

MAURITIUS TIMES

• Health is the most precious asset we can ever have. During these difficult times of pandemic, humour proves to be one of the best medicines to boost our immunity and mental wellbeing. -- Nanjunda Swamy

The IMF minces no words...



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"There was no reason for the DPP to take over

the Sawmynaden case as the information was only a provisional, not a formal one"



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Municipal elections postponement

The Covid-19 pandemic has served as a convenient reason, excuse or pretext to do a lot of things on the quiet, such as emergency procurement of medical supplies or passing stringent legislation. But in the case of municipal elections it is a weak argument, and their postponement is not warranted.

First of all from the point of view of the Covid problem. Currently there is partial lifting of restrictions. Even if they are still in place by the time the elections are due to be held, that will be relatively less onerous than holding general elections because only about half the population is concerned. The conditions in the voting centres are as it is normally strictly regulated, with only one voter at a time entering the room where voting is taking place. The officers too have ample space to sit at the stipulated distance away from each other. In other words, social distancing is more possible in that set-up.

Furthermore, voters do not come *en masse*, and this is another point that favours the holding of the municipal elections. Besides, as they enter the voting venue, they can be made to use sanitiser and also the wearing of their masks properly be ensured by an officer or staff posted there for that purpose.

What is of more concern, however, is that fact that the opportunity must be given to people to express themselves. Their representatives in Parliament are sometimes being debarred from asking questions or seeking clarifications on burning matters using all kinds of excuses and devices. If representatives cannot speak or probe, surely the people must be allowed to send their own signal to the authorities, which is what municipal elections would allow them to do. The circumstances are calling for such a move.

This might also be an occasion for the authorities to monitor people's behaviour as regards the public health measures, and make sure they comply during the voting. At the same time, this may also be a solid opportunity to distribute fact sheets about the pandemic, or perhaps even consider playing out taped messages at regular intervals about Covid appropriate behaviour. In communication repetition is a powerful reinforcing tool, and when associated with a major event such as municipal elections it can be an impressive reminder.

This in fact may be particularly needed at this point, because as has been opined by the relevant experts and serious observers, there is a third surge or wave that is probably in the making. The numbers of cases being detected either daily or within days of each other clearly show that the virus is circulating in the community. The reasons are not far to seek. Many people are still defaulting on wearing the mask properly or keeping safe distance. There are ground reports of people refusing to use hand sanitiser or wear mask when shopping at the smaller corner outlets – but the vendors are being very strict and insist on the protocol being followed, otherwise the customer is turned away. There are also reports of people entering religious places furtively and again there defaulting on the protocol. Now all this is very concerning, and it is therefore no surprise that cases are mounting.

If we want to avoid a third wave and yet another lockdown, we all know what we have to do. So, let's do it!

The Conversation

What India's second wave means for its vaccine coverage – and the rest of the world

Increased demand and falling supplies in India risk leaving many countries empty handed



Pic - indiatoday.in

With rich countries having bought up the majority of the world's Covid-19 vaccines, the rest of the world has relied on India – one of the world's largest vaccine producers and exporters – to increase access to doses.

But now India's exports – which include supplies for Covax, the global vaccine-sharing programme, as well as bilateral donations and commercial agreements branded under its "vaccine friendship" programme – are being disrupted. India's devastating second wave has led it to redirect more of its vaccine production towards its domestic immunisation programme. With so many countries relying on India for supply, this is threatening vaccination progress globally.

The UN secretary general, António Guterres, has hailed India's vaccine production capacity as "one of the best assets the world has today".

India is a key supplier to Covax. At the beginning of the year, Covax was forecast to deliver 2.3 billion doses to low-income and middle-income countries in 2021, with more than 1 billion of these produced by the Serum Institute of India, the single largest vaccine manufacturer in the world.

Of the 53.9 million doses shared around the world by Covax up to May 6, 19.8 million were exported from India, with a further 10 million Indian-made doses being supplied directly back to the country.

Changing priorities

At the start of the year, the Serum

Institute's CEO, Adar Poonawalla, declared that India had more vaccine stock than it could physically administer. But the second wave has seen India's position quickly deteriorate – and with it the prospect of the country meeting its commitments to Covax.

By mid-March, the Serum Institute was dedicating much more of its capacity to India than originally planned.

The Indian government has repeatedly stated that there's no export ban on Covid-19 vaccines, but consignments due to many countries – including the UK – have been delayed. Only 6 million vaccines have been exported since late March, compared to 60 million in the previous two months.

At the same time, the number of Covid-19 vaccine doses administered monthly in India has increased from 3.7 million in January, to 10.1 million in February, 50.6 million in March and more than 90 million in April. By May 6, over 162 million doses had been administered – the third highest number in the world after the US and China.

There has been a clear effort to increase vaccination as India's second wave has materialised. Indeed, India's vaccination programme was expanded at the beginning of May so all adults could register to receive a dose.

Rory Horner

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The Other Pandemic: Fear and Panic



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

At the height of the AH1N1 pandemic of 2009-2010 serious concern was raised about the rapidity of its spread, and at a certain point it was even pointed out that this was the result of the panic created by the media. We witnessed this phenomenon in Mauritius too. People were flocking to the hospitals unnecessarily for a condition that could be controlled at home by simple measures, and only seek medical help when the symptoms aggravated despite such treatment and precautions taken. And like the current Covid-19 infection, well over 90% of cases would recover.

Along with the natural transmission of the virus, panic and fear created by irresponsible and unethical reporting by what in India has been called the left liberal press is also fuelling the spread of the pandemic there. This should be a matter of concern to us because of the extensive trade and travel exchanges that we have with India, but also because the capacity of India to produce vaccines will be impacted, with consequences for the whole world as has been highlighted by experts in the matter. And the whole world includes our own country too.

On the subject of vaccines, it is unbelievable that pre-

“Along with the natural transmission of the virus, panic and fear created by irresponsible and unethical reporting by what in India has been called the left liberal press is also fuelling the spread of the pandemic there. This should be a matter of concern to us because of the extensive trade and travel exchanges that we have with India, but also because the capacity of India to produce vaccines will be impacted, with consequences for the whole world as has been highlighted by experts in the matter. And the whole world includes our own country too...”



Along with the natural transmission of the virus, panic and fear created by irresponsible and unethical reporting by what in India has been called the left liberal press is also fuelling the spread of the pandemic there. Pic - zeenews.com

“We are all appalled and saddened by the scale of the disaster in India. But also comforted by the support that several countries have stepped in to provide and are continuing to do, spontaneously, as a mark of gratitude to the Indian government for its generosity to the rest of the world during the first wave. This was through its 'vaccine maitri' programme, whereby 60 million doses of vaccine were distributed to nearly 75 countries. What we have to reckon with is that we live in a connected world, and that peddling wrong information or indulging in sensationalism to sell copy in the end is counterproductive...”

judice should still prevail about Covaxin, of which 200,000 doses have already been administered, along with the 200,000 doses of Covishield, all of which came from India. There have been some side effects, most of which have been mild and settled within hours or days. Talking about phase 3 clinical trials of Covaxin is passé, and reveals complete ignorance of how the vaccine reached the final stage of approval by the Drug Controller General of India, which is the regulatory body. In an interview by Arnab Goswami of Republic TV, Dr Krishna Ella, founder of Bharat Biotech which has produced Covaxin, has given a detailed and lucid account of the process. Millions of doses have already been administered in India, and there have been no issues with regard to efficacy or safety. Bharat Biotech is expanding its capacity, and another company in India, Zydus is soon to enter the market with an intradermal vaccine, according to its CEO Dr Sharvil Patel, and is looking for partnerships to increase production capacity.

However, vaccines is big business, and since there are several global players in the game, there is bound to be competition and rivalry, and it wouldn't be a surprise if the echoes of rivalry that are being heard should prove to be true. And explain at least in part what is happening at the international level in this sector. It will be of interest to follow the evolution, especially in light of America's decision to waive off patents temporarily, and the hard and possibly protracted negotiations that are forecasted to take place at WTO.

To come back to the problems being caused by panic in India, several psychiatric associations have made an 'appeal to media friends' to tone down their reporting and send out more positive messages rather than bombarding media space with despairing images and graphics. The

consequence of such reporting is that instead of waiting for at least seven days after the onset of symptoms before they seek medical help if these do not relieve, people are rushing to hospitals or wrongly self-medicating with dexamethasone or remdesivir, or to procure oxygen cylinders in anticipation of future use – all this obviously deprives others who are more needy. Moreover, this has led to a racket of black-marketing as unscrupulous people try to exploit the situation to make money. One such racket involving oxygen concentrators has been busted by the police in New Delhi. Another racket about blocking hospital beds has been exposed in Bangalore by a local MP Shri Tejasvi Surya.

The political blame game at national level is not helping either. However, there are more responsible views and more balanced analyses that are also expressed, but without trying to cover up the lack of preparedness and proper planning that has followed the undoubted successful management of the first wave. For example, Biocon

founder and Executive Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw feels India 'needs to build a stockpile of essential medicines to combat the second wave of the pandemic' and proposes how to go about doing this. The Chief Scientist of WHO, Dr Saumya Swaminathan in an interview to a TV channel made an overview of the situation in India from the beginning, highlighting both the strong and the weak points, and gave sound advice in an assured voice of hope and optimism.

This is of course in addition to the equally balanced views that are aired daily by panels of experts, counselling people over and over again to avoid panic and to be more rational. But repeatedly, the importance of the public health measures of social distancing, masking up, etc., is emphasized. Unfortunately, people continue to persist in their old ways and for reasons best known to themselves prefer to take risks, thereby harming themselves and others too when the disease strikes.

We are all appalled and saddened by the scale of the disaster in India. But also comforted by the support that several countries have stepped in to provide and are continuing to do, spontaneously, as a mark of gratitude to the Indian government for its generosity to the rest of the world during the first wave. This was through its 'vaccine maitri' programme, whereby 60 million doses of vaccine were distributed to nearly 75 countries.

What we have to reckon with is that we live in a connected world, and that peddling wrong information or indulging in sensationalism to sell copy or support an ideological agenda in the end is counterproductive, for the virus hits everybody indiscriminately. We need the types of messages of hope and optimism as advocated by authoritative voices, not of despondency.

Can patent waivers solve the worldwide shortage of Covid vaccines



Anil Madan

Patent waivers are among the least effective, it makes great sense to build more regional vaccine production facilities around the world

The continuing Covid-19 pandemic and the stark rise of infections and deaths around the world, the horror of it most strikingly raging in India, have prompted calls for

pharma companies to waive their patents on vaccine production. Indeed, there have been calls for the World Trade Organization (WTO) to waive intellectual property (IP) constraints on all products related to Covid-19 containment, treatment, and immunization. With each voice proclaiming that getting Covid vaccines to the world is a moral imperative — *and, of course, it is* — one is tempted to think that where there is so much smoke, there must be fire. However, a puff of white smoke over the Vatican when Pope Francis joined the chorus of calls for patent waivers, suggests more steam or smoke than fire.

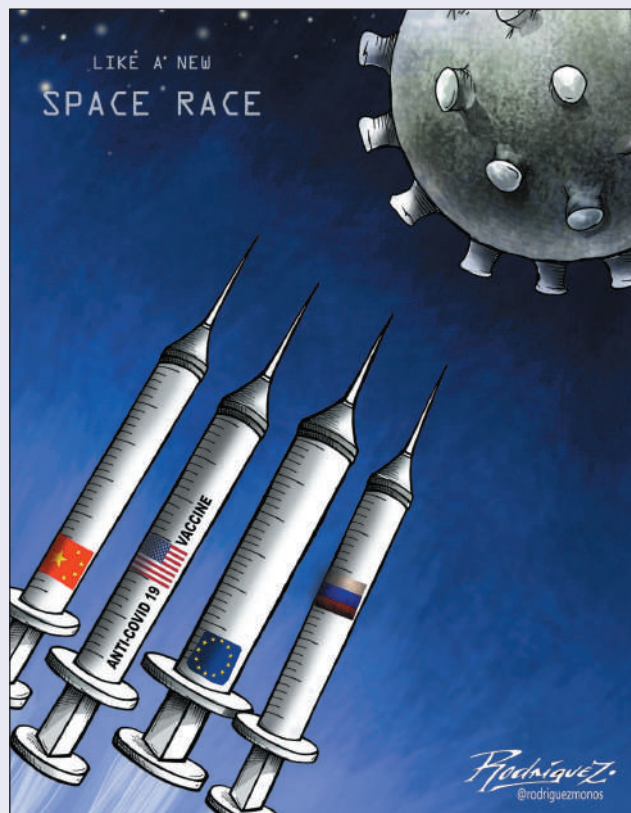
A closer look suggests that this cacophony of drum-beaters is indeed pretty much all smoke and noise. The practical imperative for addressing the *moral imperative of worldwide vaccine distribution* is that it be done in an intelligent and effective way. The world can ill afford foolishness that trips us up. Even a superficial level of scrutiny suggests that patent waivers are among the least effective, and perhaps most dangerous steps we can take at this time. A deeper dive suggests that the problem is exaggerated and that there are better solutions. Certainly, as a long-term approach to preparedness for future pandemics and the ongoing management of Covid-19, it makes great sense to build more regional vaccine production facilities around the world. Patent waivers are not the best way to get there. Let us explore.

