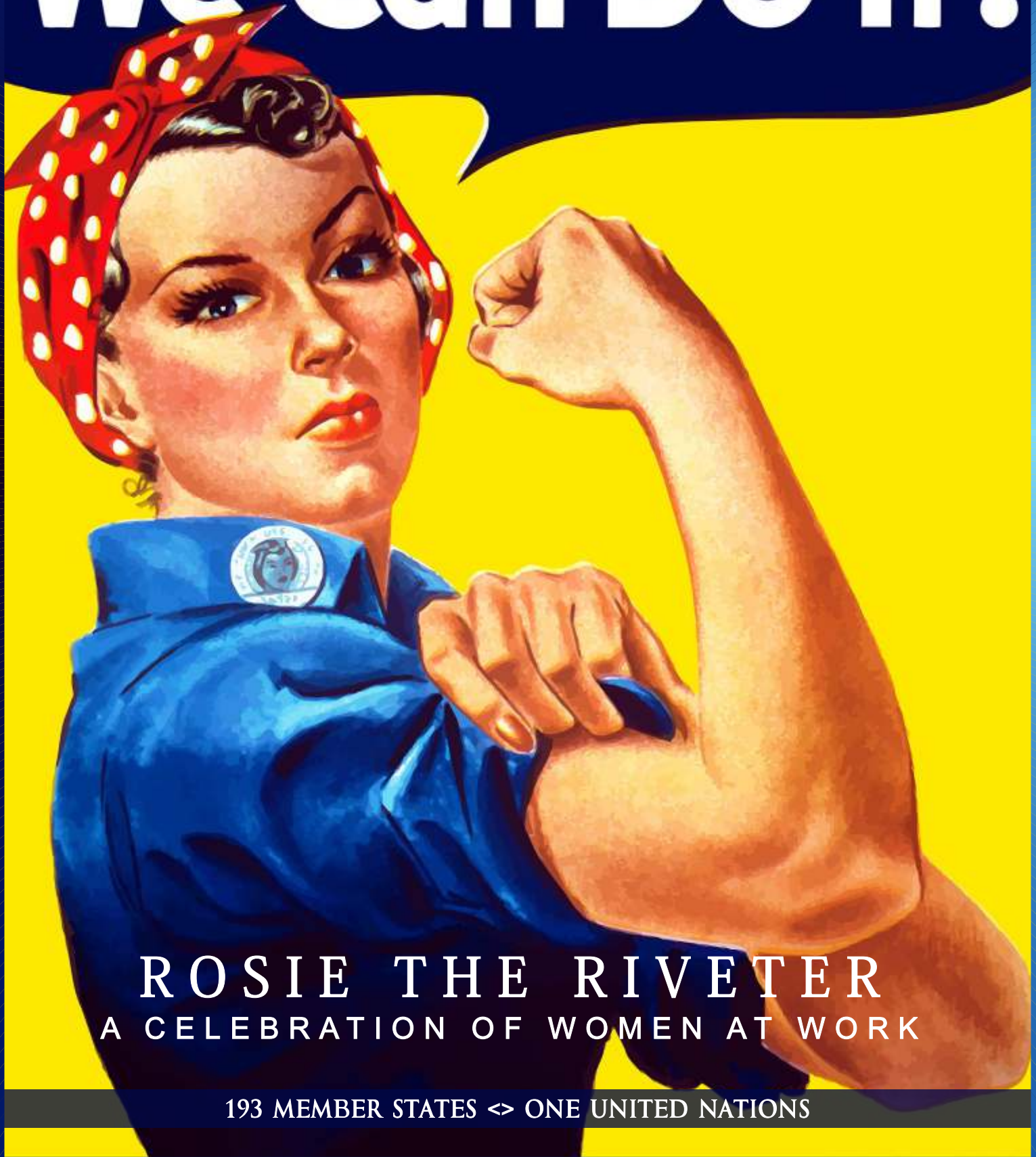


E Pluribus Unum

We Can Do It!



ROSIE THE RIVETER

A CELEBRATION OF WOMEN AT WORK

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Global Politics and Perspectives

Pandemics & History

-by Aryan Sridharan , Grade XII , SNS Gurugram



The entrance of pandemics on the world stage is as old as the Greek language itself. Communicable diseases existed during humankind's hunter-gatherer days, but the shift to agrarian life 10,000 years ago created permanent communities. This is where the advent of pandemics begins.

Much of our world history is based on conquest, war, revolution, political affiliation, the entrenchment of racial and economic discrimination, and religion. Pandemics play the role of an ally or a foe, which changes the course of history.

While many a time it favours fall of civilisations such as the 430 BCE pandemic in

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Athens which allowed the Spartans to steamroll through the city-state of Athens. It led to the end of the Greek golden age. Or the extermination of the Inca and Aztec populations due to the Small-Pox epidemic during the Spanish Inquisition.

