

# MAURITIUS TIMES

• "It's not just about being better. It's about being different. You need to give people a reason to choose your business." -- Tom Abbott

## Commission of Inquiry on Betamax



**'It is unlikely that a Supreme Court judge will be influenced by any political motives'**

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## Encounter:

Armoogum Parsuramen, Chairman  
- Global Rainbow Foundation



**"Whenever there is injustice; we cannot and should not remain quiet"**

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## Record-breaking everything!

'Record-breaking,' 'unprecedented,' 'freak event,' 'unnatural,' 'extreme event': these are some of the terms being used to refer to the serial catastrophes that have been occurring in different parts of the planet

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## Opinion

## Calamity compounded



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# Betamax, again

**I**t was announced last Friday, after the Cabinet meeting of the same day, that government had decided to appoint a Commission of Inquiry to inquire and report on, inter alia, 'the circumstances in which the contract for transport of petroleum products to Mauritius (Contract of Affreightment) was awarded to Betamax Ltd and the circumstances which subsequently led to the termination of the said contract'. This comes following the final determination of this case by the Privy Council, which overturned the ruling of the Supreme Court, and confirmed the earlier ruling of the Singapore International Arbitration Tribunal which found in favour of Betamax. A sitting judge, Hon Mrs Carol Green-Jokhoo, Puisne Judge, will be the chairperson, and she will have as commissioners Dr Pushpawant Boodhun, former Permanent Secretary and Kodados Mosafeer, former Director, Procurement and Supply, as Commissioners.

Six billion rupees drawn from the public exchequer to pay for damages to Betamax for unjustified breach of contract as well as legal fees have gone down the drain in the process since the contract was rescinded by the Lepep government in 2015 without any perceivable benefit to the country, and one wonders what is sought to be achieved with this newly-appointed commission of inquiry.

Readers will recall that one of the first dossiers the Lepep government issuing from the general election of December 2014 took up after assuming power was the contract given out to Betamax by the STC under the preceding government in 2009. It tried at first to negotiate Betamax out of the country's petroleum transportation contract in January 2015, on the ground that the contract would have been awarded unlawfully thanks to a colourable device consisting of amending public procurement laws and singling it out for privileged contract allocation.

To no effect, since, as advised to the government by the State Law Office previously, the contract had been made fully compliant with the changed legal dispositions. That this was actually the case was affirmed, as it were, by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP), later in November 2016. The ODPP explaining its decision not to prosecute several persons including the former Prime Minister; former Minister of Public Infrastructure, Transport & Shipping; the director of Betamax and certain public officials for alleged offences of bribery of public official, forgery, cons-

piracy and related offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act and the Public Procurement Act, as asked for by the police in December 2015, found no evidence that the law, as it stood, had been breached.

However, the Lepep government was adamant that the law had been breached and colourable devices had been resorted to so as to allocate the contract to Betamax. Unwilling or not being able to negotiate the company out of the contract, it decided by end-January 2015 to rescind the Betamax contract. It found a presumably cheaper alternative for transporting our petroleum requirements. Whether this is true or not, we don't know, as no credible independent assessment has taken place. The fact now is, as established earlier by the Singapore Arbitration Centre and thereafter confirmed by the Privy Council, that the Lepep government acted in breach of law by rescinding the contract, for which the State, that is the people, has had to shell out a colossal amount of Rs 6 bn for damages and legal fees.

The decision to appoint a commission of inquiry prior to the rash decision-taking of 2015, might have been understood. Now that the colossal damages have been inflicted on the population as confirmed by our court of last appeal, there is clearly the feeling that political motivations are at stake to try and spin a narrative that soothes the damage and resentment of the population.

The country is paying the price for a situation where power goes to the head of politicians who think that they can get off scot-free no matter what questionable decisions they take, how they twist existing laws and rules to suit their momentary conveniences and how they explain away controversial decisions. In France, past President Chirac, past PMs Laurent Fabius, Alain Juppé and Francois Fillon had to face the music for insalubrious acts during their tenure and past President Nicolas Sarkozy is currently in the dock for a variety of alleged offences. Even in the USA, at least a dozen collaborators of past President Donald Trump have been arraigned and charged with various misdemeanours, with Trump Organisation itself under scrutiny. Isn't it about time to do away with the fig leaf of Cabinet collective responsibility and that politicians, just as high officials and advisors, be made answerable for acts that are against the public interest or the greater good of the nation, particularly when public funds are involved?

## The Conversation

# Why some people switch political parties

**W**hy do some people switch political parties? After all, if someone is committed enough to a particular vision of politics, wouldn't they be relatively immune to the charms of its competitors?

It turns out, however, that switching parties at grassroots membership level is by no means uncommon, even giving rise in some quarters to accusations of "entryism".

The massive increase in Labour's membership which accompanied Jeremy Corbyn's elevation to the leadership in 2015 was often anecdotally associated, at least in the minds of his enemies (internal as well as external), with an influx of people who had previously belonged to parties on the far-left fringe of the country's politics.

Meanwhile, the Conservatives' adoption of an ever-harder position on Brexit was blamed by some not just on Theresa May's desire to keep Tory Eurosceptics on board, but on pressure put on more moderate MPs by former members of the Eurosceptic UK Independence Party (UKIP) joining and even taking over their local associations.

Our new research sheds light on the truth of party-switching politics – how many people really switch, why people are motivated to do so, and whether the claims of entryism are credible.

## Patterns of party-switching

We surveyed nearly 7,000 members of British political parties (including registered Brexit Party supporters) within two weeks of the 2019 general election. When we analysed the data, we found a remarkably high proportion of our sample (23%) claimed to have previously been – or, if we allow for registered Brexit Party supporters as well, currently were – members of a different political party than the one to which they were now affiliated.

Some 29% of Tory members who admitted in 2019 to having been members of other parties claim to have been UKIP members. Interestingly, though, virtually as many were former Labour members. As a proportion of all Conservative Party grassroots members, these figures amount to 3% who were former members of UKIP, 4.5% who were simultaneously Brexit Party supporters, and 4% who were ex-Labour members.

This puts into perspective the scale of the entryist phenomenon. At most, 7.5% of all Tory members in 2019 had a history of connections with UKIP or the Brexit Party (probably fewer, given the likely overlap of UKIP and Brexit Party connections).

This is not to say that their impact may not have been significant in certain constituencies when it came to selecting party candidates, nor is it to deny that the Conservative Party grassroots have increasingly come to favour "hard" forms of Brexit over the course of the past few years. But it would appear that, in the vast majority of cases, this will have been down to the changing views of members who had no formal associations with UKIP or the Brexit Party.

Paul Webb, Prof of Politics, University of Sussex &  
Tim Bale, Prof of Politics, University of London

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Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

# Record-breaking everything!

*'Record-breaking,' 'unprecedented,' 'freak event,' 'unnatural,' 'extreme event': these are some of the terms being used to refer to the serial catastrophes that have been occurring in different parts of the planet*

Record-breaking, 'unprecedented,' 'freak event,' 'unnatural,' 'extreme event': these are some of the terms being used to refer to the serial catastrophes that have been occurring in different parts of the planet, practically within days of each other although they span geographical regions that are very far apart. In fact, they have been affecting all the continents. This therefore suggests that there may be a common underlying cause, whether emanating from planet Earth itself or from an extraterrestrial source. From a science perspective one would try to figure out which is the primary or triggering event, which may then be sustained by other factors for given periods of time.

The variety of descriptors applied allude each to a particular aspect and gives some food for thought. Record-breaking they certainly are in the regions where they are happening, for example the forest fires in the north-west of the North American continent, which have been preceded by hitherto unknown temperatures in the 40 to 50 degrees range and prolonged dryness. In other parts of the world, though, such as during summers in India, these levels of temperature have been routinely experienced in inhabited areas and it would seem that people's physiologies have adapted to them. There usually aren't as many deaths as took place, for example, during one summer over a decade ago in France when almost 20,000 people, mostly the elderly, died from dehydration and heat exhaustion.

Extreme too they definitely are as they exceed the normal limits that people are used to, but not quite unprecedented when we really come to think of it – because there have been precedents that have been witnessed, though perhaps elsewhere. Freak in the sense of 'abnormal, irregular or bizarre' seems appropriate, as we ourselves are currently witnessing – or rather enduring: a particularly cold winter that we are both talking and complaining about. When people living in Port Louis tell you that as the evening sets in they feel cold, well, that is a real indication that the winter is an abnormal one, and unusually so early on. Besides, however, it has also been associated with much rain, of the persistent continuous type that lasts almost a whole day in the 'highlands and central plateau,' per the meteorological office bulletin forecast.

The reason for the severe cold is apparently an anticyclone. That we are used to, but what is no doubt bizarre to our lay minds is the fact that instead of the usual one or two per season, this time round they seem to be following



**"The loss of lives and people missing, along with the devastations caused to residential areas, invariably with great loss and a painful realization that it is going to be an uphill struggle to restore a minimum of what increasingly now is being referred to as the 'new normal.' As with us here after some of the massively destructive cyclones we have experienced, nothing was ever the same again, but we have learnt our lessons over the years..."**

each other in succession: one is not yet gone that another is tagging behind. As someone remarked, 'ek so la queue li pé risse éne lote!' – 'it is pulling another one with its tail end!' Despite the sun, and no rain for a change, Sunday last has been cold, and windy. And the met forecast was that there was yet another anticyclone forming and that would be coming in from the south-east of the Indian Ocean basin. Is that a foreboding of what we can expect for next year's winter?

Not too far from us, the Western Cape region in South Africa witnessed – hold it – snowfall! And that was on Sunday as well. As adults scurried to take cover and rush home, children in heavy clothing were seen to be enjoying themselves, putting out their hands to catch snow and doing merry go-rounds. That snowfall is for sure an abnormal phenomenon, and the reason put forward was that there was a freezing Atlantic wind that was blowing.

What has characterized these events is their suddenness, and that caught people aback and unawares, as they were unprepared to face what was happening, especially the floods that took place in regions as far removed from each other as one can imagine – Costa Rica in South America, China, several countries in Europe, Perth in Australia, India – where floods have ravaged the state of Maharashtra. What is abnormal in this case is that they extended into the hinterlands, whereas 'normally' it is Mumbai which goes under water when the annual monsoon sets in.

One could say that there is nothing unusual, abnor-

mal, unprecedented, freak or record-breaking about this because it takes place every year and people know it will happen. Such floods are more common in the states of Bihar, Assam, and Uttarakhand. It may be recalled that in the latter, several years ago, there happened what was referred to as the 'Himalayan tsunami.' It was the first ever of its kind. Besides the damage to habitations, roads and other infrastructure, thousands of people lost their lives and thousands more went missing.

This is the other characteristic of these catastrophes, the loss of lives and people missing, along with the devastations caused to residential areas, invariably with great loss and a painful realization that it is going to be an uphill struggle to restore a minimum of what increasingly now is being referred to as the 'new normal.' As with us here after some of the massively destructive cyclones we have experienced, nothing was ever the same again, but we have learnt our lessons over the years.

However, these global catastrophes that we have been seeing seem to belong to another category altogether, and this is where the issue of what is causing them comes to the fore. Cyclones, tornadoes, typhoons, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions are regarded as 'natural' phenomena, meaning that that we have no control over their occurrence. The term 'unnatural' therefore suggests that there may be other factors that may be linked to the catastrophes of extreme heat and flooding, and the UN's panel on climate change (International Panel on Climate Change) conclusively puts this down to the sum total of human activities, and which will increase as the population of the world continues to grow. They generate carbon dioxide, the emissions of which cumulatively lead to global warming, and its consequence is the 'abnormal' events that we are witnessing, mostly helplessly.

Given that they are taking place more frequently and regularly, the question is whether instead of considering them as abnormal they will in a foreseeable future be considered as another subset of the 'new normal'? Something to ponder.





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**64<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**  
1956-2020



# Calamity compounded

Jan Arden

**O**n 25th July we commemorated the first anniversary of the wreckage of the MV Wakashio onto our south-east coral reefs off Pointe d'Esny. Whether it was loaded with undesirable cargo other than the reported 4000 tonnes of fuel oil we may never know, since both parts of the broken vessel have been sunk or sent to junk.

We trust the appointed Court of Investigation to fish out fact from fiction, but with its inherently limited mandate, we may never discover how, why and when this rather large vessel deviated from the maritime passage south of our shores to head straight to our reefs where it impaled itself. Neither may we find out whether the command and control centres of the NCG and our coastal radar surveillance systems were in paralysis from the moment of the course deviation to the ultimate break-up of the beached vessel in two parts, causing the worst oil spill in living memory in that pristine region. Nor whether the Mauritius Ports Authority was even aware that its hangars were full, it seems, of kms of oil-booms and a variety of contingency equipment to mitigate oil spill damages.

All while thousands of volunteers across the island, braving police interdicts and even barricades, were busy collecting and sewing rudimentary booms in a desperate attempt to stem the flow of oozing black muck. All while authorities were visibly missing in action for a full twelve days, leading in August an angry conscience of the population to march and call for government's departure on grounds of incompetence, if not downright dereliction of duty.

But worse was to come with the tragic episodes surrounding the sinking of tug Sir Gaetan, sent out to haul L'Ami Constant barge back from Pointe d'Esny to Port-Louis harbour with deaths of three seamen and the disappearance at sea of its unfortunate skipper. We as yet do not know how the barge and the tug were dispatched to assist the Wakashio salvage operations by SMIT salvage on behalf of the Japanese ship-owners.

