

MAURITIUS **TIMES**

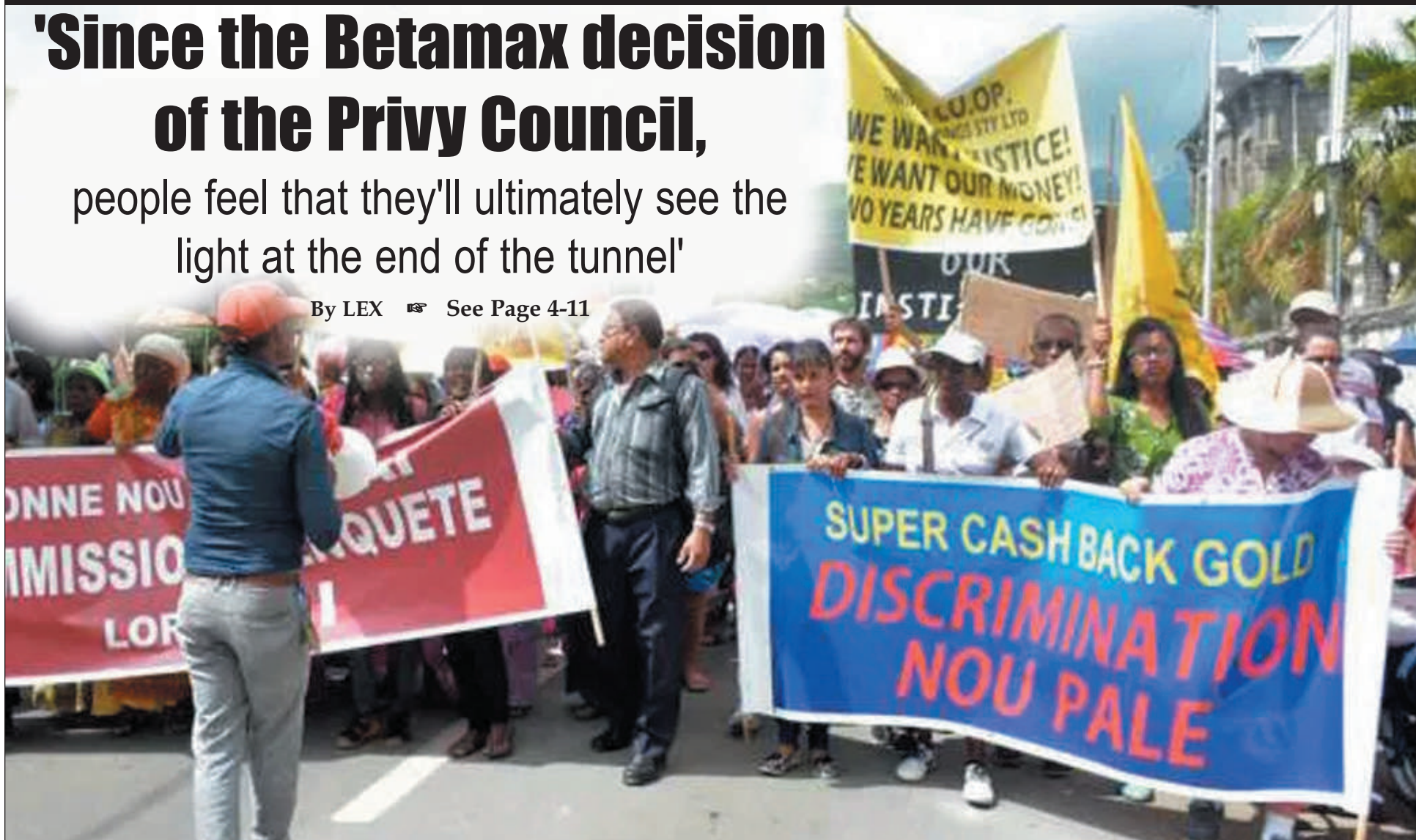
• *"A strong, positive self - image is the best possible preparation for success." - Joyce Brothers*

BAI's Case at the Brussels Court of First Instance

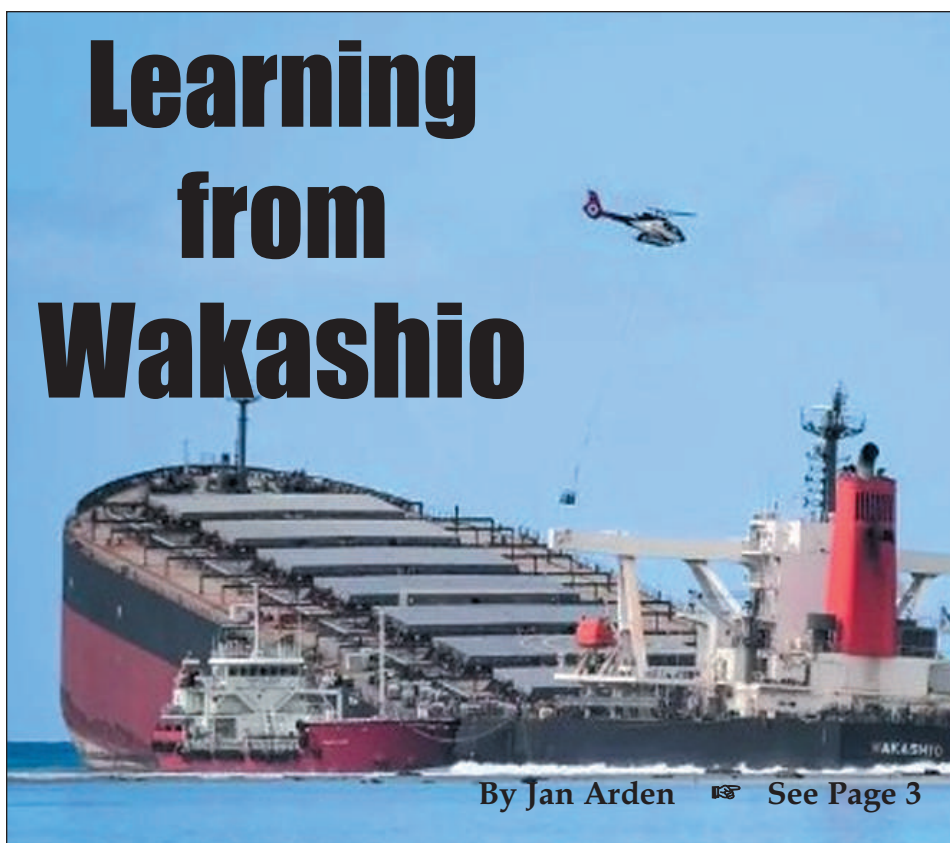
'Since the Betamax decision of the Privy Council,

people feel that they'll ultimately see the light at the end of the tunnel'

By LEX See Page 4-11



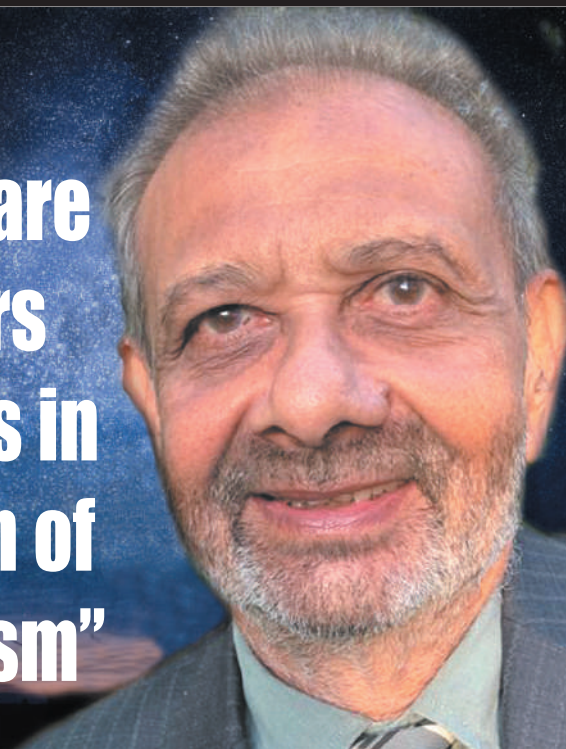
Learning from Wakashio



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Encounter - Bhasker Desai, Amateur Astronomer

"Other countries are light years ahead of us in the domain of astro tourism"



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Vaccination and Sanitary Measures still the best protection

Despite problems with vaccine supplies, logistics and questions relating to efficacy and safety of different types of vaccines, especially in light of the appearance of variants, the message coming out of all studies has remained constant: vaccination is still the best protection against degree of severity and rate of mortality of the disease. Despite being vaccinated, a certain proportion of people, around 10%, may still become infected with the Covid-19 virus, what is known as 'breakthrough infection'. But here too the same reasoning prevails, that severity and mortality will be less, and this is enough justification for maintaining the recommendation.

What is also clear is that vaccination by itself is not sufficient to prevent transmission: it must be supplemented by strict adherence to the well known sanitary measures, in particular wearing of masks and keeping safe distance. The new clusters that have developed starting at Terre Rouge illustrate this point, and it is clearly in the interest of everybody concerned to follow the guidelines so as to protect themselves, family and friends, and by extension the citizens whom they are inevitably bound to interact with. This becomes all the more important as restrictions are lifted, and if we are to resume economic activity on an expanding scale.

There is no getting out of the fact that a proper vaccination programme is the 'only sustainable means to protect the population against Covid-19 severe disease and death and return to some level of acceptable economic activity,' according to expert opinion. Fortunately, the majority of people are willing to undergo vaccination, as is evident from the queues that start forming from early morning at designated vaccination centres. However, there are some hiccups that need to be addressed. For example, people from outside the region come to line up and local inhabitants face a shortage when their turn comes, and this causes frustration. We have repeatedly stressed in the paper that there must be a continuous and proper communication exercise so that the vaccine rollout is successfully conducted. These small details are concerning for inhabitants and need to be addressed.

There are ongoing studies about the efficacy of current vaccines against the latest, more transmissible Delta variant, present in the UK, and India where it is deemed to have been responsible for the massive second wave – which has now abated considerably.

According to a press release by the US National Institute of Health, reported by 'India Today' on 30 June 2021, the result of two studies (Study 1 and Study 2) carried out on people who had received Covaxin 'suggest that the vaccine generates antibodies that effectively neutralise the Alpha and Delta variants of SARS-CoV-2.' Additionally, 'several other studies suggest Covaxin may be effective against multiple variants of the coronavirus.'

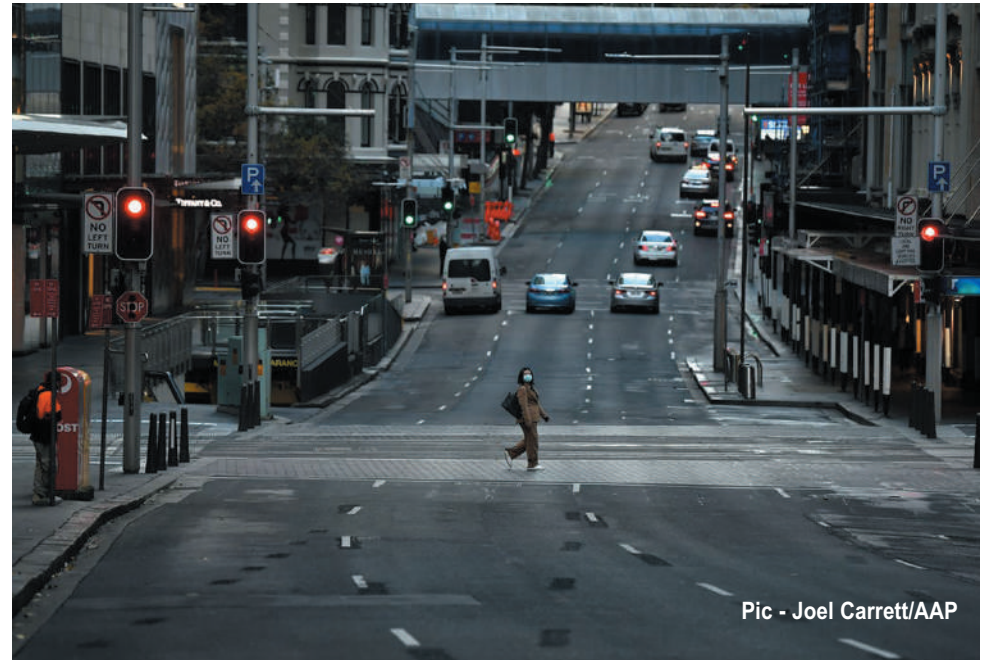
This is reassuring for us because a number of people have received Covaxin already. However, given the supply issue, we have no choice but to accept whatever vaccine is available, which currently is Sinopharm, and forthcoming are Sputnik and Johnson & Johnson. The record of Sinopharm in Seychelles, namely that the country has suffered a rapid second wave despite the fact that almost 70% of its population had been vaccinated with Sinopharm, may be a matter of justified concern. But then this must be set against the fact that tourists were allowed in shortly afterwards, and they also moved about freely.

All this put together again brings us back to the initial point that has been ceaselessly repeated right from the beginning, and which must bear reiterating: that whatever the vaccine used, sanitary measures **must be continued** if we are to be safe, safe enough to allow greater resumption of economic activity, which we all want.

