

MAURITIUS TIMES

• "You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough." -- Mae West

Qs & As - Presidential Powers

"A President cannot remain in an ivory tower and be perceived to be a yes-man"



By LEX See Page 4

From Hong Kong to Kabul, Belt and Road of Rot



What has gone wrong is not that the war in Afghanistan was not won but rather that America took too long to defeat itself in an unwinnable war

By Anil Madan See Page 5-6

Has Covid-19 become uncontrollable?



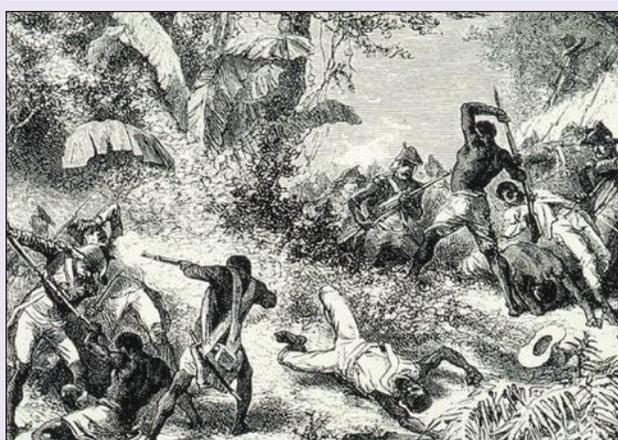
The big question everyone is asking at the moment is how the new variants and strains will affect the efficacy of Covid vaccines

By Dr R Neerunjun Gopee See Page 3

Afghanistan. Backward Forward



By Nita Chicooree-Mercier See Page 18



There was a time reparation were actually paid out - just not to formerly enslaved people

By Thomas Craemer, University of Connecticut See Page 2

Edit Page

Municipals - Triangular Electoral Contest?

As we surmised last week, talk and speculation about a National Unity Government (NUG) was given short shrift by all Opposition leaders, looking and smelling of a totally unappetizing red herring which seems to have petered out and back-fired on spin masters who tried to make some hay from an innocent picture of cordial exchanges between the Labour Party (LP) and MSM leaders in the settings of the Indian High Commission's commemoration of India's Independence Day.

That the MSM leader and his advisers needed to steer the conversation away from hot topics and controversies on a variety of fronts has not gone unnoticed: the Angus Road saga; the refusal of ex-Minister Yogida Sawmynaden and STC acolytes to give their ADN samples to help police inquiries that might have put them in the clear has been poorly perceived; the way the Police has been conducting its investigations into the murder of MSM activist Soopramanien Kistnen, the reduction of the National Assembly into what looks like a partisan blaring house under the current Speakership, amongst other issues, there was every reason for a diversionary tactic from the MSM headquarters.

That red herring aside, there is still the question then of how the Opposition intends to tackle the upcoming municipals, already postponed and presumed to be held before the end of the year or at latest some time early next year. In our socio-political context, the urban electorate in the four municipal townships and in the capital City of Port Louis, are said to be more sensitive to issues of morality and good governance in the public sphere, recoiling somewhat at corruption, drug infiltration, opacity in governance, crony capitalism, the diversion of public funds and the capture of nominally independent institutions.

The government, with daily help from the national TV carrier, is busy with urban inaugurations and catch-up projects, giving credence to the prospect of early elections, which the MMM and Alliance de l'Espoir leader Paul Berenger seems also to favour in a recent declaration. That may be play-acting or upping the ante in negotiations that would be needed with the LP to constitute a united

Opposition front, which from the latter's point of view should acknowledge the leadership role of the LP, and its leader Navin Ramgoolam, with a substantial grassroots electorate in urban areas. An early option for municipals would clearly call for a hastened pace of discussions and negotiations which currently do not seem to be happening.

If an early triangular electoral contest is favoured by Paul Berenger, despite the experience of the triangular 2019 general elections, what then might be the strategy and rationale behind such calculations particularly at a time when his own party has to face up to upcoming generational change of guards? Would he thereby hope to drown out in the Alliance de l'Espoir the actual troop strength of his party that has lost many of its cadres to government poaching? Or does he prefer the possibility of shared spoils in a triangular fight rather than the immense psychological hurdle of abandoning, probably for good, his traditional leadership role in Opposition? It is no disrespect for his formidable career that this option cannot be overlooked as he himself had acknowledged some time back.

Some might guess that he may simply overplayed and feels bound by his overtures to his favoured PM candidate Nando Bodha, fresh from the MSM stables and whose autonomous pulling traction remains unknown. Others that a low political cost triangular in urban areas might hand him and his Espoir colleagues a bargaining level for the general elections in 2024. A more intriguing perspective is that the venerable MMM party leader, abandoned by a large fraction of his traditional base in 2014 and in the by-election of 2017, would not be averse to demonstrating to what remains of that electoral base the necessity of a united front in 2024, even at the cost of disappointing results in municipals through a triangular fight.

But these can only be speculations and crystal-ball gazing as the events unfold. Whatever scenarios and back-up plans the major party leaders are toying with, they will be expected to hold their cards close to the chest when the stakes are already so high, surprisingly after less than two years in office of the MSM.

The Conversation

There was a time reparation were actually paid out – just not to formerly enslaved people

Monday 23 August is the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition. History is full of examples of nations paying out to compensate for slavery. But the money never went to those who suffered under the system, only those who profited.

The cost of slavery and its legacy of systemic racism to generations of Black Americans has been clear over the past year – seen in both the racial disparities of the pandemic and widespread protests over police brutality.

Yet whenever calls for reparations are made – as they are again now – opponents counter that it would be unfair to saddle a debt on those not personally responsible. In the words of then-Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, speaking on Juneteenth – the day Black Americans celebrate as marking emancipation – in 2019, “I don’t think reparations for something that happened 150 years ago for whom none of us currently living are responsible is a good idea.”

As a professor of public policy who has studied reparations, I acknowledge that the figures involved are large – I conservatively estimate the losses from unpaid wages and lost inheritances to Black descendants of the enslaved at around US\$20 trillion in 2021 dollars.

But what often gets forgotten by those who oppose reparations is that payouts for slavery have been made before – numerous times, in fact. And few at the time complained that it was unfair to saddle generations of people with a debt for which they were not personally responsible.

There is an important caveat in these cases of reparations though: The payments went to former slave owners and their descendants, not the enslaved or their legal heirs.

Extorting Haiti

A prominent example is the so-called



No guessing who in this 1864 depiction may have been compensated after slavery ended.
Pic - API/Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images

“Haitian Independence Debt” that saddled revolutionary Haiti with reparation payments to former slave owners in France.

Haiti declared independence from France in 1804, but the former colonial power refused to acknowledge the fact for another 20 years. Then in 1825, King Charles X decreed that he would recognize independence, but at a cost. The price tag would be 150 million francs – more than 10 years of the Haitian government’s entire revenue. The money, the French said, was needed to compensate former slave owners for the loss of what was deemed their property.

By 1883, Haiti had paid off some 90 million francs in reparations. But to finance such huge payments, Haiti had to borrow 166 million francs with the French banks Ternaux Grandolpe et Cie and Lafitte Rothschild Lapanonze. Loan interests and fees added to the overall sum owed to France.

The payments ran for a total of 122 years from 1825 to 1947, with the money going to more than 7,900 former slave owners and their descendants in France. By the time the payments ended, none of the originally enslaved or enslavers were still alive.

Thomas Craemer,
University of Connecticut

● 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 epaper 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

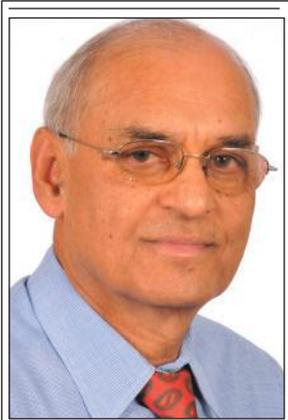


www.mauritiustimes.com



facebook.com/mauritius.times

Has Covid-19 become uncontrollable?



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

The big question everyone is asking at the moment is how the new variants and strains will affect the efficacy of Covid vaccines

Whether we will be able to stop the spread of the epidemic depends on a) how effectively we apply the social distancing and other public health measures that are recommended, b) the capacity of health systems to treat cases of Covid-19, and c) prevention by means of a vaccine.

The least that can be said is that this pandemic is evolving in ways that have not been seen with earlier ones. If we look back to its more recent predecessor, the AH1N1 pandemic, that was over within a year. There was one big wave that spread all over the world, and it died down with the help of the vaccine that was developed fairly rapidly, and became available and affordable across the world. Because AH1N1 was an influenza virus that caused an influenza-like disease, it became possible to administer the vaccine along with the other two influenza viruses in a triple vaccine that is now given yearly.

AH1N1 viruses circulate among the population as a normal phenomenon, and produce disease when the conditions are conducive - like the influenza virus which attacks during the cold weather, and then we talk about the 'flu season.'

But, disappointingly, within a few months of its appearance, it became clear that Covid-19 is not a mere influenza or influenza-like, as was assumed it would be because it is a coronavirus like the influenza viruses. Instead, it was affecting all age groups and even children, in whom it produced what was termed a 'Kawasaki-like' syndrome (Kawasaki's disease is an autoimmune inflammation of small arteries), which presented with a severe inflammation of the heart muscle along with red skin patches on the thighs. More than 100,000 children have been affected in the US alone.

Besides, in post-mortem studies, the virus particles were found not only in the lungs but in several other organs as well, for example the kidneys and the nervous system including the brain. In comparison, influenza affects only the upper respiratory passages. That is, it has a certain 'specificity,' with respect to the organ system it affects, whereas Covid-19 does not have this specificity since it affects all organs.

The other difference noted is that, unlike the influenza

“The least that can be said is that this pandemic is evolving in ways that have not been seen with earlier ones. If we look back to its more recent predecessor, the AH1N1 pandemic, that was over within a year. Because AH1N1 was an influenza virus that caused an influenza-like disease, it became possible to administer the vaccine along with the other two influenza viruses in a triple vaccine that is now given yearly. But, disappointingly, within a few months of its appearance, it became clear that Covid-19 is not a mere influenza or influenza-like...”



Pic - Reuters

“Unlike the influenza virus, Covid-19 has been mutating, this means that when it multiplies, there are errors in the process so that the new particles of virus are not exactly the same as the original. Such mutations may lead to the production of new 'variants' which help the virus to spread better and/or to cause more serious disease. That is to become more transmissible to other persons or be more virulent. When a virus acquires these additional features, it becomes a source of concern., and is aptly called 'variant of concern or VOC.' This is the case with the Delta variant...”

virus, Covid-19 has been mutating, this means that when it multiplies, there are errors in the process so that the new particles of virus are not exactly the same as the original. Mutations are common in nature and affect all living things. But the consequences of mutation are not the same for all organisms, and especially in the case of viruses such mutations may lead to the production of new 'variants' which help the virus to spread better and/or to cause more serious disease. That is to become more transmissible to other persons or be more virulent.

When a virus acquires these additional features, it becomes a source of concern., and is aptly called 'variant of concern or VOC.' This is the case with the Delta variant, which has followed in the wake of a few other variants, which however, were not spreading as fast as Delta, though they were found in several countries over a short period.

The trouble with the Delta variant is that it is more transmissible more rapidly, and affects more people than the original Covid. The latter affects 2-3 people, designated by the term 'Reproductive number,' or R which is therefore 2-3 for it. For Delta, it is 5-6, and takes place in a shorter period.

It is now the fastest spreading variant in several countries, even those that had initially controlled the spread very rapidly and effectively, and has been spreading like wildfire in certain parts of the US, such as Texas where hospitals are overwhelmed.

There is no specific treatment that has been found yet for Covid-19, and that is why scientists, the medical community and health authorities are banking on vaccination as the mainstay of prevention in the long term, because the sanitary measures and rolling lockdowns have been causing much hardship to livelihoods and well-being, as

they impact the economic and social activities very negatively.

One positive thing, as was pointed out by Prof Randeep Guleria, Director of the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences New-Delhi, in an interview to the media a few days ago, is that although in certain regions the number of cases is rising, the number of people needing hospitalization or dying has slowed down. Which means that most people are suffering from the milder form of the disease, even if caused by variants.

But the big question everyone is asking at the moment is how the new variants and strains will affect the efficacy of Covid vaccines.

The scientific community is uncovering more information about emerging mutations, variants and strains all the time, and leading vaccine developers are testing and evaluating the efficacy of their vaccines in this light. Some studies have shown that the efficacy of some vaccines extends to the variant as well, but it is too early to make any definitive statement in this regard as yet. More studies over a longer period are required to generate the reliable data on which to base oneself for making firm recommendations.

