

# MAURITIUS TIMES

• "The nation will find it very hard to look up to the leaders who are keeping their ears to the ground". -- Sir Winston Churchill

## Qs & As - Biometric Identity Card & Safe City Cameras



**“What guarantee do we have that all the data provided for the purpose of obtaining official documents are in safe hands?”**

By LEX Page 4



## The Power Machine

Jan Arden See Page 3



Encounter - François Sarah

**"Not one single community can claim to be Mauritian to the exclusion of others**

The challenge, then, is to arrive at an education policy and system that would provide a national standard while encompassing the rich diversity of our cultures"

See Page 7-8-9

**Here's what humans are doing to the planet**

By Robert Kopp, Rutgers University  
 See Page 2





## A Temporary Commissioner of Police?

Section 71 of our Constitution states as follows:

'Commissioner of Police

- (1) There shall be a Commissioner of Police whose office shall be a public office.
- (2) The Police Force shall be under the command of the Commissioner of Police.
- (3) The Prime Minister, or such other Minister as may be authorised in that behalf by the Prime Minister, may give to the Commissioner of Police such general directions of policy with respect to the maintenance of public safety and public order as he may consider necessary and the Commissioner shall comply with such directions or cause them to be complied with.
- (4) Nothing in this section shall be construed as precluding the assignment to a Minister of responsibility under section 62 for the organisation, maintenance and administration of the Police Force, but the Commissioner of Police shall be responsible for determining the use and controlling the operations of the force and, except as provided in subsection (3), the Commissioner shall not, in the exercise of his responsibilities and powers with respect to the use and operational control of the force, be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority.'

Constitutional posts - and for that matter any institutional post with an equivalent level of responsibility - are fundamentally about the dignity of office. More than the powers that such posts carry, their dignity flows from that that of the incumbent. Since our legislators frequently make reference to determinations of the Supreme Court in India or the opinions of Indian legal luminaries, it is perhaps appropriate to quote this extract from a *Times of India* article in May 2013, when the issue of 2G scams was taken to the Supreme Court of India - 'People who hold these posts or man the institutions are to a large extent responsible for creating public perception about the post or institution. Their vision, conduct, character, charisma, honesty and integrity define to a considerable extent the height to which the posts or institutions will be lifted or the depths to which they will plunge. The people at the helm of affairs define the parameters of trust and faith associated with these posts and institutions.'

In what may be a historic first in our country, a Commissioner of Police has allegedly been appointed on a temporary basis. What could have impelled the nominee to accept to occupy such a key post on a temporary basis is best left to the person himself. What is of national interest however is how such a nomination affects the functioning of the office, and its potential impact on the country, especially in view of the context in which the alleged temporary appointment has been made -- a context marred by widespread interrogations about the real leeway and operational independence enjoyed by the Commissioner of Police following the Judicial Inquiry into the murder of political activist Soopramanien Kistnen, earlier deemed by the CID as a suicide, and all the revelations brought to light by the Inquiry, and which led to the perception that the latter department was operating like a state within a state.

It goes without saying that by definition the holder of a temporary post can only be there as long as s/he is felt to be 'desirable', in other words pliant to the orders or instructions coming from above, because failure to do so will result in immediate termination or reluctance to appoint the officer in a substantive capacity. Whether or not any incumbent weighs this before accepting to assume those high responsibilities is not known, but this possibility must surely hang as a sword of Damocles on the person's head. The temporary nomination therefore weakens both the person and the post.

Can one imagine, in our model of democracy, the appointment of say a judge or a President on a temporary basis? What signal would that send to the population, to the outside world, with its consequent impact on our global reputation?

These are genuine queries that deserve the highest consideration, and it seems that in the appointment of a temporary CP we have fallen short of doing so. The sooner this unhealthy, unstable and untenable situation is resolved with a view to not tarnish the dignity of the office and to give due respect to the operational autonomy that it confers, the better it will be for the country.

### The Conversation

## Here's what humans are doing to the planet

*Profound changes are underway in Earth's oceans and ice, new IPCC climate report warns*



A scientist plants a flag to identify a GPS position on Greenland's Helheim Glacier in 2019. The glacier had shrunk about 6 miles (10 kilometers) since scientists visited in 2005. Pic - AP

**A**t the most basic level, the facts about climate change have been clear for a long time, with the evidence just continuing to grow.

Global sea level has been rising at an accelerating rate since about 1970, and over the last century, it has risen more than in any century in at least 3,000 years.

In the years since the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report in 2013 and the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate in 2018, the evidence for accelerating ice sheet loss has become clearer.

Over the last decade, global average sea level has risen at a rate of about 4 millimeters per year (1.5 inches per decade). This increase is due to two main factors: the melting of ice in mountain glaciers and at the poles, and the expansion of water in the ocean as it takes up heat.

Ice sheets in particular are primarily responsible for the increase in the rate of sea level rise since the 1990s. There is clear evidence tying the melting of glaciers and the Greenland Ice Sheet, as well as ocean warming, to human influence. Sea level rise is leading to substantial impacts on coastal communities, including a near-doubling in the frequency of coastal flooding since the 1960s in many sites around the world.

Since the previous reports, scientists have made substantial advances in modeling the behavior of ice sheets. At the same time, we've been learning more about ice sheet physics, including recognizing the potential ways ice sheets can

become destabilized. We don't well understand the potential speed of these changes, but they have the potential to lead to much more rapid ice sheet loss if greenhouse gas emissions grow unchecked.

These advances confirm that sea level is going to continue to rise for many centuries to come, creating an escalating threat for coastal communities.

Sea level change through 2050 is largely locked in: Regardless of how quickly nations are able to lower emissions, the world is likely looking at about 15 to 30 centimeters (6 to 12 inches) of global average sea level rise through the middle of the century.

But beyond 2050, sea level projections become increasingly sensitive to the world's emissions choices. If countries continue on their current paths, with greenhouse gas emissions likely to bring 3-4 C of warming (5.4-7.2 F) by 2100, the planet will be looking at a most likely sea level rise of about 0.7 meters (a bit over 2 feet). A 2 C (3.6 F) warmer world, consistent with the Paris Agreement, would see lower sea level rise, most likely about half a meter (about 1.6 feet) by 2100.

What's more, the more the world limits its greenhouse gas emissions, the lower the chance of triggering instabilities in the polar ice sheets that are challenging to model but could substantially increase sea level rise.

Robert Kopp, Rutgers University

● Cont. on page 11

### Mauritius Times

Founder/Editor: Beekrumsing Ramlallah - Aug 1954-Sept 2000

Editor-in-chief: M. Ramlallah / Senior Editor: Dr RN Gopee  
This paper has been produced with the assistance of

Doojesh Ramlallah, Sultana Kurmally and Kersley Ramsamy

Pearl House 4th Floor Room 406 - Sir Virgil Naz Street, Port Louis -- Tel: 5-29 29301 Tel/Fax: 212 1313



mtimes@intnet.mu



www.mauritiustimes.com



facebook.com/mauritius.times



# The Power Machine

Jan Arden

There is a temptation to believe that none of the two alternatives spelt out by Plato have ever been attained in the past and that neither are they even near to concretion in our internet age and the current thriving business culture in political affairs of the State.

*'Finally, I came to the conclusion that the condition of all existing states is bad-nothing can cure their constitutions, but a miraculous reform assisted by good luck-and I was driven to assert, in praise of true philosophy, that nothing else can enable one to see what is right for states and for individuals, and that the troubles of mankind will never cease until either true and genuine philosophers attain political power or the rulers of states by some dispensation of providence become genuine philosophers.'*

The term philosophy would certainly have had a different meaning in those times, and there is a somewhat pessimistic if not despairing tone to Plato's musings. Nobody expects a statesman to be a philosopher today, but we could expect a minimum of standards from those gravitating around the spheres of power controlling government and its machinery and from the legislators that man our democratic structures.

Following the Britam Inquiry report, three senior government Ministers went public with accusations that conveyed their intent: Roshi Bhadain was clearly the target of malignment by all three. The Public Infrastructure Minister, Bobby Hurreeram, reportedly stated: *"We have never had such a damning report against a former minister in the history of the country..."* and went further in his analysis to ask Roshi Bhadain, former Financial Services Minister to come forth and inform the population *"where the missing Rs 1.9 billion went"*.

The political drumbeat had erupted even when facts from the Report itself seem so reluctant to fit the storyline that somebody made away with Rs 1.9 billion in that sale of shares. Roshi Bhadain has served notice that Minister Hurreeram will have to answer for his volatile statements in court.

One of this formidable communication trio happened also to be our Attorney General, Maneesh Gobin, whose station as government's principal legal advisor might have called for *gravitas* and restraint, yet he was also keen to hit the nuke button on former colleague Bhadain. The Attorney General, although he was careful with an "if", similarly drummed home that "someone will have to pay if Rs 1.9 million is

missing in the deal".

He announced that investigations will be carried out by the police and the Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC) in Mauritius. He revealed that he has already initiated the process to seek the help of the United Nations, referring to the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative of the World Bank and the United Nations.



**“The latest shocking salvo from the Speaker, usually accompanied by a chorus of raucous government backbenchers urging him on, has made headlines even in the BBC news bulletin. The regular illustration of our parliamentary mores has plumbed new depths of shameful behaviour and nothing was more biting than the commentary of the Seychelles President to his own internal audience. Our Parliament, to paraphrase him, is one where every MP can debate about better governance and contributes to legislation in the common interest. It operates in a far more civilised manner than in Mauritius...”**

In effect, the Rs 1.9 billion that the Commission failed to unearth conclusively after 4 years, or was at best, a *"manque à gagner"* from the sale operation, would now be chased around the globe by the best sleuths of the world.

We can only wish government's principal legal advisor success in that venture, for losses of such magnitude following the disastrous decision to bring down the BAI/Bramer group rather than help it restructure itself, demolished we might add without any judicial oversight or condemnation, would be indeed intolerable particularly when the economy has shrunk by 15% with the pandemic. Every penny counts as the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development would certainly concur and so would the angry population faced with rupee devaluation, rising food and freight charges and steeper health and pharmaceutical bills.

And while the Attorney General is busy in that hunting mode of precious rupees foregone or stashed away according to his reading of the Britam Report, he might advise government and investigative authorities to consider a fulsome enquiry of

the BAI/Bramer saga that has reportedly cost the countrymen and the cash-starved nation more than Rs 20 billion. After all, the Britam sale was only one of the many dramatic consequences of what many might term the outright nationalisation and asset-stripping of that large and dynamic private concern. The scale of losses we have had to foot still leaves us numb.

Or, if the Attorney General has the

As those investigations are unlikely to see the light of day, one is forced to suspect that the real purpose of the Britam Commission was to rake up as many diverse issues, some accessory, some critical, to the political chase waiting to happen since 2017 when the Commission was set up. One wonders what have been the costs to the taxpayer of the four-year long Britam enquiry at rates which some of members practise or earn and what further costs would be incurred by us taxpayers in the Attorney General's announced world-wide chase.

Our body politic as a whole may have accepted as very real, in our local context, the renowned American historian-cum-philosopher Will Durant's perception that *"the political machine triumphs because it is a united minority acting against a divided majority"*. It is certainly the agenda of the ruling party and its associates to promote such divisions or continue to do so. Despite increasing grassroots frustration at the status-quo in Opposition ranks, some entente is manifest in the National Assembly, particularly around the excesses of the Speaker, so well summed up in last Friday's editorial.

Thanks to the enterprising tenure of the previous Speaker, Maya Hanoomanjee, the proceedings are now tele-

cast live and can be watched in full on the national TV station or extracts on social media. It is far from offering even the modicum of dignity large fractions of the population and even the Attorney General would be accustomed with in Westminster models around the globe.

The latest shocking salvo from the Speaker, usually accompanied by a chorus of raucous government backbenchers urging him on, has made headlines even in the BBC news bulletin. The regular illustration of our parliamentary *mores* has plumbed new depths of shameful behaviour and nothing was more biting than the commentary of the Seychelles President to his own internal audience. Our Parliament, to paraphrase him, is one where every MP can debate about better governance and contributes to legislation in the common interest. It operates in a far more civilised manner than in Mauritius. That is a sad truth even if it hurts and shames everyone of us.

