

MAURITIUS TIMES

• "During the pandemic, art appreciation and creation helps us relax physically and mentally, and strengthens our focus with critical thinking". -- Mallamma Patil

Are Commissions of Inquiry being trivialised as soapbox tools for political ends?

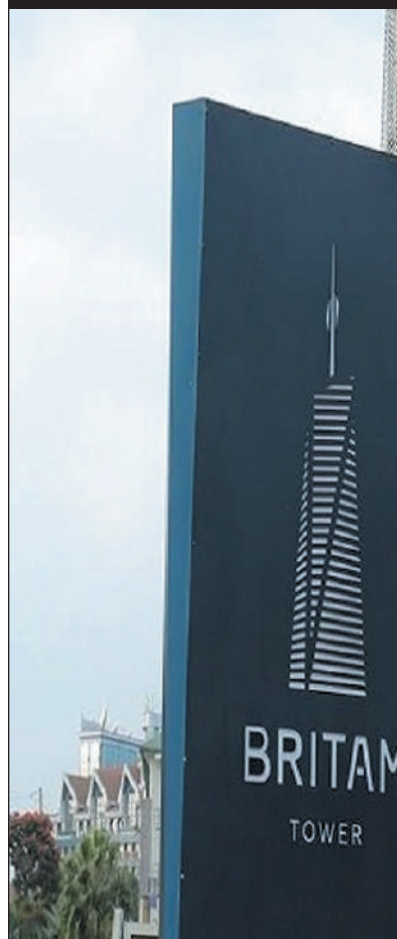
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Qs & As - Commission of Inquiry on Britam Sale

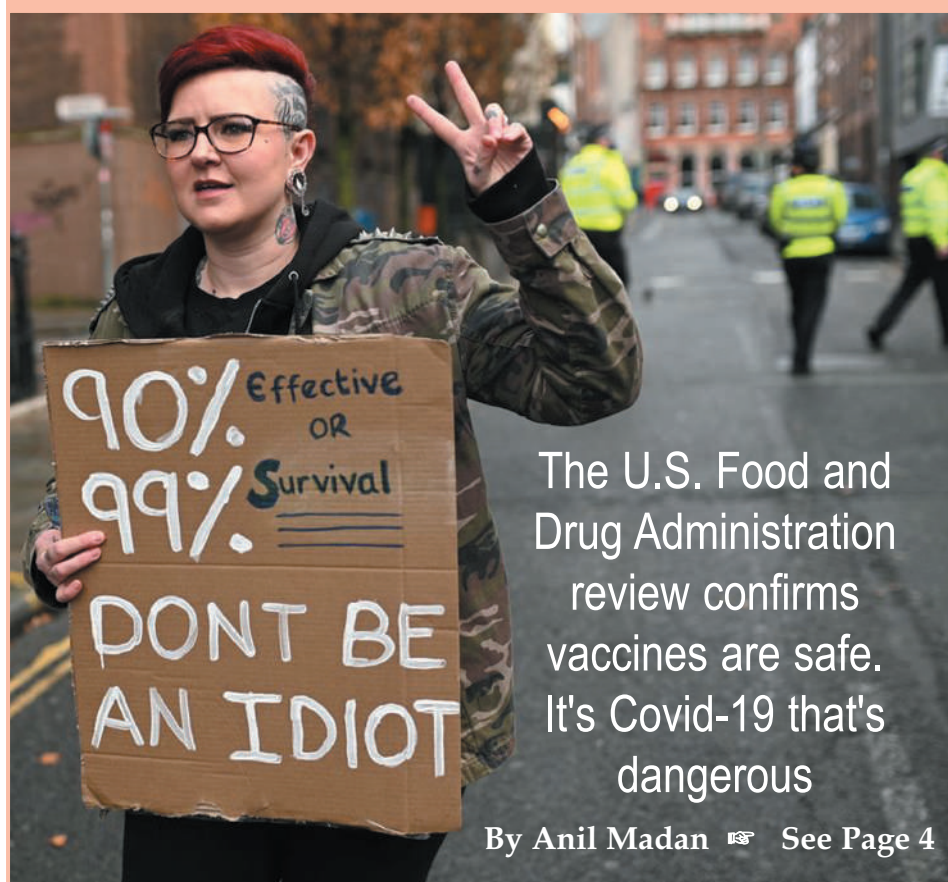
"A commission of inquiry should follow the rules of natural justice."

Has this principle been adhered to in the Britam inquiry?"




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The Battle: Science vs. Idiocy



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration review confirms vaccines are safe. It's Covid-19 that's dangerous

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Attending to Burning Issues

Despite the affluence at malls and other places where those who after lifting of restrictions can afford gather for their leisure and amusement, it is undeniable that the overall prevailing atmosphere and feeling in the country is not the brightest. One would not be wrong to state that it is one of pessimism especially for the upcoming generations for whom opportunities are closing elsewhere as well due to the contraction resulting from the Covid-9 pandemic. When one hears young people who are, thank goodness, earning an honest income by dint of hard work and perseverance, and tending to their families while at the same time anticipating for rainy days – nevertheless opining that 'the future does not look bright here!', there is reason to worry.

This despondency arises from the labyrinthine hurdles that they have to face with officialdom in their efforts to find their place under the sun, as they are confronted not only by bureaucratic impediments but also by the over-politisation in the process. Nothing is straightforward, every *demarche* assumes political colouration. And that is indeed a sad comment on the polity and not a reassuring signal for those who still believe in their country and want to be part of it as useful and productive citizens.

Unfortunately, what is happening on the national scene reinforces this negativity, and it cuts both ways as the opposition is not showing the kind of united strength that would make of it a credible alternative. It is unable to obtain from the government the answers and viable solutions to the burning issues of the day.

Jobs lost, swelling unemployment figures, industries shutting down, our receding international image, being on the European Union black list, inflation and the continuing depreciation of the rupee, the swelling national debt apparently at the rate of Rs10 bn per month, the price rises despite the package of Rs 500 M to the sector – they don't seem to be getting the serious attention and thinking that they deserve so as to find the viable, short- and long-term solutions

that they are crying for.

Instead of fulfilling its due role of addressing these matters, politics continues to be increasingly concerned with defending the indefensible as it tries to salvage the lost reputations of those that have earlier savaged it from within the ranks, diverting its energies and resources away from attending to these issues of more immediate importance and relevance to the livelihood of the masses. Now more resources will be engulfed in the aftermath of the Britam affair. There seems to be no end to the ramifications of precipitate actions taken in the previous mandate, and it is the people who will have to bear the costs and the consequences.

Apart from economic security there is also the visible disintegration of the social fabric, and responsible to a large extent is the explosion of the drug culture that has been hastened by the advent of synthetic drugs for one. But another major factor is the running after easy money by all means, and that the irregular practices at the high levels have no doubt spurned. Can one prevent those so inclined to think that if the top guys can do it why can't we? Except that they are the ones who get caught more easily and get convicted, and that causes further erosion of the social fabric. Time and over again the media has appealed for the implementation of the recommendations of the Lam Shang Leen Drug Commission Report, but to no avail.

Complicating all this are the uncertainties facing students in the education sector, the genuine and harrowing difficulties regarding quarantining especially where parents are brutally separated from their children, the lack of humanness in handling these delicate situations attended by much emotional distress, the violence that is vitiating the law and order situation... one can add to this seemingly endless list.

There is urgency in shifting focus to these problems instead of wasting energies elsewhere, to prevent the country from sliding further down both nationally and internationally.

The Conversation

Don't be fooled by signs of recovery

pandemics weaken the flow of business ideas for seven years

Innovation is in fact the most important determinant of long-term economic growth

The UK continues on its path to economic recovery from Covid. According to the latest survey data from the Office for National Statistics, the proportion of companies seeing their turnover reduced by Covid in July 2021 was just 29%, compared to 65% in June 2020. That's the lowest level since these surveys started in the same month.

This is what you would expect with the lifting of Covid restrictions. We are seeing predictable winners and losers – international travel and high-street retail are still getting back on their feet, for example, while Amazon and other home delivery businesses roar on.

But this narrative is missing something important. For many businesses, recovery will depend on rather more than just restrictions being lifted. The ability of businesses to innovate after a pandemic can be hampered for years after – and no one seems to be talking about it.

Productivity and remote working

As part of the Covid restrictions, people were told that everyone who can work from home must do so. One important question was how this has affected productivity, which is a standard determinant of GDP growth and wages. The UK's productivity growth has been in decline for years, so anything that prevents it from getting worse would be worth pursuing.

Whether remote working would achieve this was debatable, however. Academic research published years before the pandemic pointed to clear productivity gains when people work from home. But the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published a paper in September 2020 indicating that the overall effects would be negative, and a Bank of England working paper from December agreed. If so, it's bad news that many believe that remote working will never go away entirely.

So why would productivity be weakened by remote working? One key reason could be that productivity is affected by our ability to generate ideas. The more that businesses come up with new inno-



Pic - theconversation.com

vative ideas, the more a nation's economy is able to produce.

Creativity in the workplace requires not only creative people, but group thinking. Research indicates that being in a social environment affects both the amount and frequency of our ideas. This can happen anywhere from a formal meeting to knocking around ideas over a sandwich to queuing next to a colleague in the local coffee shop. The fewer the opportunities for social interaction, the poorer the ideas that we come up with.

This goes to the heart of the Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter's notion of "creative destruction". It explains how economies grow as a mostly evolutionary process, in which new ideas replace old ones. If you weaken the flow of ideas, you'll get stagnation.

The threat to the UK

It might be tempting to think that ideas are overrated, and that consumer demand determines what new products come on the market. But it's often the other way around.

For an eloquent explanation of this, take a look at the famous scene from the Devil Wears Prada, where fashion mogul Miranda Priestly (Meryl Streep) gives new assistant Andy Sachs (Anne Hathaway) a frosty lesson in how the clothing industry works.

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Are Commissions of Inquiry being trivialised as soapbox tools for political ends?

Jan Arden

The report submitted these days by the Presidential Commission set up in April 2017 to inquire into the facts and circumstances in which Mauritius had sold the shares which BAI Company Ltd and its related entities held in Britam Holdings Ltd (Kenya), plunges us back into the 2015-2017 era, where power politics, raw ambitions and reckless decision-making, ended up in our countrymen being forced to foot the colossal bills that ensued.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth became PM and Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo Minister of Finance and Economic Development, but both for different reasons, were to vacate their substantive posts by the end of that most turbulent of eras, the second in early 2016, (accepting Foreign Affairs), and the first in January 2017, (accepting the newly created post of Mentor in Cabinet). With Pravind Jugnauth assuming the twin mantles of PM and Finance in January 2017, and the Ministry of Good Governance of then Minister Roshi Bhadain left vacant, a bitter public fall-out between those two former close comrades led to the latter's resignation from the National Assembly in June of that year.

That is the known political context surrounding the setting up in April 2017 of the Britam Commission of Inquiry which in other circumstances may never have seen the light of day. Even though the Commission spends chapters defending itself from accusations of bias, conflict of interest or political witch-hunting, the timing and circumstances of its birth cannot be interpreted *in vacuo* and has everything to do with the seismic political upheavals of the times. Nowhere was this more evident than in the key Terms of Reference (TOR) that was to guide the Commission's agenda and which reads as follows:

- (vi) "whether in relation to the above transaction [sale of Britam shares] there has been any fraud, malpractice, corruption, undue influence or, other misdeeds by any person involved in negotiating and finalizing the sale of said shares and whether any financial prejudice has thereby been caused to any person in Mauritius;"

We will leave the political dimensions to the politicians and the promise of immediate judicial challenges for the Supreme Court to thrash out, but any reasonable man would infer that the bow was strung and the arrow directed squarely at former close acolyte Bhadain.

Nevertheless, we can surely recognise that if there have been indeed shady circumstances around the sales of the BAI shares in Britam (Kenya) leading to a loss to the exchequer of Rs 1.3 to 1.9 billion, as alleged in TOR (ii) of the Commission, then these deserved to be investigated and reported on. This was the basis of the investigation by the Commission, to look into

- (ii) "the circumstances in which the Special Administrators, Messrs Yacoob Ramtoola and Georges Chung, did not proceed with the sale of the BAI Company (Mauritius) Ltd and related entities shares in Britam Holdings Ltd (Kenya) for the sum of MUR 4.3bn offered by a potential buyer, namely, MMI Holdings Ltd (South Africa) and, instead proceeded to sell the said shares to the existing shareholders, namely, Messrs Peter Munga and other investors



“The Commission has some choice words for ex-Minister Bhadain, duly elected in Quatre-Bornes and entrusted by late SAJ with high responsibilities: 1242. To get a ministerial position soon after one's first election happens only to a few fortunate ones, one would argue. Except that when he took his ministerial chair, he had everything that goes into it except the little desk experience essential for running public affairs... Landlubber boys embarking on a rescue mission on the high seas without buoys. That and other querulous statements of a similar nature are in effect a damning broadside at late SAJ's judgement and his ability to control his Cabinet...”

(Kenya) for the sum of only MUR 2.4bn;"

The allegation that there have been better offers, most notably from South African firms and conglomerates, in particular MMI Holdings, had been widely rooted in the media and, while we certainly would have much to say about former Minister Bhadain's overbearing actions during the period of political turmoil between 2015 and 2017, the question needed to be laid to rest definitively. Were there such binding concrete offers from South Africa or MMI or was it just rumours, allegations or obfuscation for political reasons?

