

MAURITIUS TIMES

• *Vigilance is not only the price of liberty, but of success of any sort. -- Henry Wart Beecher*

Qs & As

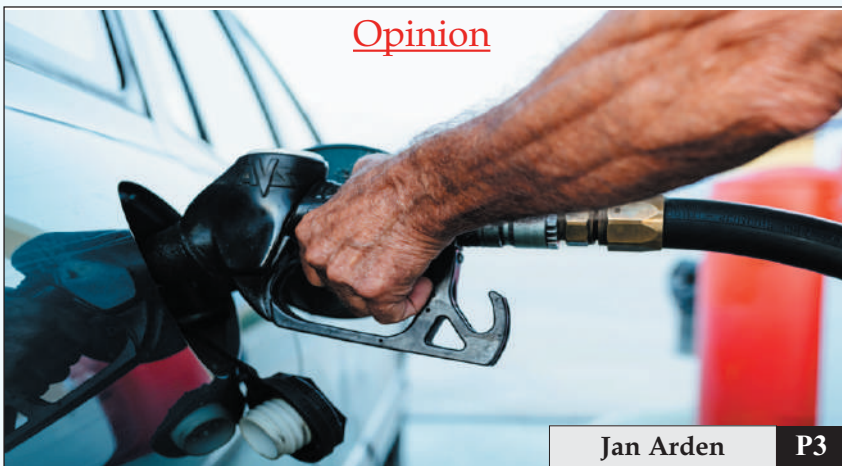


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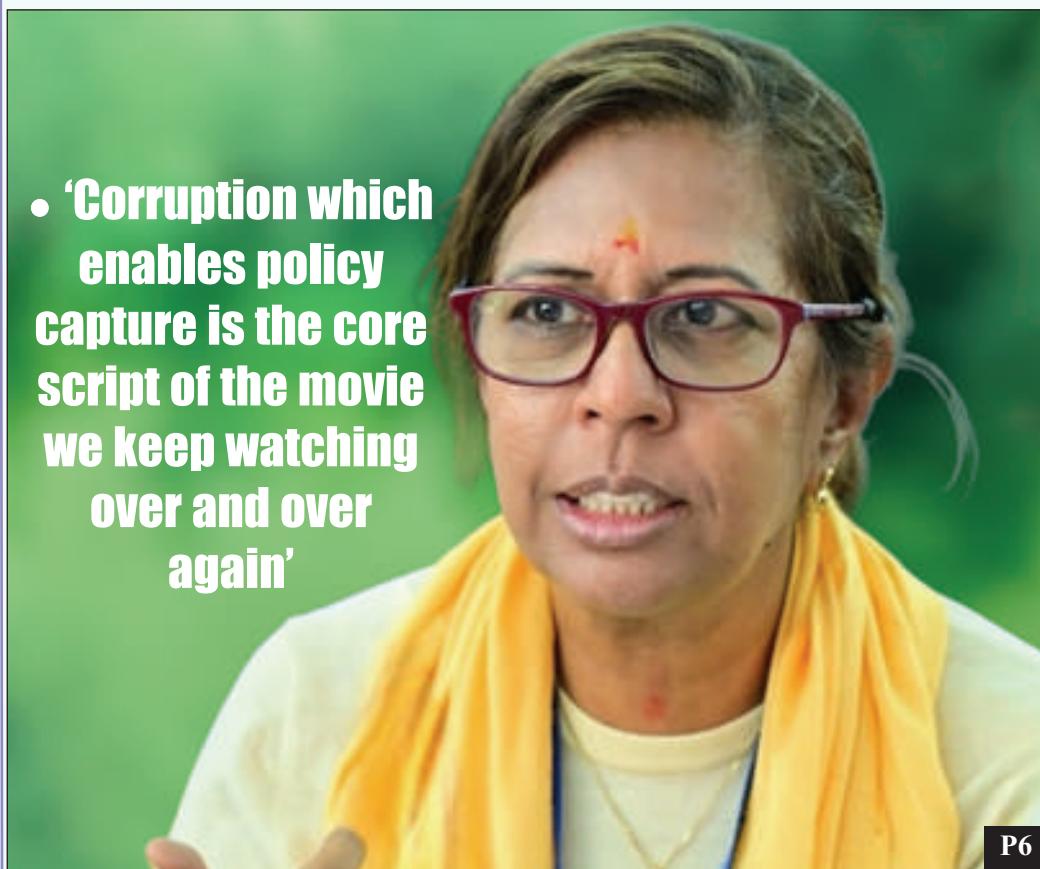


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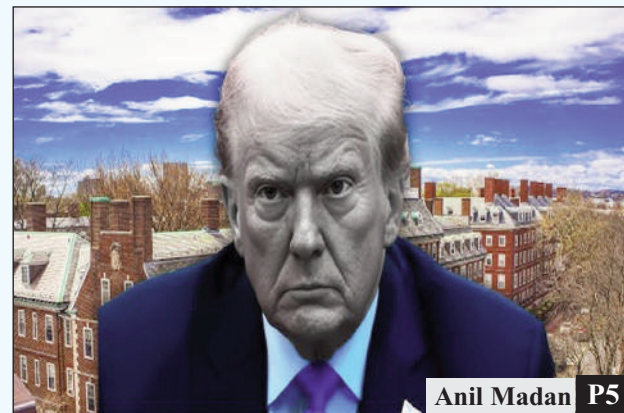


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An Unending Saga

The unravelling threads of systemic corruption: Mauritius grapples with the MIC scandal

The unfolding investigations by the Financial Crimes Commission (FCC) in Mauritius are laying bare a deeply troubling narrative: one of systemic corruption that appears to have permeated the highest echelons of power. At the heart of this burgeoning scandal lies the Mauritius Investment Corporation (MIC), an entity created by the Bank of Mauritius (BOM) under the purview of the then Minister of Finance. What was intended as a lifeline for distressed companies in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic now stands accused of being a conduit for the plundering of public funds, orchestrated through a network of political influence, cronyism, and blatant conflict of interest.

The FCC is carefully and systematically implementing what resembles an encirclement strategy, progressively tightening the net around individuals suspected of involvement in dishonest deals. With each new revelation, the emerging picture reveals a growing scale of alleged fraud, painting a grim portrait of governance where public trust appears to have been flagrantly abused. The sheer volume of questionable transactions surfacing since the MIC's inception suggests a deeply embedded culture of corruption, where political pressure seemingly dictated the disbursement of substantial funds to companies with close ties to those in power.

The recent revelations concerning the Maradiva Villas Resort & Spa serve as a stark illustration of the alleged modus operandi. Initially reported as a Rs 650 million loan, internal documents now reveal that the total financial assistance extended to Mauriplace Beach Resort Ltd (now Dhyanaavartam Ltd) amounted to a staggering Rs 1.65 billion. This places the luxury hotel among the largest beneficiaries of the MIC. It would now appear that the CEO of MIC was the personal appointee of the former Minister of Finance, and that the same CEO had astounding conflicts of interest as Board member on the receiving side. What makes this particular case troubling is that Maradiva was tottering on the verge of bankruptcy, could not service its huge borrowings at other banks (including the SBM) and had to be repeatedly bailed out. No due diligence seemed to have been done either at SBM or MIC levels and what is even more alarming is the timing of the final disbursement of Rs 350 million, approved by the MIC board in February 2024 – a mere few months before the last general elections.

The board meeting minutes of February 5th paint a picture of significant internal dissent and apprehension regarding this substantial financial commitment. Despite the eventual approval, several board members voiced serious doubts about Dhyanaavartam Ltd's financial health and its ability to meet its repayment obligations. One board paper explicitly noted the company's failure to adhere to the initial debt repayment terms, raising "significant doubt about the group and the company's ability to continue as a going concern," as highlighted in their 2022 audit report. This is a damning indictment for a company receiving such substantial public funding.

The then CEO of the MIC, Jitendra Bissessur, allegedly attempted to assuage these concerns by pointing to the timely interest payments made by Dhyanaavartam Ltd and the group's market value exceeding its total debt in January 2023. However, this justification failed to convince



all board members. Questions were raised about the valuation of the company's villas and the proposed interest rate (generously, less than 3.5%) for the investment.

Furthermore, a crucial point of contention emerged regarding a prior Rs 350 million loan obtained by Dhyanaavartam Ltd from the State Bank of Mauritius (SBM). The revelation that the MIC funds were intended to repay this existing loan led to the pertinent question of whether the company had approached other commercial banks. The CEO's response – that the company had reached its credit limit with other financial institutions – raises serious questions about the company's underlying solvency and suggests that the MIC was indeed a lender of last resort.

Adding to the unease was the disclosure that Dhyanaavartam Ltd recorded no revenue for the financial year 2022, an anomaly for an operational business. While the CEO attributed this to ongoing renovations, the lack of income for such an extended period further fuelled concerns about the company's financial stability. Moreover, details regarding the guarantees provided to secure these massive loans were reportedly insufficient, leaving board members uncertain about the adequacy of the collateral against the substantial sums invested.

Despite these significant reservations and unanswered questions, the MIC board ultimately approved the additional Rs 350 million funding. The decision, made so close to the general elections, inevitably casts a long shadow of doubt over the true motivations behind this investment. Was this a genuine attempt to support a struggling business, or was it a politically motivated move to channel public funds towards entities with influential connections in the lead-up to the polls?

The tentacles of this alleged corruption appear to extend beyond the Maradiva case. The investigation into a Rs 45 million disbursement by the MIC to Menlo Park Ltd just before the 2024 elections has now ensnared the former Minister of Finance, Renganaden Padayachy. Freshly released on bail in connection with the FCC-Ambre hotel acquisition investigation, Padayachy now finds himself under the scrutiny of the Anti-Money Laundering Unit (AMLU).

The AMLU is actively examining Padayachy's alleged involvement in facilitating the controversial payment to Menlo Park Ltd, a company directed by Mary-Queenie

and Stéphane Adam. Testimonies from at least three individuals reportedly implicate the former Finance Minister, suggesting his influence would have been pivotal in securing the MIC board's approval for this disbursement. The investigation aims to determine whether Padayachy instructed or pressured the former Governor of the BOM, Harvesh Seegolam, and the then CEO of the MIC, Jitendra Bissessur, to expedite the approval of Menlo Park Ltd's request.

Evidence reportedly suggests a crucial meeting held at the MIC headquarters in October 2024, attended by Seegolam, Bissessur, and the Adam siblings, allegedly played a decisive role in the approval of the funds. The arrest of Seegolam, Bissessur, and the Adam siblings underscores the seriousness with which the authorities are treating this particular strand of the investigation.

These interconnected cases paint a disturbing picture of a potential systemic abuse of power, where public institutions were allegedly manipulated for private and political gain. The MIC, established with the noble intention of providing economic relief during a crisis, appears to have been exploited as a vehicle for questionable financial transactions, raising serious concerns about accountability and governance.

The ongoing investigations by the FCC and now the AMLU represent a crucial juncture for Mauritius. The credibility of its financial institutions and the integrity of its political system hang in the balance. It is imperative that these investigations are conducted with utmost diligence, transparency, and impartiality, leaving no stone unturned in the pursuit of truth and justice.

The Mauritian public deserves to know the full extent of the alleged corruption and to see those responsible held accountable to the fullest extent of the law. The unravelling threads of the MIC scandal are not just about individual acts of alleged wrongdoing; they point towards a potential systemic failure that demands comprehensive scrutiny and reform. The lessons learned from these investigations must inform future governance and oversight mechanisms to prevent such abuses from occurring again. The future prosperity and stability of Mauritius depend on its ability to confront this challenge head-on and ensure that such a breach of public trust is never repeated. The eyes of the nation, and indeed international anti-corruption institutions, are now firmly fixed on the ongoing investigations, awaiting the full and unvarnished truth.

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Mauritius: The Oil, the Virus, and the Spyware - A Reckoning?

Corruption had been cynically normalized, and princelings roamed with total impunity, dominating our numbed mental horizons. The Augean stables need to be cleansed

Jan Arden

«Car la corruption, une fois institutionnalisée, devient une méthode de gouvernance» — Thomas Mekhaël, Professor of Ethics at the École de technologie supérieure, Montreal

High-profile politically exposed persons of the ousted regime, who have been queuing up these days at the revitalised Financial Crimes Commission (FCC) in Moka, remain innocent until proven guilty in courts regarding the financial scams, corruption, and other felonies for which they are being investigated or charged. This means investigations have to be conducted diligently and professionally, the results and charges vetted by the ODP, conditional bail granted where risks of absconding, tampering or interference with witnesses are minimal and defence lawyers granted the latitude they need.

While the legal machinery grinds its way ahead, the glare of investigative and highly mediatised spotlights on the once arrogant princelings of the MSM empire is, however, merciless. The former PM and leader of that party, the Finance Minister, and the Governor of the Bank of Mauritius were not mere underlings in some power play, and the population knows that more senior officials will soon be invited to explain their role in the nexus of corruption and fraud that gravitated around the Empire.