Ultimately it is the PM who has the ability to restore some shreds of pride and decorum to our august Assembly.

appetite, he might go further in his quixotic crusade and demand, for instance, a full investigation of how and in what circumstances we were landed at inordinate costs with 50 or more unusable artificial ventilators for patients under acute respiratory distress due to the Covid-19 wave and which have been paid for to Pack & Blister, however reluctantly, by the Ministry of Health. During that pandemic, the Attorney General is also well aware that massive contracts were awarded without any Notes of Meeting held, something that the Britam Commission had found so galling, suspicious and culpable in its Report. Why not contribute more actively to the Augean clean-up?

Otto von Bismark, German Chancellor during late nineteenth century, once remarked that *"Political judgment is the ability to hear the distant hoofbeats of the horse of history."* History might look more kindly on the Attorney General's mandate should he be less "annoyed" with trivia and shadowy political pursuits and more reactive about sound governance of public funds.



## Qs &amp; As - Biometric Identity Card &amp; Safe City Cameras

# "What guarantee do we have that all the data provided for the purpose of obtaining official documents are in safe hands?"

'Let us be blunt and pretend that we do not know what happened to the Sate City recordings that were placed in areas relevant to the investigation in the alleged murder of Mr Kristen'

**L**ex clarifies below the divergent appreciation of the Supreme Court and the UNCHR legal committee on the appeal lodged by Maharajah Madhewoo regarding the protection of individual rights as against the reasonably justified larger need of protecting society. Guarantees must be provided by the State of Mauritius concerning potential abuse of data collected about individuals, ruled the UNHCR, and has given six months to authorities to inform of actions to meet that end.

## LEX

\* The UN Human Rights Committee's views on the case entered by Maharajah Madhewoo, who challenged the constitutionality of the implementation of the new biometric identity card as per the 2013 Act, claiming, inter alia, a breach of article 9 of the Mauritius Constitution on the protection of privacy, go contrary to what the Supreme Court had concluded in its judgement of 29 May 2015. What's the basis on which the UNHRC reached its conclusion?

The Constitution of Mauritius does not protect the right to privacy. This right is provided for in article 22 of the Civil Code. Section 9(1) of the Constitution provides that "except with his own consent, no person shall be subjected to the search of his person or his property or the entry by others on his premises."

What the National Identity Act 1985 Act allowed was the taking of fingerprints and the Supreme Court found this to be a breach of section (9) (1) of the Constitution.

However, the Supreme Court went further and ruled that the rights protected by section (9) (1) of the Constitution can be derogated from, in the interest of public order; for the purpose of protecting the rights and freedoms of other persons. The derogations must be reasonably justifiable in a democratic society as envisaged by section 9(2) of the Constitution.

\* **Could it be said that the Supreme Court erred in law, or are the UNHRC's views based on what obtains in other jurisdictions, mostly Western, and completely cut off from the country-specific Mauritian context?**

No. The Supreme Court did not err in law. It just considered the taking of fingerprints a reasonable derogation from the rights enjoyed by an individual.

\* **How did the UNHCR reach the conclusion it did?**

Unlike our section 9 of the Constitution, article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights protects the right to privacy. The UNHCR had therefore much more leeway and latitude to discuss the notion of privacy and come to the conclusions that more guarantees must be provided by the state for the protection of



“All the measures in regard to driving licences, identity cards, passports, for example, require data to be provided. So long as no abuse is made of such data, there should nothing objectionable to providing and collecting them. But what guarantee do we have that all the data provided for the purpose of obtaining official documents are in safe hands?...”

data.

\* **It is not only for the purposes of biometric cards that data are collected, but also for other purposes. How would these data be protected?**

Under the Data Protection Act, personal data must be protected and can only be released under strict conditions as provided for in the Act and subject to the privacy rights of people. The main purpose of the Data Protection Act is to protect the privacy of the citizens. What guarantees do we have that our data are not being bandied about for political reasons?

\* **Mr Madhewoo argued that 'certain provisions enable the Minister to expand the requirements of the Act without further provision'... and that 'the State party (the Govt of Mauritius) has been planning to enlarge the ambit of the scheme without further legislative scrutiny despite the importance of considering risks to privacy'. How can the Executive be given a blanket authorisation to expand the provisions of the law without going to Parliament?**

Well, we have seen how during the current period of the pandemic, laws affecting individuals are being enacted through ministerial orders and regulations without going to Parliament. So it should be no surprise that the current Executive feels it can arrogate to itself powers to amend any law or to bring in new laws under the guise of regulations. The current Executive can do so until and unless a courageous court of law puts a halt to this practice.

\* **We also learn from the opinion expressed by the UNHRC that "the State party (Govt of Mauritius) has not responded to the author's claim that retention of**

**fingerprint data on identity cards exacerbates the security lacunae identified by the Supreme Court". That would mean that the system can still be breached despite the Supreme Court's judgement in 2015?**

The government will have to tread carefully and not go against the ruling of the UNHCR. The UNHCR ruled that the government had not provided sufficient guarantees on measures that are or would be in place to protect the data asked for the biometric card and how any risk of abuse on the use of the data can be avoided.

\* **On the other hand, if data protection policy places an emphasis on the rights of the individual to his right to privacy for example, there is however the larger public interest that has to be taken into account, isn't it?**

In any democratic society, it is always a difficult and delicate exercise to balance the rights of an individual against the rights of society at large. This is why all the sections in the Constitution and all articles in human rights conventions include derogations from the rights in the public interest provided the derogations are reasonably justifiable in a democratic society.

Apart from the right to life and the right not to be tortured or subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment, rights are not absolute. What is reasonably justifiable in democratic society depends on a number of factors. The main question that is often asked is whether the derogations satisfy the test of proportionality in the sense of whether they are proportionate to the evil that needs to be dealt with in the larger public interest.

• Cont. on page 11



## Scientists are watching for new coronavirus variants as Delta continues to spread

The continued spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus has spawned a Greek alphabet of variants - a naming system used by the World Health Organization to track concerning new mutations of the virus that causes Covid-19. Some have equipped the virus with better ways of infecting humans or evading vaccine protection. Scientists remain focused on Delta, now the dominant variant rising rapidly around the world, but are tracking others to see what may one day take its place.

### Delta

The Delta variant remains the most worrisome. It is striking unvaccinated populations in many countries and has proven capable of infecting a higher proportion of vaccinated people than its predecessors, reports Reuters. The WHO classifies Delta as a variant of concern, meaning it has been shown capable of increasing transmissibility, causing more severe disease or reducing the benefit of vaccines and treatments.

According to Shane Crotty, a virologist at the La Jolla Institute for Immunology in San Diego, Delta's "superpower" is its transmissibility. Chinese researchers found that people infected with Delta carry 1,260 times more virus in their noses compared with the original version of the coronavirus. Some U.S. research suggests that the "viral load" in vaccinated individuals who become infected with Delta is on par with those who are unvaccinated, but more research is needed.

### Lambda - On the wane?

The Lambda variant has attracted attention as a



The WHO classifies Delta as a variant of concern, meaning it has been shown capable of increasing transmissibility, causing more severe disease or reducing the benefit of vaccines and treatments. Pic - AFP

potential new threat. But this version of the coronavirus, first identified in Peru in December, may be receding, several infectious disease experts said.

The WHO classifies Lambda as a variant of interest, meaning it carries mutations suspected of causing a change in transmissibility or causing more severe disease, but it is still under investigation. Lab studies show it has mutations that resist vaccine-induced antibodies.

Dr Eric Topol, a professor of molecular medicine and director of the Scripps Research Translational Institute in La Jolla, California, said the percentage of new Lambda cases reported to GISAID, a database that tracks SARS-CoV-2 variants, has been dropping, a sign that the variant is waning.

### B.1.621 - One to watch

The B.1.621 variant, which first arose in Colombia in

January, where it caused a major outbreak, has yet to earn a Greek letter name.

The European Center for Disease Prevention and Control has listed it as a variant of interest, while Public Health England describes B.1.621 as a variant under investigation. It carries several key mutations, including E484K, N501Y and D614G, that have been linked with increased transmissibility and reduced immune protection. So far, there have been 37 likely and confirmed cases in the UK, and the variant has been identified in a number of patients in Florida.

### More on the way?

Dr Anthony Fauci, the White House's chief medical adviser, recently warned that the United States could be in trouble unless more Americans get vaccinated, as a large pool of unvaccinated people give the virus more opportunity to spread and mutate into new variants.

Even so, a key issue is that the current vaccines block severe disease but do not prevent infection, said Dr Gregory Poland, a vaccine scientist at the Mayo Clinic. That is because the virus is still capable of replicating in the nose, even among vaccinated people, who can then transmit the disease through tiny, aerosolized droplets.

To defeat SARS-CoV-2, he said, will likely require a new generation of vaccines that also block transmission. Until then, the world will remain vulnerable to the rise of new coronavirus variants, according to Poland and other experts.

## 'Source of income for underprivileged': Pak court asks authorities to review TikTok ban



The Islamabad high court (IHC) has asked Pakistan's authorities to reconsider the current ban on the Chinese video-sharing app TikTok, which cited a report by Geo News on Sunday morning. The development comes weeks after Pakistan banned TikTok for the fourth time in the country on account of "inappropriate content" on the platform and its failure to take down such videos.

The Pakistan Telecommunications Authority had notified on July 21 that it had blocked ByteDance's video-sharing platform TikTok in the country. The ban was imposed under relevant provisions of the

Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016. This was reportedly the fourth time that the app was shown the door in the country. All the earlier bans were reversed when the app promised to moderate its content.

The first time TikTok was banned in Pakistan was in October 2020. However, the ban was lifted 10-day later after the company assured that it would block accounts

"spreading obscenity".

The Peshawar high court had imposed a ban on Tiktok in March which was lifted in April. In June, the Sindh high court asked the telecommunication authority to block TikTok as it was spreading immorality and obscenity. This order was also lifted after three days.

TikTok is much popular in Pakistan, though protests against the app have also grown louder over time. The app, which is banned in neighbouring India, has been downloaded almost 39 million times in Pakistan.

## Expedite process of issuing visas to international students: Senators to US govt

A bipartisan group of influential senators on Friday urged the Biden Administration to accelerate the process of issuing visas to international students, a move likely to benefit thousands of students who want to join their classes this autumn.

In India, for instance in Delhi, only emergency visas are currently being issued by the US Embassy, as a result of which a large number of Indian students are uncertain about their academic future for the next session beginning this autumn, reports PTI.

"We write to express our concerns regarding the slow pace of processing student visas as we continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic," two dozen senators wrote in a letter to Secretary of State Tony Blinken.

"In order to welcome international students and scholars in the autumn, as competitor countries are doing, we urge the State Department to provide predictable and consistent consular services, maximise alternatives to in-person visa interviews by providing waivers and virtual interviews, extend visa eligibility waivers, authorise staff overtime and increase



hiring, and initiate meaningful engagement with outside stakeholders and agencies," they said.

Prospective students cannot be certain about whether their visas will be processed in time for them to travel to the United States to begin their studies, the senators wrote.

Data from the Association of International Educators shows that more than one million international students at US colleges and universities during the 2018-2019 academic year contributed USD 41 billion to the country's economy.

Furthermore, bringing international students to the United States enriches the educational experience of domestic students that would be more difficult to achieve through online formats.

\* Contd on page 6





People walk along the South Bank, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, in London, Britain. Pic - Reuters

## Will UK never return to lockdowns? Govt scientific adviser thinks so

The threat of another surge in coronavirus disease cases exists but further lockdowns may not be required in Britain, a government scientific adviser has said.

Speaking to Times Radio, John Edmunds, a member of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage), said he was "cautiously optimistic" that another lockdown won't be needed even if the UK sees a possible Covid-19 resurgence, fuelled by lives returning to normal.

After a sharp decline in daily Covid-19 cases, the United Kingdom has been reporting a surge in infections for the past few days. On Friday, Britain recorded 31,808 new Covid-19 cases, a marginal rise from the previous day when it registered 30,093 fresh infections. The infections are expected to rise in September when schools and colleges open for new academic sessions and more workers return to office spaces, reports Hindustan Times.

On July 19, Britain removed almost all restrictions even as the country continued to report a worrying surge in Covid-19 cases. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government relied on relatively high vaccination coverage to reopen the economy badly hit by months of curbs. More than 57% of the UK population has been fully vaccinated and nearly 12% of the population has received at least one dose of Covid-19 vaccine.

## Soaring numbers of pupils taught in 'supersized' classes

The number of school pupils in England packed into "supersized" classes has risen by 20 per cent under Tory rule, analysis reveals. A study of government figures by the Labour Party shows that just over 900,000 pupils are now in classrooms of more than 30 - an increase of 150,000 since 2010. Labour said the government was responsible for a "major crisis" in schools, with children from the poorest backgrounds "hit hardest" as the analysis showed that some of the most disadvantaged communities suffered from the worst overcrowding.