And this is precisely what the Commission might have considered as its first essential task, clearing the ground zero, as it were, for its investigations. The Commission does answer the question but to locate it and its specifics, we had to wade through pages of materials and testimonies to piece together the essential facts, noticeably parked away in various parts of the Report.

We summarize them below as they come from two of the most reliable sources, the Financial Secretary at Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED) and the first appointed Special Administrator (Yacoob Ramtoola):

(a) The only offer from MMI Holdings was never concrete and binding but, at best, a proposal based on prevailing Kenya stock market listings, subject to due diligence being carried out in Kenya by MMI. The formula proposed was Quoted Share price times 1.5 to take account of the premium value of those shares and this was vetted and reckoned as fair by MOFED and the Financial Secretary.

(b) The Kenyan authorities made it clear to the MOFED

and our FS, Dev Manraj, that for their own sovereign reasons, they were unwilling to allow South African penetration into the important Kenyan player that was Britam (Kenya), which meant therefore that no offer could be entertained from MMI or from South Africa.

The Commission would have been perfectly entitled to close the whole inquiry there and then and send the dossier, fuelled by highly mediated but unsubstantiated allegations, back to the President of the Republic. But as they ploughed on, let us probe further in the Report as mere profanes.

(a) Given the very official Kenyan stance, there was no other alternative admitted the Financial Secretary than to negotiate the best possible deal with Kenyan buyers as the matter was relatively pressing to compensate the SCBG policy-holders or re-imburse the Bank of Mauritius advances. Besides share prices were tumbling fast on the Kenyan stock market, shaving value off the Britam shares.

(b) As a key witness, then Special Administrator, Yacoob Ramtoola explained:

"...th at MMI Holdings, according to him while proposing the figure of MUR 4.3bn had based itself on the prevailing share price of Britam on the NSE which was then Kes 26.90, including a premium of 50%.

He stated to the Commission that the decision to accept the offer of MUR 2.4bn made by Plum LLP was taken at a meeting chaired by ex-Minister Bhadain in his office in the presence of officials of the MFSGG & IR, its Advisors, the FS, the FSC, NPFL and himself..."

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Anil Madan

The Battle: Science vs. Idiocy

Many years ago, I was chatting with a law school classmate. We were musing about the fact that many of our fellow graduates were really not that smart despite having attended the top law school in the country. My classmate waxed eloquent as how some people are book smart, i.e., they can read and regurgitate and

thus test well. There are very few, he said, who can understand the big picture and how the trees fit to make up the forest. Mixed metaphors aside, I think he got the concept of Rembrandt and Eucalyptus about right.

Some months ago, one of my right-wing yahoo friends wrote: "Bwana is so smart, he's dumb."

There's actually a lot of truth to that statement, but not quite in the way that he meant it. The more I learn the more I realize how little I know. On the other hand, my right-wing yahoo friends and their ilk represent another part of the spectrum of ignorance. The less they know, the more certain they are of the rightness of their opinions and the relative rectitude of what they perceive to be the moral imperative of their positions.

Put simply, their lack of knowledge of a subject is no impediment to the expression of their "learned" opinion on it.

So, it has come to pass with the subject of vaccinations and Covid-19. The idiocy of my friends—an idiocy shared with many across the nation—has now risen to frightening levels.

One of the basic truths about vaccines is that no vaccine is 100% effective in preventing disease. Yet, the right-wing yahoos cite isolated occurrences of so-called "breakthrough" infections as **evidence** that vaccines don't necessarily work. Note that even a 96% effective vaccine is not a guarantee that vaccines necessarily work. But I must point a finger at the CDC (the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) here. The CDC has been remarkably ineffective in communicating the basic idea of how vaccines work.

The principle is simple. A vaccine spurs the body to produce antibodies in response to an infection, viral or bacterial. In other words, getting infected is the key to having the vaccine do its work. The vaccine does not prevent infection; it mitigates the effect of the disease produced by the infection.

The point is that a person who is not vaccinated may not be able to mount a sufficient immune response to avoid serious disease. But a vaccinated person has a significantly better chance of avoiding serious disease and death.

Neither should it be surprising that a vaccinated person can transmit a virus. Think about it for a moment and the truth trumps the idiotic response. If vaccines are not foolproof, a vaccinated person can be infected by the very virus that the vaccine is designed to attack. But, for the vaccine to actually work, there has to be a viral attack to trigger the body's immune response. Meanwhile, the virus having infected the vaccinated person can be transmitted until it is vanquished.

Nor should a person who has had the smallpox vaccine expect it to protect against measles. So, the Delta



Covid vaccine: Support builds for patent waiver as shortages threaten to bite. Pic - The Conversation

“Every drug, even aspirin, undergoes trials. These are all experiments. When a person takes any drug, any time, it is an experiment to see if it works. In other words, if you take an aspirin tablet, it may or may not get rid of your headache, and it may or may not prevent your heart attack or stroke. I point out that Emergency Use Authorization is granted only when trials have proved so successful that the cost-benefit analysis favours immediate use of the vaccine...”

variant of the coronavirus is essentially a different virus. But it shares enough characteristics with the original coronavirus which we know to cause Covid-19, that the vaccine may still prevent serious disease and death because it is effective in neutralizing the attack of the variant. This is what experience shows. So far.

Nevertheless, the right-wing yahoos seem to rejoice that the presently available vaccines do not necessarily work against a new form of virus. This is idiocy.

My right-wing yahoo friends have responses to all this. After all, the less they know, the more certain they are. Let me share three of their laments.

1. This is an experimental vaccine

I have tried hard to explain that they don't understand what "experimental" means. I point out that **every** drug, even aspirin, undergoes trials. These are all experiments. When a person takes any drug, any time, it is an experiment to see if it works. In other words, if you take an aspirin tablet, it may or may not get rid of your headache, and it may or may not prevent your heart attack or stroke. I point out that Emergency Use Authorization is granted only when trials have proved so successful that the cost-benefit analysis favours immediate use of the vaccine.

I tell them that there is not one single drug that is not an experimental drug every time someone takes it. The simple fact is that may or may not work. Nothing is 100% effective. Except stupidity and idiocy.

2. Bill Gates and George Soros are involved

There are two claims here. (a) Bill Gates is seeking to implant a microchip via the vaccine into each of us so that our credit card and social security information is at risk; and (b) Bill Gates and George Soros say there are too

many people on this earth and they want to eliminate millions. The vaccines are the way to do this.

My response is: (a) a microchip implanted in your body or bloodstream is not going to transmit your credit card information or social security number because those numbers are not in your circulatory system; (b) Gates and Soros are right that there are too many people on this earth, some 7.8 billion. However, if they wanted to get rid of people, they would use the virus to accomplish that goal, not the vaccine. Capiche?

However, I do point out that if Bill Gates were to try to get rid of people, he'd probably want to eliminate the stupid people as much as possible. Therefore, I confess, my friends do have cause to be worried.

3. We don't know what the long-term effects of the vaccines could be

My reply is that this observation is correct, but misplaced. We know from experience that the vaccines are both effective and safe. The likelihood of an anaphylactic reaction is remote. And, by the way, that type of reaction has little to do with the vaccine ingredients and more likely to do with the solvents and inert ingredients common to many injectable products. Ah well. One of the right-wing yahoos goes on to say that he is young and healthy. That's an exaggeration, but I let it pass.

Instead, I point out that this is true but if infected, he could and most likely would be ill and at risk.

He is unmoved. I tell him that I really don't want him to die. He asks me why. I say "Because you are so stupid, you are free entertainment for me. Please don't let me down by getting Covid."

Cheer...
Bwana

"A commission of inquiry should follow the rules of natural justice. Has this principle been adhered to in the Britam inquiry?"

• *'How can the police start an investigation now before the time limit of three months for applying for judicial review would have elapsed?'*

Barely had the Britam Commission Report been made public, that numerous quarters have raised questions regarding the potential bias of the Commission and the shortcomings of the contents. Some have dismissed it as a partisan tool targeting former Minister Bhadain, his advisors and the professional firm BDO. Those concerned parties have attacked the lengthy proceedings and Report as frivolous, announcing judicial reviews to the Supreme Court for redress. LEX delves into the legal issues and also the recommendations for better democratic governance, including sharp critiques of the AG's office and the functioning of Parliament.

LEX

* On 8 April 2017, Government set up a Presidential Commission to inquire into the facts and circumstances in which Mauritius had sold the shares which BAI Company (Mauritius) Ltd and its related entities held in Britam Holdings Ltd (Kenya). Why did it take so long for the report to come out?

It's quite possible that it had been a complicated inquiry. What is disturbing however is that one month before the report is released, evidence is still being fished out in light of a document produced and on which the commission acted without giving the persons concerned an opportunity to present their comments.

* **Can the findings of the Commission be challenged in court?**

Yes, the findings can be challenged by way of the procedure known as judicial review. This will enable the court to go through the findings and see whether they are justified on the basis of the evidence produced and if the evidence was legally admissible. It should be recalled that the existing rules of evidence of Mauritius apply to a commission of inquiry.

* **On what grounds can the findings be challenged?**

From public statements made by different parties and from a reading of the report itself, it does seem that there may be a number of grounds to challenge the findings.

A commission of inquiry should follow the rules of natural justice. This means that it must be fair, transparent, independent and impartial and only act on credible evidence. Has this been adhered to in the Britam inquiry? That remains to be seen.

* **What are the specific grounds on which the findings may be challenged?**

It appears that bias and unreasonable inferences or conclusions might have motivated the commission. The presence of one assessor is considered highly prejudicial in view of his proximity to the government, in particular the Prime Minister, and in light of his prior involvement with circumstances that ultimately led to the dismantling of the BAI Group. Could that have clouded his impartiality?

* **How will a court determine whether there was bias or not?**

Any decider of facts has to be objective. Impartiality is both subjective and objective. Subjective impartiality is a judge's personal impartiality as an individual. A judge is presumed to be subjectively impartial until proven otherwise.



“The Supreme Court has in previous judgments quashed findings arrived at on the basis of evidence in relation to some parties against whom there was evidence but who were not called to submit explanations. As regards Mr Khapre, it would appear that a document allegedly emanating from him was acted upon by the Commission without his given the opportunity to submit his comments on that document. It is a case of deciding behind a person's back...”

Objective impartiality is the parties' and public's belief that the Court as an institution or a commission of inquiry is impartial and that is important.

Now this consideration will be a crucial component of any challenge of the findings of the Commission especially with regard to one particular assessor.

* **It would appear that one of the parties in the matter, Mr Sandeep Khapre, was not called to submit his explanations on a document that was produced to the Commission...**

This indeed appears to be the case. The Supreme Court has in previous judgments quashed findings arrived at on the basis of evidence in relation to some parties against whom there was evidence but who were not called to submit explanations. As regards Mr Khapre, it would appear that a document allegedly emanating from him was acted upon by the Commission without his given the opportunity to submit his comments on that document. It is a case of deciding behind a person's back. This goes against all the basic principles of natural justice.

* **The whole case in the Britam inquiry rested on whether there was a firm offer of about Rs 4.3 bn for the sale of the shares of BAI Ltd in Britam Holdings Ltd**

(Kenya). From what we hear in the press there no evidence that there was any firm offer for Rs 4.3 bn. How is that possible?

That's the crux of the matter. Whether there was direct evidence or whether inferences could be drawn from the facts presented to the Commission to substantiate that there was indeed an offer for Rs 4.3 bn will be for the court to determine.

* **Apart from the findings on the Britam case itself, the Commission has commented on many aspects of the public service?**

Whatever one may feel about the findings against individuals or accounting firms, the Commission has highlighted the nefarious role played by advisers to the government who appear to have taken over the administration of the public service from officials appointed by the Public Service Commission. This is what the Commission writes: 'Governments of the day shall ensure that political advisers are not appointed to influence decisions of State Regulators.'

The Commission also urges public officers to act in the interest of the country. It also observes that the government must ensure that that 'public officers and professionals forming part of those institutions are able to progress the entities with an independence of mind and action, if in the interest of the nation, fulfilling their statutory roles pro-actively on government policy but not unethically.'

* **The commission has also commented on the role that the Attorney General should play as principal legal adviser to government. Any comment?**

In fact, there is far too often the perception that the advice tendered by the Attorney General is tailored to suit the convenience and decisions of the government. That might have prompted the Commission to bitterly indict that office by writing:

'We recommend that the office of the Attorney-General being a Constitutional Office of the highest order under section 69 of the Constitution, take measures to dispel any perception that it is advised by Government rather than advising Government. It shall develop and adhere to a protocol of the manner in which Elected Executives relate to the Office. While it should lend a ready ear to the myriad of concerns generated from a myriad of quarters, it should avoid becoming vulnerable to any extraneous pressure; exercise institutional scepticism on advice emanating from sources other than the established trusted sources; do whatever it takes to watch the interest of the State but without compromising on its image of being apolitical and independent.'