The Conversation

Yes, lockdowns are costly. But the alternatives are worse

Early, sharp lockdowns where necessary when contact tracing is unable to "do the job", remain our best policy



Pic - Joel Carrett/AAP

Lockdowns are costly. They damage businesses and livelihoods.

Is there another way?

There is broad consensus among epidemiologists that Australia's strategy of elimination, with hard and early lockdowns, is the best response until the population is vaccinated. But some economists disagree.

"Imagine if lockdowns caused more harm than good," mused The Australian's economic correspondent Adam Creighton this week, citing US research that "fails to find evidence that lockdowns saved lives in net terms". The study has also impressed University of NSW economist Gigi Foster. "We need to stop this madness," she wrote in The Sydney Morning Herald.

We too have been considering the costs of lockdowns, but have come to a very different conclusion – that "living with the virus" would mean both higher health and economic costs than our strategy of elimination, achieved through border controls and sporadic lockdowns.

How we did our research

Our research has involved modelling four scenarios using data from Victoria's experience.

Two of those scenarios are elimination strategies – aggressive or moderate. The aggressive approach means imple-

menting a lockdown when Covid cases reach about eight a day, the moderate approach at 30 cases a day.

The other two scenarios are suppression strategies, limiting cases to a given threshold. The tight suppression scenario involves locking down when cases hit about 120 a day, while the loose scenario at about 700 cases a day.

All four scenarios involve some form of lockdown, just as these strategies have in the real world. In countries pursuing suppression, such as the US and Britain, lockdowns have been deployed to regain control of infection rates that have gotten so high that cases requiring hospitalisation threaten to overwhelm the health system.

As the experience of nations such as Britain have shown, getting a workable suppression strategy has been extremely difficult. Measures to beat back the virus have always been temporary. Once restrictions are relaxed the virus has bounced back, meaning more lockdowns.

It shouldn't be surprising that this approach tends to cost more, as our modelling suggests.

Patrick Abraham, Laxman Bablani,
Natalie Carvalho & Tony Blakely,
The University of Melbourne

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Learning from Wakashio



There have been too many as yet unanswered questions which could help separate the wheat from the chaff in the several narratives that have been vented both by local and international media

Jan Arden

As announced in August 2020, Government set up in September a Court of Investigation chaired by Abdurrafeek Hamuth, former Puisne Judge, to investigate into, and report on, inter-alia, the circumstances leading to the grounding of the MV Wakashio off the coast of Pointe d'Esny on 25 July 2020 at around 19.30 hours and the breach of its hull. The terms of reference were published and looked comprehensive enough to cover the variety of causal factors and consequences of this grounding. It is now up to the Court to shine an unfettered torch unto all the areas of mystery that seem to hover around the Wakashio wreckage.

The Court chair, assisted by a Marine Engineer and Surveyor, began hearings mid-January this year, although many seamen and observers believe it would have benefited enormously with the presence of an experienced ship captain as a co-opted assessor. There are a few of them around, patriotic Mauritians without doubt, either working on overseas cargo or passenger vessels, in retirement or acting as Ministry consultants when required. This might have quite easily weeded out some of the more fanciful narratives that have been put forward at one time or another about the captaincy of this unmistakably large cargo vessel as it headed straight for our coral reefs (looking for WiFi or internet, a birthday bash with flowing alcohol, unexplainable machinery or equipment failures, tweaking with radio or loudspeaker volumes...).

Now to many Mauritians who like me are confirmed landlubbers with an irregular love for the beautiful lagoons mostly for its shaded beaches and lagoon swimming opportunities, this investigation might hold marginal interest beyond the vague hope to find a culprit (or a scapegoat for the more cynical) and assessing damages and financial compensation for the consequential oil spill from Mitsui OK, the vessel owners. There have been reports of financial compensation but as yet no consolidated report from the authorities on the matter, partly, we assume, because that is at the core of the second term of reference of the Court of Investigation, to be supported by expert technical and environmental assessments:

ii. To determine the cause, scale and extent of the damage caused by MV Wakashio, including the oil spill in the Mauritian waters and assess the resulting damage to the marine and coastal environment and marine life;

To equal numbers who also like me gave a hand to bundle up yards of straw into oil containment booms and have them placed around the oil spill disaster site, at a time when Mauritian police forces seemed more intent to place hurdles of restricted access in the way of thousands of volunteers than helping and guiding them, there may well be residual bottled up anger at our botched and wretched marine disaster prevention and management capacities. For an island that used to proudly boast itself as "stella clavisque maris indici" ("Star and Key of the Indian Ocean") it is a rather unflattering historical downturn.

There have been undoubted deep psychological and environmental distress on the country and its population if only by the sad sight of the wreckage stuck for weeks on our coral reefs, the inadequacies of official response, the consequential oil spill into the pristine lagoon of the south-east and its mangroves affecting marine livelihoods. In parallel, we witnessed a raised acute awareness of our insular and environmental vulnerabilities and a sense of pride in collective solidarity from all quarters. But there are also other reasons why Mauritius Inc. in its diversity should take note of the Wakashio Court proceedings.

1. The first concerns our collective ability to learn from marine mishaps and accidents, as amply demonstrated on land when major road accidents or flash floods that have cost lives induce corrective action and plans by the authorities. Adults and institutions learn more not so much from abiding by set rules and regulations, but from a full and honest debriefing that should follow every major incident or accident.

Politicians and regimes may change, but a respectable public sector management would have drawn imperious lessons from previous similar marine accidents, identified and addressed all deficient lacunae and should have prepared, not simply a rarely tested oil spill contingency plan but guidelines and procedures to avert and avoid such a situation even from arising.

We pray that following this Court case, some Agency or consulting specialists will be mandated to draft after consultations such a Master plan for the country's future

public service top managers.

2. With that in mind, the first and foremost task of the Court takes its full importance:

i. To investigate into, and report on, the circumstances leading to the grounding of MV Wakashio off the coast of Pointe d'Esny on 25 July 2020 and breach of hull of the said vessel, including whether in regard to the shipping casualty that occurred on 25 July 2020 involving MV Wakashio, the standard practice and procedures for the tracking and monitoring of vessels in our territorial waters have been followed

“There have been too many as yet unanswered questions which could help separate the wheat from the chaff. Some of those questions are inevitable and have to be credibly thrashed out: When did our authorities become aware that the large vessel was steering off course from the “innocent passage” south of our shores? What actions did the National Coast Guard... deem fit and appropriate to avoid an impending collision with our fragile reefs? Were our access to satellite and radar information systems adequate to initiate prompt action?”

There have been too many as yet unanswered questions which could help separate the wheat from the chaff in the several narratives that have been vented both by local and international media. Some of those questions are inevitable and have to be credibly thrashed out:

- When did our authorities become aware that the large vessel was steering off course from the “innocent passage” south of our shores?
- What actions did the National Coast Guard (NCG) and its line of command, the CP and/or the National Security Adviser deem fit and appropriate to avoid an impending collision with our fragile reefs?
- Were our access to satellite and radar information systems adequate to initiate prompt action?
- Were the considerable resources (some seven vessels in the harbour, the Dornier aircraft and the helicopters based at Plaisance) under the NCG command paralyzed or awaiting instructions that never came or came too late?

The Court will have its work cut out with many such questions; it has the mandate and resources to do so. It is imperative that it delivers through its answers a much-needed balm to the nation and prevent future occurrences of such a disaster.

BAI's Case at the Brussels Court of First Instance

'Since the Betamax decision of the Privy Council, people feel that they'll ultimately see the light at the end of the tunnel'

Dawood Rawat, former Chairman lost a second round in his battle against the Government of Mauritius with regard to the takeover by the authorities in 2015 of the BAI Group. This time, it was before the Brussels Court of First Instance, after his first setback before the the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law. Is that the end of the road for the former BAI's Chairman, or are there other options for him to fight the BAI's case?

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* The former Chairman Emeritus of the BAI Group has met with another setback in his legal battle against the Government of Mauritius regarding the takeover of the BAI Group. The Tribunal de première instance de Bruxelles (Brussels Court of First Instance) has ruled that the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) was right in declaring that it was not competent to hear Dawood Rawat's case. In simple language, what does the ruling say, and what are the reasons on which it is based?

Dawood Rawat based his claim by invoking the 1973 Convention between the Government of the French Republic and the Government of Mauritius Concerning the Protection of Investments. Though he is a Mauritian national, he invoked his French nationality that he acquired in 1998 to seek the protection of the Convention.

Briefly, what the Arbitral Tribunal and the Court said was that the predominant nationality of Mr Rawat was Mauritian, not French, and therefore he could not avail himself of the provisions of the Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT), that is the France - Mauritius BIT (1973).

* **What could the reasons behind Dawood Rawat's recourse to the UNCITRAL initially, and thereafter to the Brussels Court of First Instance?**

Mr Rawat invoked breaches of the Investment Promotion Treaty entered into on 22 March 1973 between the Republic of France and Mauritius. He started the arbitration under the 1976 UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules through the Most Favoured Nation clause in the France-Mauritius treaty and the arbitration clause in the 2007 Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Finland and the Government of Mauritius on the Promotion and Protection of Investments. The decision of the Arbitral Tribunal was reviewable by a court of law.

Presumably he felt and was advised that he could use his French nationality to proceed with the arbitration.

* **The ruling of the Tribunal de première instance de Bruxelles brings Dawood Rawat back to square one. Is**



that the end of the road for him?

Depending on what his lawyers will advise him, he may go to the Court of Appeal and ultimately to the Supreme Court (Cour de Cassation) in Belgium. The award was decided purely on points of jurisdiction that required the legal interpretation of different treaties.

* **Would he have stood a better chance to seek redress locally at the level of the Supreme Court?**

The way Mr Rawat was treated at the time by the local authorities, with an international warrant through Interpol issued for his arrest, one wonders if he would have stood a chance to start legal proceedings here...

One should also not forget the treatment meted out to his daughters and sons-in-law, arrested on flimsy pretexts and jailed. Ultimately no evidence of any offence was found against them. It's not surprising that those actions gave rise to the perception that the police were just acting at the bidding of the government that took power in 2014.

As we still believe in the independence of our judiciary, yes, he might have stood a chance here.

* **If the outcome before the Supreme Court would had been unfavourable to Mr Rawat, he could have had recourse to the Privy Council, isn't it?**

Ultimately, on the assumption that Mr Rawat had filed a case before the Supreme Court of Mauritius, and he was unsuccessful, he could always have had recourse to the Privy Council.

Since the Betamax decision of the Privy Council, peo-

“Ultimately, on the assumption that Mr Rawat had filed a case before the Supreme Court of Mauritius, and he was unsuccessful, he could always have had recourse to the Privy Council. Since the Betamax decision of the Privy Council, people feel that they'll ultimately see the light at the end of the tunnel. Rightly or wrongly, it's for litigants to decide...”

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* **What options are available to foreign investors based in Mauritius to contest a public decision or to arbitrate in a commercial dispute between private parties?**

The general rule is for agreements to contain an arbitration clause. With regard to investments by a French national, for example, the 1973 Convention the Protection of Investments provides in its article 9 that --

'Agreements concerning investments in the territory of one Contracting State made by nationals, companies or other bodies corporate of the other Contracting State shall contain a clause providing that, in cases where an amicable settlement cannot be reached within a short time, disputes arising in connexion with such investments shall be brought before the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes so that they may be settled by means of arbitration in accordance with the Convention on the settlement of investment disputes between States and nationals of other States.'

• Cont. on page 11

Delta variant spreads to 98 nations, Europe struggles to ramp up vaccination

The Delta variant of the coronavirus disease has now spread to at least 98 countries across and is the most contagious variant of the virus to be identified till now. The World Health Organization (WHO) director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned on Saturday the world is currently in a very dangerous period of the pandemic and the Delta variant is continuing to evolve and mutate.

The WHO, meanwhile, in its Weekly Epidemiological Update published on June 29 said that the recent surge in infections and hospitalisations in countries can be attributed to the Delta variant. It (Delta variant) is "expected to rapidly outcompete other variants and become the dominant variant over the coming months," the WHO report added.

In Europe, Portugal, Russia and the United Kingdom (UK) are witnessing a massive spike in daily cases due to the Delta variant. The entire continent at present, is struggling to accelerate the vaccination drive and outpace the spread of the variant. While in the United States, the Delta variant accounts for over one-fourth of the total



Becky Alhanati, 58, of San Fernando Valley, along with her daughter, not shown, arrived at 6:15 am. Friday to wait in the standby line to receive a COVID-19 vaccination at Kedren Community Health Center in Los Angeles. Pic - www.latimes.com

active Covid-19 cases in the country. Top US infectious disease expert Dr Anthony Fauci said on July 1 the variant has the capability of spreading much more efficiently from person to person, reports Hindustan Times.

- Delta variant is increasing rapidly in Thailand's capital Bangkok and

accounts for 70 per cent of the new cases, a study by Chulalongkorn University's Center of Excellence in Clinical Virology stated.