There is no information forthcoming about whether any case of Delta variant has been detected here, and in any case, we do not have the capacity for genome sequencing that this requires, and this will have to be done in South Africa. However, we are making progress with vaccine coverage, and that is the way forward to control the pandemic. The next step is to vaccinate the younger demographic (13-19) as soon as this is possible, because the Delta variant affects the young as also those with diminished immunity. Meanwhile, let's continue to 'stay well, stay safe'.

Qs & As - Presidential Powers

“A President cannot remain in an ivory tower and be perceived to be a yes-man”

‘The Privy Council did not find the Betamax-STC contract to be tainted with vicissitudes. One is entitled to ask: What public interest will the commission deal with then?’

LEX

The representations made by Hon Arvin Boolell and other LP leaders to the President of the Republic regarding the speakership and the parallel appointment by the President of a controversial and legally challenged Britam-Commission of Inquiry, is the opportunity to delve into his limited powers, other than that of a moral authority. Would it be too much to expect a President who is not content merely to rubber-stamp Executive orders, but one who will show a minimum of guts that would fit someone entrusted with the nobler vision of “upholding and defending” the Constitution? Read on the views of Lex.

* Under the Constitution, the President of the Republic of Mauritius is the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic, and is enjoined under article 28 to uphold and defend the Constitution, and ensure that institutions of democracy and the rule of law are protected. What powers enacted into law does he currently have to allow him to properly fulfill his constitutional obligations?

The President generally has to act on the advice of the Cabinet. The instances where he can act in own deliberate judgment are expressly spelt out in the Constitution. The question arises in practice as to whether when the President acts in his own deliberate judgement he is constitutionally free to do so or whether he should discuss the matter with the Prime Minister who is the real holder of executive and political power. Our system of government is such that that we have a presidential prime minister; with the President of the Republic as just a figurehead.

* Recent events have brought to the fore the role and responsibilities of the President. He has appointed, on the advice of the Cabinet, a commission of inquiry into the Betamax-STC contract of affreightment. Opposition MPs have called on him in relation to the controversial speakership of Mr Phokeer. Isn't it a fact that the President cannot really do anything as regards both matters?

Technically, he cannot. But he does need to pull his guts to tell the Prime Minister during their weekly meetings that democracy does not mean that it allows for a Speaker to act as member of the executive and is free to maul the Opposition. He should be able to discuss with the Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs matters in relation to the police and the public perception that the police force is not performing according to the legal rules. He should be able to mention how all the institutions except for the judiciary and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions are also perceived to be at the beck and call of the execu-



“The President does need to pull his guts to tell the Prime Minister during their weekly meetings that democracy does not mean that it allows for a Speaker to act as member of the executive and is free to maul the Opposition. He should be able to discuss with the Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs matters in relation to the police and the public perception that the police force is not performing according to the legal rules...”

tive and that should stop.

There are several other issues where the President can intervene through the Prime Minister. In so far as the Betamax commission of inquiry is concerned, it is clear even to the citizen lambda that it's politically motivated, with a view to nailing the former Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam. All the legal issues mentioned in the terms of reference of the commission of inquiry have been canvassed before the Singapore Arbitral Tribunal and by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Should not the President have sought advice before rubber stamping the advice of Cabinet to set up such an inquiry?

* One would recall that Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam did not or could not, in his capacity of President of the Republic, go against the MSM-PMSD government's decision to amend the Newspaper and Periodicals Act in 1984. The only option available to him then was to give his assent or resign, isn't it?

Yes. Only one President chose to resign over what he considered a controversial piece of legislation. And that was Cassam Uteem who refused to give his assent to the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA).

* As "head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Mauritius", could the President have sought explanations from the relevant authorities as to why police inquiries in recent crimes have not been expedited, or why Safe City recordings appear to have been lost or would be non-existent?

Officially, no. But as the person who is obliged under the Constitution to uphold and defend the Constitution and ensure that (i) the institutions of democracy and the rule of law are protected, and (ii) the fundamental rights of all are respected, he was duty-bound to draw the attention of the Prime Minister to these disturbing elements. If he did, and his words fell on deaf ears, then he make a public statement.

* Former President Cassam Uteem stated to this paper, earlier this year, that "the powers and responsibilities of the President as Commander-in-Chief have never been spelled out or interpreted except to aver that the President holds discretionary powers, for instance, in times of crisis". He added that "the Constitution provides that the President should be kept informed of all matters pertaining to the State". This would therefore suggest that the President of the Republic can only, on the strength of his moral authority, try to influence policy decisions. That's all he can do, right?

Yes. But during the Kaya riots Cassam Uteem made an appeal for calm. It is this kind of action that a President should take to uphold the rule of law. A President cannot remain in an ivory tower and be perceived to be a yes-man while the country is going to the dogs in so many sectors.

* On another note, we find that the Commission of Inquiry on the Betamax-STC contract has to inquire and report on the "the decision-making process of the relevant public bodies and public officials" concerned with the "negotiations and subsequent signing of the contract of affreightment". Would Cabinet ministers also qualify as "public officials"?

Yes. As a rule, all those employed in the public service would be public officials. For the purposes of the Prevention of Corruption Act, which deals with corruption and money laundering, a public official means a Minister, a member of the National Assembly, a public officer, a local government officer, an employee or member of a local authority, a member of a Commission set up under the Constitution, an employee or member of a statutory corporation, or an employee or director of any government company and includes a Judge, an arbitrator, an assessor or a member of a jury.

● Cont. on page 11

From Hong Kong to Kabul, Belt and Road of Rot



Anil Madan

What has gone wrong is not that the war in Afghanistan was not won but rather that America took too long to defeat itself in an unwinnable war



US allies tear into Biden administration over Afghanistan 'failure'. Pic - The Times of Israel

There is no denying that America's exit from Afghanistan is a debacle. But despite the fact that it has long been clear that America's half-hearted involvement was over, and that the US never fought to win in Afghanistan, that its involvement in that country would come to an ignominious end, the disengagement has been lamented by the American people as a colossal failure of the Biden administration, and criticized by hysterical American media types and their strident counterparts the world over as an American defeat.

Sadly, the real story being missed here is that this is a defeat for the Afghani people at large and, indeed, for Democracy, human dignity, and freedom around the world.

One hundred fifty-eight years ago, in November 1863, President Abraham Lincoln gave his famous speech dedicating the battlefield cemetery at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He observed that the Civil War was a test of the question whether America—or any other nation—conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal, can long endure.

In 2021, we can say that for Hong Kong, Belarus, and Afghanistan the answer to Lincoln's question is a resounding No. Until the Communist Chinese takeover, Hong Kong had what all sensible persons knew was only a temporary reprieve for its people hoping to live free in a Democracy. No one seriously expected the Chinese communists to honour their commitment to let Hong Kong be a free society, and no intelligent person was taken in by the false reassurance of the rhetoric of one country two systems. For the last twenty years, the Afghani people have had a fleeting taste of potential freedom but always tempered by the realization that their so-called government was corrupt and that the Taliban, an evil force, lurked ready to pounce at any moment.

Lincoln's Gettysburgh address

In 1950, four score and seven years after Lincoln's Gettysburgh address, the answer to his question about America's endurance seemed a resounding yes. We had just come off a triumphant victory in World War II and a time of peace and prosperity lay ahead. Americans saw their country's founding principles extended to, and enthusiastically

“American president after American president has engaged in rallying the American people to support military adventurism, backed by jingoistic cheering from members of Congress, the military brass, and their cohorts in the lobbying machinery who promote wars and military spending. America is not about to use the full force of its power because the American people will not stand for it. They expect better from their leaders than a ruthless wielding of power particularly given the extent of the lethality we can project if we wish...”

siastically accepted by Western European countries, and as well by Britain, Japan, India, South Korea. There seemed no impediment to expanding the noble idea. Reaching the world seemed possible. The notion that America had some special ability to export Democracy to other countries took hold.

Today, the answer to Lincoln's question for America itself has become clouded and indeed, is in some doubt. On January 6, 2021, an American president provoked a mob into demanding that his sitting Vice President ignore his constitutional duty to certify the results of the electoral college. And also, in the America of 2021, we have Republicans across the nation doing whatever they can to cling to power by imposing obstacles to ballot access.

As for the rest of the world, often the practical reality is that people should expect to live under repressive governments, without basic freedoms and with no say in how their countries will be governed. For them Lincoln's question is largely irrelevant.

China is at the forefront of a belt and road structure of this human rights rot, ringing the world. Now, Afghanistan joins that expanding chain comprising China, Russia, North Korea, Pakistan, Myanmar, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Belarus, Venezuela, the Philippines, and other nations with predatory governments. Notches along the way on that belt are made by many other countries.

It is not only the American public and media that have soured on America's leadership in evaluating the ignoble exit from Afghanistan. The leaders of the countries along the belt and road, notably China and Russia, rejoice at what they see as America's defeat.

But what has happened and is happening should not surprise anyone. That America was never going to win the war in Afghanistan has long been clear. In 2014 President Obama announced plans for greatly reducing US forces in Afghanistan by the end of the year and ending the US military commitment altogether by 2016. Notably, his statement contained no declaration of victory.

At bottom, there has been a failure of the American public to realize that we cannot create democracies around the world by propping up corrupt regimes and sending troops to fight with one hand tied behind their backs. There is a fundamental misunderstanding that a superpower is only as strong as the quantum of power it actually uses.

Worse yet, American president after American president has engaged in rallying the American people to support military adventurism, backed by jingoistic cheering from members of Congress, the military brass, and their cohorts in the lobbying machinery who promote wars and military spending. America is not about to use the full force of its power because the American people will not stand for it. They expect better from their leaders than a ruthless wielding of power particularly given the extent of the lethality we can project if we wish.

On the other hand, we have not understood that sloganeering about "the will of the people" means nothing if foreign governments do not abide by the same norms that American Democracy and its western counterparts do.

Worse yet, unless we change our approach drastically, America will have lost not just another war in a streak that includes Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, but we risk that the belt and road of rot will strangle us.

Debacle in Afghanistan

President Biden, facing criticism over the optics of the debacle in Afghanistan, has come to the microphone twice to stumble and mumble that he stands by his decision. Of course, this is a deflection. Standing by his decision to withdraw American troops begs the question whether the withdrawal could have been better managed and indeed, whether the war itself had to be lost even as it started. Of course, he wasn't President then, but there is no question that his primary policy once he became President was one of capitulation.

President Biden's most telling comment either admitting a lack of attention to detail or revealing that he wishes he had done it differently was this in an interview with George Stephanopoulos of ABC News: "I-- I don't think it could've been handled in a way that there -- we -- we're gonna go back in hindsight and look, but the idea that somehow there's a way to have gotten out without chaos ensuing, I don't know how that happens. I don't know how that happened."

● Cont. on page 6

From Hong Kong to Kabul, Belt and Road of Rot

• Cont. from page 5

When asked if, for him, that was always priced into the decision, he responded: "Yes. Now, exactly what happened – is not priced in." Since then, President Biden, in the face of humbling poll numbers showing his popularity dropping, has made three national addresses to the nation. When a President tries to defend his actions repeatedly in such short order, you can bet something has gone wrong.

Of course, there is little recognition that what has gone wrong is not that the war in Afghanistan was not won but rather that America took too long to defeat itself in an unwinnable war, and the biggest losers are the vast majority of Afghani people who have no desire to be ruled by the Taliban.

Putting aside the Biden administration's utter incompetence in failing to avoid predictable chaos, the takeaway from that interview is President Biden's concession that intelligence reports stated that a Taliban takeover was likely. The President found solace in the idea that intelligence estimates thought such a takeover was likely by the end of the year and not as quickly as it happened. But such intelligence reports were unnecessary; it has long been clear that the end of US involvement in Afghanistan meant a return of that country to Taliban control and not to the so-called government of Ashraf Ghani, a Captain Schettino redux who abandoned the ship as soon as he could.

Let us step back for a moment and revisit why this outcome was inevitable, even invited by America. Back in 2019, President Trump started negotiations with the Taliban, yes, the *Taliban* about the withdrawal of American troops from



People struggle to cross the boundary wall of Hamid Karzai International Airport to flee the country after rumors that foreign countries are evacuating people even without visas, after the Taliban over run of Kabul, Afghanistan, 16 August 2021. Pic STR/Nur - via Getty

“In 2014, Lt. General Hamid Gul who served as the Director General of Pakistan's ISI (the Inter Services Intelligence) that nation's premiere intelligence agency, not quite so jokingly stated: "When history is written, it will be said that the ISI, with the help of America, defeated the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The next sentence will be: With the help of America, the ISI defeated America in Afghanistan." The sad truth revealed here is that the US allowed the Pakistan ISI to support and nurture the Taliban...”

Afghanistan. Absent from those meetings was the government of President Ashraf Ghani, the President of Afghanistan. Why? Because the Taliban said they would not negotiate with an American puppet government. So, President Trump let the Taliban set the basic conditions for the negotiations. He allowed the Taliban to dictate to

him what he would dictate to the government of Afghanistan. Perhaps the Taliban had a point about a puppet government.