While we have no doubt that the FCC headquarters are fully aware of the variety of cases that were soundly slept on or swept under the carpet for the party prima donnas, it does no harm here to remind ourselves of a few epic affairs that rocked our shores and grabbed some headlines at various times during the past mandate(s). We assume they too will necessitate some diligent enquiry in the coming weeks and months.

Oil contracts

It will be recalled that in 2010, the STC under the Labour Party government signed with Mangalore Refinery & Petrochemicals Ltd, (MRPL) a contract for uninterrupted supply of our annual requirements (about 1.1 MMT) of

liquid petroleum products, comprising Jet A1 (ATF) MoGas, GasOil and Furnace Oil for a period of three years at a fixed and pre-determined price, whatever the vagaries of the international market.

For the island's strategic security, this was a landmark agreement, guaranteed by the Government of India, but after a decade of successfully meeting our needs, the agreement was not renewed in 2019 by the MSM regime. The latter preferred the far riskier route of purchases through brokers and tenders, often under emergency conditions, under the pretext that it would be cheaper, a postulate which had never been demonstrated since then.

Why any government would jettison a stable agreement with India, a traditional ally, while placing our vital strategic supplies at the mercy of unforeseeable events on the high seas for a few pennies of potential savings is open to conjecture. What is certain is that the agents, tenders, and brokers handling our significant needs likely involved hefty commissions and fees, and we need to ascertain that no monkey business occurred at the STC or higher levels.

Covid: Fishy Business

Most of us would not have forgotten the immense challenges to our daily lives that the Covid 19 pandemic caused, from morbidity and mortality at hospital facilities through vaccination and supermarket access sagas and the severe restrictions upon our daily movements. For the most part we played along, learned about virus propagation/prevention and collaborated with official instructions just as the admirable hospital staff ambulance personnel and nurses did, coping as best they could with a deadly unknown from out of some rural market zone inside China.

In this effervescence and amidst the pain and sufferings of the elderly or the co-morbidities of the ailing, emergency

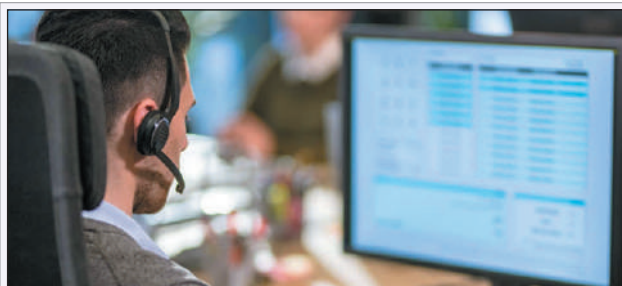


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procurement procedures became the standard for authorities for everything from surgical and consumer masks to respirators, equipment and pharmaceuticals.

More worryingly, orders for vaccines shot through the roof with millions reportedly gone to waste, there were whiffs of scandal with the emergency procurement of some other pharmaceuticals (namely Molnupiravir), hardware stores and other exotic trades became medical suppliers and non-functional Turkish origin ventilators grabbed headlines for reasons best known to the STC, the Ministry of Commerce and that of Health.

In popular parlance, this was a shocking phenomenon that became known as “Covid Bez Cass” in the midst of sufferings and sacrifices. It needs a proper investigation.



In its Editorial on 7 February this year, *Mauritius Times* reported PM Navin Ramgoolam's shocking revelations that preliminary audits conducted by US experts indicate that the authorities had deployed a high-tech interception system with the potential to monitor phone calls, internet traffic, and social media communications of all Mauritians or anyone living on Mauritian soil. The intercepted data, including Facebook, TikTok, WhatsApp, Signal, and email exchanges, was reportedly stored, analyzed, and potential-

Spying and other abuses

ly exploited without judicial oversight or independent control.

Initially commissioned in 2017, its scope was reportedly considerably expanded in 2022, enabling an unprecedented and unlimited prying of private exchanges by parties as yet unidentified under the guise of national security installations

“Preliminary audits conducted by US experts indicate that the authorities had deployed a high-tech interception system with the potential to monitor phone calls, internet traffic, and social media communications of all Mauritians or anyone living on Mauritian soil. The intercepted data, including Facebook, TikTok, WhatsApp, Signal, and email exchanges, was reportedly stored, analyzed, and potentially exploited without judicial oversight or independent control...”

and operations. Global spyware controversies have hit the headlines occasionally (Israeli spyware Paragon, Graphite or Pegasus for example) though they only work with governments or their accredited national security agencies.

What's even more galling to the layman, is the fact that he ultimately paid the hefty bill (some say Rs 5-6 billion) for the illegal intrusion and monitoring of their private lives. Not only had we become a banana republic but much worse, a rogue and vagabond state. A full investigation is needed for this serious matter, and measures must be taken to prevent its recurrence in the future.

Aside from those cases currently under the FCC spotlight, most of us could list several more cases from conspiracies to defraud, through swindling of public funds to downright corruption. Corruption had been cynically normalized, and princelings roamed with total impunity, dominating our numbed mental horizons.

The Augean stables need to be cleansed.

Due Process and Accountability in Mauritius' Arrests

The arrests of Jugnauth, Gobin, and Padayachy appear justified based on the disclosed facts'

'Why didn't Seegoolam and Bissessur report Minister Padayachy while he was still in office? Were they concerned about their job security?'

The arrest of former Finance Minister Renganaden Padayachy over the "Apavou Deal" and the earlier arrest of former Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth have brought the legal processes surrounding allegations and arrests in Mauritius into sharp focus. In this analysis, Lex probes the fundamental questions these cases raise: What constitutes sufficient grounds for arrest? How is the presumption of innocence upheld in the face of public perception? And crucially, are Mauritius' legal mechanisms robust enough to ensure due process and prevent politically motivated actions?

LEX

*** The Financial Crime Commission's (FCC) arrest of former Finance Minister Renganaden Padayachy regarding the "Apavou Deal" rests on allegations of undue influence over the Mauritius Investment Corporation's (MIC) financial support decisions. Is the FCC's action justified based solely on allegations, or does it require substantial prima facie evidence to warrant arrest and detention?**

Many criminal cases often originate from allegations. The rule is to verify the genuineness and credibility of these allegations. One assumes the FCC followed this procedure before arresting the former Minister of Finance.

*** The arrest of former Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth, stemming from Josian Deelawon's allegations regarding Rs 114 million in suitcases, raises similar concerns to the Padayachy case. Assuming the Jugnauth arrest was solely predicated on Deelawon's claims, what legal principles, such as due process, the presumption of innocence, and the requirement for sufficient evidence, might have been disregarded or violated?**

Every citizen is presumed innocent until proven guilty. An arrest based on reasonable suspicion of an offence does not equate to guilt. It signifies that the police or FCC investigators have sufficient grounds to proceed with an arrest for further investigation.

However, in Mauritius, there's a prevailing perception that the arrest of a high-profile individual implies guilt. Consider the treatment of Navin Ramgoolam in February 2015, when he was forcibly removed from his home by police officer Heman Jangi and others and transported in a police van. In stark contrast, the treatment of Pravind Jugnauth was entirely civilized.

*** Doesn't the pattern of arrests targeting political opponents during the MSM's last two terms, frequently appearing to rely solely on unproven accusations without substantial supporting evidence, underscore the urgent need for effective mechanisms to guarantee due process and prevent politically motivated arrests, making a strong legal framework, an independent judiciary, and robust oversight essential components of such a system?**

If an arrest is unlawful and unjustified, the arrestee can seek damages from the State. An arrest of a politician does not automatically constitute political targeting.

The arrests of Pravind Jugnauth, Maneesh Gobin, and

Renganaden Padayachy appear justified based on the disclosed facts. However, it is the court's role to determine the credibility of those facts.

*** Transparency is lacking regarding the legal standing and credibility of those who made allegations leading to the arrests of politically exposed individuals during the MSM's regime. It's also unknown what investigations, if any, were conducted to substantiate these claims. If these arrests are ultimately shown to be based purely on unsubstantiated allegations, what legal remedies exist for the affected individuals?**

If the individuals concerned feel aggrieved, they can file a case to claim damages.

Further the Criminal Code provides that "where a public functionary, an agent of, or person appointed by the Government, orders or commits any arbitrary act, prejudicial either to individual liberty, or to the civic rights of one or more individuals, or to the Constitution of Mauritius, and does not prove that he acted by order of his superior, in matters within the competency of the latter, he shall be condemned to imprisonment or to a fine not exceeding 3,000 rupees."

*** Conversely, would an individual knowingly making false accusations under oath to the FCC be exposed to perjury charges and severe consequences, including imprisonment and fines?**

Yes. Anyone who makes a false allegation can be prosecuted for the offence of false and malicious denunciation in writing. If they provide false testimony under oath in court, it constitutes perjury.

*** Does an unlawful arrest, stemming from unsubstantiated allegations or inadequate investigation, necessarily lead to the dismissal of a case against politically exposed individuals (e.g., former Prime Minister or Finance Minister), allowing them to avoid conviction despite public demand for accountability?**

Well, if the allegations are unsubstantiated, the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) will not advise prosecution, and the case will be **closed** or **shelved**. It will then be up to the aggrieved individual to seek any legal remedy.

*** What about Pravind Jugnauth's denial of Seegoolam's claims relating to the former Finance minister's interference and pressure and Renganaden Padayachy's denial of any wrongdoing? Do these denials carry weight in the legal process, or will the court will ultimately assess the credibility of these denials in light of the evidence presented?**

The task of the investigators is to explore all relevant avenues. When the file is submitted to the DPP, it will be up to him to assess the weight of the evidence and take whatever decision he deems fit.

Ultimately, the court will evaluate the strength of the evidence if the case proceeds.

*** On the other hand, the scrutiny of Verde Frontier Solutions Ltd and the transactions involving Mercantile & Maritime Group (MMG) and Kuros Construction Solutions Ltd are based on suspicions of financial impropriety. What is the significance of these allega-**



"If an arrest is unlawful and unjustified, the arrestee can seek damages from the State. An arrest of a politician does not automatically constitute political targeting. The arrests of Pravind Jugnauth, Maneesh Gobin, and Renganaden Padayachy appear justified based on the disclosed facts. However, it is the court's role to determine the credibility of those facts..."

tions, and what lessons can be learned from this situation regarding financial transparency and the politicians-corporate nexus?

Ultimately, it boils down to good governance and integrity. Regardless of the laws in place, if an individual – be it a minister or a public functionary – chooses to act corruptly, the primary solution is to report them. However, the question remains: will a civil servant ever denounce a minister, or will they become complicit if they are benefiting from corrupt practices?

In the case of Padayachy, why didn't Seegoolam and Bissessur report the minister while he was still in office? Were they concerned about their job security and opted to continue benefiting from their roles?

*** Harvesh Seegoolam has reportedly decided to "reveal everything" to the FCC? Does such cooperation by an accused party with the police and investigative authorities, in addition to any potential benefit to themselves, mitigate the seriousness of the charges in the eyes of the court?**

It appears they are attempting to minimize their involvement in these transactions.

However, Seegoolam and Bissessur, along with Padayachy, could face prosecution for conspiracy to defraud public funds if the evidence supports such charges.

*** At the end of the day, it's the DPP who will determine the sufficiency and admissibility of the evidence and allegations before the matter proceeds to court. One could therefore expect a decision either way - to prosecute any of the suspects in the various deals that are today making the headlines, or to decline to press charges due to insufficient or inadmissible evidence. Right?**

The ultimate decision rests with the DPP. However, deciding to prosecute is one thing; conducting the case in court with all its complexities and ramifications will be the real test.

It is certainly important that lawyers within the DPP's office possess the specialized expertise needed for these types of cases. Similarly, it would be beneficial if our magistrates or judges have the requisite financial expertise to address financial crimes.



Anil Madan

Separating Church And State: Will Harvard Save American Democracy?

In the battle to keep the Church of Harvard separate from the State of Trump, Harvard will prevail

Harvard College was founded in 1636. Two years later, John Harvard, an English Puritan Minister in the Colonies, died. He left a bequest to Harvard which included 400 books in his library.

Harvard was founded long before, seven score years before, the United States of America came into existence. In 1650, the Massachusetts legislature granted a charter to the Harvard Corporation and designating it the President and Fellows of Harvard College. In 1780, the Massachusetts Constitution went into effect and recognized Harvard as a university.

On Friday, a week ago, the Trump administration sent a letter to the President of Harvard and Penny Pritzker, a member of the Harvard Corporation who refers to herself as "Senior Fellow" stating that the United States has "invested" in Harvard University's operations "because of the value to the country of scholarly discovery and academic excellence." But, the letter cautioned, "an investment is not an entitlement. It depends on Harvard upholding federal civil rights laws, and it only makes sense if Harvard fosters the kind of environment that produces intellectual creativity and scholarly rigor, both of which are antithetical to ideological capture."

Who would have thought that intellectual creativity and scholarly rigor are concerns that motivate the Trump administration? And if you know what "ideological capture" means, I'm interested in an explanation.