The WTO protocols include the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). This 1994 agreement requires almost all the 164 member nations to honour and enforce each other's IP rights. If the holders of patents on the processes for making the Pfizer, Moderna, or Oxford AstraZeneca vaccines make appropriate filings and pay applicable fees in other WTO countries, their rights will be protected.

Without unanimity, no waiver

However, the WTO also allows its signatories to waive patent protection but this requires *unanimous* agreement of its 164 members. Although the US has recently indicated a willingness to go along with patent waivers at least for vaccines, Germany is opposed. Without unanimity, there will be no waiver. Pfizer is opposed to patent waivers and so is Oxford.

It will undoubtedly come as a surprise to most people that Moderna has already declared its own version of a patent waiver. In a statement released last October, Moderna stated: "Beyond Moderna's vaccine, there are other Covid-19 vaccines in development that may use Moderna-patented technologies. We feel a special obligation under the current circumstances to use our resources to bring this pandemic to an end as quickly as possible. Accordingly, while the pandemic continues, Moderna will



“Some countries took the prudent step of pre-ordering large quantities of vaccines in advance of knowing whether they would work. Of course, the high income countries had the resources to do this. But a side benefit of this process should not be ignored. If the US, for example, had not pre-ordered vaccines that are now surplus to its needs, those vaccines may never have been manufactured as they have been. They are now available for redistribution by the US by way of gift or sale...”

not enforce our Covid-19 related patents against those making vaccines intended to combat the pandemic. Further, to eliminate any perceived IP barriers to vaccine development during the pandemic period, upon request we are also willing to license our intellectual property for Covid-19 vaccines to others for the post pandemic period.”

So far, not a single company has taken Moderna up on its offer. So much for patent waivers. What is not clear is how Moderna defines “while the pandemic continues” and what its licensing terms are for the post pandemic period whenever that starts. Even if Moderna's licensing terms were acceptable to a licensee and the investment in plant and equipment is made, the manufacture of vaccines involves much, much more than patent rights.

Vaccine manufacturing is a complex process requiring sophisticated equipment in a suitable physical plant, a skilled and trained workforce, knowledgeable scientists,

and meticulous management of the supply chain. An error in managing the supply chain, a missing ingredient, or a production misstep can ruin batches of vaccines that have been in production for months.

Aside from errors or missteps, on-time input supply delivery for more than 100 components: as vaccine manufacturing must run 24/7 and is time-sensitive, all input materials and consumables need to be available when required. Lack of availability of a single component could halt the entire production process and may force the scrapping of a batch that might already have been in production for several weeks.

A company seeking to make the Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca, or any other vaccine, would most likely need access to trade secrets, process knowhow, and supply chain management. None of these aspects are customarily included in patent applications. An agreement with any of these companies would cover matters well beyond just patents.

As for Moderna's self-declared waiver on enforcement of its patents during the pandemic, it simply makes no economic sense for a plant to gear up just for a short run of vaccine production. Sure, such a plant might be adapted to making other vaccines, but that is speculative.

Nor would a reputable vaccine manufacturer want to license its product to be marketed under its brand name without stringent quality controls. A production error that generates unwanted side effects or illnesses in vaccine recipients could lead to vaccine hesitancy or rejection and ruin the reputation of a vaccine or its principal manufacturer.

Good manufacturing practices

Setting up a vaccine manufacturing operation is not something that can be done overnight. For example, Dr Drew Weissman of the University of Pennsylvania, one of the researchers who pioneered mRNA vaccine technologies stated during a May 7 interview on NPR that, since the spring of 2020, he has been working with the government of Thailand to build a GMP (good manufacturing practices) site for the production of vaccines. Although advocating for setting up more vaccine production facilities in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, he points out that a critical difficulty is the acquisition of raw materials—enzymes, nucleotides, and lipids—needed to produce the vaccines.

Whereas Pfizer has licensed the production of its vaccines, for example to Merck in the US, its CEO, Albert Bourla is opposed to patent waivers. Even if we take his comments with a grain of salt given his vested interest in the integrity of Pfizer's patent portfolio, what he says makes sense.

Bourla warns that if patent waivers bring many would-be vaccine manufacturers, this would set off a worldwide race for raw materials that would threaten the safe and efficient manufacturing of Covid vaccines. Bourla wrote: “Currently, infrastructure is not the bottleneck for us manufacturing faster.

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The IMF minces no words...



“The Mauritius Investment Corporation has of course, as we know, been the subject of intense criticism since its inception locally but it is somehow reassuring that the IMF too concurs with the condemnation of the unhealthy role of the BoM and its wholly owned subsidiary as a grand financier of projects from distressed conglomerates. What is even more irritating is the culture of secrecy that shrouds over its disbursements: how much, to whom and under what terms should have been a self-evident imperative where our accumulated savings and reserves are being handed out at such levels...”

Jan Arden

An IMF mission team, headed by Ms Cemile Sancak, conducted through virtual discussions and examinations the Mauritius 2021 Article IV Consultations over the period April 19th to May 7th. These are usually somewhat unremarkable affairs leading to dreary prose couched in the polite diplo-speak of nuances, ending up with some suggested avenues for consolidating all the good work being accomplished by local authorities.

After almost eighteen months of the pandemic, these were probably awaited with some trepidation by government and central bank circles, and with interest by the independent analysts and the economically literate audience. After all, the two years since the last exercise have seen the Covid-19 pandemic tear through much of the economy and our lives. Finance and government generally may have been anxious about the prognosis of the IMF on the handling of the economy and the priorities of government during those two years. And, for once, their trepidation was not misplaced.

Although the team's Staff Report is not yet available, Ms Sancak issued a concluding statement from Washington on May 7th highlighting the IMF view on strategic issues and priorities concerning the country. After the traditional words of praise for areas where she felt government could be commended (handling the pandemic public health aspects and the ensuing financial support schemes in particular) the lady cut to the chase.

Sharp observations

Her statement revealed a series of sharp observations and somewhat tersely worded recommendations, all of which indicates that the 18-day virtual audit must have been most awkward for government folks in the higher spheres. The sobering recommendations will be pored over by her specialist audience and the knowledgeable public though we will mention some key ones here as they are rather unusual for their bluntness.

The IMF lady team-leader minces no words in admonishing the authorities to “prioritize and target expenditures to set the stage for resilient growth”. This is followed by a doubling down with a rather stern recommendation to “prioritize programs that are consistent with medium-term development needs and broader social and environmental goals”. This sounds like a severe blowback for a variety of massively costly public sector investments, many of them barely transparent or marginally relevant to those development needs.

One can infer a gruelling grilling over any number of wasteful projects, ranging from the erratic Safe City CCTV cameras, the stadium dubbed as a white elephant at Côte d'Or, the Rs 400 million for a few minutes of Liverpool coverage when tourism remains in the doldrums, the crony contracts during the 2020 pandemic, the P&B unresolved farce or even, heaven forbid, the tramway and its limited corridor for Port-Louis commuters! Were we flies on the computer walls...

Equally incisive it seems, over the long days of burrowing, were the questions, observations and recommendations regarding public debt levels and their management post-pandemic. Here again the IMF team must have been flustered enough to rebuke our best technocrats robustly on the issue and the absence of credit-worthy plans to stabilize a debt level that now

exceeds 90% of GDP and is running headlong to the 100% mark.

This was no harsh criticism emanating from Opposition or independent economists. It came from an institution that had been rather muted while the public debt was slowly ballooning from 2015 to 2019. Neither had it been forceful in condemning the variety of accounting sleight-of-hand or colourable devices that ended up misrepresenting real public debt and obligation levels over that same period. So, the tone and the glare of the spotlight might have come as a shock to the same government establishment that had been so liberal in their expenditures through monies we did not have and were borrowed.

The Bank of Mauritius credibility

Our high-flying team may also have blushed with the IMF team leader recommendation to “further improve the BoM credibility”. One cannot help wondering what impression the Bank's Governor and his top echelons left with the IMF team. But what will undoubtedly catch the headlines is the very curt recommendation that the BoM “should relinquish ownership of the Mauritius Investment Corporation (MIC)”. One can almost sense the unwritten “immediately”! Experienced former Ministers and cadres will know better, but one feels that very rarely has such a major Finance initiative attracted such irate words in a world of soft carpets and hushed tones!

The MIC has of course, as we know, been the subject of intense criticism since its inception locally but it is somehow reassuring that the IMF too concurs with the condemnation of the unhealthy role of the BoM and its wholly owned subsidiary as a grand financier of projects from distressed conglomerates. What is even more irritating is the culture of secrecy that shrouds over its disbursements: how much, to whom and under what terms should have been a self-evident imperative where our accumulated savings and reserves are being handed out at such levels.

“In a situation where avenues of democratic expression are being overtly restricted, where the municipal elections due in June are about to be shelved, where the National Assembly looks skewed, questions severely restricted and leading Opposition members expelled, where it is proposed to curtail the remaining internet and social networks free space, Opposition forces and a growing fraction of the population may feel, sadly, that only overseas institutions can force some degree of course correction to avoid a fulsome banana republic image...”

Both the BoM and Finance received more flak with the IMF showing manifest unhappiness at the one-off projected Rs 80 billion transfer of our reserves to the Consolidated Fund of government. It issues a stern warning to “preempt further exceptional transfers to the government, in line with international best practices.” We recall that these exceptional transfers concerned Rs 160 billion of accumulated savings at the central bank, half for the Minister's budgetary support, half for financing conglomerates, with little or no transparency on either front.

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Private Prosecutions

"There was no reason for the DPP to take over the Sawmynaden case as the information was only a provisional, not a formal one"

A private prosecution is a criminal proceeding initiated by an individual private citizen or private organisation (such as a prosecution association) instead of by a public prosecutor who represents the state. Though private prosecutions are sometimes regarded with suspicion given their potential for vexatious or malicious prosecution, they are also considered by aggrieved parties as the only avenue for redress of injustice whenever there exists the perception that investigative bodies and other public authorities would not be pursuing criminal investigations and proceedings in a manner which leads to culprits being brought before a criminal court. LEX sheds light on issues related to private prosecutions, the DPP, etc.

By LEX

*** A private prosecution by way of a provisional information was lodged in the District Court of Port Louis in December 2020 by Mrs Simla Kistnen against Hon Yogida Sawmynaden in relation to an alleged offence of 'Abuse of authority by a Public Officer'. What does the ruling in this case inform us about the validity of the private prosecution lodged in this case?**

It appears that a provisional information was lodged against Yogida Sawmynaden. That was the weakness of the case right from the beginning. In a 1989 case the Supreme Court observed:

"...provisional information is entered when a suspect is arrested or is brought into custody. Its purpose is to bring the detention of the individual under judicial supervision and control so as to prevent an administrative detention and to enable a judicial authority to decide whether the detainee should be released on bail or not and, if not, for how long he should be detained. No detainee pleads to provisional information and no trial takes place."

*** The Mauritian Supreme Court has held that a private prosecution may only be instituted by an aggrieved**



party and that the Director of Public Prosecutions may take over and continue/discontinue a private prosecution. Should the Director of Public Prosecutions have taken over as regards this particular case?

There was no reason for the DPP to take over the Sawmynaden case as the information was only a provisional, not a formal one. Let us not forget that in the Bruneau Laurette's private prosecution against two ministers, in the absence of a thorough investigation, the required elements of the offence or offences alleged against the two ministers might not have been clear. Hence the decision of the DPP to stop the prosecution pending the completion of the police inquiry.