- Portugal is seeing an extremely high increase in delta variant, which accounted for 4 per cent of cases in May but nearly 56 per cent last month,

according to news agency AP. Daily cases jumped by 2,605 on Saturday, the highest single-day spike since mid February. The government is aiming to vaccinate 1.7 more million citizens as new cases are being reported more among the unvaccinated.

- Iranian President Hassan Rouhani warned on Saturday that the country will be hit by a fifth wave of the pandemic linked to the outbreak of the Delta variant. Rouhani urged citizens to be careful as the variant has entered Iran from south and southeast.
- The European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC) said on Saturday the risk of infection from the Delta variant is high to very high for those who are partially vaccinated or not vaccinated at all. By the end of August, the variant will account for 90 per cent of infections in 27 nations of the European Union, the ECDC added.
- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) said in its study that neutralising antibodies against the Delta variant were not found in 58.1 per cent of the serum samples from those administered the first dose of the Covishield vaccine. While after taking both the doses, the antibodies could not be found in 16.1 per cent of the samples.

Covaxin effectively neutralises Delta variant: Top US health research institute

India's Covaxin, developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research, effectively neutralises both Alpha and Delta variants of coronavirus, the US' National Institute of Health has said.

The NIH said results of two studies of blood serum from people who had received Covaxin suggest that the vaccine generates antibodies that effectively neutralise the B.1.1.7 (Alpha) and B.1.617 (Delta) variants of SARS-CoV-2, first identified in the UK.

The top American health research institute, which has a history of strong scientific collaboration with India, also said that an adjuvant developed with funding from it has contributed to the success of the highly efficacious Covaxin, which has been administered to roughly 25 million people to date in India and elsewhere, reports Livemint.com.

Adjuvants are substances formulated as part of a vaccine to boost immune responses and enhance a vaccine's effectiveness.

Covaxin comprises a disabled form of SARS-CoV-2 that cannot replicate but still stimulates the immune system to make antibodies against the virus. Published results from a phase 2 trial of the vaccine indicate that it is safe and well-tolerated, the NIH said, adding that safety data from a phase 3 trial of Covaxin will become available later this year.

"Meanwhile, unpublished interim results

from the phase 3 trial indicate that the vaccine has 78 per cent efficacy against symptomatic disease, 100 per cent efficacy against severe Covid-19, including hospitalisation, and 70 per cent efficacy against asymptomatic infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19," it said.

Ending a global pandemic requires a global response, said Anthony S Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of NIH.

"I am pleased that a novel vaccine adjuvant developed in the US with NIAID support is part of an efficacious COVID-19 vaccine available to people in India," he said.

The adjuvant used in Covaxin, Alhydroxiqum-II, was discovered and tested in a laboratory by the biotech company ViroVax LLC of Lawrence, Kansas with support from the NIAID Adjuvant Development Program.

Alhydroxiqum-II is the first adjuvant in an authorised vaccine against an infectious disease to activate receptors TLR7 and TLR8 that play a vital role in the immune response to viruses.

In addition, the alum in Alhydroxiqum-II stimulates the immune system to search for an invading pathogen. Molecules that activate TLR receptors stimulate the immune system powerfully, but the side effects of Alhydroxiqum-II are mild, the NIH said.

Pakistan's gamble in Afghanistan has left it in perilous state, warns expert

While the Taliban continue their offensive against Afghan security forces, Pakistan is undertaking a dangerous gamble in the war-torn country by seeking to cultivate radical jihadist groups in the region, an expert has warned. In an opinion piece, Kelly Alkhoul, director of international relations at the Center of Political and Foreign Affairs, said "Pakistan's support of jihadi groups stems partly from cynical realism, in order to expand its sphere of influence in Afghanistan and support the Islamist insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir," reports Hindustan Times.

Pakistan has long been blamed for providing support to the Taliban and recently, Prime Minister Imran Khan ruled out the possibility of hosting American bases on their soil for military action inside Afghanistan. In an op-ed for The Washington Post, Khan argued that Pakistan cannot host American bases as they have "already paid too heavy a price."

"If Pakistan were to agree to host US bases, from which to bomb Afghanistan, and an Afghan civil war ensued, Pakistan would be targeted for revenge by terrorists again," said Khan.

Alkhoul opined that the Taliban is an



Pakistan's reluctance to blame the Taliban for rising violence is being seen as tacit support to the insurgents. Pic - Reuters

"independent terrorist organization with fickle allegiances" and Pakistan's reduced leverage over the Islamist group with the latter's potential victory in Afghanistan has made Islamabad "increasingly wary". She warned that the continued violence in Afghanistan will spill over into Pakistan with a mass influx of refugees. She said that the Taliban's victory would embolden other Islamist groups in Pakistan and Imran Khan's lack of control over security apparatus could lead to a coup.

"Ultimately, Pakistan's dangerous gamble has left it in a perilous state, with fewer allies and greater mistrust," Alkhoul said.

☞ Cont. on page 6

Face masks to become 'matter of personal choice' in UK



The British Medical Association suggests that some coronavirus measures like wearing masks and ensuring proper ventilation should be carried on even after July 19. Pic - AFP

Face masks will soon become a matter of "personal choice" for citizens in the UK, said Prime Minister Boris Johnson. When asked if he would stop wearing a mask if permitted, Johnson responded in the affirmative, insisting that a lot of people would prefer

to do away with the mask order if possible.

"I will (not wear a mask). I don't particularly want to wear a mask, I don't think a lot of people enjoy doing it, we will be moving into a phase though where these will be matters of personal choice," reports Ayshee Bhaduri

of Hindustan Times.

As the UK is all set to open up its economy after July 19, pandemic essentials like face masks will be left to the citizens' judgment, and the country will "move away" from restrictions that have been difficult for its citizens, said housing secretary Robert Jenrick.

"It will be a different period where we as private citizens make these judgements rather than the government telling you what to do," Jenrick said.

"It does seem as if we can now move forward and move to a much more permissive regime where we move away from many of those restrictions that have been so difficult for us," he added.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson confirmed on June 28 that most coronavirus restrictions in the UK will come to an end on July 19. Jenrick reiterated Johnson's words stating that the data that is all set to decide if final lockdown restrictions in the UK can be lifted on July 19 is looking "very positive", thanks to the success of the vaccination programme. Many in the UK have started to dub July 19 as "Freedom Day".

The British Medical Association (BMA) however suggested that some coronavirus measures like wearing masks and ensuring proper ventilation should be carried on even after July 19. BMA's words of caution comes amidst a spike in the daily tally of cases in the UK, which reported 27,125 cases on Friday.

Johnson had plans to lift restrictions in June but a raging Delta variant caused him to relent. He said last week that vaccination has severed the link between infections and death but cautioned that some restrictions might continue even after July 19.

China's rise as a super power has always been under global scrutiny. Many countries in the West, as well as smaller countries, have raised concerns about China's handling of issues. It is involved in a stalemate with the United States, particularly over the origin of the coronavirus disease pandemic.

The cautious approach is what has led to various countries going slow with importing the weapons made by China, especially the fighter jets, reports Amit Chaturvedi of Hindustan Times.

According to a report in Foreign Policy, and quoted by news agency ANI, after last month's confrontation with the Philippines, where Chinese naval vessels entered Philippine waters without authorisation, few want to partner up with Beijing.

China is involved in a border standoff with India in Ladakh, leading to deterioration of bilateral ties, said Foreign Policy. Though it has imported weapons from other countries, India won't consider China for the same, the magazine said. Ditto for Vietnam, with its worsening maritime dispute with China. Malaysia and Indonesia are also too wary of Beijing's ambitions to ever consider acquiring a Chinese fighter, reported Foreign Policy.

A report released by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri) earlier this year said that India is increasingly becoming self-reliant under its Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme, which is showing results.

Strained ties lead to dip in China's weapon export: Report



China Fails To Sell Fighter Jets As Arms Export Dips Amid Strained Ties With Nations. Pic - Republic World

India's arms imports fell 33% between 2011-15 and 2016-20, the Sipri report said. In the same period, China's exports fell 7.8%.

China has made great strides in improving its state-owned aerospace technology base, particularly in the military realm. It has made aircraft like J-10, J-10C and FC-31. But between 2000 and 2020, China exported just USD 7.2 billion worth of military aircraft, according to Sipri arms transfers database.

The United States stayed safely on top,

exporting USD 99.6 billion, and Russia stayed in the second slot at USD 61.5 billion. Even France's aircraft exports doubled China's, at USD 14.7 billion.

The only country which is relying on China for weapons is Pakistan. Beijing accounted for 74% of Islamabad's military imports during the last five years, up from 61% in 2011-15.

The best explanation for this failure is China's foreign policy. The Philippines is a perfect illustration of why China's fighter export ambitions have stalled, the article in

the magazine said.

According to Foreign Policy, this pattern of failure speaks to more than just a problem with sharp elbows.

First, it shows a lack of commercial soft power. Fighter sales often involve a trade relationship, since they tend to include commercial offsets - or economic sweeteners such as market access or technology transfer that are designed to mitigate some of the expense of a weapons package, the Foreign Policy article said.

But China's relatively closed economic system means that potential customers with export-oriented economies have little to gain, since China wants to be a globally dominant export manufacturer and certainly doesn't want to increase its intake of imported manufactured goods.

It has little interest in preserving the status quo in Asia, few qualms about territorial expansion, and next to no record of supporting allies in times of crisis, said Foreign Policy.

Compiled by D. Ramlallah

Bhasker Desai, Amateur Astronomer

“Other countries are light years ahead of us in the domain of astro tourism”



Bhasker Desai, a long serving member and office bearer at the Mauritius Astronomical Society, is an amateur astronomer who undoubtedly enjoys his passion and enlightens us whenever a particular event in the sky takes place. These events may be simply of a planetary or stellar nature (eclipses, comets, asteroids, eruptions on sun or planet surface...) or missions to distant planets from the earth or sometimes of a particular religious significance (e.g. MakharSankranti). His comments in today's 'Encounter' will hopefully reawaken interest in astronomy both as a hobby and as a career option for today's young people. Read on:

fy the patterns in the sky or ask some simple questions and try to get some basic information, which is nowadays so easily accessible through the digital medium.

*** What is astronomy in simple words? Why do we need to study it and what do you learn from it?**

Astronomy is the study of the celestial bodies – everything that is around us up there in space: the planets, moons, comets, stars, galaxies, black holes and everything in the cosmos. The quest of humans has always been to find answers to such questions as: where we came from, where we are going, and why? In fact there are too many questions to be answered, but we can also try to get the answers from philosophy, religion or science. I always like to say “science is the

search for truth”.

*** The literature on astronomy informs us that 'by studying the cosmos beyond our own planet, we can understand where we came from, where we are going, and how physics works under conditions which are impossible to recreate on Earth'. That sounds pretty serious, and would require academic training to understand - it's not within the reach of the common man, right?**

From where and how everything started and how the entire evolution of the universe begins and ends... Physics and advanced mathematics may provide some of the answers to these questions.

This task is mainly for the astrophysicists to figure out for humankind. This is what they are doing at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, one of the world's largest and most respected centres for scientific research, where they have created a very sophisticated lab to try to understand the whole process.

This requires a huge outlay of funds, energy and grey matter.

*** One would have thought that astronomy, both as a career option and as a hobby, would have been popular here in view of the geographical location of Mauritius. Does it take long years of training to become an astronomer/research astronomer, or doesn't it not pay well as a career?**

Mauritius is well placed for amateur astronomers, not for professional ones. Of course, I am here talking about optical or observational astronomy. Professionals need 350 clear nights out of 365 -- conditions available only at high altitudes of 3,000 meters above sea level or in deserts. These conditions are absent here. Research in radio astronomy is being carried out at the University of Mauritius; I understand that the scope is somewhat limited in that field.

*** What brought you to astronomy? Curiosity or fascination?**

As a kid, we all have been looking at the sky and wondering – hey what are these little sparkles in the sky? so initially it is curiosity, and once you start reading and understanding the functioning of the little stars, that becomes fascination – that's magic.

“Other countries are light years ahead of us in the domain of astro tourism – a striking example is that of Chile, which has an extremely well-oiled industry. As far as we are concerned, our night sky is becoming highly polluted with all the artificial lights, which is disastrous for astronomers...”



During a visit of the European Southern Observatories at Paranal in Chile, which house the biggest telescope on Earth

*** There seems to be few people in Mauritius who take an interest in astronomy, even in stargazing as a hobby. Astronomy clubs/societies, which existed some 60 years ago in a few State Colleges, have all but disappeared, and we do not get to hear much about private societies trying to popularize the science or even amateur astronomy. Why is that so?**

You are right. Very few people will go out and look up into the sky at night. The reasons why the astronomy clubs have disappeared from our secondary schools are simple: first, it is a subject to be studied at night, and our conservative society makes it difficult for youngsters to be out at night.

Second, you need some guidance from someone knowledgeable in the subject. Now, will that person be available as and when and where required? As you see, it becomes rather complicated.

Since secondary schools can no more provide for astronomy clubs, there's fortunately the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre which has been set up to popularise the science. But even then, few people are taking an interest in the subject.