The letter, unprecedented in American history, and evoking something that Galileo Galilei might have had thrust upon him, declared that "Harvard has in recent years failed to live up to both the intellectual and civil rights conditions that justify federal investment." The letter demanded that Harvard acquiesce to its demands as "an agreement in principle that will maintain Harvard's relationship with the federal government." The letter then stated that its terms would be translated into a more thorough, binding settlement agreement, in other words, an agreement to agree on the agreement already agreed.

The letter was signed by representatives of the General Services Administration, the US Department of Health & Human Services, and the US Department of Education and set forth the following demands on Harvard:

- Governance and Leadership Reform. These included fostering clear lines of authority and accountability, reducing the power held by students and untenured faculty, and reducing forms of governance bloat, duplication, or decentralization.
- Merit-Based Hiring Reform. This means ceasing all forms of preferences based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.
- Merit-Based Admissions Reform. This is the same as above but with provisions for sharing data with the federal government and subjecting Harvard to federal audits.
- International Admissions Reform. This means preventing admission of students hostile to the American values and institutions described in the US Constitution and Declaration of Independence.
- Viewpoint Diversity in Admissions and Hiring. This



requires an external independent third party to audit the university's achievements in promoting a "view point diverse" student body and faculty. No standards are set forth.

- Reforming Programs with Egregious Records of Antisemitism or Other Bias. This also required audits by an external party.
- Discontinuation of DEI or Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, practices.
- Student Discipline Reform and Accountability. These included investigation and discipline of students involved in past misconduct.
- Whistleblower Reporting and Protection.
- Transparency and Monitoring. This includes reporting immigration and related information to the Department of Homeland Security.

The legal counsel retained by Harvard replied to the government's letter, pointing out that Harvard is committed to fighting antisemitism and bigotry of any kind and has made structural, programmatic and policy changes in that regard. The letter stressed that the government's demands are unlawful and unconstitutional and declared: "The university will not surrender its independence or relinquish its constitutional rights. Neither Harvard nor any other private university can allow itself to be taken over by the federal government. Accordingly, Harvard will not accept the government's terms as an agreement in principle."

My daughter who went to Barnard College which is part of Columbia University is furious that Columbia acquiesced to the administration's demands, lamenting that she was even more furious that she had to say something nice about Harvard texted: "Great move by Harvard." When we spoke later, she asked: "Do you think Harvard can save America?" I said I'd write about that.

So, what is at stake here? The administration has already frozen some \$2.2 billion in aid and research grants to Harvard. And it has threatened another \$9 billion in research grants that for the most part, go to Harvard teaching hospitals working on critical studies of illness, disease, and intervention to prevent and treat people around the world, not just in America.

President Trump has threatened to revoke Harvard's tax-exempt status. And now the *Wall Street Journal* reports that the administration has requested that the Internal Revenue Service start the process of revoking that tax-

exempt status. What is at stake here is not just that Harvard pays no taxes on any income it earns, but also that contributions to the university and its various schools, e.g., the law school, business school, and others are tax deductible. Over the years, Harvard College has amassed an endowment of over \$50 billion and the other schools have hundreds of millions to billions more. Importantly, only about 20% of the funds are freely available for deployment on a discretionary basis; some 70% of the endowment is restricted to specific purposes or departments.

Harvard's President Alan Garber followed up with a letter to the Harvard community and its alumni. His ultimate message was clear: "The University will not surrender its independence or relinquish its constitutional rights."

Harvard has listed on the university's website just what is at risk. Here are some examples:

The National Cancer Institute estimates that nearly 40% of men and women will be diagnosed with cancer during their lives.

- A form of cancer immunotherapy called checkpoint blockade developed by HMS scientists is currently used for the treatment of at least 12 types of cancer. Hundreds of thousands of patients with cancer stand to benefit from these therapies each year.
- A first-in-class drug to treat a form of blood cancer known as multiple myeloma
- Study Finds Three New Safe, Effective Regimens to Treat Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis
- Breakthrough research in neurodegenerative diseases such as Huntington's Disease and frontotemporal dementia.
- Between 34-36 million Americans are estimated to have Type 2 diabetes and globally obesity affects about one billion people. A Harvard Medical School researcher discovered glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1), a molecule that has become the basis for the therapies that have revolutionized obesity treatment. Additional discoveries enabled the design of disease-altering therapies for type 2 diabetes.
- Almost 88,000 people in America are awaiting a kidney transplant and 35 million people in the US are living with chronic kidney disease. Harvard medical researchers are engaged in breakthrough discoveries in transplanting kidneys and combating the disease.

Federal tax law prohibits the President or senior government officials from requesting directly or indirectly that investigations of certain taxpayers be conducted. The administration's request that proceedings to revoke Harvard's tax-exempt status based on disagreement with "viewpoints" of its faculty or students, or for failure to promote viewpoint diversity appears to be a clear violation of the first amendment since it is a restraint on freedom of speech and expression. It is probably also a violation of the freedom of association clause of the first amendment.

I have no doubt that in a legal battle on this issue, Harvard will prevail.

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Nita Deepalsing

“Unscrutinized renewal of opaque IPPs’ *contrats en beton* would be equivalent to at least 10 Illovo deals”

Recent financial scandals in Mauritius, including the arrest of a former Finance Minister, raise concerns about systemic corruption beyond isolated incidents. The following interview features Nita Deepalsing, who argues these are symptoms of deep-rooted issues stemming from the influence of powerful economic interests since independence. The conversation also explores this historical context, the impact of a rent-seeking economic model, and specific examples like IPP contracts and the Freedom of Information Act. Nita Deepalsing also argues in favour of a genuine “rupture” through bold anti-corruption measures and fundamental shifts for Mauritius’ democratic and economic recovery.

Mauritius Times: The headlines in recent weeks have been dominated by the Financial Crimes Commission’s investigations into alleged fraud, abuse of position, money-laundering, and other offenses in different institutions/companies. The latest development involves the arrest, detention, and subsequent parole of former Finance Minister Renganaden Padayachy in connection with the so-called ‘Apavou Deal’. While the presumption of innocence must be upheld for all individuals under investigation, these repeated scandals raise troubling questions. Is this really just the work of a few bad apples, or are we looking at something far more systemic, deeply rooted in the structures of power and governance?

Nita Deepalsing: It goes without saying that those who have siphoned funds from the public purse must face the consequences of their actions. What we are seeing these days is an escalation of both the number of cases as well as the huge amount of funds which were diverted from being used to enhance the well-being of each citizen of the country.

However, to your question as to whether these are just a few bad apples, I would say that we are seeing the symptoms of a very deep-rooted issue. It is therefore systemic and until we address the underlying systemic architecture, we will keep having this movie of symptoms parading in front of us.

I need to take you back to 1968 at the time of our independence so that we can zoom in on the systemic architecture. Let us look at some undisputable facts:

We obtained our independence after a general election whereby the sugar barons poured enormous funds to finance an outright racist, fear mongering campaign which led to 44% of the population voting against independence. The scourge of political financing starts right there. Because it was financing by the sugar barons to keep a certain dominance over the economic life of this country. That was the real objective. The diversion for the people was in fuelling an outright racist campaign which succeeded in marking a deep ridge in our national psyche.

The deep scars of that shamelessly racist campaign, financed by the sugar barons are still with us. It not only resulted in the core of the Creole intelligentsia to flee to Australia, thereby carving out an important part of our talent

pool, but it also created the divide between Hindus and Muslims on the one hand and Creoles on the other hand. The very root of that psychological divide lies there in that deliberately racist, divisive campaign funded by the sugar barons. This is why it is laughable when some people today have the guts to say that if we criticize the historical dominance of the sugar barons, lo and behold, “we” are now the racists! And yet every 1st February, we are reminded that a people which does not know its History is a people without rudders.

Remember that the MMM of the 1970s decried the “*dominere*”; of the so-called “14 familles”. But after 1982, the narrative of the “14 familles” gradually disappeared from the vocabulary of the MMM. Clearly, if not some pockets, at least many minds were captured to turn the narrative from a “*dominere*” to “*pa kapav ena developma sans zot*” (there cannot be development without them). A narrative which embeds a sense of superiority/inferiority. Thus emerged the TINA (There Is No Alternative) paradigm...»

So, after independence, Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam (SSR) was practically hostage to the sugar barons to make something of this country. The country was poor, most of the population lacked formal education and there was no existing public architecture on which SSR could rely. This is why what he went on to do is tremendously remarkable. While navigating with the dominance of the sugar barons, he put into place a solid welfare state for the people to access health and education. Let us remember that no country in the world, no corporation, no enterprise, no family unit can even dream of prosperity and well-being without these two essential ingredients: a healthy and an educated population.

*** Given this dependence on the sugar barons, how then was SSR able to implement such significant social reforms?**

SSR’s government achieved this by negotiating and securing a guaranteed market and price for our sugar exports. While this provided a comfortable existence for the sugar barons, it also enabled SSR to establish his vision for a healthy and educated population. His previous membership of the Fabian Society surely had something to do with this enlightened vision.

Now do you realize that for all these years of a guaranteed market of 500,000 tons of sugar exports at a guaranteed price, the sugar barons in Mauritius have never ever declared a profit?! This was the birth of the systemic economic architecture of this country: a rent-seeking model.

And let us be clear: a rent-seeking model is inherently “*dominere*” and is absolutely against the larger well-being of the majority of the people. Because it siphons public funds for the private interests of an oligarchy.

En passant, remember that the MMM of the 1970s decried the “*dominere*”; of the so-called “14 familles”. But



after 1982, the narrative of the “14 familles” gradually disappeared from the vocabulary of the MMM.

Clearly, if not some pockets, at least many minds were captured to turn the narrative from a “*dominere*” to “*pa kapav ena developma sans zot*” (there cannot be development without them). A narrative which embeds a sense of superiority/inferiority. Thus emerged the TINA (There Is No Alternative) paradigm which even today is furthered and entrenched by some people who have interiorized a deep inferiority complex. Or are so poor in character that their motivation for public action stems from the thickness of envelopes that the sugar barons can still afford to throw around.

While the perilous context in which SSR became Prime Minister was very particular and there was truly no alternative then, we have to deplore that successive political leaders have so far failed to un-scotch themselves from the TINA paradigm. Is it because they have some inferiority complex which they cannot surmount? Or is it because the erstwhile sugar barons are still very cunningly watering the coffers of political parties so that public policy is captured to further their narrow interests?

Is it because political leaders post SSR are devoid of courage and vision? Or is it because it is much more comfortable to not rock the boat, and glide comfortably on TINA waters flowing on the solid bedrock of a rent-seeking model which is only entrenched regime after regime?

*** Let’s see what’s happening today. The government appears to have deliberately maintained a distance from the FCC’s investigations, allowing the institution to carry out its mandate without overt interference. But if we’re now confronting what looks increasingly like systemic corruption, the Alliance du Changement’s promise of a “rupture” carries even greater responsibility. After all, previous anti-corruption efforts have largely fallen short of expectations. What concrete, bold measures should the government implement to confront corruption head-on and deliver the genuine break from the past?**

Let us not wear blinkers. Gliding comfortably on TINA waters is definitely not “*rupture*” and will never be, no matter how much we use the word as a cliché in an electoral campaign.

● Cont. on page 7

Corruption which enables policy capture is the core script of the movie we keep watching over and over again. Until those who run for elections and are voted into office, are not animated by genuine, noble political convictions, they will not see nor will want to see this stark reality. As long as we have career-politicians devoid of any political conscience; who only care for the spoils of power, this systemic economic architecture will generate exactly the same results. Admittedly to varying degrees...»

'Corruption which enables policy capture is the core script of the movie we keep watching over and over again'

● Cont. from page 6

"Rupture" is certainly not failing to see through cunning fear-mongering which leads to making important public policy decisions in craftily created panic mode - like the one on the cards today regarding the upcoming renewal of the Independent Power Producer (IPP) *"contrats en beton"* (rock-solid contracts).

Sitting comfortably on the bedrock of a rent-seeking model which is only being further entrenched election after election, will give rise to exactly the symptoms that we are seeing today.

Because the wheels of this rent-seeking model, which is inherently *"dominere"*, and inherently against the larger wellbeing of the people, can only keep moving smoothly every 5 years with the help of a much-needed oil: corruption from a willing corruptor whose benefits will greatly accrue by throwing a few peanuts here and there. In fact, the problem with the rent seeking model is that it has now trickled down to a new bourgeoisie class and beyond. Thereby entrenching the notion that rewards need not align with level of risks taken. Provided that there's a 'contribution' for electoral campaigns. This now widespread rent seeking model is the systemic faultline which will ensure the cyclical parade at the FCC.

Corruption which enables policy capture is the core script of the movie we keep watching over and over again. Until those who run for elections and are voted into office, are not animated by genuine, noble political convictions, they will not see nor will want to see this stark reality. As long as we have career-politicians devoid of any political conscience; who only care for the spoils of power, this systemic economic architecture will generate exactly the same results. Admittedly to varying degrees.