It is not rocket science to conclude that President Trump would not have agreed to negotiate with the Taliban unless it was clear that the Taliban were a force to be reckoned with. Indeed, he agreed, *with the*

“One hundred fifty-eight years ago, in November 1863, President Abraham Lincoln gave his famous speech dedicating the battlefield cemetery at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He observed that the Civil War was a test of the question whether America—or any other nation—conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal, can long endure. In 2021, we can say that for Hong Kong, Belarus, and Afghanistan the answer to Lincoln's question is a resounding No...”

Taliban, to withdraw American forces from Afghanistan by May 2021. In return, the Taliban agreed not to attack American troops. And, he committed Ghani's government to releasing 5000 Taliban prisoners even though Ghani's government was not a party to the talks.

Trump's former national security adviser, H.R. McMaster compared this deal to the infamous Munich agreement of 1938 that enabled Adolf Hitler's rise. McMaster minced no words: "Our secretary of state (Mike Pompeo) signed a surrender agreement with the Taliban," he said in an interview with Bari Weiss. McMaster added:

"This collapse goes back to the capitulation agreement of 2020. The Taliban didn't defeat us. We defeated ourselves."

An article in *The Economist* noted: "It is true that Mr Trump was so desperate to strike a quick deal that he accepted preposterous terms, agreeing to end America's deployment without even securing a ceasefire, let alone a clear plan to end the civil war. He had already reduced the American presence to little more than 2000 soldiers by the time Mr Biden took office, and had promised to get the rest out by May 1st."

Heart-wrenching self-examination

This is not a war that needed to be lost. In 2014, Lt. General Hamid Gul who served as the Director General of Pakistan's ISI (the Inter Services Intelligence) that nation's premiere intelligence agency, not quite so jokingly stated: "When history is written, it will be said that the ISI, with the help of America, defeated the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The next sentence will be: With the help of America, the ISI defeated America in Afghanistan." The sad truth revealed here is that the US allowed the Pakistan ISI to support and nurture the Taliban. We had the ability to destroy the supply lines from the ISI to the Taliban that kept the Taliban in business. We failed to do so.

Now, America is engaged in a heart-wrenching self-examination, not about how or why it lost the war and how it could have won so that the same mistakes are not repeated, but rather about what we owe to the Afghans who want to get out from under Taliban repression. This is evocative of the evacuation from Saigon and the exodus of thousands of Vietnamese people to the US.

But America cannot transplant 37 million Afghans or almost 8 million Hong Kongers to the US. Nor can we go into any future conflict with the tacit understanding that if we lose again, we owe an obligation to the citizens of that third country, safe passage to America.

We need to figure a better way to stop the rot that is the belt and road of oppression spearheaded by China and now inhabited by its latest denizen, the Taliban.

Cheer...
Bwana



The fiasco in Afghanistan is a grave blow to America's standing. Pic - The Economist

Which countries are taking in Afghan refugees and which countries are not?

The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan has resulted in a human catastrophe as it has triggered a mass exodus of Afghan people who are desperate to flee the clutches of the Taliban. But where will they go? On Sunday, Russia and Austria have made it clear that they don't want Afghan refugees for various reasons. Some countries are accepting Afghan refugees while some are weighing their options and are not too keen to expand their refugee programmes. A report by Hindustan Times:

List of countries that are accepting Afghan refugees

The United States will accept people from Afghanistan who have previously worked with the government. Reports said these Afghans will be temporarily sheltered in Albania, Kosovo or northern Macedonia, the three Balkan countries in Europe which have opened their doors to Afghan refugees.

United Kingdom: The United Kingdom said it can take up to 20,000 Afghans over the long term with priority given to women, children and those facing persecution.

Australia: Australia has plans to provide at least 3,000 visas to Afghans over a year. It will not allow thousands of Afghans inside the country, Prime Minister Scott Morrison has said. "I note that some are talking about figures of 20,000 but can I tell you there are no clear plans about that. Australia is not going into that territory," he said.



Tajikistan: In July, Tajikistan said it was ready to take in up to 100,000 Afghan refugees.

Canada: Around 20,000 Afghan refugees have already fled to Canada.

Germany: Angela Merkel has told her party that the country needs to take in about 10,000 Afghans who are at risk.

India: India is committed to evacuating Hindus and Sikhs who want to come to India. It has introduced a new category of e-visa, which will be valid for six months, as of now.

Iran: Reports said Iran has set up emergency tents for refugees in three provinces that border Afghanistan.

Pakistan: Pakistan said it would seal its border with Afghanistan but so far Afghans have been allowed to cross over to Pakistan.

Countries with a conservative stance on taking in Afghan refugees

Turkey: Reports said Turkey is reinforcing its border with Iran to stop a potential influx of fleeing Afghans. Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said that Turkey will not become Europe's "refugee warehouse".

Austria: Austria's government said it won't accept asylum seekers fleeing the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan and will instead focus on assisting them locally. "I am clearly against voluntarily accepting more people," Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said, according to excerpts of an interview published by broadcaster Puls 24. "That won't happen on my watch."

Russia: Russia has said that it does not want Afghan militants arriving under the cover of refugees.

France: Emmanuel Macron said France will protect those who are in danger but at the same time he pointed out that Europe has to protect itself from "significant waves of illegal migrants".

Do Covid-19 vaccine boosters help? This Israeli study has answers

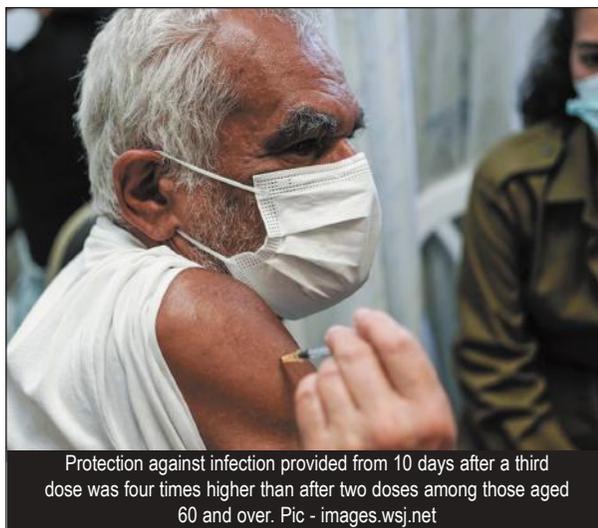
Data from Israel shows a booster shot of Pfizer Inc's Covid-19 vaccine has significantly improved immunity and offered protection from serious illness among people aged 60 and above, as the US and other countries have announced plans to give additional doses amid the spread of highly infectious Delta variant.

The United States has announced plans to offer booster shots to all Americans, citing data showing diminishing protection and Canada, France and Germany have also announced booster campaigns.

Findings published by Israel's health ministry showed on Sunday that the protection against infection provided from 10 days after a third dose was four times higher than after two doses among those aged 60 and over. It also showed that the third jab for over 60-year-olds offered five to six times greater protection after 10 days with regard to serious illness and hospitalisation. That age group is particularly vulnerable to Covid-19 and in Israel, it was the first to be vaccinated against Covid-19 when the inoculation drive began in late December.

The data were presented at a meeting of a ministry panel of vaccination experts on Thursday and uploaded to its website on Sunday. However, the full details of the study have not been released.

Last week, Maccabi Health Services, one of several organisations administering



Protection against infection provided from 10 days after a third dose was four times higher than after two doses among those aged 60 and over. Pic - images.wsj.net

booster shots to try to curb the Delta variant, also had similar findings with separate statistics.

Maccabi Health Services in a study released last Wednesday said that the booster shot reduced the risk of infection in the 60-plus age group by 86 per cent and against severe infection by 92 per cent. The findings by Maccabi are based on real-world data from a relatively large group. Pfizer and Moderna Inc have also said their own studies showed a booster shot would improve protection, reports Hindustan Times.

Israel, which has been fighting an outbreak of the Delta variant since June, has one of the world's highest infection rates per capita. Close to 1.5 million people out of the country's 9.3 million population have taken the third jab. Israel was the first country to fully vaccinate a majority of its citizens against Covid-19.

Canada polls: Trudeau's Liberal Party unlikely to get majority

With four weeks of the campaign for the 2021 Federal elections in Canada remaining, the Liberal Party leader (and caretaker Prime Minister) Justin Trudeau's gamble for calling snap polls amid a fourth wave of the Covid-19 pandemic may partly pay off. Trudeau is favoured to head the next government, even if that will still be short of a majority in the House of Commons.

Trudeau was strangely absent from the campaign trail on Saturday, but the latest polls indicate the ruling Liberal Party may garner additional seats but, as things appear, not gain enough to get a majority that was the rationale behind risking the elections scheduled on September 20.

Poll trackers are not exactly in line with Trudeau's ambition to capture a majority and not depend on support from another party to implement its agenda as his government had to do after the 2019 Federal elections, when the Liberal party fell 13 seats short of the 170 majority mark in the 338 seats House of Commons.

Of course, when he first came to power in Ottawa in October 2015, Trudeau led his party to a thumping victory with 184 seats.

That a minority verdict may be in the offing was underscored by the updated Poll Tracker from the news outlet CBC, which noted, "The Liberals continue to hold a lead over the Conservatives in national polling and would likely gain seats if an election were held today, but are slipping further away from being within reach of the 170 seats needed for a majority



Justin Trudeau visits a veterans' retirement home during his election campaign tour in Victoria, Canada. Pic - s.france24.com

government."

The ruling party has 34.2% support, against 30.1% for the principal opposition party, the Conservatives. No tracker gives the Conservatives enough seats to capture a majority or even emerge as the single-largest party.

Modelling from the election analysis outlet 338 Canada projects a similar scenario: As of Saturday, Trudeau's party is slated to capture 156 seats, with the Conservatives getting 117. It also puts the odds of the Liberals getting a majority at just 26.4%.

The latest Federal vote intention data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute also places the Liberals comfortably ahead of their rivals, with 36% support against 30% for the Conservatives.

As it stands, Trudeau is almost certain to return as Prime Minister, but his objective of securing a majority may well be thwarted by the voters.

*Contd on page 8

No super-spreader event: US wants world leaders to address UNGA event virtually



Caribbean leaders will begin addressing virtually the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Pic - www.nycaribnews.com

The United States has called on world leaders to virtually attend the upcoming annual session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to prevent the weeklong high-level programme from becoming a super-spreader event amid rising concerns over the rapid spread of the Delta variant of the Covid-19 disease.

The UN General Debate is slated to begin on September 21 and will run through September 27.

US ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield has reportedly written to the 193 member states of the UN that as the host country of the UN headquarters, her country bears a "significant responsibility" to ensure the safety of participants and New York residents.

"So too does the Secretariat and President of the General Assembly. We need your help to prevent UNGA 76 High-Level Week from being a super-spreader event," she further wrote.

With cases and hospitalisations increasing sharply in the US and all counties in New York City currently rated as having the highest level of community transmission, she said, "In light of current health concerns, we will convey to all member states and observers that heads of delegation should consider delivering their statements to the UN General Assembly's General Debate by video."

In case delegations choose to travel to New York for the General Debate, the US requested that delegations bring the minimum number of travellers necessary.

So far, 167 heads of state and heads of government and 29 ministers and diplomats are scheduled to address the UN General Debate. About 40 leaders are listed to address the high-level session through pre-recorded statements, including Iran, Egypt, Indonesia, South Africa and Nepal, reports Hindustan Times.

Last year, world leaders had submitted pre-recorded video statements for the UNGA session in September, as heads of state and government could not physically attend the annual gathering due to the coronavirus pandemic. It was the first time in the UN's 75-year history that the high-level session had gone virtual.

Pakistan allows fully vaccinated Sikh pilgrims to visit Kartarpur Sahib from next month

The Pakistan government on Sunday announced it will allow pilgrims who are fully vaccinated against Covid-19 to visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur for the death anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev next month.

Pakistan's National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) held a meeting during which they unanimously decided to allow Sikh pilgrims to visit Kartarpur in the Narowal district, next month under strict Covid-19 protocols, Dawn reported.

Dawn reported that fully vaccinated persons with certificates will be allowed to enter Pakistan provided they show real-time polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test reports which should not be more than 72 hours old.

Apart from this, Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) will also be conducted at airports, and in case of a positive result, the individual will not be allowed to enter Pakistan.

Besides, as per non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs), a maximum of 300 people will be permitted to assemble at a time at the darbar.

Early this month, Pakistan has



Sikh pilgrims wave as they leave in a bus for Pakistan. Pic - www.outlookindia.com

lifted travel restrictions from 11 countries including India.

Pakistan had put India under Category C from May 22 till August 12 due to the spread of the Delta variant, which meant that the movement of people, including Sikh pilgrims, from India, was subjected to special permission.