A second Court of Investigation is under way in parallel to fathom the circumstances and causes of this wretched second accident, some 30 miles north of the Wakashio wreck. But what has been transpiring day by day, as witnesses testify, is nothing short of a calamitous state of affairs at the Port Authority, in what used to position itself as a potential leader in Indian Ocean for security, efficiency and efficacy of operations.

Can we hope that this Court's findings



Photo: PTI file

**“What has been hogging the limelight throughout much of this month has been the sudden rise in local cases coupled with the explosive propagation for thousands of immigrants locked in quarantine ‘dortoirs’. True be it that some may have acted rashly and irresponsibly in organizing family events where sanitary protocols have been ignored, but the bare fact remains that this unchecked rise and a level of 100 new cases per day is taking place as every beach resort, tourism operator and economic management authorities would no doubt have wished for a far safer bubble-image to sell...”**

will assist the urgent sorting out required at the MPA and restore some of its waning credentials?

\* \* \*

## The gilded cage

**M**any of us who have not worked in the public or para-public sector will still have family, friends and relatives working as civil servants and most of us may encounter them in the course of their professional or social intercourse. Thousands of them are dedicated to their work and sense of contributing something more worthwhile than earning money or executing jobs in the private sector, with its own strictures. From teachers and educators to all grades of health personnel, police and fire services, front-liners during the pandemic, many were putting lives and families at risk going to work during the past eighteen months. Our comment here is not in any way therefore addressed at those conscientious personnel in their operational or administrative roles.

MK personnel and staff were not to be blamed when, well before the pandemic, higher echelons flew to Toulouse and chatted their way into buying two new Airbuses which, even before landing, had to be rushed off to SAA on lease and mired our national carrier in heavy seas

which the pandemic contributed to send it into voluntary administration. Neither can the thousands of dedicated SBM staff be blamed when top echelons, with garrulous ease, shaved several billions off the bank's profits through bungled loans to international sharks.

As for the port authorities or the NCG, there is no need to belabour the point when two separate Courts of Investigation are under way. On their side the police service top echelons have yet to explain satisfactorily their conduct of the inquiry into the murder of an MSM chief agent Soopramanien Kistnen, a high-profile case with political ramifications and where we understand the judicial inquiry will be re-opened this week. As for the STC and the fraudulent activities it has been associated with during the pandemic, we are still unaware where matters stand regarding any inquiries and sanctions.

Two weeks ago, I considered that this sense of impunity could have a debilitating impact on the country's psyche. An experienced civil servant rejoined privately that while he concurred, he could see no way out of the administrative morass. Most higher echelons know the procedures inside out and have spent their lives cajoling ministers and political brass, towards a fulsome retirement.

They pick the juiciest board postings, where their contribution is likely to be minimal, he continued. So, what do you replace defaulting SCEs and PS if not by his assistant at a lower rung and who will inevitably have to report to him?

I hope my friend is a tad cynical but he provides some insight about the business as usual atmosphere at highest echelons of our civil service. Kindly do not compare us to Singapore, Rwanda or even Seychelles for that matter unless we find a way to escape the gilded cage.

\* \* \*

## Get vaccinated!

**T**he first contingent of Covishield gifted generously by India arrived here end January 2021. The Health ministry, which had previously given the impression of biding its time with vaccine orders, could do no less than get its vaccination act together. There were still problems to sort out: priorities between competing population segments to target, lengthy queues of the elderly to manage and the controversy surrounding the claim waiver form, but at least a semi-organised roll-out was under way from March onwards, depending on the arrival of lots from Covaxine, Covishield, Sinopharm and, now we hear, Sputnik.

That is a massive relief as we stand poised for the re-opening of frontiers with close to 50% of the population having or about to receive their second dose of whatever was on offer by authorities. Yet, what has been hogging the limelight throughout much of this month has been the sudden rise in local cases coupled with the explosive propagation for thousands of immigrants locked in quarantine ‘dortoirs’. True be it that some may have acted rashly and irresponsibly in organizing family events where sanitary protocols have been ignored, but the bare fact remains that this unchecked rise and a level of 100 new cases per day is taking place as every beach resort, tourism operator and economic management authorities would no doubt have wished for a far safer bubble-image to sell.

We should all wish that the overburdened and overstretched Health personnel succeed in bringing this disquieting new normal rapidly under control and we can contribute our share by getting vaccinated with a double dose at the earliest. When the balance of personal freedoms is up against such an alarming national threat, the sense of collective good, backed by scientific fact rather than speculation, should prevail over personal concerns and beliefs.

Get vaccinated and stick to sanitary protocols all the while, until our island is restored to the safe heaven that it should have remained since early this year. All the more so if we wish all quarantine restrictions imposed by authorities to be phased out at the earliest.



## Commission of Inquiry on Betamax

# 'It is unlikely that a Supreme Court judge will be influenced by any political motives'

*'What might amount to a contempt would be conclusions or findings of the commission that go against the Privy Council's determination'*

**L**ex sheds his legal perspective on Government's decision to appoint a Commission of Inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the award of the highly politicised Betamax contract and its abrupt termination, costing the taxpayer nearly Rs 6 billion. The Commission will have to tread carefully its mandate on a matter where our final court of judiciary appeal has already delivered its verdict against STC/Government, now a matter of public knowledge. If it does, it may not amount to contempt of the Law Lords, although it will be up to Government whether it will make the findings of the Commission public, and therefore open to more political sniping.

## LEX

**\* The President of the Republic has appointed a Commission of Inquiry to inquire into the Betamax contract. What are the roles and limitations of a commission of inquiry?**

The purpose of a commission is only to hear evidence, collect facts, draw conclusions and, if need be, make recommendations.

**\* Is it correct to say that the findings of commissions of inquiry are not legally binding, but they can be highly influential?**

After the Commission of Inquiry has completed its investigation, the findings are remitted to the President of the Republic who would then transmit it to the Prime Minister. The findings are not legally binding. And if the report is not made public, people will never know what had been found and recommended. It will be up to the government to decide whether or not the report should be made public.

**\* The proposed commission of inquiry on Betamax comes in the wake of the earlier judgement of the Supreme Court and the recent one by the Privy Council. It will no doubt act independently of the government, but its conclusions might be leveraged for political purposes. Could that be its only aim?**

Since the commission of inquiry on Betamax will be chaired by a Supreme Court judge it is unlikely that the judge will be influenced by any political motives. What may happen, depending on the findings, conclusions and recommendations, politicians may use it for political purposes. We can recall how the commission of inquiry of Messrs Badry and Daby chaired by late Justice Victor Glover impacted the political scene and weakened the Labour Party in the eighties.

**\* What would a Judge, who has been called upon to inquire into the "circumstances" of the award and termination of a business contract between a government and a private party be looking at?**

According to the press, the commission will be asked to investigate the circumstances of the award of the contract and its rescission. The commission will analyse the circumstances under which the contract was awarded. A number of serious allegations of corruption were made against the government of Navin Ramgoolam by the late Sir Anerood Jugnauth and Roshi Bhadain. These will have to be investigated.

The commission will also have to hear the explanations of those who were behind the arbitrary rescission. Possibly the commission may inquire to find out whether there was a cheaper way of getting out of the contract especially as the abrupt rescission has cost the Treasury and the country nearly Rs 6 billion.

**\* The judge will form an opinion or a conclusion on the basis of the evidence and according to the provisions of the law. To what extent can a former Permanent Secretary and a former Director of Procurement and Supply, acting as Commissioners, be of assistance to the presiding judge in this matter?**

Both a former Permanent Secretary and a former Director, Procurement and Supply, acting as Commissioners, are deemed to be persons of experience in administrative and procurement matters respectively. Their contribution will be of great assistance as long as they do not allow themselves to be swayed by political influence.

**\* Do the terms of reference of the commission of inquiry, that is to inquire into the "circumstances" of the award and termination of the contract, indicate that these "circumstances" have not been examined by the Supreme Court nor by the Privy Council?**

This is a very pertinent question. The Arbitrator in the case analysed the circumstances leading to the award of the contract. Both the Supreme Court and the Privy Council did the same exercise though they came to opposite conclusions. The Supreme Court found the award of the contract was illegal whereas the Privy Council determined it was not. Surely the commission of inquiry will not go back on the conclusions of the Privy Council. Would it be permissible for the commission, after analysing the circumstances, to conclude that corruption tainted the award of the contract? That would be tantamount to sitting on appeal on the judgment of the Privy Council.

**\* This suggests that the commission of inquiry may find itself in an awkward situation in view of the conclusions of the Privy Council...**

Yes and no. So long as the judge and her assessors tread carefully and do not impinge on the prerogatives and findings of the Privy Council but limit themselves to a purely fact-finding exercise with regard to the circumstances of the award and rescission of the contract, they will be home and dry. Admittedly, they'll have to tread carefully.

**\* A suggestion has been made that the setting up of the commission of inquiry into the Betamax case would constitute a contempt of the Privy Council. If that is indeed be the case, then wouldn't this amount to tying our sovereignty to the oversight of the Law Lords?**



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The appointment of the commission of inquiry may not itself constitute a contempt of court. What might amount to a contempt would be conclusions or findings of the commission that go against the Privy Council's determination.

**\* The commission of inquiry will make an opinion on whoever directly or indirectly participated in the decision-making process, at Cabinet level, that culminated in the award and termination of the contract. Are ministers collectively responsible for any wrong decision? Or can blame be pinned on any individual minister?**

Once a decision is taken by Cabinet, ministers are bound by the principle of collective responsibility. But each minister bears the responsibility of what happens in his own department.

**\* Commissions of inquiry have been criticized for several reasons: 'for being unfair to the persons who are the subject of unfavourable comments, made during public hearings or in the commission's report; for costing too much; and for taking too long'. Justice Gomery considers that 'they are outweighed by the benefits since they not only assist the government in taking remedial action but also tend to restore public confidence in the process being reviewed'. What do you think will come out of this Betamax inquiry?**

In the past commissions of inquiry made unfavourable comments and adverse observations. However, the Supreme Court has never quashed the comments or observations on the ground that they were not findings but mere observations. How would the lay public make a distinction between observations and findings? The people targeted remained without a remedy.

A commission of inquiry is beneficial if an honest government acts on the findings and recommendations. But if the report is shelved or is put to rest in a drawer somewhere in the corridors of power, what benefits can be derived from an inquiry?



## France passes law that makes special Covid-19 passports, vaccines mandatory

The French parliament on Monday approved a law that made special virus passports a part of daily life and vaccination mandatory for health workers as the nation continued its fight against a resurging coronavirus disease. A compromise was reached between the two Houses of parliament amid massive protests against the new measures that many believe were an infringement to civil liberties.

President Emmanuel Macron last week ordered that the health pass -- proof of full vaccination or a negative test -- would be required for the French to visit any public venues such as cinemas, nightclubs or even trains and planes. It initially applies to only adults, but will become mandatory for everyone above 12 years of age starting September 30. The health pass can be in paper or digital format, reports Hindustan Times.



Protesters attend a demonstration called by the French nationalist party "Les Patriotes" against France's restrictions to fight the Covid-19 outbreak. Pic - Reuters

The law also requires all workers in the healthcare sector to start getting vaccinated by September 15 or risk suspension. The new law further says a government decree will outline how to handle vaccination documents from other nations.

The rules will be applicable through November 15 depending on the pandemic situation.

About 1,60,000 people staged protests across the country on Saturday against the special pass rule and mandatory vaccinations for health workers. Many marchers shouted "liberty!" and said the government should not tell them what to do.

On a visit to a hospital in French Polynesia, Macron asked, "What is your freedom worth if you say to me 'I don't want to be vaccinated,' but tomorrow you infect your father, your mother or myself?"

## Indonesia records more Covid-19 cases than India, Brazil



Indonesia has been urged by the World Health Organization to impose tighter Covid-19 curbs. Pic - Reuters

Indonesia on Sunday recorded 45,416 new cases of coronavirus disease to overtake Brazil, India and the US in terms of fresh infections, according to Worldometer data.

There were 38,091 Covid-19 cases logged in Brazil, 39,742 in India and 37,245 in the United States during the same period. However, in terms of the total number of infections and deaths, Indonesia is still far behind the top countries with 3,166,505 cases and 83,279 fatalities, reports Meenakshi Ray of Hindustan Times.

On Sunday, President Joko Widodo loosened Covid-19 curbs for another week until August 2 even as coronavirus disease cases remained high following near month-long restrictions. Widodo's orders came despite experts warnings that loosening restrictions could bring about another wave of the pandemic in the country.

According to the new orders, traditional markets selling staple foods will open as normal and shops selling non-food items and other small merchants have been allowed to operate at half capacity with shorter hours. Food stalls and restaurants can resume dine-ins in outdoor areas but under very strict protocols.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has urged Indonesia to impose tighter Covid-19 curbs and experts have said that lifting restrictions will result in more cases and deaths in the country.

## Tunisian president suspends Parliament, fires PM; Opposition cries 'coup d'etat'

Tunisian President Kais Saied announced Sunday the suspension of parliament and dismissal of Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi following a day of protests against the ruling party, who condemned the move as a "coup d'etat".