As for the common man, they will go out and watch the stars, and that's about it; they will not seek to identi-

● Cont. on page 8

'Our night sky is becoming highly polluted with all the artificial lights, which is disastrous for astronomers'

● Cont. from page 7

* It's said that the Southern Skies are rich with many interesting celestial objects (open clusters, globular clusters, galaxies, constellations e.g. the Southern Cross) that any visitor to Mauritius having an interest in astronomy or cares to watch our skies will be simply fascinated. Is that indeed the case?

As a matter of fact, all these objects are visible wherever you are across the world. Somehow in Mauritius we have some of the best open clusters like the butterfly cluster or globular clusters like omega centauri visible from where we are situated. These are not visible from the Northern Hemisphere skies. Hence many of the tourists coming here will be simply very happy to have a glance at them and appreciate their beauty.

* You would perhaps recall that former Indian President APJ Abdul Kalam, who by training was an aerospace scientist, said in his speech at the State Banquet given in his honour by the Mauritian government during his visit here, that there was something special about our skies, which he had

“Mauritius is well placed for amateur astronomers, not for professional ones. Of course, I am here talking about optical or observational astronomy. Professionals need 350 clear nights out of 365 -- conditions available only at high altitudes of 3,000 meters above sea level or in deserts. These conditions are absent here...”

observed from the airplane. What did he mean?

You see, again it usually takes a foreigner to tell us that we have something special in our skies. Yes, for sure we are lucky to have the centre of the Milky Way galaxy right overhead in the month of July, and do believe me, this is simply a view out of this world. How many of us have tried to observe that?

* Do you think there is scope for developing astronomy tourism here, given our unpolluted night skies, and coupled with cultural and environmental activities?

Other countries are light years ahead of us in the domain of astro tourism – a striking example is that of Chile, which has an extremely well-oiled industry.

As far as we are concerned, our night sky is becoming highly polluted with all the artificial lights, which is disastrous for astronomers.

Even the five-star hotels here on the coast have their flood lights and other “decorative” lights all over their premises – they have not even spared the palm trees from these parasitic lights.

In Chile in each and every hotel they have a completely light pollution-free spot with red bulbs, etc., installed for ease of observation. By the way, Chile is on the same latitude as us- that is 20 degrees south.

* On the other hand, besides Muslim, Chinese and European astronomy, there is also the Indian tradition in astronomy which flowered in the 5th-6th

“For sure, Hindu astronomers have taken a keen interest in astronomy. They were excellent mathematicians and worked on various topics of astronomy. They knew from those days about precession (the slow, topline wobbling of the spinning Earth, with a period of about 25,772 years), which is amazing as it requires careful observation and a lot of trigonometry...”



century, with Aryabhata, whose 'Aryabhatiya' represented the pinnacle of astronomical knowledge at the time. That tradition has a close association with religion, and is usually followed for the correct performance of religious rituals, residential/altars/temple construction, etc. What's your opinion on that tradition?

“Very few people will go out and look up into the sky at night. The reasons why the astronomy clubs have disappeared from our secondary schools are simple: first, it is a subject to be studied at night, and our conservative society makes it difficult for youngsters to be out at night. Second, you need some guidance from someone knowledgeable in the subject. Now, will that person be available as and when and where required?”

Remember that the first satellite launched by India bears the name of Aryabhata, a pioneer in the scientific domain in India at that time and whose achievements are indeed great.

For sure, Hindu astronomers have taken a keen interest in astronomy. They were excellent mathematicians and worked on various topics of astronomy. They knew from those days about precession (the slow, topline wobbling of the spinning Earth, with a period of about 25,772 years), which is amazing as it requires careful observation and a lot of trigonometry.

They also did use data gathered from the stars which went into the construct the temples, etc., as per the position of sunrise, the equinoxes and other astronomical phenomena.



Observing the solar eclipse of September 2016 on the beach of Flic en Flac

Dawning into the Covid Era

Mohun Aujayeb

We were all expecting that Covid-19 that came like a terrible cyclone will subside. But it has continued to gather momentum, staying with us and causing as much damage as it did initially. New strains keep emerging and making our fight against it strenuous, as if it is neutralizing our armour each time we build a new one.

The fight in principle is twofold. The first one is to stop infection and prevent transmission of the pathogen - the virus by adopting Covid appropriate behaviours. These include personal hygiene, washing of hands on a regular basis, using sanitizers, wearing masks, maintaining social distancing. We are also careful to change clothes and take a proper shower when we come back home from work, the market or shopping spree, etc.

The next step is to become immune to the disease. Once immunized, should we be exposed to the virus and get infected our body will hopefully be equipped to resist the disease and its serious effects. Immunity offers that protection and very importantly prevents transmission of the virus to others. Immunity comes from already having had the disease as well as being vaccinated against it. Vaccination is a process wherein the treated virus antigen is injected into the body and the body in some way is duped to produce a defence mechanism - antibodies to kill the specific virus, and thus develops acquired immunity. The body also develops memory cells that respond to any future invasion of the virus by increasing its defence artillery. By vaccinating a consi-



“Let's not rejoice. Scientific literature scientific and other media are replete with words of caution: the efficacy of the Covid vaccines is not definite. We are still struggling to know how long a vaccine (of 2 shots) will remain effective. Or to what extent will the immunity provided by the current vaccine/s be effective against mutated strains? Shall we need a third dose/vaccine boosters to maintain our individual immunity and herd immunity...”

derable number of people in a population, we start building collective defence against the virus so that isolated sparks of infection burn out instead of spreading into an outbreak. This concept is referred

to as herd immunity.

In herd immunity people who are immune become shields, preventing the virus from using them to continue the

transmission chain to another person. It in no case means that the other persons are not susceptible to infection. It simply means a good number of people are acting as a shield to prevent the spread of infection. What is the percentage of population that needs to be vaccinated is not a standard figure. At present the WHO estimates a combined infection and vaccination percentage needed is 60% so as to achieve herd immunity. In the US, the number is set around 75-85%. And with the emergence of highly transmissible variants, some experts feel that 90% of the population should be vaccinated to reach herd immunity.

From the above, it seems that the vaccine is our saviour. And our objective is to achieve herd immunity which reduces the "reproductive number" (R number) of the disease (R number is the average number of people an infected person will pass a disease to). In this way as more persons get vaccinated and become immune, an infected person will pass the infection to fewer persons. When the R number reaches below 1, the disease starts to die out.

But let's not rejoice. Scientific literature scientific and other media are replete with words of caution: the efficacy of the Covid vaccines is not definite. We are still struggling to know how long a vaccine (of 2 shots) will remain effective. Or to what extent will the immunity provided by the current vaccine/s be effective against mutated strains? Shall we need a third dose/vaccine boosters to maintain our individual immunity and herd immunity, and counter another surge and an unbridled spread?

For the time being we need to adopt and adapt Covid appropriate behaviours and get the vaccine so that we can live with the virus. It's a new era that has dawned.

A quoi sert une commission d'enquête

P. Neerhoo
Auditeur/fiscaliste

Le gouvernement a institué une commission d'enquête pour faire la lumière sur les circonstances dans lesquelles la State Trading Corporation (STC) alloua un contrat à la compagnie Betamax pour le transport de produits pétroliers en 2009 et pourquoi le contrat fut ensuite résilié en 2015.

Compte tenu du fait que l'affaire Betamax a été débattue en profondeur au tribunal d'arbitrage international de Singapour, en Cour suprême et devant le Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC) avec les résultats que l'on sait, on comprend difficilement cette initiative de charger une instance ad hoc de se pencher à nouveau sur une affaire classée. Si le leader de l'Opposition n'avait pas réclamé cette commission

d'enquête, soutenue par le MMM mais désapprouvée par le PTR, le gouvernement l'aurait-il mise sur pied. On en doute.

Objectivement, deux partis d'opposition ont offert une opportunité au gouvernement d'accentuer les divisions au sein de l'opposition dans son ensemble et de dévier l'attention d'autres scandales autrement plus importants comme l'affaire Saint Louis et les contrats d'urgence alloués en plein Covid à des entrepreneurs douteux. S'il y a une affaire importante qui mérite une commission d'enquête, c'est le démantèlement de la BAI dans des circonstances douteuses. Ou encore la mauvaise gestion ayant causé la chute d'Air Mauritius avant Covid.

Instituer une commission d'enquête sur une affaire qui a été tranchée par la plus haute instance judiciaire, c'est mettre

la charrue avant les bœufs. C'est tenter de reproduire ("relitigate") en public un procès qui a été déjà jugé par le JCPC. A quoi servirait cette commission si ce n'est de mettre en relief les rôles de certains protagonistes dans les tenants et aboutissants de cette affaire. Puisque ces protagonistes sont des hommes politiques dans des camps opposés, on peut prévoir le spectacle de témoignages contradictoires qui déferlerait.

À ce jour, seules deux commissions d'enquête établies dans le passé ont éclairé le public sur un problème majeur, notamment la commission Rault sur la drogue en 1987, et la récente commission Lam Shang Leen sur le trafic de drogue. Toutefois, les rapports de ces deux commissions ont connu peu de suivi. D'autres commissions d'enquête n'ont même pas terminé leurs travaux de façon concluante, notamment la commission Caunhye

sur l'ancienne présidente de la République (Ameena Gurib-Fakim qui fut accusée de manquement à ses devoirs) et la commission Domah sur l'affaire Britam, une société de l'ex-conglomérat BAI qui fut vendue au Kenya. On apprend que le rapport de cette dernière commission d'enquête aurait été soumis au Président de la République, mais nous sommes toujours dans l'attente d'une annonce officielle.

Finalement on se demande si toutes ces commissions ne sont pas faites pour la galerie dans une entreprise de diversion bien calculée. En tout cas, elles ne font pas honneur à la tradition des 'Royal Commissions of Enquiry' que l'on connaît dans les pays anglo-saxons. Dans ces pays, les commissions d'enquête sont rares, mais elles sont efficaces et pèsent de tout leur poids sur la politique publique.

From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

4th Year No 166

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 11 October 1957

● *To have ideas is to gather flowers; to think is to weave them into garlands. -- Sophie Swetchine*

Homage to Manilal

By Somduth Bhuckory

It is today exactly fifty years since Manilal Doctor came to Mauritius. But it is next Sunday that is going to be a memorable day in the history of Indians in Mauritius for it is on that day that the Manilal Memorial Celebration is taking place to mark the event.

From the communique issued in the press, it can be seen that the organizers have done their best to celebrate the occasion in a fitting manner. There will, first of all, be the laying of the foundation stone for the statue of Manilal in the Company's Garden, opposite the Hindu Maha Sabha, at noon. Then at 12.30 p.m. a fancy fair will be opened at Taher Bagh with a view to swelling the Memorial Fund. And finally at 1 p.m. a public meeting will be held at the Gymkhana where homage will be paid to Manilal by various speakers.

The organizers have very rightly taken the decision of not issuing any individual invitation. This celebration should be a national celebration in which everybody must participate without being asked personally to do so. It is the duty of one and all to pay homage to Manilal by being present and by remembering fondly the great man who is no more but whose deeds cannot be forgotten.

There is one very striking feature about the celebration, viz. it is not an exclusive Hindu function. The readiness with which members of Muslim community have accepted to cooperate and have in fact cooperated deserves mention. It is also noteworthy how kind the Mayor of Port Louis has been in associating himself with the celebration and how helpful the Municipality has been in granting a site for the statue. The President of the Labour Party, Hon. G. Forget, has also shown his interest in the celebration by having accepted to speak at the Gymkhana.

Needless to mention the names of illustrious members of the Indian community itself. We don't want to sound like blowing our own trumpet.

While homage is being paid to a distinguished son of India, we are fortunate in having in our midst a no less distinguished representative of that great land, Major General B. Chatterjee, who has kindly accepted to participate in the celebration.

On this auspicious day, we can't help expressing our appreciation for the good work done by the Committee which is responsible for the Celebration. Team work has been much in evidence but a special mention should be made of Vanprasthi Dhoorundhar, and of Mr M. Sangeelee who has so ably seen to the execution of the project.

Today the time when Manilal came to Mauritius appears to be remote indeed. Much change has taken place since. In half a century, a community which was mainly associated with immigration has evolved to be associated with the ministry. Human nature being what it is, there is of course a lot of heartache and heart-burning because of this evolution.

So, when we find some people speaking ill of the



celebration, we are not at all surprised. We have said before how a section of the local press has reacted against the celebration. We have had the opportunity since of hearing something disgusting from the platform of the Parti Mauricien. Well, let pen-pushers scribble and let wicked tongues waggle: it's good to know to what length jealousy and intolerance can go.

Those who are paying homage to Manilal know what a fearless man he was. He fought injustice and discrimination in the press, on platforms and in the courts. We shall fail in our duty if we allow injustice and discrimination to flourish unchecked in any quarter -- be that quarter white or coloured.

It is sometimes noticed that Indians are not very enthusiastic in standing up for Indian causes i.e., when justice has to be done to the Indian community in general or to its members in particular. The reason for it is that we are afraid of being taxed with communalism. That fear of the next-door neighbour is responsible for the perpe-

tuation of many an injustice. How long are we going to keep mum to please Tom, Dick and Harry?