It has been a saviour, a pall-bearer of peace and freedom, an ally to revolution. Chattel slavery and the end of colonisation in the New World was only possible due to the lack of immunity of Europeans. **When Napoleon Bonaparte sent an armada to reinstate slavery in Haiti, his army was defeated by a slave revolution due to yellow fever. This also led to the Haitian revolution and Louisiana Purchase of 1803.**

Hence, epidemics have played contradicting positions in world history and has been a mediating force in the rise and fall of civilisations and social structures. But an interesting feature about pandemics is its role in politics and religion.

Diseases have led to the marriage between state and religion which has survived from the times of the Late Roman and Byzantine empires to today's superpowers, which, even if they do not have a state religion, are influenced by it. For example, in Britain during 444 CE the Cyprian Plague became a cause of obstruction in the fight of Britons against the Picts, this led to the conquest of the British Isles by the Saxon kings.

In 541 CE due to the Justinian Plague, Emperor Justinian was unable to unite the Roman empire and led to a rapid spread of Christianity. During such periods of turbulence, there is not only a resurgence of faith but a need for the reason of these omens, which modern science calls epidemics in form of myths and folklore, as well

as religious beliefs during the 11th century to the 19th-century this can be seen.

When Leprosy struck during the middle ages it was considered as a punishment by the gods, while folklore of the undead such as Lugat and Moroi began in Eastern Europe. **From the 19th century onwards there was an increase in the number of victims due to epidemics. This brought forth two important points which were sanitation and political oppression.** The Paris Commune was an instance of radical socialist movements.

While pandemics have taken many lives over time, an acute sense of optimism can be felt. Due to the presence of these pandemics, we as humans have developed ways to prevent the spread of these diseases. There have been advances in medicine, this not only includes finding cures or vaccines but also creating specialised branches of medicine, the discovery of new viruses and bacterium, medical institutions such as modern hospitals and Pharmaceuticals began coming into existence.

Florence Nightingale, who was a revolutionary in the field of nursing, her example was used for treating patients with Spanish Flu. The modern times have benefitted from the failures of the past- from social campaigns to raise funds during the 1980s in the fight against AIDS, to organisations which send doctors to treat patients such as Doctors Without Borders during the Ebola Crisis in Africa.

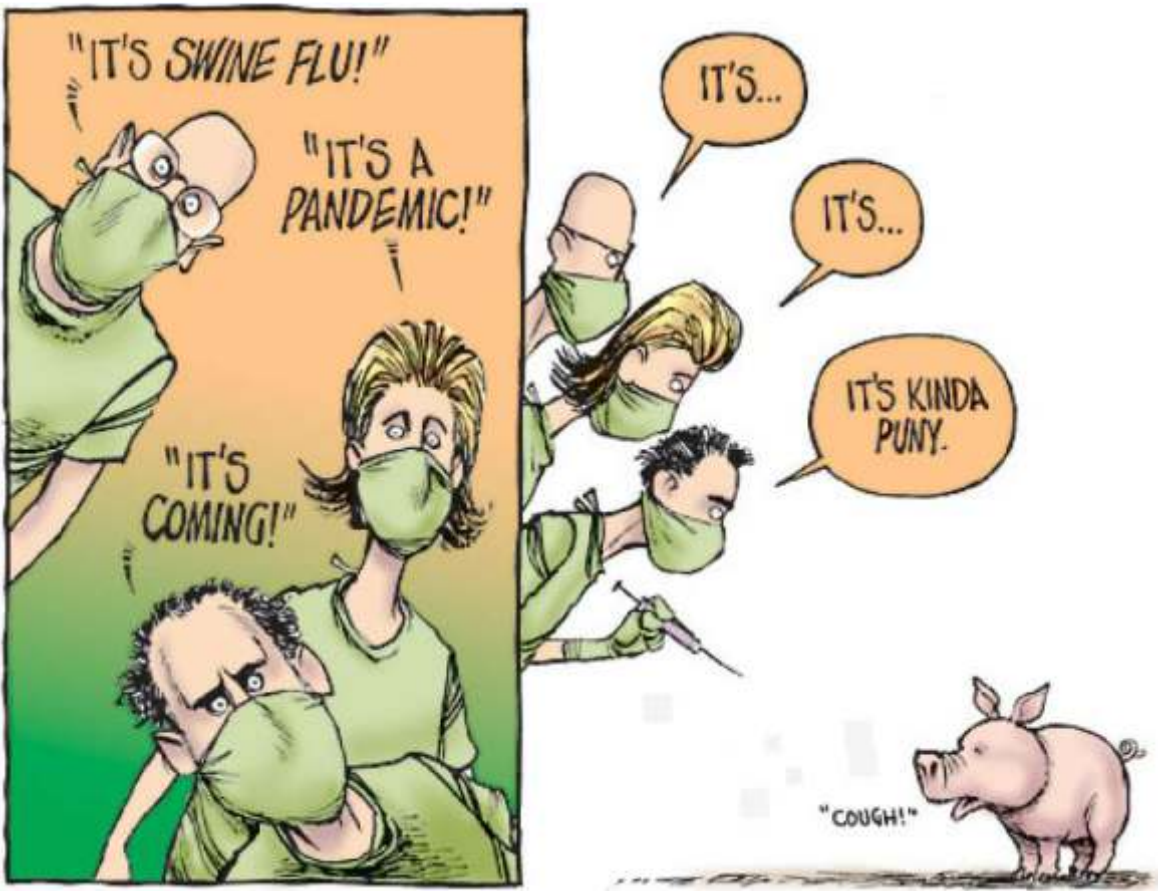
Now, yet again we are faced with a similar challenge in the form of COVID-19, for which many countries have taken preventive measures by placing travel bans, or advertisements. COVID-19 has increased the scope of zoonotic as a branch of study, it has caused