*** An aggrieved party may be of the view that the investigative authorities, for instance the Police, ICAC, MRA, etc., would not fulfilling their duties to track crime or alleged criminals, hence the recourse to private prosecutions. What does this tell us about the integrity of the law and order institutions in the country?**

There will be always whining and criticisms when the DPP or the police does not prosecute a case. The prosecution of a case depends on the evidence available that will stand the test of credibility in a court of law. Even after an investigation, the police or the DPP may decide not to prosecute. That leaves the aggrieved individual the option of filing a private prosecution. It should be borne in mind that any prosecution, whether by the police, the ICAC, the MRA or any other institution is still under the control of the DPP.

*** It is possible however for people who are not victims of crime or direct**

aggrieved parties themselves to use private prosecutions to harass others, especially public figures. Are there sufficient safeguards in our judicial system to ensure that frivolous and vexatious proceedings and abuse of the system are prevented?

It is clear that the DPP has primary power to prosecute offences triable before the Supreme Court, whether they are crimes or misdemeanours, and that no such prosecution can be entered by an individual unless, first, he is an aggrieved party, second, the DPP has refused to enter a prosecution on the basis of his complaint and, third, the Judge decides that he may use the process of the Court. The important element to retain is that the person must be an aggrieved party.

*** Is it correct to say that neither the Mauritian Constitution nor legislation provides for the right to institute a private prosecution? If that is correct, how come private prosecutions are allowed?**

The Supreme Court has ruled in 1994 that there is no constitutional right to file a private prosecution. Private prosecutions are provided for and regulated by the Criminal Procedure Act.

*** Who has *locus standi* to institute a private prosecution and what is the role of the Director of Public Prosecutions in private prosecutions?**

Only a person who satisfies the requirement that he is an aggrieved party. The aggrieved party must be an individual who has personally suffered a prejudice.

*** Does the Director of Public Prosecutions have to give reasons in case he does take over a particular**

case and discontinues the private prosecution?

No. But he may if he so wishes.

*** The Director of Public Prosecutions is said to be responsible for and exercise control over the conduct of prosecutions in the Republic of Mauritius. What are the parameters and limits within which the ODPP operate?**

Under section 72 of the Constitution, the DPP alone is responsible for advising prosecutions. He is subject to the control of nobody. Remember that following the 2014 elections, the government wanted to place the DPP under the authority of a Prosecutions Commission where no doubt there would have been political nominees. That would have meant that prosecutions or non-prosecutions would have been decided by politicians.

What parameters the DPP uses depends on the evidence that an inquiry reveals. Then there is a public interest in prosecuting or not.

*** Section 4 of the Criminal Procedure Act provides that: '(1) In any case of crime or of misdemeanour triable before the Supreme Court, the Director of Public Prosecutions may, on the complaint of an aggrieved party, institute a prosecution on behalf and at the expense of the State.' Does this mean that the DPP could have instituted a prosecution in the Sawmynaden after a complaint from an aggrieved party?**

It would not have been advisable for the DPP to take over the case and advise a prosecution in the absence of a full-fledged investigation.

UK to allow entry from 12 'green list' countries, territories starting May 17. Here's the list



The British government on Friday released new guidance on travel restrictions as the country approaches the third phase of the four-step roadmap out of lockdown. The United Kingdom announced a new "green list" of countries and territories where people will be allowed to travel from May 17 without having to quarantine on their return.

Britain has classified countries in three categories - green, amber and red. The classification is partly based on the Covid-19 situation in those countries and the success of their vaccine rollout. India continues to be

on the UK's red list as it is witnessing a deadly second wave of coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic.

Individuals who have been in a country or territory placed on the red list in the last 10 days will be allowed to enter Britain only if they have British or Irish nationality, or have residence rights in the UK but only on the condition of mandatory quarantine in a government-approved hotel for 10 days. Others will be refused entry to the UK.

People arriving from amber list countries or territories will have to quarantine at home or at the place of

their stay for 10 days. They also have to take a Covid-19 test on or before the second day and on or after the eighth day of their quarantine period.

A dozen countries and territories have been placed on the green list which puts the least number of restrictions on travellers. Those arriving in England from territories on the green list must take a Covid-19 test on or before the second day of their arrival. The traveller won't need to quarantine unless the test result is positive.

Here's the UK's green list of countries and territories:

- Australia
- Brunei
- Falkland Islands
- Faroe Islands
- Gibraltar
- Iceland
- Israel
- New Zealand
- Portugal (including the Azores and Madeira)
- Singapore
- South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands
- St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha

Queen's cousin, Prince Michael of Kent, offers to sell access to Putin: Report

An investigative report by British media said Sunday that Queen Elizabeth II's cousin, Prince Michael of Kent, was willing to use his royal status for personal profit and to seek favors from Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The undercover investigation by the Sunday Times and Channel 4 saw reporters posing as investors of a fake South Korean gold company seeking contacts in the Kremlin to further its business in Russia, reports AP.

Prince Michael, 78, allegedly told the reporters by Zoom that he would give their company his royal endorsement in a recorded speech for a \$200,000-fee. He added that he was happy to use his home in Kensington Palace as a backdrop for the endorsement.

The royal's business partner, Simon Reading, also reportedly told the fake investors that Michael could be hired for 10,000 pounds (\$14,000) a day to make "confidential" representations on behalf of the fictitious gold firm, House of Haedong, to Putin.

"If he (Prince Michael) is representing the House of Haedong, he could mention that to Putin and Putin would find the right person who is interested in South Korea or interested in gold," Reading reportedly said. "It just opens the door, you know, which is so helpful."

He went on to describe Michael as "Her Majesty's unofficial ambassador to Russia", and that tension between the U.K. and Russia has not affected his relationship with Putin.

Responding to the report, Michael's office said he "has no special relationship with President Putin" and that the



two men last met in 2003. The royal "earns his own living through a consultancy company that he has run for over 40 years."

"Lord Reading is a good friend, who in trying to help, made suggestions which Prince Michael would not have wanted, or been able, to fulfill," his office said.

Prince Michael and his wife, Princess Michael of Kent, aren't working royals and receive no public funds, but they are involved in some public duties including representing the queen at some engagements. Michael has represented the queen at state funerals in India, Cyprus and Swaziland in the past, according to the monarchy's website.

His biography said Michael is connected to Russia through his maternal grandmother, and is the first member of Britain's royal family to learn Russian. He is involved in charity work in Russia and is patron of the Russo-British Chamber of Commerce.

Saudi Arabia backs India-Pakistan dialogue to resolve issues such as Kashmir

Saudi Arabia has welcomed the decision by India and Pakistan to observe a ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) and backed a dialogue between the South Asian rivals to address all outstanding issues, including the Kashmir dispute.

The kingdom's position was articulated in a joint statement issued by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia late on Saturday after a meeting between Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and visiting Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan. It came against the backdrop of speculation about the role being played by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to foster dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad, reports Hindustan Times.



Khan was on an official visit to Saudi Arabia during May 7-9. Pakistan Army chief Gen Qamar Bajwa too visited Saudi Arabia last week. Both Bajwa and Khan held meetings with the Saudi crown prince and the talks were seen as part of Pakistan's efforts to normalise strained relations with Saudi Arabia.

The joint statement said the Saudi crown prince "welcomed the recent understanding reached between the military authorities of Pakistan and India regarding ceasefire at the Line of Control (LoC), which is based on a 2003 understanding between Pakistan and India".

It added that Saudi Arabia and Pakistan "emphasised the importance of dialogue between Pakistan and India to resolve the outstanding issues between the two countries, especially Jammu and Kashmir dispute, to ensure peace and stability in the region".

However, a readout issued by the Saudi side on the meeting between Khan and the crown prince made no mention of India or the Kashmir issue.

There was no immediate response from Indian officials to the joint statement.

There has been speculation about the role played by Saudi Arabia and the UAE to reduce tensions between India and Pakistan since the 2019 Pulwama suicide bombing, which triggered a tense military standoff.

The UAE envoy to the US, Yousef Al Otaiba, confirmed last month that his country played a role in bringing together India and Pakistan for talks aimed at calming tensions over the Kashmir issue and getting bilateral ties "back to a healthy level". It is understood that senior Indian and Pakistani security officials have met in London and Dubai for secret talks in recent months.

The surprise decision by the Indian and Pakistani armies to recommit themselves to the 2003 ceasefire on the LoC from February 25 is seen as the outcome of these contacts.

China allegedly probed weaponising coronaviruses in 2015: Reports

Chinese scientists allegedly investigated weaponising coronaviruses five years before the Covid-19 pandemic and may have predicted a World War III fought with biological weapons, according to media reports referring to documents obtained by the US State Department, reports PTI.

According to 'The Sun' newspaper in the UK, quoting reports first released by 'The Australian', the "bombshell" documents obtained by the US State Department reportedly show the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) commanders making the sinister prediction.

US officials allegedly obtained the papers which were written by military scientists and senior Chinese public health officials in 2015 as part of their own investigation into the origins of Covid-19.

Chinese scientists described SARS coronaviruses - of which Covid-19 is one example - as presenting a "new era of genetic weapons".

The PLA papers referenced seem to fantasise that a bioweapon attack could cause the "enemy's medical system to collapse".

It references work by US Air Force colonel Michael J. Ainscough, who predicted World War III may be fought with bioweapons.



A transmission electron microscope image of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, isolated from a patient in the US, as virus particles are shown emerging from the surface of cells cultured in the lab, the spikes on the outer edge of the virus particles give coronaviruses their name. Pic - AP

The paper also includes musing that SARS -which hit China in 2003 - could have been a man-made bioweapon deliberately unleashed by "terrorists".

They reportedly boasted the viruses could be "artificially manipulated into an emerging human disease virus, then weaponised and unleashed in a way never seen before".

The document lists some of China's top public health figures among the authors and has been revealed in an upcoming book on the origins of COVID, titled 'What

Really Happened In Wuhan'.

China reported the first Covid-19 case in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019 and since then the deadly disease has become a pandemic, affecting more than 157,789,300 people and over 3,285,200 deaths worldwide.

Questions remain over the origins of the deadly virus after a much derided World Health Organisation (WHO) probe earlier this year, with the organisation ordering a further investigation which factors in the possibility of a lab leak.

Most scientists have said there is no evidence that Covid-19 is manmade - but questions remain whether it may have escaped from a biolab in Wuhan - the Chinese region where the pandemic originated.

China is known to have been carrying out high risk "gain of function" research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) - which is near the outbreak's ground zero at the Huanan Seafood Market. There is no evidence so far to suggest it was intentionally released by China.

Meanwhile, in Beijing, the state-run *Global Times* newspaper slammed *The Australian* for publishing the article to smear China.

An academic book that explores bioterrorism and possibilities of viruses being used in warfare was interpreted as a conspiracy theory by *The Australian*, which deliberately and malignantly intends to invent pretexts to smear China, Chen Hong, a professor and director of the Australian Studies Center at East China Normal University, told the newspaper.

"It is a shame for anti-China forces in Australia to back their own ideology against China at the expense of basic professional journalistic ethics, conspiring to twist the real meaning of the book," Chen said.



Egypt offers to cut compensation claim for blocking of Suez canal

A container ship passes through Suez Canal, Egypt. The Suez Canal chief said that authorities are negotiating a financial settlement with the owners of a massive vessel that blocked the crucial waterway for nearly a week. Pic - en.amwalaighad.com

Egypt offered to reduce claims by a third for compensation from owners of the container ship that blocked the Suez Canal in March, Suez Canal Authority Chairman Osama Rabie told MBC Masr channel television channel.

The canal authority said it would reduce the claims for compensation to \$600 million from \$900 million, according to Rabie. The SCA also offered payment terms to owners of the Ever Given container ship but they have yet to respond, he said.

An Egyptian court granted the Suez Canal Authority's request for the seizure of the vessel in mid-April as compensation talks dragged on. The blockage roiled shipping markets because hundreds of vessels had to wait for the canal --

which can shave two weeks off a journey between Asia and Europe -- to reopen.

The canal authority has said compensation is needed to cover losses of transit fees, damage to the waterway during the dredging and salvage efforts, and for the cost of equipment and labor.

The 400-meter-long Ever Given is owned by Japan's Shoei Kisen Kaisha Ltd. and was being chartered by Taiwan's Evergreen Line when it got stuck in the southern end of the canal for six days.

Egypt Suez Canal revenue increased by 2.8% in the first four months of 2021 to \$1.96 billion compared with with \$1.9 billion a year earlier.