● **Cont. on page 11**

Asia sees record Covid-19 surge, Delta variant spurs nations to reconsider curbs

Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) cases are once again surging in Asia, with countries such as Thailand and Malaysia clocking a record number of infections. The city of Tokyo in Japan, where the 2020 Summer Olympics are underway, reported record Covid-19 infections over the past few days. The scenario is the same for countries that previously proved relatively successful in containing the virus. These Asian countries are now imposing strict restrictions of movement in several major cities and provinces, reports Hindustan Times.

Japan: Olympics organisers said on Saturday they have banned any Games-related person or people from going on sightseeing. None of them would be allowed to leave the athletes' village for touring around elsewhere in Japan, authorities said.

The organisers of the multi-sports event banished on Sunday as many as six people, including two silver medalists from Georgia, for violating measures imposed to hold the Olympics safely amid the pandemic.

Thailand: The situation is similar in Thailand, where a daily record high of 18,912 new cases of Covid-19 infection



Covid surge sees Southeast Asia hitting record highs. Pic - Reuters

was registered on Saturday. As many as 178 people lost their lives due to the virus over the past 24 hours, also a daily record in itself.

The government of Thailand said that the Delta variant of the Covid-19 has been found in more than 60 per cent of the Covid-19 cases in the country, of which 80% are in the capital Bangkok alone.

According to the local media, a hospital near Bangkok had to begin placing bodies

of the dead in makeshift containers and refrigerators, after the recent surge in Covid-19 cases overwhelmed its mortuary. The last time that the facility had to do this was after the 2004 tsunami, the hospital director was quoted as saying.

China: China is battling its worst Covid-19 outbreak in several months, reports said, as the Delta variant of the coronavirus disease keeps being locally transmitted to several parts of the country.

The Delta cluster has now spread to the eastern city of Nanjiang, where airport workers were believed to have been infected after cleaning a plane that arrived from Russia.

Vietnam: Vietnam, also grappling with a surge in Covid-19 cases, announced that from Monday it will impose strict curbs on movement in its business hub Ho Chi Minh City and another 18 cities and provinces throughout its south for another two weeks.

India: As many as 41,831 fresh cases of coronavirus disease were registered on Sunday, in the past 24 hours, taking the cumulative tally to 31,655,824. India now has 410,952 active cases, which constitutes 1.30 per cent of the total caseload. With this, the daily positivity rate has touched 2.34 per cent.

Covid-19 infections, driven by the Delta variant, have increased by 80% over the past four weeks in most regions of the world, WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Friday. The Delta variant of the coronavirus is as contagious as chickenpox and far more so than the common cold or flu, the US Centers for Disease Control said in a document this week.



Carrie Johnson announced her pregnancy in a post on Instagram. Pic - TOI

UK PM Boris Johnson's wife says she's pregnant again

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's wife, Carrie, said Saturday that she is expecting the couple's second child.

Carrie Johnson announced her pregnancy in a post on Instagram in which she also revealed that she suffered a miscarriage earlier this year, reports AP.

"At the beginning of the year, I had a miscarriage which left me heartbroken," she wrote. "I feel incredibly blessed to be pregnant again, but I've also felt like a bag of nerves."

Johnson said she hoped to welcome her "rainbow baby" around Christmas. Rainbow baby is a term used to describe a child born after a miscarriage, still birth or the death of an infant.

The 33-year-old environmental campaigner and former Conservative Party communications director said she wanted to share the news about her miscarriage to help others.

"Fertility issues can be really hard for many people, particularly when on platforms like Instagram it can look like everything is only ever going well," she said. "I found it a real comfort to hear from people who had also experienced loss so I hope that in some very small way sharing this might help others too."

Former Supreme Court judge suspect in Haiti president Jovenel Moise's killing

Amid an international manhunt for mercenaries and masterminds, Haiti police have brought up fresh accusations against a former Supreme Court judge over her links in the assassination of President Jovenel Moise. The police said that the judge, Wendelle Coq-Thelot, had met some Columbian mercenaries accused of killing Moise, reported news agency Reuters.

Moise, who took the office a year after he was elected in 2016, had been claiming that his presidential term should end in 2022, a stance backed by the US, the UN and the Organization of American States.

However, the Opposition wanted Moise to step down in February citing a constitutional provision that sets the clock when a president is elected, not when he takes office.

Coq-Thelot was ousted in February along with two other judges after Moise alleged a coup was being planned against him. Earlier this week, Haitian police issued an arrest warrant against the former Supreme Court judge.

Inspector General Marie Michelle Verrier, the spokesperson for the National Police of Haiti, told reporters that Colum-



Martine Moïse speaks at her husband's funeral in Cap-Haïtien last week. Pic- Xinhua/Rex/Shutterstock

bian mercenaries and Haitian-Americans arrested in Moise's murder case have indicated they met Coq-Thelot twice at her home.

"These people gave to (police) details of documents signed during the meetings at Mrs. Coq's home," said Verrier.

The spokesperson said that the police have raided the former judge's main home and other residences in the countryside but her

whereabouts remain unknown. A wanted poster for Coq-Thelot has also been launched, according to Reuters.

While Haitian police have arrested several suspected members of the "hit squad" made up of Colombians and Americans in connection with Moise's assassination, they are yet to identify the masterminds and the motive behind the killing.

* Contd on page 7

UN warns hunger is expected to rise in 23 global hotspots



Deteriorating trends are mostly driven by conflict dynamics, as well as the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Pic - Boston Globe

Hunger is expected to rise in 23 global hotspots in the next three months with the highest alerts for "catastrophic" situations in Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region, southern Madagascar, Yemen, South Sudan and northern Nigeria, two U.N. agencies warned Friday.

The Food and Agriculture Organization and World Food Program said in a new report on "Hunger Hotspots" between August and November that "acute food insecurity is likely to further deteriorate."

They put Ethiopia at the top of the list, saying the number of people facing starvation and death is expected to rise to 401,000 -- the highest number since the

2011 famine in Somalia -- if humanitarian aid isn't provided quickly.

In southern Madagascar, which has been hit by the worst drought in the past 40 years, pests affecting staple crops, and rising food prices -- 14,000 people are expected to be pushed into "catastrophic" acute food insecurity marked by starvation and death by September. And that number is expected to double by the end of the year with 28,000 people needing urgent help, the two agencies said.

"Acute hunger is increasing not only in scale but also severity," FAO and WFP said in Friday's report. "Overall, over 41 million people worldwide are now at risk of falling into famine or famine-like conditions, unless they receive immediate life and livelihood-saving assistance."

The two Rome-based agencies called for urgent humanitarian action to save lives in the 23 hotspots, saying help is especially critical in the five highest alert places to prevent famine and death.

"These deteriorating trends are mostly driven by conflict dynamics, as well as the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic," they said. "These include food price spikes, movement restrictions that limit market and pastoralists activities alike, rising inflation, decreased purchasing power, and an early and prolonged lean season" for crops.

Nearly 300 Taliban killed, hundreds injured in ops by Afghan forces in 48 hours



The Taliban has also taken control of 10 border crossing points in Takhar, Kunduz, Badakhshan, Herat and Farah provinces. Pic - AFP

As the Taliban mounted an offensive amid the withdrawal of foreign troops from war-torn Afghanistan, as many as nearly 300 members of the group have been killed and hundreds of others wounded in operations by the country's security forces in different provinces since Saturday, said the ministry of defense has said. "254 Taliban terrorists were killed and 97 wounded as a result of ANDSF (Afghanistan National Defence and Security Forces) operations in Ghazni, Kandahar, Herat, Farah, Jowzjan, Balkh, Samangan, Helmand, Takhar, Kunduz, Baghlan, Kabul & Kapisa provinces during the last 24 hours," the ministry of defense tweeted on Sunday.

There has been a surge in violence in Afghanistan as the Taliban have intensified their offensive against Afghan security forces and civilians and have captured several districts. The Afghan foreign ministry has said that the Taliban has seized over 193 district centres and 19 border districts. The Taliban has also taken control of 10 border crossing points in Takhar, Kunduz, Badakhshan, Herat and Farah provinces which has led to the complete shutdown of cross border movements and trade in these areas.

Nearly 4,000 ANDSF personnel have been killed, more than 7,000 injured and about 1,600 captured by the Taliban since April 14, the ministry said. As many as 2,000 civilians, including women and children, were killed in the violence, while 2,200 were injured, it added.

Tolo News channel has reported that 70 districts fell to the Taliban in July. The government said that 11 districts have been recaptured from the Taliban in July, however, Yaftal in Badakhshan, Chakhansur in Nimroz, Malistan in Ghazni, Garmsir in Helmand and Guzara in Herat have been taken back by the Taliban.

Indian PM Modi to launch 'futuristic digital payment solution' e-RUPI

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched on Monday launch e-RUPI, a person and purpose-specific digital payment solution via video conferencing. "Digital technology is transforming lives in a major way and is furthering 'Ease of Living.' At 4:30 PM tomorrow, 2nd August, will launch e-RUPI, a futuristic digital payment solution which offers several benefits for its users," Modi said in a tweet on Sunday.

According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on Saturday, e-RUPI is a cashless and contactless instrument for digital payment which has been developed by the National Payments Corporation of India in collaboration with the department of financial services, the Union ministry of health and family welfare and the National Health Authority.

It is a QR code or SMS string-based e-Voucher, which is delivered to the mobile phones of beneficiaries. Users of e-RUPI will be able to redeem the voucher without a card, digital payments app or internet banking access, at the service provider.

The digital payment solution connects sponsors of services with beneficiaries and service providers digitally without any physical interface. e-RUPI ensures that payment to a service provider is made only after the completion of a transaction. "Being pre-paid in nature, it assures timely payment to the service provider without involvement of any intermediary," the PMO statement added.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Pic - www.telugu-kathalu.com

World's first commercial fully re-programmable satellite lifts off

Eutelsat Quantum, the world's first commercial fully re-programmable satellite lifted off from French Guiana on Friday on board an Ariane 5 rocket, with the hope of a new era of more flexible communications. The European Space Agency (ESA) posted from its official handle a photo of the Eutelsat Quantum satellite lifting off and said that it is the "first commercial fully flexible software-defined satellite in the world".

The satellite was placed in orbit some 36 minutes after the launch.

"Eutelsat Quantum, developed under an ESA partnership project with satellite operator Eutelsat and prime manufacturer Airbus, is the first commercial fully flexible software-defined satellite in the world," the space agency said in an official release. "Because it can be reprogrammed in orbit, it can respond to changing demands for data transmission and secure communications during its 15-year lifetime. Its beams can be redirected to move in almost real-time to provide information to passengers onboard moving ships or planes."

What is a fully re-programmable satellite? Unlike conventional models that are designed and "hard-wired" on Earth and cannot be repurposed once in orbit, the



Eutelsat Quantum allows users to tailor the communications to their needs -- almost in real-time.

Because it can be reprogrammed while orbiting in a fixed position 35,000 kilometers (22,000 miles) above the Earth, the Quantum can respond to changing demands for data transmission and secure communications during its 15-year lifetime, according to the European Space Agency.

And at a time of growing concern over digital security -- as well as the possible weaponising of space -- Quantum is able to pinpoint the origin of signals emitted with or without malicious intent and take action to remedy the interference.

The Quantum will cover a large geographical area from West Africa to Asia for a period of 15 years.

Compiled by Doojesh Ramlallah

Small climate changes can have devastating local consequences - it happened in the Little Ice Age

In recent weeks, catastrophic floods overwhelmed towns in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, inundated subway tunnels in China, swept through northwestern Africa and triggered deadly landslides in India and Japan. Heat and drought fanned wildfires in the North American West and Siberia, contributed to water shortages in Iran, and worsened famines in Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya.

Extremes like these are increasingly caused or worsened by human activities heating up Earth's climate. For thousands of years, Earth's climate has not changed anywhere near as quickly or profoundly as it's changing today.

Yet on a smaller scale, humans have seen waves of extreme weather events coincide with temperature changes before. It happened during what's known as the Little Ice Age, a period between the 14th and 19th centuries that was marked by large volcanic eruptions and bitter cold spells in parts of the world.

The global average temperature is believed to have cooled by less than a half-degree Celsius (less than 0.9 F) during even the chilliest decades of the Little Ice Age, but locally, extremes were common.

In diaries and letters from that period, people wrote about "years without a summer," when wintry weather persisted long after spring. In one such summer, in 1816, cold that followed a massive volcanic eruption in Indonesia ruined crops across parts of Europe and North America. Less well known are the unusually cold European summers of 1587, 1628 and 1675, when unseasonal frost provoked fear and, in some places, hunger.

"It is horribly cold," author Marie de Rabutin-Chantal wrote from Paris during the last of these years; "the behavior of the sun and of the seasons has changed."

Winters could be equally terrifying. People reported 17th-century blizzards as far south as Florida and the Chinese province of Fujian. Sea ice trapped ships, repeatedly enclosed the Chesapeake Bay and froze over rivers from the Bosphorus to the Meuse. In early 1658, ice so completely covered the Baltic Sea that a Swedish army marched across the water separating Sweden and Denmark to besiege Copenhagen. Poems and songs suggest people simply froze to death while huddling in their homes.

These were cold snaps, not heat waves, but the overall story should seem familiar: A small global change in climate dramatically altered the likelihood of extreme local weather. Scholars who study the history of climate and society, like me, identify these changes in the past and find out how human populations responded.