I am convinced that SSR, as leader of the Labour Party, carried deeply in his consciousness the very reason for which the Labour Party was needed in 1936: to fight for the dignity of the people and to oppose the *"dominant-dominé"* model of the day. Influenced by Fabian philosophy, he was navigating through the infested waters of the sugar barons. But he stood for the noble idea of working for the wellbeing of the population at large. Which is why he ensured that there would be a welfare state for the many, not a welfare state for the economically dominant segment of our country.

I sometimes ask myself who today in the Labour Party is even cognizant of the fact that being entrusted with the power of the people is first and foremost about opposing this *"dominant-dominé"* model? I have to say that in 2007 when Dr Navin Ramgoolam led the battle against the sugar barons, he demonstrated that he was truly animated by those convictions. Convictions that would make the 1936 Labour Party founders proud.

I hope these convictions still stand steady today. Let's see what happens to the IPP contracts.

* **Consistent with the idea of "rupture," one would expect the government to drop any resistance to a Freedom/Right to Information Act, which is essential for improving public oversight of public finances, especially considering the Director of Audit's recurring reports**



« I sometimes ask myself who today in the Labour Party is even cognizant of the fact that being entrusted with the power of the people is first and foremost about opposing this *"dominant-dominé"* model? I have to say that in 2007 when Dr Navin Ramgoolam led the battle against the sugar barons, he demonstrated that he was truly animated by those convictions. Convictions that would make the 1936 Labour Party founders proud. I hope these convictions still stand steady today. Let's see what happens to the IPP contracts...»

gotiation so important? And what broader structural reforms do you believe are needed to address the underlying issues?

First, I think we have to ask ourselves whether a good portion of electricity production should even be privatized. If the public purse can afford to spend 19 billion on Safe City cameras, 12 billion on a partial tramway, should it not invest in electricity production so as to ensure that accessibility to electricity is never ever compromised by threats and blackmail of supposedly *"too-big-to-fail"* private corporations in search of narrow interests?

Do you know that one of these very *"patriotic"* companies threatened to go off the grid in 2024 if the public officials did not meekly acquiesce to their demands? What exactly is the meaning of long-term public interests?

To me it is incredible that today in 2025 we are still with the idea of keeping such a strategic sector as electricity production in the hands of the erstwhile sugar barons who have sailed comfortably from guaranteed-market, guaranteed-price sugar production, to tourism with all-inclusive packages and a supportive monetary policy, not to mention a collaborative national airline, to huge windfall gains on the *'betonaz'* via smart cities.

* **Could you elaborate on the concept of rent-seeking within the economic framework of Mauritius?**

Let us travel back a century or so and imagine you are taking a leisurely walk in the countryside and you find some large expanse of land. You decide to take possession of this land. You invest in building a nice cottage - so we recognize that you have made some investments - then you ask that

of irregularities, and also regarding procurement in the public and parastatal sectors, as well as assistance to corporates. What do you think?

I think the IPP contracts will provide a good litmus test on freedom of information.

Three *"Independent"* power producers (IPP) have their *contrats-en-beton* coming to an end soon. They are of course asking for a renewal. Will the population finally get to know that the guaranteed price is indexed on exchange rates, on price index not only in Mauritius but also on EU price index for raw materials? Does that remind you of sugar barons days?

Will the population get to see in full transparency how exactly the price that is being paid for each KWh to the IPPs is a case of abusive profits in a captive market and therefore results in a *"prix-dominere"* for each and every citizen of this country?

* **Given your understanding of how the IPP model has evolved over the past three decades — its impacts, perceived imbalances, and critiques that it has served private interests at public expense — why is this rene-**

public money is used to market your cottage overseas.

Then when people flock to your cottage for holidays, you of course charge them a rental fee. But all this rent that you pocket, derived from a land that you did not even buy in the first place (or paid pittance for), you now keep for yourself. Not even in rupees but in forex overseas!

Would you want me to call you a great, innovative, enterprising, risk-taking industry captain without whose existence I would not survive? Maybe you would even expect me to give you a medal on the 12th of March for your *"contribution"* to the country?

It may be good to know that according to publicly available reports from the Truth and Justice Commission, a good portion of land were *"acquired"* in controversial circumstances. And speaking of Freedom of Information, let us hope that all the reports, without exception, of the Truth and Justice commission will soon be in the public domain.

* **What about the IPPs?**

We all know that profits should be aligned with level of risks any entrepreneur takes. Do you know that most of the bank loans to finance the installation of machinery was guaranteed by the public? And that these loans were mostly paid off by the public too?

We know that IPPs are inextricably linked to sugar refineries. Do you know that the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate (MSS) buys refined sugar from the sugar producers not on the actual amount of refined sugar it buys but it pays an amount calculated on the refinery capacity of the sugar refineries, regardless of whether the refinery has operated at full capacity or not? Do you know that maintenance and repairs are borne by the MSS? Including the wages of the workers? Note that MSS funds include money from small planters. Which means the small planters are footing a lopsided share of expenses.

Still on freedom of information, it is incredible how opaque some decisions are with respect to small planters. If the sugar refinery tells the small planter that the sugar content of the sugarcane, he delivered is 60%, then that's what it is. There is no way to verify that claim, there is no transparency. 25 years ago, small planters used to pay 24 out of every 100 kg of sugar in lieu of payment for the sugar mill's crushing and extraction. Today, after so-called efficiency gains (which required public funds!), the small planter is paying 22 kg out of every 100 kg. It seems that efficiency gains is only for the mills, not for the small planters.

« **Should these IPPs *"contrats en beton"* be meekly renewed, without scrutiny about price structure, without getting out of the opacity of the price structure, without any questioning of the mark-ups which are in no way aligned with the level of risks taken, then this will be equivalent to at least 10 Illovo deals at one go. There are enough Chartered Financial Analysts around to calculate the NPV (net present value of future profits vs investments and risks)...»**

I am told that all decisions at MSS are completely opaque as far as small planters are concerned. The small planters are not privy to any details about negotiations regarding prices obtained. Apparently when questioned, one former CEO of MSS unabashedly stated that this was a trade secret that could not be given out to any Tom Dick and Harry - meaning the small planters.

Do you also know that the MSS deducts from the small planters Rs 3,000 per arpent for irrigation whether their plots are irrigated or not.

● Cont. on page 8

'We are sowing the seeds for a fragmented Mauritius...

...those who have been able to afford primary private education and those who have not'

● Cont. from page 7

Also to be noted is that any increase in this fee for irrigation is unilateral, without any consultation with the small planter community. Allow me a side comment on water rights. Do you know that some sugar barons are trying to capture "ownership" of water rights? This needs to be watched carefully because it will be scandalous if that were to happen.

Are you aware that small planters get peanuts for the bagasse they deliver to the IPPs? Not to mention the pithy Rs 3,000 per ton for molasses when this should be closer to Rs 8,000 per ton in order to be considered fair pricing?

All in all, some small planters claim that they are being deprived of about 50% of what is really due to them. And this is not even counting the fact that each Mauritian citizen – which includes small planters – are paying 3 or 4 times more for their CEB bill than what a fair and reasonable pricing from the IPPs should have been.

Anyone with even an iota of comprehension of what "justice" means would argue that the IPP contracts which are coming to an end cannot and should not be meekly renewed for another 30 years on the same basis.

*** With time running out and the contracts nearing their renewal, will it be possible to scrutinize and review these agreements thoroughly before any renewal decisions are made in good time?**

Omnican's current contract is only coming to an end in 2027. That is 2 full years from now. You will tell me that this is not enough time to prepare another kind of energy policy? Unless you tell me that Omnican has at least 2 very influential *porte-paroles* of the same patronym in decision making spheres these days, then I will understand that 2 years are not enough indeed.

The facts are there. Should these IPPs "*contrats en beton*" be meekly renewed, without scrutiny about price structure, without getting out of the opacity of the price structure, without any questioning of the mark-ups which are in no way aligned with the level of risks taken, then this will be equivalent to **at least 10 Illovo deals** at one go. There are enough Chartered Financial Analysts around to calculate the NPV (net present value of future profits vs investments and risks).

For those who don't recall what the Illovo deal was, let us remind them that in 2005, the Labour Party campaigned forcefully against this deal which entailed huge windfall gains to sugar barons on conversion of prime agricultural land. Which the State Law Office (SLO) did not approve. And yes, let us also not forget that that was the first time in Mauritius History, that the SLO was brushed aside to bring in a private lawyer to give the OK for the deal.

Factually, Paul Berenger was the then Prime Minister of the MSM-MMM team. Bifurcating SLO advice in favour of private legal advice: does that remind you of something? Let us not forget when that "idea" was implemented in the first place.

*** You've also raised concerns about the slow pace of the energy transition, particularly around the use of biomass and the proposed shift from coal to wood chips. What are your main reservations - economic, environmental, or strategic - about the current approach to renewable energy in Mauritius?**

Don't you think calling woodchips "biomass" is laughable to start with? Woodchips come from deforestation. Period. Under what concept can woodchips be considered sustainable? On top of it, the import of woodchips will likely be



« The organic bonds shared by children at an early age growing up together in public primary schools with a common sense of citizenship can never be cultivated outside of these formative years where children are united by one national curriculum. It is very sad to see that the middle class is fleeing from public primary schools. Parents rightly want the best for their children. This means that the whole chunk of the middle class does not feel their children will get the best education in public primary schools...»

more expensive which means more forex out of the country.

We should be maximizing to the last inch, any space available for solar panels for electricity production. Admittedly it will be only a fraction of our energy needs, but still it will contribute to lower the dependency on non-renewable sources. Additionally, with current technological advances, we should revisit Waste to Energy projects; the more so in the light of what we see at Mare Chicose.

*** What is your reaction to Navin Ramgoolam's statements about a democratic and economic recovery ('redressement démocratique et économique')? What fundamental shifts do you believe are necessary to facilitate that recovery?**

We will have to deal with the impacts of the current disruption in international trade. However, with every challenge comes an opportunity. I believe that the African continent should unite in accelerating the implementation of the AfCTA – the African continental free trade agreement.

'Redressement économique' is also about the two essential ingredients that SSR saw as the foundation of a prosperous country: a healthy population and an educated population.

Both on health and education, I believe we have to grapple with the fact that our population is not enjoying good health. And it is not the construction of luxurious clinics that will make a dent in the inherent ill health of the majority of the population. I am convinced that the huge amount of Ultra Processed Food (UPFs) we consume has something to do with it.

But do we have a consumer protection body which can force supermarkets to place all UPFs and junk food in the back corner of the supermarkets? Can we heavily tax these UPFs? But then can we ensure the population affordable access to wholesome food? Are we going to continue to support the consumption of fake UHT milk in cartons rather than give a boost to local fresh milk production?

As for education, I wonder if anyone is taking cognizance of the fact that privatized primary education is chopping away any dream of nation building. The organic bonds shared by children at an early age growing up together in public primary schools with a common sense of citizenship can never be cultivated outside of these formative years where children are united by one national curriculum. It is very sad to see that the middle class is fleeing from public primary schools. Parents rightly want the best for their children. This means that the whole chunk of the middle class does not feel their children will get the best education in public primary schools.

Other than the quality of education, my concern is that we are sowing the seeds for a fragmented Mauritius. Those who have been able to afford primary private education and those who have not. How can we ever dream of a population united by a common sense of public goods, a common sense of purpose when the system is automatically forcing

segregation in the notion of public goods, therefore shared citizenship right at the primary school level?

*** At the end of the day, why is it that those in power often fail to act in the public interest, allowing vested interests to influence policymaking - whether in areas like the IPP contracts or Freedom of Information legislation? Reforming the former would clearly benefit consumers, while the latter would help bring transparency to critical decisions involving public finances, procurement, and more. What, in your view, explains this persistent disconnect between public interest and political action?**

I guess there must be many reasons for some people just wanting power just for the sake of power and not for the responsibility that power entails. Sadly, they are damaged souls. But damaged souls are nefarious for the construction of sustainable public goods.

But here again education – within the home or at school – can be of help. I believe most human beings do value empathy and the need for one's consciousness to evolve. This is why spirituality and religion have such a central place in the human species. In the spiritual philosophy within which I was brought up, there is a 3D formula which is supposed to be forge one's character: Dayaa (compassion/empathy), Daama (self-control/staying away from extremes) and Daan

« When I see the (lack of) character of some individuals who today are parading as inheritor-in-waiting while touring the oligarch's boardrooms to announce that they are the "héritier-par-défaut" of the Labour Party, I can only shake my head in contempt. Because it is now evident that under an artificial veneer, there is not even a faint whisper of genuine Labour convictions in their actions. Unless you tell me that what is called Labour convictions in 2025 is about cosying up to the oligarchy...»



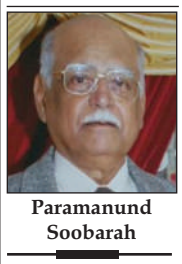
(the concept of charity/of giving). This is from the Upanishads, but it actually cuts across and is present in all spiritual teachings. For a country with so much public display of religiosity, I am baffled as to why this 3D formula seems to escape so many people.