Peter Kyle, the shadow schools minister, said: "Boris Johnson promised that education would be a priority on his watch. Instead, his government has continued with the Tory trend of rising class sizes and lowering social mobility, reports The Independent. This was a major problem before the pandemic, this is now a major crisis."

\*\*\*

## 'Devastating' IPCC report to warn time running out to save planet

A "devastating" new UN report is expected to set out a stark message on runaway climate change in what the government hopes will be a "wake-up call". The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, published on Monday, will be the first comprehensive assessment of scientific knowledge about the threat to the planet from human activity since 2013.

An interim report said global warming was likely to hit 1.5C, the disastrous limit world leaders have pledged to try to avoid, between 2030 and 2052. But reports indicate that a new landmark study will bring the window forward by a decade to 2040 at the latest. Climate minister and Cop26 president Alok Sharma said he expected the report to act as "a big wake-up call for countries to do even more", he said on Sunday. "I suspect the IPCC will rein-



Children at Manor Park School in Knutsford, Cheshire. Pic - PA

force the fact that we are running out of time. It will genuinely be a decisive moment in history."

\*\*\*

## Ministers 'mixing messages' after U-turn on civil service work from home policy

Ministers have been accused of issuing confusing advice over whether civil servants should continue working from home or return to the office. The government has reportedly scrapped plans to require Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) staff to be based in the office part-time from September.

England's order to work from home where possible, which was put in place in March 2020 as part of efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus, was lifted on 19 July. DHSC staff were told that there would be a "minimum expectation" that they would attend the Westminster office for between four and eight days every month, unless there was a business or health-related reason. But an announcement sent out to staff on Thursday states that the requirement to work partly from the office has been dropped.

## Iran nuke talks could resume in early September, says EU official

Iran is ready to resume talks reviving the nuclear deal with world powers under new president Ebrahim Raisi, and meetings could take place in Vienna from early September, an EU official said on Saturday.

The senior official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the EU's negotiator on the file, Enrique Mora, attended Raisi's swearing-in in Tehran last Thursday and spoke with the Iranian official designated to take charge of the nuclear talks, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

Amir-Abdollahian "said that it was unclear whether the nuclear talks would remain under the responsibility of the Iranian foreign ministry or be taken over by another body, such as Iran's National Security Council.

Raisi is a hardliner expected to consolidate the ultra-conservatives' power during his four-year term, reports AFP.

He succeeds the relatively moderate Hassan Rouhani whose landmark achievement during his own two-term presidency was the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and six world powers: the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany.

Former US president Donald Trump pulled out of the deal in 2018 and re-imposed sanctions that have choked Iran's oil-dependent economy. Iran responded by walking



European Foreign Policy Chief Catherine Ashton (left), and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif (right), before the closed-door nuclear talks in Vienna, Austria, on Wednesday, May 14, 2014. Pic - AP

back measures it had agreed to abide by.

Talks have been happening since April in Vienna to find a way to bring both sides back into full compliance.

The last round took place on June 20 with no date set for when they would continue. The EU chairs the meetings.

The United States has said it is "an urgent priority" to get Iran back to the table.

But tensions have risen, notably with an attack by

drones last week on an Israeli-linked tanker off Oman that killed a Briton and a Romanian on board.

The G7 -- the United States, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan -- blamed the attack on Iran. Tehran denies the accusation.

### Iranians want 'success'

Iran's decisions to increase uranium enrichment and restrict UN inspectors' access to some nuclear facilities have unsettled the West.

"The EU would like Iran to freeze the nuclear activities," the EU official said, but admitted Russia and China did not back its language on that position.

He added that Mora's meeting with Amir-Abdollahian was "very useful", even though many issues remain unclear.

The Iranians said they want to get back to Vienna "as soon as possible, not just for talks but to achieve an agreement -- they want a success," the EU official said.

"If there is no agreement, the situation for Iran will be much worse," the EU official predicted. "We will work on the assumption we will get an agreement."



# "Not one single community can claim to be Mauritian to the exclusion of others"

The challenge, then, is to arrive at an education policy and system that would provide a national standard while encompassing the rich diversity of our cultures"

François Sarah



**Mauritius Times:** You started off at Bain Boeuf, Cap Malheureux, and went on to do your PhD in International Relations at the University of St Andrews, Scotland, winning along the way a number of awards. The notes on your background seem to indicate that it's the cultural milieu and the background in which you grew up, which have contributed as much as hard work to your achievements in education. Based on your own experience, how do cultural milieu, family background and values help in educational performance?

**François Sarah:** The family as the domestic society, which fulfils certain basic educational functions, is determinative of the educational performance of children. I was very lucky to have parents who took their duties very seriously and provided me with the right environment and means for the development of my academic skills and ambitions. I will be ever grateful to them.

Alongside schoolwork, my mother had set up a parallel and complementary course of homework supervised by herself, my father, and some other family members. In addition, I also followed the courses of the Alliance Française. My

mother took care of the languages while my father helped with mathematics, and they split the rest among themselves. The timetable at home was as regulated as that of school. I was not allowed more than 30 minutes of television on weekdays - only after having completed both schoolwork and homework. The older cousins who were at university were held up as examples to follow. And there was also a sort of competition among cousins of the same age group about school rankings and results.

Early on, my parents had passed on to me the love of reading. Books were, and still are, everywhere in our house. When I was at secondary school, most of my pocket money would go towards buying books for my own library. After school hours, and when not taking private tuitions, I would frequent a number of bookshops in Port Louis, namely, Le Trefle, Allot, Nalanda, University

**“The classroom must not be a prison cell but the porch of knowledge. It is also not a “preaching hall” in which the students have very little to say. Learning and most activities relating to it, after all, take place in the foreground of an implicit conversation or dialogue between the past and the present, between the teacher and the students, and among the students themselves...”**

**F**rançois Sarah emphasizes the role and importance of the socio-cultural milieu centred around the family/extended family (family plus close relatives) as the crucible which nurtures and motivates the growing child towards seeking educational excellence beyond mere employability concerns. He feels that the excessively labour-oriented system that has abandoned the important core elements of the traditional system which developed the sense of aesthetics, wonder and openness to the rich diversity of cultures we are privileged to be exposed to is to a large extent responsible for the paucity of our present education system.

François Sarah holds a PhD in International Relations from the University of St Andrews, Scotland and was awarded The Rt Hon Lord Campbell of Pittenweem Prize for International Relations as well as the 600th Anniversary Doctoral Scholarship. He previously obtained his BSc Hons in Political Science at the University of Mauritius.

Bookshop, and Harry Bookshop.

**\* Does this mean that those without a proper and conducive cultural milieu and family background will have the odds stacked against them, which is why so many of our youngsters in some areas are unable to make much headway in education despite free education opportunities for all?**

I am convinced that it is so. Without the active support of the family, the task of teachers is made more difficult, as there is little to no effective communication between school and home. Parents and teachers ought to be partners in the education of children.

Free education was a blessing. It was introduced at a time when families were more closely knit together and able to provide some support. It was also a time when consumerism, excessive individualism, and a certain model of social mobility had not yet conquered the minds of Mauritians. Since then, society has moved on for the worse and the education of children suffers as a result.

The increase in divorce rates, the phenomenon of absentee parents, the lack of authority figures and the absence of mentoring, financial destitution, etc.

make for precarious, if not impossible, conditions for the development of well-rounded individuals.

**\* In fact, if there is an increasing number of young Mauritians who have done very well in education, there are also the thousands who are left on the wayside every year. Do you think the authorities, public and private, are doing the right things to mitigate the incidence of educational failure?**

As far as both the public and private authorities are concerned, I believe there is a lack of common or coordinated vision regarding the future of Mauritian society as an organic whole. There are no directive principles and objectives of state policy beyond the promises and retractions of electoral cycles.

In such circumstances, I can understand why some of the young should feel lost, with those having the means and the skill emigrating, and the rest being left behind, trying to eke out a living in the context of the lack of national vision and the scarcity of resources and jobs.

We can't hope to carry out a successful reform of the educational system in isolation. There must be an integrated policy in which the systemic defects of all areas of both sectors are considered and addressed together. It is only in redefining the objectives of the State in terms of the fundamental needs of the people, of which education and occupations are essential elements, that we will give ourselves a framework in which opportunities can be created.

● Cont. on page 8

# 'The increase in divorce rates, the phenomenon of absentee parents, the lack of authority figures, financial destitution, etc. make for precarious, if not impossible, conditions for the development of well-rounded individuals'

“Free education was a blessing. It was introduced at a time when families were more closely knit together and able to provide some support. It was also a time when consumerism, excessive individualism, and a certain model of social mobility had not yet conquered the minds of Mauritian. Since then, society has moved on for the worse and the education of children suffers as a result...”

“As far as both the public and private authorities are concerned, I believe there is a lack of common or coordinated vision regarding the future of Mauritian society as an organic whole. There are no directive principles and objectives of state policy beyond the promises and retractions of electoral cycles. In such circumstances, I can understand why some of the young should feel lost, with those having the means and the skill emigrating, and the rest being left behind...”

● Cont. from page 7

**\* You personally have chosen to come back, why do you think an increasing number of our students abroad are settling down there? Is there more to it than a simple answer to that question?**

Yes, I think this would demand a full-blown study! But I will try to identify one or two salient factors. Following on your earlier question, I would say that there is a general lack of incentive to return for those who have spent years of study abroad. I come back to the idea of social mobility I just mentioned. As far as salaries, quality of life, and work environment are concerned, Mauritius cannot really compete. There is also the perception that the society here is not really meritocratic, in spite of much official protestations to the contrary.

**\* We also learn in your background notes about the attachment of your larger family, consisting of your parents as well as great-uncles and great-aunts, to social, religious, and civic duties, as well as their appreciation of tradition on the one hand, and on the other hand their openness to different non-Western cultures, thus their decision to have you learn Hindi as an oriental language at school. Tell us more about that and how has this helped?**

I was brought up in an environment that put a premium on heritage - both material and cultural. My great-uncles and great-aunts were the "guardians", as it were, of family memory and tradition, and they imparted to me a solid sense of continuity and communion with the past.

Some of the great-uncles with whom I grew up had fought in the Second World War, and they instilled in me a sense of civic duty and patriotism. Even though the



family was culturally Western, we were mindful and proud of our diverse origins, of which the Indian was a prominent component. Thus, my parents decided that I should study Hindi at primary level. They themselves had Hindi-speaking friends who were regular visitors to our house and with whom I was able to practise (in addition to our Hindi-speaking neighbours).

Even though I haven't studied the language to a higher level, I still retain a love and a taste for it, and for Indian civilization in general. I think it was that introduction to Hindi at primary level that helped me choose the "elective" on Indian classical music and dance when I was at the University of Mauritius. That "elective" opened to me such vistas of aesthetic and philosophical insights that have been crucial in the formation of my worldview.

**\* It's a pity that we do not get a more profound exposure to different cultures, languages and literature other than their mass-appeal representations that are broadcast on TV. It's Mauritianism's loss, isn't it?**

You are quite right. Mauritianism will remain a dead letter if we do not articulate and implement a consistent policy of cultural education and communication. The media ought to have been the choicest platform for cultural communication.

I have often thought that we would need to create and broadcast a programme on the level of "Civilisation" by Kenneth Clark, but broadened to all the cultures found on the island. We need to promote the study and pursuit of traditional and classical art forms, and encourage children to take up one such art form alongside their academic studies.

We already have specialized schools and institutions, and, more importantly, the qualified personnel, that could come together to create a national programme, which would form the basis of a national endorsement and promotion of the arts.

**\* In what ways can the rich diversity of Mauritian heritage redefine the orientation of an overarching education policy?**

One of the advantages of Mauritius is that there was no indigenous population before the arrival of the Portuguese and of the Dutch. Not only was it legally *terra nullius*, but also, culturally, a *tabula rasa*. Not one single community can claim to be Mauritian to the exclusion of others. The challenge, then, is to arrive at an education policy and system that would provide a national standard while encompassing the rich diversity of cultures that coexist in Mauritius. For this purpose, we must be able to create spaces where the most salient elements of different cultures are showcased and communicated to the community at large and to learners in particular. Endeavours in this direction already exist; they need to be acknowledged, upheld, and encouraged.

“There is a general lack of incentive to return for those who have spent years of study abroad. As far as salaries, quality of life, and work environment are concerned, Mauritius cannot really compete. There is also the perception that the society here is not really meritocratic, in spite of much official protestations to the contrary...”