Disastrous storms, like one in 1775 in the Netherlands, were documented by engravers and other artists. Noach van der Meer II, after Hendrik Kobell

What's behind the extremes

We know about the Little Ice Age because the natural world is full of things like trees, stalagmites and ice sheets that respond to weather while growing or accumulating gradually over time. Specialists can use past fluctuations in their growth or chemistry as indicators of fluctuations in climate and thereby create graphs or maps - reconstructions - that show historical climate changes.

These reconstructions reveal that waves of cooling swept across much of the world. They also suggest likely causes - including a series of explosive volcanic eruptions that abruptly released sunlight-scattering dust into the stratosphere; and slow, internal variability in regional patterns of atmospheric and oceanic circulation.

These causes could only cool the Earth by a few tenths of a degree Celsius during the chilliest waves of the Little Ice Age, however. And the cooling was not nearly as consistent as present-day warming.

Small global trends can mask far bigger local changes. Studies have suggested that modest cooling created by volcanic eruptions can reduce the usual contrast between temperatures over land and sea, because land heats and cools faster than oceans. Since that contrast powers the monsoons, the African and East Asian summer monsoons can weaken after big eruptions. That likely disturbed atmospheric circulation all the way into the North Atlantic, reducing the flow of warm air into Europe. This is why parts of Western Europe, for example, may have cooled by more than 3 C (5.4 F) even as the rest of the world cooled far less during the 1816 year without a summer.

Feedback loops also amplified and sustained regional cooling, similar to how they amplify regional warming today. In the

Arctic, for example, cooler temperatures can mean more, longer-lasting sea ice. Ice reflects more sunlight back into space than water does, and that feedback loop leads to more cooling, more ice and so on. As a result, the comparatively modest climate changes of the Little Ice Age likely had profound local impacts.

Changing patterns of atmospheric circulation and pressure also led in many regions to remarkably wet, dry or stormy weather.

Heavy sea ice in the Greenland Sea may have diverted the North Atlantic storm track south, funneling severe gales toward the dikes and dams of what are today the Netherlands and Belgium. Thousands of people succumbed in the 1570 All Saints' Day Flood along the German and Dutch coast, and again in the Christmas Flood of 1717. Heavy precipitation and water pooling behind dams of melting ice repeatedly overwhelmed inadequate flood defenses and inundated central and Western Europe. "Who would not take pity on the city?" one chronicler lamented after seeing his town under water and then on fire in 1602. "One storm, one flood, one fire destroyed it all."

Cooling sea surface temperatures in the North Atlantic Ocean probably also diverted the rain-giving winds around the equator to the south, provoking droughts that undermined the water infrastructure of 15th-century Angkor.

Owing perhaps to the modest cooling of volcanic dust veils, disrupted patterns of atmospheric circulation led in the 16th century to severe droughts that contributed to food shortages across the Ottoman Empire. In 1640, the grand canal that supplied Beijing with food simply dried up, and a short but profound drought in 1666 primed the wooden infrastructure of

European cities for a wave of catastrophic urban fires.

How does it apply to today?

Today, the temperature shift is going in the other direction - with global temperatures already 1 C (1.8 F) higher than before the industrial era, and local, sometimes devastating, extremes occurring around the world.

New research has found that extreme heat waves, those that don't just break records but shatter them, become more common when temperatures change rapidly.

These serve as a warning to governments to redouble their efforts to limit warming to 1.5 C (2.7 F), relative to the 20th-century average, while also investing in the development and deployment of technologies that filter greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere.

Restoring the chemistry of the atmosphere will still take many decades after countries bring down their greenhouse gas emissions, and so communities must adapt to a hotter and less habitable planet. Nations and communities might learn from some of the success stories of the Little Ice Age: Populations that prospered were often those that provided for their poor, established diverse trade networks, migrated from vulnerable environments, and above all adapted proactively to new environmental realities.

People who lived through the Little Ice Age lacked perhaps the most important resource available today: the ability to learn from the long global history of human responses to climate change.

Dagomar Degroot,

Associate Professor of Environmental History, Georgetown University

The Seesaw of Politics

This government is currently going through the eye of a storm with criticisms emerging even from the most unexpected quarters. It has been constantly under fire lately and is having great difficulties to repel the continuous attacks heard on the airwaves and seen in the media. The consequences could have been even much more calamitous except that help has come from the least expected sources, namely the opposition parties. They seem to have great problems in rallying and uniting their forces in order to offer a robust alternative. This, at a time when a strong opposition is needed more than ever to ensure that democracy is well and alive in our island. Unfortunately, the squabbles in their midst are legend and despite the efforts of some of them, the opposition remains disunited and could hardly be termed as a government in waiting, that is the first bit of good news for the government.

The second welcoming tidings for them, which is perhaps even more gratifying, is the fact that an out of favour politician wants to soldier on because he perceives himself as the only alternative to the coveted seat of power, that is despite being rejected by the electorate on two successive occasions. He continues to think that he can make another comeback like the famous comebacks of Frank Sinatra. To quote a famous saying from a well-known politician 'Arette rêver camarade' because you will be doing a disservice not only to your party but equally to the country. No doubt that will be recalled in history. I find it a terrible shame that generally, some politicians do not realize when it is time to call it a day, to take their reverence and hang up their boots as the saying goes in football parlance. Of course, seasoned politicians can and should still play a prominent role in the affairs of the state without being involved on a day-to-day basis. Their wisdom and past experiences can be invaluable in guiding the newcomers on how to play their new role.

Apart from the above preamble, the reasons for the ongoing troubles the government is facing, are two-fold:

1. The competence and standard of some who currently hold high office.

I can only assume that some ministers are doubling up in their ministerial obligations because there is a dearth of competence and quality among the rest of the potential aspirants to ministerial duties in the ranks of the government. They are simply not up to the expected standards to take up the cudgel and step to the mark. I have no doubt that there are some capable, competent and talented ministers, especially among those currently holding two ministerial portfolios but to expect a minister to manage double responsibilities even to a reasonable standard, let alone sustain the expected levels, is simply not realistic. It is rather unfortunate for whatever circumstances other than what I have stated above, that no one else can be nominated even at a junior ministerial level, to at least support even on a temporary basis those holding those double responsibilities.

Perhaps in future all political parties should select their potential candidates on the following criteria, that is not only to perform to a very high standard as a member of parliament but also to assess them in a scientific way their potential to hold higher office. Not on the basis of their ethnicity or which constituency they might represent, but on their ability not only to deal with ministerial duties on a day to day basis but to anticipate potential problems and act accordingly.

2. The quality of communication

The second equally important reason is the way the quality of communication is imparted at different levels of responsibilities within the ranks of the government.

If ever there is one aspect which can be considered to be the Achilles' heel of this government, it is in the quality of its communication and the way it is disseminated. First, the authorities need to realize that it is not only the quality and depth of the content of what is to be communicated which is important but the ability of the person delivering the message. He or she should be very eloquent so that the message can be clearly understood. For example, if the person fronting the event speaks in a staccato style as it has been the case in a not too distant past, the message will not be clearly understood and will be lost in transmission along the way.

If only a policy of total clarity and transparency could be adopted (barring exceptions when information cannot be divulged for reasons of state security restrictions), that would help the government no end in communicating instead of the opacity that prevails most of the time. Even to obtain the simplest of information is equivalent to negotiating an obstacle course. Practically, every explanation is sometimes given reluctantly and seems to be shrouded in mystery.

This tends to create more confusion in the mind of the ordinary citizen than helping him or her to understand. This reluctance to impart basic and clear explanations seems to be the hallmark of some of the so-called experts in communication, who are paid at great costs from the government coffers. What it is really bewildering, is that never before have the authorities held so many tools to communicate effectively with the population - through print, television, online media, social media, emails, text notification and mobile apps - and yet seem unable to do so even at a basic level. That fact can be reflected in the number of complaints heard and read daily across all the media.

For what it is worth, I will give a free piece of advice to all those in charge of communication at the highest level in government. Remember when trust is at an historic low, it is imperative to revamp the strategic and communication modality by adopting a more participatory and inclusive approach and by fostering a meaningful two-way communication and engagement so that the population can understand and feel understood.

CLAUDE CANABADY

The BLS a must

During the turbulent political period that preceded the Independence of Mauritius, there was a great apprehension of hegemony expressed by the minority ethnic groups - Creoles, Whites, Muslims, Chinese, etc. Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, leader of the Labour Party with his allies S. Bissoondoyal of the IFB and R. Mohamed, CAM were campaigning for Independence, whereas Koenig and Duval, leaders of the PMSD, campaigned for an Association with Great Britain. The contest between the Pro-Independence and Pro-Association factions was rough and tough, often carrying the country on the brink of racial clashes. Tension was high in the air. Violent racial explosions could have occurred at any time due to the existing fear, suspicion and mistrust in the country.

Constitutional Conference - London

Fortunately, thanks to the participation of technical advisers from the British government and other experts on constitutional matters, the Mauritian political leaders meeting in London finally reached a compromise - The Best Loser System (BLS). "The essence of politics is compromise," says Macaulay. No doubt, the task of the participants - Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo, Sir Harold Walter, Sir Satcam Boolell, Jules Koenig, Sir Gaëtan Duval, Sookdeo Bissoondoyal, Sir Abdool Razack Mohamed at the London Constitutional Conference, had not been an easy one. They however allowed understanding, common sense and wisdom to guide them in reaching their final decision. Mauritius, because of its diversity and specificity is in need of a specific electoral system like the BLS. "*Je connais les raisons pour lesquelles ce système a été introduit. L'histoire a démontré que nous avions raison,*" Sir Anerood Jugnauth, an extract from Le Mauricien, Monday 24 Sept. 2012.

We believe that the BLS is 'A MUST' for the General Population, the Muslims and the Chinese. One must not forget that the BLS has also been applied in the case of Sir Kher Jagatsingh, Motee Ramdass and Ravi Yerigadoo, all three members of the Hindu community. The Electoral Commission is empowered to do the needful in regard to a minor change, just as it did after Gaëtan Duval had stood as a candidate in four different constituencies at the general elections in 1982. Since then, no other 'Froder Election,' can stand as candi-

date in more than one constituency at an election.

Banwell - Electoral System

Banwell recommended (among others) 20 constituencies in Mauritius returning 3 members each and Rodrigues 2 members. At the same time Banwell divided the population into 4 sections: Hindu, Muslim, General Population and Chinese for electoral law purposes.

The final proposal and actual electoral system is based on Banwell recommendations and modified by Stonehouse.

The Best Loser System

- "BLS was designed to provide 'balanced' ethnic and political representation."
- "The Best Loser System is a method used in Mauritius to make sure that the minority ethnic groups are well and equitably represented in the parliament."
- "The Best Loser System was set up long ago to prevent political tension in the country..."

Communalism in Mauritius

Can *Resistans ek Alternativ* eliminate communalism in Mauritius? What we desperately need in Mauritius is a change of mentality. Until that can happen, I will tend to share the view that "As long as Mauritius exists, communalism will exist." (*Mauritius Times*, 21-27 March 2008 - Yousuf Mohamed).

Finally, there is nothing wrong with the BLS; it has helped to prevent political tensions in the country and to maintain peace and harmony among the various ethnic groups after an election. According to MAM, the *status quo* of the BLS should be maintained, except for a very minor change by the Electoral Commission. In fact, the country needs No Electoral Reform, No Proportional Representation, No Senate, No Assembly of 90 Deputies, No Party List System in order to make that change, and at the same time, satisfy *Resistans ek Alternativ*, in line with the UN Human Rights Committee's recommendation. However, if the Electoral Commission implements that change that would allow *Resistans ek Alternativ* not to state their ethnic belonging in their nomination forms, the Electoral Commission should automatically exclude them from any allocation of the Best Loser seats.

ELIÉZER FRANÇOIS JP
Leader MAM

From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

4th Year No 169

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 31 October 1957

• *Fanaticism consists in redoubling your efforts when you have forgotten your aim.* -- George Santayana

Peter Ibbotson

Many territories, large and small, use state-run lotteries to raise funds. The world-famous British Museum had its financial origin in a state's lottery; and last year the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced the Premium Bond scheme (a form of lottery) to boost national savings. Some colonial territories use lotteries as a means of raising funds for national expenditure; notably Gibraltar. The Malta Government Lottery is worldwide.

The Government of St Kitts is alarmed at the amount of money which is sent out of the island every year to pay for lottery tickets in other countries. So alarmed, in fact, that the local Legislature has passed a bill authorising the establishment of a local lottery.

There is, of course, the Mauritius Lottery. Before me I have a copy of *Le Mauricien* of March 9, detailing the winning numbers of ticket in the 120th draw of the Mauritius Lottery. For a ticket costing 25 cents, prizes of Rs 83, 748, 22,332, 16,749, 8,374, 5,583 and 2,791 were awarded; with 50 consolation prizes of Rs 1,116 each.