On March 16, 2020, both India and Pakistan had temporarily suspended the day-long pilgrimage in wake of Covid 19 and also suspended the registration for the Kartarpur

Sahib pilgrimage.

However, on October 2, 2020, the Pakistan government announced to unilaterally open the Kartarpur Sahib pilgrimage but India denied to reciprocate the gesture.

India and Pakistan signed the Kartarpur corridor agreement with Pakistan on October 24, 2019.

Under the pact, Indian pilgrims of all faiths are allowed to undertake round-the-year visa-free travel through the Kartarpur corridor to Gurudwara Kartarpur Sahib.

Jaish-e-Mohammad, Lashkar-e-Taiba hold pro-Taliban rally, expose Pakistan

Pakistan's claims of not supporting terror groups were exposed again on Monday when a rally was organised in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) by supporters of insurgent group Taliban. Videos have emerged from the area which show cadres of Pakistan-based terror groups Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) taking part in the rally and firing celebratory shots in the air.

The leaders of the two outfits later addressed the rallies.

In further embarrassment for the Imran Khan government, some reporters have posted photos of Taliban leader Mullah Baradar and ISI chief Faiz Hameed offering namaz together.

Pakistan was among the first countries which came out in support of Taliban seizing control of Afghanistan in the wake of withdrawal of American forces. PM Imran Khan and many Pakistani ministers have made controversial statements, saying the Taliban are not "bad people" and are trying to govern Afghanistan through principles of Islam.

Days ago, a video emerged from a school in Pakistan where the students were seen praising the Taliban.

A top Republican lawmaker, Congressman Steve Chabot, on Sunday alleged that Pakistan and its intelligence service have played a key role in fostering the Taliban and allowing it to eventually take over Afghanistan.

Biden raises possibility of US staying beyond August end

The US evacuated 11,000 people out of Kabul in the last 36 hours. It has lifted nearly 28,000 people since August 14 and 33,000 since July.

US President Joe Biden on Sunday said discussions are under way on whether or not to extend the evacuation deadline beyond August 31, the last day he has committed himself to for Americans to leave Afghanistan.

Biden also indicated that US forces securing the Hamid Karzai International Airport are being expanded to provide "increased rational access" to the airport overcome present difficulties.

"There's discussion going on among us and the military about extending," the American president said, adding, "Our hope is we will not have to extend, but there are going to be discussions, I suspect, on how far along we are in the process."

The United States had planned to complete the evacuation of all American citizens, allies and Afghan partners by August 31, a deadline posted by Biden for ending America's longest war.

But those plans did not factor in the unexpectedly early collapse of the Kabul government. And the swift return of the Taliban triggered a rush on the airport of Afghans eager to flee the country, especially those who had worked with US and allied forces and now feared reprisal from the Taliban.

Facing withering criticism of the chaotic evacuations, Biden has sought to reassure Americans no American or Afghan partner will be left behind, as the president indicated before in an interview to ABC, the US could stay beyond the August-end deadline.

Why I no longer think we can eliminate COVID - public health expert

Around the world, countries are having to strike a balance between Covid-19 cases and restrictions. In the UK and the US, daily new cases number in the thousands, but restrictions and limitations are being lifted. In contrast, New Zealand has started a short national lockdown to contain just a handful of cases.

For the past 20 months, New Zealand, Australia and several other east Asian countries have pursued tough policies aiming to completely eradicate Covid-19. The hallmarks of these "zero Covid" approaches are strict border controls and quarantine arrangements as well as the early introduction of lockdowns when discovering cases.

So far they've helped minimise infections and deaths. The economic impacts experienced by countries adopting these approaches have also been less severe than those who have not. New Zealand has said it intends to continue its Covid-19 eradication strategy indefinitely.

Is this sustainable? In an ideal world, completely eliminating Covid-19 is what all countries would aim to do, and earlier on in the pandemic I supported this strategy. But now the pandemic has evolved, the approach makes less sense.

An impossible dream?

Many countries now have high levels of the virus circulating and aren't aiming to eradicate it. And it's unlikely countries with few infections, such as New Zealand or Australia, can continue to keep Covid-19 at bay indefinitely in a world where the virus circulates.

There will always be the risk of importation by infected travellers from other regions. And in a globalised world, isolating a country from most others long term would likely be too costly and unpopular to maintain. Plus, it requires a degree of luck. Vietnam, Thailand and South Korea, once cited as zero Covid success stories, have struggled to contain the virus when it's been imported despite various border controls being in place.

The fact that the virus is mutating may explain why they've found it harder to keep it at bay. The virus is becoming better at spreading in humans. The alpha variant is around 50% to 100% more transmissible than the original virus that emerged in late 2019, and delta around 50% more transmissible than alpha. The more infectious the virus becomes, the more that has to be done to enforce suppression.

There are other factors to consider too. The virus can infect both domestic and wild animals. If humans give the virus to animals, such that new viral reservoirs are created, then the virus could then potentially spill back into humans after being



Vaccination offers a route out of high vulnerability to COVID, but probably isn't a path to absolute zero. Pic - EPA

suppressed.

On top of this, a large proportion of human infections are asymptomatic. These infections are difficult to detect early and so are likely to spread. Both factors raise the likelihood of Covid-19 being reintroduced at some point - unless high levels of restrictions in zero Covid countries persist.

But how long will people continue to support a zero Covid approach if it means periodically entering lockdown to handle a small number of cases? In Australia, people appear to be growing tired of repeated restrictions, especially as the virus seems to be taking hold anyway. Trust in the government's Covid-19 response is waning and stress is building. That said, support is still there for New Zealand's strict approach.

The role of vaccines

An important counterpoint is that countries such as Australia and New Zealand still have low vaccine coverage. Relaxing current policies may see the virus spread quickly and cause large amounts of disruption, illness and death that could be avoided.

And although zero Covid policies are costly, one thing this pandemic has taught us is that in the short term, adopting a stringent approach leads to the least damage to the health and wealth of societies. In countries with low levels of infection and low vaccine coverage, there's a very good case for continuing with maximum suppression.

But it's less clear what the optimal long-term solution is. The virus has yet to settle into its ecological niche, so it's unclear what behaviours it will eventually fall into. There are several possible outcomes, and they depend on to what degree vaccines block people from catching and spreading

the virus, as opposed to simply stopping them from getting ill.

If vaccines protect well enough against infection, and enough of the population is vaccinated, then cases should subside to low levels. It may then be possible to achieve eradication of Covid-19 across much of the world through immunisation, much like measles. There will remain the risk of the virus being reintroduced from areas where cases are higher or of the virus persisting in unvaccinated groups - which is how measles behaves today.

However, it's not known how long vaccine protection lasts, and substantial inequity in global vaccine distribution is a significant barrier to widespread suppression of Covid-19. Increasingly, the view of

public health experts is that reaching population-level immunity is unachievable at the present time.

The other possibility is that vaccines do not sufficiently block the spread of infection. In this scenario, the virus would continue to circulate, but with severe disease, hospitalisations and deaths reduced. We would see periodic outbreaks and probably seasonal epidemics, similar to flu. This is the more likely scenario. The focus then would be less on trying to stop the spread of infection and more on protecting vulnerable individuals through immunisation.

Accepting that Covid-19 will become endemic - as many already are - and preparing for that eventuality may be the only realistic endgame strategy for all countries. As such, countries with low levels of infection and immunity, like Australia and New Zealand, should urgently immunise their populations. This is key if they want to avoid the considerable Covid-19 mortality and morbidity seen in Europe and the Americas.

But once this is done, continuing with recurrent lockdowns could be both socioeconomically disruptive and challenging to maintain public support for. Together with the virus being more transmissible, the near impossibility of having completely closed off borders long term, and the fact that other countries aren't pursuing zero Covid, these factors likely will make completely eliminating the virus unachievable.

By Andrew Lee,
University of Sheffield



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



Home



Motor car



car



Lorries

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

From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

4th Year No 170

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 8 November 1957

• *Let us have the crisis: we shall either have death or the cure.* -- Thomas Carlyle

Brainwashing - Here and abroad

During the electoral campaign in the recent by-election of Grand Port - Savanne, we went to the remotest villages and came across different types of people. There was one class, however, whom we met again and again. They were there at every meeting listening with an indifference marked on their faces. Some of them who were bolder said to us: "You will not be able to do anything for all your grand speeches. Your Party has joined government. By doing so it has paralysed itself. No good can be expected of you."

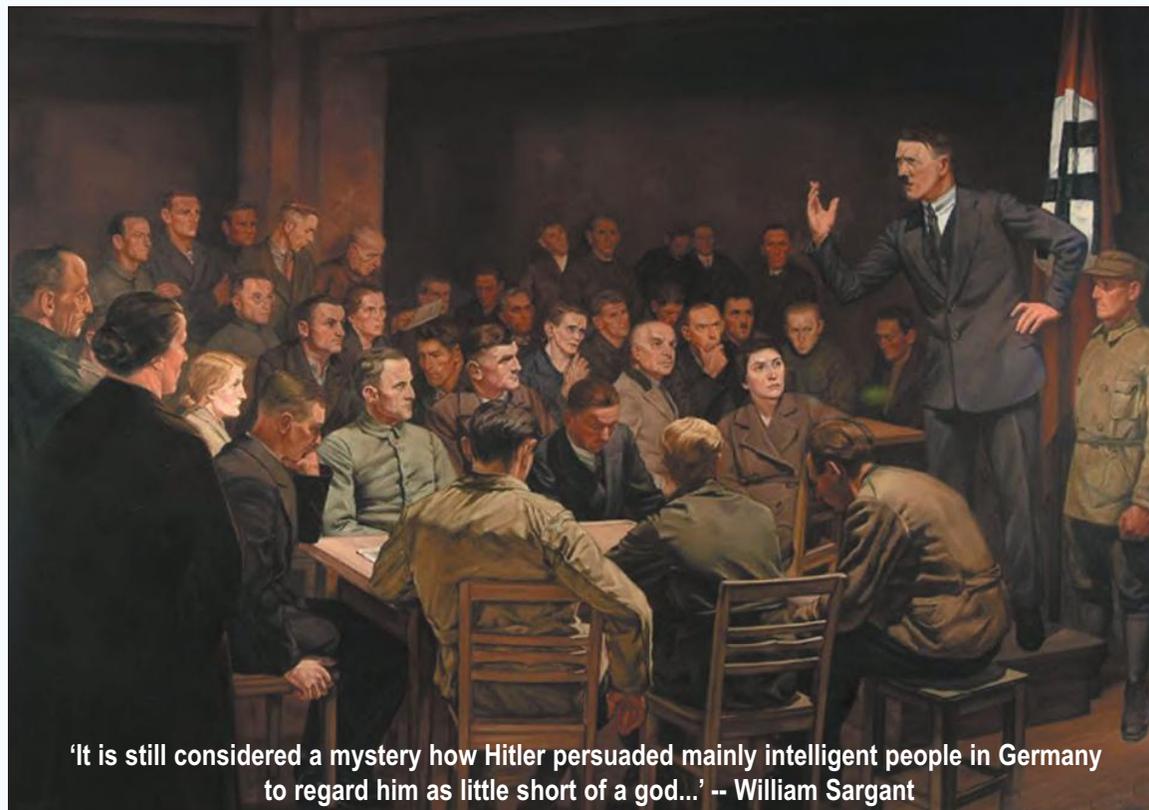
These words and similar ones left us wondering. When other colonies were achieving self-government or were well on the way towards it, when the recent examples of Ghana, British Guinea and Malaya were fresh before us, how could there be people in our island who could pronounce themselves so doggedly against progress.

Since that time, a book has fallen into our hands. It is William Sargant's **'Battle for the Mind'**, published by Heinemann this very year. It has helped us to understand the outlook of the people we spoke about. They were innocent creatures who had undergone brainwashing for political ends. They had been repeatedly spoken to in the language of vulgarity -- which the common people easily grasp. Their emotions were roused, their reasoning faculty never given any opportunity to exercise itself. Ultimately their willpower was paralyzed. They became automatons whose intellect did not function, who were made to move at the bidding of others.

But let us return to the book in question. At the outset, the author says that he is concerned with the brain and nervous system through which the "emissaries of God or the Devil-dictators, policemen, politicians, priests, physicians and psychotherapists of various sorts may all try to work their will on man."

In **'Battle for the Mind'**, special stress is laid on the technique of religious conversion but the author admits that the methods used for religious purposes have also been effectively used in the political field. For example, here is how the great Methodist preacher John Wesley, acted:

"First of all, Wesley would create high emotional tension in his potential converts. He found it easy to convince large audiences of that period that a failure to achieve salvation would necessarily condemn them to hell fire forever and ever. The immediate acceptance of an escape from such a ghastly fate was then very strongly urged on the ground that anybody who left the meeting 'unchanged' and met with a sudden fatal accident before he had accepted his salvation, would pass



'It is still considered a mystery how Hitler persuaded mainly intelligent people in Germany to regard him as little short of a god...' -- William Sargant

vince them. On the contrary, they go forward to make converts to their beliefs.