Thousands of Tunisians had marched in several cities protesting against the Islamist-inspired Ennahdha party, criticising what they said were government failures in the North African nation and crippling coronavirus rates, reports AFP.

Since Saied was elected president in 2019, he has been locked in a showdown with Mechichi and parliament speaker Rached Ghannouchi, a rivalry that has blocked ministerial appointments and diverted resources from tackling Tunisia's many economic and social problems.

Car horns sounded after Saied announced parliament's suspension following an emergency meeting at his palace.

"The constitution does not allow for the dissolution of parliament, but it does allow for its work to be suspended," the president said, citing Article 80 which permits such a measure in case of "imminent danger".

Saied said he would take over executive power "with the help" of a government headed by a new chief appointed by the president himself.

He also said that parliamentary immunity would be lifted for



In this photo taken from the presidential television station, Tunisian president Kais Saied announces the dissolution of parliament and PM Mechichi's government on July 25, 2021. Pic - AFP

deputies.

Earlier on Sunday in the capital, Tunis, hundreds rallied in front of parliament, shouting slogans against Ennahdha and premier Mechichi. Demonstrations were also reported in the towns of Gafsa, Kairouan, Monastir, Sousse, and Tozeur.

Despite a decade passing since the 2011 revolution which overthrew dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Tunisia remains prone to chronic political turmoil that has stymied efforts to revive crumbling public services. The country's fractious political class has been unable to form lasting, effective governments.

## Beijing slams US before top diplomat's key visit

China and the international community have the responsibility to teach the US a lesson on how to treat other countries equally, senior diplomat Wang Yi said, just ahead of the visit of deputy secretary of state Wendy Sherman to China beginning Sunday.

State councillor and foreign minister Wang made the remarks at the third round of China-Pakistan foreign ministers' strategic dialogue with counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi held in Chengdu, China's Sichuan province on Friday.

"The US has always put pressure on others with its self-claimed strengths in a

condescending manner," Wang was quoted as saying in the state media. "But I want to tell the US side that there is never a country that is superior to others, and there shouldn't be one."

Much of the focus will be on Sherman's two-day visit and talks in Tianjin, a port city some 100km from Beijing, reports Sutirtho Patranobis.

It will be the first face-to-face talks between Washington and Beijing in months as the two negotiate acrimonious ties.

Ahead of her visit, US officials told reporters in Washington that Sherman

will tell Beijing that while Washington welcomes competition, it wants to ensure that ties do not veer into conflict. "She's going to underscore that we do not want that stiff and sustained competition to veer into conflict," a Reuters report from Washington quoted a US official as saying.

"The US wants to ensure that there are guardrails and parameters in place to responsibly manage the relationship," the official said. "Everyone needs to play by the same rules and on a level playing field."

\*Contd on page 7



## NSO says Pegasus helps millions to sleep well at night, walk safely on streets



The Cypriot capital Nicosia. Pic - AFP

**A**midst the raging controversy over its surveillance software Pegasus, Israeli cybersecurity company NSO Group has defended itself by saying that millions of people around the world sleep well at night and walk in the streets safely due to such technologies available with intelligence and law enforcement agencies.

The company also stated that it does

not operate the technology nor does it have access to the data collected by its clients.

The alleged use of the Pegasus software to spy on journalists, human rights defenders, politicians and others in a number of countries, has triggered concerns over issues relating to privacy, reports PTI.

Politicians, rights activists and jour-

nalists were among those targeted with phone spyware sold to various governments by the Israeli firm, according to an international media consortium.

"NSO, together with many of the other cyber intelligence companies in the world, provides cyber intelligence tools for governments because law enforcement agencies around the world are in the dark and there's no regulatory solution that allows them to monitor malicious acts on instant messaging and social media", the company said.

On the controversy around its snooping software that has rocked the world, the spokesperson asserted that "NSO does not operate the technology, nor do we have visibility to the data collected".

"We are doing our best to help creating a safer world." it said.

Amidst the latest controversy, Israel has established a committee to review the allegations of misuse of the NSO group's surveillance software and hinted at a possible "review of the whole matter of giving licences".

## India and Pakistan needs better compliance to resolve bilateral issues, says US



Relations between India and Pakistan nose-dived after New Delhi abrogated the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. Pic - HT

**I**ndia and Pakistan need to work with each other to resolve their bilateral issues, the United States has said, observing that it had always encouraged the two neighbours to build a more stable relationship going forward.

Relations between India and Pakistan nose-dived after New Delhi abrogated the special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 on August 5, 2019 and bifurcated it into two Union territories. The two neighbours earlier in the year signed a ceasefire agreement.

On a question on Afghanistan, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Dean Thompson told reporters during a conference call that the US expects all the countries in the region to have a shared interest in a stable and secure Afghanistan going forward.

Secretary of State Tony Blinken is slated to visit India next week during which Afghanistan would be a major topic of discussion.

## China gets new World Heritage Site with links to Hinduism, Tamil Nadu

**A**s many as 22 sites in the southeastern Chinese city of Quanzhou including a temple with links to Hinduism were included to the Unesco World Heritage List on Sunday.

The new listing of "Quanzhou: Emporium of the World in Song-Yuan China" by the world's top cultural organisation boosts the credentials of Chinese President Xi Jinping's maritime silk road, the sea route part of the Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI), which aims to link China with Asia and beyond through infrastructure projects on land and sea.

China has been promoting the coastal province Fujian and the city of Quanzhou as an important ancient sea trade zone where multicultural communities including from Tamil Nadu mingled a millennia ago, reports Sutirtho Patra-nobis.

Xi served as governor of Fujian between 1999 and 2002, and also visited Quanzhou.

The listing decision was made on Sunday during the Unesco World Heritage Committee's 44th online session chaired from Fuzhou, the capital of Fujian, the same province where Quanzhou is located.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Xi had decided to establish "sister-



An idol of Vishnu found in Quanzhou, now housed at the Quanzhou Maritime Museum. Pic - HT

state relations" between Tamil Nadu and Fujian during the latter's visit to Mamallapuram for the second informal summit in October, 2019 - it was because of Quanzhou's ancient links with Tamil Nadu.

Key sites in the listing include Kaiyuan Temple with Hindu and Buddhist links, Luoyang Bridge, Qingjing Mosque, one of the oldest mosques in China and an archaeological site of an old maritime trade office, said to have been first established in 1087, according to state-run China Daily newspaper.

China's submission document to UNESCO applying for Quanzhou's heritage status, surprisingly, did not specifically mention the city's ancient links with Tamil Nadu but only mentioned Hinduism.

"Historic monuments and sites of ancient Quanzhou (Zayton)" is directly associated with the significant events of (Chinese general) Zheng He's voyages to the west and tangibly associated with the spread of Islam, Manichaeism, Hinduism, and Nestorianism in the southeast coastal area of China," the document said.

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## Armoogum Parsuramen, Chairman - Global Rainbow Foundation



**A**rmoogum Parsuramen, who started life as an Education Officer, went on to serve four terms as Member of Parliament until 1995. His career then took an international dimension at the World Bank and UNESCO. Rich with this experience, he decided to come back to Mauritius and dedicate himself to a cause that he had at heart from the beginning, especially given his modest origins and the hardships he and his family had faced: service to the vulnerable section of society, the Persons with Disabilities, and senior citizens through the setting up of the Global Rainbow Foundation and the University of Third Age Mauritius respectively. In what follows he gives us a lucid account of his journey and of the work that his NGOs are doing.

**\* After 14 years devoted to politics, you left to join UNESCO and thereafter started in 2012 the Global Rainbow Foundation with the aim of 'empowering differently-abled persons and vulnerable groups through education and training, and to provide them with the opportunity for holistic human development'. How has been the journey so far?**

The Global Rainbow Foundation was founded on the 11th November 2011. It was the realization of a dream that I had cherished since my childhood, fighting against injustice, discrimination and suffering of the most vulnerable people of society. I was also guided by my international experience which exposed me to similar situations of working for vulnerable people in Africa. This further crystallized my conviction and determination to serve the most vulnerable section of our society.

I chose the cause of Persons with Disabilities. Being a witness to the reality of the lives of people with disabilities in Mauritius and around the world, I saw a clear signal that concrete action had to be taken for this community of people. Persons with disabilities faced countless challenges and were discriminated against, missing many opportunities to rise and shine.

**\* Would you say that your current engagement in the social field, interacting with the differently-abled and vulnerable people and the elderly has been giving you more personal satisfaction than could be achieved in politics?**

Ten years dedicated to serving Persons with Disabilities in Mauritius and Overseas through Global Rainbow Foundation and being the founder of University of Third Age Mauritius - this is for me a source of accomplishment, especially when I would see on the faces of so many Persons with Disabilities how the Global Rainbow Foundation has transformed their lives, brought smiles to their faces as opposed to their situation of anguish and despair. All this has given me a great sense of fulfillment. I must also say that determination to dedicate myself to vulnerable groups was also the result of my deep gratitude to my mother and father, to the people of Mauritius for having elected me and enabled me to serve as Minister of Education in Mauritius and also for the wonderful international journey I had during this period of time.

# "Whenever there is injustice; we cannot and should not remain quiet"

This feeling of gratitude was so profound that I felt that I had to give back to society. Looking at the ten years within my NGO, I feel a deep sense of satisfaction to have realized most of my dreams.

In addition to serving people with disabilities, I also realized having myself reached the stage of elderly person that there was a need to work towards the welfare of our senior citizens who have done so much for Mauritius. As the builders of Mauritius, they have suffered a lot during the colonial period, facing economic difficulties to bring to us the Mauritius that we know now. So, I felt it was equally important for me to do something for this group of people as well. The University of Third Age is one modest but very meaningful contribution to give back to our senior citizens the feeling of dignity and respect.

Many senior citizens have confided to me with a lot of joy in their eyes that they feel so much happiness of being healthy with a sense of aging beautifully.

They come to the University and study in many areas that they could not do before, something that they cherish a lot. When I meet them for their graduation ceremony, I can feel their joy and happiness at wearing their gown and receiving their certificates. We have also organized an international conference which was yet another great achievement for the members of the University.

**\* Has this social engagement through the Foundation given you another perspective on the evolution of Mauritian society as well as an exposure to the realities of life in Mauritius hidden from the public view?**

After my physical absence for 14 years from Mauritius, I was able to see the reality of life of elderly groups and persons with disabilities in Mauritius and most of it was hidden from the public view. I must say I recognize certainly from 1995 to 2011 that the country has experienced major development. Many measures have been taken by successive governments to improve the quality of life of the people but one thing that I found which was hidden from the public is the fate of the vulnerable group of Mauritius. This is how, being inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, who said that "the true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members", and Mother Teresa - "A life not

lived for others is not a life" -, I felt a profound reason to dedicate my mission to serve the neediest people of the society.

This deep sense of mission is what is needed. Many people do not know the reality of people who are excluded or bedridden. Exposing this reveals big societal problems and issues that have to be tackled in a sustainable and holistic manner. This further motivated me to ensure the fundamental rights of persons with disabilities should be fought for and this cannot be done by *ad hoc* assistance and support, but requires fundamental policy changes.

The present government in its first mandate from 2014-2019 promised in its electoral manifesto to bring a Disability Bill with the view to eliminate barriers and discrimination in the lives of persons with disabilities. Six years have elapsed and until now the Disability Bill is an unfulfilled promise.

GRF therefore launched a major advocacy campaign on the Disability Bill with all the stakeholders, Members of Parliament and international organizations to support us in

this noble cause so that the Disability Bill would become a reality in Mauritius. The Global Rainbow Foundation's 2021 mission is to draft the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill 2021 (RPWD) within the tailored stipulations of the UNCRPD to ensure a Disability-inclusive legislation in Mauritius. When confronted with a situation of injustice and discrimination, we need to fight and advocate for structural changes to ensure that the fundamental rights of those people are recognized and enforced in a non-discriminatory way.

**\* On the other hand, besides the existence of charitable institutions, we see a growing number of private homes being set up mostly for middle-income sections of the population and the well-off. There could be valid practical or medical reasons why this phenomenon is gaining ground in the country. What are your thoughts on this issue?**

**"We are fortunate in Mauritius to have a judiciary which has lived up to the expectations of the nation and ensures that justice will prevail. We know the circumstances in which the case went to the court and what was the outcome of the case of the private prosecution lodged by the lawyers of Mrs Kistnen. Following the findings of the magistrate, the DPP has taken the decision to reopen the judicial enquiry. In the interest of justice, I think this is a very commendable move and it is to his honour that the DPP ensures the rule of law and the constitutional rights of every individual in Mauritius..."**

Mauritius is faced with a growing ageing population. Today, we have some 240 000 persons aged 60 and above; in 2050, 30% of the population will be senior citizens. This is a big challenge for the government and for the families with elderly members.

● Cont. on page 9



# 'We have noted since 1995 the increasing influence of money politics during elections and this in many cases has violated the rules of democracy'

• Cont. from page 8

However, this should not be a reason for older people to no longer receive the love, care and medical attention they deserve.

In fact, this group of people is vulnerable and deserves our respect and attention because they have contributed so much to the development of this country. We should not look at our elderly citizens as a burden but should be grateful to them for all the work they have done to serve the country in difficult circumstances. Therefore, we need to remind ourselves of our duty to provide them with their well-deserved pension. It is their right and that should not be seen as charity to our senior citizens.