Others can erect statues whenever they like and wherever they like, but the Indian community is listed in the black book if it dares to do anything of the sort. Others can be anti-Indian but mind you if you venture to be pro-Indian! This fear-ridden mentality bordering on moral slavery has to be got rid of.

When we pay homage to Manilal let us be inspired by him to assert our independence and put an end to the paralysing fear of this, that and the other.

After the din and bustle have subsided and the madding crowd has gone home, the memory of Manilal will pervade in the atmosphere never to leave it again. And soon the statue will be seen contemplating the contemporary scene. When it is unveiled sometime next year, let us hope against hope that dissident voices will by then be stilled.

Because the statue is being made in England, it should not be thought that it is going to be looked upon as more an objet d'art than an embodiment of gratitude. In this fast-moving world, it is comforting to think that there are people still who can be grateful to their heroes out of sheer admiration.

To perpetuate the memory of Manilal, the Committee has also the intention of publishing a symposium. We understand that the symposium will be published on the occasion of the unveiling of the statue. We are told that several local writers will be contributing articles on Manilal to it. An account of the celebration taking place on Sunday could be included with advantage.

And so, the memorial and the symposium will remain an ever-lasting testimony of gratitude to Manilal. Detractors may come and detractors may go but children of generation after generation will seek to know the secret of Manilal's glory and pay homage to him in the secure belief that he has been a benefactor of their ancestors.

We wish the Manilal Memorial Celebration every success and we join with the rest of sympathisers in paying our homage to Manilal. By taking part wholeheartedly, everybody will be contributing his bit in making of the day a red-letter day. And in the course of history let it become a milestone to mark the progress made in half a century. From that milestone we have to go onwards with the burning desire of improving on the achievement left behind.

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64th ANNIVERSARY
1956-2020

BAI's Case at the Brussels Court of First Instance

'Since the Betamax decision of the Privy Council, people feel that they'll ultimately see the light at the end of the tunnel'

• Cont. from page 4

In cases where we do not have a treaty to provide for such a clause, the rule is for agreements to have an arbitration clause. But care must be taken as to how the clause is drafted and what law will govern the arbitration.

*** It's said that the most common way for resolving disputes is court litigation, and in many cases, it's the best choice. Does the Betamax case confirm this view?**

Look at what happened to the Betamax contract that contained an arbitration clause governed by the laws of Mauritius. The Supreme Court was quick to invalidate the award.

Investors will no doubt have to choose a jurisdiction that is pro-enforcement award, unlike Mauritius that has earned a negative image of anti-enforcement award. The damage has been mitigated by the Privy Council but not removed completely.

If we really mean business in matters of

“Look at what happened to the Betamax contract that contained an arbitration clause governed by the laws of Mauritius. The Supreme Court was quick to invalidate the award. Investors will no doubt have to choose a jurisdiction that is pro-enforcement award, unlike Mauritius that has earned a negative image of anti-enforcement award. The damage has been mitigated by the Privy Council but not removed completely...”

investments, we have to give serious thought to all these issues.

*** Was arbitration an option in the case of the BAI, or would it have required prior agreement between the BAI and the Government to go for arbitration in case of dispute?**

There could not be an agreement as there was no contract between the BAI and the Government of Mauritius. The decision to seize his assets was a unilateral one on the ground that he had a concocted a Ponzi-like scheme.

As Mr Rawat was *persona non grata* in Mauritius, he resorted to the 2007 Agreement between the Government of the

Republic of Finland that allows an investor to go directly to arbitration without the agreement of the other party.

Article 9 (2) of the Finland Treaty provides that if the dispute has not been settled within three months from the date on which it was raised in writing, the dispute may, at the choice of the investor, be submitted to the competent courts of the Contracting Party in whose territory the investment is made; or to arbitration by the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes.

*** The report of the commission on inquiry on the sale of Britam of the BAI Group has apparently been submitted to**

the President of the Republic, four years after the Commission was set up in May 2017. It must have been a complex case to have taken four long years, right?

Possibly. But if you appoint the same persons to chair commissions of inquiries and to preside over other bodies, how do you expect the work to be done within a reasonable time?

*** We have yet to take cognizance of the conclusions of the commission of inquiry on the former President of the Republic, Ameenah Gurib-Fakim. Could there be a reason for the time that a commission of inquiry takes to submit its conclusions**

This is the problem that arises when you assign a commission of inquiry to a sitting judge. The inquiry on the former President of the Republic has political and constitutional ramifications. The three sitting judges have a heavy case load to deal with, and then they are landed with a heavy inquiry. What can we expect?

LEX

Yes, lockdowns are costly. But the alternatives are worse

• Cont. from page 2

We ran the model a hundred times for each of these scenarios, to capture some of the randomness inherent in the spread of the virus in real life as well as uncertainty about inputs like costs per week of lockdown.

The costs of treating Covid-19 in hospitals were always greater for our two suppression strategies than the two elimination strategies.

Economic costs – measured by effect on GDP – were less clear-cut. However, in 77% of model runs GDP losses were greatest for either of the two suppression strategies.

Other research supports elimination

Our findings are consistent with other new studies, both for Australia and globally.

In a study published last month, researchers from the University of Melbourne and ANU have calculated the total economic costs of unmitigated spread would have been about four to eight times larger than quashing the virus early.

Another study published last month, in the Lancet, compares health and economic outcomes for Australia and four other OECD countries opting for elimination (Iceland, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea) with the 35 OECD nations that have opted for suppression.

Though the authors acknowledge their analysis does



London's COVID-19 Memorial Wall. Britain has recorded more than 128,000 COVID deaths. Pic - Andy Rain/EPA

downs by a week has been associated with a 2.7% increase in excess deaths.

However, since many of these countries implemented suppression strategies, lockdowns were implemented in the presence of high and increasing Covid-19 cases. These high cases flowed on to high mortality in coming weeks. Essentially, correlation does not imply causation.

Significantly, the study notes Australia and New Zealand, two countries that used early lockdowns to eliminate Covid-19, had fewer deaths (allowing for both SARS-CoV-2 and other causes). This is also what you will usually find at our Covid-19 Pandemic Tradeoffs tool, which examines health impacts of different strategies allowing for unintended health impacts of lockdowns.

To put it simply, the costs of lockdowns can't be calculated in isolation from their role

in the strategy chosen to control Covid-19. Both elimination and suppression have lockdowns, but elimination requires fewer lockdowns with better health and economic outcomes.

The lesson is "go hard, go early" – at least in 2021 and until we have higher vaccination coverage. But we're still a long way from that. Until then the elimination strategy, including early, sharp lockdowns where necessary when contact tracing is unable to "do the job", remain our best policy.

not prove causal connection between response strategies and outcomes, all indicators favour elimination. The elimination nations have had a Covid-19 death rate (per million) 25 times lower than the suppression nations, and higher GDP growth through almost every weekly period through to early 2021.

Go hard, go early

So what of the study cited by Creighton and Foster as evidence that lockdowns are not only ineffective but actually may be causing more deaths?

This study measures changes in excess deaths following the implementation of stay-in-place policies in all US states and 42 other countries. It finds extending lock-

Patrick Abraham, Laxman Bablani,; Natalie Carvalho & Tony Blakely, The University of Melbourne

US intelligence report on UFOs

No aliens, but government transparency and desire for better data might bring science to the UFO world

A new nine-page report, requested by Congress, doesn't say what the 144 UFO sightings from 2004 to 2021 are, but does say that the government wants to learn more



Chris Impey

University Distinguished
Professor of Astronomy,
University of Arizona

On June 25, 2021, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence released a much-anticipated report on UFOs to Congress. The military has rebranded unidentified flying objects as unidentified aerial phenomena - UAPs - in part to avoid the stigma that has been attached to claims of aliens visiting the Earth since the Roswell incident in 1947. The report presents no convincing evidence that alien spacecraft have been spotted, but some of the data defy easy interpretation.

I'm a professor of astronomy who has written extensively on the search for life in the universe. I also teach a free online class on astrobiology. I do not believe that the new government report or any other sightings of UFOs in the past are proof of aliens visiting Earth. But the report is important because it opens the door for a serious look at UFOs. Specifically, it encourages the U.S. government to collect better data on UFOs, and I think the release of the report increases the chances that scientists will try to interpret that data. Historically, UFOs have felt off limits to mainstream science, but perhaps no more.

What's in the UFO report?

The No. 1 thing the report focuses on is the lack of high-quality data. Here are the highlights from the slender nine-page report, covering a total of 144 UAP sightings from U.S. government sources between 2004 and 2021:

- "Limited data and inconsistent reporting are key challenges to evaluating UAP."
- Some observations "could be the result of sensor errors, spoofing, or observer misperception."



Radio telescopes like the Allen Telescope Array seen here scan the sky looking for signs of intelligent life in the universe. Brewbooks/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA

- "UAP clearly pose a safety of flight issue and may pose a challenge to U.S. national security."
- Of the 144 sightings, the task force was "able to identify one reported UAP with high confidence. In that case, we identified the object as a large, deflating balloon. The others remain unexplained."
- "Some UAP may be technologies deployed by China, Russia, another nation, or non-governmental entity."

UFOs are taboo among scientists

UFO means unidentified flying object. Nothing more, nothing less. You'd think scientists would enjoy the challenge of solving this puzzle. Instead, UFOs have been taboo for academic scientists to investigate, and so unexplained reports have not received the scrutiny they deserve.

One reason is that most scientists think there is less to most reports than meets the eye, and the few who have dug deeply have mostly debunked the phenomenon. Over half of sightings can be attributed to meteors, fireballs and the planet Venus.

Another reason for the scientific hesitance is that UFOs have been co-opted by popular culture. They are part of a landscape of conspiracy theories that includes accounts of abduction by aliens and crop circles. Scientists worry about their professional reputations, and the association of UFOs with these supernatural stories causes most researchers to avoid the topic.

But some scientists have looked. In 1968, Edward U. Condon at the University of Colorado published the first major academic study of UFO sightings. The Condon Report put a damper on further research when it found that "nothing has come from the study of UFOs in the past 21 years that has added to scientific knowledge."

However, a review in 1998 by a panel led by Peter Sturrock, a professor of applied physics at Stanford University, concluded that some sightings are accompanied by physical evidence that deserves scientific study. Sturrock also surveyed professional astronomers and found that nearly half thought UFOs were worthy of scientific study, with higher interest among younger and more well-informed astronomers.

If astronomers are intrigued by UFOs - and believe some cases deserve study with academic rigor - what's holding them back? A history of mistrust between ufologists and scientists hasn't helped. And while UFO research has employed some of the tools of the scientific method, it has not had the core of skeptical, evidence-based reasoning that demarcates science from pseudoscience.

A search of 90,000 recent and current grants awarded by the National Science Foundation finds none addressing UFOs or related phenomena. I've served on review panels for 35 years, and can imagine the reaction if such a proposal came up for peer review: raised eyebrows and a quick vote not to fund.

A decadeslong search for aliens

While the scientific community has almost entirely avoided engaging with UFOs, a much more mainstream search for intelligent aliens and their technology has been going on for decades.

The search is motivated by the fact that astronomers have, to date, discovered over 4,400 planets orbiting other stars. Called exoplanets, some are close to the Earth's mass and at just the right distance from their stars to potentially have water on their surfaces - meaning they might be habitable.

Astronomers estimate that there are 300 million habitable worlds in the Milky Way galaxy alone, and each one is a potential opportunity for life to develop and

for intelligence and technology to emerge. Indeed, most astronomers think it very unlikely that humans are the only or the first advanced civilization.

This confidence has fueled an active search for extraterrestrial intelligence, known as SETI. It has been unsuccessful so far. As a result, researchers have recast the question "Are we alone?" to "Where are the aliens?" The absence of evidence for intelligent aliens is called the Fermi paradox. First articulated by the physicist Enrico Fermi, it's a paradox because advanced civilizations should be spread throughout the galaxy, yet we see no sign of their existence.

The SETI activity has not been immune from scientists' criticism. It was starved of federal funding for decades and recently has gotten most of its support from private sources. However, in 2020, NASA resumed funding for SETI, and the new NASA administrator wants researchers to pursue the topic of UFOs.

In this context, the intelligence report is welcome. The report draws few concrete conclusions about UFOs and avoids any reference to aliens or extraterrestrial spacecraft. However, it notes the importance of destigmatizing UFOs so that more pilots report what they see. It also sets a goal of moving from anecdotal observations to standardized and scientific data collection. Time will tell if this is enough to draw scientists into the effort, but the transparency to publish the report at all reverses a long history of secrecy surrounding U.S. government reports on UFOs.

I don't see any convincing evidence of alien spacecraft, but as a curious scientist, I hope the subset of UFO sightings that are truly unexplained gets closer study. Scientists are unlikely to weigh in if their skepticism generates attacks from "true believers" or they get ostracized by their colleagues. Meanwhile, the truth is still out there.



Laughter
is the **BEST**
Medicine

Pappu: My internet is not working properly.

Officer: Ok, Double click on "My computer"

Pappu: I can't see your computer.

Officer: No no, click on "My computer" on your computer.

Pappu: How can I click on your computer from my computer?