Furthermore, we must not be afraid to refer to "classical" standards of taste and value to guide us in the elaboration of such a policy. In other words, let us not be afraid of "high culture" or let us not hesitate to construct such a system where "high culture" occupies a normative position. I do realise that this is a rather controversial view, but I stand by it.

Education, after all, is about the cultivation and improvement of oneself, for the sake of oneself and for society's sake. It must instill in the young the sense of those things which make life worth living. I am convinced that those things (love, friendship, loyalty, virtue, creating, building, dwelling, thinking, etc.) have been given a most sublime treatment in the works of the classical poets (for example, among many others, Kalidasa, Sophocles, Vergil, Du Fu, Ferdowsi), and in the legends of countless other cultures and folks.

● Cont. on page 9



# 'There is a lack of common or coordinated vision regarding the future of Mauritian society as an organic whole.'

In such circumstances, some of the young feel lost, with those having the means and the skill emigrating'

● Cont. on page 8

The advantage of the ancient poets is that they expressed those things in compositions whose beauty has withstood the test of time, and which present us with a high degree of moral and philosophical sophistication and elegance. At the same time, the human element of those old stories remains remarkably close to us, and their concern speak to our own.

At this twilight hour of civilization, I would probably also include mediaeval and early modern works in my "canon" of high culture (e.g. Dante, Shakespeare, Racine, Tagore, T.S. Eliot, etc.) Classical culture, thus redefined in terms of the union of the ancients and the moderns, has the potential to provide any scheme of education with a very sound basis for cultivation and emulation.

The return to an educational paradigm where the Humanities (languages, history, with mathematics) constitute the basis of instruction for all children has a number of advantages. It enhances the need for universal literacy, and provides it with a textual context and cultural frame of reference. It also provides an intercultural interface for the learning of languages, and an avenue for teaching moral and civic values.

**\* We understand that you guide the kids of expats in their studies of the classical languages, in particular Latin. That's interesting, because we do not get to hear much about our own local students taking up these classical subjects, as well as Geography, or even History as examinable subjects since they are considered unrelated to the labour market. The expats seem to think otherwise, it would appear?**

The families with which I have the privilege to work are seized of the critical situation in which the Western world finds itself since the 1960s, with May '68 as the paradigmatic event. The dissolution of the family unit, the decline in religious practice, and the replacement of history by ideology -- all form part of the ongoing crisis of the West.

In seeking to provide a classical education for their children, the expats intend to re-establish the links with the past, to revive tradition, and all the positive aspects of Western civilization which owes so much to the Greco-Roman culture. Furthermore, the crisis in the Roman Catholic Church since the 1960s with the loss of the traditional Latin liturgy and rituals has contributed in no small measure to the disenchantment of the West, with a decline in the sense of the sacred. Those parents who approach me want to renew with both the secular and sacred roots of their identity, and transmit them to their children.

To come back to Mauritius, I believe one of the problems of an exclusively employment-oriented education system is that it needs to be constantly updated to keep pace with the ever-changing requirements of industry.



**“Even though the family was culturally Western, we were mindful and proud of our diverse origins, of which the Indian was a prominent component. Thus, my parents decided that I should study Hindi at primary level. They themselves had Hindi-speaking friends who were regular visitors to our house and with whom I was able to practise (in addition to our Hindi-speaking neighbours)...”**

**“The crisis in the Roman Catholic Church since the 1960s with the loss of the traditional Latin liturgy and rituals has contributed in no small measure to the disenchantment of the West, with a decline in the sense of the sacred. Those parents who approach me want to renew with both the secular and sacred roots of their identity, and transmit them to their children...”**

We need to identify or articulate an inner core of the education system which will remain more or less stable. Other subjects, as the needs arise, will then be added to the curriculum organized around this core.

Thus, we must provide pathways and places for those who would like to pursue the humanist/classical core up to the level of higher studies, just as much as we need to recognize that some learners will only be able to take in a minimum of core, by virtue of their inclinations or circumstances. Those students can be directed towards more concrete subjects, again depending on their desire or the career path intended for them.

**\* The traditional model of education is described by Salman Khan of the Khan Academy as essentially sitting "in a chair, and the teacher tries to project knowledge at you; some of it sticks, some of it doesn't." Khan further avers that it creates an attitude of "you need to teach me". How do we change this mindset? How do we create a system where curiosity is instilled in our students?**

Khan seems to be referring to a didacticist and mechanistic style of education, which he rightly criticizes. However, I will temper this by saying that any transmission of knowledge necessarily includes a degree of formulaicism - a need for the learner to be taught and to master the basic elements of certain semantic and conceptual fields in view of application and replication.

It has its place but it should not be the whole of education, nor the sole criterion for academic success. It can certainly coexist in the younger years with more visual and interactive items and activities that would present those semantic and conceptual fields in a concrete manner. Repetition is not bad, but it can become barren when divorced from the organic life of the learner and the teacher - when the whole experience of teaching and being taught takes place in a sort of bureaucratic vacuum.

One of the ways in which the curiosity of learners is aroused is to introduce them to items with which they are not familiar at all. It can also be aroused by introducing them to unfamiliar aspect of familiar things. This introduction will have to be punctual and consistent with the subject being taught and studied. It will rely on both visual and auditory support, and include discussions where the learners will be called upon to express their thoughts on the item. Class trips to museums, historical sites, nature reserves, and other places of interest should become a regular feature of school life.

The classroom must not be a prison cell but the porch of knowledge. It is also not a "preaching hall" in which the students have very little to say. Learning and most activities relating to it, after all, take place in the foreground of an implicit conversation or dialogue between the past and the present, between the teacher and the students, and among the students themselves.

One of the most fundamental tasks of teachers is to help the students build up their own confidence and enlarge their stock of knowledge in order to participate in this great conversation.



From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

4<sup>th</sup> Year No 169

## MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 31 October 1957

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

By Nestor

## Mr Young's Appointment

At a press conference held in September last Dr Millien, Minister for Labour, announced that the Government would have the services of a trade union expert shortly.

We are pleased to learn about the appointment of James Young, who is an old acquaintance and who came to Mauritius in October 1954 as delegate of the World Federation of Free Trade Union to inquire into the growth and development of trade unionism. He has 40 years of experience in trade union movement. He has also been a Member of Parliament.

Interviewed by us about the local trade union movement, he said that there were more members outside than inside. He was sorry to find that the two agricultural unions were not working hand in hand. When asked about how to improve this state of things, he replied that a campaign must be started to ask workers to join the unions and to explain to them the advantages they would derive in the form of better wages, better conditions of living and better understanding with their employers. A sound and healthy trade union movement, he added, would benefit both employers and employees alike, because the output could be increased if employees were well treated.

\* \* \*

## Campaign against Lavish Spending

Some time ago we reproduced a note from the *Colonial Times* in what about Mr D.G. Mehta, a renowned social worker of Mombasa, who contrary to prevalent practice had the marriage of his daughter celebrated among a small gathering of friends and relatives. Spending lavishly on wedding ceremonies is an evil which is especially

## News and Views

prevalent especially among the Indian community. Some spend because it is a tradition in the family. Others do it just for show. The earlier we get rid of this evil, the better. In Mombasa people have taken this matter more seriously. They have given it the shape of a campaign and set the pace for us to fol-



'Mr Ahmed Ali Omar referred to the "prevalent malpractice" of people spending beyond their means for wedding and funeral ceremonies. In the case of weddings, it often happened that people ran into debt and marriages were broken because the husband was unable to support his wife.

'Women guests at weddings were also harassed because, by custom, they were required to wear uniforms. If a man was not in a position to buy his wife a dress, there was marital disharmony.'

\* \* \*

## Two Subjects Only!

According to an advertisement published a few days ago in the papers, a pass in any two subjects at the SC level will qualify

candidates to enter the Teachers Training College (TTC). Any two subjects will do. It may be French and Hygiene, Mathematics or Hindi, Latin or Economics, Chinese or History, Painting or Needlework, Music or Woodwork. We have been following this recruitment business and know quite well that a large number of School Certificate holders have applied for admission.

In the past, it appears from criticisms published in the papers that a certain category of persons unsuitable for the teaching profession have been appointed as teachers while holders of School Certificate of a certain community have been discarded. We are not in a position to ascertain whether it was true or not. But this year we are watching closely the doings at the TTC. Is there really such a dearth of qualified people in Mauritius? Or is it the avowed policy of certain people to favour some at the

low. We are indebted to the *Mombasa Times* for the following news items which will set our social workers thinking:

'A campaign is being planned to dissuade Mombasa Africans from spending more money than they can afford on lavish wedding and funeral ceremonies. The first meeting of the Wedding and Funeral Committee, which has been set up at the instigation of the Mombasa African Advisory Council, has been held at the Tononoka Social Centre. The committee is made up of 30 members, five from the Advisory Council, three from each of the town's ward councils and a community development assistant. Mr Lance Jones, Executive Officer of the Advisory Council, was elected chairman, and Mr Benjamin Mutua, the community development assistant, has become the committee's first secretary. Only 16 of the 30 members attended the first meeting.

expense of others?

\* \* \*

Lowering the Standard of VI<sup>th</sup> Std

A Standard VI Certificate has always been considered as a valuable parchment taking into account that it is the minimum qualification required to land a job even as policeman or to enter as apprentice to many professions such as printing, etc. It is really the eagerly sought-after certificate. The employers know fully well its value. Its standard is a guarantee to them.

It is but proper here to recall that candidates for the Standard VI have to score 33% of the marks allotted to each examination subject and obtain 50% of the total marks given to all the subjects taken as a whole to qualify for a Pass Certificate. This year, however, the examination scripts are being marked on the following basis: 33% for a pass in one sub and only 35% of the total number of marks in all subjects are required to get a Pass Certificate. Therefore, the standard of the certificate has been lowered to a great extent and by as much as 15%! It is anybody's guess why it has been done...

Parents and the public in general must realise the Standard VI certificate as from this year will no longer have the same face value as the certificate issued formerly. It will no longer provide the guarantee it used to give. This abhorrent method is being used to cope with the intake problem next year. And it is significant that it is being done when Mr Snell is at the steering oar of the Education Department. Has he explored other alternatives before taking such an action? Is he justified in doing so? And, lastly, will the parents accept and let Mr Snell issue such a diluted certificate?

It is indeed a sad day for education in Mauritius. The ultimate result will be that shortly a Std VI Certificate will have no value, and Mauritius will become a land full of half-baked young people.





भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम  
LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA

**Protecting lives, ensuring happiness**



1956-2020

LIC Centre, 1st Floor,  
John Kennedy Street,  
Port Louis

marketing@licmauritius.intnet.mu

208 1485, Ext 24 [Port Louis]  
4674960 [Qautre Bornes]

## Union Of Airlines &amp; General Sales Agents Employees

Members of the above Union are informed that the **Annual General Meeting** will be held on **Saturday 28th August 2021 at 2.00 pm.**  
Lieu: F.P.U., 1st Floor, Arcades Rond Point, Rose Hill.

## AGENDA:

1. Reading & Approval of Last Minutes
  2. President's Report
  3. Treasurer's Report 2020
  4. Election of Managing Committee members
  5. Appointment of Auditors
  6. Arbitration
  7. A.O.B
- Members who are interested to sit on the Committee are kindly requested to submit their names to the Vice President by latest **25<sup>th</sup> August 2021.**
- Vice President  
**Jean Philippe Saydraouten**

The **Annual Delegates Meeting** of Mauritius Trade Union Congress will be held at its seat at GRNW, on Saturday 28 August at 9.00 am

## AGENDA:

1. Approval of minutes of last ADM.
2. Matters arising.
3. President's Report
4. Finance
5. Amendments to Rules (if any).
6. Reshuffling of Bureau of Members (if any).
7. A.O.B.
8. Lunch

**V.A. Kallooa**  
Ag. General Secretary



# “What guarantee do we have that all the data provided for the purpose of obtaining official documents are in safe hands?”

● Cont. from page 4

\* **Calls for digital Covid passports, biometric ID cards, data-sharing track-and-trace systems and automated facial recognition are facilitating the policing not only of people crossing borders but also, increasingly, of the populations living within them. The layman might ask: 'What's wrong with that if it allows the authorities to better take care of the health and safety of the citizens of the country?' What's your take on that?**

Precisely. All the measures in regard to driving licences, identity cards, passports, for example, require data to be provided. So long as no abuse is made of such data, there should be nothing objectionable to providing and collecting them. But what guarantee do we have that all the data provided for the purpose of

obtaining official documents are in safe hands?