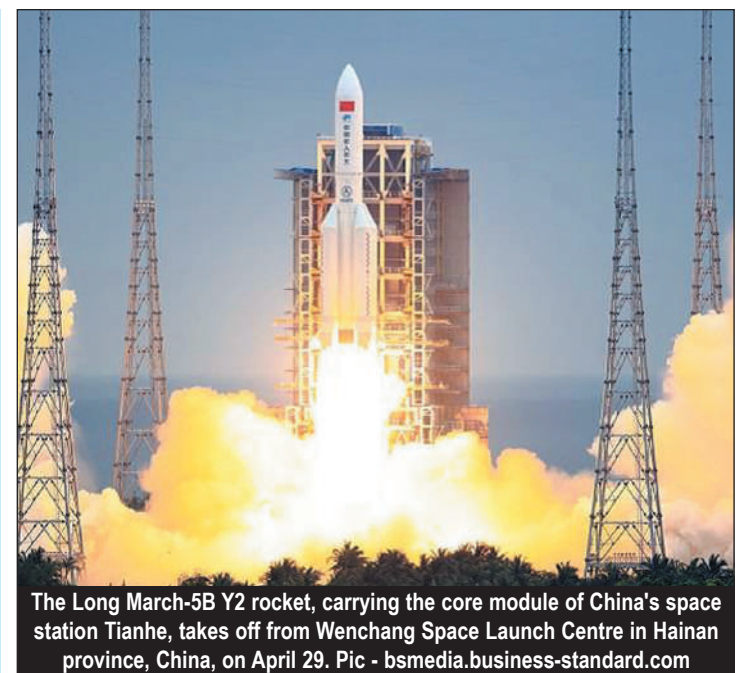
Chinese rocket debris falls into Indian Ocean

The remains of a Chinese rocket crashed into the Indian Ocean on Sunday with much of the debris burning up during the re-entry into the earth's atmosphere, China's space agency said.

The coordinates, cited by the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) and shared by official news agency, Xinhua, pointed to the location of the impact near the Maldives islands.

"The debris of the last stage of the Long March-5B Y2 carrier rocket re-entered the atmosphere at 10.24 a.m. on Sunday (Beijing Time)," Xinhua reported, adding: "The vast majority of the device burned up during the re-entry, and the rest of the debris fell into a sea area with the centre at 2.65 degrees north latitude and 72.47 degrees east longitude."

The Long March-5B Y2 rocket, carrying the Tianhe module, the first and core module for the construction of China's space station, launched from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site on the coast of the southern island province of Hainan on April 29.



The Long March-5B Y2 rocket, carrying the core module of China's space station Tianhe, takes off from Wenchang Space Launch Centre in Hainan province, China, on April 29. Pic - bsmedia.business-standard.com

The re-entry of the debris of the Chinese rocket into the earth's atmosphere drew strong criticism from Nasa, which said China was failing to "meet responsible standards".

Chinese state media dismissed the criticism, saying the so-called "uncontrolled re-entry" of China's rocket debris

a groundless, false accusation.

Quoting observers, the *Global Times* said it is "completely normal for rocket debris to return to Earth and has been a common practice carried out by global participants in the aerospace field, including China and the US".

Can patent waivers solve the worldwide shortage of Covid vaccines

☛ Cont. from page 4

The restriction is the scarcity of highly specialized raw materials needed to produce our vaccine."

Pfizer's vaccine requires 280 different materials and components that are sourced from 19 countries around the world, Bourla said. His concern is that without patent protections, entities with much less experience than Pfizer at manufacturing vaccines will start competing for the same ingredients.

"Right now, virtually every single gram of raw material produced is shipped immediately into our manufacturing facilities and is converted immediately and reliably to vaccines that are shipped immediately around the world," Bourla wrote.

Even if we assume that such concerns are merely self-serving or worse, ill-founded, the problem of a vaccine shortage does not seem to be curable by way of patent waivers. The contention that there is a production shortfall may itself be false. A discussion document released on March 9, 2021 by IFPMA (International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations) and co-authored by representatives from that organization as well as CEPI (Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness), and DCVMN (Developing Countries Vaccine Manufacturers Network) provides a detailed look at the challenges involved in vaccine manufacture and distribution.

The IFPMA document noted that "11 vaccines are already in clinical use in the countries where they obtained approval (often with emergency/limited authorisation), more than 80 additional candidates are in clinical trials, and hundreds of candidates are in the pre-clinical phase. At the same time, vaccine manufacturers and suppliers of vaccine components are scaling up for Covid-19 vaccine production from zero to billions of doses, with an announced cumulative supply target of up to 14 billion doses by the end of 2021."

If the world is truly on pace to produce 14 billion doses by the end of 2021, that should put an end to discussion of patent waivers to meet the current crisis. No existing or new facility could produce any vaccines by the end of 2021, let alone producing enough to make a difference. Of course, it is one thing to have a supply target, quite another to meet it.

The world's largest manufacturer Serum Institute (SII) of India has experienced production problems. In addition, India's pressing need for vaccines to address the crisis at home caused SII to prioritize domestic needs and delay shipment of 90 million doses to COVAX, the



“Even a superficial level of scrutiny suggests that patent waivers are among the least effective, and perhaps most dangerous steps we can take at this time. A deeper dive suggests that the problem is exaggerated and that there are better solutions. Certainly, as a long-term approach to preparedness for future pandemics and the ongoing management of Covid-19, it makes great sense to build more regional vaccine production facilities around the world...”

UN-backed program for worldwide vaccine distribution.

SII's CEO confirmed that AstraZeneca has sent SII a "legal notice" to SII about delays in promised shipments. SII promises to resume shipments to COVAX by June if infections in India subside. And if the infections don't subside, SII's CEO said: "I am scared of what... we will have to do, and what will happen."

Production problems have occurred at a US contract manufacturing plant that ruined 15 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and some 20 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine and the US government has banned AstraZeneca from using that facility which is now being run by Pfizer. The move is intended to prevent the conflating of the two vaccines. AstraZeneca is looking for an alternate US site.

The IFPMA document provides interesting perspectives. They say that it usually takes more than five years to build manufacturing capacity and 18-30 months to transfer production to other sites or manufacturers. The companies making the mRNA vaccines formed more than 150 partnerships with contract development and manufacturing organisations (CDMOs) and other multinational biopharmaceutical companies to transfer their technology and increase their overall production. Notwithstanding these efforts, the strain on manufacturing capacities and capabilities is very high, in light of the immediacy and scale of the demand, which may be exacerbated further if a broader coverage of the population is

needed and if boosters are needed due to waning efficacy and need to protect from new variants.

Many Covid-19 vaccine supplies of raw and packaging materials, consumables and equipment are in short supply. As a result existing Covid-19 vaccine manufacturers will likely be unable to meet their current vaccine manufacturing commitments. The IFPMA document states that mechanisms to ensure input supplies for current and increased manufacturing capacity intent need to be put in place with short, medium and long term solutions.

In short, patent waivers that invite unskilled and inexperienced entrants hoping to cash in on what is seemingly insatiable demand for vaccines may actually make the problem worse. It is entirely possible that the use of Pfizer's or Moderna's patents without the relevant manufacturer's trade secrets and know-how will result in the production of vaccines that require testing and proof of efficacy. In effect, these may well be unapproved vaccines that have to go through clinical trials.

Incentivize manufacturers

A far more sensible solution is to incentivize those manufacturers producing the most effective vaccines to set up additional manufacturing capacity, backed by their know-how, experience-based knowledge, and trade secrets, in locations around the world so that production can be ramped up and delivered expeditiously. The cost of setting up new

vaccine production facilities are likely similar for existing as well as new manufacturers although experience with existing plants may generate knowledge-based cost savings. Similarly, the cost of recruiting and training personnel is likely to favour an existing manufacturer since transferring knowledge from its existing plants to its new plants will be of well-defined processes and methods and less susceptible to the vagaries of trial and error.

As a practical matter, it also makes sense to ramp up capacity in this way so that if variants and mutations demand changes in the vaccines, an existing manufacturer can apply the change across all plants. We are already being told that a third shot of the Pfizer vaccine may be needed as a booster and that Moderna is planning a combination flu and Covid vaccine to be given annually. It does not take a rocket scientist to understand that with immense profits in the offing, vaccine manufacturers would be less than enthusiastic about patent waivers.

One other observation is in order. The clamour for patent waivers is generated in large part by the sense that vaccine distribution around the world has been inequitable and has favoured high income countries. This is true, but it is a reflection of the fact that some countries took the prudent step of pre-ordering large quantities of vaccines in advance of knowing whether they would work. Of course, the high income countries had the resources to do this.

But a side benefit of this process should not be ignored. If the US, for example, had not pre-ordered vaccines that are now surplus to its needs, those vaccines may never have been manufactured as they have been. They are now available for redistribution by the US by way of gift or sale. Indeed, the EU has just ordered 900,000 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine with an option for 900,000 million more. The amounts ordered by the EU exceed its needs.

One must not forget that Ursula von der Leyen was severely criticized for mucking up the EU's vaccine ordering strategy. The EU even raided AstraZeneca's facilities and accused the company of favouring other countries outside the EU. Now, von der Leyen is calling on the US to match the EU's level of vaccine exports. This is political grandstanding. The US will soon be in a position to distribute tens, if not hundreds of millions of vaccine doses.

But it is important to remember that the cold chain storage requirements for maintaining the stability and effectiveness of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines will make exports from the US a difficult problem. Canada and Mexico bordering the US to the north and south may be the beneficiaries of this happenstance.

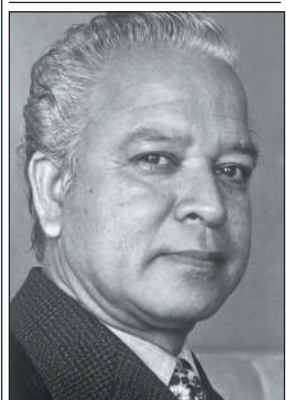
Cheerz...
Bwana

From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

4th Year No 164

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 27 September 1957

● *Opposition always inflames the enthusiast, never converts him. -- Friedrich Schiller*

Somduth Bhuckory

When the public sittings of the Boundary Commission were over, the Commission issued a public statement in which it was said *inter alia*: "The Commission have not as yet reached any decision but they have prepared two draft schemes - one for forty single-member, and another for eleven three-member constituencies. These schemes are entirely the personal work of the Commissioners and no one, official or non-official, has been consulted about them. The Commissioners are very conscious that, as strangers to Mauritius, they lack the local knowledge which Mauritians themselves possess, and they have therefore placed copies of the two schemes at their office for public inspection and criticism."

Having dealt with their schemes and their lack of local knowledge, the Commissioners went on to invite criticisms in writing. They said that their schemes were available to the public at the Commission's Office on certain specified days at certain specified times. The closing date to send the written criticisms was the 26th.

It is these schemes that have appeared in the press last Wednesday, just one day before the closing date. After having a look at the maps and after going through the figures, we don't see how the public can be helpful to the Commission. We maintain that the task that faces the Commission can be tackled by the Commission only and nobody else. The two maps are fascinating indeed. Used to seeing the island divided into nine districts, everyone is eager to know the proposed boundaries. But there is more eagerness to know the outcome.

* * *

It can easily be seen now that it is impossible to have forty single-member constituencies satisfying the conditions laid down in the London Agreement and included in the terms of reference of the Boundary Commission. Assuming that the proposed boundaries are reasonable geographical boundaries which can be expected to endure for a reasonable number of years, let us consider how far the forty single-member constituencies will

Binding Boundaries



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afford each main section of the population "adequate opportunity to secure representation".

The census of 1952 on which the demarcation is based classifies a total population of 501,415 as follows:

General.....	148,238
Hindus.....	258,381
Mohamedans.....	76,746
Chinese.....	17,800

To reflect the composition of the population it follows that out of 40 elected members there must be 12 of the General Population, 21 Hindus, 6 Mohamedans and 1 Chinese.

Now, the minority communities which are seeking representation more than any other are the Muslim and the Chinese communities. As regards the Muslim community, we find that in only one constituency it has absolute majority and in only one relative majority. So, this community will have "adequate opportunity" of returning only two members. As regards the Chinese community, we find that in only one constituency it has absolute majority and in only one relative majority. So, this community will have "adequate opportunity" of returning only two members. As regards the Chinese community, we find that it does not have either absolute or relative majority in any of the constituencies. So, this community will be denied the opportunity of returning a single member.

The scheme is quite fair as far as the General Population goes. The General Population has absolute

majority in 8 constituencies and relative majority in 3. The Hindus have more than what is required: they have absolute majority in 25 constituencies and relative majority in 2.