That is what happened in Germany under Hitler, who converted the German masses to the Nazi faith. William Sargant says on this matter: "Just as Hitler's conversion of the German's masses to the Nazi faith was helped by meetings where rhythmic chanting, torch light procession, and the like, could arouse them to states of hysterical suggestibility even before he rose to speak, so it was with the flagellants who anticipated his anti-semitic fury."

Speaking of the Hitlerian tactics, the author writes: "It is still considered a mystery how Hitler persuaded mainly intelligent people in Germany to regard him as little short of a god; yet Hitler never concealed his methods which included deliberately producing such phenomena by organized excitement and mass hypnotism and even boasted how easy it was to impose 'the lie of genius' on victims."

straight into the fiery furnace. This sense of urgency increased the prevailing anxiety which, as suggestibility increased, could infect the whole group.

"When the emotions of the audience have been roused to the point of increased suggestibility and the brain function is disturbed by deliberately induced fear, anger to excitement, then religious or political beliefs are poured into the receptive minds. People thus converted become in their turn fanatics who can never be brought to reason, however solid the arguments used to con-

After having read **'Battle for the Mind'**, we no longer wonder at the mentality of some of the people we came across in the election campaign. They are people whose credulity has been exploited. They too are the victims, as Hitler's Nazis, of organized excitement and mass hypnotism.

After having read **'Battle for the Mind'**, we no longer wonder at the mentality of some of the people we came across in the election campaign. They are people whose credulity has been exploited. They too are the victims, as Hitler's Nazis, of organized excitement and mass hypnotism.



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]

'The Privy Council did not find the Betamax-STC contract to be tainted with vicissitudes...'

One is entitled to ask: What public interest will the commission deal with then?'

● Cont. from page 4

* The Commissioners will also have to report on "whether the national interests of Mauritius were safeguarded by the public bodies and public officials" concerned with the Betamax-STC contract. What's the basis on which a Court of Law or even a Commission of Inquiry can and will make a pronouncement on the issue of "national interest"?

When an arbitral award is being challenged before a court of law, one of the factors that would lead to the quashing of the award is that it offends against the public policy of the country where the award is to be executed. Public policy would encompass the public interest of the country. Public policy refers to moral, social, economic, cultural values of a country.

But the issue of public policy comes into play only if the contract is tainted with illegality. The illegality would refer to the status of the award, the conduct of the arbitral

“In so far, the Betamax commission of inquiry is concerned, it is clear even to the citizen lambda that it's politically motivated, with a view to nailing the former Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam. All the legal issues mentioned in the terms of reference of the commission of inquiry have been canvassed before the Singapore Arbitral Tribunal and by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Should not the President have sought advice before rubber stamping the advice of Cabinet to set up such an inquiry?”

proceedings, and validity of the arbitration agreement.

In the International Arbitration Act of Mauritius, it is provided that an award may be set aside where the Court finds that (i) the subject matter of the dispute is not capable of settlement by arbitration under Mauritius law; (ii) the award is in conflict with the public policy of Mauritius; (iii) the making of the award was induced or affected by fraud or corruption; or (iv) a breach of the rules of natural justice occurred during the arbitral proceedings or in connection with the making of the award

by which the rights of any party have been or will be substantially prejudiced

The Privy Council in the Betamax judgment used the word vicissitudes to discuss whether the contract was illegal or not. It did not find the Betamax-STC contract to be tainted with vicissitudes and so the question of public policy did not arise. One is entitled to ask: What public interest will the commission deal with then?

* On 23 Nov 2014, Ivan Collendavelloo, of the l'Alliance Lepep announced the introduction of a Freedom of Information Act so that citi-

zens, under certain conditions, could get information on contracts like the Betamax-STC's CoA. "Nous faisons un pacte avec la nation..." said SAJ, and that was reported by *Week-End*. Interesting, isn't it? A lot of water has since flown under the bridge, and we have yet to see the Freedom of Information law enacted...

We are all aware of how many pacts have been made by politicians of various hues with the people since so many decades. Similarly, there were those made by the leaders of the L'Alliance Lepep in 2014. Their enunciated priorities were to wage war against nepotism, favouritism, opacity in the award of contracts, cover-ups in police investigations, waste of public money, trampling of democratic principles, etc. What have we seen instead? Do you really believe a Freedom of Information Act is their concern?

LEX

There was a time reparation were actually paid out – just not to formerly enslaved people

● Cont. from page 2

French slave owners weren't the only ones to receive payment for lost revenue, their British counterparts did too – but this time from their own government.

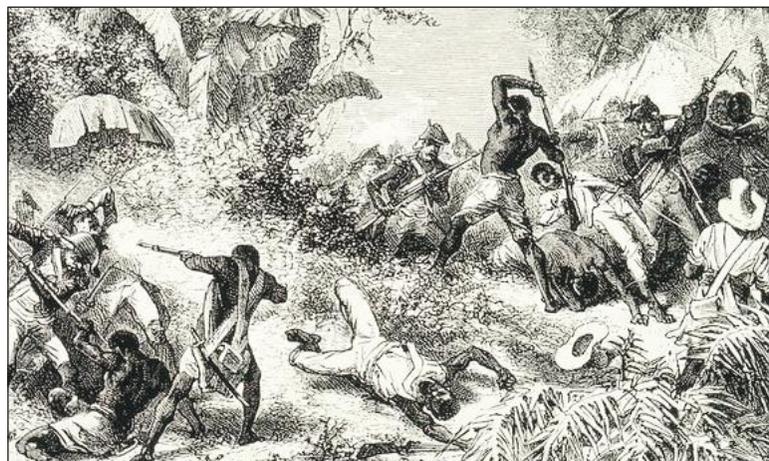
The British government paid reparations totaling £20 million (equivalent to some £300 billion in 2018) to slave owners when it abolished slavery in 1833. Banking magnates Nathan Mayer Rothschild and his brother-in-law Moses Montefiore arranged for a loan to the government of \$15 million to cover the vast sum – which represented almost half of the UK government's annual expenditure.

The UK serviced those loans for 182 years from 1833 to 2015. The authors of the British reparations program saddled many generations of British people with a reparations debt for which they were not personally responsible.

Paying for freedom

In the United States, reparations to slave owners in Washington, D.C., were paid at the height of the Civil War. On April 16, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the "Act for the Release of certain Persons held to Service or Labor within the District of Columbia" into law.

It gave former slave owners \$300 per enslaved person set free. More than 3,100 enslaved people saw their freedom paid for in this way, for a total cost in excess of \$930,000 – almost \$25 million in today's money.



Haitians had to pay for their independence. Pic - API

In contrast, the formerly enslaved received nothing if they decided to stay in the United States. The act provided for an emigration incentive of \$100 – around \$2,683 in 2021 dollars – if the former enslaved agreed to permanently leave the United States.

Similar examples of reparations going to individual slave owners can be found in the records of countries including Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden, as well as Argentina, Colombia, Paraguay, Venezuela, Peru and Brazil.

The French government even set an example on how the government can conduct genealogical research to determine eligible recipients. It compiled a massive six-

volume compendium in 1828, listing some 7,900 original slave owners in Saint Domingue and their French descendants.

Reparations, this time the other way round...

Blessed with detailed U.S. Census records and local archives, I believe the government could do the same for the Black descendants of enslaved Americans.

In the 1860 census, the last one before the Civil War, the government counted 3,853,760 enslaved people in the United States. Their direct descendants live among close to 50 million Black residents in the United States today.

Using historic census records to estimate the number of man-, woman-, and child-hours available to slave owners from 1776 to 1860, I estimated how much money the enslaved lost considering the meager wages for unskilled labor at the time, which ranged from 2 cents in 1790 to 8 cents in 1860. At a very moderate interest rate of 3%, I arrived at an estimate of \$20.3 trillion in 2021 dollars for the total losses to Black descendants of enslaved Americans living today.

It is a huge sum – roughly one year's worth of the US's GDP – but a figure that would comfortably close the racial wealth gap. The difference is, in contrast to historical precedents, this time the benefits would go to the Black descendants of the enslaved, not to enslavers and their offspring.

Thomas Craemer
University of Connecticut

Mauritians in Canada

From one 'tiny island' to another: First Mauritian restaurant on P.E.I. now open

-- Isabelle Gallant for CBC News

A lot of Islanders have probably never heard of the country of Mauritius. If they have, they likely couldn't point to it on a map. And yet you can now taste Mauritian food right here on P.E.I., at a newly opened restaurant in Charlottetown called The Dodo, writes Isabelle Gallant for CBC News.

Named after the now-extinct bird that lived in Mauritius, The Dodo is the first Mauritian restaurant in P.E.I., and joins a small but growing number of Mauritian restaurants across Canada.

"It feels really good for people, for our customers, to discover Mauritius," said manager Jesh Ramloll, a Mauritian immigrant who has made P.E.I. home.

"A lot of our customers would actually take their phone and start Googling Mauritius and look up the pictures and they are so amazed how beautiful, how rich in culture, Mauritius is."

People who do start searching will learn that Mauritius is a small island, less than half the size of P.E.I., but with 1.2 million people. It's in the Indian Ocean, off the east coast of Madagascar, and is home to a multiethnic population of Indian, African, Chinese, and European descent. That melting pot of cultures is responsible for its varied cuisine.

"When you look at our menu, you see that there's a big influence of Chinese cuisine, a lot of influence of Indian cuisine and also African," said Jesh Ramloll.

A lot of menu items look familiar: fried rice, egg rolls, and curries. However, the way the food is cooked and served reflects the blending of different cuisines.

For example, egg rolls are served with green tomato chutney instead of the more typical plum sauce. Curries also have a different taste than at most Indian restaurants.

"Our spices that we use in our curry, it's a blend of African and Indian spices," said Ramloll.

It's been a journey of discovery for the restaurant's chef, Xueying Yan. Yan is from China, and for her, cooking fried rice and fried noodles is an easy task.

"It's exactly familiar, almost the same what I cook in China," said Yan.

The curry dishes, however, she found very different. "Before, the curry [I know] is all the Indian curry, and they are ... really thick and heavy flavour. But here we only use a little bit of oil, just to make sure it won't stick on the pot," she said.

'Always my dream'

Yan and Ramloll met while studying at

Holland College: Ramloll in the hospitality management program, and Yan in culinary arts.

That's also where they met their third business partner, Jack Jia, who was also studying hospitality management.

Jia helped finance the restaurant.

"It has been always my dream to open a restaurant someday," said Ramloll.

Ramloll immigrated to P.E.I. in 2017, joining his wife Khousmita Gopaul, who had moved from Mauritius the year before.

He graduated in 2019 and started working at the Charlottetown Airport.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, however, he was laid off. While out of work, his dream began percolating, and he started working on a business plan for the restaurant.

"I knew Jack was looking for something, too ... so I reached out to him. I explained what I wanted to do. And he was very, very happy about it. We all had the same dream."

The Dodo opened March 17, 2021, in the same building as the Wilson's Gas Stops on the corner of Kensington Rd. and Exhibition Dr.

Ramloll estimates there are about 100 Mauritians on P.E.I., but he has seen a lot of support from them, and from Mauritians across Canada.

"A lot of people has been contacting us, congratulating us," said Ramloll.

"Some people have not been to Mauritius for many, many years because it's a long [way to] travel. So, they just want to come here and feel at home."

He said Mauritians appreciate that they



Manager Jesh Ramloll and chef Xueying Yan opened The Dodo Mauritian restaurant with business partner Jack Jia in Charlottetown in March 2021. The three met while studying at Holland College. (Isabelle Gallant/CBC)

are keeping the food as authentic as possible.

Flatbread called farata

That includes a Mauritian flatbread called farata, which Ramloll compared to the common Indian flatbread, paratha.

It's another dish that has been shaped by the many influences in Mauritian cuisine.

"Mauritian cuisine has a lot of ... French influence also. So, just like in France, everybody likes their bread," said Ramloll.

Mauritius was under French rule in the 1700s, which is why many Mauritians speak French and explains the French influences in Mauritian food.

"A lot of Mauritians really, really, really

like to eat bread," said Ramloll.

Ramloll said farata, which is thin and soft, has been compared to a French crepe.

"You can find it on every corner of the street in Mauritius. And usually there's always a big lineup of people waiting for their farata, especially before going to work, because some people don't have time to pack their lunch. So that's a very great alternative for them. It's very cheap," he said.

The farata is filled with curry - in Mauritius, it's typically a lima bean curry called gropsoids - and then wrapped up into a neat package.

The Dodo offers lima bean curry as well, though Ramloll said customers are sometimes adventurous in the way they eat their farata, pairing it not with the traditional curry but with another dish, the crispy fried chicken.