We need to have a holistic development programme for them. We need to learn about the experiences of other countries, in particular China. With the increase of ageing population, we have witnessed a rise in the numbers of homes. This is probably the answer to provide better conditions to the senior citizens but unfortunately many of them do not provide the optimum services to the seniors and this is a matter of concern. It's good that we have more homes but this should be properly organized and regulated.

\* The GRF invites donations to help finance its various programmes. How has been the response from the corporate sector and from individuals generally, and what does it say about the spirit of philanthropy in Mauritian society?

We have traditions of solidarity among the people which started during the days of colonization amidst indentured labourers.

At Global Rainbow Foundation, I must say we are satisfied with the support we get from the corporate sector for our activities. The foundation does not receive any grant from the government and therefore it has to raise funds for its activities and serve the people. Many private companies do endorse our projects. We also receive small contributions from individuals.

With the new modalities of National Social Inclusion Foundation, NGOs get regular funding for ongoing projects and this ensures sustainability. But many NGOs still face many difficulties to raise funds. I think it is time for the government to have an evaluation of its CSR policy based on the experiences so far and come forward with a revised action plan which could help to address all these issues and at the same time ensure that civil society can carry its role fully in the social and economic development of Mauritius.

**“The way the institutions, apart from the judiciary, have treated that case was also very disappointing. I think it is our duty to stand up and fight whenever there is injustice; we cannot and should not remain quiet. This has been my stand on many occasions whenever I felt there was an injustice and I would also like to remind that my strong condemnation was inspired by what Albert Einstein said, 'If I were to remain silent, I'd be guilty of complicity'...”**

\* Our society has grown on the foundations of the welfare state, and we find more NGOs like the GRF playing a role in the lives of the old-aged and the vulnerable. Do you think the government can do much more than what it is already doing for these groups, or would it be best left to the NGOs to join in the public social welfare programmes?

In fact, it is a remarkable achievement in Mauritius that we have over the years developed a strong welfare state, providing a wide

**“Late Kistnen was a member of the MSM, an active agent who fought hard for the elections of the Prime Ministers. After the alleged killing of late Soopramanien, the way the whole case was handled by the police and the authorities first declaring that it was a suicide and then confirmed that it was a crime, was yet another disturbing situation. Being a founder member of MSM, I took a position as it pains me to see where the party has fallen. Neither attention nor support were given to the Kistnen family after his death in this tough time....”**

range of free services to the population in various key areas like education, health, social security and many more. NGOs like Global Rainbow Foundation and many others are also making their contribution for the welfare of the elderly and the vulnerable group. I think it is high time for government and civil society to work together to try to develop a Marshall Plan which could enhance a new framework in delivering welfare services to the needy population. Here, I have no ready answer to this issue, there is no ready-made solution.

Moreover, many countries like India delegate the implementation of many of the welfare programmes to NGOs because NGOs have the efficiency in providing the services at the grassroots level. But what I would advocate to the government is to have a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of the free services and the welfare benefits and how they are reaching the needy population. In light of this, a new strategy can be defined which can then give clear guidance for better improvement of the services offered. We must also look at the international experiences and from this, we can develop a very sound social public service.

\* We have had to date six governments and four different Prime Ministers at the helm of the country at different times since you quit politics in 1995. People may hold differing views about how the leaders have managed the affairs of the country, but at the end of the day do you think the people got the government they deserved?

Since I quit politics in 1995, we went through six governments and four different Prime Ministers at the helm of the country. In a democracy like Mauritius, the choice of the government and the leadership is in the hands of the voters. This has determined who leads the country at successive elections and each Prime Minister and government



had their own programme for the development of the country. Along with the outcomes, there has been impact on the development of the country and the life of the people.

Nevertheless, no government can be perfect because of the complexity of the political framework that we have in Mauritius. I will not make a critical analysis of what happened from 1995 till now at the level of the different governments. We have seen their successes and the failures when at the helm of the country, and it is important to draw lessons from those, especially from the mistakes committed. What is important for all governments, once they are in power, is they should realize that they have to fulfil this noble mission with a deep sense of service to the nation and not to pursue their own interests.

Unfortunately, we have noted since 1995 the increasing influence of money politics during elections and this in many cases has violated the rules of democracy and influenced the results.

\* Earlier this year, we saw you coming out openly to condemn the authorities' handling of the case of late Soopramanien Kistnen, who died in mysterious circumstances, and attacking in the same breath the Prime Minister in very strong terms. Did you then think we had touched the bottom?

The mysterious circumstances surrounding his death had shocked the whole nation, and I could never believe that this will happen one day in Mauritius. I came out and condemned this act strongly for a number of reasons, but I will mention two:

1. Late Kistnen was a member of the MSM, an active agent who fought hard for the elections of the Prime Ministers.

• Cont. on page 10



# “It is the right of our senior citizens to receive a well-deserved pension, and that should not be seen as charity”

## ● Cont. from page 9

After the alleged killing of late Soopramanien, the way the whole case was handled by the police and the authorities first declaring that it was a suicide and then confirmed that it was a crime, was yet another disturbing situation. Being a founder member of MSM, I took a position as it pains me to see where the party has fallen. Neither attention nor support were given to the Kistnen family after his death in this tough time. Instead they were unfairly attacked, making their lives more difficult. I could not stay insensitive to that situation.

- The second reason is more fundamental. The way the institutions, apart from the judiciary, have treated that case was also very disappointing. I think it is our duty to stand up and fight whenever there is injustice; we can not and should not remain quiet. This has been my stand on many occasions whenever I felt there was an injustice and I would also like to remind that my strong condemnation was inspired by what Albert Einstein said, 'If I were to remain silent, I'd be guilty of complicity'...

I am also guided by the sayings of Desmond Tutu which I would like to quote, “If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor”.

**\* We now learn that the DPP has taken the decision to reopen the judicial inquiry in this case, on account of allegedly the failure of CCID to submit a complete report on the murder of the former MSM activist. How do you react to that?**

I must say that we are fortunate in Mauritius to have a judiciary which has lived up to the expectations of the nation and ensures that justice will prevail. We know the circumstances in which the case went to the court and what was the outcome of the case of the private prosecution lodged by the lawyers of Mrs Kistnen. Following the findings of the



magistrate, the DPP has taken the decision to reopen the judicial enquiry. In the interest of justice, I think this is a very commendable move and it is to his honour that the DPP ensures the rule of law and the constitutional rights of every individual in Mauritius.

Fortunately, the attempt to reduce the independence of the DPP's office by this government through the Prosecution Commission Bill in 2016 failed. The Prosecution Commission Bill did not go through in Parliament, otherwise the independence of the DPP's office would have been severely undermined.

I have a special thought for Mrs Simla Kistnen because she has suffered tremendously not only for losing her husband in such an atrocious manner but also for her son who

lost his father during the year he was sitting for his exams. I pray and hope like Mrs Kistnen who keeps on saying that God will render justice to the case of late Soopramanien Kistnen.

**\* What are your views on the political evolution in the next few years?**

After the general election in 2019 in Mauritius, there was much concern about democracy and how the elections were conducted with the results being challenged. This has created a situation of mistrust in the government and the country was divided. What followed was a series of scandals, and acts of corruption which affected Mauritius' credibility at international level. Let's not forget the recent head-

**“We should not look at our elderly citizens as a burden but should be grateful to them for all the work they have done to serve the country in difficult circumstances. Therefore, we need to remind ourselves of our duty to provide them with their well-deserved pension. It is their right and should not be seen as charity to our senior citizens...”**

line of Mauritius being placed on the EU blacklist, a news that was well published in the international media.

At the same time, at the political level, we have seen how the opposition instead of forming a united front against the government were divided. It is difficult to predict what will happen because many things can happen. It will also depend on how political parties will present their campaigns when election is due. I feel sad that our country has reached such a situation which is a matter of great concern for its future.

## The Conversation

# Why some people switch political parties

## ● Cont. from page 2

As for Labour's members, two-fifths of those with previous party memberships joined the party after 2015 – surely the Corbyn effect? Those Labour members who had past lives in other organisations came mainly from the Greens or Liberal Democrats – or, intriguingly, from an amorphous “other parties” category, with the latter maybe hinting (but only hinting) at a degree (albeit limited) of entryism from the far left.

It is worth bearing in mind that the smaller parties have generally experienced even higher levels of cross-party flows, proportionately speaking. For instance, three-fifths of Green members were former Labour members, as were around half of SNP and Liberal Democrat members.

## Why switch?

But what drives some people to quit one party and join another? Our research sug-



gests that the most telling reasons are connected with ideology and party leaders. If people feel themselves to be in tune with particular a party in terms of its core values and leader, they are naturally attracted to join it. However, they are equally inclined to eventually quit the same party if they feel it or its leadership has changed tack and become more remote.

In particular, we discovered that ideolo-

gical radicals are especially prone to switching parties. The same goes for Brexiteers – although this is perhaps a time-sensitive finding relevant to the past few years, given the special power of Brexit to cut across longstanding patterns of partisan alignment.

Ultimately, the traditional breadth of the major parties in Britain partly reflects the nature of the first-past-the-post electoral system, which makes it hard for minor parties to gain parliamentary representation unless – like the Scottish and Welsh nationalists or, more unusually, the Greens in Brighton – they have geographical concentrations of support.

As a result, both Labour and the Conservatives are coalitions of quite

diverse types of people. We should not be surprised, then, that their grassroots members often find themselves at odds with their parties' policies – particularly when there is a change of direction brought about by a change of leadership.

A new leader intent on charting a different course from their predecessor – Keir Starmer and Boris Johnson are both obvious examples – can try to keep as many of their existing members on board as possible. But, ultimately, it may be better for all concerned – and a sign of healthy, pluralist democracy – if those who come to believe another party might represent a better fit for them depart so they can try it for size.

And nowadays, of course, with the emergence of parties that either weren't around at all (such as populist radical right outfits like UKIP, the Brexit Party and Reform UK) or were less powerful than they are now (like the SNP), there are more alternatives on offer than ever.

**Paul Webb, Prof of Politics, University of Sussex & Tim Bale, Prof of Politics, University of London**



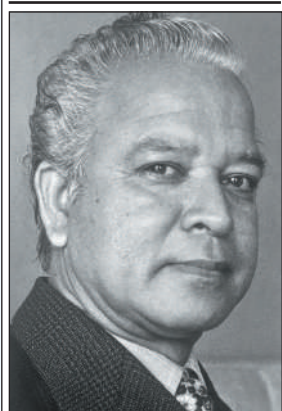
From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

4th Year No 168

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 25 October 1957

• To seem and not to be is throwing the shuttle without weaving. -- Proverb



Somduth Bhuckory

## Generous Yet Miserly

**O**ur budget is swelling year after year and yet Government has recourse to supplementary budgets to carry on. Last week such a budget was presented in the Legislative Council for ratification. It involves a colossal sum of about one-sixth of the budget of the current financial year.

The Supplementary Estimates are for various items which have either cropped up after the elaboration of the annual estimates or which existed then but for which provisions had not been made. Now that the whole financial structure of the colony is being re-organized, it is to be hoped that such staggering supplementary estimates will become a thing of the past. Generous and yet miserly, that is how we see the Estimates – both annual and supplementary – when it comes to the teaching of oriental languages.

From the time the annual estimates were discussed we had been struck by the fact that the number of teachers of Oriental languages had not been increased. In the annual estimates for 1956-57, provisions had been made for 95 teachers. The same figure was maintained in the estimates for 1957-58, although there had been a marked increase in the number of head teachers and 1st, 2nd and 3rd class teachers. The school population had increase by about 24,000 children in a year and yet the number of Oriental language teachers remained static.

This is how we felt about the question on the 10th of May when we wrote the following: "We are of opinion that Oriental languages are not receiving the consideration they deserve in schools. Now that the budget is being discussed we appeal to our MLCs – including Hon Koenig – to see to it that the number of Oriental language teachers is increased by twenty-five this year."

And Nestor had this to record the following week: "At the Council meeting last Tuesday, Hon Koenig speaking in French contrary to his habit, pleaded in favour of intensifying the teaching of Oriental languages in our primary schools. The Indo-Mauritian and Muslim members must have felt quite uncomfortable in their seats while Hon Koenig took the

defence of their languages."

What has happened after that? The problem seems to have simply vanished. When money to the tune of thousands are being earmarked for all sorts of works, it is a pity that no thought is being given to such an important feature as the teaching of languages. If the Government maintains this attitude, the only inference the people will draw is that Oriental languages are officially considered as pariahs.

To pay twenty-five Oriental language teachers, Government would not have had to drain its resources. The salary of one minister would have sufficed to pay the twenty-five teachers for a year. And yet nobody thought of it. Had another minister, a tenth one, to be appointed, we must surely have seen eager faces with dazzling eyes nodding acceptance.

There is nothing in the Annual Estimates and there is nothing in the Supplementary Estimates. It only seems to mean that there will be nothing till the present financial year comes to an end.

Meanwhile the people are carrying on social work throughout the island to keep Oriental languages alive; it is surprising with what zeal and devotion they are doing this. But it pains them to find the indifference of the Government towards their languages.

The Government has accepted the principle of teaching Oriental languages in primary schools. It has got to stop doing justice to the Oriental languages with reluctance.