Contrast this with the Malta Government Lottery. Tickets for this cost 10 shillings sterling; say, Rs 665. Four lotteries are held every year; they are organised by a Director of Public Lotteries. He has a whole host of ticket selling agents, and these agents sell tickets all over the world. The total prize fund of the 32nd lottery was announced -- before the receipts of the tickets were known -- as £60,000; that is, Rs 800,000. (Compare this against the prizes awarded in the 120th Mauritius Lottery -- Rs 195, 412). If the sales of tickets exceed 450,000 the prize fund is increase. The fixed prizes awarded in the Malta Lottery are:

- 1st prize - £35,000 or Rs 466,666
- 2nd prize - £10,000 or Rs 133,333
- 3rd prize - 4,000 or Rs 53,333
- 4th prize - £1,500 or Rs 20,000
- 5th prize - £1,000 or Rs 13,333
- 6th prize - £600 or Rs 8,000

Topics of The Times

Lotteries



Other prizes are 12 of £200 (Rs 2,666); 30 of £100 (Rs 1,333); and 28 of £50 (Rs 666). Every ticket buyer receives prize list, by airmail; and the prizewinners are scattered all over the world. The list of prizewinners in a typical draw, the 31st (March 1957), shows that the 1st, 2nd and 5th prizes went to England; the 3rd to South Africa, the 4th to S.W. Africa, and the 6th to the USA. The lesser prizes went to England, USA, France, Iran, Nigeria, Canada, South Africa, Malta, Kenya, Jamaica, Uganda, Scotland, Venezuela, Philippine Islands, Cameroons, India, Ireland, Southern Rhodesia, Wales, Portugal, Holland, Tanganyika, and Bolivia.

If we have a Mauritius Lottery, and it is an established institution, let it be a worthwhile one. It would be a good thing to seek advice from the Director of Public Lotto, Malta, and to try and build up the Mauritius Lottery into a world-wide lottery. If Malta becomes integrated into the UK, the lottery will have to cease as it is against the laws of the United Kingdom to run such a lottery. For myself, I have no moral objection to a lottery as such; although it does become objectionable when people buy tickets at the expense of necessary expenditure on their families. But if a Mauritius Lottery could be established on the lines of the Malta Lottery, then welcome revenue would accrue; and more people would learn of the existence of Mauritius and its place on the map.

* * *

The Franchise

Whatever system of constituencies is decided upon, the next election will be fought on a much wider franchise than in 1953. Adult suffrage, without literacy tests, will add considerably to the number of electors

registered. And these illiterate electors will have to have some means of distinguishing between candidates on the ballot papers.

In such circumstances, the usual method is for the various political parties or groups to be allotted different party symbols. For Example, when the vote was given to thousands of illiterate Africans in Gold Coast, the various political parties were allotted symbols and Government teams toured the country instructing voters in the meaning of the party symbols.

The Labour Party must make sure that it gets one symbol which is recognised as the party symbol which is recognised as the party symbol all over Mauritius. This is important; it sounds a small point but is really a big one. The same symbol in all areas will help voters to recognise the Labour candidates wherever they happen to live. The absence of a nationally-recognised symbol puts the Party under a handicap.

For example, the Labour Party in Dominica (West Indies) recently fought a general election at which, says Phyllis Allfrey (leader of the Party) in the October issue of *Venture*, confusion and trickery marked the scene. "These island people", she says, "are politically shrewd but mainly illiterate and they have to vote by symbols -- the hat, the bottle, the hammer and so forth.

Several months before the election date the Labour Party of Dominica applied for one overall symbol but the request was refused... The boundaries between voting districts are vague so that often Labour voters putting crosses against the 'the hat' with wild enthusiasm found afterwards that they were on the wrong side of the stream, road or ravine and should have voted for 'the hand' or 'the bottle' -- they had voted for the opposition candidate".

* * *

Education

Many teachers are irked at the insistence of the Director of Education that the timetable is sacrosanct. Rigidity of the timetable if not a sign of educational advance. You cannot compartmentalise instruction into half-an-hour's reading, half-an-hour's writing, half-an-hour's French, and so on. Especially at the primary school stage. The time-table must be flexible.

Mr Kynaston-Snell has boasted about having been a member of the National Union of Teachers. As such he should surely be aware -- when he was a member -- of the advances in educational theory and practice of the last twenty or thirty years in the UK. All over England and Wales, the realisation is growing that the time-table is no longer king. The needs of the pupils, not the requirements of administrators, come first. In the junior school (children aged 8 to 11) in England, the timetable is not rigidly adhered to; and in many infants' schools (children aged 5 to 8) there is no formal timetable.

The days are divided into "Teacher's time" and "Children's time" -- and the pupils busy themselves with a variety of occupations. In teacher's time, their occupations will be chosen and guided by teacher; in children's time, their occupations will be self-chosen with the teacher being ready with help, advice and assistance if and when appealed to. Rigidity is a thing of the past. When will Mr Snell encourage modern methods in Mauritius? and when will he stop his department insisting on slavish adherence to a rigid time-table?

Are Commissions of Inquiry being trivialised as soapbox tools for political ends?

● Cont. from page 3

It is worth noting from the Report that at that time of consensus agreement, the share price on the NSE was 11Kshs (Kenyan Shilling) per share and Plum (Munga et al) were actually offering 16 Kshs per share, a figure that the whole Mauritian side considered to be advantageous and the deal was accordingly settled. Given the above averments, derived from the Commission's Report itself, one wonders whether there was any worthwhile cause to pursue over several years at probably substantial costs to the taxpayer.

Whether the Commission was somewhat peeved and empty-handed on the TOR (ii) or (vi) quest, they ploughed on and did find some comfort

in alleged derailments elsewhere, notably two versions of a Note of Meeting for which police enquiry is recommended.

The Commission has some choice words for ex-Minister Bhadain, duly elected in Quatre-Bornes and entrusted by late SAJ with high responsibilities:

1242. To get a ministerial position soon after one's first election happens only to a few fortunate ones, one would argue. Except that when he took his ministerial chair, he had everything that goes into it except the little desk experience essential for running public affairs... Landlubber boys embarking on a rescue mission on the high seas without buoys.

That and other querulous statements of a similar nature are in effect a

damning broadside at late SAJ's judgement and his ability to control his Cabinet in that short-lived two-year prime ministership that left such a heavy legacy for the population to bear. There seems little reason to celebrate an Inquiry that could have been closed after a few months, represents a waste of taxpayer money and whose credibility suffers so seriously from its political broadsides.

Another Commission that has been appointed after the Betamax affair which has already cost taxpayers a hefty price, is widely perceived as having political dimensions at its root. Are Commissions of Inquiry being trivialised as soap-box tools for political ends?

Jan Arden

Don't be fooled by signs of recovery pandemics weaken the flow of business ideas for seven years

● Cont. from page 2

This is prompted by Sachs sniggering at the fuss being made over choosing between two belts that she thinks look very similar.

Priestly picks on her "lumpy blue sweater" by pointing out that it's not just any shade of blue, but a cerulean blue that originally came from a collection of gowns by Oscar de la Renta. He was then copied by numerous other designers before it filtered down to the high street and sold as millions of items of clothing. The point is that ideas can be replicated by a large number of firms, effectively creating a multiplier effect in terms of economic growth.

Innovation is in fact the most important determinant of long-term economic growth. Countries that host more innovative firms tend to achieve better GDP numbers.

I recently co-published a paper into how innovation is affected by pandemics. By analysing the effect on patent applications within the world's leading economies of previous pandemics like the Spanish, Hong and Asian flus, swine flu and encephalitis, we concluded that it takes approximately seven years for innovation to recover from a pandemic shock.

It takes an average of two to three years after the pandemic for the



Pic - theconversation.com

shock to be felt on the ideas pipeline, as companies enter the pandemic with an existing list of ideas under development. From there, it remains depressed for four or five years.

More research-intensive sectors are disproportionately affected. And if this is the effect of taking people out of the workforce and preventing them from interacting in the usual way, the prospect of remote working being semi-permanent this time could make the damage even worse.

The lifting of the restrictions is a great opportunity to get the "ideas economy" moving again. The UK and other governments would be well advised to give extra assistance to firms that are particularly important to R&D, being mindful of the timescale

over which this threat plays out. They should also invest to make patent offices as efficient as possible, and to set up more spaces that are purely designed for people to come together to develop ideas.

What governments must not do is to look at the latest promising recovery numbers and think that everything is getting back to normal – they need the bird's eye view not the worm's eye view. The UK is facing a slump in the creation of ideas that will slow down economic growth, and be made worse by remote working. Getting it right is a marathon, not a sprint, and it needs to be an urgent priority.

Thanos Verousis, Reader
in Finance, University of Essex

Qs & As - Commission of Inquiry on Britam Sale

"A commission of inquiry should follow the rules of natural justice. Has this principle been adhered to in the Britam inquiry?"

● Cont. from page 5

* It is interesting to note that the Commission also calls on the government not to ignore the views of the opposition when it comes to legislating. This is what the Commission says: 'Opposition views, sometimes very pertinent, should be heeded and not scoffed at. In the absence of an Upper House to comment objectively on a Bill, it is essential that the Minister tabling the Bill should lend an ear to what the opposing views are. It is the ethical duty of members knowledgeable in law to lift the debate to a level above the mere political, populist and partisan.' Was that justified?

Of course. Look at what is happening to legislation on the future of horse racing or the future of pensions. The views of the opposition are ridiculed and scoffed at. It is as if whatever the opposition says is mere nonsense. The opposition is either threatened or muzzled with the assistance of what is perceived to be a partisan speaker. Is that democracy?

"What is strange is that the police will apparently start an investigation with a view to finding out whether the protagonists are criminally liable. How can the police start an investigation now before the time limit of three months for applying for judicial review would have elapsed? This is sheer nonsense and it smacks of political harassment..."

* Will the government of the day pay heed to the comments made on the public service and the manner of legislating?

No way. The government and its followers are all focusing on the guilt of the protagonists in total defiance of the rule of presumption of innocence. Everybody on the government side is making abstraction of the latter part of the report that incorporates the principles of good governance. The comments made by the Commission are a real indictment of the government of the day and no wonder the government and its followers are turning a blind eye on that aspect of the report.

* One of the protagonists who was targeted in the report has been highly critical of its findings. Why is that so?

The main protagonist is Mr Roshi Bhadain. A well-known firm, KPMG, is also targeted as well as the firm BDO. The latter two have not made public statements except for BDO, which has issued a communiqué. Mr Bhadain is a politician and it is normal that he will want to defend his reputation. No doubt he will challenge the findings before the court and it will be up to him to substantiate his stand.

What is strange is that the police will apparently start an investigation with a view to finding out whether the protagonists are criminally liable. How can the police start an investigation now before the time limit of three months for applying for judicial review would have elapsed? This is sheer nonsense and it smacks of political harassment.

LEX

What Olympic athletes can teach us about regulating our emotions and staying dedicated

Simone Biles' recent Olympics withdrawal is a reminder for all of us to balance our passions with our emotional well-being - as both work in unison



Alessandra Tarantino/AP

Olympians are often seen as the epitome of human performance, with incredible physical and mental strength. And with the 2020 Tokyo Olympic games well underway, it's hard to not be impressed by the sheer talent and determination of athletes competing from all over the world.

For many of us non-Olympians, the thought of possessing such capabilities is but a dream. But research in sport psychology suggests there are indeed some skills we can learn from the experts, as long as we're willing to put in the work ourselves.

What makes an Olympic athlete?

Being an Olympian not only requires immense physical talent but also an incredible amount of psychological control. Sport psychologists have spent decades trying to identify the key psychological ingredients that make the world's greatest athletes great.

For one, elite athletes display high levels of passion and commitment towards their sport. They also tend to believe in their own abilities more than the average person - which can protect them against the negative effects of stress.

Resilience and determination help them bounce back from defeat. A case in point: after competing in three prior Olympic games, British diver Tom Daley recently won his first ever Olympic gold medal in Tokyo.

While competing, athletes must effectively regulate their emotions and attention to ensure best performance. Not keeping their emotions in check may

compromise their performance under pressure - a phenomenon often referred to as "choking".

The withdrawal of gymnast Simone Biles from the US women's team and all-round finals to focus on her mental health has highlighted to the whole world how important it is for athletes to be aware of their emotional and psychological functioning.

But how is discipline developed?

While genetics do play a role in shaping an elite athlete, life experiences and environmental factors are also very important. Characteristics such as self-efficacy (your belief in your ability to perform a task) develop through experience and continued

Studies show enabling a supportive environment which promotes free will, emotional expression and non-controlling feedback is important for enhancing athletes' psychological well-being.

This type of environment fosters what we call "autonomous motivation", which is the motivation to perform an action based on one's own interest or enjoyment. Research has shown behaviours that are autonomously motivated are more likely to be maintained long-term.

Olympic champions often deal with multiple stressors relating to their sports performance, occupation and personal lives. But their work requires them to develop resilience and approach stressors as challenges to be overcome.

An athlete's performance can also be impacted by a variety of environmental cues including their peers, opponents,

training facilities, training activities and their coach. Coaches therefore have a particularly important role in shaping an athlete's environment and promoting high performance.

Adopting an elite mindset

Whether or not you're training for the 2024 Paris Olympics, adopting some of the psychological skills used by Olympians can help you maintain focus and motivation in your own life.

Whether you want to exercise more, reduce your alcohol intake, or maybe be more productive at home or work - the following techniques can help you adopt an elite mindset.

1. Goal-setting

Elite athletes often set short-term and long-term goals. Setting "SMART" goals (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound) can help you achieve those small wins to keep you motivated as you progress towards a greater goal.