Officer: Listen. There is an icon labelled "My Computer" on your computer. Ok. double click on it.

Pappu: What the hell, what is your computer doing on my computer?

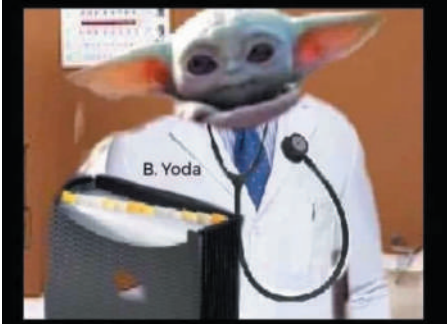
Officer: Double click on your computer.

Pappu: On which icon I've to click.

Officer: "My Computer."

Pappu: Oh, you idiot... Tell me where is your office... I'll come there and click on your "Computer."

Why you keep asking questions about the vaccine? When Pfizer produced the Viagra, you didn't even read the instructions!



A guy urgently needed a few days off work,

But he knew the Boss would not allow him to leave.

He thought that maybe if he acted "Crazy"

Then he would tell him to take a few days off.

So, he hung upside-down on the ceiling & made funny noises.

His co-worker (who's blonde)! asked him what he was doing.

He told her that he was pretending to be a light bulb, so that the Boss might think he was "Crazy" and give him a few days off.

A few minutes later the Boss came into the office and asked, "What are you doing?"

He told him he was a light bulb.

He said, "You are clearly stressed out. Go home and recuperate for a cou-

ple of days."

He jumped down and walked out of the office...

When his co-worker (the blonde) followed him, the Boss asked her "And where do you think you're going?"

She said, "I'm going home too, I can't work in the dark!"

Of husband & wife

Wife: What is inflation?

Husband: Earlier you were 36-24-36. But now you are 48-40-48. Though you have everything bigger than before, your value has become less than before. This is inflation?

Economics is not that difficult if we have the right examples.

Interviewer: What is recession?

Candidate: When "wine & women" get replaced by "water & wife", that critical phase of life is called recession!

Accountancy fact

What is the difference between liability & asset?

A drunk friend is a liability. But a drunk girlfriend is an asset.

An economist beautifully explained two reasons for having two wives.

A - Monopoly should be broken.

B - Competition improves the quality of service.

If you have 1 wife, she fights with you!

If you have 2 wives, they will fight for you!

When you are in love, wonders happen.

But once you get married, you wonder, what happened?

Philosophy of marriage

At the beginning, every wife treats her husband as God.

Later, somehow don't know why. Alphabets get reversed.

Secret formula for married couples

'Love One Another'.

And if it doesn't work, bring the last word in the middle!



Cataract is the third biggest cause of blindness.
Religion and politics remain the first two.

Life Stories

Tribute to APJ Abdul Kalam

By Wg Cdr Nasir Hanfee (Rtd)

This was way back in 1998. Our PSLV missile program was in full swing. But it was being done clandestinely to avoid detection by US spy satellites. The program director was Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, who we did not recognize at that time.

The cryogenic engines used were secretly shipped to Chennai port from where they were airlifted by our heavy lift helicopter.

If this helicopter was to fly straight from Chennai, it would have taken only two hours to reach the launch-site. But to avoid detection by US satellites, a zig zag route was worked out involving long halts at unscheduled places. A two-hour flight due to this would take us eight hrs of flying and eight hours halt, but ensure no detection - a small price to pay.

Due to heavy load, our passenger carrying capacity was significantly reduced. We were able to carry only 12 supporting staff from the missile program, including two sweepers to sweep and mop the constantly leaking fuel and oil from cryogenic engine. All 12 names were approved at the highest echelon of Government of India, and the director was allowed only to change two sweepers, if required.

On the day of our departure, a gentleman with long grey hair approached us. "I have missed my flight and I have no choice but to travel with you all because I am required at launch-site." We had to refuse him because the names were cleared from high up and we could neither make any changes, nor carry any extra passenger.

Just when we were about to start up, this man came to us running.

"Captain, the project director has kindly agreed to replace a sweeper with me. Here is the authorization. Please take me on board." The Captain said Ok, and he jumped on board like a happy child.

Our second halt was about four hours long. As we were sipping our tea, we saw this gentleman sweeping and wiping the floor. We saw some of the senior scientists ran to him and have animated conversation but he continued



doing his job.

One of the scientists then approached the Captain and requested him to order the sweeper not to sweep! "Sir, he is our project director, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, and you have to stop him please."

We were shell shocked. The Captain approached him but he simply said: "I am travelling in the capacity of a sweeper and no one can stop me from doing my job."

At a loss as to how to deal with this situation, we remained passive spectators. On our next halt too, he did his duty. His simplicity bowled us over.

We dropped the men and machine at the drop site and bid him goodbye.

Many years later I received an invitation from President's house to visit Mughal Gardens to see how much work he had done on it and judge if he was a better *maali* or a better sweeper. I sent my regrets as I was out of the country.

I met him after he retired as President and he remembered the episode.

Affirmation of the day : I awaken new life with in me. I flow.

The Lord moves in mysterious ways

A priest enters a pub to avoid the rain and spies a member of his congregation looking miserable. "What's wrong, Peter?" asks the man of god.

"It's my grandfather, he's just dead," replies Peter.

"Well, did you not try to take him to Lourdes and get cured?"

"We had a round in the pub and I went with him, but we had only been for an hour when he died," answered Peter

"Well. Sometimes the Lord moves in mysterious ways ."

"I think it was more likely to be the speed of the cricket ball that hit him on his head."

Food & Recipes

You can turn fresh herbs into dried seasonings for food. Place leaves in a single layer between two paper towels, and heat on high for 1 minute per cup. This method works best on parsley, basil, and celery leaves.

Toast nuts

Spread them in a single layer on a microwave-safe dish, then add oil or butter -- about half a teaspoon for every cup of nuts or seeds -- and heat them on high in your microwave for about a minute. Check to make sure they're done, adding time in small amounts as needed until they're lightly brown and have that nice smell.

Bake apples

For a speedier soft apple, peel and core it, and either leave it whole or cut it into pieces. Fill or cover with a tablespoon of butter and any spices or seasonings you prefer, like cinnamon. Cover it with wax paper and heat on high for 2½ to 3 minutes. Make sure to let it sit for a bit before eating.

Bake potatoes

Microwaves can give you fluffy baked potatoes in a fraction of the time your oven can. First, scrub your potatoes and prick several holes in them with a fork. That'll give steam a way to escape. Cook one potato for 7 to 8 minutes, two for 10 to 12, and four for 14 to 18, or until soft. Don't forget to flip your potatoes halfway through.

Scramble eggs

Want a hot breakfast, but short on time? Microwave your eggs. Crack one egg into a microwave-safe bowl or



Surprising uses for your microwave

mug you've coated with nonstick spray. Mix in a tablespoon of milk or water, and cook on high for 30-45 seconds. Stir, then let it sit for 2-3 minutes.

Steam veggies

Arrange fresh vegetables in a microwave-safe dish. Add 2 or 3 tablespoons of water and cover with a lid or plastic wrap. (Make sure to leave space for the steam to escape.) Microwave your vegetables on high for 3 to 7 minutes (depending on the vegetable) or until soft.

Cook homemade chicken soup

Combine diced vegetables, canned beans, canned chunked chicken, and broth in a microwave-safe bowl. Cover it with plastic wrap. Cook times will vary but are usually between 15 and 30 minutes. Make sure to stir your soup several times during the heating process to make sure every bite is heated through.

Sanitize sponges

All it takes is 1 minute on high in the microwave to kill bacteria on your kitchen sponges. Wet them first so they don't catch fire, and also check to it doesn't have a metallic scrub pad. If yours does, put it in the dishwasher instead.

Microwave tips

Check for the "microwave safe" label on containers before heating food in them. Avoid foam containers, and never heat metal. Chemicals in plastic wraps may seep into your food if you cook in them. For even cooking, pick a round container over square, and cut food into equal-sized pieces when possible.

Cancer risk?

There's no proof microwaves cause cancer. They cook your food by making the water molecules inside vibrate and give off heat. Your food isn't radioactive after you microwave it, and properly working microwaves don't give off enough radiation to put you at risk of cancer, either.

Christine Mikstas, RD, WebMD

5 ways to build relation after your engagement in an arranged marriage



He
&
She

Couples usually get very little time to know each other before an arranged marriage. But if you've had your engagement and there's still time left for the big day, then you've got some bonus time on

your hands! There can be never enough time to know your partner and so, getting to know them after exchanging rings and before getting hitched can be just what you need. If you're shy or confused about how

to approach your partner, then these simple ways of building relations with your spouse before tying the knot will surely help you! Advice from Times of India...

Put efforts into knowing each other

It's important to know what your spouse is like; what their preferences, goals, ambitions and dislikes are. It will help you get a better understanding of who they are as a person. Letting your spouse know about your priorities in life, before and after marriage and vice versa is necessary to always have transparency in your marriage, from the start.

Discuss things apart from the wedding

It's natural to be excited for the big day, but that shouldn't be the only topic of discussion between you and your spouse. Find out more about your spouse's family and ask questions about them.

Talk about the past

This is a step you can take only if both of you are comfortable enough to discuss

it. What happened in the past doesn't matter but some people do prefer to be aware of their partner's former relationships. Don't be judgemental with any such delicate matters. Instead, remember that the marriage will be a fresh start for both of you.

Try talking about finances

This might seem too early to talk about, but no, it is actually the right time. You and your spouse should be clear about individual and joint financial arrangements after the marriage. Let your partner know that you're equally interested to be a part of any financial discussion or burden. It will now be both of your responsibility to handle the household finances.

Be honest about everything

Now is the time to tell your spouse everything, if by any chance you have been holding back a matter, then share it with your partner as soon as possible. Your arranged marriage is a fresh start, but it's necessary to come clean in case of any doubts or confusion. This paves the way for a healthy marriage later down the line.

Jacqueline Fernandez to Mouni Roy...

Bollywood stars and their secret relationships

With privacy settings on, stars who stake their claim on the limelight in their professional lives are sometimes extremely secretive of their personal ones. Here's a look at some alleged 'secret couples', as reported by Gulf News.

Jacqueline Fernandez

'Drive' star Jacqueline Fernandez is reportedly in love and house hunting. Her alleged boyfriend is an entrepreneur. Indian media claims that Fernandez has been looking for a place in Mumbai's Juhu and Bandra area and has zeroed in on a France-based interior designer to get it kitted out.

Mouni Roy

Is Bollywood actor-model Mouni Roy going to marry Dubai-based investment banker Suraj Nambiar? She's not only posted photos of them together on social media but also reportedly refers to his parents as 'mom' and 'dad'. Earlier this year, a source was quoted as saying by ETimes that a wedding is on the horizon.

Minissha

Minissha Lamba, who recently got candid about being cheated on in a previous relationship, has confirmed that she's in a relationship with a 'lovely person'. No, this one is still a secret.

Madhuri Dixit

Madhuri Dixit (now Nene) and Sanjay Dutt were allegedly in love and ready to get hitched - until he was



jailed under TADA 28 years ago. Things have obviously cooled since then and the couple have gone on to live out their respective lives.

Yami Gautam and Aditya Dhar

Moviemaker Aditya Dhar and actress Yami Gautam worked together on his movie, 'Uri: The Surgical Strike', where they got close. They recently announced their

wedding after a three-year relationship. The surprising thing is, the news of the intimate ceremony still came as a shock as the two had kept things quite hush hush.

Rekha and Amitabh Bachchan

The alleged affair between Rekha and Amitabh Bachchan is by far the most dramatic in Bollywood, with the two not looking each other in the eyes at events and Rekha wearing vermilion in public. They never worked together after "Silsila" - around the time there was allegedly a tough woman-to-woman talk between Rekha and Jaya Bachchan.

Sunny Deol and Dimple Kapadia

Dimple Kapadia and Sunny Deol apparently had an affair after an unhappy spell in her marriage to Rajesh Khanna, with whom she has a daughter, Twinkle. A few years ago, a video went viral on social media featuring the duo in a candid moment holding hands while seated on a bench.

Vicky Kaushal and Katrina Kaif

Vicky Kaushal - Katrina Kaif love story is perhaps one of the worst kept secrets in Bollywood with the stars often seen together at parties, weddings and outside each other's homes, but no one has ever confirmed the story. They have neither confirmed nor denied the news openly. Recently, Anil Kapoor's son Harshvardhan Kapoor decided to take it upon himself to let the cat out the bag by addressing their alleged affair on TV.



Nayanthara to make her Bollywood debut in Shah Rukh Khan's film with director Atlee?

Nayanthara, one of the leading heroines in the South, is rumoured to make her debut in Bollywood. According to reports, Nayanthara is in talks to play the female lead in Shah Rukh Khan's film with director Atlee. The makers have initiated the talks with Nayanthara, but nothing has been finalised as of now. It is reported that Shah Rukh Khan's upcoming film with Atlee is expected to go on floors later this year or early next year, reports India Today.

Nayanthara, who is waiting for the release of *Netrikann*, has a slew of films in the pipeline at different stages of production. It looks like the actress is all set to sign her next film.