### Labour's 4th Victory

And so, Labour won again. Its success was tremendous. Of the 16,098 electors on roll 9,276 voted, i.e., 57.6%. Roy scored 5,424 votes, i.e., 58.4% of the total votes, while his opponent, Curé, got only 3,366 votes, i.e., 36.3%. These figures are indeed significant, but had the Muslims not boycotted the election the margin would have been thinner. Of the two thousand and odd Muslim voters only a score or two voted.

In the course of exactly 17 months, Labour contested four elections and won all of them. It is sufficient indication that the people have pinned up their faith in socialist principles. This election took place while the Ministerial System of Government is being tried. By electing the Labour candidate, the people want to give Labour the chance to show its worth.

Six important factors have stood out in this election. They may serve as a lesson for future contests:

1. Trade unionists have shown as much dynamism, organizing ability and power of rhetoric as the Executives of the LP themselves. Moignac, Badry, Lacoze, Cloridor, Napal and Ruhee displayed such inherent qualities as may well qualify them for future leadership of the proletariat.

2. Muslims are a well-disciplined community. Given proper leadership they can make their weight felt in Mauritian politics. By having successfully persuaded the Muslims to boycott the election – an unprecedented event indeed in the history of this island – Mohamed, Dahal and Ramjan have shown their mettle.

3. People do not forgive those who have betrayed their trust. Curé fell a victim to his reactionary outlook and doings which stand in contradiction to the avowed principles of the LP which he himself founded.

4. The people have got disgusted with Bissoondoyal's irresponsible opposition and stunts. He may be swept off his feet for ever if Labour makes a determined effort. It is for the first time that Bissoondoyal was seriously challenged in his own fortress and made to suffer an ignoble defeat. In fact, the contest was Labour v/s Bissoondoyal who was backed throughout by the Amalgamated Labourers' Union.

5. The Party spirit prevailed over communal consideration during the election. Most of the agents of Curé were Hindus. Several Hindus even lent him their cars. On the other hand, hundreds of Creole artisans and dockers flocked to the Labour camp to help Roy.

6. Elections cannot now be won by merely haranguing the electors, but by a programme which appeals to the masses, the past and the personality of the candidate, the organizing ability of the party or of the candidate and personal contacts are, among other things, the fundamental factors which help to win elections. There is another thing which needs special mention. It is those hundreds of voluntary workers – the majority of whom, artisans and labourers – who sacrificed their time, gave up their work and did the canvassing for Roy from door to door.

Now that the excitement of the victory has subsided, people will keenly watch whether Roy keeps his promise. Roy must live up to the expectations of his party of those who have voted and worked for him. He cannot afford to squat over his responsibilities and let time slip by till the general elections which are expected to be held in August next year.

To end, may we congratulate Roy on his resounding success.

## A Memorable Day

**M**anilal Doctor's 50th anniversary was commemorated with much enthusiasm on Sunday last (13th October 1957) in various places at Port Louis. Many people from the towns and villages of the island had flocked to the Company's Garden to attend to the laying of the foundation stone of the pedestal that will receive the statue of Manilal Doctor.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Sangeelee said of Manilal Doctor: "His was a life of truth, of friendship and zeal, a life of hard struggle. He had dedicated his life to the welfare of the poor and oppressed labourers of the island." Mr Sangeelee added that the aim of the Manilal Doctor

Memorial Committee was to set up a bust only, but sympathisers' response made it possible to pronounce for a statue itself. But as the statue is not yet ready, the MDM Committee has decided to lay the foundation stone of the pedestal of the statue.

The foundation stone of the pedestal was laid by a poor and old immigrant, Mohabeer Itchaye. A prayer was said by Swami Kritananda of the Ramakrishna Mission.

Mr Bhuckhory, speaking in Hindi, said that the statue will turn a new page in the history of the poor labourers of the island. "This memorable day will be written in golden letters. This statue will not only be a witness of the struggle that great philanthropist had undertaken to free the poor

and the oppressed labourers of this island from the shackle of ignominious servitude; but will also be the token of imperishable gratitude that every labourer feels for Manilal Doctor. It will be an emblem of truth and of disinterested struggle for the betterment of oppressed mankind."

After the ceremony of the laying of the foundation stone, Mr Sangeelee requested those present to move to the Taher Bagh Fancy Fair. There was a generous response and the Commissioner for the Govt. of India opened the Fair by the sale of a cushion, which was bought by Mr Sunassee.

Many people then moved to the Gymkhana, Champ de Mars, where a gathering was held to commemorate the 50th

anniversary of the arrival of M. Doctor to the island. Hon Seeneevassen presided over. Speeches were delivered by Messrs J. N. Roy, V. Govinden, Pundith Dhoorundar, H. Toorawa, G. Forget. In his speech Mr Forget said that he hails Mr Manilal as the greatest fighter for the betterment of the working class and to him caste or creed made no difference as every worker belongs to only one Community. He further added that in his person he associated the Labour Party with this commemoration.

A night fete crowned that memorable day at which the Veeramundar Band and local singers entertained the people who had come from every corner of the island.

Clavis



# We're moving to a new reality in which no phone is safe from surveillance

*Spyware - why the booming surveillance tech industry is vulnerable to corruption and abuse*

The world's most sophisticated commercially available spyware may be being abused, according to an investigation by 17 media organisations in ten countries. Intelligence leaks and forensic phone analysis suggests the surveillance software, called Pegasus, has been used to target and spy on the phones of human rights activists, investigative journalists, politicians, researchers and academics.

NSO Group, the Israeli cyber intelligence firm behind Pegasus, insists that it only licenses its spyware to vetted government clients in the name of combating transnational crime and terrorism. It has labelled reports from investigative journalists a "vicious and slanderous campaign" upon which it will no longer comment.

Yet the founder and chief executive of NSO Group previously admitted that "in some circumstances our customers might misuse the system." Given that the group has sold its spyware to a reported 40 countries, including some with poor records of corruption and human rights violations, it's alleged that Pegasus has been significantly misused, undermining the freedom of the press, freedom of thought and free and open democracies.

These revelations are the latest indication that the spyware industry is out of control, with licensed customers free to spy on political and civilian targets as well as suspected criminals. We may be heading to a world in which no phone is safe from such attacks.

## How Pegasus works

Pegasus is regarded as the most advanced spyware on the market. It can infiltrate victims' devices without their even having to click a malicious link - a so-called "zero-click attack". Once inside, the power Pegasus possesses to transform a phone into a surveillance beacon is astounding.

It immediately sets to work copying messages, pictures, videos and downloaded content to send to the attacker. As if that's not insidious enough, Pegasus can record calls and track a target's location while independently and secretly activating a phone's camera and microphone. With this capability, an infected phone acts like a fly on the wall, seeing, hearing and reporting back the intimate and sensitive conversations that it watches continuously.

There's previous evidence of Pegasus misuse. It was implicated in the alleged hacking of Jeff Bezos' phone by the crown prince of Saudi Arabia in 2018.

The new revelations suggest that Pegasus was used to watch Mexico's president Andres Manuel Lopez and 50 members of his inner circle - including friends, family, doctors, and aides - when



Pegasus spy claims probed as Macron switches phone. Pic - France 24

he was an opposition politician.

A Pegasus infiltration has also now been found among phones belonging to the family and friends of murdered journalist Jamal Khashoggi, and there are indications that Pegasus may also have been used by a Mexican NSO client to target the Mexican journalist Cecilio Pineda Birto, who was murdered in 2017.

## Spyware industry

Although the power of Pegasus is shocking, spyware in its various forms is far from a new phenomenon. Basic spyware can be traced back to the early 1990s. Now it's a booming industry with thousands of eager buyers.

At the base of the spyware industry are the lesser snooping tools, sold for as little as \$70 (£51) on the dark web, which can remotely access webcams, log computer keystrokes and harvest location data. The use of such spyware by stalkers and abusive partners is a growing, concerning issue.

Then of course there's the global surveillance estate that Edward Snowden lifted the curtain on in 2013. His leaks revealed how surveillance tools were being used to amass a volume of citizens' personal data that seemed to go well beyond the brief of the intelligence agencies using them.

In 2017, we also learned how a secret team of elite programmers at the US National Security Agency had developed an advanced cyber-espionage weapon called Eternal Blue, only for it to be stolen by the hacker collective Shadow Brokers and sold on the dark web. It was this spyware that would later be used as the backbone of the infamous 2017 Wannacry ransomware attack, which targeted the NHS

and hundreds of other organisations.

## Why Pegasus is different

When the Snowden leaks were published, many were shocked to learn of the scale of surveillance that digital technologies had enabled. But this mass spying was at least developed and conducted within state intelligence agencies, who had some legitimacy as agents of espionage.

We're no longer debating the right of the state to violate our own rights to privacy. The Pegasus revelations show we've arrived in a new, uncomfortable reality where highly sophisticated spyware tools are sold on an open market. To be under no illusion, we're referring here to an industry of for-profit malware developers creating and selling the same types of tools - and sometimes the very same tools - used by "bad hackers" to bring businesses and government organisations to their knees.

In the wake of the Pegasus revelations, Edward Snowden has called for an international spyware ban, stating that we're moving towards a world where no device is safe. That will certainly be the case if Pegasus meets the same fate as Eternal Blue, with its source code finding its way onto the dark web for use by criminal hackers.

We've only just begun to fully contemplate the full implications of Pegasus on our collective privacy and democracy. Without transparency, we have no sense of how and under what circumstances Pegasus is licensed, who has authorisation to use Pegasus once it's licensed, under what circumstances a license may be revoked, or what international regulations are in place to police against its abuse. Evidence suggests that Pegasus

has been misused and greater accountability and oversight is needed. We must also seek to rekindle important debates around enforceable controls on the creation and sale of corporate spyware. Without this, the threat that Pegasus and future spyware tools pose to privacy will not be limited to the high-profile targets that have so far been revealed, but will be a threat to us all.

**Christian Kemp**

Lecturer, Criminology,  
Anglia Ruskin University

## Groupement Volontaire de Cap Malheureux (Registration Number: 14698)

Members are kindly requested to attend the Annual General Meeting on the 12th day of August 2021 at 4pm at the seat of the Village Hall of Cap Malheureux.

### Agenda:

1. Welcome address by the president
2. Reading and Approval of the Minutes of proceedings for the AGM held on 8th July 2021
3. Matters arising
4. Report of the president
5. Treasurer's Report, Approval of the Accounts for the years ended 31st December 2019 and 31st December 2020 and budget estimate for the year 2021
6. Amendments of rules
7. AOB

In case, there is a lack of quorum the meeting will be postponed for the 19th of August 2021 at the same time and place mentioned above.





## A slap in the train

A manager, his assistant, an old woman and her young daughter are travelling in a train and during the course of time get themselves introduced to each other and become temporary friends.

The train goes through a tunnel and it gets completely dark. Suddenly there is a kissing sound and then a slap.

The train comes out of the tunnel. The women and the assistant are sitting there looking perplexed.

The manager is bending over holding his face, which is red from an apparent slap. All of them remain diplomatic and nobody says anything.

The old woman is thinking: "These managers are all crazy after girls. He must have kissed my daughter in the tunnel. Very proper that she slapped him."

The young girl is thinking: "The manager must have tried to kiss me but kissed my mother instead and got slapped."

The manager is thinking: "Damn it. My assistant must have kissed the young girl. She might have thought it was me and slapped me."

Now guess what the assistant is thinking.

Now hold your breath and read what the assistant is thinking...

"If this train goes through another tunnel I will make another kissing sound and slap my manager again. The rascal keeps harassing me in the office".

\*\*\*

## The evils of drug use

Two young guys were caught smoking dope and had to appear before the judge. The judge told them: "You seem to be nice young men, and I'd like to give you a second chance rather than send you to jail. I want you to go out this weekend and brief others of the evils of drug use and convince them to give up drugs for ever. I'll see you on Monday."

When they returned to court, the judge asked the first one: "So how did you do this weekend?"

"Well, your honour, I managed to persuade 17 people to give up drugs forever." "Seventeen, that's wonderful, what did you tell them?"

"I used a diagram, your honour, I drew two circles like this O o - and explained to them that the big circle is your brain before drugs and the small circle is your brain after drugs."

Out of the millions of statues built across the world. Only the statue of Marilyn Manroe is useful



"That's admirable," said the judge. Then turning to the second one he asked: "How did you fare?"

"Well, your honour, I succeeded to convince 150 people to give up drugs forever."

"150 people, that's amazing, how did you do?"

"Well, I used the same diagram, only I pointed to the small circle first and said this is a..hole before prison."

\*\*\*

## The best liars in the world

One army officer goes to his commanding officer (CO) and asks for leave. "Sir, my wife is pregnant and is unable to do the household work. I think I must go there and help her. Please give me one week's leave."

The CO says, "It is just the last evening that your wife telephoned me and asked not to send you home under any circumstances. She said that every time you go home, you get drunk and create nuisance. So, your leave is not granted."

The army officer said, "OK, Sir..." and started to leave, but paused at the door. He said, "Sir, I've one more point."

The CO said, "OK, go on."

"Sir, don't you think we two are the best liars in the world?" he asked.

"Why do you say so?" inquired the CO wittingly.

"I am not married yet, Sir."



Moving through a dense jungle, an explorer come across a pygmy standing over a dead elephant.

"Did you kill the elephant?" asked the explorer.

"Yes," replied the tiny man.

"That's amazing I've never seen such a thing, what did you use?"

"A club," replied the pygmy.

"It must have been a big one."