When setting goals for yourself, try to make them meaningful by linking them to values you care about. For instance, you might wish to prioritise your health, or academic achievement. Doing so can help boost your motivation to achieve your goals.

2. Planning

Obtaining a goal can often take considerable time and effort, as we see with athletes preparing for the Olympics. Planning is an important psychological skill that can help you regulate your behaviour as you move toward your goals.

Consider creating detailed action

plans which outline when, where and how you will progress toward your goal. Your action plan may look like this:

Every afternoon at 3:00pm (when) I will drive to the local swimming pool (where) and swim for 45 minutes (how).

In addition, creating detailed coping plans will help prepare you for potential challenges that may impede goal attainment. For instance:

If the pool is too busy, I will go for a 45-minute run through the park instead.

3. Positive self-talk

Many athletes engage in reflective practices such as self-talk to help them focus or concentrate on the task at hand.

Identifying positive key words or phrases such as "I can do it" and "I'm almost there" can help redirect your attention and increase motivation to persevere through difficult or challenging situations. Positive self-talk can also help enhance your self-efficacy, which is a strong predictor of various positive outcomes.

4. Mental imagery

Before running towards the vault or executing a serve in volleyball, athletes often use mental imagery to visualise their performance. Visualising the steps needed to perform an action or reach your goal can boost motivation and anticipated pleasure from completing the planned activity.

So the next time you sit back to watch the world's best compete for glory, think about how you too can adopt the mindset of an Olympian, and feel motivated to excel in your own way.

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Home

Motor car car Lorries

Do most Family Businesses really fail by the Third Generation?

Many articles or speeches about family businesses today include a reference to the "three-generation rule," which says that most don't survive beyond three generations.

But that perception could not be further from the truth. On average, the data suggest that family businesses last far longer than typical companies do. In fact, today they dominate most lists of the longest-lasting companies in the world, and they're well-positioned to remain competitive in the 21st century economy.

A Single Study, Decades Old

Where did that three-generation idea come from? A single 1980s study of manufacturing companies in Illinois. That study is the basis for most of the facts cited about the longevity of family businesses. The researchers took a sample of companies and tried to figure out which of them were still operating during the period they studied. They then grouped the companies into thirty-year blocs, roughly representing generations. Only a third of family businesses in this study made it through the second generation, and only 13% made it through the third.

A few observations about the study

First, its core findings are often described incorrectly. Many describe the results to say that only one-third of family businesses make it to the second generation. But the study actually says that one-third make it through the end of the second generation, or sixty years. That's a thirty-year difference in business longevity, so choose your words carefully!

Finally, the study provides no insight on why some businesses disappeared. Family disputes and business problems surely did hurt some of them, but in other cases the owners may simply have sold their business and started a new one. That's far from "failing."

The Three-Generations Myth

The three-generation myth is so pervasive that it can become a self-fulfilling prophecy for family businesses who believe the odds of long-term success are stacked against them. That's what almost happened to one successful business family we advised, which was told by an independent board member that to ensure the survival of their business, they should not hand it down to the next generation.

The siblings cared deeply about their business and the people who worked there. They also very much valued the idea of leaving the business as a legacy for their family rather than cashing out and giving the next generation the proceeds. So when they were ready to retire, they agonized over whether to sell the business to their long-standing non-family managers or to pass ownership to the next genera-



On average, family businesses last far longer than typical companies do. In fact, today they dominate most lists of the longest-lasting companies in the world.

Pic - SmallBusinessify.com

tion. The board member's advice had them believing that they had to choose between making their company last and keeping it in the family. But they sensed that this was a false choice, and so they decided to give family ownership a try.

It was a wise move: The siblings are well into transferring ownership to the next generation, and the business is thriving with help from non-family managers who are bridging the gap between the retiring owners and their successors.

So is there anything to the three-generations myth? Certainly, some families go from rags to riches and back again, but on average, they do not. Those who climb to the top of the wealth ladder tend to stay there for a long time. That's what Gregory Clark, an economist at University of California, Davis, found when he conducted extensive research on social mobility over generations: Rich families typically stay rich, and poor families stay poor. Eventually there's a regression to the mean, he wrote, but "the process can take 10 to 15 generations (300 to 450 years)." Similarly, when economists from the Bank of Italy studied tax records in Florence in 1427 and 2011, they found that today's top earners were "already at the top of the socioeconomic ladder six centuries ago."

Thinking in generations, not quarters

Can family businesses continue to be the dominant source of employment nationally and globally over the long term? The answer is yes.

The reason for that is the choices they make. Rather than being obsessed with hitting quarterly earnings targets, as public companies are, family businesses tend to

think in terms of generations, which allows them to take actions that put them in better position to endure the tough times.

For example, Robinson Lumber Company, established in 1893 and based in New Orleans, is today owned and managed by the fifth generation of the founding family. At the heart of their success is a way of doing business that puts long-term survival above short-term profits. The company sells a combination of wood products that, if one were building a company from scratch, would not make sense to combine into one business. Species, colors, and other trends come in and out of fashion over the years, so typically while some of the company's products are doing well, others aren't. At those points in time, it might be most profitable to abandon the unpopular products in favour of the current performers, but to do so would put the company at risk of irrelevance when tastes change again.

Also, like many family businesses, Robinson Lumber doesn't borrow much from the bank. Debt is a great way to fund growth and goose return on equity, but it also puts the company at risk during the inevitable downturns in the economy. Family businesses last longer because they are able to pay the price that longevity requires.

A bright post-pandemic future

Compared to widely held public companies, family businesses tend to thrive when times get tough. The pandemic has provided evidence of this. Though few businesses have been immune to the challenges of the pandemic, family businesses seem to be emerging in better shape than their competitors.

Family ownership brings a competitive advantage in situations that demand resiliency rather than rapid growth. Family businesses, with owners close to the business, can adapt quickly to changing circumstances and balance the imperatives of navigating through the current crisis with the implications for the long-term in mind. That means working hard not only to preserve cash but also to ensure the well-being of employees and communities. In many studies, family companies have been shown to be better employers and community citizens than their non-family-run peers. That's a distinct competitive advantage, one that represents capitalism at its best.

Josh Baron is a cofounder and a partner at BanyanGlobal Family Business Advisors and an adjunct professor at Columbia Business School. Rob Lachenauer is a cofounder and the CEO of BanyanGlobal. Both authors are co-authors of The Harvard Business Review Family Business Handbook (Harvard Business Review Press, 2021).

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Protecting lives, ensuring happiness

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1956-2020



How do scientists know evolution is real?

In science, we look at the evidence and try to find the theory that best explains it. And that's what happened when it came to figuring out evolution.

We can see life evolving all around us. Plants, animals and even bacteria are adapting to different conditions (like climate change), to new predators and diseases.

A young man named Charles Darwin was one of the first to realise how this happens. He lived in England nearly 190 years ago and decided to sail around the world (because he didn't really know what to do with his life).

Spot the difference

For two years people on the boat mapped the shore and explored South America and Australia. Darwin's job was to check out the plants and animals they found. Sound fun? Not if you were seasick like poor Darwin.

He began to wonder why animals were so different to those back in England. He had the revolutionary idea that they weren't always that way. Maybe these species had changed over time in response to their environment, he thought.

He noticed that little brown birds that they called finches, living on a group of islands called the Galápagos, looked similar to each other but had different-shaped beaks on different islands.

Darwin realised that the beaks were good for getting different kinds of food: big heavy beaks for crushing tough nuts that grew on one island; little beaks for eating fruit; sharp beaks for probing cactus; and long beaks for catching insects on other islands.

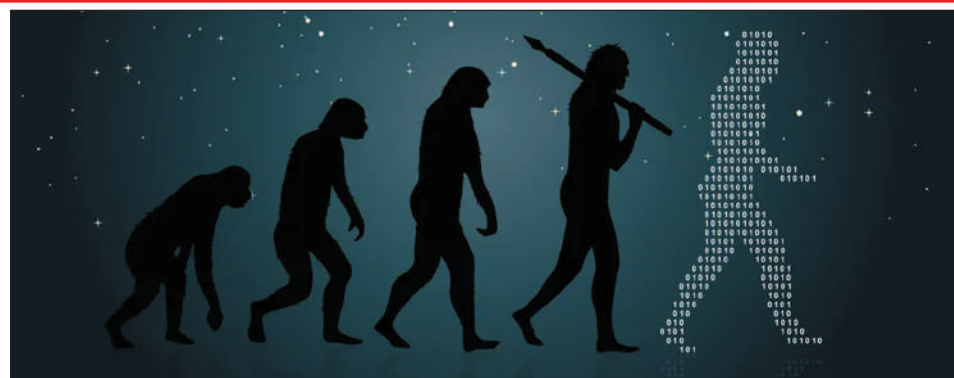
Darwin twigged that the birds all started off the same, but those on an island with nuts developed heavier beaks, whereas those on an island with cactus developed sharp beaks. How?

He suggested the beaks of individual ancestor birds were all a bit different, and the differences were passed down from parents to chicks. Birds with slightly heavier beaks did better on the island with nuts, and they laid more eggs and had more chicks than other birds. These chicks also had heavier beaks, and did better than other birds, and laid more eggs. He called this "natural selection".

Darwin suggested animals or plants that survived in different environments would eventually become so different they couldn't get together to have chicks. This is how one species splits into two.

The evidence piles up

During Darwin's day, these ideas seemed shocking. Most people believed species of plants and animals had always been the way they were; that they were created that way. But soon, people began to find new evidence that fit Darwin's theory, or reconsider old evidence in light of



what he proposed.

People found dinosaur bones and realised these enormous creatures once roamed the Earth but were now extinct. Now we know, from comparing skeletons, they are related to birds, and we even have fossils of feathered dinosaurs.

One famous example of fossils that showed earlier "versions" of contemporary animals is the "walking whale" - fossils that indicated that earlier versions of whales had legs. People couldn't believe that natural selection could turn a hippo-like land animal into a whale, that lost its legs as it became a better swimmer. But recently whale fossils with legs were discovered. (Even today, we can see that whale embryos develop four masses of cells called limb buds, but which don't grow into legs.)

In Darwin's day nobody knew the Earth's crust changes dramatically; land under the ocean can buckle upward to form mountains. That's why cockle shells can be found at the top of huge mountains. All this evidence supports the idea that environments change and animals adapt.

Splitting one species into two takes

millions of years, but we can sometimes catch this happening. Little groups of wallabies that live in rocky outcrops in Queensland are a famous example because they show a lot of intermediates (meaning populations that are starting to get so different from each other that they don't interbreed well and are close to becoming two new species).

A huge new source of evidence for evolution came with the discovery of DNA, which is shared by all life on Earth. DNA changes slowly as mutations accumulate. DNA is similar for species that are closely related (like Darwin's finches, or like hippos and whales) and more different between species that are distant (like humans and whales, or humans and plants). This is a pretty big clue supporting Darwin's idea that living things are related and have changed over time.

Scientists have looked at the huge piles of evidence and concluded that evolution is the best explanation we've heard so far on how life on Earth came to be as it is today.

Jenny Graves

Distinguished Prof of Genetics,
La Trobe University

Activity is good: Varied activity is better



A walk in the morning, a jog in the evening or even just going out to buy groceries: activity helps the psyche. Many tried to stay active during the pandemic despite mandatory home office and limited leisure activities. Others found that they were moving significantly less than before the pandemic.

Against this backdrop, a study led by Prof Andrew

Gloster of the University of Basel provides an indication of what impact restricted movement patterns might have. The results have been published in the journal 'BMC Psychiatry'.

That exercise promotes not only physical but also mental health is known from various studies. However, these mostly focused on the influence of deliberate exercise programs. "In contrast, little was known about whether every day, naturally chosen movement patterns also influence mental health," Gloster explains.

To investigate this, he and researchers at the University Psychiatric Clinics in Basel collected GPS data from 106 patients with mental disorders who agreed to participate. For this purpose, the study participants were given extra smartphones that they carried with them for a week. This allowed the researchers to track their movements without interfering with the patients' daily routine. The research team then compared the movement data with surveys of the participants' well-being and symptoms of their mental illness.

The results showed that the more people moved and the more varied their movements, the greater their sense of well-being. However, no influence on the symptoms could be determined. "Our results suggest that activity alone is not enough to reduce symptoms of mental disorders, but can at least improve subjective well-being," Gloster elaborates.

"Although the data were collected before the pandemic, the results are also relevant in light of the limitations during the coronavirus crisis," he adds. Because many social and recreational activities were discontinued during that time, many people's physical activity patterns also likely became more monotonous. Various studies by research groups at the University of Basel have been able to show that the pandemic took a toll on the psyche of the population. The results of the team led by Gloster suggest that the restricted movement patterns could also play a role in this.

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Healthy Living

How these night-time habits affect your days

Is what you do at night making your morning better or worse? Here's how to give yourself an advantage.

Exercise

In general, hitting the gym helps you sleep better and get to sleep quicker. But when you work out, your body makes more cortisol. That's a hormone that helps make you more alert. That's good when you're trying to wake up for work. But it's not so good when you're trying to get to sleep. If you must exercise in the evening, try to finish at least 3 hours before bed.