has caused heavy setbacks upon the world economy and has caused many of us to question our food habits also.

Hence this will change our lives and our world in one form or the other. Maybe we owe today's achievements, not to the wisdom of our ancestors, but the existence of their foe- pandemics.

I suppose that Martin Luther King was correct...

"We are not makers of history. We are made by History."



Global Politics and Perspectives

U.S., Taliban Sign Deal To End War In Afghanistan

-by Aryan Sridharan , Grade XII , SNS Gurugram



U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad (left) and Taliban co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar sign the U.S.-Taliban peace agreement during a ceremony in the Qatari capital of Doha on February 29.

The United States has signed a historic agreement with the Taliban aimed at ending the conflict in Afghanistan.

The agreement signed in Doha in Qatar on February 29 lays out a timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan after more than 18 years of conflict in return for various security commitments from the insurgents and a pledge to hold talks with the government in Kabul.

According to a joint declaration published by the U.S. and Afghan governments on February 29, the United States and NATO would withdraw all troops in Afghanistan within 14 months if the Taliban upheld the commitments made in the agreement. The deal was signed by U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation **Zalmay Khalilzad** and Taliban co-founder **Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar**, leader of the political wing of the group.

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U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Taliban leaders attended the signing ceremony. Representatives from over two dozen countries and international organizations, among them the foreign ministers of Pakistan and Turkey, were also present at the event.

"We are just at the beginning," Pompeo said ahead of the signing. "A significant reduction in violence will create conditions for peace, and the absence of it the conditions for failure," he added.

Pompeo said that Afghans need to live in peace and prosperity with respect for the rights of women, while the United States must be assured there will not be a terrorist threat from the country.

Speaking in Kabul, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said that the United States would not hesitate to nullify the deal if the Taliban did not uphold its end. **"If the Taliban upholds the agreement the United States will begin a conditions-based, and I repeat a conditions-based, reduction in forces,"** Esper said, calling this a **"pivotal moment in the peace process."**

The signing comes after a week in which both U.S.-led forces and the Taliban committed to a reduction in violence. The Taliban has so far refused to talk directly to the Afghan government, calling it a puppet of the West. Talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban could still prove difficult, with many in Kabul doubting the extremists' sincerity or their ability to control all of the group's militants.

A U.S.-led coalition of forces invaded Afghanistan in 2001 to drive the Taliban from power after the group refused to hand over Al-

-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. Since then, about 2,400 U.S. soldiers have been killed in fighting, along with tens of thousands of Afghan soldiers, extremist fighters, and civilians.

Trump campaigned on a pledge of pulling U.S. forces out of "endless wars." On February 28, he urged the warring sides to seize the opportunity to make peace.

"Soon, at my direction, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will witness the signing of an agreement with representatives of the Taliban, while Secretary of Defense Mark Esper will issue a joint declaration with the government of Afghanistan," **Trump said in a statement. "If the Taliban and the government of Afghanistan live up to these commitments, we will have a powerful path forward to end the war in Afghanistan and bring our troops home," Trump said.**

"These commitments represent an important step to a lasting peace in a new Afghanistan, free from Al-Qaeda, [Islamic State], and any other terrorist group that would seek to bring us harm," Trump said. He added, however, that "ultimately it will be up to the people of Afghanistan to work out their future." "We, therefore, urge the Afghan people to seize this opportunity for peace and a new future for their country," he added.

In September 2019, Trump suddenly called off a planned signing ceremony with the Taliban at Camp David, Maryland, after a series of Taliban attacks.

But talks eventually resumed, led by U.S. special envoy Khalilzad, in Qatar, where the Taliban has a representative office.

ROSIE THE RIVETER

How did a World War II Campaign endure to INSPIRE today?

-Adapted by Saarah Singh, Grade VIII , SNS Noida



When the iconic **Rosie the Riveter** poster was first published in 1943, the primary goal was to change American perceptions about women's work. As men went to fight in World War II, American women joined the industrial workforce by the millions, taking jobs in defense production plants and building weapons and warplanes, work that historically had been done by men.