I would be for each child starting their day in school with 3 minutes of deep breathing exercises whereby they are encouraged to silently contemplate these notions according to their respective faith. It would be a great bonus if every adult could be nudged to do the same.

*** To effect meaningful change, one often needs to be in the 'right' political party. In your view, is this a difficult choice to make because of a scarcity – whether of viable alternatives, genuine political will, or principled leadership?**

When I see the (lack of) character of some individuals who today are parading as inheritor-in-waiting while touring the oligarch's boardrooms to announce that they are the "héritier-par-défaut" of the Labour Party, I can only shake my head in contempt.

Because it is now evident that under an artificial veneer, there is not even a faint whisper of genuine Labour convictions in their actions. Unless you tell me that what is called Labour convictions in 2025 is about cosying up to the oligarchy, hinting that as supposed inheritor-in-waiting, future policy capture with the appropriate envelopes will be implemented by you. Not to mention cowardly orchestrating and pulling strings behind cheap casteist campaigns that would make the 1936 Labour Party founders blush in shame.



Paramanund
Soobarah

From “Imperial Caravan” to “Wind of Change”: A Journey through Decolonization

The Wind of Change has on the whole been gentle to Mauritius. Any administration seen as less than satisfactory came about through the free and fair choice of the electorate, and no one can complain

Ware very fortunate to be living in an era when change comes with gentle winds. In a broad historical perspective, the Independence of Mauritius, celebrated last month, was but a gentle ripple. It has not always been so. There have been times when strict monotony was the order of the day. And there have been times when change came with hurricane speed and force.

“The dogs can bark, but the Imperial Caravan will pass.” This was a statement that I often heard being repeated in my childhood (spanning the 1930s and 40s). It used to be attributed to Winston Churchill, then Prime Minister of Britain. But I have not been able to confirm this authorship from online sources. The saying is itself a slight modification of a common Arab dictum – caravans and camels were a normal part of life in the Middle East. The addition of the word “Imperial” could only have come from an English-speaking imperialist familiar with the Arab world; Churchill, having played a prominent part in the redrawing of the Middle East map after the fall of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War (1914-1918), was one such.



“Churchill led his nation through a difficult war to victory, but what concerns us here is his staunch opposition to any talk of independence for any of the territories of the enormous British Empire. Churchill was also very contemptuous of the coloured races who constituted the bulk of the inhabitants of his empire. Speaking in the House of Commons in November 1942, he said: ‘I have not become the King’s First Minister to preside over the dissolution of his Empire.’ But the war he waged was so expensive that it impoverished Britain to the point that it was no longer in a position to rule the overseas territories it had amassed.” – Pic - Grunge

Churchill became Prime Minister in May 1940 not long after the start of the Second World War. He had been unflinchingly opposed to Germany in contrast to his predecessor Neville Chamberlain who was regarded as an appeaser and who finally lost a vote of confidence in Parliament. Churchill led his nation through a difficult war to victory, but what concerns us here is his staunch opposition to any talk of independence for any of the territories of the enormous British Empire.

Churchill was also very contemptuous of the coloured races who constituted the bulk of the inhabitants of his empire. Speaking in the House of Commons in November 1942, he said: “I have not become the King’s First Minister to preside over the dissolution of his Empire.” But the war he waged was so expensive that it impoverished Britain to the point that it was no longer in a position to rule the overseas territories it had amassed. Churchill was defeated in the elec-

tions that followed shortly after the war, and Clement Atlee, leader of the Labour Party, succeeded him.

The British government under Labour Party found itself struggling with economic constraints and increasing opposition to foreign rule from within territories of the Empire. To continue its role as a world power Britain would need strong American support, but America, sadly for Britain, was against imperialistic tendencies and was calling on European countries to withdraw from the countries under their rule. Furthermore, the Labour Party had promised to engage in social reconstruction at home.

Faced with these difficulties Britain evolved a policy of developing the ingredients of democracy leading to autonomy in all its colonies and to their full independence at some stage. The principal constraint to this policy was not opposition to it from within Britain, although that was there, but the difficulties prevailing within the colonies themselves; it would take time to educate the elites and the masses, usually with opposed views, and warring factions to accept majority parliamentary rule as it was understood in Britain. Besides, very few in the colonies believed in the genuineness of the British policy statements. After Churchill’s statements, who would?

Subhash Chandra Bose & Indian Naval Mutiny

In those days, the Congress Party in India, led by the immensely popular, widely respected, and even worshipped Mahatma Gandhi and other party members, had been conducting a non-violent movement for the independence of the country, but it is widely believed that two other separate events accelerated the independence process for India.

One was the fact of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose’s Indian National Army, comprising former British Army soldiers who had been taken prisoner by the Japanese and who had volunteered to join Bose’s movement to fight the British for Independence; evidently, they lost out when the Japanese surrendered and were even court-martialled by the victorious British administration. But their action had shaken the faith of the British Government in their ability to control India using Indian personnel; they would never have been able to rule India as they did with only metropolitan British forces.

The other was the Indian Naval Mutiny in Bombay in 1946. The trigger for this major event was the abusive language used by British officers against Indian sailors who had complained about the quality of food being given to them. “Beggars can’t be choosers!” they had arrogantly replied. The Commanding Officer Frederick King had also used phrases like “sons of bitches”, and “sons of coolies” about them. This led to a mutiny that started in Bombay but spread widely to other bases of the Royal Indian Navy. It was finally brought under control but not before having seriously shaken the faith of the British in them. Giving promotions and other status rewards to some native Indians was no longer sufficient to ensure the loyalty of the military, police and civil services. It was time to go.

The initial date planned by Prime Minister Atlee for independence was June 1948, but Viceroy Mountbatten, arriving in India in the third week of March 1947, and seeing the situation on the spot, decided very hurriedly to hand over Independence to the Congress Party in August 1947, but not before carving out substantial parts to form Pakistan. It is said that thousands if not millions of Hindus and Muslims died in clashes during the process of transfer of power and consequential population transfers. But to all (public) intents and purposes Independence of India had happened non-



“It is widely believed that two other separate events accelerated the independence process for India. One was the fact of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose’s Indian National Army, comprising former British Army soldiers who had been taken prisoner by the Japanese and who had volunteered to join Bose’s movement to fight the British for Independence; evidently, they lost out when the Japanese surrendered and were even court-martialled by the victorious British administration. But their action had shaken the faith of the British Government in their ability to control India using Indian personnel; they would never have been able to rule India as they did with only metropolitan British forces.” – Pic Telegraph India

violently.

The Labour Party in Britain continued the task of surrendering the rule of other territories of the Empire to their nationals. Shortly after India, Burma (now Myanmar) and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) also became Independent. These territories, all in South Asia, went relatively fast. The Conservative Party and Churchill came back to power in 1951; Anthony Eden, another staunch imperialist, succeeded Winston Churchill at the head of the Conservative Party and the British government, and he also tried to slow the process down, if not outrightly oppose it.

Abdel Gamal Nasser & the Suez Canal

In 1956 Colonel Abdel Gamal Nasser, leader of the revolutionary Egyptian government, took a few nationalistic steps in favour of his country against the interests of the newly created Jewish homeland of Israel. For example, he closed the Gulf of Aqaba and the Strait of Tiran to deprive Israel of access to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal and even nationalised the Suez Canal itself. Till then the Canal had been owned and operated by the Anglo-French Suez Canal Company. Israel declared war on Egypt to regain its rights; Britain and France joined in for their opposition to the Egyptian move regarding the Canal. The United States, led by President Eisenhower, strongly opposed the Anglo-French move regarding the Canal, and the attacking countries had to desist. But Israel regained access to the Red Sea.

These events convinced the British government that it was no longer in a position to conduct a foreign policy independently of American wishes. That was also the end of Britain’s imperialistic tendencies. Following the failure of the Suez adventure, Anthony Eden gave way to Harold Macmillan as Prime Minister.

☞ Cont. on page 10

From “Imperial Caravan” to “Wind of Change”: A Journey through Decolonization



In 1956, Egypt's President Gamal Abdel-Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal and henceforth it has been run by the Suez Canal Authority. Pic - Ahram

☞ Cont. from page 9

There still remained the possessions in South-East Asia (Malaya, Singapore and others) and the numerous countries in Africa to deal with. In some of these countries the issues had become complicated by the large numbers of white settlers who regarded themselves as the sole owners of their new countries. Violent insurgencies had started in some of them (the Mau Mau movement in East Africa, the communist insurgency in Malaya, the Archbishop Makarios (Enosis) movement for union with Greece in Cyprus, violence also in Aden, etc). It fell largely to Prime Minister Harold Macmillan to deal with them. He had fully understood that there was no point in toeing the Churchill line, and he made a virtue of necessity.

In January 1960 Macmillan went on a tour of Africa visiting Ghana, Nigeria, Rhodesia (which doggedly resisted rule by the indigenous population for two decades), Nyasaland (which became Malawi after Independence) and South Africa, the land of apartheid. Addressing the South African Parliament on 3 February 1960, he gave his historically famous “Wind of Change” speech, in which he said: “The wind of change is blowing through this continent, and whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact, and our national policies must take account of it.”

After this the British policy of granting Independence to all its remaining colonies was set in motion. Dissolution of the Empire became the main it not the only task of the Colonial Office – which was later absorbed in the Commonwealth Office. The one hard nut to crack was Rhodesia, where the white settlers, under the leadership of Ian Smith, declared Independence unilaterally in 1965. This new government faced international opposition and sanctions and internal insurgency, and Ian Smith was finally forced to agree to an internal settlement. The British government briefly re-took control of the country until elections were held in 1980, after which the country became independent under the name of Zimbabwe, under the leadership of Prime Minister Robert Mugabe.

One last colony was Hong Kong, which was occupied by Britain under a hundred-year lease, agreed after two less than honourable Opium Wars. The lease expired in 1979. Efforts by Britain to extend it further, led by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher failed. Mrs Thatcher even visited China to that end, but Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping refused, offering to take control of Hong Kong with its existing form of constitutional government for fifty years. This was Deng's policy of “One Country Two Systems”. Hong Kong reverted to Chinese rule on 1 July 1997.

The story of the independence of the other former British territories in Africa, the Caribbean and South East Asia is a

succession of conferences at Lancaster House in London with the political leaders of those countries.

One of those countries obviously was Mauritius, where the main opposition came from the Mauritian side: one of the factions would have preferred association with Europe to Independence. This strengthened the British side to hive off the Chagos Archipelago from the territories until then under Mauritian administration. Mauritians gained Independence “in substantial measure” (to use the words of Prime Minister J. Nehru in his “tryst with destiny” speech) on 12 March 1968. They have continued their campaign through international fora to regain “full” independence with sovereignty over Chagos and are, at the time of writing, about to achieve their aim.

If this is the story of colonial territories under British rule, the story of liberation of territories under French, Dutch, Portuguese, and Belgian rules involved some bloodier wars by the local inhabitants.

- The French held most of North Africa (including Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania), numerous countries of sub-Saharan Africa, including Senegal, Guinea, Ivory Coast, and Madagascar (besides others), Pondicherry, Mahé, Karaikal and Yanam in India and Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in Indo-China.
- The Dutch held territory in the East Indies, now called Indonesia.
- The Portuguese held Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde and Sao Tome and Principe in Africa, and Goa, Daman and Diu in India.
- Tiny Belgium held the vast country that is now the Democratic Republic of Congo, and also Rwanda and Burundi.
- Germany had earlier held numerous territories in Africa (Tanganyika, Togo, South-West Africa, Rwanda, Burundi, etc.) but had lost them all after its defeat in World War I.

It is not possible to go into the stories of the liberation of all these countries in this article. Only a few salient points will be mentioned.

In French Indo-China, the demands and struggles for independence started immediately after the War in 1945. Following the Chinese take-over of China in 1949, the communists led the fight in Indo-China, and they were strongly supported by China. The USA, in its efforts at countering the communist advance in the world, joined in and began supplying arms and ammunition to the French side. Around this time the Korean war had started, the North Koreans supported by China opposing the South Koreans supported by the Americans.



President de Gaulle initiated a decolonisation policy which led to the independence of all French-ruled sub-Saharan countries within a French Community. Pic - American Affairs Journal

The fighting everywhere was bitter and costly. France lost the important battle against their fortress of Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and so decided to call it a day. They withdrew leaving the country divided between a communist North and a capitalist South. Technically that was the end of French colonialism in Indo-China, as Laos and Cambodia were also freed. The United States, seeing this fight as part of a global Communist effort to take over the world, joined in, supporting South Vietnam against the Communist North.

The US greatly escalated its action as from 1965. (It was in this period that the Americans came to learn about the Island of Diego Garcia, a British possession as part of the Colony of Mauritius and obtained British permission to set up a base there to position their forces.) But they could not withstand the Communist onslaught either and had to withdraw in 1973. That, however, was not the end of the war. North, with capital at Hanoi, led by Ho Chi Minh, and South, with capital at Saigon, led by No Din Diem, continued fighting until the North completely overcame the South, with the southern capital Saigon falling in 1975 and being re-named Ho Chi Minh City, and North and South unifying into the single country of Vietnam, ruled by the Communists.