"Indeed, there were must have been about 400 of us," replied the little man.

\*\*\*

As a group of soldiers stood in formation at an army base, the Drill Sergeant said, "All right! All you idiots fall out." As the rest of the squad wandered away, one soldier remained at attention.

The Drill Instructor walked over until he was eye to eye with him, and then raised a single eyebrow. The soldier smiled and said, "Sure was a lot of 'em, huh, sir?"

\*\*\*

A man was walking down the street and saw a sign in a store window that said "Help Wanted," so the man ran in the store and yelled out, "What's wrong?!"

## Life's Lessons

# People also can create miracles

A certain company had a tradition of holding a party and a lottery every Christmas Eve.

The rules of the lottery draw were as follows: each employee pays ten dollars as a fund. There were three

hundred people in the company. In other words, a total of 3000 dollars can be raised. The winner takes all the money home.

On the day of the lottery draw, the office was filled with a lively atmosphere. Everyone wrote their names on the slips of paper and put them in the lottery box.

However, a young man hesitated when he wrote. Because he thought that the company's cleaning lady's frail and sickly son was going to have an operation soon after the dawn of New Year but she did not have the required money to pay for the operation, which made her quite troubled.

So, even though he knew that the chance of winning was slim, with only a three percent chance, the man wrote the name of the cleaner lady on the note.

The tense moment came. The boss doubled in the lottery box, and finally drew out a note. The man also kept praying in his heart: hoping against hope that the cleaning lady can win the prize... Then the boss carefully announced the winner's name, a miracle happened!

The winner turned out to be the cleaning lady. Cheers broke out in the office, and the cleaning lady hurriedly rushed to the stage to accept the award. She almost burst into tears and said, "I am so fortunate and blessed! With this money, my son now has hope!"

At the end of the party, the man paced to the lottery box. He took out a piece of paper and opened it casually. The name on it was also that of the cleaning lady! He took out several pieces of paper one after another. Although the handwriting on them was different, the names were all the same - that of the cleaning lady. The man's eyes were filled with tears and he clearly understood that the people could also create miracles by themselves!

## WORTH READING TWICE



# What is Education

At the end of World War II, this letter was found in a Nazi concentration camp. It is addressed to Teachers.

Dear Teachers,

I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness: Gas chambers built by learned engineers. Children poisoned by educated physicians. Infants killed by trained nurses. Women and babies shot and burnt by high school and college graduates. So, I am suspicious of education. My request is: Help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated illiterates. Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve towards making our children more humane.



**W**eight loss is a frequent aim, whether you want to lose weight due to your health condition or for a special reason. A person who's following a specific lifestyle would certainly also want to know at what time he will lose weight, if he/she begins to burn through exercising or diet from that extent onwards. You may want to know what a healthy weight loss rate is in order to set reasonable expectations. Below TOI suggests some of the essential things you need to know about what to expect when you start a weight loss journey, and how long it could take to see the actual results.

### The weight loss process

The body happens to lose weight when one consumes fewer calories than they burn per day. In contrast, weight gain occurs when you consume more calories than you expend. The calorie-containing meal or beverage you consume contributes to your total calorie consumption. However, the quantity of calories you burn each day, also known as energy expenditure or calorie expenditure, is a little more tricky.

But most importantly you need to remember that in order to maintain your body weight, the number of calories you consume equals the number of calories you burn. If you want to lose weight, you must either consume fewer calories than you burn or raise your activity

The three major components of calorie expenditure are as follows:

**Resting metabolic rate:** This is the amount of calories your body requires to perform basic physical activities like breathing and blood circulation.

**Thermic effect of food:** This refers to the calories expended in the digestion, absorption, and metabolism of food.

**Thermic effect of activity:** These are



the calories burned during physical activity. It can also include non-exercise activity thermogenesis, which accounts for calories consumed through activities such as yard maintenance and fidgeting.

### Gender

The fat-to-muscle ratio has a significant impact on your capacity to reduce weight. Women have a lower Resting Metabolic Rate than men of the same height because they have a higher fat-to-muscle ratio than men. This means that while resting, women burn about 5-10 percent fewer calories than men. Men, on the other hand, tend to lose weight faster than women on a calorie-balanced diet.

### Age

With the alterations in body composition, fat mass grows and muscle mass decreases are one of the many physical changes that occur with ageing. This alteration, together with other reasons such as your primary organs' reduced calorie needs, adds to a lower Resting Metabolic Rate. In simple words older people have

lower capability than the younger adults due to decrease in the resting metabolic rate.

### Current body weight

The speed with which you lose weight may be influenced by your beginning body mass and composition. It's crucial to realise that various absolute weight losses in different people can result in the same relative weight loss. While a heavier individual may lose twice as much weight as a lighter one, a lighter person may lose an equivalent percentage of their body weight.

### Calorie balance

To reduce weight, you must generate a negative calorie balance. How quickly you lose weight is essentially determined by the size of the calorie deficit. Make sure your calorie loss isn't too large, though. This would not only be unsustainable, but you'd also be putting yourself at danger for nutritional deficiencies. Furthermore, it may increase your chances of losing weight as muscle mass rather than fat

mass.

### Sleep

Sleep is perhaps the most yet critical aspect of weight loss. Sleep deprivation can stifle weight loss and slow down the rate of weight loss. You can simply realise that when bingeing, watching or partying till late certainly increases your craving for high-calorie, nutrient-poor meals like cookies, cakes, sugary beverages, and chips after just one night. As a result, persistent sleep deprivation has been associated with type 2 diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and a variety of malignancies.

### Exceptions

**Medical condition** - Antidepressants and other antipsychotics, generously cause weight gain or impair weight loss. Hypothyroidism too, is the disorder in which your thyroid gland produces too few metabolism-regulating chemicals, can cause weight gain and delay weight loss.

**Hereditary**- The hereditary component is importantly related with overweight or obesity, which may affect weight loss.

## Healthy Beauty

# Foods that make you look older

Your skin is the largest organ in your body, and everything you eat affects it. These foods do more harm than good and add years to your body inside and out.

**Spicy foods:** Some like it hot ... and some can't take the heat. Spicy food makes your blood vessels swell and even break, leading to purple marks on your face. If you have rosacea -- common in women after menopause -- the heat from spice can trigger a flare-up. It also raises your body temperature, so you sweat to cool back down. When sweat mixes with the bacteria on your skin, it can cause breakouts and blotches.

**Margarine:** Your skin is the largest organ in your body, and everything you eat affects it. Most margarines, especially the solid kind, have trans fats. They raise your "bad" cholesterol, lower your "good" kind, and create inflammation throughout your body. Inflammation is linked to heart disease and stroke, two conditions that can give you an aged appearance.

**Sodas and energy drinks:** The more sodas and energy drinks you consume, the quicker the cells in your tis-

sues age. In addition to the fizz, they have more calories and added sugar -- 7 to 10 teaspoons in 12 ounces -- than any other beverage. Combined with the bacteria in your mouth, that sugar also forms acid that wears down your tooth enamel and causes decay. Other cons include weight gain and a higher risk of stroke and dementia.

**Frozen dinners:** One frozen dinner can pack in half the sodium of a healthy daily diet. When you have too much salt, it causes you to drink more than normal and flood your kidneys. Any extra water will move to places in your body that have less salt, like your face and hands. That's what makes you look puffy.

**Alcohol:** Those margaritas don't look as good on your skin as they did in the glass. If you've ever had cotton mouth in the morning after a night of drinks, you know alcohol dehydrates you. This makes a big impact on your skin, which is 63% water. Even if you drink a big glass of water, it will hydrate all your other organs before your skin. When you don't get enough, your skin looks and feels dry, and can't defend itself against wrinkles.

**Processed meats:** Processed meats are smoked, cured, or salted so they'll last longer without going bad. It's what makes them both delicious and dangerous. The sodium and chemical preservatives cause inflammation that can wear your body down inside and out. A little inflammation is good: It helps your cells heal. Too much



can cause heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.

**Fried Foods:** The difference between dough and a doughnut is a nice long bath in boiling oil. That bath promotes free radicals, or unstable molecules that damage other molecules in your cells and add years to your skin.

**Baked goods:** Just because they're not fried doesn't mean they look good on you. Baked goods like cookies and cakes are high in artery-clogging fat that put on the pounds. They also don't skimp on sugar, which can cause diabetes, high blood pressure, and tooth decay (among other things).

Inflammation is another reason to skip that sundae. The more inflammation you have, the higher your chances of arthritis, depression, Alzheimer's, and some cancers.

**Charred meats:** Frying or grilling meat at high temps creates advanced glycation end products, or AGEs. Low levels of AGEs are fine (your own body produces them), but high amounts from charred meats cause inflammation that "inflammages" your body and triggers heart disease and diabetes.

**Caffeine:** Caffeine is a diuretic: It stimulates your brain and your need to urinate. This can cause dehydration. When you don't have enough water, your skin stops releasing toxins. The backup makes you more prone to dry skin, psoriasis, and wrinkles.



# Beauty secrets of Bollywood celebrities revealed

We all have our idols for one thing or another and our Bollywood divas are definitely influencing our beauty game with their brilliant hacks. Scroll down and pick your favourites, as reported by TOI.



## 1. Priyanka Chopra

Priyanka uses homemade lip scrubs to exfoliate her lips, and get glistening lips quickly at home. Her pouty lips need extra care and for which she makes sea salt lip scrub.

- Mix 2 teaspoon sea salt together with 1 teaspoon pure vegetable glycerine and 1 teaspoon rose water. Mix it up using your index finger and gently exfoliate your lips.



## 2. Radhika Madan

Radhika uses a homemade face pack for her glowing, milky white skin. The natural shine on her face even without make-up is impeccable and that's why you need to try this face pack ASAP.

- Take a glass bowl and add 1 tablespoon of gram flour, 1 teaspoon of turmeric powder, 2 teaspoons of almond flour, and 1 tablespoon of saffron milk.

- Apply this pack all over your face as well as neck and leave it on for 15 minutes. After washing it off, apply a cream/gel-based moisturizer to restore the skin barrier.

## 3. Ananya Panday

The 22-year-old actor uses a face mask recipe given to her by her mom which helps her hydrate her skin after a

scorching and exhausting shooting day.

- Mix 1 tablespoon of unflavoured yogurt with 1 teaspoon of turmeric powder and 1 teaspoon of honey together.

- She applies it as a cleanser to make her skin bright and fresh-looking. She likes to use her hands for applying the mask so that it can reach every corner. Massage this mask on your face and leave it on for 15 minutes.



## 4. Malaika Arora

-The actor is obsessed with body scrubs and maintains her youthful glow, she makes DIY coffee body scrubs.

- Mix 1 tablespoon of ground coffee powder together with 1 tablespoon of gran-

ulated brown sugar and a few drops of coconut or almond oil.

- Massage this scrub all over your body for a soft, supple, and moisturized skin texture.



## 5. Katrina Kaif

Katrina regularly dunks her face in a bowl filled with ice cubes. Cryotherapy and cryo facials at home are popular skincare maintenance methods that people from all around the world have been recently seen adopting.

Every morning, she does a 1-minute ice facial which helps in getting rid of puffiness especially around the eyes, inflammation, skin-tightening, and oiliness. It also helps in cutting down your facial fat.

## Kangana Ranaut reacts to Raj Kundra's arrest: 'All that glitter is not gold; I'm going to expose 'Bullywood'



**K**angana Ranaut took to her Instagram handle to react to the recent arrest of Shilpa Shetty's husband and businessman Raj Kundra in a pornography-related case as he was produced before the Esplanade Court on Tuesday afternoon, reports TOI.

Sharing a news report on Raj's arrest, Kangana took a dig at the film industry and wrote, "This is why I call movie industry a gutter... all that glitter is not gold, I am going to expose the under belly of Bollywood in my upcoming production called *Tiku weds Sheru*."

She further added, "We need strong

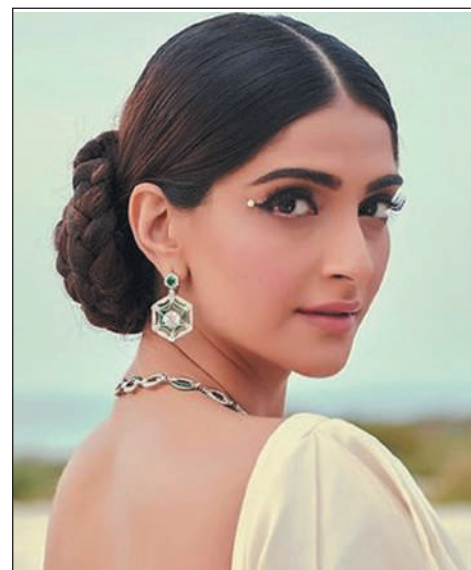
value system and conscience in the creative industry and of course a whip."

Meanwhile, Raj Kundra has been sent to judicial custody, along with Ryan Tharp, who has also been arrested in the same case on Tuesday morning.

On Monday, Raj Kundra was arrested in an alleged pornography case which was being probed since February. His name appeared in the probe after the property cell came across the involvement of a UK production company, Kenrin, whose executive, Umesh Kamat was arrested by the police. He was the former employee of Raj Kundra and was accused of uploading at least eight "pornographic and obscene" videos shot by Gehna Vasisth on a social media app for monetary consideration.