"They take the farata, they put their crispy chicken on the farata, and wrap it ... like a burrito," said Ramloll.

"It's very interesting because they are just trying to discover the farata in their own way."

Ramloll hopes more Islanders will soon discover their small corner of P.E.I. that is representing their home country thousands of kilometres away.

"I feel very happy and proud at the same time, coming from such a tiny island like Mauritius and representing all the Mauritians here on P.E.I."

Isabelle Gallant is an award-winning radio producer and web writer who has worked for CBC in Edmonton and Toronto. She grew up in Halifax and Charlottetown and is now happy to be back home on P.E.I.



Yan is familiar cooking fried noodles and fried rice, but the Mauritian curries were more of a learning experience for her. (Isabelle Gallant/CBC)

Purposeful Learning

Good leaders learn to remain relevant

Brian Eagar, Founder and CEO
of TowerStone

An integral part of good leadership is making time for the hard work that continual learning requires. Purposeful leaders are lifelong learners. They appreciate the true value of learning to improve their leadership so they enrich all those around them, keeping them inspired and engaged to contribute to their fulfillment.

When Charles Brindamour became CEO of Intact, he blocked three to four hours every morning to gain a better understanding of areas that could influence his company or the lives of his employees. "Learning to have perspective on things is really important. It is never all black or white," he said, adding: "If you don't make this a priority, you risk the organisation becoming complacent."

Consider the following reasons to keep learning:

Learning helps you identify and live your purpose

You can't live your purpose without continually learning about things that may inhibit or benefit your goals. Purpose and learning are two sides of the same coin, the one must inform the other. While your purpose will motivate you to keep learning, learning itself will ensure you keep acquiring the skills and the knowledge you need to stay on track. The knowledge you gain might even cause your purpose to evolve into something you never imagined in the beginning.

Neither learning nor living purposefully is a destination. It is the satisfaction and contentment gained throughout the colourful journey of life, enhancing one's wellbeing and fulfillment.

Learning helps you to add value to the lives of others

If we are to lead purposefully and be taken seriously, is it not incumbent on us to constantly empower ourselves to add real value to the lives of those we have the privilege of leading?



N.R. Narayana Murthy, co-founder of software giant Infosys: "The day a leader closes those feedback channels is the day when a leader's power starts diminishing"

As a leader, you need to develop new skills and stay abreast of factors that could influence your organisation and all its stakeholders. Making time to learn will help you to make sustainable decisions and lead with innovation. However, it does not stop there. If you are committed to lifelong learning, it will also inspire others to invest in their own growth. This will help you to build a stronger, more capable team. It is important to remember that when you become a leader you are not only responsible for developing yourself, but also for developing others.

Learning keeps you humble

N.R. Narayana Murthy, co-founder and chairman emeritus of software giant Infosys, said: "The day a leader closes those feedback channels is the day when a leader's power starts diminishing and he or she starts doing things that are completely wrong."

Leading with an open mind and open door requires a certain degree of humility, admitting you don't have all the answers and leaving room for others to contribute. This means you must not only be willing to learn from the experts, but also from the

laymen. Having the character to put ego aside and collaborate is now more important than ever before. Being open to continuous learning can help you to keep the ego at bay.

Learning helps you to see the opportunity in a challenge

Another invaluable source of leadership development is facing uncomfortable and difficult experiences. If you are open to learning while dealing with the less pleasant tasks, it can be the proverbial "spoon full of sugar that makes the medicine go down". When facing business or cultural challenges, a learning mindset will allow you to see the opportunity in the challenge. Leaders who invest in continual learning are better equipped to solve challenges because they are abreast of what is going on in their business environment and they develop the attitude it takes to collaborate and address challenges head-on.

Learning keeps you relevant

We have to be mindful of the fact that change is inevitable. We are getting older, the next generation is finding their feet and the world is moving on, whether we like it

or not. Peter Senge's book 'The Fifth Discipline' is based on the premise that "in the long run, the only sustainable source of competitive advantage is your organisation's ability to learn faster than its competition." If you don't adapt, you will become irrelevant, like Kodak and Blockbuster learned the hard way. And how can you adapt if you don't make time to learn?

Simply put, I believe leaders need to be far more conscious and passionate about excelling and dedicated to achieving through continual learning. In essence, good leaders are the product of a never-ending process of skill and character development.

Make learning a daily priority. Excuses like "I don't have time" will not prevent change from impacting you. Create opportunities to learn every day, whether it means blocking time to read and learn from an expert, opening your mind to learn from your team or looking for what you can learn from every challenge.

TowerStone is a leadership centre that empowers leaders to build a values-driven culture for sustainable success. Visit: www.towerstoneglobal.com

Work Smarter

Adapt your leadership for a crisis

Leaders facing today's level of uncertainty need to be ready to quickly adapt. But how can you move an organization forward in the face of unpredictability, imperfect information, and multiple unknowns?

Start by prioritizing evidence-based learning. Define key metrics that will determine success or failure, and set a clear process for collecting relevant data. Then stress test your underlying theories, assumptions, and beliefs by simulating possible future scenarios.

Next, make sure you're transparent about who is making decisions, what's informing those decisions, and which possible risks are at play. This way you'll create an

environment of candour, psychological safety, and mutual trust that will ultimately help you avoid making decisions that are too safe or risk-averse.

Finally, mobilize collective action. Responding to a crisis often requires behavioural change at a group level. Emphasize coordination, partnership, and dialogue to make sure that everyone is ready to move forward in the same new direction.

This tip is adapted from "5 Principles to Guide Adaptive Leadership," by Ben Ramalingam et al - Harvard Business Review.

Let go of your working-parent guilt

The Covid-19 pandemic has created a tremendous amount of stress for working parents - and working mothers in particular, who disproportionately manage

child care responsibilities. If you're feeling like you're letting your kids, your team, or your boss down, you're not alone. But guilt won't make the situation better, so do what you can to let it go. Remind yourself of the reasons behind your decisions. Rather than saying, "I feel bad about ___," try saying, "I made that decision because of ___." And revisit your values and priorities to be sure they're aligned. This may mean saying no to unnecessary commitments or setting new boundaries. The goal is to feel more in control over your time. And, as hard as it may be to do, ask for help when you need it - both at work and at home. Reach out to colleagues, friends, family, and neighbors when you need support to get everything done, or when you just need a break. You may feel like you need to go it alone, but you don't.

This tip is adapted from "How to Let Go of Working-Mom Guilt," by Sheryl G. Ziegler - Harvard Business Review.

Does testosterone influence success?



Higher testosterone has often been linked to sporting success, and other kinds of success too. But beyond sport, new research has found little evidence that testosterone meaningfully influences life chances for men or women. In fact, the study, conducted by researchers from the University of Bristol's Population Health Sciences and MRC Integrated Epidemiology Unit, suggests that despite the social myths surrounding testosterone, it could be much less important than previously thought.

To isolate effects of testosterone itself, the research team applied an approach called Mendelian randomization in a sample of 306,248 UK adults from UK Biobank. They explored testosterone's

influence on socioeconomic position, including income, employment status, neighbourhood-level deprivation, and educational qualifications; on health, including self-rated health and BMI, and on risk-taking behaviour.

Similar to previous studies the research found that men with higher testosterone had higher household income, lived in less deprived areas, and were more likely to have a university degree and a skilled job. In women, higher testosterone was linked to lower socioeconomic position, including lower household income, living in a more deprived area, and lower chance of having a university degree. Consistent with previous

evidence, higher testosterone was associated with better health for men and poorer health for women, and greater risk-taking behaviour for men.

In contrast, there was little evidence that the testosterone-linked genetic variants were associated with any outcome for men or women. The research team concluded that there is little evidence that testosterone meaningfully affected socioeconomic position, health, or risk-taking in men or women. The study suggests that - despite the mythology surrounding testosterone -- it might be much less important than previously claimed.

Results for women were less precise than results for men, so the influence of testosterone in women could be studied in more detail in the future using larger samples.

People with stroke who walk 30 minutes per day may have 54% lower risk of early death

A new study shows that people who walk or garden at least three to four hours per week, or bike at least two to three hours per week, or the equivalent after having a stroke may have a 54% lower risk of death from any cause. The research is published in the August 11, 2021, online issue of *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology. When people under the age of 75 exercised at least that amount, their risk of death was reduced by 80%.

"A better understanding of the role of physical activity in the health of people who survive stroke is needed to design

better exercise therapies and public health campaigns so we can help these individuals live longer," said study author Raed A. Joundi, MD, DPhil, of the University of Calgary in Canada. "Our results are exciting, because just three to four hours a week of walking was associated with big reductions in mortality, and that may be attainable for many community members with prior stroke. In addition, we found people achieved even greater benefit with walking six to seven hours per week. These results might have implications for guidelines for stroke survivors in the future."

The study looked at 895 people with an average age of 72 who had a prior stroke and 97,805 people with an average age of 63 who had never had a stroke.

"Our results suggest that getting a minimum amount of physical activity may reduce long-term mortality from any cause in stroke survivors," Joundi said. "We should particularly emphasize this to stroke survivors who are younger in age, as they may gain the greatest health benefits from walking just thirty minutes each day."



Why do some people worry more than others?

Worrying a lot or a little has nothing to do with being brave, strong or your character

You might think there are some people who never worry. But that's not true. We all worry but at different times and about different things. A bit of worrying is normal and healthy.

It's your brain telling you something helpful. It might be telling you there's something you need to think more about. We couldn't get rid of worries even if we really wanted to!

Why people worry

Some people worry more than others because they're born that way. Some experts say your genes or personality can make a person more likely to be a worrier. Worries can run in families - maybe mum, dad, your sibling or grandparents could be worriers too.

Worries are actually really common. In your class, there's a good chance that three or four other kids would know about worries because they've got them too. Maybe they're thinking about a few worries right now.

Worrying has nothing to do with being brave, strong or your character.

Big worries and small worries



Worries can be helpful. There is a part of the brain called the amygdala. It's not very big and it's shaped like an almond. It switches on really quickly when it thinks you're in danger. It's there to protect you. Its job is to get you ready to run away from any danger.

But worries become a problem when they show up at unexpected times. Sometimes you can't forget the worry. The worry stays on your mind, and maybe you feel sick in your tummy or have a headache. These worries can turn your brain's amygdala on, and make it feel like you need to run even when there is no danger around.

Sometimes people can worry a lot because something in their life is hard.

If you are having a hard time in your life - like an illness, family or school issues, or problems with friends - that can make you feel worried. We could call these big worries.

Big worries can feel scary and confusing. Sometimes a little worry can feel like a big one, too.

Avoiding worries big or small doesn't help. It can make them worse. But we can ease our big worries into smaller ones so they're not on our mind all the time.

That way they don't stop us from doing things or make us feel like we need to run away from danger when there is none there.

What can help with worrying too much?

If you feel like you worry too much, the most important thing you can do is make yourself the boss of your worries. Whether they are big or small, you can try:

* Hot Cocoa Breathing: Pretend you have a mug of hot cocoa in your hands. Smell the warm chocolatey smell for three seconds, hold it for one, blow it cool for three, hold it for one. Repeat three or four times;

* Grounding: Distract yourself from the worry by looking and finding:

- five things you can see
- four things you can touch
- three things you can hear
- two things you can smell
- one thing you can taste
- Talk to an adult you trust like a teacher, neighbour or parent.

Christine Grové
Educational Psychologist and Lecturer,
Monash University

Fitness & Exercise

Walking mistakes and how to avoid them



Yes, walking is as easy as putting one foot in front of the other. But to reach your exercise goals and avoid pain, correct these missteps, says Tyler Wheeler, MD.

The Wrong Shoe

You probably already know that high heels aren't the best choice. Tennis and basketball shoes also present problems. The stiffness of these court shoes helps support quick sideways movement but hinders the heel-to-toe flexibility that's good for walking. Look for a shoe with a well-padded heel that's light, breathable, and water-resistant. A running shoe might work as well as a walk-specific model.

Poor Fit

If your shoes are too loose, they won't provide the support you need. Too tight and they can rub and cause calluses or corns. They should feel comfortable in the store: roomy enough to wiggle your toes with ease but snug enough to keep your foot from sliding around. Shop later in the afternoon when your feet are slightly swollen so you get a good sense of your true size.

Stuck in a Rut

You might get bored and lose interest in your walk if you go the same route every day. Change it on a regular basis to keep it interesting. Not only is it good for your mood and motivation, but it also switches things up for your muscles and joints. Look for hills to add to your route. These can add intensity and strengthen thigh,

hamstring, and glute muscles.

Tuned Out

You may like to escape into your own music or podcast, but it could be unsafe if it's too loud. If you must listen, look for headphones that let in sounds from the outside, and keep the volume low enough so that you can hear what's going on around you: a speeding bus, a honking car, a barking dog, an ambulance siren.