\* **The public interest has unfortunately not been served by our own multi-billion Safe City project, however, what with the disappearance of vital video recordings of the movements of the murdered political activist Soopramanien Kistnen...**

Let us be blunt and pretend that we do not know what happened to the Safe City recordings that were placed in areas rele-

vant to the investigation in the alleged murder of Mr Kristen.

The police started on the premise that it was a suicide until it ultimately proved that the late activist was murdered. Do you sincerely think that the cameras would have recorded the presence of the killer or killers?

\* **The UNHRC has concluded its views by stating that 'the State Party is obligated to provide sufficient guarantees against the risk of arbitrariness**

**and abuse of the author's fingerprint data as may arise from the issuance of an identity card to him, and to review the grounds for storing and retaining fingerprint data on identity cards...' It also wants to be informed, within 180 days, 'about the measures taken to give effect to the Committee's Views'. Is the Government bound to comply?**

A government that has signed an international convention should be bound by it. What the UNHCR has asked is that the State of Mauritius provides sufficient information on the measures that would be taken to protect the data collected for the purposes of the biometric card and whether there would be any risk of abuse being made on the exploitation of these data.

LEX

“We have seen how during the current period of the pandemic, laws affecting individuals are being enacted through ministerial orders and regulations without going to Parliament. So, it should be no surprise that the current Executive feels it can arrogate to itself powers to amend any law or to bring in new laws under the guise of regulations. The current Executive can do so until and unless a courageous court of law puts a halt to this practice...”

# Here's what humans are doing to the planet

● Cont. from page 2

Under the most extreme emissions scenario we considered, we could not rule out rapid ice sheet loss leading to sea level rise approaching 2 meters (7 feet) by the end of this century.

Fortunately, if the world limits warming to well below 2 C, it should take many centuries for sea level rise to exceed 2 meters – a far more manageable situation.

## Are the oceans or ice nearing any tipping points?

“Tipping point” is a vague term used in many different ways by different people. The IPCC defines tipping points as “critical thresholds beyond which a system reorganizes, in a way that is very fast or irreversible” – for example, a temperature rise beyond which climate dynamics commit an ice sheet to massive loss.

Because the term is so vague, the IPCC generally focuses on characteristics of changes in a system – for example, whether a system might change abruptly or irreversibly – rather than whether it fits the strict dynamic definition of a “tipping point.”

One example of a system that might undergo abrupt changes is the large-scale pattern of ocean circulation known as the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation, or AMOC, of which the Gulf Stream is part. Paleoclimate evidence tells us that AMOC has changed rapidly in the past, and we expect that AMOC will weaken over this century. If AMOC were to collapse, it would make Europe warm more slowly, increase sea level rise along the US Atlantic coast, and shift storm tracks and monsoons. However, most evidence indicates that such a collapse will not happen in this century.

There is mixed evidence for abrupt changes in the polar ice sheets, but clear evidence that changes in the ice sheets can be locked in for centuries and millennia.

If the world succeeds in limiting warming to 1.5 C (2.7 F), we expect to see about 2-3 meters (7-10 feet) of sea level rise over the next 2,000 years; if the planet continues to warm and reaches a 5 C (9 F) increase, we expect to see about 20 meters (70 feet) over the next 2,000 years.

Some people also discuss summer Arctic sea ice – which has undergone substantial declines over the last 40 years and is now smaller than at any time in the past millennium – as a system with a “tipping point.” However, the science is pretty clear that there is no critical threshold in this system. Rather, summer Arctic sea ice area decreases roughly in proportion to the increase in global temperature, and if temperature were stabilized, we would expect sea ice area to stabilize also.

## The report involved 234 scientists, and then 195 governments had to agree on the summary for policymakers. Does that broad range of views affect the outcome?

When you're writing a report like this, a key goal for the scientists is to accurately capture points of both scientific agreement and scientific disagreement.

For example, with respect to ice sheet changes, there are certain processes on which there is broad agreement and other processes where the science is still emerging and there are strong, discordant views. Yet knowing about these processes may be crucially important for



Pic - Shutterstock

decision-makers trying to manage risk.

That's why, for example, we talk not only about most likely outcomes, but also about outcomes where the likelihood is low or as-yet unknown, but the potential impacts are large.

The IPCC uses a transparent process to produce its report – the authors have had to respond to over 50,000 review comments over the three years we've spent writing it. The governments also weigh in, having to approve every line of a concise Summary for Policy Makers that accurately reflects the underlying assessment – often-times making it clearer in the process.

I'm very pleased that, as with past reports, every participating government has signed off on a summary that accurately reports the current state of climate science.

Robert Kopp, Rutgers University





A woman holds a phone in front of the office of NSO Group, which makes a tool that can see and hear everything a phone is used for. Pic - AFP

# A cybersecurity expert explains how Pegasus spyware invades phones

*A tool made for tracking criminals and terrorists has potentially been used against politicians, dissidents and journalists*

End-to-end encryption is technology that scrambles messages on your phone and unscrambles them only on the recipients' phones, which means anyone who intercepts the messages in between can't read them. Dropbox, Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Twitter and Yahoo are among the companies whose apps and services use end-to-end encryption.

This kind of encryption is good for protecting your privacy, but governments don't like it because it makes it difficult for them to spy on people, whether tracking criminals and terrorists or, as some governments have been known to do, snooping on dissidents, protesters and journalists. Enter an Israeli technology firm, NSO Group.

The company's flagship product is Pegasus, spyware that can stealthily enter a smartphone and gain access to everything on it, including its camera and microphone. Pegasus is designed to infiltrate devices running Android, BlackBerry, iOS and Symbian operating systems and turn them into surveillance devices. The company says it sells Pegasus only to governments and only for the purposes of tracking criminals and terrorists.

## How it works

Earlier version of Pegasus were installed on smartphones through vulnerabilities in commonly used apps or by spear-phishing, which involves tricking a targeted user into clicking a link or opening a document that secretly installs the software. It can also be installed over a wireless transceiver located near a target, or manually if an agent can steal the target's phone.

Since 2019, Pegasus users have been able to install the software on smartphones with a missed call on WhatsApp, and can even delete the record of the missed call, making it impossible for the phone's owner to know anything is amiss. Another way is by simply sending a message to a user's phone that produces no notification.

This means the latest version of this spyware does not require the smartphone user to do anything. All that is required for a successful spyware attack and installation is having a particular vulnerable app or operating system installed on the device. This is known as a zero-click exploit.

Once installed, Pegasus can theoretically harvest any data from the device and transmit it back to the attacker. It can steal photos and videos, recordings, location records, communications, web searches, passwords, call logs and social media posts. It also has the capability to activate cameras and microphones for real-time surveillance without the permission or knowledge of the user.

## Who has been using Pegasus and why

NSO Group says it builds Pegasus solely for governments to use in counter-terrorism and law enforcement work. The company markets it as a targeted spying tool to track criminals and terrorists and not for mass surveillance. The company does not disclose its clients.

The earliest reported use of Pegasus was by the Mexican government in 2011 to track notorious drug baron Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán. The tool was also reportedly used to track people close to mur-

dered Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

It is unclear who or what types of people are being targeted and why. However, much of the recent reporting about Pegasus centers around a list of 50,000 phone numbers. The list has been attributed to NSO Group, but the list's origins are unclear. A statement from Amnesty International in Israel stated that the list contains phone numbers that were marked as "of interest" to NSO's various clients, though it's not known if any of the phones associated with numbers have actually been tracked.

A media consortium, the Pegasus Project, analyzed the phone numbers on

the list and identified over 1,000 people in over 50 countries. The findings included people who appear to fall outside of the NSO Group's restriction to investigations of criminal and terrorist activity. These include politicians, government workers, journalists, human rights activists, business executives and Arab royal family members.

## Other ways your phone can be tracked

Pegasus is breathtaking in its stealth and its seeming ability to take complete control of someone's phone, but it's not the only way people can be spied on through their phones. Some of the ways phones can aid surveillance and undermine privacy include location tracking, eavesdropping, malware and collecting data from sensors.

Governments and phone companies can track a phone's location by tracking cell signals from cell tower transceivers and cell transceiver simulators like the StingRay device. Wi-Fi and Bluetooth signals can also be used to track phones. In some cases, apps and web browsers can determine a phone's location.

Eavesdropping on communications is harder to accomplish than tracking, but it is possible in situations in which encryption is weak or lacking. Some types of malware can compromise privacy by accessing data.

The National Security Agency has sought agreements with technology companies under which the companies would give the agency special access into their products via backdoors, and has reportedly built backdoors on its own. The companies say that backdoors defeat the purpose of end-to-end encryption.

The good news is, depending on who you are, you're unlikely to be targeted by a government wielding Pegasus. The bad news is, that fact alone does not guarantee your privacy.

**Bhanukiran Gurijala,  
West Virginia University**

## Appartement à louer - long terme



Appartement meublé de 3 c.a.c, climatisé, cuisine équipée, piscine et parking, sécurité (24/24) à Trou aux Biches - Complexe Fleury sur Mer  
Tel: 57809413 - 57530881

## To Rent

Fully furnished and air conditioned 3-bedroom apartment at Fleury sur Mer Complex, Trou aux Biches for long-term.  
Parking and 24 hour security, swimming pool  
Tel: 57809413 - 57530881

**Sanlam  
Central Agency Ltd**

Accredited Agency

Contact: Mrs V. Gopal

1st floor, ARC Building, c/r SSR & Sir William Newton Streets, Port Louis  
Tel: 208 0289 / 5782 5678 - Fax: 213 0961  
Email: centralagency@intnet.mu





## Business Success

# How being an effective leader is vital to your business success



Effective leaders always choose to surround themselves with other outstanding individuals. Pic - Harvard Professional Development

## Bruce Hakutizwi

As a business leader you will develop your own style. And while this will depend to some extent on your character, it will also be influenced by the qualities of those it is your job to lead, as well as by the sector in which you operate and the prevailing market conditions.

Nevertheless, there are certain skills and traits which are common to all good leaders. Some qualities are innate, while others must be learned and/or acquired through experience.

### Integrity

Commanding the respect of others without having to rely on the authority of your office is a compelling definition of integrity. Furthermore, integrity itself consists of rather more than simply taking appropriate action. It invariably means being able to consistently exemplify the principle in question through your own words, actions and behaviour in the broadest sense.

For instance, never asking an employee to do something you would not be prepared to do yourself. Individual leaders who always act with integrity make an invaluable contribution to company culture.

### Self-awareness

This, of course means being able to assess your own strengths and weaknesses. But from that starting point a wise leader will take steps to address any weakness which is becoming an impairment.

It is important that, if you are going to be a good leader, you get feedback in order to be able to improve. Iconic hotel entrepreneur, Conrad Hilton, was a leader that was concerned with his employees and

would regularly ask for their opinions in order to better his company. This proved vital to his success and other hotel owners found the same thing.

### Decisiveness

Leaders are called upon to provide focus and direction. Effective leaders will be aware that decisive action can create a positive momentum which of itself can influence a positive outcome. And similarly, over-cautious deliberation and delay often makes taking effective action even more difficult, simply because the initiative has been lost. Never pretend to be considering 'all the options' while you just tread water - the only person this ever fools is yourself.

### Fairness

In any leadership role, your actions are likely to be scrutinised for their fairness. Above all, that means you must behave in a principled manner at all times and make your judgements without fear or favour. With decision making, it is impossible for any leader to satisfy all parties every time.

Nevertheless, provided your guiding principles are transparent, it should be possible for everyone to accept that you tried to act fairly. Conversely, acting unfairly is a fatal leadership flaw in the eyes of those who have to look to you for guidance.

### An eye for talent

It takes a great team to get truly amazing things to happen. Which is why really effective leaders always choose to surround themselves with other outstanding individuals.

For example, Apple's Steve Jobs was always on the lookout for uniquely talented people. That's the real reason he was so keen to accept

offers to speak at universities - because it gave him instant access to the brightest and best individuals. He is also known to have personally interviewed more than 5000 job applicants in a continuing effort to hire the very best talent for his own creative team.

### Knowledge

A mere talking head is worse than useless. As a leader you should keep up with sector trends, be keen to learn and hear about current best practice, and know what story the statistics in your industry have to tell. That's the only way to retain real respect and ensure that you hear truthful answers, rather than the accounts others calculate you might be satisfied with.