Post Raj Kundra's arrest on Monday, Mumbai Police Commissioner, Hemant Nagrale had confirmed in a statement, "There was a case registered with Crime Branch Mumbai in February 2021 about the creation of pornographic films and publishing them through some Apps. We've arrested Mr Raj Kundra in this case on 19/7/21 as he appears to be the key conspirator of this."

## Sonam Kapoor thanks her lucky stars she didn't end up marrying 'somebody from Bollywood'



"I'm really fortunate to have met somebody who is like-minded and a feminist," she told Vogue. "Thank god I didn't meet somebody who is from the same industry as me, because their world view can be very limited. It's all about what's happening in Bollywood." Asked if anything has surprised her, she said, "This is the first year that we've spent every night together. Usually, we travel so much. I've realised that we're obsessed with each other and we have a lot of fun together."

Sonam said that living in London gives her an element of anonymity -- she does her own shopping, for instance -- but acknowledged that brown people 'are everywhere'. She said, "I was in Scotland and there were Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Middle Eastern people everywhere, and they're all obsessed with Bollywood."

Sonam was last seen in a starring role in 2019's *The Zoya Factor*. She appeared in a cameo in *AK vs AK*, in which she played a version of herself, alongside her father Anil Kapoor and filmmaker Anurag Kashyap. She will next be seen in *Blind*, a remake of a South Korean thriller co-produced by Sujoy Ghosh, which she shot in Scotland.

**S**onam Kapoor thanked her stars that she didn't end up with someone from the film industry. The actor is married to businessman Anand Ahuja, with whom she divides time between their houses in New Delhi and London.

Sonam Kapoor and Anand Ahuja tied the knot in 2018. She said that like her, Anand is a feminist, and that people in the film industry can have a very myopic view of the world.



## From Karan Patel to Yeh Rishta actor Anshul Pandey

# TV celebs who have been accused of cheating on their partners

Modern-day relationships have become very fickle and many of our TV celebs have also gone through heartbreaks and felt betrayed. While some did not reveal it to the public, a few breakups were quite public. Recently, *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai* actors Priyanka Udhwani and Anshul Pandey also parted ways where Priyanka accused Anshul of cheating on her. Times of India takes a look at such pairs:

*Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai* actors Priyanka Udhwani and Anshul Pandey recently announced their separation. The couple, who met on the sets of the show in 2014 and started dating a year later, have called it quits. In an interview with BT, Priyanka accused Anshul of cheating on her.

"I didn't believe people when they told me about Anshul and was foolish in love. He is a toxic person and caused a lot of negativity in my life. After breaking up, I feel happy and liberated. I want to come out of this as a happy and strong person."

Anshul on the other hand said, "I don't like to discuss my personal life, but if Priyanka is accusing me of cheating on her, then it's wrong. If we came as far as six years together, I am sure there must have been more mental happiness than emotional exhaustion. The irony is she hasn't even spoken to me about this."

### Karan Patel

Karan Patel and Kamya Panjabi's relationship was quite open and it left Kamya heartbroken when she learned about him marrying Ankita Bhargava. *The Shakti*:

*Astitva Ke Ehsaas Ki* actress had reportedly found him cheating on her, which led to her breakup with the *Yeh Hai Mohabbate* in actor.

In an interview with TOI, Kamya had said, "After Karan it took me two-and-a-half years to get back to a normal life. It is after two-and-a-half years that I started loving my life, I'm was eating, sleeping on time, talking to my friends and going to work and coming back. I didn't feel like doing anything. I was depressed. I was undergoing counselling and there were lots of things happening."

### Eijaz Khan

The Bigg Boss 14 contestant was dating his KKavyanjali co-star Anita Hassanandani back then. Their relationship ended when Anita found out about Eijaz' growing proximity towards another television actress. In fact, Eijaz admitted cheating on Anita in a chat show with Rajeev Khandelwal. Eijaz said that it was a grave mistake that he had made. Currently, Eijaz is dating Pavitra Punia, whereas Anita is living a happy married life with Rohit Reddy and son Aaravv.

### Sharad Malhotra

Divyanka Tripathi and Sharad Malhotra were in a relationship for eight long years. The actress distanced herself from Sharad after finding out about his philandering ways. They had met on the set of their show, 'Banoo Main Teri Dulhan' and broke up in 2015.

In a chat show with Rajeev Khandelwal, Divyanka admitted to being



shattered, resorting to several ways to get him back in her life but realised true love doesn't require all of this to be done.

For now, Divyanka and Sharad are past their past relationship and are happily married to Vivek Dahiya and Ripci Bhatia respectively.

### Avinash Sachdev

Avinash Sachdev and Rubina Dilaik fell in love with each other during their show, *Choti Bahu*. Apparently, while being in a relationship with Rubina, Avinash started seeing some other TV actress and after finding out about this, Rubina called it

quits. In one of the interviews, the *Bigg Boss 14* winner had mentioned that the breakup only made her stronger. Rubina is now married to Abhinav Shukla.

### Ankit Gera

The Sapne Suhane Ladakpan Ke actor Ankit Gera was dating Adaa Khan until he also started seeing Roopal Tyagi. Adaa in Rajeev Khandelwal's chat show revealed, "When it comes to love, I have had a very terrible experience in the past. My ex-boyfriend cheated on me and still, I forgave him thrice. But after a point, I knew that I had to let it go." Ankit, to date, has remained mum about it.

## 'Kundali Bhagya'

# Ruhi Chaturvedi: 'Dad initially said no when I got offer to play negative role'

Ruhi Chaturvedi, who plays the antagonist Sherlyn Khurana in the popular soap *"Kundali Bhagya"*, recalls her father's reaction when she got the offer long back, reports IANS.

"I remember when I got the offer, my father was sceptical about me taking up this character. Since it was a negative role, he felt I would get typecast and immediately said no. It took a while for me to convince him by saying that it was just a two-month cameo and at the end of the first month, the character would turn into a positive role before she exits the show. That's when he agreed to let me take the offer," Ruhi recalls.

The show has completed four years and 1000 episodes but her role is still the same, though Ruhi loves her character. "I have come to realise that a negative character is a pivotal element for a positive character to succeed in a story. It's like *Raavan tha isliye Ram bhi* the (Ram exists because there was Raavan)," she reasons.

Ruhi's career spans from modelling to films and television. She finds her journey satisfying and comfortable. "The entire journey has been absolutely incredible. If I have to be honest, I actually did not face that many struggles while finding my way on television. I still remember that January 17, 2017 was my last fashion show in Jaipur. Post that I came back and told my parents that I didn't



want to do fashion shows anymore and wanted to be a part of television," she recalls.

She goes on charting her journey: "On February 2, I began auditioning for various characters and by August 10 I was on air with a Balaji show. It was all really unbelievable because I had always heard stories of people struggling for years and facing rejections. I feel extremely blessed that way to have had an easy start and glad how things have turned up."

For Ruhi, acting is her ultimate passion and since childhood she used to admire Madhuri Dixit.

"I always wanted to be an actor as Madhuri Dixit used to stay in my building. As a child, I used to see quite a lot of films of hers and loved her performance. In fact, I have also visited different sets with her and that's how the inclination to pursue acting came within me. I would never have become anything else. This was the ultimate thing," she says.

After playing a negative role for a long time, Ruhi wants to play a mysterious character. "I would love to play a role like Vidya Balan in *'Kahaani'*. Till the last frame, no one knew what her character was about, and she was a very mysterious figure. Roles like that really intrigue me," she sums up.



## CINE 12

Mardi 27 juillet - 21.10



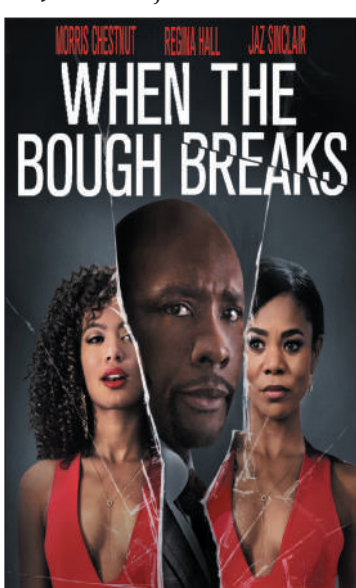
## CINE 12

Mercredi 28 juillet - 21.00



## When The Bough Breaks

Jeudi 29 juillet - 21.15



mardi 27 juillet

### MBC 1

06.00 Local: Rodrig Mo Pei  
09.00 Contest Of The Cathedraels  
11.00 Mag: Le Saviez Vous?  
11.10 Tele: Soleil Levant  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.30 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir  
12.55 Doc: L'art Et La Matiere  
14.30 D.Anime: The Garfield Show  
14.53 D.Anime: Astrology  
15.18 D.Anime: Little Spirou  
15.27 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis...  
15.35 D.Anime: The Drakers  
15.58 D.Anime: Johnny Test  
16.19 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain  
18.56 Local: Taal Prasthar  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.35 Local: Generations J  
21.05 Film: 30 Days Of Night: Dark  
23.10 Le Journal

### MBC 2

07.00 DDI Live  
08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3  
10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4  
12.30 Film: Alaap  
Star: A. Bachchan, Rekha, Asrani  
15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek  
15.25 Serial: Aamhi Doghi  
15.47 Serial: Bava Maradullu  
16.08 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal  
16.29 Serial: Aatish  
16.49 Serial: Imtihaan  
17.16 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala  
17.34 Telugu - Premabhishekam  
18.00 Serial: Dr. Qin  
18.30 DDI Magazine  
19.00 Zournal Kreol  
19.30 DDI Magazine  
20.04 Local: Programme In Tamil  
20.30 Film: Samadhi  
Star: Ashok Kumar, Nalini Jaywant, Kuldeep Kaur

### MBC 3

06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa  
06.39 Mag: Voa Connect  
07.21 Mag: In Good Shape  
07.47 Doc: Amazing Gardens  
08.13 Mag: Future Mag  
09.00 Educational Prog: Grade 5  
11.30 Educational Prog: Grade 8  
14.29 Mag: 360 GEO  
14.21 Mag: Global 3000  
15.47 Mag: Washington Forum  
16.58 Mag: Eco@Africa  
17.24 Mag: Arts And Culture  
18.02 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto...  
19.00 Student Support Prog...  
19.31 Mag: Made In Germany  
20.30 Local: News (English)  
21.04 Doc: Snapshots  
21.30 Doc: Scanning The Great...  
22.11 Mag: Close Up  
22.37 Local: Klip Seleksion  
23.19 Doc: Can Electric Cars...

### Cine 12

01.24 Film: Shadow People  
02.44 Serial: Chicago Med  
03.24 Film: United  
05.37 Serial: Gone  
06.43 Film: They Came To Cordura  
09.00 Serial: Macgyver  
09.48 Tele: Daniella  
10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor  
11.01 Serial: Chicago Med  
12.00 Film: United  
13.34 Tele: Muneca Brava  
14.12 Mag: Hollywood On Set  
14.45 Film: They Came To Cordura  
16.43 Serial: Macgyver  
17.31 Serial: Gone  
18.05 Tele: Daniella  
19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor  
20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones  
20.30 Serial: Gone  
21.15 Film: NYC: Tornado Terror  
22.45 Tele: Muneca Brava

### Bollywood TV

08.00 Film: Hijack  
12.04 / 19.54 - Radha Krishna  
12.26 / 20.11 -  
Chupke Chupke  
12.48 / 20.32 Mere Sai  
13.09 / 21.09 - Agniphera  
13.29 / 21.24 -  
Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
13.55 / 21.59 - Zindagi Ki Mehek  
15.01 / 22.25 - Sethji  
15.24 Film: Yamla Pagla Deewala  
Star: Dharmendra, Sunny Deol, Bobby Deol  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Kundali Bhagya  
18.55 Serial: Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein  
19.17 Bhakharwadi  
19.40 Siddhi Vinayak

mercredi 28 juillet

07.00 Local: Aktiv  
08.00 Local: Palette  
10.30 Mag: Check In  
11.10 Tele: Soleil Levant  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir  
13.00 Local Prod: Groov'in  
14.30 D.Anime: The Garfield Show  
14.54 D.Anime: Astrology  
15.18 D.Anime: Little Spirou  
15.25 D.Anime: Rev & Roll  
15.36 D.Anime: The Drakers  
17.35 Serial: Lucas Etc.  
17.50 Mag: Happy Tales  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain  
18.55 MBC Production: Ayush  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.20 Prod Indepen: Lottotech  
21.20 Film: Seized  
Stars: Scott Adkins, Mario Van Peebles, Karlee Perez

07.00 DDI Live  
08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3  
10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4  
12.30 Film: Sone Pe Suhaaga  
15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek  
15.25 Aamhi Doghi  
15.47 Bava Maradallu  
16.01 Apoorva Raagangal  
16.32 Serial: Aatish  
16.55 Serial: Imtihaan  
17.12 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala  
17.28 Serial: Kulvadh  
18.00 Serial: Dr. Qin  
18.30 Mag: DDI Magazine  
19.00 Journal Kreol  
19.30 Mag: DDI Magazine  
20.06 Programme In Marathi  
20.26 Local Prod: Chinese Local...  
20.56 Film: Commando, The Ninja  
22.24 Live: DDI Live

06.00 Rev: The Global Auto...  
06.26 Doc: Norwegian Riesling  
06.52 Mag: Check In  
07.18 Mag: Made In Germany  
08.13 Doc: Les Artisans Du Redut  
09.00 Educational Prog: Grade 8  
11.30 Educational Prog: Grade 5  
14.00 Doc: Snapshots  
14.29 Doc: Scanning The Great...  
15.09 MAG: Close Up  
16.17 Doc: Can Electric Cars...  
17.03 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto...  
17.29 Doc: Norwegian Riesling  
17.59 Mag: Motorweek  
18.30 Mag: Vous Et Nous  
19.00 Student Prog Grade 7  
19.28 Doc: Garden Party  
20.04 Mag: Tendence XXI  
20.30 Local: News (English)  
20.40 Doc: Comme Un Poisson...  
21.32 Mag: Initiative Africa  
22.24 Doc: The Secret Of Mona...