Is not the foregoing analysis sufficient to show that the proposed boundaries do not guarantee the "adequate opportunity" they must in order to be acceptable? The conclusion is therefore clear: we cannot have single-member constituencies. The conclusion, by the way, does not surprise us at all for we reached it long ago, when the London Agreement was published. We said then that we could not expect the Boundary Commission to square a circle.

* * *

So, it can safely be predicted that what is coming our way now is the List System. Once that the Commissioners are satisfied that they cannot demarcate the single-member constituencies they have only to "demarcate boundaries for 11 three-member constituencies, which shall be roughly equal in the number of voters, basing them as far as possible on present divisions used for purposes of central or local government."

From the alternative scheme of the Commission, we find that the proposed three-member constituencies have a total population varying from about 40 thousand to about 52 thousand. Well, this is roughly what is desired. In this case, let it be remembered, the Commissioners have not

to see whether the main sections of the population will have "adequate opportunity to secure representation" or not.

It will not be long now before the Commission reports. This is how the Commissioners have planned their work. We quote from the communication issued by the Secretariat dated the 15th of July and signed by the Commissioners: "We shall carry out our consultations in two stages starting stage I in Mauritius at the beginning of August and we hope to conclude stage II not later than October 4th. The Secretary of State has asked us to report if at all possible before the end of October."

Once the Boundary Commission reports in favour of the List System, it will be interesting to know the reactions. Hon Mohamed has repudiated the London Agreement and a large part of the Muslim community has already expressed its intention of boycotting the elections. The Chinese community has not gone so far as that, it has only asked for its representation. The Parti Mauricien will not lose anything in accepting the List System and so it is very likely that it will keep silent.

The question which has started to loom large is: What will the Labour Party do? Its spokesman has criticized the List System without repudiating the London Agreement. It is no secret today that the Labour delegates had exceeded their mandate in accepting the List System as an alternative. Knowing full well that the List System is bad, will the Labour Party accept it? And if the Labour Party does accept it, will the rank and file support the Party?

The IMF minces no words...

☛ Cont. from page 5
A rare scolding

Ms Sancak's brief statement does not delve lengthily on avenues of structural reform or sustainable growth areas the IMF might be more fully examining in their upcoming Staff Report. It neither mentions the repercussions of such depleted BoM reserves for our currency and inflation, nor on the restrictive hurdles placed on the Audit Office in their constitutional monitoring duties, still less on the wastage the Audit Report depicts or on other billions Mauritians are still paying for a generally acknowledged mishandling of the BAI/Bramer affair. She did not need to: wrapped in perfunctory niceties, the words and terms indicated a rare scolding from the august institution that, in our dire economic straits, with little sources of outside assistance, our finance technocrats had to stomach with



fortitude.

In a situation where avenues of democratic expression are being overtly restricted, where the municipal elections due in June are about to be shelved, where the National Assembly looks skewed, questions severely restricted and leading Opposition members expelled, where it is proposed to curtail the remaining internet and social networks free space, Opposition forces and



a growing fraction of the population may feel, sadly, that only overseas institutions can force some degree of course correction to avoid a fulsome banana republic image.

As usual these days, the IMF team-leader ends by commending and encouraging authorities to pursue coordinated efforts to exit at the earliest the IMF/FATF grey list and the ensuing blacklists of both the European Union and the UK.

Government is shortly due to defend its case at the virtual FATF plenary some-time soon, followed possibly by an onsite inspection and audit team.

Our layman understanding is that there are some outstanding issues with the capacity of our regulatory and investigative authorities to investigate financial scams, fraud, corruption and drug-related money-laundering, much of it through "hawala" money transfers, gaming and gambling. It is probably true that many such activities have grown in sophistication and scope, but government's team defending our interests may have to demonstrate factual evidence of investigations leading to trials and convictions, particularly in high-profile cases.

We can only wish them well, as the IMF does not seem in the mood for massaging locally bruised egos which may indicate that probing questions about demonstrable tangible results of our investigative institutions may not be in short supply.

Jan Arden

What India's second wave means for its vaccine coverage – and the rest of the world

☛ Cont. from page 2
The world's pharmacy is out of stock

The second wave is not the only reason exports have dried up. The escalating crisis has also revealed critical production shortages: increasing demand is being met with dwindling supply. The seven-day average of doses administered fell from 3.6 million per day in early April to 1.7 million a month later.

This problem has been brewing since before the second wave. Back in February, Poonawalla warned that the Serum Institute wouldn't make 1 billion Covid-19 vaccine doses it was predicted to this year, but rather 400 million doses "if we're lucky". He therefore cast doubt on Covax's ability to supply over 2 billion doses to countries around the world by the end of 2021, suggesting 18 months was a more likely timeline.

Even if all of India's vaccine production capacity is dedicated to domestic supply in the coming months, capacity may still be insufficient. The Serum Institute has manufactured more than 90% of the vaccines administered in India so far, but its monthly production is estimated at only 60 million doses. The target of increasing this to 100 million doses has been frequently delayed – from March, to April, May, June and now July. India's only other supplier, Bharat Biotech, has an estimated monthly capacity of just 5 million doses.

India's goal in January was to have ramped up production sufficiently to have fully vaccinated 300 million of its people by August. To achieve this now requires giving another 440 million doses, averaging over 3.5 million a day, over the next four months – a tall order.

So, what happens now?

According to Poonawalla, the absence of advance



Pic - theconversation.com

purchase agreements for the Serum Institute's vaccines slowed down its rate of production in 2020. However, such agreements have been more forthcoming in 2021. The biggest to date was announced on April 19, with advanced purchases of Rs 3,000 crore (US\$406 million) to the Serum Institute and Rs 1,500 crore (US\$203 million) to Bharat Biotech. This money should enable them both to scale up production.

Other vaccines are also expected to be available later in the year. Russia's Sputnik V received approval on April 13, becoming the third allowed for use in India, with the first batch imported on May 1 and partnerships in place with Indian companies for local production. Johnson & Johnson's vaccine may be imported from July, with a local production partnership also in place. But the Novavax vaccine, which Serum Institute is manufacturing, reportedly won't be available until September.

With India struggling right now just to meet domestic demand, the immediate prospect of it making substantial vaccine exports looks bleak. Recognising India's domestic crisis, Mexico has waived an upcoming delivery of 870,000 doses. The Serum Institute is also issuing refunds to some governments, is reportedly being sued by others, and has received legal notification from AstraZeneca over delays.

Insufficient and delayed supply from India – potentially for a number of months – will be a major setback for Covax.

Recent donations of 500,000 and 1 million doses by France and Sweden respectively are drops in the ocean compared to the supply that had been expected from India. Moderna's new deal announced on May 3 to supply Covax with 500 million doses includes only 34 million in 2021.

The need to scale up Covid-19 vaccine production has never been more evident. But while that happens, countries besides India urgently need to step up their Covax donations. Covid-19 vaccination can then continue elsewhere as India fights its domestic crisis – helping to prevent other countries experiencing such devastation.

Rory Horner

Senior Lecturer, Global Development Institute,
University of Manchester

Middle Eastern monarchies: how do Arab ruling families hold on to power?

Despite often seismic political upheavals over the years, most Middle Eastern royal families have been able to weather the storms

When the Jordanian royal family gathered on April 11 to celebrate 100 years since the kingdom's foundation, it was a picture of dynastic unity. Alongside King Abdullah was his half-brother, the former crown prince Hamzah bin al-Hussein, who had only days ago been placed under house arrest, following what was reported in the world's press as a "coup attempt". The king gave interviews assuring the outside world that all was well and that the former heir to the Jordanian throne had offered him his loyalty.

In no other area of the world do royal families dominate politics as much as in the Middle East. Six of the states on the Arabian peninsula are monarchies, as are Jordan and Morocco. Royals not only rule in these states, but in most cases members of the royal family dominate positions of influence in government and business sectors.

This prevalence of absolute monarchies in the Middle East has puzzled scholars for decades. Many somewhat arrogantly assumed that these modes of governance would die out as the states modernised and "inevitably" followed the western model, becoming republics or embracing the constitutional monarchy model. Yet the monarchies have proved to be rather resilient.

During the seismic regional upheaval of the Arab Spring from 2010 onwards, a number of republics were convulsed by revolution. But, while several monarchies endured significant protests, none fell - and few really looked in mortal peril.

How do the monarchies hold on?

Investigating the roots of this resilience has engendered a burst of scholarship. Some scholars have argued that monarchies were culturally or otherwise locally attuned and fit simply into prevalent tribal heritages. Others suggested that monarchies are more effective at controlling opposition or that they oppress their way to relative stability.

But such explanations struggle to contend with the region's history. Any sense of a special predilection in the Middle East for monarchy is undercut by the reality that many monarchies have fallen in the past century or so, as in Egypt, Tunisia, Iraq, North Yemen, South Arabia, Libya and Iran.

A more compelling explanation is likely to lie elsewhere. For the Gulf monarchies, it is difficult to get away from the transformative impact of gargantuan levels of hydrocarbon resources.

Wealth alone is far from a panacea - just ask citizens in Iraq, Iran, or Venezuela. But the careful and effective distribution of



Dynasty: the House of Saud has ruled since the First Saudi State was established in 1744. Friemann/Alamy Stock Photo

wealth has surely been a critical factor engendering comparative stability in the monarchies. Not only that, but all monarchies occupy important geostrategic locations. As such, they arguably benefit from the support of influential external states in maintaining the status quo - including the US in the case of the Gulf monarchies and Jordan, and France in the case of Morocco.

The kings and emirs of these states are not elected, and criticising them or their position is usually a bright red line that citizens do not cross. Still, neither are they despots, and they rule with often a surprising degree of support from a range of constituencies.

Indeed, most royal elites created systems to place themselves at the apex of wealth or favour redistribution schemes that are baked into the state's political economy. This means they have created strong and sometimes diverse groups of individuals and structures in society who continue to be dependent on the status quo from which they benefit.

These benefits vary from country to country. Monarchs in the Gulf have long overseen some of the world's most generous welfare state systems, as well as low rates of taxation, sometimes explicit promises of jobs in the government sector, and a litany of subsidies. Similarly, in Jordan it has long been argued that elites used government handouts and patronage to boost support in key tribal constituencies.

Storing up problems

This system has worked for decades,

but is coming under increasing pressure. Indeed, arguably the central problem that the monarchies face, albeit to varying degrees, is that their economies are classed as rentier economies. This means that, in reality, a comparatively small percentage of the populations are involved with making the majority of the state's income, which tends to come from extractive industries (oil, gas, minerals) or international support.

The obvious issues here are that these resources are finite and subject to wildly shifting demand and prices. The influence of, for example, hydrocarbons on local economies is so pervasive that it tends to inhibit the emergence of an autonomous, functioning economy. Overall, this means that the state's GDP lurches around according to factors well beyond the control of the state, which has long played havoc with governments striving to set a sustainable, clear, long-term budget.

Diversifying these economies away from a reliance on these kinds of basic sources of income has been a goal for generations. The results show that states fail to meaningfully diversify unless they are forced to - and even when the wells run practically dry, they switch, like Bahrain, to relying on other monarchies for financial support.

The recent elite spat and mini crisis in Jordan is arguably rooted in precisely these kinds of economic concerns. But, if recent reports are to be believed, the family squabble has been resolved, order has been restored and - for the time being at least - the status quo appears to have survived.

David B Roberts,
Associate Professor, School of Security Studies, King's College London





Protecting lives, ensuring happiness



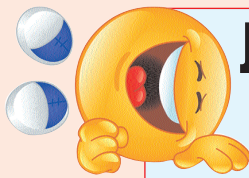
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Laughter is the **BEST** Medicine



Je me fais des amis sans Facebook

Quarantine Jokes

- Two grandmothers were bragging about their precious darlings. One of them says to the other, "Mine are so good at social distancing, they won't even call me."
- My husband purchased a world map and then gave me a dart and said, "Throw this and wherever it lands... that's where I'm taking you when this pandemic ends." Turns out, we're spending two weeks behind the fridge.
- My mom always told me I wouldn't accomplish anything by lying in bed all day. But look at me now, Ma! I'm saving the world!
- If I keep stress-eating at this level, the buttons on my shirt will start socially distancing from each other.
- I never thought the comment "I wouldn't touch them with a six-foot pole" would become a national policy, but here we are!
- The World Health Organisation announced that dogs cannot contract Covid-19. Dogs previously held in quarantine can now be released. To be clear, WHO let the dogs out.
- Since we're all in quarantine, I guess we'll be making only inside jokes from now on.
- How did the health experts lie? They said a mask and gloves were enough to go to the grocery store. When I got there, everyone else had clothes on.
- Why do they call it the novel coronavirus? It's a long story...