Insurgencies in France's North African territories

The French debacle in Indo-China in 1954 was immediately followed by demands for independence in their North African territories. Insurgencies there led to the independence of Morocco in 1955 and of Tunisia in 1956. Algeria proved to be a very difficult case, as more than one million French people had settled there, and they strongly opposed independence. They were backed strongly by a large part of the metropolitan French population and the French Army.

In 1958 talk of independence in government circles led to an army mutiny in Algeria organised by former Algerian Governor Jacques Soustelle; military units there captured the island of Corsica which is regarded as part of Metropolitan France. There was even talk about their moving on to Paris, and many would even have welcomed them there. Most sides called for the resignation of the government led by Prime Minister Pflimlin and the return of war-time leader General Charles de Gaulle.

On 29 May 1958 President René Coty declared in Parliament that, to avoid a civil war, he was calling on “le plus illustre des Français” to come and take over the administration. The General agreed with the precondition that a new constitution would provide for a powerful president which role he would himself assume. Thus came into Force the Fifth French republic with President Charles de Gaulle at its head.

President de Gaulle also initiated a decolonisation policy which led to the independence of all French-ruled sub-Saharan countries within a French Community, i.e. a Commonwealth type association. The colony of Guinea under the leadership of Sékou Touré in West Africa rejected the idea of belonging to any Community and was thereupon granted immediate independence but all French assistance was cut off.

Algeria still remained a hard nut to crack. Following widespread support by the French population for Algerian self-determination, the General tasked Prime Minister Michel Debré to initiate secret talks with the FLN, the Algerian National Liberation Front, for Independence. When the military units in Algiers heard of this, they regarded it as an act of betrayal by the government of Charles de Gaulle and decided to stage another coup. They launched their action on 22 April 1961. Their intention was to take the battle to Metropolitan France.

Fortunately, the commanders in the two other Algerian cities (Oran and Constantine) refused to join in; orders were given in Metropolitan France to prevent landings at all airports, and President de Gaulle made a televised address to the nation urging for help to quell this mutiny. The Left in France organised massive demonstrations against the uprising.

Paramanund Soobarah

☞ Cont. on page 11

From "Imperial Caravan" to "Wind of Change"

Beyond the British story: A bloodier toll in other colonies

Cont. on page 10

Those were very tense few days in France and were tensely lived even in Mauritius out here. The recently introduced transistor radio played a great part in the communication and diffusion of information, and, very importantly, during those very few days the first French nuclear test was carried out in the Sahara, ostensibly independently of the mutiny, but it must surely have had an effect on the mutineers. They surrendered after four days, on 26 April 1961. They were all court-martialled and sentenced subsequently.

In spite of all this the independence talks with the Algerians continued, culminating in the full independence of Algeria on 5 July 1962.

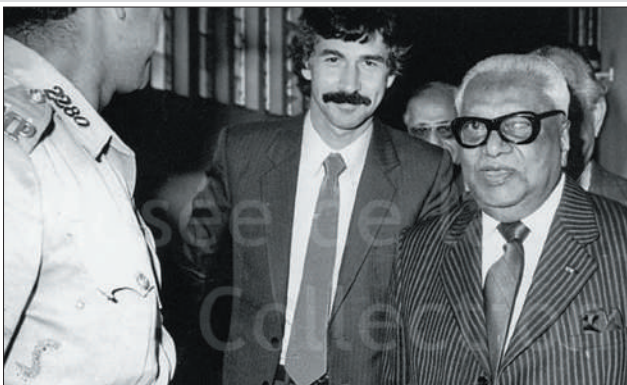
Portugal, Belgium, and the Dutch: Different Roads to Freedom

Another empire where it took a military rebellion in the metropolitan country for colonies to be liberated was the Portuguese one. India took over Goa and the other Portuguese possessions in the country with a short military action; Western countries were critical of the move but did not intervene. Violent strife had long been ongoing in Angola and Mozambique for several years, but diehard imperialist Portuguese dictator O. Salazar and his similarly minded successor M. Caetano would not budge from their colonialist mindset. On 25 April 1974, military officers staged a coup in Lisbon which ended almost half a century of dictatorship in Portugal. It received strong public support and was dubbed the "Carnation Revolution." The revolution also ended Portuguese colonialism. All colonies were freed.

In the Belgian colony of Congo, the principal difficulty came from settlers and their supporters. The province of Katanga, led by military officer Mobutu Sese Seko, seceded from the country, and the United Nations under Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld led a major war effort against the move. When that war ended, the re-united Congo decided to elect – guess who? – none other than Mobutu Sese Seko, who had led the secession war, to lead the country. The new United Nations Secretary General U Thant quipped: "Nations get the government they deserve."

The Dutch East Indies – also known as the Netherlands East Indies, was a Dutch colony with territory comprising mostly the modern state of Indonesia. The campaign for independence there started long before the War and continued under the Japanese occupation. The Indonesians proclaimed a Republic complete with an army and continued their struggle on both the military and diplomatic fronts. They had widespread international support, including from countries like the US and Australia. International pressure compelled the Dutch to join UN-brokered negotiations in January 1948. These were carried out aboard the USS Renville, an American ship anchored in Jakarta Bay. An accord was concluded, but in December of the same year, the Dutch had second thoughts and, breaking the accord, they launched a virulent surprise attack on the Indonesians.

Operation Kraai, as it was called, was severely criticised internationally, and the United States even threatened to cut off assistance under the Marshall Plan (a major American financial aid plan to European countries to help in the reconstruction effort after the World War II) to the Netherlands. India, Pakistan and Ceylon banned Dutch flights from their airspace. While the operation could be said to have been militarily successful, international pressure compelled the Dutch to come to the negotiating table again. Negotiators from both sides met on 7 May 1949 and concluded a cease-fire. The final peace accord with full transfer of sovereignty was reached at a Round Table Conference held in the Hague between 23 August and 2 November 1949, at the end of which the Republic of Indonesia gained full Independence.



“When a student-led movement under the name of the MMM arose to throw a spanner in the works, SSR did not, as Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew might have done, crush them outright. He tolerated them on until they replaced him outright in 1982. They are still around, but the process of government change has remained democratic all through these years. Mauritius remains the one bright star in the entire British Empire dissolution process...”

Pic – Musée de la Petite Collection

The Dutch government later officially apologized to Indonesians for the use of excessive force during the struggle.

One point of interest for us in Mauritius is that when India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, in their opposition to Operation Kraai, banned Dutch aircraft from their airspace, the British government authorised the Dutch airline KLM to route its flights from Amsterdam to Batavia (now Jakarta) through Mauritius. The route was Amsterdam-Khartoum-Mauritius-Batavia, and the aircraft used was a Lockheed Constellation fitted with extra fuel tanks. The leg from Mauritius to Batavia, a distance of 5527 kms, took 15 hours 15 minutes, and was the longest overwater flight in the world at the time and for a long time to come. Each flight, outbound or return, was an adventure and an extraordinary piece of navigational achievement, conducted without any reference to a surface radio station – it was just water all the way. There were no GPS in those days. The technical staff of KLM still look back with pride at those flights. So did the old-timers at Plaisance Airport.

Liberated colonies: post-independence performance

Were there any problems? In one country, India, the problem happened even before Independence. In 1946 it had become clear in India that the Atlee government in Britain was serious about granting independence. On 15 March 1946 Prime Minister Atlee informed Parliament about that decision and announced that a Cabinet Mission would be going over immediately to discuss the matter with Indian leaders. In India, the Congress Party found it necessary to elect a leader who would take on the role of Prime Minister. Mahatma Gandhi himself did not plan on holding any government post. Of the 16 State representatives in the Congress Committee, 13 voted for Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel for the role. In a palace coup, Mahatma Gandhi, taking advantage of his enormous popularity among the masses, asked Patel to stand down in favour of Jawaharlal Nehru, which he very obediently did.

Once jokingly say that he had done so because Jawaharlal Nehru spoke English better; if that is really true, then his decision would only have been a transitory one, just for the duration of the final phase of negotiations and the initial phase of government. Mahatma Gandhi had reportedly called for the dissolution of the Congress Party after Independence. Whatever may be the truth, Mahatma Gandhi was himself killed within six months of Independence, but the country is still grappling with the consequences of his deci-

sion.

In Pakistan the first Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan was assassinated in 1951. President Iskander Mirza assumed dictatorial powers, only to hand them over to the military chief General Ayub Khan, who ruled the country as a dictator under martial law for more than ten years. Since then, military governments have been alternating with civil ones every few years.

In Nigeria, a military coup overturned the government of the first Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, assassinating him. In that country also there have been military takeovers every now and then.

In Ghana, freedom fighter Dr Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown while he was on a State Visit to China. The Ghanaian embassy there refused to help him, saying that their allegiance was to the Government of the day.

In Zanzibar, which had been granted independence as a constitutional monarchy in 1963, the African majority rebelled against the Arab sultan and overthrew him. Soon thereafter the country joined Tanganyika to form the Republic of Tanzania. One self-styled Field Marshal O'Kello was involved in these changes.

In Uganda, independent since 1962, Prime Minister Milton Obote suspended the Constitution in 1964 and assumed full powers as President, abolishing the post of Prime Minister; in his turn he was overthrown in 1971 by military officer Idi Amin Dada, who ruled with an iron hand for eight long years. In 1972 he expelled 40,000 ethnic Indians with pre-Independence British passports. It cannot be said that these refugees were received with open arms in Britain, but today they are a thriving community. Many of them are business magnates and some are members of Parliament and even of the Government. In Uganda, life under the dictatorship of Amin Dada was hard; he was eventually expelled from the country following a short war (dubbed the War of Liberation in Uganda) waged by Tanzania's President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania.

Our neighbours the Malagasy Republic and the Seychelles have also experienced the process of coups.

British Empire's dissolution: Mauritius stands out

Coming to our own jewel of an island that Mauritius is, large-hearted Prime Minister Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam forgave those who had bitterly opposed the Independence of the country and installed solid democratic rule, even inviting them to join the government for some time. For the flag of the country, he chose the colours red, blue, yellow and green, these being party colours, laid out in horizontal stripes strictly in the numerical order of seats won by the contesting parties, namely the Labour Party, the Parti Mauricien, the IFB and the CAM.

SSR followed the same principle for the pictures on currency notes, namely himself, leader of the Labour Party, for the Rs 2000 note, Sir Gaetan Duval, leader of the Parti Mauricien, for the Rs 1000 note, Sookdeo Bissoondoyal, leader of the IFB, for the Rs 500 note and Sir Abdool Razack Mohamed, leader of the CAM, for the Rs 200 notes. He did not forget about long-time political fighter Renganaden Seeneevassen, even though he had already passed away, to whom he assigned the Rs 100 note. He also assigned other notes to leaders Jules Koenig and Jean Ah-Chuen.

When a student-led movement under the name of the MMM arose to throw a spanner in the works, SSR did not, as Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew might have done, crush them outright. He tolerated them on until they replaced him outright in 1982. They are still around, but the process of government change has remained democratic all through these years. Mauritius remains the one bright star in the entire British Empire dissolution process.

The Wind of Change has on the whole been gentle to Mauritius. Any administration seen as less than satisfactory came about through the free and fair choice of the electorate, and no one can complain.

Paramanund Soobarah



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

Our Complex World Is A Marvel

After reading my article in last week's issue of this paper, about 'The Future of Life' which was the theme of the 'Nobel Prize Dialogue' held in Japan in March, a reader from the US sent me the following post: 'I have tried to understand some questions about life. Though I tend to believe in the Darwinian theory of evolution, yet I marvel at the almost perfect outcome of environment, natural forces, vegetation, animal and human life on earth. DNA, genome and cellular structures etc. are so complex that it's so hard to imagine their evolution in their own way over billions of years.'

I was not surprised that an engineer should 'marvel' at how complex life has evolved almost to perfection from the interplay of several factors, through processes which would appear to have unfolded 'in their own way.' By which is presumably meant without any guidance from any known entity or 'Intelligent Designer' aka God, which those opposed to Darwin's Theory of Evolution are staunch proponents of, calling themselves the creationists.

The big flaw in the creation thesis is that it postulates *only* a 'creator' – as do other similar belief systems – whereas in front of our very eyes what we observe is that existence pans out in continuously repeating cycles of creation-sustenance-destruction. For example, all that is made of matter, star or living things like plant and animal, is born or 'created', lives or is sustained for some period of time, then dies or is 'destroyed.' From the tiniest organism like a virus or a bacterium to the largest star, it is the same cycle that they undergo.