Staring at Your Screen

Gaze at your phone while walking and you could be headed for trouble. You might trip or even step into traffic. It happens a lot. Pedestrian injuries linked to phones has more than doubled since 2004, and most walkers -- 60% -- are distracted by their phones or something else. Stop, get out of the way, and finish your business before walking again.

Take your dog along

It turns out that people who have dogs and take them for regular walks are more likely to hit 150 minutes a week of moderate exercise, which is the least that experts recommend for good health.

Wardrobe Malfunction

Clothes that are too tight and heavy could make your

walk unpleasant. They should be loose, comfortable, and breathable so you can move easily and they won't get wet from sweat or humidity. You can remove thin layers as you get warmer and add them back when you're cold. Take rain gear if the weather looks iffy, and don't forget hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen to protect you from the sun (even on cloudy days or in winter).

Losing count

Counting steps or miles or kilometers or minutes is important. That way, you know whether you're meeting your exercise goals. It also could help motivate you. People who tracked steps took around 27% more of them than those who didn't in one group of studies. That added up to an average of 2,500 steps a day. You can track yours with an app on your phone or with an inexpensive device called a pedometer.

Out of touch

As long as you don't get distracted by it, your phone is a plus. So don't leave it at home. You can use it to find a map if you're lost or to call someone in case of emergency. And it can be a useful way to track your distance and location. Just remember to charge it up before you go.

Slumped stance

You might have a hunched posture from sitting at a computer all day. But don't bring it on your walk! The right walking posture can help you walk faster and longer and help prevent injury. Try to lift your spine as if there were a string pulling you up from the top of your head. Your eyes should be forward, your shoulders down, back, and relaxed. Swing your arms naturally and freely as you step your feet lightly from heel to toe.

Can't be seen

Bright colours and reflective fabrics will help drivers and others see you if you like to walk in the evening or early morning when it's dark. You can also bring a light to help you see where you're going and to make yourself even more visible. It's easiest for others to see you when the reflectors or lights are on parts of your body that are moving, like your arms or legs.

The wrong drinks

Were you going to treat yourself to a soda on your walk? You'll get too much sugar and more calories that you want. How about a sports drink? You probably don't need extra electrolytes if you're only going for a moderate walk. The best way to stay hydrated when you walk is with water. Reward yourself with something else that's good for you, like spending time talking with a friend.

Not stretching afterward

Give your leg muscles -- especially your calves -- a gentle stretch when you're done with your walk. It will help you stay flexible. Don't overdo it -- stretches shouldn't hurt -- and don't bounce. Hold each stretch for 10-20 seconds. Use a chair or a wall for help with your balance.

Healthy Living

Having a bad breath can be embarrassing

5 ways how cleaning tongue can boost your health

Keeping the tongue clean is important to keep the bad bacteria and food debris away. Tongue scraping helps to remove bacteria, debris, fungi, toxins and dead cells away from the surface of the tongue. The process does not just clean

your tongue but also improves your overall health. Here is how tongue scraping can improve your health in five ways.

Improves digestion: Digestion starts with your mouth. The enzymes present in the saliva break down the food and make it easy to digest. Scraping activates relevant enzymes, which are required for the better digestion of food.

Activates organs: Scraping helps in eliminating toxins that have accumulated in your mouth overnight. It also activates and awakens the internal organs and thus make you feel fresh and clean.

Say bye to bad breath: Debris, dead cells and bacteria can lead to bad breath. Scraping the tongue twice a day for seven



days reduces overall bacteria in the mouth.

Your sense of taste improves: Scraping your tongue twice a day can improve your sense of taste. Removing the dead cells and other unwanted substances keeps your palate fresh and thus you can distinguish better between sweet, salty, bitter and sour sensations.

Removes bacteria: Bacteria on the tongue can be the source of many health woes, such as tooth decay along with the bad breath. Scraping helps you maintain the right balance of good bacteria in your mouth as it cleans the food debris that has accumulated in your mouth.



The smartest man in the world

A doctor, a lawyer, a little boy and a priest were flying on a small private plane. Suddenly, the plane developed engine trouble. In spite of the best efforts of the pilot, the plane started to go down. Finally, the pilot grabbed a parachute and yelled to the passengers that they better jump, and he himself bailed out.

Unfortunately, there were only three parachutes remaining.

The doctor grabbed one of the parachutes and said "I'm a doctor, I save lives, so I must live to save other's lives," and jumped out.

The lawyer then said, "I'm a lawyer and lawyers are the smartest people in the world. I deserve to live." He also grabbed a parachute and jumped.

The priest looked at the little boy and said, "My son, I've lived a long and full life. You are young and have your whole life ahead of you. Take the last parachute and live in peace."

The little boy handed the parachute back to the priest and said, "Do not worry

Father. The smartest man in the world just took off with my back pack."

Health Check

One day, Pete complained to his friend, "My head really hurts. I guess I should see a doctor."

His friend said, "Don't do that. There's a computer at the drug store that can diagnose anything quicker and cheaper than a doctor. Simply tell it the problem, put in a sample of your urine, and the computer will diagnose it and tell you what you can do about the issue you're having. It only costs \$20.00."

Pete figured he had nothing to lose, so he filled a jar with a urine sample and went to the drug store. Finding the computer, he poured in the sample and deposited the \$20.00.

The computer started making some noise and various lights started flashing. After a brief pause, out popped a small slip of paper which read: "You have migraines. You need to take better care of yourself. Get daily rest, drink a lot and avoid bright lights, stress, and strain. See me again in two weeks."

During the next two weeks, while thinking how amazing this new technology was and how it would change medical science forever, he began to wonder if this could be fooled. He decided to give it a try. He mixed together some tap water, a stool sample from his dog, and urine samples from his wife and daughter. To top it off, he even added some oil from his car.

He went back to the drug store, located the computer, poured in the sample and deposited the \$20.00, again stating he had a bad headache. He waited curiously to see what the computer will say about the odd mix. The machine again made the usual noises, flashed lights, and printed out the following analysis:

'Your tap water has too much waste in it. Your dog has ringworms. Your teenage daughter is pregnant. Your wife has had 5 different lovers in the past six months. Also, your car needs a new radiator. And you wonder why you have a headache?'

Men are simple creatures

Husband and wife both made a list of 5 people they're allowed to have an affair with, if they ever got the opportunity...

She picked Hrithik Roshan, Ranveer Singh, Akshay Kumar, Ranbir Kapoor and Ajay Devgan!

He picked her sister, her cousin, her best friend, their next-door neighbour and their son's school teacher.

Men are simple creatures - they set achievable goals.

The Little Mouse

Once there was a little baby mouse and a mother mouse. They both lived in a hole in a warm house where they had a lot of food to eat. Since the house was occupied by an old lady with bad eyesight, they could easily roam around the house with-

out being noticed.

One day the mother mouse decided to take the little mouse outside of their house. But the world outside the house wasn't very safe. As two mice were exploring their neighbourhood, they encountered a huge ginger cat, licking its lips and waiting to devour both of them.



"Mother, mother! What should we do now" cried the little mouse clinging to his mother's tail? The mother mouse paused, stared up into the beady eyes of the hungry cat. She was not scared of the huge cat because she knew exactly how to deal with it. She took in a deep breath.

"Woof! Woof! Woof!" barked the mother mouse. The cat was stunned and ran away as fast as it could.

"That was amazing!" exclaimed the tiny mouse. The mother smiled and happily replied "And that is why it is always best to have a second Language"

Funny Stories

Concerned husband

Once there lived a happy couple who had been together for decades. But after spending years together, husband was concerned that his wife was not hearing well as she used to hear. He thought that she might need a hearing aid but he wasn't sure how to approach her.

He called his family doctor asked for suggestion. The doctor told him to test it with a simple idea. The doctor said, "Stand 40 feet away from her and speak as loud as you would speak to her in a normal conversation. Observe if she hears you. If not, reduce the distance to 30 feet, then 20 feet, and so until you get a response. The distance will help us to estimate her requirements for the hearing aid"

Next day, the husband saw his wife cooking dinner in the kitchen. So, he took the opportunity to check the doctor's idea. He got 40 feet away from his wife and asked, "Dear what is there for dinner?" He waited for response but did not get any.

He moved a bit closer and asked, "Dear, what is there for dinner?" . He still did not get any response from his wife.

He then stood twenty feet away from his wife and asked the same question, hoping he would get a response this time. But the wife did not respond.

He then stood just ten feet away from his wife and



asked, "Dear, what is there for dinner?" He did not get any response

By now the husband was very concerned and felt pity about how bad is his wife's hearing.

Then he walked right behind her and asks, "Honey, what is there for dinner?"

The wife shouted, "John, this is the fifth time I'm saying, chicken...!"

Moral: Most often, the problem may not be with others but could be very much within us.

Thought to live by Mentally retarded?

Eight boys were standing on a racing track.

'Ready! Steady! Go!'

With the sound of pistol all boys started running. Hardly had they covered 10 to 15 steps, one boy slipped & fell. He started crying due to pain.

When the other seven boys heard him, all of them stopped running. They stood for a while, turned back & ran towards him. All the seven boys lifted the boy, pacified him, joined hands together, walked together and reached the winning post.

The officials were shocked. Many eyes were filled with tears.

It happened at Pune.

The race was conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health. All the participants were mentally retarded.

What did they teach?

Teamwork, humanity, sportsman spirit, empathy, sympathy, love, care, & equality....

We surely can never do this because...

We have brains. We have ego. We have attitude. We have complexes... with little or no place for the above virtues! And we call them mentality retarded!