01.02 Film: Dead Men  
03.59 Serial: Chicago Med  
04.39 Film: NYC: Tornado Terror  
06.47 Serial: Gone  
07.29 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive...  
09.00 Serial: Macgyver  
09.48 Tele: Daniella  
10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor  
11.01 Serial: Chicago Med  
12.00 Film: NYC: Tornado Terror  
13.32 Tele: Muneca Brava  
14.45 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive...  
16.40 Serial: Macgyver  
17.23 Serial: Gone  
18.08 Tele: Daniella  
19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor  
20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones  
20.30 Serial: Madam Secretary  
21.15 Film: Ex Machina  
22.45 Tele: Muneca Brava  
23.38 Serial: Macgyver

08.00 Film: Yamla Pagla Deewana  
Star: Dharmendra, Sunny Deol, Bobby Deol  
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: Hum Hai Teen Khurafaati  
Starring: Sheet Chhabra, Pranshu Kaushal, Sonia Kur  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Kundali Bhagya  
18.51 Ishaaron Ishaaron...  
19.15 Bhakharwadi  
19.38 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak

jeudi 29 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  
12.50 Doc: L'art Et La Matiere  
13.03 Local: Le Rendez Vous  
14.00 Local: Zafan Nou Zill  
14.30 D.Anime: The Garfield Show  
15.18 D.Anime: Little Spirou  
15.24 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis...  
15.35 D.Anime: The Drakers  
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: Speed  
Stars: Zayed Khan, Urmila Matondkar, Aashish Choudhary...

07.00 DDI Live  
08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3  
10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4  
12.30 Film: Nishana  
15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek  
15.22 Aamhi Doghi  
15.43 Bava Maradallu  
16.01 Apoorva Raagangal  
16.32 Serial: Aatish  
16.53 Serial: Imtihaan  
17.12 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala  
17.29 Local: Amrit Vaani  
18.00 Serial: Dr. Qin  
18.30 Serial: Ghar Pahucha Da...  
19.00 Journal Kreol  
19.30 Mag: DDI Magazine  
20.15 Local: Les Grandes Lignes  
20.36 Local: Mots & Ecrits  
21.19 Film: When The Bough Breaks

06.00 Mag: Motorweek  
06.26 Mag: Vous Et Nous  
07.19 Doc: Garden Party  
07.51 Doc: Tendence XXI  
09.00 Educational Prog: Grade 5  
11.30 Educational Prog: Grade 8  
14.55 Mag: Initiative Africa  
15.47 The Secret Of Mona Lisa  
16.33 Mag: Motorweek  
16.59 Mag: Vous Et Nous  
17.26 Mag: Arts.21  
18.00 Mag: Eco@Africa  
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: Enjoy! Cruise Japan  
21.58 Doc: Defying The Odds  
22.40 Doc: Raqqa  
23.22 Mag: Eco@Africa

01.33 Film: Ex Machina  
03.15 Serial: Chicago Med  
03.55 Film: Philadelphia  
05.55 Tele: Muneca Brava  
07.19 Film: Auggie  
09.00 Serial: Macgyver  
09.45 Tele: Daniella  
10.36 Tele: Tanto Amor  
11.00 Serial: Chicago Med  
11.41 Film: Philadelphia  
13.41 Tele: Muneca Brava  
14.16 Mag: Hollywood On Set  
14.48 Film: Auggie  
16.40 Serial: Macgyver  
17.24 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: Miami Magma

08.00 Film: Hum Hai Teen Khurafaati  
Starring: Sheet Chhabra, Pranshu Kaushal, Sonia Kur  
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  
14.11 Entertainment: India's Asli  
14.55 / 21.46 - Sethji  
15.20 Film: Second Hand Husband  
18.00 Samachar  
18.30 Kundali Bhagya  
18.51 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein  
19.14 Serial: Bhakharwadi  
19.38 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak



Jeudi 29 juillet -  
15.20

Star: Gippy Grewal, Tina Ahuja,  
Dharmendra, Ravi Kishan



Jeudi 29 juillet -  
20.15

Stars: Zayed Khan, Urmila Matondkar, Aashish Choudhary, Aftab Shivdasani, Sanjay Suri, Amrita Arora, Sophie Chaudhary, Tanushree Dutta





# Forget the medals, the real game of the Olympics is soft power — and the opening ceremony is key

*The competition for soft power is at the heart of the Olympics.*

The Olympic Games are often hailed as a neutral celebration of athletic achievement. "The Olympic Games are not about politics," wrote the International Olympic Committee president, Thomas Bach, in the Guardian last year.

In reality, the games have long been a platform for soft power: the use of culture and values to shape people's opinions in order to achieve political outcomes — particularly internationally.

Regardless of how many medals are won or lost, this is the real game of the Olympics.

And for the host country, the opening ceremony offers an unparalleled platform for building soft power.

## The biggest artistic event in the world

Included in the Olympic Games since 1906, the opening ceremony combines pageantry, ritual and performance. With key components mandated by the Olympic Charter, including an artistic program and a parade of nations, the ceremony offers a unique opportunity for the host country to frame a cultural narrative about itself.

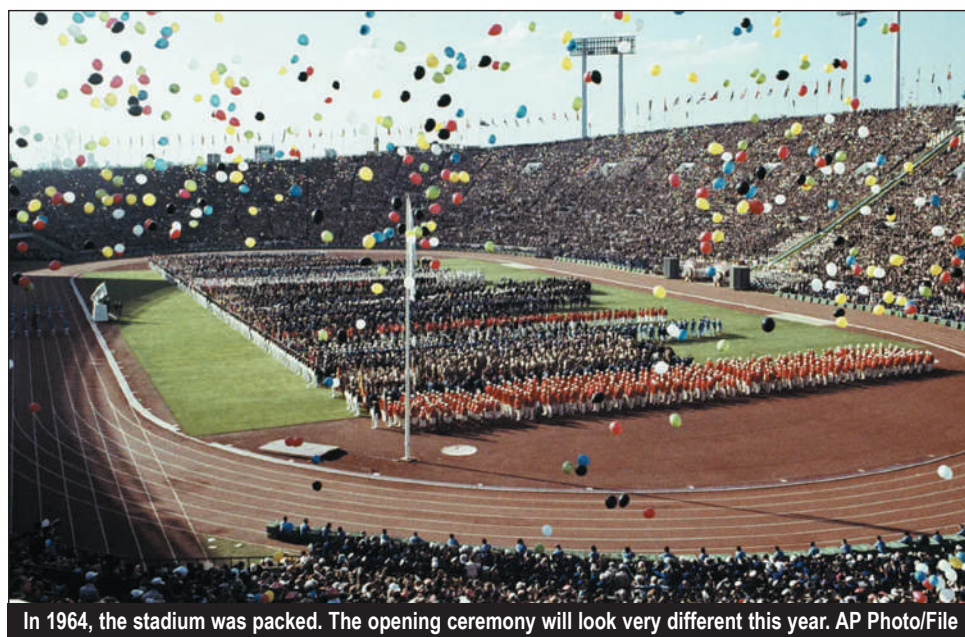
No other artistic event in the world offers immediate access to such a large audience of global viewers. In 2016, 3.6 billion viewers watched Rio de Janeiro's opening ceremony on television.

Accordingly, the opening ceremony has increased in size, scope and expense in recent years. Demonstrations of dance, music and theatre are explicitly designed to dazzle spectators while also presenting a politically strategic image to the world.

Beijing's opening ceremony in 2008 framed China as a model of spectacle and national collaboration. Directed by filmmaker Zhang Yimou at a cost of US\$100 million (A\$135 million), the event lasted over four hours and featured 15,000 performers. In one jaw-dropping sequence, 2,008 Chinese drummers performed in perfect unison.

For the 2004 opening ceremony in Athens, Greece endeavoured to highlight its heritage and connection to the Olympic Games of antiquity. The program included projections of the stadium used in the original games, a blazing comet that outlined the Olympic rings in fire, and an abstract reenactment of the progression of Greek civilisation.

At the opening of the 2012 London Games, Britain elected to emphasise its national musical legacy, with performances by Paul McCartney, the Sex Pistols and Arctic Monkeys. In a further nod to British popular culture, Queen Elizabeth II and James Bond actor Daniel



In 1964, the stadium was packed. The opening ceremony will look very different this year. AP Photo/File

Craig appeared to jump from a helicopter.

## Broadcasting the perfect image

The last time Japan hosted the Summer Olympics was in 1964, and the stakes were unusually high. After the shame of the second world war and Japan's subsequent exclusion from the 1948 games, Tokyo 1964 was key to its efforts to re-establish a positive international reputation.

With the development of satellite technology, the 1964 games were also the first to be live broadcast. The opening ceremony was suddenly a chance to showcase Japan at its best to a worldwide audience.

Symbolising Japan's new era, the Olympic torch was carried into the ceremony by Yoshinori Sakai, born in Hiroshima on the day the city was bombed in 1945.

Because of the opportunity to access millions of international viewers at once, opening ceremonies have become a powerful tool of cultural diplomacy.

But such a public platform also has its risks, and the diplomatic cost of any incident that contradicts a country's carefully curated image can be extreme.

Consider the dove debacle of Seoul's opening ceremony in 1988, when dozens of doves were accidentally incinerated by the Olympic flame on live television.

## Counting losses

Japan has already faced difficulties that threaten to tarnish its Olympic image. After a one-year postponement, the costs of this year's games may exceed US\$26 billion (A\$35 billion).

With significant restrictions on spectators, Japan will not benefit from the typical boost from international tourists. This

makes the country's potential soft power gains from the televised opening ceremony all the more crucial in order to justify the financial investment.

But even the televised spectacle will be taking place amid controversy. Only a day before the Opening Ceremony, the event's director Kentaro Kobayashi was fired over a 1998 video in which he joked about the Holocaust.

Kobayashi is the third high-profile artist associated with the Ceremony to leave. Creative Director Hiroshi Sasaki resigned in March after calling a plus-sized celebrity an "Olympig," while composer Keigo Oyamada left on Monday over historic bullying.

Japan's success at building soft power will also be unavoidably lessened by the pandemic. The Opening Ceremony's artistic program will take place in a largely empty arena — a reminder of the cost of the pandemic in terms of both lives and our ability to come together.

Each smiling team of internationally competitive athletes during the Parade of Nations will similarly be viewed against their nation's efforts (and failures) to manage COVID-19.

Meanwhile, the Olympic Committee is maintaining a running list of athletes and staff who have been infected while in Japan. Even before the Opening Ceremony, the list stands at over 100.

**Caitlin Vincent**

Lecturer in Creative Industries, The University of Melbourne

**Katya Johanson**

Professor of Audience Research, Deakin University



**Tree of Knowledge**

Madisyn Taylor

## Giving of Herself

The role of a mother is infinitely complex and one of pure tenderness, compassion, and unflagging loyalty

Mothers throughout history have been worshipped, revered, analyzed and even criticized. Every one of us was created through the wondrous workings of a woman's body; each of us has a mother. But being a mother is more than a biological concept. In India, women who are profoundly nurturing, compassionate, and wise are publicly acknowledged by the title "Holy Mother."

Those who have never met their biological mothers often have mothers nonetheless in adoptive parents, relations, and friends. There are human mothers and spiritual mothers, Mother Earth, and mother goddesses. The role of a mother is infinitely complex and one of pure tenderness, compassion, and unflagging loyalty. The mother represents fertility, stability, creation, and sacrifice.

Our mothers determine who we become because they are not only the life givers, but the most influential person in our young lives. Before we are old enough to understand that influence, mothers give us the beginnings of our spirituality and value systems.

A mother lauds accomplishment and ignores minor faults, she both teaches and shields her children from misfortune, and hides her own tears, preferring to laugh so her children can laugh with her. She is both a sharer of grief and a healer of many pains. And every mother gives of herself knowing that someday her progeny will leave her.

For these reasons and more, motherhood is a sacred institution, not limited by narrow constraints. It is also not unusual to seek the guidance of a mother in a wise woman or a grandmother because each woman is taught to be a mother by her own mother, whether she chooses to have children or not.

Other ways to see Mother is to find a source of motherly nurturing in the earth, which gives us so much and demands little in return. Earth mother continually blesses us with her bounty and we are even born and eventually go back to the universal mother

The definition is necessarily broad because mothers of all types exist in part to put a smooth veneer on the rough edges of life for those they love. A mother never stops growing, never stops becoming more motherly. Though some may argue that a mother is a woman who gives life with her womb and nourishment with her breast, it is important to remember that a mother, any mother, is also one who gives life with her tenderness and nourishment with her love.