Bonjour, comme je n'ai pas Facebook, j'essaie de me faire des amis en dehors du vrai Facebook mais en appliquant les mêmes principes :

Tous les jours je descends dans la rue et j'explique aux passants ce que j'ai mangé, comment je me sens, ce que j'ai fait la veille, ce que je suis en train de faire, ce que je vais faire demain.

Je leur donne des photos de ma femme, du chien, de mes enfants, de moi en train de laver ma voiture, de ma femme en train de coudre. J'écoute aussi leurs conversations et je leur dis "j'aime".

Et ça marche, il y a déjà 4 personnes qui me suivent : 2 policiers, 1 psychiatre et un psychologue!!!

Pill for Grandpa

Grandma and Grandpa were visiting their kids overnight.

When Grandpa found a bottle of Viagra in his son's medicine cabinet, he asked about using one of the pills.

The son said, "I don't think you should take one Dad, they're very strong and very expensive."

"How much?" asked Grandpa. "\$10.00 a pill," answered the son.

"I don't care," said Grandpa, "I'd still like to try one, and before we leave in the morning, I'll put the money under the pillow."

Later the next morning, the son found \$110 under the pillow. He called Grandpa

and said, "I told you each pill was \$10, not \$110."

"I know," said Grandpa. "The hundred is from Grandma!"

Rastaman at the bank

A Rastaman goes to the bank with a 25kg bag of marijuana and hands it over to be cashier.

Shocked, the cashier asks: "What's this for?"

The Rastaman replies: "I man is here to open a joint account."



Aïcha te salue

Hier sa femme lui a envoyé un SMS:

"Chéri n'oublie pas d'acheter du pain en rentrant du travail, et ta copine Aïcha de Moov te salue."

Lui: "Qui est Aïcha de Moov?"

Elle: "Personne, je voulais juste que tu me répondes... pour avoir la confirmation que tu a vu mon sms."

Lui: "Mais je suis avec Aïcha en ce moment, je pensais que tu m'avais vu ?"

Elle: "Koi?? Où es-tu ?"

Lui: "Près de la boulangerie du quartier."

- You know what they're saying about 2020. It went viral faster than anyone thought it would.

- Why don't chefs find coronavirus jokes funny? They're in bad taste.
- What does eating raw garlic have to do

Elle: "Attends je viens tout de suite!"

Après cinq minutes, elle envoie un message : "Je suis à la boulangerie, tu es où ?"

Lui : "Je suis au travail. Maintenant que tu es à la boulangerie, achète tous les pains que tu veux!"

A bus full of housewives going on a picnic crashed with no survivors.

Each husband cried for a week, but one husband continued for more than two weeks.

When asked, he replied miserably, "My wife missed the bus."

My wife sent me a text, "Your great."

So, naturally, I wrote back, "No, you're great."

She's been walking around all happy and smiling.

Should I tell her I was just correcting her grammar or leave it?

If ever you feel overloaded by life, wife or work...

Immediately go to the nearest "Biological Anxiety Relief" (BAR) centre and place an order for any one or more of the following antidotes:

1. Wife Irritation Neutralizing Extract (WINE)
2. Refreshing Unique Medicine (RUM)
3. Bothersome Employer Elimination Rebooter (BEER)
4. Vaccino Officio Depression Killing Antien (VODKA)
5. Wife High Infusing Suspicion Killing Energy Yeast (WHISKEY)

with preventing Covid-19? It helps keep everyone at a safe distance.



Life's Stories

Meaningless Goals

A farmer had a dog who used to wait by the roadside for vehicles to come. As soon as one came, he would run down the road, barking and trying to overtake the vehicle.

One day the farmer's neighbour asked the farmer "Do you think the dog is ever going to overtake those vehicles?"

The farmer replied, "That is not what bothers me. What bothers me is what he would do if he ever caught one."

Many people in life behave like that dog who is pursuing meaningless goals.

A lesson in giving

Many years ago, when I worked as a transfusion volunteer at a hospital, I got to know a little three-year-old girl who was suffering from a disease. The little girl needed blood from her five-year-old brother, who had miraculously survived the same disease. The boy had developed the antibodies needed to combat the illness and was the only hope for his sister.

The doctor explained the situation to the little brother, and asked if he would be willing to give his blood to his sister. I saw him hesitate only for a moment before he took a deep breath and said "Yes, I will do it if it will save my sister."

As the transfusion progressed, he lay in bed next to his sister and smiled, seeing the colour returning to her cheeks. Then his face grew pale and his smile faded. He looked up at the nurse beside him and asked with a trembling voice, "When will I start to die?"

The young boy had misunderstood the doctor and thought he had to die to save his sick sister.

Unnecessary Doubts

A boy and a girl were playing together.

The boy had a collection of beautiful marbles. The girl had some candies with her. The boy offered to give the girl all his marbles in exchange for all her candies. The girl agreed. The boy gave all the marbles to the girl, but secretly kept the biggest and the most beautiful marble for himself. The girl gave him all her candies as she had promised.

That night, the girl slept peacefully. But the boy couldn't sleep as he kept wondering if the girl had hidden some more tasty candies from him the way he had hidden his best marble.

Moral: If you don't give your hundred percent in a relationship, you'll always keep doubting if the other person has given his/her hundred percent.

Alltimeshortstories.com



These houseplants are good for your health

Some therapists use gardening to help treat depression, schizophrenia, and other psychiatric conditions. Learning to nurture a living plant may help lower anxiety, improve attention, and lessen the severity of depression. Plants also might help people recovering from trauma, as well as those with dementia or who live in long-term care facilities. Plants that boost your mood, keep dust away, and help you breathe easier? See which ones offer the most physical and mental benefits.

Allergy Relief

Researchers found that rooms with plants have less dust and mold than rooms without any foliage. Leaves and other parts of the plants act as natural filters to catch allergens and other airborne particles. Common low-light houseplants like Chinese evergreen or the peace lily can do the job. Violets and other plants with textured leaves might be even better traps. Avoid plants with pollen or spores.

Happy Blooms

Plants not only can brighten up your surroundings, but they can lift your mood. Employees who work in offices with plants tend to feel better about their jobs, worry less, and take fewer sick days. Flowers in particular are a good pick-me-up. So liven up your room with blooms, like a lipstick plant, or a fresh bouquet and see if your outlook improves.



Spider Plants for Moisture

Furnaces and air conditioners can sap humidity indoors, especially in the winter. That can raise your chances for catching a cold or the flu, or make your skin itch. Houseplants add moisture to the air. One study found a collection of spider plants boosted the relative humidity in a bedroom from 20% to a more comfortable 30%.

Relaxing Lavender

This fragrant purple plant has been an important herbal medicine for centuries. You can inhale lavender oil or massage it on your scalp for aromatherapy. You can

also boil the leaves for tea. Some studies suggest it may help calm you and help lower any anxiety. But more proof is needed.



Air Purifiers

Carpets, paint, cleaners, printer toners and inks, and many other indoor objects give off pollutants called volatile organic compounds (VOCs). They can build up in the air and irritate your eyes and skin, worsen your asthma, or make it hard for you to breathe. Houseplants can soak up VOCs. Some good air-scrubbers are English ivy, asparagus fern, and dragon tree.



Herbs for Better Digestion

Mint may help tamp down bloating, gas, and other problems after you eat. Common varieties you can grow in containers include peppermint and spearmint (essential in mint juleps). Basil, another herb for cooking, also can help calm your stomach. Try steeping the leaves in hot water.



Aloe for First Aid

Gel from this plant is a popular home remedy. It can treat sunburns and other minor burns. It can soothe your psoriasis and other skin conditions. Juice from the aloe plant can even help you poop if you're constipated.



Restful Sleep

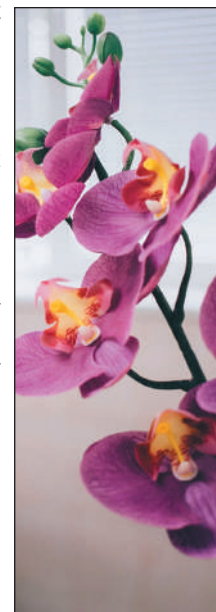
Plants take in carbon dioxide and give off oxygen. It's how they turn sunlight into food, a process called photosynthesis. Some, like gerbera daisies, keep giving off oxygen even after the sun goes down. Put a few cheerful pots in your bedroom and the extra oxygen may help you sleep more soundly.

Sharper Focus

Plants may help raise your test scores, make it easier to concentrate on your tasks, and strengthen your memory. Students in classrooms with three potted plants performed better on math, spelling, reading, and science tests than kids in classrooms without any greens. Bring home a golden pothos or a bamboo palm and you just might clear that to-do list.

Faster Healing

Taking a bouquet of flowers or potted foliage to a loved one in the hospital can be more than just a thoughtful gesture. It may actually help them recover more quickly. Researchers found that people who had surgery got better faster if they had plants in their room or even a view of the nature from their window. They also tolerated pain better and needed fewer medications when surrounded by greenery. Try an orchid or a peace lily.



Stress Relief

Feeling the weight of daily pressures? Try and add a heart-leaf philodendron or a snake plant to your décor. It may help you relax. Several studies have measured people's levels of blood pressure, heart rate, and the stress hormone cortisol while they handled a tough task or were under mental stress. Being around plants has a calming effect on people.

Reviewed by Carol DerSarkissian, WebMD

Reasons why you need to remarry after a divorce

Going through a divorce can be traumatising. But if you happen to fall in love with someone again, societal judgements and emotional pain can prevent you from finding happiness once again. However, marrying a second time can not only be refreshing but will also provide you with the physical and emotional support your previous marriage failed to do. Times of India brings to you a few reasons that will surely convince you to remarry after a divorce.

Falling in love

Once you go through a divorce, finding love and trusting someone can be emotionally draining. However, if you have finally met someone who's ready to be with you

at your worst, will prioritise you and help you believe that love indeed needs a second chance, then that person is worthy of your hand in marriage, once again.

No compulsion, but pure wants

There should be no compulsion to marry someone again, unless you truly desire a companion. A second marriage after a divorce should only be a decision that involves love and comfort. If you are certain that you are voluntarily excited to spend the rest of your life with the person, then go ahead. You can choose your happiness again.

Be sure to provide each other's needs

Marry someone who's ready to take your responsibilities and vice versa. Don't just depend on the other person for all your needs; make sure you are fulfilling theirs as well. Appreciate the chance given to you once again,

because happy, second chances are rare.

Proper financial planning

Remarrying without financial compatibility can be an immature decision. If you have children from your previous partner, make sure your current partner is on par with having to take care of all of you. Besides basic household expenses, there should be a definite commitment regarding monetary plans, support and marital expenses.

It's not just lust anymore

You may have started out as a casual relationship after your divorce, but now, if you both are certain that you feel more than just lust, then you both are in the right direction. Lust is not enough to make a long-term marriage work. If you and your current partner are ridden with deep feelings of love, then maybe it's time for you to give yourself a second chance at marriage.

Bollywood celebs & Covid relief: Who has contributed how much



Stars like Akshay Kumar, Twinkle Khanna, Salman Khan, Sonu Sood, Bhumi Pednekar, Sushmita Sen and others have gone above and beyond in their attempts at reaching out to those in need of assistance as India faces an acute shortage in beds, medicines and oxygen supply.

A number of these superstars have provided financial assistance for Covid relief as well. Here's looking at which star has contributed how much to help fight the second wave of the pandemic. A report by Times Now:

Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma donated Rs 20 M

Anushka and Virat recently announced their Ketto fundraising initiative through a video on social media. The couple also donated Rs 20M to a fund-raising project, which will raise a total of Rs 70M to support the country's fight against the pandemic.

Hrithik Roshan donated Rs 1.1 M

Hrithik Roshan donated \$15,000 (approximately Rs 1.1M) towards a fundraiser started by international author and podcaster Jay Shetty to help India fight against the second wave of the pandemic. Hrithik joined international stars Will and Jada Smith, Ellen DeGeneres, Brendon Burchard, and Camila Cabello, among others, to contribute towards the fund.

Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas raised almost Rs 40 M

Priyanka Chopra Jonas and her husband Nick Jonas had requested her fans to contribute. And with mutual support from all of her followers, the duo managed to generate nearly Rs 38.4M. The actress had shared videos and posts on social media, urging fans to donate to the fundraiser which would help Indians

receive essential medical supplies. Sharing an emotional video from London, she wrote, "India, my home, is suffering the world's worst Covid crisis, and we all need to help!"