The muscle-flexing, bandana-wearing Rosie is an enduring symbol of the six million women who strengthened the U.S. industrial economy during and after, attaining new roles in everything from chemistry to breaking codes. **Rosie was a model of strength, independence, and self-sufficiency.**

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The original **Rosie, Rosalind P. Walter, died last week at age 95, but her legacy lives on.** As the 75th anniversary of the end of WWII is commemorated this year, the contributions of the Rosies will be on full display.

Born into privilege, prep school raised, 19-year-old Walter delayed Vassar to drive rivets on an assembly line for fighter planes. A newspaper column about her turned into a 1942 popular song, and other women later sat for a Norman Rockwell portrait (above, paired with the Michelangelo image he modeled it after) and for the Rosie posters, which have rebounded in America's consciousness the past four decades.



Like many women of impact on history, the original Rosie the Riveter was more than a two-dimensional character. Heiress of one fortune, married into another, Walter spent the later part of her life on another patriotic effort: bankrolling public TV documentaries and shows that round out the education of fellow citizens.

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The Economics Page

Minimum Support Price. Not supporting.

-by Sameeka Maroli , Grade XII , SNS Noida



The crisis in India's agrarian sector, which employs nearly 52 per cent of the workforce of the nation has assumed epidemic proportions and has pervaded all over India, transcending all state and environment boundaries. **Incidentally, the growth rates in agricultural production, which steadily increased during the period 1950-1990, was higher than the rate of population growth, thus helping India achieve self-sufficiency in food grain output.**

In 2014, the opposition, party of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power expressly riding an overwhelming wave of support from farmers embraced by the party's promise to waive farmers' debts, raise the price of harvest procurement, and install

middlemen-free farm-to-market mechanisms.

According to the Indian government's own economic think-tank, NITI Aayog (replaced the 65-year-old Planning Commission), a farming family's average income growth in 2011-2016 was only 0.44 per cent, which meant that farmers' incomes were stagnant (but expenses increased, as their income reflects inflation). The Livestock insurance scheme - a centrally sponsored scheme initiated by the Indian Ministry of Agriculture - focused on providing a protection mechanism to the farmers and cattle rearers against any eventual loss of their animals due to death and to popularize the benefit of the insurance of livestock, thus attaining qualitative improvement in livestock and their products. These programs have been accompanied by government purchases of any surplus, to restrict acreage in order to limit those surpluses, by crop or production restrictions.

The central government is intervening today to provide the small and marginal farmers with minimum income support. If the government had better tailored and effectively fulfilled an older minimum promise: the minimum support price (MSP) or the price at which it agrees to buy 25 crops from farmers, irrespective of their prevailing market price, this distress intervention might not have been needed.

Noting that the government has intervened in the agro-market by taking initiatives such as the Minimum support price (MSP), Kisan Credit Card (KCC) and Livestock Insurance scheme. The intervention of the government can be seen as a price floor (in economic terms). A price floor is a government- or group-imposed price control or limit on how low a price can be charged for a product,

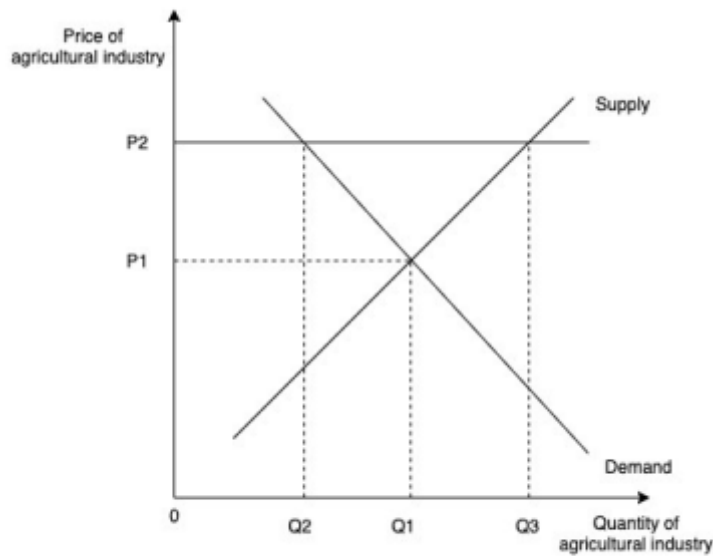


Diagram1: Agricultural Industry

good, commodity, or service. In Diagram 1, we see that the initial equilibrium is at Q_1, P_1 . As the government intervened in the market, they set a minimum price at which the farmers will sell their produce, i.e. P_2 . The situation we come across now shows that on price P_2 , there is lesser demand (Q_2, P_2) than the supply (Q_3, P_2). Hence, there is excess supply in the market, which is then bought by the government. If the average market price for a crop fell below the crop's target price, the government paid the difference.