Packing lunch -- at night

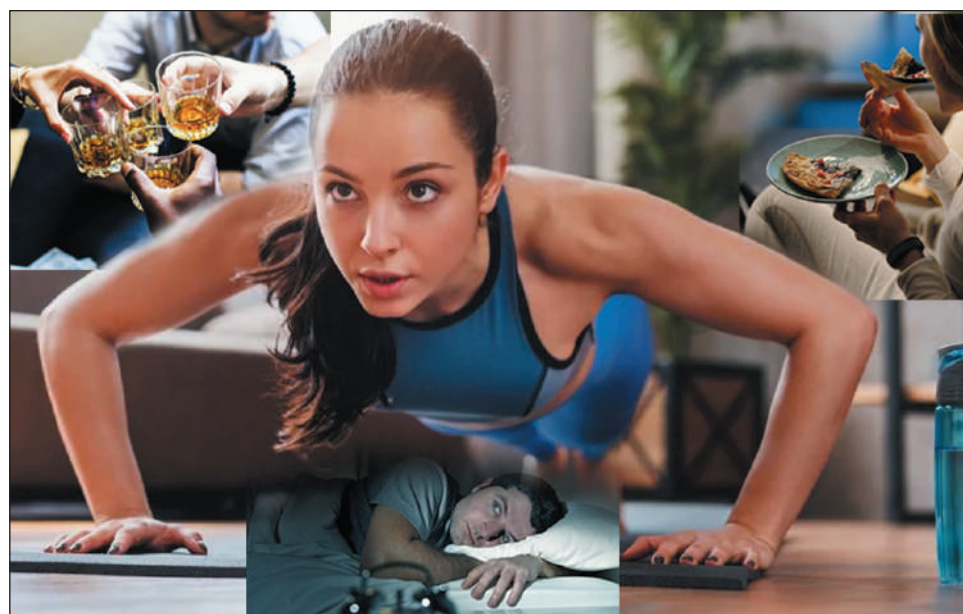
Then you can just grab it from the fridge on your way out the door tomorrow. It saves time and stress in the morning, and it guarantees decent nutrition to get you through the day.

Late-night eating

That cheesesteak in the wee hours isn't a recipe for a restful night's sleep. You're more likely to wake rested and ready for the day with a lighter dinner -- less fat, salt, and calories -- several hours before bed. If you're hungry later, snack lightly on easy-to-digest foods like toast or yogurt.

Ignoring your teeth

If you don't brush and floss in the evening, you might notice a thicker coating (bacteria) on your teeth in the morning. Swishing with mouthwash also might help prevent this buildup of bacteria. In just a day or two, it starts to harden into a cement-like "tarter" that can lead to cavi-



ties and gum disease. Only your dentist can remove tartar.

Staying up late

Not only does it sap your energy, but it can trigger your body to make more cortisol. It can also make you crave higher-fat, high-sugar foods the next day. That's why you tend to have more body fat if you sleep less than 6 hours a night. That extra body fat makes you more likely to get things like diabetes and heart disease. So, if you have to be up for work, it helps to go to bed early enough to get at least 8 hours of sleep.

Drinking alcohol

At first, it might make you sleepy. But after a few hours, it has the opposite effect. And the quality of sleep you do get may not be as good. Plus, it makes you pee more, which means more up and down to

the bathroom. All this might leave you dragging the next day. Consider keeping it to 1 to 2 drinks per day, and try not to drink in the 3 hours before bedtime.

A late jolt of caffeine

It's in tea, coffee, chocolate, and many energy drinks. Even in normal amounts, it can make it harder to fall asleep or make the sleep you get less effective, especially as you get older. Even if you have caffeine 6 to 8 hours before bedtime, it could give you that unrested feeling the next day.

Washing your face

You don't want to overwash your face or scrub it too hard, especially if you have dry skin. But you should wash off the dirt, grime, sweat, and makeup at the end of the day. By keeping germs off your face, you'll keep pimples away and you might even prevent eye infections. Plus your

moisturizer, if you use one, will work better.

Napping

A nap of any length in the late afternoon or evening can lead to an unfortunate cycle that disrupts your normal sleep routine and makes it hard to get up in the morning.

Your busy mind

It can be hard to relax when your mind is racing with the million things you need to do. But if you take just a few minutes to organize your thoughts, you can create a mini-plan for the next day -- a "to-do" list, if you will. It will help you lessen your stress level the next morning by giving you a ready-made guide for how to attack the day.

Being digital after dark

Too much artificial light after the sun goes down can mess up your internal clock. The "blue light" given off by your smartphone, laptop, and other electronics can cut down the amount of melatonin that your body makes, which can make winding down difficult. Specialized glasses or screens can filter out the light, and some devices have "nightshift" settings that help remove it. But the best solution is to put the electronics down early.

Get a sleep routine

Ease the path to bedtime with a soothing evening routine. Read a book or listen to calming music. A hot bath or shower can promote sleepiness, as can some light stretching. Avoid difficult or stressful discussions late in the evening, which can trigger hormones that keep you up.

WebMD

5 lifestyle changes you should make if you suffer from regular headaches

Headache is something we all have experienced at some point in our life. Be it after a long day at work or before an approaching deadline, it is normal to feel pressure in the head. But some struggle with it daily.

Persistent headaches can interrupt your work and can lead to drastic mood swings. This could also be a sign of an underlying health condition or depict lifestyle problems. To reduce the likelihood, frequency, intensity, and severity of pain, cutting down some habits or modifying them may help to reduce the risk of severe attacks. Here are 5 changes you can make in your daily routine.

Eat healthily

The food you eat in the day from the moment you get up till you go to bed may also trigger your headache. Excess intake of caffeine, tea, alcohol, salty snacks, and processed foods may also cause headaches. Notice which food causes you headache and try to reduce intake of such foods during day time. Besides, skipping a meal can also lead to throbbing pain in the head. Try to have a balanced meal in a day. Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains should be a part of your regular meal.

Fix your posture

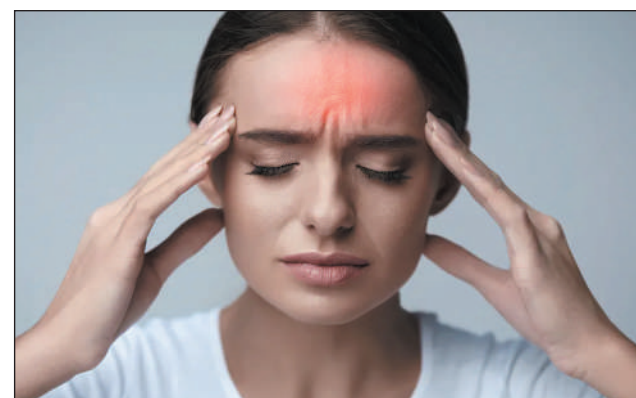
Poor posture can put you at the risk of developing headaches. Hunching your shoulders and sitting in sloppy postures can put strain on your head, neck and shoulders, leading to tension headaches. If you have a sitting job, sit properly on a chair and table and not on the bed. Also, keep checking your posture throughout the day. Keep your spine erect, laptop at the level of your eyes and shoulders straight. Take a break after every hour.

Stress

Stress is a major contributor to tension and migraine headache. So, if you are one of those who often suffer from the problem of headache try to manage your stress level. Meditation, breathing exercises, yoga or even a small walk in the middle of the day can calm your mind and reduce your level of stress hormones. If you are struggling to manage your stress level then consult a professional.

Avoid smoking

Honestly, smoking has no health benefits. It damages your lungs, affects your gut health and also reduces your



immune health. Now there is another addition to this list-headache. Smoking and second-hand smoking, both can contribute to headaches. The pain is intense if you smoke too many cigarettes in a day or have it on an empty stomach. This happens due to the presence of nicotine, which constricts the blood vessels and reduces the blood flow in the brain, leading to throbbing pain.

Sleep schedule

After working all day long, your body needs time to rest and rejuvenate. Putting extra load on your brain and cutting down your sleep time will trigger headaches, lead to weight gain and decrease your concentration level. It is better to stick to your sleeping schedule and maintain a healthy sleeping schedule.



A Mauritian goes for tooth extraction

A Mauritian went to a dentist in USA for tooth extraction and first enquired about the cost. The dentist said, \$1200. The guy thought it was too much. After some thought, he asked about cheaper methods.

The dentist said, 'Yes, it can be done without anaesthesia and will cost only \$300 but it will be very painful.'

The Mauritian said, 'OK, doctor, do it without anaesthesia.'

The dentist removed the tooth without anaesthesia and during the entire procedure the guy sat quietly, even smiling a little.

The dentist was not only surprised, but was quite impressed and said, 'I have never seen such a brave patient like you. I don't even want my fees. Instead, take this \$500 as a reward, you've taught me such a powerful lesson today about mastering one's pain and feelings!'

Never mess with a chaiwala

Two lions escape from a zoo. One of the lions had been captured from the jungle, so he runs back to the jungle. The other was born in the zoo itself - so is basically a city-slicker. He vanishes into the city.

Three days later the jungle-lion is recaptured and returned to the zoo. A month passes, then two, three... but the city-lion is not traceable! Finally, after six months, the city-lion is also recaptured and brought back to the zoo.

Jungle-lion is amazed to see his friend.

Jungle-lion: For God's sake, how were you able to evade these guys for 6 whole months?

City-lion: *Kuchh nahi yaar!* I just went to a government department, and hid behind a huge pile of dusty files that they have there.

Jungle-lion: But what did you eat there?

City-lion: *Arrey*, there was an unlimited supply of government servants. Whenever I ate one, they hired five more. Nobody did any work anyway, so nobody missed the ones I ate.

Jungle-lion: Wow! But, then how did you get caught?

City-lion: *Galti kar gaya yaar...* One day I ate the *chaiwala*. The whole office stopped working. They launched a massive hunt for the *chaiwala*. And I got caught!

Love story of a doctor

I was in 12th.
She was in 12th.
I loved her - she loved me.
I went on to do MBBS.
She went to do BE (Comp.)
I was doing MBBS.
She completed her BE.
I finished my MBBS.
She completed her MBA.
I completed my Internship
She started working.
I was preparing for MD entrance.

She got married.
I'm doing MD...
She's the mother of two children.
I finished my MD.
Her daughter is in 1st standard.
I became a specialist.
Her daughter passed 10th.
I opened my clinic.
Her daughter joined college.
The greatest irony is that...
Today is my engagement & today is her daughter's marriage!
Sala... agle janam Engineering hi loonga....

Thoughts to live by

I am responsible for my happiness

I asked one of my friends who has crossed 60 and is heading to 70 how he feels now. He sent me the following very interesting lines.

1. After loving my parents, my siblings, my spouse, my children, my friends, now I have started loving myself.
2. I just realised that I am not "Atlas". The world does not rest on my shoulders.
3. I now stopped bargaining with vegetables and fruits vendors. After all, a few Rupees more is not going to burn a hole in my pocket but it might help the poor fellow save for his daughter's school fees.
4. I pay the taxi driver without waiting for the change. The extra money might bring a smile on his face. After all he is toiling much harder for a living than me.
5. I stopped telling the elderly that they've already narrated that story many times. After all, the story makes them walk down the memory lane and relive the past.
6. I have learnt not to correct people even when I know they are wrong. After all, the onus of making everyone perfect is not on me. Peace is more precious than perfection.
7. I give compliments freely and generously. After all it's a mood enhancer not only for the recipient, but also for me.
8. I have learnt not to bother about a crease or a spot on my shirt. After all, personality speaks louder than appearances.
9. I walk away from people who don't value me. After all, they might not know my worth, but I do.
10. I remain cool when someone plays dirty politics to outrun me in the rat race. After all, I am not a rat and neither am I in any race.
11. I am learning not to be embarrassed by my emotions. After all, it's my emotions that make me human.
12. I have learnt that it's better to drop the ego than to break a relationship. After all, my ego will keep me aloof whereas with relationships I will never be alone.
13. I have learnt to live each day as if it's the last. After all, it might be the last.
14. I am doing what makes me happy. After all, I am responsible for my happiness, and I owe it to me.

Life's Lesson The Gift

A few years ago, the terrorist organisation Hamas sent a gift to the President of Israel in an elaborate box with a note.

After having the box checked for safety reasons, the President of Israel, Shimon Peres, opened the box and saw that the content was shit.

He opened the note which said, "For you and the proud people of Israel."

Being a wise and experienced person, he decided to reciprocate, sending Hamas a very pretty package and a note.

The leaders of Hamas were very surprised to

receive the parcel and opened it very carefully suspecting that it might contain a bomb.

But to their surprise they saw that it contained a tiny computer chip.

The chip was rechargeable with solar energy, had an 1800 Terabyte memory and could output a 3D hologram display capable of functioning in any type of cellular phone, tablet or laptop.

It was one of the world's most advanced technologies, invented and produced in Israel.

The accompanying note to the Hamas leaders stated very courteously: "A leader can give only what his people can produce."

Moral: How to deal with insults is one of the best lessons you can learn to lead a better life. Give your best to your worst enemy and stay blessed forever.