Salman Khan donated over Rs 30 M

Salman Khan is donating Rs 1,500 each to 25,000 workers in the film industry including makeup artists, technicians, stuntmen and spot boys. The Bollywood superstar has also been instrumental in distributing 5000 food packages and arranging meal kits for frontline workers in Mumbai.

Akshay Kumar donates Rs 10 M

Another Bollywood biggie, Akshay Kumar donated a sum of Rs 10 M to cricketer Gautam Gambhir's Delhi-based NGO for helping those affected by the pandemic. The former cricketer-turned-politician thanked the actor in a tweet of gratitude.

Ajith Kumar donated Rs 12.5 M

Tamil Actor Ajith, who was shooting for *Valimai*, before it got put on hold due to the pandemic, donated Rs 12.5 M.

Appartement à louer - long terme



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Tel: 57809413 - 57530881

Salman Khan's bodyguard Shera's salary is more than any CEO's annual income

Salman's bodyguard Shera is no less than a celebrity himself. He recently hit headlines when he was given the task of guarding Justin Bieber during his India concert in Mumbai.

Not just Justin, Shera had also guarded the safety of many other international celebs when they visited Mumbai in the past, like Will Smith, Jackie Chan, Michael Jackson and also Amitabh Bachchan.

Shera has been with Salman for 23 years now. He also won an award for it back in 2011, right after Salman's movie 'Bodyguard' released, reports asianet-news.com.

Being the bodyguard of Salman Khan is not an easy job as he is constantly mobbed by fans and media. According to reports, he gets a whopping Rs 20 million a year for guarding Sallu.

Shera was born as Gurmeet Singh Jolly in a Sikh family. In an interview with an entertainment website, Shera says, "I honestly don't know what I would have been if not Salman Khan's personal bodyguard. I would have been someone who had a small security agency... I don't know."



5 superhit pairs will be reuniting on screen

One thing that most moviegoers look forward to in any Bollywood movies is the lead stars and the chemistry they share. And if it's a pair with already proven chemistry, then all the better. Five of Bollywood's dearly loved onscreen pairs will soon be reuniting for their upcoming films?

Tiger Shroff and Kriti Sanon

Jackky Bhagnani will be bringing together the pair that delivered a blockbuster with their debut movie together, *Heropanti* and this time for a complete action flick, *Ganpath*. All fans poured in comments hoping for the actress opposite Tiger Shroff to be Kriti Sanon and their wish was fulfilled. Kriti will be seen in a completely hot and grunge look alongside the action star for *Ganpath*.

Varun Dhawan and Kriti Sanon

Dilwale saw Varun Dhawan and Kriti Sanon come together for the first time and

the couple was immensely loved together with their adorable chemistry together. Now they will be reuniting for *Bhediya* which will see both in their first ever horror comedy film. Varun shared super cute pictures and message for his co-star after wrap of their Arunachal Pradesh schedule.

Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone

Deepika Padukone made her debut into Bollywood with Shah Rukh Khan in *Om Shanti Om*. The two have been seen together multiple times since in films like *Chennai Express* and *Happy New Year*. Now the on-screen couple will be reuniting for their upcoming film, *Pathan*.

Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif

With films like *Ek Tha Tiger* and *Bharat*, the two have won hearts of the audience multiple times and now they will be seen in their next film, *Tiger 3* which a lot of fans are awaiting eagerly.

Aamir Khan and Kareena Kapoor

3 Idiots gave a preview of a unique college romance story between Aamir Khan and Kareena Kapoor. Now they will be seen in the upcoming movie, *Laal Singh Chaddha* for which Kareena has already wrapped her shoot.

Viraf Patell donates wedding fund to Covid patients; ties knot in court

Actor Viraf Patell and his fiancé Saloni Khanna had planned an elaborate wedding but due to the pandemic they changed their plans. So, the couple tied the knot in a simple ceremony at the Bandra court on May 6.

The *Naamkarann* actor reveals that they were planning their wedding since before the lockdown last year and kept waiting for things to ease out. "We were looking at May for the wedding but then the second wave took us by surprise. As it kicked in stronger, we decided to go ahead with the deed and eliminated all that we had planned. Eventually, it was stripped down to a point where we had to ask even our respective parents and families to not turn up and stay safe as they had not had their second jab." Three of their close friends, who had been vaccinated, were witness to the ceremony, reports Kavita Awaasthi of Hindustan Times.

He admits that both their families were disappointed and "initially heartbroken but they gracefully hid it with a smile". "They eventually agreed that it was wiser to stay at home and blessed us to go ahead. Perhaps, they realised that life must go on and we have our lives in front of us to



celebrate. They pointed that the wedding doesn't really matter, the marriage does. With that spirit they let us go forth," he shares with a grin.

Patell was glad that the court proceedings were smooth and thanks the authorities and his friends. He was also grateful to his neighbour Rasna, who filled in for his mother's absence and helped with the ushering in the newly-wed couple with the traditional ritual of Aachoo Michoo as per Parsi customs. "I was asked to lift Saloni and enter the house and then we took our vows in a peaceful manner. Saloni managed not to cry. We shared a meal with our witnesses and were on video calls with friends and family. The phone has gone a bit crazy to be honest but then again, you don't get married often. It was simple, pure and special," he says.

The couple plans to donate the wedding fund to help and support people who are battling Covid. "I've gotten married in Rs150 flat! We paid 100 bucks as fee to the marriage registrar, and 50 for the photocopies. Saloni and I weren't really looking at a big fat Indian wedding, anyway but with whatever we've saved, we will use to support as many Covid battles and causes we can, within our circles and beyond. This will hopefully give our wedding and togetherness more meaning," he concludes.



Get inspired by Pooja Banerjee, Hina Khan and Erica Fernandes

to stack-up up your jewellery casket with funky ornaments

Jewellery and ornaments make up a greater deal of a woman's accessory collection. It won't matter to a girl to not possess belts, bags, caps, etc., as much it would bother them for not possessing jewellery pieces.

In the older times, a major chunk of heavy jewellery and utensils used to be made of expensive raw materials like real metals (gold, silver, copper, etc.), rare and unique gemstones (diamond, emerald, ruby, etc.) which were usually endorsed only by the upper-strata and the royal families of earlier societies, while it used to be a big deal for the under-privileged to even own a slim strand of a gold chain.

Nowadays, except for special occasions and ritual-oriented events like marriages, meeting a newborn for the first time and others, ladies hardly prefer purchasing heavy pure metal ornaments anymore owing to their excessive weight, swankiness, and finally, the availability of pocket-friendly gem and junk jewellery which showcases trend and contemporary designs of

the latest craftsmanship.

Talking about funky and junk jewellery, the market nowadays has been flooded with extremely cheap and heavily available various types of ornaments like bangles, nose-rings and septums, earrings, studs and ear-cuffs, dangles (both ethnic and contemporary), etc. of lustrous and oxidised varieties, which are usually made of alloys, clay, fabric, threads, gems and many more. Most importantly, a unique speciality of modern chic jewellery is that they can be worn with all types of outfits, be it western, fusion or even ethnic.

These jewellery and ornaments make up 95% of a modern girl's casket-possession, with 90% of the lot following the current market-trend's pattern. However, in the pursuit of possessing them all, one thing or the other inevitably misses out from the list. To grab your whole bunch, one can refer to our compilation of leading telly actresses like Pooja Banerjee, Hina Khan and Erica Fernandes for grabbing instant tips in order to enhance their current collection, as reported by Kasturi Haldar of Tellychakkar:

Pooja Banerjee

Studs are a must possession piece for every girl out there for it's multi-purpose usage with various outfits.

Those funky multi-coloured and lighter bangles are the perfect replacement for the original heavy metal bangles, that hindered one's locomotion. They can be worn with both casuals and ethnic wear.

The over-dressing-up with various jewellery with one outfit is no more a dream for most girls. That layered and oxidised neckpiece just looks heavy from the outside, but is really light. Also, these ornament pieces are extremely affordable and are available in local stores.

Hina Khan

Hina looks gig-ready in this pic and so is her getup, especially with that funky septum ring, that are easily available in the market.

If you think that hairclips are for kids, Hina's this look would definitely prove you WRONG! You don't need any excuse to use trendy hairclips to fasten your hair.

This is how one can mix-match ethnic-styled jewellery with modern outfits.

Erica Fernandes

To enhance a one-piece with minimum jewellery, one can endorse this heavy-looking neckpiece to enhance their OOTD cleverly.

These sleek bracelets with dangling trinkets look perfect as both office and part-wears.

To rock your ethnic look without any neckpiece, use oxidised dangles like these to enhance the look.



Sayantani Ghosh on Mother's Day: My mom is still my Ludo partner

On Mother's Day (in India), actor Sayantani Ghosh, who is currently acting in the TV show 'Tera Yaar Hoon Main' says it is her mother who taught her to grow into an independent woman.

"Since my childhood, my mother has always taught me to value and imbibe a sense of independence," she says, adding, "And I think this is what has made me into a very independent and strong woman of today's time."

Commenting on celebrating Mother's Day as special day dedicated to her mom, she says, "I don't believe in celebrating any occasion for a day, other than birthdays. I believe in making people feel special throughout the year by doing little-little things for them and staying connected."

That said, she fondly recalls the time her mother became her best friend when she was little. "My mother was my first best friend while growing up and is still my Ludo partner. She is very forgiving and always tends to look at the brighter side of things, and the credit for my compassionate nature goes to her."

As a gesture of her love towards her mother, she says, "I usually send her a bouquet or try my hands at cooking a meal for her to make her feel special."