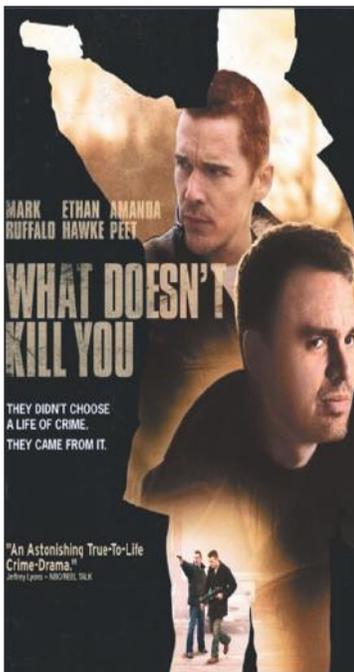
CINE 12

Mardi 24 août - 21.10



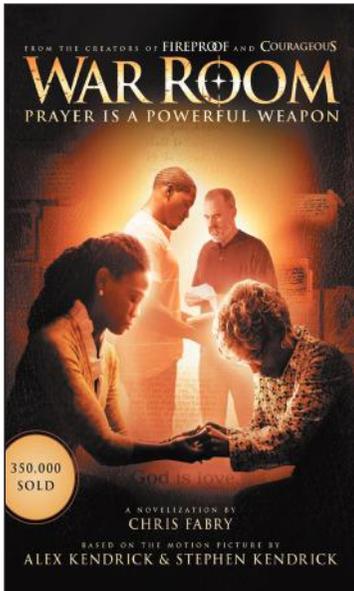
mbc-1

Mercredi 25 août - 21.00



mbc-2

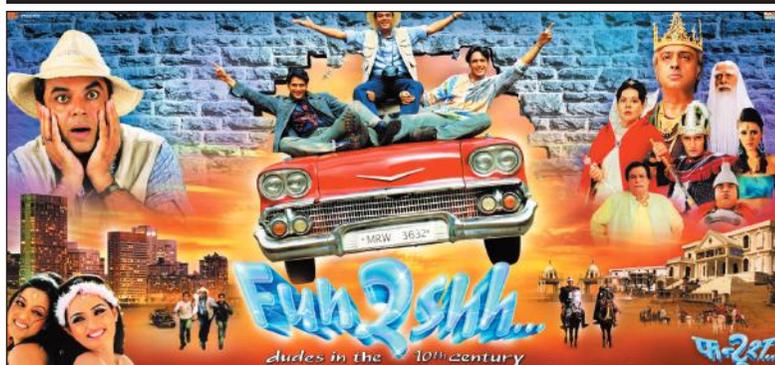
Jeudi 26 août - 21.15



	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
mardi 24 août	06.30 Local: Rodrig Mo Pei 09.45 Local: Passerelles 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: Twirlywoos 14.58 D.Anime: Linkers 15.22 D.Anime: Astrology 15.46 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 15.48 D.Anime: Petit Creux 15.50 D.Anime: Mega Man: Fully... 16.13 D.Anime: Johnny Test 16.34 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.15 Local: Tou Korek 20.45 Local Prod: Generations J 21.15 Film: Bleeding Steel	07.00 DDI Live 08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3 10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4 12.30 Film: Fifty Fifty Star: Rajesh Khanna, Tina Munim, Om Shivpuri 15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.34 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.43 Serial: Bava Maradullu 16.04 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 16.28 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: Aap Beati Star: Shashi Kapoor, Hema...	06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa 06.52 Mag: Voa Connect 07.21 Mag: In Good Shape 07.47 Doc: Amazing Gardens 09.00 Educational Prog: Grade 5 11.30 Educational Prog: Grade 8 14.29 Mag: 360 GEO 15.21 Mag: Global 3000 15.47 Mag: Washington Forum 16.16 Mag: Eco@Africa 18.00 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto... 18.30 Doc: The Expanding Desert 19.00 Student Support Prog... 19.31 Mag: Made In Germany 20.30 Local: News (English) 21.04 Doc: Comme Un Poisson... 21.57 Mag: Close Up 22.23 Local: Klip Seleksion 23.05 Doc: Maldives 23.31 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto And Mobility show	01.24 Film: Dark Tourist 02.50 Serial: The Magicians 03.22 Film: Fixer Upper Mystery 05.25 Serial: Gone 06.31 Film: Godzilla 09.00 Serial: When Calls The Heart 09.45 Tele: Teresa 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: The Magicians 12.00 Film: Fixer Upper Mystery 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.12 Mag: Hollywood On Set 14.45 Film: Godzilla 16.55 Serial: When Calls The Heart 17.40 Serial: Gone 18.21 Tele: Teresa 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: S.W.A.T 21.15 Film: Officer Down 22.48 Tele: Muneca Brava	08.00 Film: Haan Maine Bhi Pyaar Kiya Starring Akshay Kumar, Abhishek Bachchan, Karisma Kapoor 12.04 / 19.54 - Radha Krishna 12.24 / 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: Naam Shabana Star: Taapsee Pannu, Akshay Kumar, Manoj Bajpayee 18.00 Live: Samacher 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.55 Serial: Ishaaron Ishaaron.. 19.17 Bhakharwadi
mercredi 25 août	06.30 Local: Generations J 09.30 Local: Retrovizer 11.00 Mag: Le Saviez Vous? 11.10 Tele: Soleil Levant 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.50 Doc: Green Touch 14.30 D.Anime: Twirlywoos 14.58 D.Anime: Linkers 15.22 D.Anime: Astrology 15.46 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 15.48 D.Anime: Petit Creux 15.50 D.Anime: Mega Man: Fully... 16.13 D.Anime: Johnny Test 16.34 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.20 Local: MBC Production 21.15 Film: What Doesn't Kill You 23.30 Le Journal	07.00 DDI Live 08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3 10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4 12.30 Film: Jaani Dushman Star: Sunil Dutt, Sanjeev Kumar, Shatrughan Sinha 15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.25 Aamhi Doghi 16.01 Bava Maradallu 16.01 Apoorva Raagangal 16.29 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 20.34 Film: More Than Friends 22.03 DDI Live	06.00 Rev: The Global Auto... 06.26 Doc: The Expanding Desert 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: Comme Un Poisson... 14.29 Mag: Close Up 14.55 Local: Klip Seleksion 16.37 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto... 17.50 Mag: Motorweek 18.16 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: La Ville Passe Au Vert 21.55 Mag: Initiative Africa 22.20 Mag: Focus On Europe 22.49 Doc: Soul Ladies	01.26 Film: Officer Down 03.00 Serial: The Magicians 03.41 Film: Bleeding Steel 05.26 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.08 Serial: S.W.A.T 06.50 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive... 09.00 Serial: When Calls The Heart 09.45 Tele: Teresa 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: The Magicians 11.41 Film: Bleeding Steel 13.31 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.46 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive... 16.40 Serial: When Calls The Heart 17.23 Serial: S.W.A.T 18.08 Tele: Teresa 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: S.W.A.T 21.15 Film: L'Etranger 22.45 Tele: Muneca Brava 23.27 Serial: When Calls The Heart	08.00 Film: Naam Shabana Star: Taapsee Pannu, Akshay Kumar, 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 15.10 Film: Mr Joe B. Carvalho Starring: Arshad Warsi, Soha Ali Khan, Javed Jaffrey, Vijay Raaz 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.51 Ishaaron Ishaaron... 19.15 Bhakharwadi 19.38 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak
jeudi 26 août	06.00 Local: Klip Seleksion 06.45 Local: Fee Main 07.10 Local: Aktiv 10.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today 11.00 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous? 12.00 Le Journal 12.50 Mag: Green Touch 13.03 Local: Le Rendez Vous 14.00 Local: Zanafan Nou Zil 14.43 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 14.56 D.Anime: Petit Creux 15.22 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 15.25 D.Anime: Astrology 17.05 Serial: Dark Oracle 17.35 Doc: World Stamps 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 18.55 Local: Tirth Yatra 19.30 Le Journal 20.30 Film: The Zoya Factor Stars: Sonam Kapoor, Dulquer...	07.00 DDI Live 08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3 10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4 12.30 Film: Mera Damad 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 21.14 Film: War Room Stars: Priscilla C. Shirer, T.C. Stallings, Karen Abercrombie	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: Soul Ladies 16.28 Mag: Motorweek 16.54 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: Delacroix From Paris... 21.33 Doc: 360 Geo 22.25 Doc: The Wonderful World... 23.08 Doc: High-Speed Internet...	01.26 Film: Containment 02.50 Serial: The Magicians 03.23 Film: Drôle De Père 04.45 Tele: Muneca Brava 07.19 An Emma Fielding Mystery 09.00 Serial: When Calls The Heart 09.45 Tele: Teresa 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.00 Serial: The Magicians 12.00 Film: Drôle De Père 13.38 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 An Emma Fielding Mystery 16.40 Serial: When Calls The Heart 17.23 Serial: Madam Secretary 18.05 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: Exit Speed 23.29 Tele: Muneca Brava	08.00 Film: Mr Joe B. Carvalho Starring: Arshad Warsi, Soha Ali Khan, Javed Jaffrey, Vijay Raaz 12.05 / 19.54 - Radha Krishna 12.22 / 20.11 - Chupke Chupke 12.48 / 20.32 - Mere Sai 13.07 / 21.09 - Agniphera 13.28 / 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: Fun2shh... Dudes In The 10th Century Starring: Gulshan Grover, Paresh Rawal, Farida Jalal 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.51 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 19.14 Serial: Bhakharwadi

BTV Jeudi 26 août - 15.20 Star: Gulshan Grover, Paresh Rawal, Farida Jalal

mbc-1 Jeudi 26 août - 20.15 Stars: Sonam Kapoor, Dulquer Salmaan, Sanjay Kapoor



Afghanistan. Backward Forward



Nita Chicooree-Mercier

People worldwide are appalled by the fall of Afghanistan in the hands of Taliban, conjuring up memories of their brutal rule between 1996 and 2001. Notwithstanding the ongoing blame game, Joe Biden had no choice than implement former President Trump's decision to withdraw troops by the end of August. Panic and chaos came earlier than expected as much as the swift takeover. The US pumped one trillion dollars in maintaining the Afghan government and training its military, enabling it to run services with half a million employees. Allied forces had to fight against Taliban insurgencies which took to guerilla warfare, targeting installations, government convoys, public places and military bases with funds drawn from narcotics, smuggling and terror finances. Much like Trump before him, Biden is fully aware that keeping Afghanistan afloat could not last any longer. The US needs to pull up its economy, and might have to send its boys to the South China Sea where there will be other fish to fry in the coming months.

Secularism versus Conservative forces

For the past 100 years Afghanistan's political woes have become deeply entrenched in its social set-up of various tribes and the resistance of the clergy to a centralized modern type of government. Afghan political leadership is a harrowing history of struggle to build up a secular political structure, albeit on Soviet Russia's model, while putting up with conflicting tribal interests and radical religious groups.

From 1923 to 1989 Afghan leaders ruled as deeply committed patriots to usher reforms and propel the country into an era of political, economic and social progress. Soviet-inspired policies were adapted to local context, allowing space for different groups to express themselves. Tribes who dominated various regions viewed land reform as a threat to their interest. Gender equality and opportunities granted across religions hurt the clergy. The first princely ruler, Nader Shah, was assassinated in 1933.

His son Zahir Shah introduced a constitutional monarchy, set up two Houses of Parliament, and opportunities were given to political aspirations of different hues, including the Egypt-inspired Muslim Brotherhood group. Mahmud Shah, the PM, defied conservative religious leaders with free elections, free press and a liberal Parliament.

With the support of both leftist military officers and fundamentalists, Daud Khan toppled him in a bloodless



The Ahsad family have spent the past week sleeping in this small park in central Athens (Kostis Ntantamis/IRIN) - Pic - thenewhumanitarian.org

coup in 1973. He continued Soviet-inspired policies in the economy and the military, and worked closely with Pakistani PM Z. Ali Bhutto. Another Constitution was drafted, and the country was made a republic. Women participated increasingly in the public domain, and dress codes became women's choice on a voluntary basis. All the progressive measures bristled the clerics. In 1978 Daud Khan and his family were killed.

The Darkest Era

The fight for supremacy between two political and social ideologies marked Afghanistan's political history from the 70s to the early 90s. In 1978 the leaderless government turned to Soviet Russia for help. Land and administration reforms went on, and equal rights for women were maintained. Revolts broke out. In 1979 Russian tanks rumbled into Afghanistan. Najibullah, a bright Afghan doctor, took the helm of affairs.

The US with the help of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan concocted a plan to take on the Soviets in Afghanistan. The 'Believers versus the Unbelievers' narrative was propagated to recruit and motivate huge numbers of zealots from religious schools across Pakistan and Afghanistan to rise against the Soviet-backed government. Saudi Arabia provided the ideology and funds. Pakistan offered its territory for the training of militants. Its Intelligence Service ISI conducted a network to supply militants of the Mujahideen, Afghan freedom fighters. The US and Saudi Arabia sat back and watched. China joined in to supply weapons to the jihadis. Those years stand out as the darkest period in the history of Afghanistan.

Pakistani ISI coordinated Mujahideen groups, and brought conservatives and radicals together to destroy the Afghanistan secular government. ISI controlled and trained a network of young men from religion-inspired schools, and made it impossible for the Afghan government to recruit soldiers in its army. Several attacks were conducted against government forces in the 1980s. The Najibullah government collapsed. The US achieved its goal.

Withdrawal of Soviet forces in 1989 led to a civil war. Half a dozen coalition of Mujahideen forces with links to ISI formed an interim government. They soon started fighting among themselves. Chaos ensued. Najibullah's

family migrated to India. He was less fortunate when he tried to join them later. He was arrested on his way to the airport and faced a most brutal death.

An offshoot of the Mujahideen, Taliban stepped up on the stage as 'saviours' in 1996. However, they refused to bend down to the will of the US and promote its economic interest. Instead, they gave shelter to terrorist outfits hostile to the US. Taliban has continued to reap millions of dollars from a mafiosi network of drugs sales backed by Pakistan ISI. Formerly, Communist-inspired singled out the clerics and their illegal parallel economy as a major social ill, and physically eliminated huge numbers of clerics who thrived on the opium trade.

The taste of Freedom

Is it the end of secularism in Afghanistan? In 1923 the first Afghan ruler adopted a modern Constitution for

Afghanistan, inspired by Atatürk's end of the Islamic Caliphate in Turkey. In 2021 Taliban claim the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. For the past 100 years the country has kept swinging in a forward-backward movement mostly because of the opposition of the clergy class to progressive policies, and tragically, because of the dark period of US, S. Arabia, Pakistan and China intervention.

The public is tired of suicide bombings and years of fighting between Allied forces and Taliban guerilla attacks. The US could not solve all issues linked to corruption in the government and the army. Taliban weakened resistance by terror tactics of cold-blooded killing of government soldiers. For the moment, attacks on civilians have ceased now that the perpetrators are in Parliament.

The generation of young men and women who have grown up in a relatively free society for 20 years are the hope for change to a progressive modern society. They have witnessed the reconstruction of their country by friendly countries. Girls and boys went to IT centres, experimented with Robotics, benefited from modern teaching methods thanks to the training Afghan teachers received in France, for example. Formal education was accessible to boys and girls, women occupied public space freely. Singing and acting were no longer taboo. Theatres re-opened, India built schools, hospitals and the Parliament. All these are no small gains.

There is no fixed formula or a standard solution to issues impacting political, economic and social development in diverse complex societies. Thousands of people turning to the outside world, mostly democratic countries, for help is a clear sign of what their 'values' are.

The taste of freedom prompted Afghan youths to hoist up the Afghan flag again.

A deeper change in society will have to be brought about by Afghan themselves by first reforming the educational system to avoid mind control which nurtures radicalism, something which the outgoing government failed to undertake.

Afghans will need other countries' support to achieve any substantial change in the future to take the country forward and make a definite exit from the retrograde rule ultra-conservative forces want to impose on them.