However, that is another, equally fascinating matter. Our focus here is on how the wonders of the natural world manifest evidence of complex design – exactly what engineers themselves are used to, as they build up complex and equally marvellous structures starting from simple materials that are assembled step by step to produce infrastructure such as buildings and bridges. The latter are my favourite objects of admiration, though I feel rather ill at ease when I look down below at the vast expanse of water. So, while walking on the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco or the Brooklyn Bridge in New York, for example, I have concentrated my sight on the magnificence of the steel structures and marvelled too at their complex design!

The foremost contemporary protagonist of Darwin's Theory is the British evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins who elaborated on the subject in his first book 'The Selfish Gene' published in 1975. He followed this up with a second book in 1986, 'The Blind Watchmaker'. Stating that 'The problem is one of complex design', he proceeded to demonstrate how 'The complexity of living organisms is matched by the elegant efficiency of their apparent design,' his aim being to 'convey something of the sheer wonder of biological complexity.' In other words, how starting from seemingly simpler structures like molecules

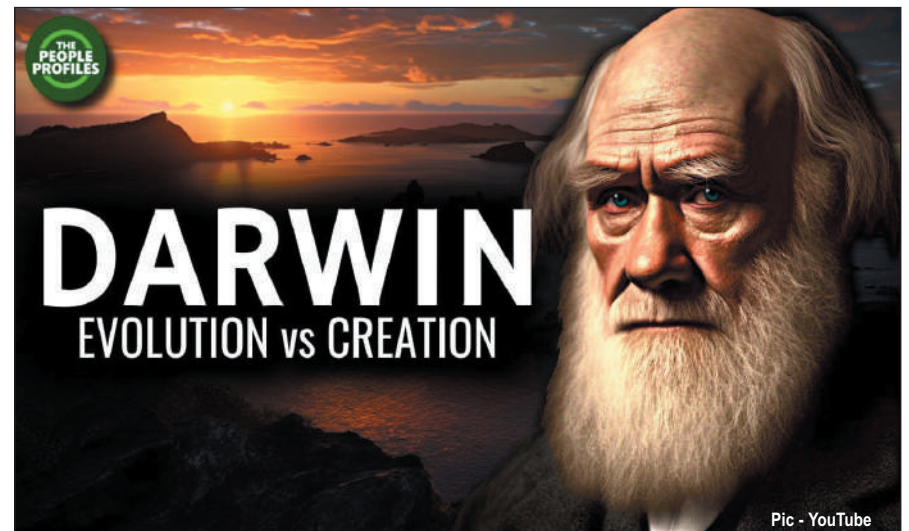
nature arrived at complex organisms like plants and what is considered to be the summum bonum of evolution, human beings. He aimed to 'convey something of the sheer wonder of biological complexity.'

In that book he explored 'how the unconscious, automatic, blind yet essentially non-random process of natural selection discovered by Darwin is the only answer to the most important questions of all: why do we exist? What makes us know how we are? Is there some grand design at work?'

In his third book, 'River Out Of Eden' (1995) Dawkins lays out the scheme whereby a 'seemingly innocent property' namely 'an ability to self-replicate; that is, the object is able to use the surrounding materials to make exact copies of itself, including replicas of such minor flaws in copying as may occasionally arise.' This build-up from simplicity to complexity occurs by crossing what he calls successive thresholds that can be schematically summarized as follows:

- **Threshold 1** – Replicator Threshold: Self-replicating system + rudimentary hereditary random variation + occasional mistakes in copying.
- **Threshold 2** – Phenotype Threshold: phenotypes survive because of phenotype availability.
- **Threshold 3** – Replicator Team Threshold: cells harbouring a conducive environment put together by a consortium of genes working together.
- **Threshold 4** – Many Cells Threshold
- **Threshold 5** – High-speed Information Processing Threshold: neurons – nervous system threshold.
- **Threshold 6** – Consciousness or Conscious Awareness Threshold.
- **Threshold 7** – Language Threshold.
- **Threshold 8** – Cooperative Technology Threshold.
- **Threshold 9** – Radio Threshold.
- **Threshold 10** – Space Travel Threshold. 'Phenotype' refers to the observable, complex 'finished product' e.g. human being made from the interaction of its genes with the surrounding environment.

It is interesting how, as a biologist, he describes lan-



“The big flaw in the creation thesis is that it postulates *only* a 'creator' – as do other similar belief systems – whereas in front of our very eyes what we observe is that existence pans out in continuously repeating cycles of creation-sustenance-destruction. For example, all that is made of matter, star or living things like plant and animal, is born or 'created', lives or is sustained for some period of time, then dies or is 'destroyed.' From the tiniest organism like a virus or a bacterium to the largest star, it is the same cycle that they undergo...”

guage: 'the networking system by which brains (as they are called on this planet) exchange information with sufficient intimacy to allow the development of a cooperative technology.'

The 'replicator' is the molecule of DNA which has now become part of our common parlance, so that we often hear expressions like 'it's hardwired in your DNA' or 'it's in your genes.' Everybody, well almost, knows that the characteristics we inherit from our parents are carried or transmitted by our genes, though not everybody may know that genes are actually made up of molecules of DNA. They are found in what is called the nucleus which is to be found at the centre of the cell, whose idealized shape in diagrams is spherical but actually it varies from organ to organ. In fact, the first lesson we learn in biology is that the cell is the fundamental unit of life.' Like, for example, a brick is the fundamental unit of any building. Just as bricks placed together according to a certain order or design and are polished over by a layer of cement to give the building its aesthetic look, so too are living things made up of cells (which DNA has replicated), which are then polished over or covered by a skin to give it an appealing look. But, aha, the skin too is made up of cells!

And that is the wonder of nature, of the complexity that arises out of simplicity. Surely, we owe it to ourselves to be in awe of such wonder...

Gayanath Mandir

Royal Road, Bon Accueil - Reg. No: 2198

Annual General Meeting

Gayanath Mandir will hold its Annual General Meeting on **Sunday, 4th May 2025 at 14:00** at the seat of Gayanath Mandir Bon Accueil.

AGENDA:

1. Reading and approval of the Minutes of the last AGM
2. President's Report
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Amendments to Rules and Regulations
5. Matters Arising

6. Election of the New Management Committee

Members wishing to express interest in serving as executive members are requested to submit their written applications to the Secretary by **26th April 2025**.

In the event a quorum is not met, a second meeting will be convened with the same agenda within 15 days.

Gayanath Mandir

Secretary

ROAD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TECHNICAL AND OTHER STAFF UNION (RDATOSU)

The Annual General Meeting of Road Development Authority Technical and Other Staff Union (RDATOSU) will be held on 10 May 2025 at 10.30 am at View Lounge Restaurant, Palma.

AGENDA:

1. Reading & Approval of last AGM.
2. Matter Arising.
3. President's Report
4. Finance.
5. Amendments to rules (if any) and Motions.
6. Reshufflement (if any)
7. AOB
8. Speeches by Honorary Guests.

Dr Pritish Gupta QUEDOU -- Secretary

Travellers have dubbed Istanbul the 'world's most expensive' airport

While most food items are more expensive at any airport, travellers around the globe have dubbed this airport as the 'world's most expensive', according to a report by the Mirror. At Istanbul Airport, travellers have claimed that the notorious pricing has made their eyes water.

They claimed that the airport sells the most basic food items at premium prices. With a beer selling for £15 and one banana being sold at £5. The main airport in Turkey sees an average footfall of 220,000 passengers every day and travellers have widely considered its high prices outrageous, especially in the food and beverage category.

Sky-high prices

According to Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera, Istanbul Airport is the 'most expensive airport' in Europe for food and drinks. One Italian writer described his experience of buying 90 gram lasagna being sold for £21.

"It looks more like a piece of brick with a sprinkling of what looks like grated cheese and a pseudo-basil leaf," he said, adding that the quality of the food did not match the exorbitant pricing.

Even pocket-friendly fast food chains like McDonald's and Burger King sell their staple dishes at sky-high prices.

'The prices are ridiculous'

One stunned traveller even took to Reddit to ask why the prices were so high at the airport. "The prices are



Istanbul Airport food prices have shocked passengers, with some items costing up to four times more than other airports. Pic - The New York Post

more than exaggerated, with all respect to Istanbul, they are ridiculous. They are from 2 to 4 times(!) higher than at Frankfurt Airport. The terminal is just amazing and magnificent, however the prices unfortunately made the experience somewhat worse," he said.

Others compared the prices at the airport with other in the US and were confused about its steep pricing. "They know people will pay. My sister was in Dalaman recently and said two Big Mac meals were around 40 euros or Rs 2054. I was in the USA a few days back and LaGuardia and Orlando MCO were quite reasonable on prices as airports go," said one of them.

Russian, Belarusian ambassadors not invited to German parliament's WWII memorial event

The German parliament has kept the ambassadors of Russia and Belarus off its guest list for a special sitting on May 8 marking the 80th anniversary of the end of World War Two in Europe, a spokesperson for the legislature said on Thursday.

The decision highlights discomfort in Germany over how to address the role of Russia in liberating Europe from Nazi terror during the anniversary year given that President Vladimir Putin has drawn on the legacy of World War Two to justify his invasion of Ukraine.

The Bundestag spokesperson referred to an assessment by the federal government in a statement explaining the move: "This assessment led to the ambassadors of the Russian Federation and Belarus, among others, not being invited," it said.

Representatives of other embassies will join German lawmakers for the event in the Bundestag's plenary chamber that will commemorate the end of the war and with it, the end of Nazi Germany's campaign of violence and genocide in Europe.

Guests from abroad were not invited, the spokesperson said.

On Wednesday, Russian ambassador Sergey Nechayev attended a commemorative event in the eastern town of Seelow despite a government warning about Moscow's efforts to "instrumentalise" events marking the 80th anniversary.

The commemoration marked the Battle of the Seelow Heights, one of the final battles in the war before the Soviet army's march on Berlin and Germany's capitulation in May 1945. At least 30,000 Soviet soldiers were killed in one of the hardest fought battles for the Red Army, which was made up of Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians among others.

On Wednesday, Russia's state RIA news agency cited Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova as saying the German idea of expelling Russian and Belarusian diplomats from the anniversary events was an insult by the "ideological heirs and direct descendants" of those who carried out Hitler's killings.

UN nuclear watchdog says it should be involved in US-Iran nuclear talks

The UN nuclear watchdog should play a role in nuclear talks between Tehran and Washington, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Rafael Grossi said on Thursday, ahead of a second round of talks between the U.S. and Iran.

Grossi, who arrived in Tehran on Wednesday, held discussions with Iran's foreign minister and nuclear chief over how the IAEA can support Iran-U.S. nuclear talks. US President Donald Trump has threatened to bomb

Iran if the talks fail.

"I am also in contact with the American negotiator to see how the agency can be a bridge between Iran and the U.S., and help achieve a positive outcome in the negotiations," Grossi said, adding that verification by the IAEA would be required to make any nuclear deal valid.

In 2018, Trump withdrew the U.S. from a 2015 nuclear pact between Iran and major world powers, leading Iran to subsequently surpass that deal's uranium enrichment limits and limit the IAEA's oversight.

In February, the IAEA released a report saying the current situation is "of serious concern" as Tehran is enriching uranium to up to 60% purity, near weapons grade. Tehran has long denied seeking nuclear weapons.

Bangladesh model accused of blackmailing Saudi envoy

Bangladesh police said Thursday a former beauty queen arrested this month had attempted to honey-trap the former Saudi ambassador in an attempt to extort \$5 million from the envoy.

Meghna Alam, 30, was initially held without charge under the South Asian nation's controversial law which permits indefinite detention of suspects.

Police spokesman Muhammad Talebur Rahman told AFP that Alam had now been charged with extortion over the alleged blackmail scheme.

Another senior police official told AFP on condition of anonymity that Alam and others hatched a plan to coerce the diplomat into handing over the money.

"Bangladesh has the highest number of expatriate workers in Saudi Arabia. The government doesn't want to jeopardise diplomatic ties," the officer added.

Saudi Arabia is a constant donor of financial and humanitarian aid to Bangladesh and its more than two million Bangladeshi workers are the largest cohort of



Model Meghna Alam arrested in Bangladesh, accused of blackmailing Saudi ambassador. Pic - rozanaspokesman.in

foreign labourers in the kingdom.

Alam appeared without legal counsel during a court hearing on Thursday and rejected the allegation brought against her, urging her arrest to be nullified.

The Daily Star newspaper reported Alam as saying she had been contacted by the diplomat, who had asked her to commence a relationship.

Her father, Badrul Alam, has also said "the ambassador and Meghna were in a relationship".

"My daughter refused his marriage proposal because he already has a wife and children," he told AFP following the arrest.

The Saudi embassy in Dhaka did not respond to queries Thursday.

Police said after Alam's arrest on April 9 that the model, a former winner of the Miss Earth Bangladesh beauty pageant, had been accused of "disrupting state security" and "prejudicing the country's financial interests".

Her detention under the Special Powers Act was criticised by rights groups.

Satellite images on Google Maps show China's growing submarine fleet near Taiwan



Satellite image of Qingdao First Submarine Base in China. Pic – The Daily Guardian

New satellite images on Google Maps have revealed China's growing submarine power, showing at least six nuclear-powered submarines at a navy base near Qingdao, The US Sun reported.