### Acknowledging mistakes

Someone who's 'never wrong' can often be painfully irritating to others, and it takes a strong character to make a good job of acknowledging mistakes. When Amazon simply deleted unauthorised copies of '1984' and 'Animal Farm' from Amazon Kindles their users had purchased, an almighty backlash soon followed.

Hearing of this, CEO Jeff Bezos immediately got Amazon to confess the error in an official press statement. He then offered his own "deep apologies to our customers" and accepted the Amazon action was "stupid, thoughtless, and painfully out of line with our principles." The real moral? Once you start believing you're just too big to say sorry, that's when you start to look really small.

*Bruce Hakutizwi, Director of North America for BusinessesForSale.com, the world's largest online marketplace for buying and selling small and medium size businesses.*

## Work Smarter



## Everyone needs a network

If you pride yourself on being self-sufficient, you may have assumed that you don't need a network. But even if you've achieved your current success on the strength of solo (or near-solo) efforts, making meaningful connections with people in your field can still be beneficial. If you don't like the idea of networking, reframe it as a way of making interesting friends for the long term.

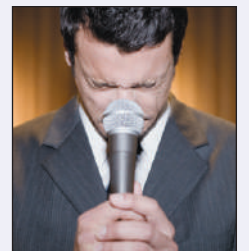
Create a "wishlist" of people you'd like to connect with - a senior colleague, a thought leader in your field, a respected author. You could connect with them by interviewing them for a blog or podcast. Or, if you share a commonality like being part of an alumni group or professional association, you could simply suggest a "getting-to-know-you" call.

If this feels like it's not your speed, you might concentrate your networking efforts on one or two key conferences per year. While it may feel uncomfortable at first, we all can stand to benefit from spending a little time getting to know people who may end up being our colleagues, mentors, or friends.

*This tip is adapted from "Build a Network - Even When You Don't Think You Need One," by Dorie Clark — Harvard Business Review*

## Nervous about public speaking? Try this

Contrary to popular belief, confident public speaking isn't about getting rid of your nerves. The secret is to reframe your anxiety as excitement. Here are four steps you can take before your next big speech or presentation.



First, take a few minutes to center yourself. Pause and breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Next, ask yourself, "Why is this speech, this topic, or this audience important to me?" Say the answer out loud.

Then, visualize the entire presentation from start to finish ... and be sure to imagine it going incredibly well! What's the best-case scenario? What did you do right? How did you carry yourself? How did you communicate the information?

Finally - and this is the easiest step - listen to a song that gives you a little boost. Pick one that brings a smile to your face and fills you with positive energy (no matter how corny).

Practising these rituals before every presentation will help you make use of your nervous energy instead of being thwarted by it.

*This tip is adapted from "The Upside of Your Public Speaking Jitters," by Allison Shapira. — Harvard Business Review*



## Millennials and Generation Z are more sustainability-orientated -- even when it comes to money

The younger generations are willing to put their money where their mouth is when it comes to sustainable living. In a study questioning both commitment to sustainable behaviors and willingness to trade better pay to work for a more sustainable-minded company, the surveyed young adults in Japan made their preferences clear.

The results were published in a special issue of the 'Journal of Cleaner Production' focused on achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Researchers issued two surveys investigating how people support the SDGs, which consists of 17 goals and 169 targets to achieve by 2030 -- including ending poverty and ensuring access to clean water and sanitation for all.

"Many people, in popular media or even in daily conversation, say that the younger generation is more socially conscious and has sustainable development goal-orientated behavior, but scientific evidence is limited," said paper author Tomomi Yamane, researcher at Hiroshima University.

"In this study, we provide novel evidence that the younger generation preferred a sustainable lifestyle than the older generation. And younger people are willing to disperse income to work for SDG-minded companies."

"In 2030, the younger generation will be the central working force in society and is expected to make real efforts to create a sustainable future and likely play a substantial role in achieving the SDGs," said paper co-author Shinji Kaneko, Prof at Hiroshima University.

"Corporations wanting to attract younger people to buy their products or services or to work for them should incorporate the SDGs into their strategies and seriously contribute to SDGs."

"Combined, the findings suggest that younger generations could change their behaviour when they become knowledgeable about the inherent nature of SDGs, despite the findings from the first survey showing that the younger generation prefers better pay more than older generations," Yamane said. "Our findings suggest that today's younger generation can be the driving force for achieving the SDGs."



## How comorbidities increase risks for COVID patients

At the start of the pandemic, there was concern that specific medications for high blood pressure could be linked with worse outcomes for Covid-19 patients.

Previous research from the University of East Anglia (UEA) team showed this wasn't the case and that medications for high blood pressure could, in fact, improve Covid-19 survival rates and reduce the severity of infection.

New findings, published in the 'Journal of the American Medical Association' (JAMA) Network Open, additionally show that it is comorbidities such as heart disease, respiratory disease, renal disease, cancer, obesity and increasing age -- and having more than one disease or chronic condition at the same time -- that lead to increased mortality and severity of disease.

They studied the outcomes for patients taking antihypertensives -- looking particularly at 'critical' outcomes such as being admitted to intensive care or being put on a ventilator, and death.

Their meta analysis showed a significantly lower risk of hospitalisation or death for people taking blood pressure medications Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme inhibitors (ACEi) or Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (ARB). But they also found that risks for hospitalisation and death were much higher for people with comorbidities.

Lead researcher Dr Vassilios Vassiliou, from UEA's Norwich Medical School said: "What we can see very clearly now, is that it is the comorbidities such as cardiac disease or respiratory disease, cancer or obesity amongst others that lead to an increased mortality.

"And we can confirm that the blood pressure medications themselves are protective -- not only for people who have high blood pressure, but for people with a range of other comorbidities as well," he added.



## Why do people like to kiss? Do other animals kiss?

*If both people like and trust each other enough to kiss, the good shared feelings they get makes them more likely to stay together*

-- Rob Brooks, Scientia Prof of Evolutionary Ecology, University of New South Wales

That's a question that puzzled me when I was young. Why would two people want to smooch their mouths together?

For people who enjoy kissing, however, the answer is simple: "It feels good". But why does kissing feel good?

Well, that's a question even scientists have found tricky to answer.

### Kissing brings people together

Kissing seems to be important when people are first attracted to one another, like when they've got a crush on each other. To get close enough to kiss someone, you have to trust that person a lot and let them into your personal space.

If you don't like somebody enough to kiss them, that's a sign to them that they should look somewhere else for a girlfriend or boyfriend.

And, kissing aside, sometimes it might feel wrong just to touch another person's skin. Or you may not like how they smell.

These are examples of our bodies telling us what we can't put into words. In this case, they're telling us we aren't a good match with that person.

As adults, kissing can help us decide if another person is the right person to start a family with (if this is something both people want). Chances are if two people don't enjoy kissing, they aren't attracted enough to stay together long enough to raise a child.

If both people do like and trust each other enough to kiss, they'll probably kiss quite often. The good shared feelings they get from this makes them like and trust each other even more, and eventually that might lead to starting a family.

Some research has shown that couples benefit from kissing even after they've been together for many years. In one study, couples who agreed to kiss each other more often were happier with each other and with their lives than couples who carried on as

### Back to those germs

When I was in primary school, my friends referred to kissing as "swapping germs". It's true that kissing a person exposes you to their germs. But that might

actually help explain why we do it.

If you're going to spend time in a relationship, you're going to be exposed to another person's germs. So if we aren't prepared to kiss somebody because they might make us sick, we surely won't want to live with them.

And if we do decide to kiss someone we like, the nice feelings we get help us worry less about catching their germs.

### Not everybody kisses

Other animals in nature appear to kiss sometimes. Common and bonobo chimpanzees give each other big wet kisses quite often, which look like human romantic kissing.



But, surprisingly, kissing isn't something all humans do. Nearly everywhere in the world, there is some kind of loving kiss between parents and children. This is not "romantic". And not all people kiss romantically.

One big scientific study looked at 168 different groups of people, from small communities that gather and hunt their own food, to bigger and busier cities. These experts found romantic kissing was common in less than half (46%) of the groups.

People from non-kissing cultures who live in sub-Saharan Africa, New Guinea, or the Amazon rainforest find it either funny or disgusting when shown photos of kissing. Then again, they have other ways of touching one another that probably help them build trust and keeps them feeling close.

Romantic kissing is more common in big, complex places where there are many different people living many different lives.

Being able to find and keep a partner is less simple in these settings, which may be why kissing becomes an important part of trying to find a romantic partner.



Men's Health

# Get the Right Screening Test at the Right Time

is one of the best things you can do for your health

**G**etting the right screening test at the right time is one of the best things a man can do for his health. They check on your health and if you do have a condition, it's better to find out ASAP so you can start treating it. The tests you need are based on your age and other factors.

## Lung Cancer

Most lung cancers are caused by smoking. But people exposed to secondhand smoke over long periods of time can get it, too. Not smoking and avoiding secondhand smoke are the best ways to lower your risk.

A low-dose CT scan is a type of X-ray that takes pictures of your lungs. It's also called LDCT. Low-dose CT is recommended if you're between 55-80 years old and have a history of heavy smoking. That's 1 pack a day for 30 years or 2 packs a day for 15 years. It's also recommended if you smoke or quit smoking in the past 15 years.

## Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer tends to be a slow-growing cancer, but some types are more aggressive.

Screenings for healthy men may include a digital rectal exam (DRE) and possibly a prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test. Government guidelines recommend against routine PSA testing, so ask your doctor about the risks and benefits. The American Cancer Society recommends that men start talking about that with a doctor at:

- 50 for average-risk men
- 45 for men at high risk.
- 40 for men with a strong family history of prostate cancer

## Testicular Cancer

This uncommon cancer is usually seen in men ages 20-54. It can be treated, especially if it's found early. Testicular exams are typically part of a man's routine check-up. Some doctors recommend that men do self-exams for lumps, bumps, or changes in the testes' size or shape.

## Colorectal Cancer

Most colon cancers develop from growths called polyps on the inner surface of the colon. Finding and removing colon polyps before they turn cancerous is key.

For most people, screening begins at age 50 (earlier if you're at high risk). Tests include colonoscopy, in which a doctor uses a thin tube and tiny camera to screen the entire colon and remove polyps, or flexible sigmoidoscopy, which only checks the lower part of the colon.

Some people opt for other screening methods. But if polyps are detected, you'd need to get a colonoscopy to remove them.



## Skin Cancer

There are several kinds of skin cancer. Risks include sun exposure, tanning, and sunburns.

Check your skin regularly for any changes including the shape, color, and size of any marks. Your doctor, dermatologist, or other health professional should also check your skin when you get a checkup. Treatments are more effective when skin cancer is found early.

## High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)

Your chances of getting high blood pressure are tied to your age, weight, and lifestyle. Many people have high blood pressure and don't know it. It's treatable, and changing your diet and exercise habits can make a big difference. That may help you avoid heart disease, stroke, and kidney failure

Blood pressure readings give two numbers. The first is the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats. The second is the pressure between beats. Normal blood pressure is less than 120 over less than 80 (<120/<80); elevated is 120-129 over less than 80 (120-129/<80); hypertension stage 1 is 130-139 or 80-89; and hypertension stage 2 is greater than 140 or greater than 90 (?140 or ?90).

## Cholesterol Levels

If you have too much LDL cholesterol in your blood, plaque builds up in the walls of your arteries. This makes heart disease more likely. Over time it can lead to heart attack and stroke. Lifestyle changes and medications can lower your LDL levels.

A blood test can check your levels of total cholesterol, LDL ("bad") cholesterol, HDL ("good") cholesterol, and triglycerides (another type of blood fat). Your doctor may ask you to fast for a few hours before the blood test.

## Type 2 Diabetes

Uncontrolled diabetes can lead to heart disease and stroke, kidney disease, blindness from damage to the blood vessels of the retina, nerve damage, and impotence. But if found early, you can control diabetes and avoid complications with diet, exercise, weight loss, and medications.

A fasting plasma glucose test is most often used to screen for diabetes. Doctors may also use the A1C test, which checks how well your body has controlled blood sugar over time. Healthy adults should have the test every three years starting at age 45. Some people, including those with high cholesterol or high blood pressure, should start testing earlier and more often

## HIV

HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. It spreads from one person to another through blood or other bodily fluids.

Many people don't know they have HIV. A series of blood tests can check on HIV. The first test is called ELISA or EIA. It looks for antibodies to HIV in the blood. A second test called a Western blot assay is done for confirmation. Repeat testing is recommended. If you think you may have been exposed to HIV, ask your doctor about the tests.