CINE 12

Mardi 11 mai - 21.15

Patsy & Loretta

Star: Megan Hilty, Jessie Mueller,
Kyle Schmid

mhc-1

Mercredi 12 Mai - 21.20

Flawless



mhc-2

Jeudi 13 Mai - 21.15

Avec: Matt Dillon, James Caan,
Natascha McElhone

MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
mardi 11 mai 07.00 Dessin Anime 10.35 Serial: Radio Free Roscoe 11.00 Mag: Le Saviez Vous? 11.10 Tele: Soleil Levant 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.55 Mag: Urban Gardens 14.00 MBC Production 14.30 D.Animes: The Hive 14.37 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà... 14.59 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 15.23 D.Anime: The Twisted Whis... 16.00 Film: Spark: A Space Tail 17.30 Serial: Backstage 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja 18.56 MBC Production 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.35 Local Prod: Generations J 21.10 Film: Patsy & Loretta 23.00 Le Journal	10.00 Serial: CID 10.48 Serial: Ye Vaada Raha 12.04 Film: Jeeva Starring: Sanjay Dutt, Mandakini 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.20 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.45 Serial: Bava Maradullu 16.08 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 16.29 Serial: Suno Chanda 16.53 Serial: Imtihaan 17.05 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.26 Telugu - Premabhishekam 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 DDI Magazine 19.00 Journal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Local: Tamil Programme 20.30 Film: Swarg Narak Star: Sanjeev Kumar, Jeetendra	06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa 06.52 Mag: Voa Connect 07.27 Mag: In Good Shape 07.53 Doc: Amazing Gardens 08.19 Mag: Future Mag 09.43 Mag: Global 3000 10.38 Doc: Discarded Children 11.23 Mag: Eco@Africa 11.49 Mag: Arts And Culture 12.15 Mag: Voa Connect 12.44 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous 13.18 Mag: Amazing Gardens 13.42 Mag: Future Mag 15.06 Mag: Global 3000 15.32 Mag: Washington Forum 16.01 Doc: Discarded Children 16.13 Mag: Arts And Culture 18.02 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto... 19.00 Open Univ: Student Support 19.31 Mag: Made In Germany 20.04 Doc: Ville En Fête	01.26 Film: Black Wake 02.57 Serial: French Series 03.38 Film: Drôle De Père 05.01 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.58 Film: Mississippi River... 09.00 Serial: Chicago Fire 09.45 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: Chicago Med 12.00 Film: Drôle De Père 13.34 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.15 Mag: Hollywood On Set 14.45 Film: Mississippi River... 16.41 Serial: Chicago Fire 17.23 Serial: Absentia 18.05 Tele: Daniella 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: Absentia 21.15 Film: Ice Soliders 23.46 Tele: Muneca Brava	08.00 Film: Shirin Farhad Ki... 12.04 / 19.54 - Sanjivani 12.26 / 20.11 - Radha Krishna 12.48 / 20.32 Agnipheara 13.09 / 21.09 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.31 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.51 / 21.59 - Naagin Season 3 14.33 / 22.25 - Ikyawann 14.55 / 22.56 - Mere Sai - Shraddha Aur Saburi 15.23 Film: Sunday Starring: Ajay Devgan, Arshad Warsi, Pooja Rawal, Ayesha 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.52 Serial: Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka 19.15 Serial: Bhakharwadi
mercredi 12 mai 07.15 Dessin Anime 10.35 Serial: Radio Free Roscoe 11.10 Tele: Soleil Levant 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.50 Prod Indepen: Met Seryer 13.00 Local: Generations J 14.05 Local: Priorite Sante 14.30 D.Anime: The Hive 14.37 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà... 14.59 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 15.11 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 16.00 Film: Bobby Et Les Chas... 17.30 Serial: Backstage 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja 18.55 MBC Production 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.25 Local: MBC Production 21.20 Film: Flawless 23.05 Local: Le Journal	07.00 DDI Live 09.00 Serial: Chacha Bhatija 09.22 Serial: Chota Bheem 10.00 Pyar Ka Dard Meetha Meeth 12.00 Film: Usne Kaha Tha 14.14 DDI Magazine 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.17 Aamhi Doghi 15.44 Bava Maradallu 16.10 Apoorva Raagangal 16.30 Serial: Suno Chanda 16.53 Serial: Imtihaan 17.12 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.33 Serial: Kulvadhu 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 Serial: DDI Magazine 19.00 Zournal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Programme In Marathi 20.30 Film: Rajwade And Sons 22.34 Live: DDI Live	06.00 Rev: The Global Auto... 06.26 Doc: An Adventure In... 06.52 Mag: Check In 07.26 Mag: Made In Germany 07.53 Doc: Ville En Fête 10.05 Local: Klip Seleksion 10.47 Doc: Guardians Of The... 11.35 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto... 12.26 Mag: Check In 13.02 Mag: Made In Germany 13.28 Doc: Ville En Fête 13.55 Doc: Olivia's Garden 15.16 Mag: Close Up 16.24 Doc: Guardians Of The... 17.04 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto... 17.30 Doc: An Adventure In Tran... 18.00 Mag: Motorweek 18.30 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous? 19.00 Student Support Prog... 20.04 Mag: Tendence XXI 20.40 Doc: The World From... 21.06 Doc: Comme Un Poisson...	00.20 Serial: The Magicians 01.26 Film: Ice Soldiers 03.39 Film: Patsy & Loretta 05.03 Tele: Muneca Brava 05.45 Serial: Absentia 06.27 Film: Finding Forrester 09.00 Serial: Chicago Fire 09.45 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: Chicago Med 12.00 Film: Patsy & Loretta 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: Finding Forrester 16.49 Serial: Chicago Fire 17.20 Serial: Absentia 18.05 Tele: Daniella 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: 19-2 21.15 Film: Freebird 22.45 Tele: Muneca Brava 23.30 Serial: Chicago Fire	08.00 Film: Sunday Starring: Ajay Devgan, Arshad Warsi, Pooja Rawal, Ayesha 12.04 / 20.06 - Sanjivani 12.24 / 20.26 - Radha Krishna 12.56 / 20.02 - Agnipheara 13.14 / 20.46 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.36 / 21.09 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.56 / 21.31 - Naagin Season 3 14.35 / 21.46 - Ikyawann 14.52 / 21.59 - Mere Sai - Shraddha Aur Saburi 15.23 Film: Welcome Starring: Akshay Kumar, Katrina Kaif, Nana Patekar, Anil Kapoor, Feroz Khan 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.51 Ek Rishta Saajhed Ka 19.16 Bhakharwadi
jeudi 13 mai 06.00 Local: Klip Seleksion 06.45 Local: Sur Prise 08.40 D. Anime: Kung Fu Panda 10.05 D. Anime: Astrology 10.35 Serial: Radio Free Roscoe 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.45 Local: Le Rendez Vous Avec... 13.52 Local: Zafan Nou Zil 14.25 D.Anime: The Hive 15.00 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 15.29 D.Anime: Cosmic Quantum... 17.05 Serial: Backstage 17.30 Live - Covid-19 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Jamai Raja 18.55 Local: Tirth Yatra 19.30 Le Journal 20.15 Film: Dream Girl Stars: Ayushmann Khurrana, Nushrat Bharucha, Annu Kapoor	10.00 Karm Phal Data Shani 12.05 Film: Sorry Daddy Starring: Shameem Khan, Tinu Verma, Mukesh Tiwari 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.21 Aamhi Doghi 15.43 Bava Maradallu 16.05 Apoorva Raagangal 16.33 Serial: Suno Chanda 16.53 Serial: Imtihaan 17.11 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 Serial: Ghar Pahucha Da... 19.00 Zournal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.05 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 20.30 MBC Production 20.56 Local Prod: Profil 21.19 Film: Dylan Dog: Dead Of... Starring: Matt Dillon, James Caan, Natascha McElhone	06.00 Mag: Motorweek 06.25 Mag: Vous Et Nous 07.28 Doc: Garden Party 08.25 Doc: The World From Above 09.47 Mag: Business Africa 10.10 Mag: Focus On Europe 11.23 Mag: Motorweek 11.47 Mag: Vous Et Nous 14.13 Doc: Comme Un Poisson... 15.32 Mag: Focus On Europe 16.46 Mag: Motorweek 17.37 Doc: Set One: Heavy Load... 18.03 Mag: Eco India 18.30 Mag: Shift 18.41 Mag: Sur Mesure 19.00 Student Support Prog... 19.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today 20.05 Mag: Science Ou Fiction 20.30 Local: News (English) 21.32 Doc: Waterworld 22.14 Doc: The Race Of His Life	01.27 Film: The Quiet Hour 02.52 Serial: Chicago Med 03.33 Film: Jumanji 05.13 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.40 Film: 55 Steps 09.00 Serial: Chicago Fire 09.45 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: Chicago Med 12.00 Film: Jumanji 13.40 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.22 Mag: Hollywood On Set 14.48 Film: 55 Steps 16.41 Serial: Chicago Fire 17.23 Serial: 19-2 18.05 Tele: Daniella 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: 19-2 21.51 Film: Freebird 23.20 Tele: Muneca Brava	08.00 Film: Welcome 12.05 / 19.54 - Sanjivani 12.22 / 20.11 - Radha Krishna 12.48 / 20.32 Agnipheara 13.07 / 21.09 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.29 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.48 / 21.46 - Naagin 14.29 / 21.59 - Ikyawann 14.55 / 22.52 - Mere Sai 15.20 Film: Rock On 2 Starring: Albert Mawrie, Arjun Rampal, Farhan Akhtar, Shraddha Kapoor 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.51 Ek Rishta Saajhed Ka 19.16 Serial: Bhakharwadi 19.38 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak

Jeudi 13 Mai
- 15.20

Star: Albert Mawrie, Arjun Rampal, Farhan Akhtar, Shraddha Kapoor

Jeudi 13 Mai -
20.15

Stars: Ayushmann Khurrana, Nushrat Bharucha, Annu Kapoor



Climate Change and Arranged Marriages

Climate crisis causing families to shun farmers for arranged marriages



The devastating effects of climate change on the natural environment are already well known. Temperatures are increasing. The frequency of extreme weather events is on the up. Sea levels are rising. But the social and cultural effects of the climate crisis are discussed less often. Is the climate crisis already changing societal norms? And if so, how?

These were the sorts of questions that took us to the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, where we interviewed over 1,000 farmers between November 2018 and June 2019. Our research was initially focused on examining the increasing vulnerability of agriculture along these coastal regions of southern India. We found strong evidence of the negative effects of climate change on the agricultural sector, with lives and incomes becoming much more precarious.

But we also had some unexpected findings - namely, that this precarity is affecting marriage patterns. Worsening climatic conditions, we found, are leading to a marriage crisis.

Farming failures

Agriculture is still the primary employment for the majority of people worldwide. In low- and middle-income countries, nearly three billion people live in rural areas and of those, 2.5 billion people depend on agriculture for their livelihood. In India, more than 70% of the rural population depends on agriculture as their primary source of income.

A significant amount of these farmers depend on the rain and other natural resources for their agriculture needs. Increasing temperatures, changes in rainfall trends and more extreme natural hazards are negatively affecting incomes from agriculture. Climate change is leading to loss of crops, reductions in productivity, depletion of biodiversity, even the complete devastation of entire

crops.

Inevitably, the economic security of farmers is becoming more precarious. This is filtering through to longer-term social and cultural changes. Worsening fluctuations in climatic conditions are mirrored by deterioration in the cultural capital of Indian farmers.

Long-term effects

The vast majority of Indian farmers are male and earn low- to medium-range incomes, and they typically have between one to five acres of farming land. In India, most marriages are arranged, and because of the increasing uncertainty of farmers' incomes, most parents no longer want farmers as their son-in-law. Employees who have a stable monthly income are preferred, particularly those with government jobs which are perceived as stable and secure.

This means that many young farmers are becoming middle-aged bachelors. The farmers we spoke to shared stories with us about the emerging marriage crisis. Srinivas*, for example, a farmer from South India, is in his early 40s and still unmarried. He has not found a bride despite offering a financial incentive, known locally as kanyasulkam - the old, but uncommon, practice of a gift to the future bride, a kind of reverse dowry (dowries given from women to men is the prevalent practice).

This middle-aged farmer is not able to find a wife due to the changes in their cultural capital. Farmers are becoming ever less attractive grooms thanks to mounting uncertainties in farm incomes.

Based on our discussions, we estimate that just over half of the state of Andhra Pradesh's farmers are facing some level of barrier to marriage.

The long-term consequences of this are worrying. On a personal level, well-

being and happiness are being negatively impacted. But on a wider level, the population of farming communities will be reduced. This will lead to a reduction in farming capacity. Traditional agricultural experience and farming knowledge will be lost.

A significant number of farmers are being forced to migrate to other regions or other states to cope. If we do not minimise the impact of climate change in the near future, agriculture will be significantly affected, harming many traditional cultural practices as well as global food production.

So far, the world's focus on climate change has mostly focused on impacts to the natural environment. Our new research highlights for the first time that social and cultural changes are also occurring as a consequence of environmental damage. The climate crisis is linked to a marriage crisis, in a place where over a billion of the world's population still have arranged marriages. The social and cultural consequences of climate change are just beginning to be understood and experienced.

* Names have been changed to protect participants' anonymity.

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Tree of Knowledge

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Denying Your Feelings

Dealing with powerful emotions can be challenging, especially when we are going through chaotic, sad, or cruel experiences in our lives. Often, it can seem like we have only two options for dealing with our feelings so they don't become too overwhelming. We may let our feelings out in an immediate and visceral way, or we may bottle them up by suppressing our emotions inside our bodies. Most people make the second choice, repressing their feelings in an attempt to deny them.

The truth is that there are many positive ways to deal with emotions, and experiencing your negative feelings doesn't have to constitute a negative experience. Denying your feelings is not only unhealthy for the mind and the body, but it may also rob you of valuable information you could be learning about yourself and your life. Suppressing your emotions can even impede your short-term memory. Acknowledging your feelings can help you better understand them and help you recover naturally from change, stress, and grief.

If you find that facing your feelings head on is proving too difficult during times of emotional distress, you may want to explore alternative ways of expressing them. Otherwise, the emotions you deny could morph into unconscious anger or self-hatred. Expressing your thoughts to friends or family can be helpful. If you don't feel ready to share them, try giving them words by writing down what you are feeling. Give whatever you are feeling simple words like "livid" or "angry" or "excited"

You can also funnel your feelings into a creative outlet, physical exercise, or chores. Even just accepting and speaking your feelings out loud to yourself can be a healing release. In releasing intense emotions, it is most beneficial to acknowledge the feelings, allow yourself to feel them, and let the feelings go. Those who are willing to experience and release their feelings without judgment also find that their lives become less stressful. Breathing deeply, going for a long walk, or doing a constructive task can help you respond to your feelings in a healthy way.

While burying negative or uncomfortable feelings can numb the pain, it also may inevitably dull your ability to experience your more positive and pleasurable feelings. You may find yourself afraid to open up in the future for fear of getting hurt. The feelings we deny aren't limited to anger and sadness. Suppressing our happiness or excitement can be just as unhealthy. In learning how to express your intense emotions in a healthy way, you are giving yourself the freedom to fully experience the more joyful emotions that come with being alive.