What are the results of support programs like these for farmers? The goal is to raise farmer income and sustain it. But customers are paying more for food with price floors than they would otherwise, and governments are spending heavily on financing the programs.

“Secondly, economics must concern itself with justice. In the recent past, Economics had turned into a glamorous branch of theoretical knowledge with no aim of improving reality.” While theoretically all these concepts and ideas may seem foolproof, the

implementation and execution usually isn't as smooth.

The government's own Economic Survey of India 2016 reports that a farmer's (or a farming 2 family's) average income is just 20,000 rupees a year in 17 Indian states, or about half the nation. That means a farming family's monthly income — about five members on average — is less than 1,700 rupees. This suggests that the schemes aren't working as efficiently as they should.

Debt has risen unexpectedly. Rice and wheat rot, due to high imports and lack of cold storage facilities, and the untethered free-market policy of the government has resulted in more opportunistic intermediaries than ever. Also, there have been increasing loan waivers by various state governments in recent years, adding to the fiscal burden.

The most practical-alternate strategy with the least interference can be connecting organizations for better provision of warehousing and issuance of Electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipts (e-NWRs). Support from the government to farmers can be in the form of supporting warehousing costs, enhancing availability of regulated warehouses, and underwriting any losses that may occur to financiers under pre-decided scenarios. Another solution is to connect e-NWRs issued to farmers to their Kisan Credit Cards. With this model, the subsidy burden can be contained, while covering most of the crops grown in the country, as it can reduce the costs of direct procurement, storage and handling of stocks, apart from reducing fiscal burden arising out of market interventions. The historical price trends and cost-benefit analysis show that, with certain prerequisites, the model can be implemented successfully.

The Science Page

What happens inside an EXPLOSION.....?

-by Rishabh Chaturvedi , Grade X , SNS Noida



TYPES OF FIRE

Before I answer that question, I am going to ask a more important one. Why do we need to know what happens inside an explosion ? Turns out, we need to know what's going on so that we may increase or decrease its combustion potential and analyze the molecules involved in the reaction.

This means that we will learn how to design better engines and techniques to power and fuel everything from cars to rockets. How you ask? Well, by designing engines, we'll cut down on it's fuel consumption as well as reducing the emissions made by them which in turn will help with Climate Change.

Another application is for fighting fires, including wildfires. The technique will allow researchers to understand how fire retardants work, thus enabling them to design better equipped compounds to put an assorted variety of fires.

Now the question arises, how would we get the necessary information from inside a blazing and really hot fire. Surely putting a device with sensitive scientific equipment in it is not a good idea. We'd have to gather this data from the outside of the fire. Another question, How would we gather that information by simply observing it from the outside?

Researchers from the UCF have found a way to do so through a technique that uses a laser. A laser pulse is shot through a fire or explosion and is then caught on the other side using a simple detector. As the laser passes through, it comes into contact with different molecules due to which the laser loses some of its power. One such molecule would be that of carbon monoxide. Since light is very fast, The laser pulse can scan the fire under microseconds.

By measuring this decrease in power, the researchers can calculate the temperature as well as the concentrations of the different molecules present during the combustion.

Previous techniques have required multiple lasers in a specialized climate that some researchers have categorized as "Extreme". The new technique that uses only one such laser, is an advancement made possible by an acousto-optically modulated quantum cascade laser; which is just a deeply modified laser. The acousto-optic modulator allows for measurements so fast that the one laser can do the same work as many keeping the same time frame.

The researchers developed and tested their technique using a shock tube that uses small amounts of fuel to produce micro-explosions.

The Technology Page

Faking It!!

-by Vinayaak Singhal , Grade XII , SNS Noida



A computer and an internet connection is all that it takes to produce a deep fake video, a growing trend which is sweeping the internet. This technology is something which can be used for harmless fun in movies and videos but holds a darker side to it where in many private citizens and famous celebrities have seen their faces being used without permission at illicit places posing a challenge for privacy of the person as well as confidence on the media.

Even though it has been possible to create fake videos and alter faces and pictures for decades but it used to take a lot of time and effort which can now be easily done. Instead of a person sitting and photo-shopping, the computers have been trained

to superimpose and manipulate stuff. Anyone could have the ability to make a convincing fake video, including some people who might seek to “weaponize” it for political or other malicious purposes.

Deep fakes have now added to the distrust that people had on videos and pictures. The hurdle of misleading information and conspiracies is set to arise. Even though in my view it's too early for a clip to fake large scale events but the lack of conviction which increases with each such deep fake creation is ought to create a harmful impact on the minds of people. The challenge does not stop at identifying the fake videos but ironically, the events which happened in reality might be dismissed as being fake. The American, (now-president !!), Donald Trump was caught saying obscene things which was later termed as an action of deep fake even though the incident happened in reality. While, Barack Obama's thousands of photos and videos were a result of pure deep fake technology.