Mardi 3 août - 21.10

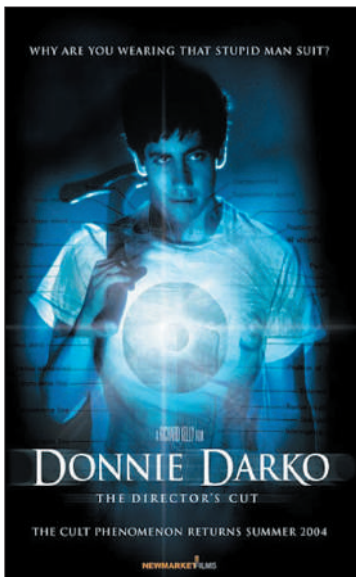


Mercredi 4 août - 21.00



Donnie Darko

Jeudi 5 août - 21.15



mardi 3 août

MBC 1

06.00 Local: Rodrig Mo Pei
09.00 Doc: Screen Generation
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: Green Touch
14.30 D.Anime: The Garfield Show
14.56 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
16.26 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie
17.50 Mag: Happy Tales
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.35 Local: An Eta Dalert
21.05 Film: The Hurt Locker
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: Listen Amaya
Star: Farooq Shaikh, Deepti Naval, Swara Bhaskari
15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek
15.22 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
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: Aaj Aur Kal
Star: Sunil Dutt, Ashok Kumar...

MBC 3

06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa
06.52 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
15.52 Mag: 360 GEO
16.44 Mag: Global 3000
17.10 Doc: Made In France
18.00 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto...
18.30 Doc: A Passion For Helping
19.00 Student Support Prog...
19.31 Mag: Made In Germany
20.30 Local: News (English)
21.04 Doc: Snapshots
21.30 Doc: Battle Of The Bunkrik...
22.44 Mag: Close Up
22.10 Local: Klip Seleksion
23.52 Doc: Good Virus, Bad Virus
00.34 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto

Cine 12

01.06 Film: Brush With Danger
02.30 Serial: Chicago Med
03.11 Film: Site Unseen
05.52 Serial: Gone
06.33 Film: Philadelphia
09.00 Serial: Macgyver
09.48 Tele: Daniella
10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor
11.01 Serial: Chicago Med
11.40 Film: Site Unseen
13.34 Tele: Muneca Brava
14.12 Mag: Hollywood On Set
14.45 Film: Philadelphia
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: Coup De Foudre Glace
22.45 Tele: Muneca Brava

Bollywood TV

08.00 Film: Sorry Daddy
12.04 / 19.54 - Radha Krishna
12.26 / 20.11 -
Chupke Chupke
12.48 / 20.32 Mere Sai
12.52 / 21.09 - Agniphera
13.14 / 21.24 -
Bade Acche Lagte Hai
13.37 / 21.59 - Zindagi Ki Mehek
14.48 / 22.25 - Sethji
15.18 Film: De Dana Dan
Star: Akshay Kumar, Katrina Kaif and Suniel Shetty
18.00 Live: Samacher
18.30 Kundali Bhagya
18.55 Serial: Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein
19.17 Bhakharwadi
19.27 Siddhi Vinayak

mercredi 4 août

x07.00 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
14.56 D.Anime: Astrology
15.18 D.Anime: Little Spirou
15.25 D.Anime: Rev & Roll
15.36 D.Anime: The Drakers
17.05 Serial: Superstore
17.35 Serial: Lucas Etc.
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain
18.55 MBC Production
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.20 Prod Indepen: Lottotech
21.20 Film: Drop Dead Gorgeous
Stars: Kirsten Dunst, Denise Richards, Ellen Barkin

07.00 DDI Live
08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3
10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4
12.30 Film: Gharonda
Starring Amol Palekar, Zarina Wahab, Dr. Shreeram Lagoo
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: Kulvadhu
18.00 Serial: Dr. Qin
18.30 Mag: DDI Magazine
19.00 Zournal Kreol
19.30 Mag: DDI Magazine
20.06 Programme In Marathi
20.34 Film: Uchla Re Uchla
Stars: Priya Arun, Berde Ravindra
22.30 Live: DDI Live

06.00 Rev: The Global Auto...
06.26 Doc: A Passion For Helping
06.52 Mag: Check In
07.18 Mag: Made In Germany
08.13 Doc: Builders Of The Future
09.00 Educational Prog: Grade 5
11.30 Educational Prog: Grade 8
14.00 Doc: Snapshots
14.29 Doc: Battle Of The Dunkirk...
15.42 MAG: Close Up
16.08 Local: Klip Seleksion
17.43 Mag: Motorweek
18.12 Mag: Vous Et Nous
18.43 Student Support Prog...
19.13 Doc: Garden Party
19.47 Doc: Les Montagnes Du Monde
20.30 Local: News (English)
21.04 Doc: Comme Un Poisson...
21.55 Mag: Business Africa
22.20 Mag: Focus On Europe

01.26 Film: Astronaut
02.57 Serial: Chicago Med
03.38 Film: Astronaut
05.08 Tele: Muneca Brava
06.47 Serial: Gone
06.56 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: Coup De Foudre Glacé
13.32 Tele: Muneca Brava
14.45 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive...
16.40 Serial: Macgyver
17.23 Serial: Gone
18.08 Tele: Teresa
19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor
20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones
20.30 Serial: Madam Secretary
21.15 Film: Badland
22.45 Tele: Muneca Brava
23.51 Serial: Macgyver

08.00 Film: De Dana Dan
Star: Akshay Kumar, Katrina Kaif and Suniel Shetty
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
14.16 / 22.15 - Maharakshak
15.01 / 21.46 - Sethji
15.43 Film: Fukrey Returns
Starring: Pulkit Samrat, Manjot Singh, Ali Fazal
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Kundali Bhagya
18.51 Ishaaron Ishaaron...
19.15 Bhakharwadi
19.38 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak

jeudi 5 août

06.00 Local: Klip Seleksion
06.45 Local: Fee Main
07.10 Local: Aktiv
10.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today
11.00 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous?
12.00 Le Journal
12.55 Mag: Green Touch
13.03 Local: Le Rendez Vous
14.00 Local: Zafan Nou Zil
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: Love Aaj Kal
Stars: Kartik Aaryan, Sara Ali Khan, Randeep Hooda

07.00 DDI Live
08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3
10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4
12.30 Film: Sajan Ki Saheli
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: Retrovizer
21.19 Film: Donnie Darko
Stars: Jake Gyllenhaal, Jena Malone, Mary McDonnell

06.00 Mag: Motorweek
06.26 Mag: Vous Et Nous
07.19 Doc: Garden Party
07.51 Les Montagnes Du Monde
09.00 Educational Prog: Grade 5
11.30 Educational Prog: Grade 8
14.54 Mag: Business Africa
15.45 Love Around The World
16.33 Mag: Motorweek
16.59 Mag: Vous Et Nous
17.26 Mag: Arts.21
18.00 Mag: Eco India
18.30 Mag: Shift - Living In The...
19.00 Student Prog Grade 7
19.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today
20.01 Mag: Science Ou Fiction
20.30 Local: News (English)
20.40 Doc: Enjoy! Cruise Japan
21.58 Doc: Living Among
23.17 Mag: Eco India
23.43 Mag: Shift

01.45 Film: Contract Killers
03.24 Serial: Chicago Med
04.04 Film: Badland
06.01 Tele: Muneca Brava
07.19 Film: Saving Flora
09.00 Serial: Macgyver
09.45 Tele: Daniella
10.36 Tele: Tanto Amor
11.00 Serial: Chicago Med
11.41 Film: Badland
13.41 Tele: Muneca Brava
14.20 Mag: Hollywood On Set
14.48 Film: Saving Flora
16.40 Serial: Macgyver
17.24 Serial: Madam Secretary
18.15 Tele: Teresa
19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor
20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones
20.30 Serial: Madam Secretary
21.14 Serial: Rich Man, Poor Man
22.01 Film: The Post

08.00 Film: Fukrey Returns
Starring: Pulkit Samrat, Manjot Singh, Ali Fazal
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
14.14 / 22.15 Maharakshak
14.55 / 21.46 - Sethji
15.20 Film: Main Aur Mr Right
Starring Barun Sobti, Shenaz Treasurywala, Kavi Shastri
18.00 Samachar
18.30 Kundali Bhagya
18.51 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein
19.14 Serial: Bhakharwadi
19.38 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak



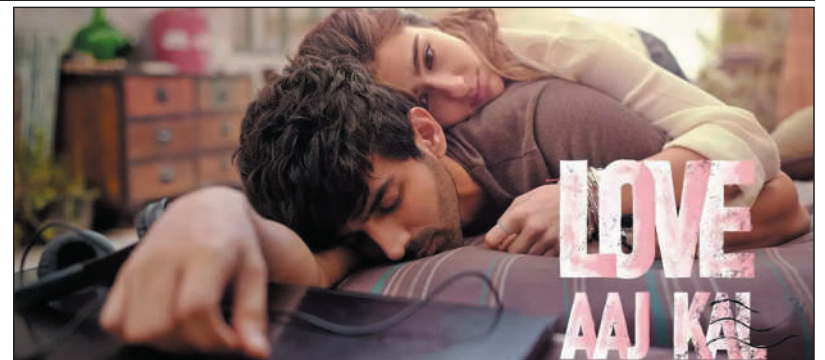
Jeudi 5 août - 15.20

Star: Barun Sobti, Shenaz Treasurywala, Kavi Shastri



Jeudi 5 août - 20.15

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



Fiji's other crisis: away from the COVID emergency, political dissent can still get you arrested

By arresting opponents of proposed land rights legislation, Frank Bainimarama again squashes democratic debate at a time when Fiji urgently needs it

The arrest of nine Fijian opposition politicians, including party leaders and two former prime ministers, once again exposes Fijian democracy's fragility. The intimidation doesn't bode well for the parliamentary elections due next year (or early 2023).

The political crisis has been overshadowed by Fiji's COVID-19 crisis, which has seen more than 25,000 infections and over 100 deaths since April. Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama even used a COVID analogy when he called those arrested "super-spreaders of lies".

While no charges have been laid, the nine are accused of inciting unrest by opposing a government bill to change the management of iTaukei (indigenous) land rights.

The original iTaukei Land Trust Act 1940 allows for long-term land leases to private interests. The idea is to maximise the economic return on land, while protecting it against permanent alienation.

The act aims to protect indigenous interests by prohibiting the sub-lease or raising of mortgages on leased land without the consent of the iTaukei Land Trust Board.

The proposed amendment would remove the requirement to obtain the board's consent, and prevent land owners going to court to dispute land use.

Arresting the opposition

Bainimarama, who also chairs the board, says the bill's purpose is to remove bureaucratic obstacles to minor activities such as arranging electricity or water supply. He says the board takes too long to provide consent and this is a constraint on economic development.

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But critics of the bill, including some of those arrested, argue it will weaken iTaukei land rights. Opposition MP Lynda



GettyImages

Tabuya was accused of a "malicious act" after she posted a "Say no to iTaukei Land Trust Bill" cover picture on Facebook last week.

In a separate post, demonstrating the low threshold for "malice" in modern Fiji, she asked:

What protection is left for landowners? This is absolutely illegal and a breach of human rights of landowners. This is not a race issue, this is a human rights issue and breaches Section 29 of the Fijian Constitution.

Tabuya is not alone. The National Federation Party has said the government has not properly consulted on the bill, and party leader Biman Prasad was among those arrested, along with former prime ministers Mahendra Chaudhry and Sitivini Rabuka.

Limited media scrutiny

Media coverage, too, has felt the effects of the arrests. For example, the Fiji Sun's one story on the issue in its July 28 edition cited only supporters of the bill and offered no insight into why it was controversial.

This isn't surprising, given Fijian journalism operates under a constitutional provision limiting its rights and freedoms "in the interests of national security, public safety, public order, public morality, public health or the orderly conduct of elections".

The Fiji Times took a risk last week by publishing an opinion column arguing poor drafting and failure to consult meant the bill goes further than its purported aims of administrative simplicity and efficiency.

Beyond the legal complexities of the

land bill, however, the real problem is political. As the article asks, "What's the issue?"

As I discuss in my book *Indigeneity: a politics of potential* - Australia, Fiji and New Zealand, the issue is that Fiji is a fragile, reluctant and conditional democracy.



A military grip on power: Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama. GettyImages

Military interference

Coups in 1987 and 2006, and a putsch in 2000, happened because democracy failed to provide the perpetrators with the "right" answers to complex political questions at the intersection of class, military power and personal interest.

The rights of indigenous Fijians were always a side issue, as the present conflict

shows.

The 2013 constitution established that "it shall be the overall responsibility of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces to ensure at all times the security, defence and well-being of Fiji and all Fijians".

Military oversight of the workings of government is intentional and explicit. When Bainimarama (then head of the military forces) led the 2006 coup, he was dismissive of accusations of political interference. If the military didn't act against the government, he said, "this country is going to go to the dogs".

He also claimed then-prime minister Laisenia Qarase was trying to weaken the army by attempting to remove him: "If he succeeds there will be no one to monitor them, and imagine how corrupt it is going to be."

No room to move

Intimidation is political strategy in Fiji. The proposed amendments to the iTaukei Land Trust Act are not what is at stake - a functioning parliamentary process could identify and resolve any substantive disagreements.

The bigger issue is that autocratic leadership, and the national constitution itself, leave little room for Fijian citizens to work out for themselves the kind of society they want.

This also leaves little room for Fijians to demand more effective policy responses to their country's COVID-19 crisis.

Dominic O'Sullivan

Adjunct Professor, Prof of Political Science, Charles Sturt University