**Preventing the Spread of HIV:** Using latex barriers such as a condom or a dental dam is necessary to avoid getting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. If you have HIV and are pregnant, talk with your doctor about what needs to be done to reduce the risk of HIV infection in your unborn child. Drug users should not share needles.

## Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that gradually damages the optic nerve and may lead to blindness. Screening tests look for high pressure within the eye, to find and treat glaucoma before it damages the optic nerve.

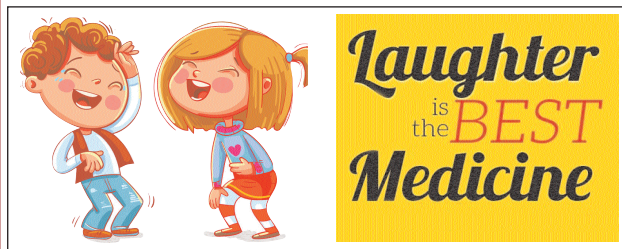
**Glaucoma Screening:** Eye tests for glaucoma are based on age and personal risk:

- Younger than 40: Every 2-4 years
- 40-54: Every 1-3 years
- 55-64: Every 1-2 years
- 65 up: Every 6-12 months

Your doctor can check on whether you might need to start screening earlier or get tested more often, based on your particular risk factors

Reviewed by Jennifer Robinson, MD - WebMD





## Consulter un voyant

**U**n homme ayant beaucoup de problèmes dans sa vie de famille décida d'aller consulter un voyant. Celui-ci lui dit de revenir après deux semaines avec un échantillon de sable de sa cour.

Alors l'homme revint deux semaines après avec l'échantillon de sable.

Le voyant effectua ses rituels et dit à l'homme : "Je ne sais pas si vous pouvez supporter d'écouter ceci."

L'homme répondit: "Allez-y! Je veux tout entendre."

Le voyant dit: "Les deux garçons que vous avez ne sont pas de vous. Votre fille s'amourache avec cinq hommes différents et votre femme est enceinte de votre frère cadet."

L'homme se mit à rire.

Le voyant lui demanda pourquoi il riait après toutes ces mauvaises nouvelles.

L'homme répondit : "Je ne sais pas si vous pouvez supporter ceci."

Le voyant lui répondit: "Allez-y!"

L'homme lui dit: "J'étais en retard et j'ai oublié d'apporter l'échantillon de sable de ma cour, alors j'en ai extrait un peu de votre cour."

Le voyant perdit connaissance immédiatement.

\*\*\*

### Marriage Online

Daughter's text to dad: Daddy, I'm coming home to get married soon, so get your cheque book ready. Lol! As you now, I'm in Australia and he's in the US. We met on a dating site, became friends on Facebook, and had long chats on WhatsApp. He proposed to me on Skype and now we've had a two-month relationship through Viber. Dad, I need your blessing, good wishes, and a really big wedding. Lots of love, Lilly.

Dad's reply: My dear Lilly, like wow! Really? Cool! Whatever... I suggest you two get married on Twitter, have

fun on Tango, register for your stuff on Amazon, and pay for it all through PayPal. And when you get fed up with this new husband, sell him on eBay. Lots of love, dad.

\*\*\*

### Unknown facts from the Ramayana

On the last day of the war in Ramayana...

The vanquished Ravana lying on the ground, groaning in pain, awaiting his death.

Rama calls his brother Lakshmana.

Lakshmana, the ever obedient brother says "Yes brother, what do I have to do."

"Dear Lakshmana, for all his faults, Ravana is still a great man, very learned and full of wisdom. A great Shiva Bhakta, a benevolent Chakravati, singer, musician, expert in Veena, knows the Vedas by heart. Go to him, pay your respects and request him to share his learning before he departs from this world."

Lakshmana immediately proceeds to the ground where Ravana is lying and stands near his head.

Hearing the footsteps and recognising that Lakshmana is standing near his head, Ravana keeps quiet.

Lakshmana waits for a long time and then returns frustrated to Rama.

Rama, the all knowing, smiles and says: "Lakshmana, when you go to someone for learning, you have to stand at their feet, not sit beside their head.

Lakshmana goes back and stands near Ravana's feet.

Looking at Lakshmana, Ravana now smiles and welcomes him.

He asks Lakshmana to come near him so that he can whisper in his ears.

Says Ravana: "I will teach you the three most important things which all must follow to be successful in life:

1. Don't get hooked to WhatsApp and waste your precious time believing every story on it.
2. Don't send video files more than 3 MB and waste people's time. They don't have that much time to squander.
3. Don't squabble with friends on social media especially on politically motivated topics and spoil your mood and relationships.

\*\*\*

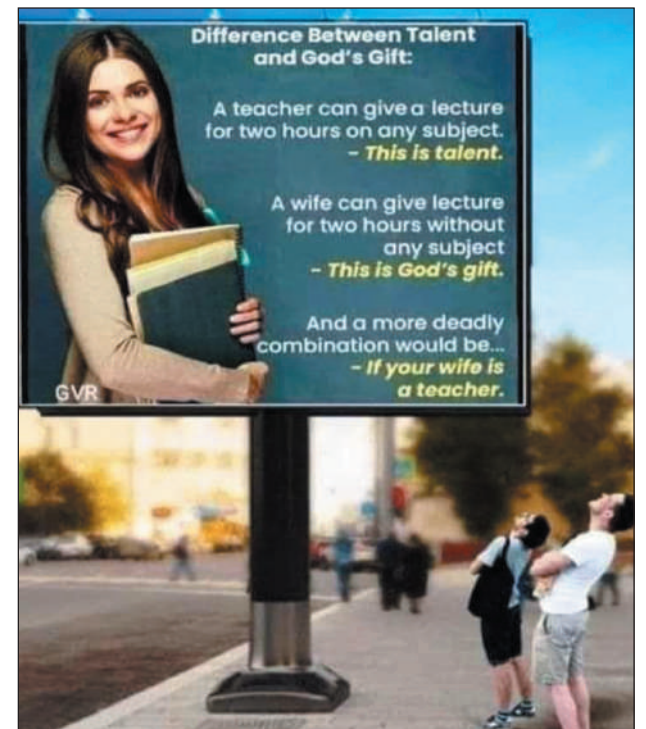
### Ma secrétaire a le sens de l'humour !

Ce matin, une patiente entre au cabinet avec son masque sur le nez et, une fois assise pour attendre l'heure de son rendez-vous, enlève son masque.

Ma secrétaire lui fait observer gentiment qu'il faut continuer à le porter et qu'elle le retirera en salle de soin lorsque cela lui sera demandé.

Et la patiente de râler style : " C'est stupide, de toute façon il faudra bien l'enlever pour me regarder les dents..."

Et là, une pulsion démoniaque a dû traverser l'esprit de



ma secrétaire qui lui a rétorqué : "Et quand vous allez chez le gynécologue, vous enlevez votre culotte dans la salle d'attente ! "

Cela a réglé le problème !

J'aime bien ma secrétaire !

\*\*\*

### Made in China

A Chinese man went to Kerala. He took a taxi at Kochi airport.

On his way, by seeing a bus, he told the taxi driver that in Kerala buses are very slow. In China buses run very fast.

After sometime, he came near a railway bridge and saw a train passing over the bridge.

Then the Chinese man told the driver that the trains are also very slow here. In China trains run very fast.

Throughout the journey he complained to the driver disparaging Kerala. However, the taxi driver kept mum throughout the journey.

When the Chinese man reached his destination, he asked the driver the meter reading and the taxi fare.

The taxi driver said it's Rs 10,000.

The Chinese man was shell shocked after hearing the taxi fare.

He shouted: "Are you kidding? in your country buses are slow, trains are slow, everything is slow. How come the meter alone runs fast?"

To this the taxi man replied calmly: "Sir, the meter is made in China!"

## Life's Lessons

### Live your life before life becomes lifeless

**W**ant to share something with you guys I realized twenty years ago and since then I'm enjoying my life too; it's best with all my family and friends.

A boat is docked in a tiny Mexican fishing village. A tourist complimented the local fishermen on the quality of their fish and asked how long it took to catch them.

"Not very long," they answered in unison.

"Why didn't you stay out longer and catch more?"

The fishermen explained that their small catches were sufficient to meet their needs and those of their families.

"But what do you do with the rest of your time?"

"We sleep late, fish a little, play with our children, and take siestas with our wives. In the evenings, we go into the village to see our friends, have a few drinks, play the guitar, and sing a few songs. We have a full life."

The tourist interrupted, "I have an MBA from Harvard and I can help you! You should start by fishing longer every day. You can then sell the extra fish you catch. With the extra revenue, you can buy a bigger boat."

"And after that?"

"With the extra money the larger boat will bring, you can buy a second one and a third one and so on until you have an entire fleet of trawlers. Instead of selling your fish to a middle man, you can then negotiate directly with the processing plants and maybe even open your own plant. You can then leave this little village and move to Mexico City, Los Angeles, or even New York City! From there you can direct your huge new enterprise."

"How long would that take?"

"Twenty, perhaps twenty-five years," replied the tourist.

"And after that?"

"Afterwards? Well, my friend, that's when it gets really interesting," answered the tourist, laughing. "When your business gets really big, you can start buying and selling stocks and make millions!"

"Millions? Really? And after that?" asked the fishermen.

"After that you'll be able to retire, live in a tiny village near the coast, sleep late, play with your children, catch a few fish, take a siesta with your wife and spend your evenings drinking and enjoying your friends."

"With all due respect sir, but that's exactly what we are doing now. So, what's the point wasting twenty-five years?" asked the Mexicans.

*And the moral of this story is: Know where you're going in life, you may already be there! Many times, in life, money is not everything. Live your life before life becomes lifeless.*