Director Atlee has planned to finalise a South Indian actress to play the female lead. If she signs the film, it will be Nayanthara's first step to get into Bollywood.

Sonam Kapoor Ahuja: Skincare tips by the Bollywood celebrity

Sonam Kapoor Ahuja is a very well-known actor in the Bollywood industry. She is the daughter of Anil Kapoor, who started her career as an Assistant Director on moviemaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali's critically acclaimed movie, *Black*. Sonam Kapoor Ahuja made her acting debut in 2007 with Sanjay Leela Bhansali's movie *Saawariya* alongside debutant Ranbir Kapoor. The actor has done some great work in the Bollywood industry and is always praised for her great on-screen performances and excellent choice of movies.

Along with always being praised for her great work on-screen, Sonam Kapoor Ahuja is often spotted giving major fashion and skincare goals to many of her fans and followers who idolize the actor as their "fashion and beauty guru". Here are the tips that Sonam has shared in order to achieve great skin, as reported by Pinkvilla.

Face masks

Sonam Kapoor Ahuja often reveals that applying a homemade face mask can work like magic on the skin and is a great "self-care activity".

Sun protection is ultra-important

Sonam believes that it is very important to use sunscreen and shades in order to protect the skin from sun damage that can then show up on the skin as pigmentation, fine lines, and dullness.

Coconut water is the key

The celebrity reveals that coconut water is a great and very quick hydrator that is very good for the skin to feel and look fresh.

Balanced breakfast

Sonam reveals that a balanced breakfast can surely



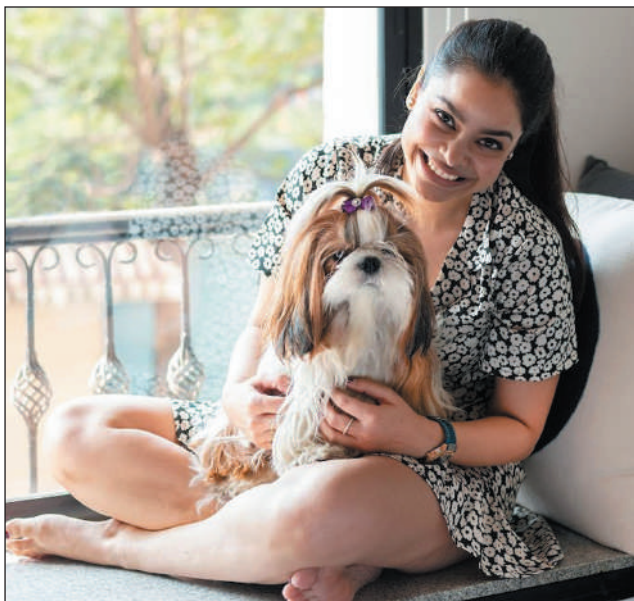
help start the day off on the right foot, giving the skin a little extra glow for the entire day.

Remove makeup

Sonam also says that it is very important to remove all the makeup before going to sleep as taking even a nap with having makeup on and letting it stay for long can harm the skin.

Inside Sumona Chakravarti's first home: The Kapil Sharma Show actor on the moment she decided to 'break down the house'

Step inside the first home of *The Kapil Sharma Show* actor Sumona Chakravarti. The actor has given her home a Scandinavian look with white walls, French windows and a bare aesthetic.



TV actor Sumona Chakravarti is a household name, courtesy, her shows, *Bade Achhe Lagte Hain* and *The Kapil Sharma Show*. The 32-year-old actor, after living with her parents in a 2BHK home in Mumbai, has moved out recently. She now lives in a flat in the same building as her parents. Though the actor bought the house a few years ago, it was only in September 2020 that she decided to shift there and hired architects to 'break the house down, and make it a home.'

In a recent video on 'Beautiful Homes', Sumona shared, "For the longest time I have been wanting to do this. I wanted to experience what it is like to run my own house. This is the first time I am living by myself, a bit late in life." The actor has given her new pad a Scandinavian look. She has an open kitchen, sliding glass doors and a French window in her bedroom. In the words of Hufeza Rangwala, director of Mumbai-based design studio, MuseLAB, "it was challenging to design the compact home."

Sumona thanked her mother for pushing her to be 'independent/to stand on my own feet'. Sharing the video of her new house, Sumona wrote on Instagram, "I have never felt more settled in life. N that comes with a certain sense of security knowing u have a roof over your head, food on the plate, n clothes to wear. There's only 1 person responsible for pushing me to be independent/ to stand on my own feet. Thank u Maa. This is a life lesson that will never be taught in any school or college."

Sumona also recalled the times when her house was given on rent, and the property brokers used to bring potential tenants to her flat and convince them by saying "it's the same place where *The Kapil Sharma Show* actor Sumona lives." The video also had the actor share how she is a person who loves her 'me time.' "I like my me-time, my solitude, I can't do with a lot of people," she said. Concluding the video, the actor added, "This is my first home, and I love it."

On the work front, Sumona has also starred in a few Bollywood films like *Mann*, *Kick*, *Barfi* and *Phir Se*. She made her TV debut in Ekta Kapoor's *Kasamh Se* in 2006. Later, she appeared in shows like *Kasturi*, *Sapno Se Bhare Naina* and *Jamai Raja*.

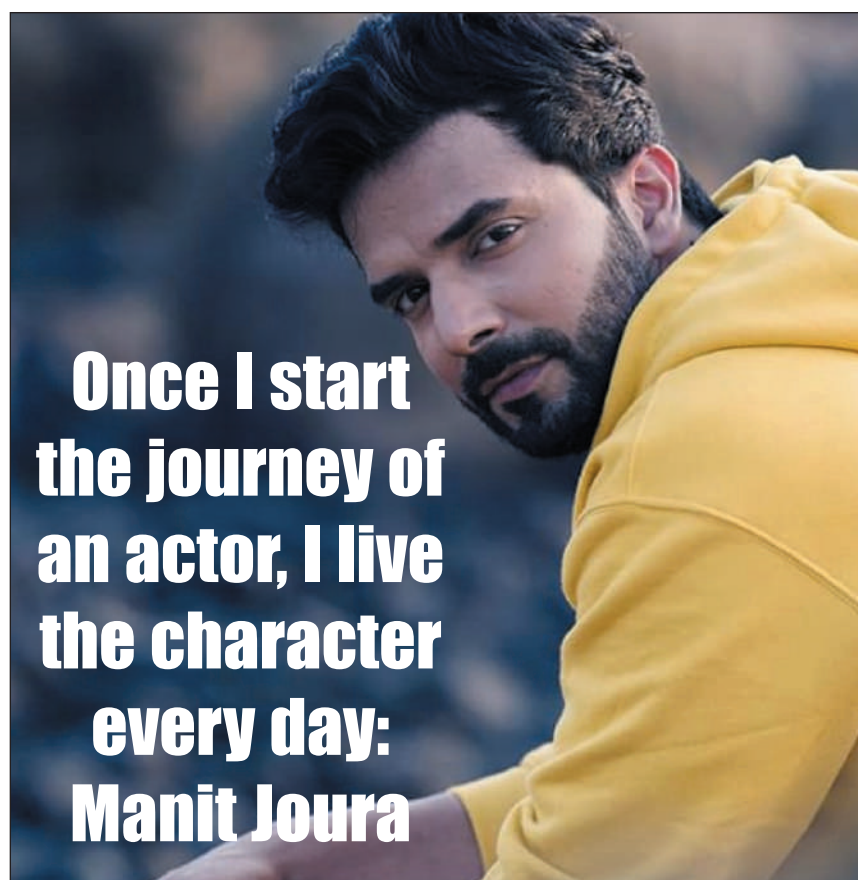
Manit Joura is currently seen playing the role of Harsh Shashtri in *"Prem Bandhan"*. The actor revealed that once he takes up a role, he starts living the character, and said, "For me, once I start the journey of an actor, I live the character every day. It's not that once I pack up at 9 pm and Harsh is switched off. I can't do that."

"I take my character home, and it's not intentional. There are traits and energy of the character which goes with you. I have realised that every character that you play gives you a lot and also takes away a lot from you. But I try to take whatever good I can take from my character," he added.

Prem Bandhan, produced by Balaji Telefilms, went on-air on November 30 on Dangal TV. When asked what made Manit say 'yes' to the show, he said, "I didn't say yes to the show, the show said yes to me after a series of look test, mock shoots, and auditions, but I am happy that I am getting to play the leading man in Balaji Telefilms' show. I am also happy that the audience likes my character and the story."

Talking about his character, he said, "I am playing the role of Harsh Shastri, an IT mastermind, who believes in giving employment to everyone around and building businesses and empires. He comes from a very influential background in Bihar. I can't say if he is an ideal man, or he is a bad boy, he is a mix of everything and as an actor, he pushes me out of my comfort zone. My character needs variety and range to play and it makes me happy as an actor. It's a love story that will make you cry but will also teach you something."

Asked if he relates to the actor in any way, the handsome actor said, "I don't think it's important for me to relate to the character initially, but it was important for the makers to relate me with the character, like how much of Harsh they see in me. When I read the character, I could easily relate to it, I don't know why, but I did. I guess when you get a character there are some character traits that you already



Once I start the journey of an actor, I live the character every day: Manit Joura

have, and of course, there are some things which are not similar too, and as an actor, it is my responsibility to fill up those dissimilarities."

"I don't relate to Harsh because I am not eccentric like him, and it's a very challenging character for me to play. I just hope that I keep playing it well. As far as similarities are concerned, both Manit and Harsh respect women and elders," he added.

Manit has worked with Balaji in TV shows like *Kumkum Bhagya* and *Kundali Bhagya* and web series like *The Test Case* and *Baarish*. He said working with Balaji again is like a homecoming for him, and added, "I am happy, grateful, and privileged to work with them again. It's a very gratifying experience. Working again with the people you already know, you feel like taking the extra mile because of the comfortable environment and because you love them. And I feel it's a team effort, and if that team is your own and loves you, what more can you ask for."

Lastly, when asked about the changes he has noticed in the industry post lockdown, he said, "I think people have become more cautious, they have become more conscious about their health, they have stopped eating outside. People have now become concerned about the health of others too."

"Also, I feel that if I start showing any symptoms then it's my responsibility to get myself checked before I show up on the set because as an actor it's my responsibility. When I am on the set, I am going to meet a lot of people, so it's my responsibility that I don't risk their lives. Fortunately, there is proper decorum being followed on the set, people check the temperature, sanitisation happens regularly and people wear masks. Makers are ensuring that they call the actors only after a scene has been set up so that it doesn't become crowded. I think people should follow and ask others also to follow the rules and nobody should take it otherwise," Manit signed off.