Recently, the deep fake was found to have entered the Indian politics presenting a challenge to the core values of democracy. **BJP MLA, Manoj Tiwari was seen making a bilingual appeal to the voters for the then-coming elections and criticizing the opposition. This much-criticized move used deep fake to relate to different communities by modulating the voice to Haryanvi and English.**

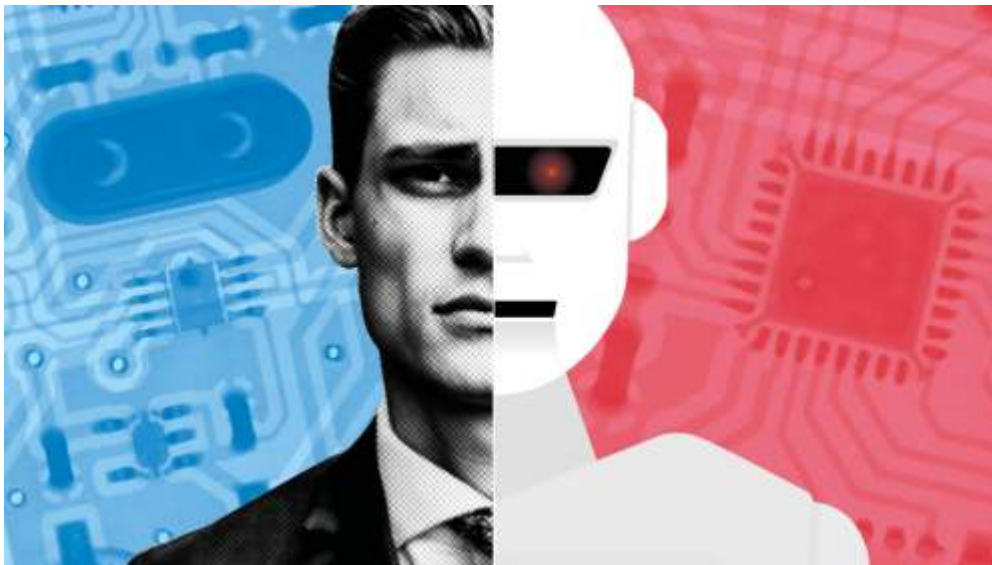
The question which arises here is whether the hype which is being created regarding increasing deep fake is worth it or not!!

It is extremely hard to detect with the human eye and ear with ultrafine faux technology. Needless to say that these deep fake videos create a doubt over information and media among people. Over and above, this technology can damage reputations by putting

extremely hard to detect with the human eye and ear with ultrafine faux technology.

In a democracy, where Media is considered to be the “Fourth Estate”, prevalence of Deep Fake erodes the very foundation of Democracy by propagating something which is DEEPLY FAKE.

It is important to realize that Artificial Intelligence must support and augment human aspirations, not overtake them.



Website for Coronavirus Information

High School student builds website to serve as a leading place for the information.



The landing page for [Avi Schiffmann's coronavirus information website](#). (nc2019.live)
Along with his concern for the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, Avi Schiffmann was concerned about the spread of misinformation. **So the 17-year-old from just outside Seattle set out to make a website that pulls together the latest and most accurate data about the epidemic — and he's heard from people around the world about how useful his effort has been.**

Schiffmann, a junior at Mercer Island High School who is in the Running Start program at Bellevue College, first started working on his coronavirus information website — [ncov2019.live](#) — in early January when there were fewer than 1,000 confirmed cases and it hadn't yet spread outside of China.

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The site's simple homepage consists of quick facts that are updated every 10 minutes, including total confirmed cases, total deaths, countries infected and more. A column lists the outbreak numbers for provinces and cities in China and another column breaks out data for other countries. An update on the site says a new column is coming that will list individual U.S. states, and also translate the information in more than 10 languages.

The site, which runs a script to automatically scrape a number of well-sourced sites for the latest data, has attracted more than 2 million unique visitors and gets as many as 300,000 returning visitors each day, setting record site numbers for past two weeks.

"I am spending most of my free time working on it," Schiffmann told GeekWire via email on Monday. "I get about 100 emails a day for bug fixes, feature requests, that kind of thing, so I am always working on adding new things."

The site also contains information on how to prepare if coronavirus impacts your area and how to prevent catching the virus. An interactive map Google map (below) crowdsourced by another group of volunteers is also embedded on the site and there's a Twitter feed of the latest alerts and breaking news, and more.

"My goal is to make the site the best place for information about the coronavirus, with multiple methods of getting data," Schiffmann said. "When I first started I was viewing the whole epidemic as an outsider, and I never expected it to personally affect me," he said, adding that the deaths and infections near Seattle have scared him a bit.

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n his LinkedIn page, Schiffmann says he has “years of experience in web development, cross-platform mobile development, and UI and UX design using Adobe and similar tools” as well as “extensive knowledge of popular 3D modeling software.” He lists himself as the co-founder of a software company called Mojave as well as a volunteer with The Mars Society, which advocates for human exploration and settlement of Mars.