**CINE 12**

Mardi 10 août - 21.10



**mbc 1**

Mercredi 11 août - 21.00



**mbc 12**

**Coup De Foudre A La Premiere Danse**

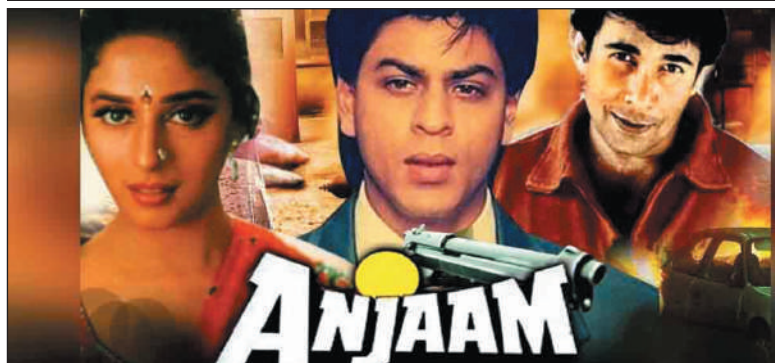
Jeudi 12 août - 21.15



	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
<b>mardi 10 août</b>	06.00 Local: Rodrig Mo Pei 09.00 Doc: Invisibles: Clickworkers 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 15.33 D.Anime: Petit Creux 15.35 D.Anime: The Drakers 15.58 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 16.22 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill 16.34 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.35 Local: Generations J 21.05 Film: The Jurassic Games 23.00 Le Journal	07.00 DDI Live 08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3 10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4 12.30 Film: Dharm Adhikari Star: Dilip Kumar, Jeetendra, Sridevi 15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.34 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.47 Serial: Bava Maradullu 16.15 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 16.29 Serial: Aatish 16.49 Serial: Imtihaan 17.16 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.34 Telugu - Premabhishekam 18.00 Serial: Dr. Qin 18.30 DDI Magazine 19.00 Zournal Kreol 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.04 Local: Programme In Tamil 20.30 Film: Bemisal Star: Amitabh Bachchan, Rakhee	06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa 06.52 Mag: Voa Connect 07.21 Mag: In Good Shape 07.47 Doc: Amazing Gardens 08.13 Magazine 09.00 Educational Prog: Grade 5 11.30 Educational Prog: Grade 8 14.55 Mag: 360 GEO 15.47 Mag: Global 3000 17.24 Mag: Eco@Africa 18.00 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto... 18.30 Doc: The Bridge Of Minor... 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: The Language Of Whales	01.24 Film: Black Wake 02.55 Serial: Chicago Med 03.36 An Emma Fielding Mystery 05.41 Serial: Gone 06.46 Film: NYC: Tornado Terror 09.00 Serial: Macgyver 09.48 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: Chicago Med 12.00 An Emma Fielding Mystery 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.12 Mag: Hollywood On Set 14.45 Film: NYC: Tornado Terror 16.40 Serial: Macgyver 17.31 Serial: Gone 18.05 Tele: Teresa 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: Gone 21.15 Film: The Challenger 22.50 Tele: Muneca Brava	08.00 Film: Karlo Time Pass Yaar 12.04 / 19.54 - Radha Krishna 12.26 / 20.11 - Chupke Chupke 12.48 / 20.32 Mere Sai 13.09 / 21.09 - Agniphera 13.14 / 21.24 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.53 / 21.59 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 14.59 / 22.25 - Sethji 15.29 Film: Fareb Star: Shilpa Shetty, Shamita Shetty, Manoj Bajpayee 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.55 Serial: Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 19.17 Bhakharwadi 19.35 Siddhi Vinayak
<b>mercredi 11 août</b>	07.00 Local: Aktiv 07.55 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: Teenie Weenie 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: Nayi Drishti 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.20 Prod Indepn: Lottotech 21.20 Film: Misconduct Stars: Josh Duhamel, Anthony Hopkins, Al Pacino	07.00 DDI Live 08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3 10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4 12.30 Film: Ek Se Badhkar Ek Star: N. Nischol, Sharmila Tagore and Raaj Kumar 15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.25 Aamhi Doghi 15.47 Bava Maradullu 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 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.06 Programme In Marathi 20.59 Film: Fury In The Shaolin Temple Stars: Gordon Liu Chia-Hui...	06.00 Rev: The Global Auto... 06.26 Doc: The Bridge Of Minor... 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: Initiative Africa 22.23 Mag: Focus On Europe 22.49 Doc: Choliatas	01.26 Film: The Challenger 03.01 Serial: Chicago Med 03.42 Film: The Jurassic Games 05.08 Tele: Muneca Brava 05.46 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: The Jurassic Games 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: Godzilla 22.45 Tele: Muneca Brava 00.11 Serial: Macgyver	08.00 Film: Fareb Star: Shilpa Shetty, Shamita Shetty, Manoj Bajpayee 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 15.30 Film: Hum Hain Lajawab Starring: Kumar Gaurav, Padmini Kolhapure, Shakti Kapoor 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.51 Ishaaron Ishaaron... 19.15 Bhakharwadi 19.38 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak
<b>jeudi 12 août</b>	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 12.50 Mag: Green Touch 13.03 Local: Le Rendez Vous 14.00 Local: Zanafan Nou Zil 14.30 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 15.18 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 15.24 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis... 15.32 D.Anime: Petit Creux 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: Street Dancer 3D Stars: Varun Dhawan, Shradha Kapoor, Prabhu Deva	07.00 DDI Live 08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3 10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4 12.30 Film: Meri Biwi Ki Shaadi 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 Zournal Kreol 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.06 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 20.32 Local: Mots & Ecrits 21.19 Film: What Doesn't Kill You Stars: Ethan Hawke, Mark Ruffalo, Brian Goodman	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: Initiative Africa 15.45 Doc: Cholitas 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: The Neanderthals 23.17 Mag: Eco India 23.49 Mag: Shift	01.22 Film: Cassidy Red 02.54 Serial: Chicago Med 03.33 Film: Godzilla 05.46 Tele: Muneca Brava 07.11 An Emma Fielding Mystery 08.49 Serial: Macgyver 09.38 Tele: Teresa 10.24 Tele: Tanto Amor 10.47 Serial: Chicago Med 11.28 Film: Godzilla 13.41 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.51 An Emma Fielding Mystery 16.40 Serial: Macgyver 17.28 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: Coup De Foudre A La Premiere Danse	08.00 Film: Hum Hain Lajawab Starring: Kumar Gaurav, Padmini Kolhapure, Shakti Kapoor 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: Anjaam Starring: Shahrukh Khan, Madhuri Dixit, Johnny Lever... 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.51 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 19.14 Serial: Bhakharwadi 19.38 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak

**BTV** Jeudi 12 août - 15.20 Star: Varun Dhawan, Shradha Kapoor, Prabhu Deva, Himani Shivpuri, Deepak Tijori

**mbc 1** Jeudi 12 août - 20.15 Star: Varun Dhawan, Shradha Kapoor, Prabhu Deva





# Secret history: the release of the Mountbatten archives and the fight to access royal diaries

An immense trove of the most important royal historical material for decades has quietly been released in the United Kingdom. These are the diaries of Lord Louis Mountbatten and his wife Lady Edwina, from the 1920s until 1968.

As the last great-grandchild and god-child of Queen Victoria, uncle of Prince Philip and adored great-uncle of Prince Charles, Mountbatten exercised a "Rasputin-like influence" in the court of Queen Elizabeth.

He had a long, typically aristocratic, naval officer career from head of combined operations during the second world war to admiral of the fleet. He was also the last viceroy of India, presiding over transition and partition. All this gave Mountbatten an unmatched insight into the royal family and its intersections with the highest levels of wartime and post-imperial governance.

But the release of this material doesn't just shed light on the royal family. It again highlights the significant barriers to accessing our history; specifically, the claimed "convention of royal secrecy" that imposes strict secrecy over royal communications across the Commonwealth nations.

## A four-year battle

The release of the Mountbatten diaries is entirely due to the work of historian and Mountbatten biographer Andrew Lownie, who fought for four years to get public access to the previously secret diaries.

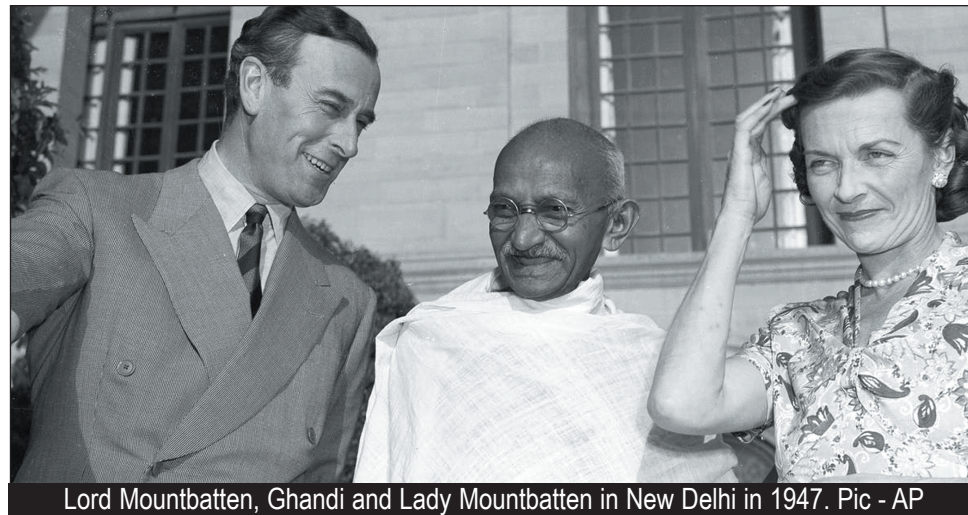
They are held in the Broadlands Archives, purchased by Southampton University from the Mountbatten family in 2010 for £2.8 million (\$A5.3 million) using public funds. At the time, the university said it would "preserve the collection in its entirety for future generations to use and enjoy" and "ensure public access".

The university's catalogue gives their legal status as "public records", and states they were "open on transfer". Yet the papers were closed after an officious university historian warned the government the papers contained "many references to the royal family".

Lownie's initial request for access under the UK's freedom of information regime was rejected by the university, citing a cabinet directive preventing the release of the diaries and letters. A successful appeal followed, which the university ignored until threatened with a contempt action.

Finally, late last month, 22 MPs signed a motion tabled in the House of Commons calling for "their publication without further obfuscation and delay". The university finally released many - though not all - of the diaries.

Lownie, meanwhile, has spent £250,000 (A\$472,000) of his own money in pursuit of public access to the Mountbatten archives, which were always purportedly a public resource.



Lord Mountbatten, Gandhi and Lady Mountbatten in New Delhi in 1947. Pic - AP

## A fascinating window

Former US ambassador to India John Kenneth Galbraith has previously described Mountbatten's unabashed use of royal privilege for personal advancement:

*no one was ever better served by the accident of birth or put royal connection to greater use.*

So the Mountbatten archive will provide a fascinating window into a rare familial link to the final years of a fading, disintegrating, European royalty and its intersection with key episodes in British political history.

Many of Mountbatten's (at times conflicting) roles attracted significant controversy, on which the diaries and letters in particular will shed great light. This includes the fiasco of the raid on the French coast at Dieppe in 1942. As Galbraith also noted, this was

*widely believed the single most ill-advised, costly and generally disastrous operation of the war.*

There is also the contentious, brutal, partition of India. And his unconventional "open marriage", including Edwina's close relationship with the first post-independence Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru. All of these will be re-evaluated in light of this remarkable shared archive.

Yet, several files Lownie is particularly interested in are missing from the public release.

These include the 1947 and 1948 diaries covering the Mountbattens' involvement in pre-Independence India, transition and partition, among "scores of files" not yet released. These crucial historical documents covering a contentious time in British imperial history remain locked away and the fight for public access to them continues.

## 'Eerily similar' to the palace letters

Lownie's case has been described as "eerily similar" to the long-running palace letters case I took against the National Archives of Australia, in its denial of access to archival documents relating to the royal family, "the effect being that public know-

ledge of key constitutional and political events is limited".

The denial of access to royal documents shields royal activities from the consideration of history, simply because of their absence from the public record, profoundly distorting the history itself.

Our own history gives us a clear example of this. The queen did not want the palace letters - her correspondence with governor-general Sir John Kerr about the dismissal of the Whitlam government - to be made public. And the National Archives of Australia and federal government unsuccessfully fought against public access to the letters all the way to the High Court, to a total cost of close to A\$2 million. With their release, the history of the dismissal of the Whitlam government has changed dramatically.

As Australian National University historian Frank Bongiorno recently concluded:

*the claim the palace had no involvement in the dismissal is now unsustainable. The palace was indeed a player.*

## Still waiting

Lownie has done us all a great public service in his efforts to bring the Mountbatten archives to public view. However, it should not be up to individual historians to take arduous legal action to ensure public archives - whether in universities or government-funded national archives - adhere to their requirements to make official records publicly available.

This includes royal communications between governors-general and the monarch, as our High Court ruled in the palace letters case in 2020.

The National Archives of Australia has said that, as a result of the High Court's decision, it would also release the royal correspondence of all governors-general from Richard Casey to Bill Hayden (1965 to 1996), thirty years of exceptionally significant archival records.

More than a year later, we are still waiting for their release.

Jenny Hocking, Emeritus Professor,  
Monash University



Tree of Knowledge

Dr Robert A. Rohm

## Obstacles are there to help

One night recently my daughter was showing me an aquarium full of tadpoles. She had purchased a whole bag full of them for her children to watch them grow from tadpoles into frogs. It was fun watching all of those little wiggly creatures swimming around in the aquarium! It brought back many fond memories of my own childhood, playing with "critters" down at my grandparent's house.

I noticed that there was a big rock in the aquarium. When I asked her why she put a rock right in the middle of the tadpoles' environment, she told me an interesting story. I can hardly believe that I have lived almost sixty-seven years without having heard it. It is so good and "life-essence saturated."

She said that she was instructed by the Pet Store salesman to be sure to "put a big rock right in the middle of the aquarium." He explained that "the tadpoles must have this obstacle to give them the incentive to climb up and thus split their little wiggly tails so that their legs can begin to develop. If they have no rock or obstacle to climb up on, they will never turn into frogs. They cannot learn how to hop by just swimming around in water. They must have something causing resistance to give them the incentive to leap forward.

The man went on to tell her that last year a school teacher came back to the store and complained because none of her tadpoles had ever turned into frogs. She had put all of them in an aquarium and let them swim around but they never became frogs. He asked her if she had put a big obstacle, like a rock, in the middle of the aquarium. She said that she had not. She did not know that a tadpole will remain a tadpole unless it faces some obstacle or barrier that forces it to row.

Neither did I, but it makes perfect sense.

So, my daughter was excited to show me all of the tadpoles swimming around the rock. In time, they will begin to try to climb up it and eventually they will make the transformation into a more fully mature creature.

Well, I was amazed and delighted to hear that story. It helped me better to see, once again, why life presents obstacles and barriers in front of us. The barriers are not there to hinder us, but they are there to cause us to grow. It is not so much what the object is in front of each one of us that matters as much as it is our attitude towards it. If we realize that the obstacle we are facing is really a gift that has come our way to help us grow and mature, we will be much more likely to face it in a positive manner.

**Moral: Obstacles are there to help us.**