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CINE 12

Mardi 6 juillet - 21.10

Death Fighter



mtv1

Mercredi 7 juillet - 21.00

Jeepers Creepers



mtv2

Riding Tornado

Jeudi 8 juillet - 21.15



	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
mardi 6 juillet	07.00 Local: Entrepreneuriat Au... 10.35 Doc: Zenith 11.00 Mag: Le Saviez Vous? 11.10 Tele: Soleil Levant 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Local: Les Grands Noms... 12.55 Doc: L'art Et La Matiere 14.30 D.Anime: Twirlywoos 14.55 D.Anime: Spirit: Au Galop... 15.15 D.Anime: La Famille Blaire... 15.27 D.Anime: Little Spirou 15.35 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis... 15.45 D.Anime: The Deep 16.08 D.Anime: Garfield Originals 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 18.56 MBC Production: Charcha 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.35 Local: An Eta Dalert 21.05 Film: Death Fighter 23.10 Le Journal	07.00 DDI Live 10.00 Serial: CID 12.00 Film: Yateem Starring: Sunny Deol, Farha Naaz, Danny Denzongpa 15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.25 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.47 Serial: Bava Maradullu 16.08 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 16.29 Serial: Silah 16.54 Serial: Imtihaan 17.16 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.34 Telugu - Premabhishekam 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 DDI Magazine 19.00 Zournal Kreol 19.30 Coming U Graphics 20.04 Local: Programme In Tamil 20.30 Film: Amrit Star: Rajesh Khanna, Smita Patil, Aruna Irani, Satish	06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa 06.43 Mag: Voa Connect 07.12 Mag: In Good Shape 07.38 Doc: Amazing Gardens 08.04 Mag: Future Mag 08.33 Doc: Tresors Oublies De La... 10.46 Mag: Eco@Africa 14.03 Mag: 360 GEO 14.36 Mag: Global 3000 15.31 Doc: Screen Generation 16.14 Mag: Eco@Africa 17.35 Mag: Voa Connecte 18.02 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto... 19.00 Student Support Prog Grade 7 19.31 Mag: Made In Germany 20.40 Local: News (English) 21.10 Doc: Snapshots 21.36 Doc: Comme Un Poisson... 22.53 Local: Klip Seleksion 23.36 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto...	01.27 Serial: Shades Of Blue 03.37 Film: Clarity 05.22 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.06 Serial: Imposters 06.47 Film: Easter Under Wraps 09.00 Serial: Mission: Impossible 09.48 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: Shades Of Blue 12.00 Film: Clarity 13.35 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.17 Mag: Hollywood On Set 14.45 Film: Easter Under Wraps 16.41 Serial: Mission: Impossible 17.23 Serial: Imposters 18.05 Tele: Daniella 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: Imposters 21.15 Film: Guernica 23.01 Tele: Muneca Brava	08.00 Film: Agent Vinod 12.04 / 19.54 - Radha Krishna 12.26 / 20.11 - Chupke Chupke 12.48 / 20.32 Mere Sai 13.09 / 21.09 - Agniphera 13.31 / 21.24 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.53 / 21.59 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.04 / 22.25 - Sethji 15.33 Film: Ladies Tailor Star: Rajpal Yadav, Kim Sharma 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.52 Serial: Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 19.22 Bhakharwadi 19.37 Siddhi Vinayak
mercredi 7 juillet	07.10 Local: An Eta Dalert 10.34 Doc: Zenith 11.10 Tele: Soleil Levant 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.55 Doc: L'art Et La Matiere 14.30 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 14.56 D.Anime: Spirit: Au Galop... 15.18 D.Anime: Little Spirou 15.33 D.Anime: Rev & Roll 15.36 D.Anime: The Hive 17.41 Doc: Zanafan Nou Pei 17.50 Mag: Happy Tales 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 18.55 Local Prod: Arogya 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.20 Prod Indepen: Lottotech 21.20 Film: Jeepers Creepers Stars: Phillips, Justin Long, Jonathan Breck 23.10 Local: Le Journal	07.00 DDI Live 10.00 Pyar Ka Dard Meetha... 11.03 Suhani Si Ek Ladki 12.00 Film: Naya Din Nai Raat 14.12 DDI Magazine 15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.25 Aamhi Doghi 15.47 Bava Maradallu 16.01 Apoorva Raagangal 16.32 Serial: Silah 16.55 Serial: Imtihaan 17.12 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.33 Serial: Kulvadh 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 Mag: DDI Magazine 19.00 Zournal Kreol 19.30 Mag: DDI Magazine 20.06 Programme In Marathi 20.30 Film: Joshi Ki Kamble 22.20 Live: DDI Live Star: Devyani Deshmukh, Amita Khopkar, Dhananjay Mandrekar	06.00 Rev: The Global Auto... 06.26 Doc: Country Living For... 06.52 Mag: Check In 07.18 Mag: Made In Germany 08.13 Mag: Sur Mesure 08.24 Doc: Ville En Fête 14.00 Mag: Check In 14.40 Mag: Made In Germany 15.30 Mag: Sur Mesure 16.15 Doc: Snapshots 16.41 Doc: Comme Un Poisson... 17.33 Mag: Close Up 17.59 Mag: Motorweek 18.30 Mag: Vous Et Nous 19.00 Student Prog Grade 7 19.28 Doc: Garden Party 20.04 Mag: Tendance XXI 20.40 Local: News (English) 21.06 Doc: Comme Un Poisson... 22.00 Mag: Business Africa 22.26 Mag: Focus On Europe	01.34 Film: Guernica 03.20 Serial: Shades Of Blue 04.01 Film: Les Rêves De Lindsay 06.06 Serial: Imposters 06.46 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive... 05.47 Serial: Imposters 09.00 Serial: Mission: Impossible 09.45 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: Shades Of Blue 12.00 Film: Les Rêves De Lindsay 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive... 16.40 Serial: Mission: Impossible 17.28 Serial: Imposters 18.08 Tele: Daniella 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: Madam Secretary 21.15 Film: Le Salaire De La Viol... 22.52 Tele: Muneca Brava 23.29 Serial: Mission: Impossible	08.00 Film: Ladies Tailor Star: Rajpal Yadav, Kim Sharma 12.04 / 20.06 - Radha Krishna 12.24 / 20.26 - Chupke Chupke 12.44 / 20.02 - Mere Sai - Shrad... 13.10 / 20.46 - Agniphera 13.31 / 21.09 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.57 / 21.50 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 14.54 / 21.46 - Sethji 15.23 Film: 1942: A Love Story Starring: Anil Kapoor, Jackie Shroff and Manisha Koirala 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.51 Ishaaron Ishaaron... 19.13 Bhakharwadi 19.36 Siddhi Vinayak
jeudi 8 juillet	06.00 Local: Klip Seleksion 06.45 Local: Sur Prise 07.10 Local: Aktiv 10.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today 11.00 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous? 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.52 Local: L'art Et La Matiere 13.03 Local: Le Rendez Vous 14.30 D.Anime: The Garfield 15.18 D.Anime: Little Spirou 15.24 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis... 15.44 D.Anime: The Deep 17.05 Serial: Superstore 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 18.55 Local: Tirth Yatra 19.30 Le Journal 20.15 Film: Dhol Stars: Tusshar Kapoor, S. Joshi and Kunal Khemu	07.00 DDI Live 10.00 Karm Phal Data Shani 12.00 Film: Mela Starring Feroz Khan, Sanjay Khan, Mumtaz 14.07 DDI Magazine 15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.25 Aamhi Doghi 15.47 Bava Maradallu 16.01 Apoorva Raagangal 16.32 Serial: Silah 16.53 Serial: Imtihaan 17.12 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.29 Local: Amrit Vaani 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 Serial: Ghar Pahuca Da... 19.00 Zournal Kreol 19.30 Mag: DDI Magazine 20.15 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 20.36 Local: Retrovizer 21.19 Film: Riding Tornado	06.00 Mag: Motorweek 06.26 Mag: Vous Et Nous 07.19 Doc: Garden Party 07.49 Mag: Tendance XXI 10.01 Mag: Focus On Europe 11.10 Mag: Motorweek 15.38 Doc: Extreme Tourism 15.51 Contest Of The Cathedrals 16.23 Mag: Motorweek 17.02 Mag: Vous Et Nous 17.16 Mag: Arts.21 18.00 Mag: Eco India 18.30 Mag: Shift - Living In The... 19.00 Student Prog Grade 7 19.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today 20.01 Mag: Science Ou Fiction 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.40 Doc: 360 Geo 21.32 Doc: Guardians Of The... 22.14 Doc: Tsunamis 22.57 Mag: Eco India	01.27 Brush With Danger 02.53 Serial: Shades Of Blue 03.34 Film: Avenging The Throne 04.56 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.45 Film: Le Salaire De La Viol... 09.00 Serial: Mission: Impossible 09.56 Tele: Daniella 10.36 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.00 Serial: Shades Of Blue 12.00 Film: Avenging The Throne 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.16 Mag: Hollywood On Set 14.48 Film: A Doggone Hollywood 16.40 Serial: Mission: Impossible 17.29 Serial: Madam Secretary 18.15 Tele: Daniella 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: Madam Secretary 21.14 Serial: Airwolf 22.01 Film: Celle Qui A Tous Les...	08.00 Film: 1942: A Love Story Star: Anil Kapoor, Jackie Shroff and Manisha Koirala 12.05 / 19.54 - Radha Krishna 12.22 / 20.11 - Chupke Chupke 12.48 / 20.32 - Mere Sai 13.07 / 21.09 - Agniphera 13.33 / 21.24 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.48 / 21.50 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 14.09 / 21.46 - Naagin 14.52 / 21.59 - Sethji 14.55 / 22.52 - Mere Sai 15.27 Film: Filhaal 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.51 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 19.14 Serial: Bhakharwadi 19.38 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak

B TV

Mercredi 30 juin - 15.20
 Star: Star: Sushmita Sen, Tabu, Sanjay Suri

mtv1

Jeudi 8 juillet - 20.15
 Stars: Tusshar Kapoor, S. Joshi and Kunal Khemu



Historic moment as Constitutional Court finds Zuma guilty and sentences him to jail

South Africa has many problems. But, as Jacob Zuma has found out, the strength of its rule of law and the independence of its judiciary should not be underestimated.



Former South African president Jacob Zuma stands in the dock at a separate trial at the Pietermaritzburg High Court in May. Photo by PHILL MAGAKOE/POOL/AFP via Getty Images

South Africa's Constitutional Court has found former president Jacob Zuma guilty of contempt of court and sentenced him to 15 months' imprisonment.

Clearly, this is a momentous, historic verdict, with profound legal and constitutional implications, and one that will have political reverberations. It will strengthen the hand of reform-minded President Cyril Ramaphosa, who is struggling to rebuild state institutions hollowed out during Zuma's nine-year rule, which ended in early 2018. The judgment fiercely makes the case for accountability over impunity. It serves to remind all South Africans that no one is above the law.

The ground-breaking judgment was read out by Acting Chief Justice Sisi Khampepe, who began with these words:

It is indeed the lofty and lonely work of the Judiciary, impervious to public commentary and political rhetoric, to uphold, protect and apply the Constitution and the law at any and all costs.

Never before has the Constitutional Court passed a custodial sentence, still less on a former democratically elected president.

This was one of several choices that the court had to make.

Weighty matters

The first question - whether there had been contempt of court - was straightforward to answer: Zuma had chosen not to contest the proceedings and had declined to offer any justification or denial of his decision to defy the order of the same court earlier this year. In that decision it held that he should appear before the Zondo Commission, the judicial inquiry into state capture and corruption in the country.

The commission's legal team had come up with a strategy that, for once, outwitted Zuma. For almost two decades, Zuma has benefited from the strength of South Africa's rule of law with his so-called "Stalingrad strategy" - taking every legal point and appealing every judgment against him.

Instead of going to a lower court, as would be customary in contempt of court proceedings, the Zondo Commission went directly to the Constitutional Court. The court accepted jurisdiction on the basis that it was its order that he was defying and because of the exceptional and urgent circumstances.

The public had an interest in having Zuma give evidence at the commission and respond to the grave allegations of corruption that have been made against him from his nine years in office. He ascended to the high office in May 2009 and was ousted from power by Ramaphosa following the latter's election as president of the governing African National Congress in December 2017.

The consequence of the decision of the Constitutional Court to accept jurisdiction was that Zuma, having nowhere to appeal to, as it is the apex court, was bound to accept its ruling.

He must now present himself to his local police station within five days.

For the majority of seven justices, Khampepe found that, although the case had exceptional features - the fact that it involves a former president, with ongoing duties to respect and protect the constitution - he was not being treated exceptionally, as the minority judgment penned by two justices (Leona Theron and Chris Jafta) held.

The second, weightier decision for the

court to take was whether to pass a coercive or punitive sentence. The former would, for example, have suspended the sentence provided that Zuma appear before the Zondo Commission; the latter would simply punish the contempt of court.

On this point, both the majority and minority judgments accepted that it would be futile and inappropriate to pass a coercive sentence because Zuma had made it clear that he would not appear in front of the commission.

This court is not "naive", Justice Khampepe wrote:

I do not think this Court should be so naïve as to hope for his compliance with that order. Indeed, it defies logic to believe that a suspended sentence, which affords Mr Zuma the option to attend, would have any effect other than to prolong his defiance and to signal dangerously that impunity is to be enjoyed by those who defy court orders.

The court has, indeed, become very wise to Zuma's tactics over the years.

The majority of the judges held that Zuma's public outbursts before and after the contempt proceedings had been brought, in which he attacked the honesty of the judges of the Constitutional Court and impugned the integrity of the rule of law, should be taken into account when determining the punishment.

For their part, the minority held that these considerations were extraneous to the core contempt matter. The minority judgment further argued that to send Zuma to prison without a criminal standard trial was to infringe his fair trial rights contained in section 35 of the constitution.

The majority rejected this argument on the basis that since he was not a criminal

defendant - contempt proceedings are civil proceedings not criminal - there could be no breach of a right that is not held.

In passing sentence, the majority judgment referred extensively to the "calculated and insidious" attacks on the rule of law by Zuma. Again, the final paragraph of the substantive part of Khampepe's judgment was sweeping:

Quantifying Mr Zuma's egregious conduct is an impossible task. So, I am compelled to ask the question: what will it take for the punishment imposed on Mr Zuma to vindicate this Court's authority and the rule of law? In other words, the focus must be on what kind of sentence will demonstrate that orders made by a court must be obeyed and, to Mr Zuma, that his contempt and contumacy is rebukeable in the strongest sense. With this in mind then, I order an unsuspended sentence of imprisonment of 15 months. I do so in the knowledge that this cannot properly capture the damage that Mr Zuma has done to the dignity and integrity of the judicial system of a democratic and constitutional nation. He owes this sentence in respect of violating not only this Court, nor even just the sanctity of the Judiciary, but to the nation he once promised to lead and to the Constitution he once vowed to uphold.

This was a passionate as well as eloquent defence of the constitution and the rule of law. Immediately afterwards, Mzwanele Manyi, the spokesman for the Zuma Foundation, described it as "emotional".

But, but for once, Zuma has run out of legal runway and must now face the consequences of his action.

A compelling narrative

South Africa has many problems, and inter-locking fiscal, economic and health crises. But underestimate the strength of its rule of law and the independence of its judiciary at your peril - as Zuma has now discovered.

There is something sad and tragic about his steady but inexorable fall from grace - a motif for the country, in one sense. And yet there is something so high-minded and noble about how the country's constitution has prevailed over his abuse of power - a far more compelling narrative.

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