Schiffmann said he’s been coding since he was about 7 years old and he called the creation of the site an amazing learning experience. He said he’s gotten hundreds of messages from people all around the world, and a donation page has attracted 200 contributors.

The plan is to keep the site going for as long as possible and adapt over time depending on relevant information that can be displayed in a meaningful way. Schiffmann envisions a vaccine progress tracker or other information which can be displayed graphically.

It’s a lot to take on for a kid who is still in high school, taking college courses, going to hackathons and competing on a ski racing team. Schiffmann admits to being “very motivated” and spending 99 percent of his free time learning new technologies. He’s currently in the middle of “10 different big projects” and said his main goal is to make something incredible one day and to change the world by creating his own companies.

“My favorite quote is by Steve Jobs,” Schiffmann said. “Because the people who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world, are the ones who do.”

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To be or not to be Holland

That is the QUESTION.

-by Ananya Bhagwat , Grade XI , SNS Gurugram



The world is a strange place... Geographically speaking, while New Holland lies in the southern hemisphere, North and South Holland lie in the northern hemisphere, although, the country of Holland lies nowhere near the equator! The demonym of Holland isn't Hollandish, Hollander (like the actor), simply Holland (like the other actor), Hollande (like the French President), or Hollandaise (like the sauce). It's Dutch. As is their language, which is called Afrikaans in Africa. Holland forms the basis for so much in the world, and yet, Holland wants to officially change its name! Puzzling, isn't it?

I was intrigued by this "change of name". Reading an article called "A TULIP BY ANY OTHER NAME- [The Netherlands doesn't want you to call it Holland anymore](#)" by [Marc Bain](#) on December 27, 2019, in The Quartz, helped demystify this. As per Bain and the Dutch Government, Holland doesn't want to be called Holland anymore!

It is common knowledge that Holland refers to the former name of the Netherlands, a country in north western Europe. **While its official name is the 'Kingdom of the Netherlands', Netherlands has thus far been used interchangeably with Holland.** In fact, "Holland" is still used for the national football team, and the government's official websites for tourism, trade, and commerce. So why would the Netherlands choose to discredit this nickname?

In the 19th century, Holland, referring to the territories of North and South Holland, became the economic hub of the nation, and eventually came to be used for the entire country. Thus, our understanding of Holland is geographically inaccurate.

But how could this alone propel a government to undertake a rebranding campaign worth approximately 200,000 Euros? Now, this has a reason that is more economic than historical in nature.

As mentioned earlier, Holland refers to North and South Holland, which are simply 2 out of the 12 provinces that make up the Netherlands. Considering that they are home to important cities such as Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague, their economic significance is a given. These cities are also tourist hotspots, and are part of the reason why the country is facing an overwhelming crisis due to "over-tourism".

The Dutch claim that the over-burgeoning tourist population is asphyxiating their cities (clearly, they haven't visited a population mammoth like India!), while the rest of the country sees rarely a few visitors annually. **The Netherlands, a country with a population of 17 million, hosted 18 million international visitors in 2018, as per official records.**

The Dutch government believes that rebranding Holland as the Netherlands would promote travel to the other 10 provinces and thus “de-clutter” their cities. It will give recognition to other provinces & focus on managing (instead of promoting) destinations.

The country has launched its rebranding campaign this month (Jan 2020). It has been decreed that all its companies, embassies, ministries, and other institutions refer to it by its official title. This shift is believed to benefit its trade and commerce initiatives. Besides, **it has introduced a new logo that reads 'NL', which will replace the traditional tulip.**

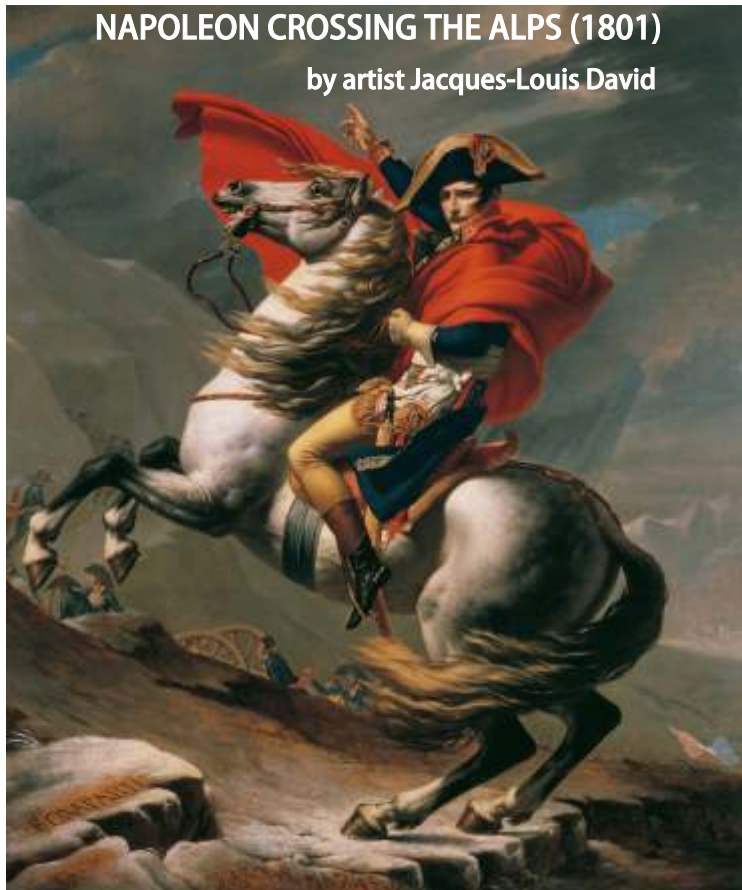
And so, it is that the World will see the renaming of the great Dutch nation in 2020.

While on the issue of renaming, Nova Hollandia, Nieuw Holland or New Holland was the name given to the land Down Under by the Dutch seafarer-explorer-merchant, Abel Tasman in the 1600's when he chanced upon Terra Australis Incognita (the unknown Southern land). New Holland continued to be used semi-officially and in popular usage as the name for the whole landmass until at least the mid-1850s. It was renamed Australia much later.

So, the next time you see a pair of clogs or admire a Van Gogh, remember they are from the Netherlands, not Holland!

To cut A Long Story *SHORT*

-by Ananya Bhagwat , Grade XI , SNS Gurugram



Napoleon Bonaparte is one of the most charismatic figures in history. He rose from the ranks and took Europe by storm. To tell his story is at best – a little complex. His expansionist ideas and his vision of becoming the Emperor is often attributed to a psychological condition that we now refer to as the **“Napoleon Complex”** or **“the short man syndrome”**, or what one might even call **“the Little Complex”**. These refer to a popular belief that short people tend to compensate for their physical shortcoming through domineering behaviour and aggression.

But was Napoleon really short?

Perhaps the most iconic and enduring image of him is the **Napoleon Crossing the Alps (1801)** by artist **Jacques-Louis David**, where he is depicted as riding a rearing stallion, blue coat aflutter in the wind, with a bicorne hat on his head.

At the height of his career, Napoleon used the art of propaganda adeptly and commissioned several portraits to uphold his image. Napoleon was particularly impressed by Jacques-Louis David's rendition of himself mentioned earlier and commissioned him to paint three more pieces - Consecration of the Emperor Napoleon, the Coronation of Empress Joséphine on December 2, 1804 (1806–07), and The Emperor Napoleon in His Study at the Tuileries (1812). Which is why it is all the more ironic that it was this very art that led to his 'belittling' (pun intended) across Europe - the Emperor was rumoured to be diminutive in stature. This belief exists in contemporary times too.

According to an article called "Was Napoleon Short" by Alicja Zelazko, his short-statured depiction was the objective of an implicit English propaganda campaign. The works of cartoonists James Gillray and Isaac Cruikshank were instrumental in propagating this image. In 1803, Gillray introduced a character called "Little Boney" that portrayed the Emperor as a tantrum-throwing child. His caricatures initially described juvenility, but later developed into shortness. **In one cartoon, Napoleon was shown wearing huge boots, and appeared to be 'struggling to pull a sword from an unwieldy scabbard that dragged along the ground as he walked'.** In "The Empress's Wish or Boney Puzzled!!", Isaac Cruikshank depicted Napoleon as being half the height of his wife and troops. Clearly the pen was mightier than the sword, as Napoleon himself said, "Gillray did more than all the armies of Europe to bring me down."

Although the British chose to mock Bonaparte for political reasons, the genesis of the rumour surrounding his height could perhaps be traced to appearances he made with his Imperial Guard who seemed to tower over him. Although Napoleon was not a short man, his height was not considered befitting that of an aristocrat or a military leader of the time.

Let us also bear in mind that Napoleon lived at a time that preceded the standardisation of units of measurement. Thus, a French inch that stood at 2.7 cm was larger than its Imperial English counterpart which was 2.54 cm. The height of the average French male of that era was approximately 5 feet 5 inches (in modern units). So, if we recalibrate our mind's eye, Napoleon was of average height.

Another reason for this misconception, and perhaps one giving leverage to the English propaganda machinery, was the fact that Napoleon was fondly referred to as 'Le Petit Caporal' by his troops. It was an affectionate nickname coined by his soldiers, rather than being a slur to his stature.

As in life, so in death, Napoleon was said to be a short man. His death certificate states his height to be in the range of 5'2" and 5'7". However, according to modern international units, it would probably be closer to 5'6" or 5'7".

Let's make no bones about it, Napoleon's shortness is a tall tale.



SHIV NADAR SCHOOL

Education for Life