The base, known as the First Submarine Base, is located about 18 km east of Qingdao, along the Yellow Sea. Its strategic position reportedly offers China swift access to key waters, including the East China Sea and the Sea of Japan.

Australian naval analyst Alex Luck shared the images on X, saying they show

five nuclear-powered submarines armed with conventional weapons. These include two Type 091 submarines, two Type 093A submarines, and one unidentified vessel, the report added.

Luck said the unidentified submarine might be in the process of being scrapped, as maintenance work is going on at a nearby site.

Also visible in the images is China's only Type 092 ballistic missile submarine, which has since been replaced by the newer Type 094.

The publication said there are reports that China lost one of its newest nuclear-powered attack submarines, the Type 041, after it reportedly sank at a shipyard in May or June last year.

The report quoted Chinese navy captain Wen Xuexing as saying in June last year, "Now, the country's submarine force development comprises both nuclear-powered and conventional boats, with nuclear-powered being the main focus."

Taiwan prepares for Chinese attack

As tensions rise, Taiwan has started 14 days of military exercises to prepare for a possible attack from China. These drills are part of Taiwan's annual Han Kuang war games.

The first part includes computer-based drills using a US system to prepare for a worst-case situation, a full Chinese invasion. The drills also include "grey zone" situations, where China uses pressure without launching a full war.

Taiwan will also test new weapons like

M1A2T tanks, HIMARS rocket systems, and anti-ship missile systems. The live-fire part of the drills will happen in July.

Taiwan's defence minister Wellington Koo said this year's drills are based on "a hypothetical invasion by China in 2027."

Recently, China carried out its own two-day military drills near Taiwan, including live-fire exercises. Satellite pictures showed large hybrid vessels that could form floating bridges to help tanks and soldiers land on Taiwan's shores.

Some experts had doubts about whether China could cross the Taiwan Strait quickly enough to invade. But this new bridge system may help China get troops across faster.

These large barges have legs that fix them to the seabed and are similar to the floating harbours used by Allied forces on D-Day in 1944.

China is also building at least five huge troop-carrying barges. Experts believe these could be used to transport tanks and the 1.2 million troops that might be needed for an invasion of Taiwan.

World's wealthiest man 'recruits' women on X to build 'legion' of children

Elon Musk is reportedly leveraging his social media platform, X, to approach women and convince them to have his children, in a personal mission to combat what he views as a global population crisis.

According to a new Wall Street Journal report, Musk believes it is his "duty to make new humans" and has gone to great lengths to fulfil this vision. The report details how Musk uses X to initiate interactions -- ranging from flirtatious to intellectual -- which sometimes escalate into direct proposals: would they consider having his child?

One woman who reportedly entered such an arrangement is conservative influencer Ashley St. Clair. After Musk began engaging with her posts on X, the two began privately messaging. Their connection deepened -- St. Clair visited Musk's offices, entered into a relationship with Musk, and gave birth to their son, Romulus, in fall 2023.

Following the birth, Musk's associate and longtime fixer Jared Birchall offered St. Clair a proposed NDA: \$15 million upfront, plus \$100,000 per month until the child turns 21 -- in exchange for her silence. St. Clair declined the deal and later told Birchall, in a recorded phone call, "I don't want my son



Elon Musk's personal mission: Combat global population decline. Pic - TOI

to feel like he's a secret." After WSJ contacted Musk for comment, St. Clair claims she received only \$20,000 -- a fraction of the original offer.

The report also suggests that Musk may have fathered more than the 14 children publicly acknowledged, though the exact number is unknown. Behind the scenes, sources describe a tightly controlled and secretive operation, with Birchall at its core. He not only manages Musk's family office but also serves as CEO of Neuralink and is a partner in

Musk's AI venture, xAI.

Birchall's role reportedly includes drafting legal agreements, handling financial arrangements, and mediating relationships with the mothers of Musk's children. In one case, he warned St. Clair that pursuing legal action "always, always leads to a worse outcome for that woman than what it would have been otherwise."

Musk's so-called "pronatalist" mission, which he frames as essential to civilization's survival, is marked by secrecy and tight control. Speaking at a Saudi investment forum in 2023, Musk stated, "A collapsing birthrate is the biggest danger civilization faces by far. If people don't have more kids, we're doomed."

His vision reportedly includes building a "legion" of children -- his term -- with intelligent and genetically desirable women. He has even discussed the use of surrogacy and compound-style living for future mothers, according to sources. Women who agree to participate, like Neuralink executive Shvonne Zilis -- who has had four children with Musk -- are said to receive high levels of support and discretion.

But those who resist, like St. Clair or pop artist Grimes, who has been involved in a custody dispute with Musk, often face legal and financial pressure.

"There's a whole ecosystem around keeping this quiet," one source said. "It's not just about privacy -- it's about control."

Harvard may lose foreign student enrollment, Trump administration explains why

The Trump administration has escalated its actions against Harvard University, warning that the institution may lose its ability to enrol foreign students unless it complies with federal demands regarding visa holders.

The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued the warning, stating that Harvard must provide information on specific foreign students suspected of involvement in "illegal and violent activities." Failure to do so by April 30 could result in the loss of the university's ability to host international students.

In a further move, DHS Secretary Kristi Noem announced the termination of two

grants totaling more than \$2.7 million previously awarded to Harvard.

"And if Harvard cannot verify it is in full compliance with its reporting requirements, the university will lose the privilege of enrolling foreign students," Noem said in a statement.

A Harvard spokesperson acknowledged receiving the letter from DHS and confirmed the university was aware of the grant cancellations and increased scrutiny over its foreign student visa holders.

The spokesperson added that Harvard "will not surrender its independence or relinquish its constitutional rights," while empha-

sizing the university's commitment to complying with all applicable laws.

This latest clash between the Trump administration and Harvard comes amid a broader federal crackdown on pro-Palestinian campus protests sparked by Israel's military offensive in Gaza following the October 2023 Hamas attack.

President Donald Trump has characterized the protests--many of which include foreign students--as antisemitic and sympathetic to Hamas. Several Jewish groups participating in the demonstrations have rejected these accusations, stating that their advocacy focuses on Palestinian rights and opposi-

tion to Israel's military actions.

As part of the crackdown, the administration has reportedly deported some foreign demonstrators and revoked hundreds of visas nationwide.

"With a \$53.2 billion endowment, Harvard can fund its own chaos -- DHS won't," Noem said, accusing the university of fostering an "anti-American, pro-Hamas ideology."

In response, Harvard stated that it remains committed to combating antisemitism and all forms of prejudice on campus, while also defending academic freedom and the right to protest.

From the Pages of History - MT 70 Years Ago

5th Year No 300

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 27 May, 1960

• Religion should be rule of life not a casual incident in it. — Benjamin Disraeli

Editorial

Needs of the Moment

The Government's acceptance of Hon JN Roy's timely motion on the Island's housing needs places a heavy, if not the heaviest, responsibility on the shoulders of the Minister of Housing. It is undoubtedly a promise which binds in no uncertain terms the entire Government. On this promise given solemnly in the Legislative Council hinges the future of the Labour Party, as well as the survival of parliamentary democracy in Mauritius. JN Roy was perfectly right, at least once since the last general elections, in stressing the social revolution which good housing can bring about in the lives of people who have been wallowing in shanties and slums. It therefore behoves the Labour Party to concentrate all its energies on honouring this pledge which, above all, will rehabilitate the common man now living in the most abject of conditions.

Having now agreed on the housing needs of the country we have to answer two vital questions. First, where to get the money from? And second, how to spend the money? We all know that it is impossible to muster the huge amounts required locally. With the visit of Mr Atkinson and the impression of Mr Macleod on the damage sites, the stage seems to be well set for encouraging reception to our ministerial delegation now en route to London. Mr Macleod himself told us that his government was prepared to give us "swift, substantial and sympathetic help." But unfortunately, the impression just now is that British Government is having second thoughts. Rumour has it that we shall be given the paltry sum of £3.5 million at the current market rate of 6 or 7%. We like to

think that it is just a rumour. If it is not, then we can afford to tell Mr Macleod that the meaning of the words "swift, substantial and systematic" has to be revised. Again, if what we hear 15 is not a rumour we can easily understand what has prompted second thoughts in our benevolent rulers.

Whether we like it or not the whole question of help to underdeveloped areas — immaterial of who gives or who receives the help — is conditioned by the exigencies of international politics. Mauritius counts for little in the great gambles of international politics or the Cold War. Mauritius has no oil, no gold, no tin, no rubber and unfortunately it is not found in the Middle East where every big power is trying to acquire or to keep as much foothold as possible. Everyone knows also that Mauritius can never become a Cyprus. Mauritians must wake up to the fact that they are living in a world where the sympathy of benefactors is often determined by what they can extract from those they help. Be it as it may, it is clear that it is difficult to discern what is the mood now prevailing in the Colonial Office. Our ministers must make it clear that they are not going to London with begging bowls.

From wherever we get money, we must know how to spend intelligently. It's here that the Ministry of Mr Razack Mohamed assumes its real and vital importance. Given the required sums of money, he may well change the face of this country. What are his housing plans? We do not know. We expect that when he comes back, he will tell the country at a press conference and at MBS what his intentions are. Meanwhile we would



Bank be changed and brought up to date. The public has very little faith in it and the procedure seems to be too cumbersome. Now that a new man has come to take charge of it, we hope that there will be a change for the better. Then the Government could channel substantial sums of money through it to the public - of course for

rebuilding and not to pay debt. make some suggestions. He must not follow the beaten track. New settlements and new townships have to be created. He must not provide houses only for the well-to-do as the Town Councils have been doing but he must try to get the workers out of the mud-huts. His target must be: "Not a single straw hut in this place when my term of office ends." It will not be difficult to ensure that every worker gets a house like the one which the **Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee** is about to give to the labourers of the sugar industry.

We would also suggest that the present organisation of the **Mauritius Agricultural**

Because we have to ask for money from B outside, we have been wondering whether our planners have made a big mistake by favouring too much cement contructions. It is well-known that many wooden buildings properly built have been able to resist as terrible a cyclone as Carol. Why therefore should we insist on wasting much of our money on cement? Are we sure that we have thoroughly explored the potentialities of local timber? This is a matter which our Ministers should study in London. At any rate the views of Mr Atkinson will be interesting on this matter. So, we say bon voyage and good luck to our ministers.

Mauritius Times

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Thank you so much.
Mauritius Times

Employment of Women

Some time ago in the Legislative Council, Hon Dr Teeluck complained that female nursing students were recruited instead of male. He emphasized that male students should be given the opportunity to secure these posts.

In our last issue we too protested against that decision. At last Friday's sitting of the Legislative Council, the Member for Poudre d'Or raised that question. He said that it seemed that the pet theory of some people to replace men by women, even in male wards, bade fair to succeed. He pointed out that since last year not only female students have been recruited but nurses have also been posted in some male wards at the Civil Hospital. The Member said that it was not a farsighted policy to appoint women in posts which by right belong to men, especially when scores of male School Certificate holders are without a job. The startling fact about it is that these girls have neither the educational qualifications nor the personality which men candidates usually possess.

Replying to the protests, the Minister of Health, Hon. Forget, said that it was not the intention of his Ministry to replace male nurses by females. It was found necessary to recruit more female students because more nurses were required to attend to babies, children, expectant mothers and orthopaedic cases. Further, he remarked, there was a heavy wastage among female nurses: many of them left their job once they got married.

The public will be pleased with the assurance given by the Minister of Health.



The SICOM Group, a leader in the local Financial Services sector, is currently looking for talented and motivated individuals in the positions below. Join our dynamic team in a fast-evolving insurance and financial services industry. If you're driven, innovative, and ready to grow, we want to hear from you. Shape your future alongside high-performing professionals and build a rewarding career with us!

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Candidates who had already applied for the post in October 2024 are invited to re-submit their application.

Closing Date: Wednesday 30th April 2025

The Company reserves the right to call for interview only the best qualified candidates and not to make any appointment as a result of this advertisement.

YOUR STARS

SAGITTARIUS: NOV 22 - DEC 21

Expect a busy week of messages, errands, and connections. Your words carry weight — use them wisely. Short trips or contracts prove beneficial. An old flame may resurface. Focus on clarity, not closure.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 6, 13, 22, 27, 36

CAPRICORN: DEC 22 - JAN 19

Financial focus intensifies—good time to reassess your budget or negotiate pay. A small win boosts confidence. Relationships, especially with siblings or neighbours, need more effort. Health improves

Lucky Numbers: 5, 8, 17, 23, 28, 34

AQUARIUS: JAN 20 - FEB 18

The spotlight is on *you* this week. A personal project gains traction. Confidence rises — use it to push through hesitations. Love life feels spontaneous. Don't forget to tend to your body's basic needs.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 10, 15, 24, 31, 39

PISCES: FEB 19 - MAR 20

You crave quiet and reflection. Inner work pays off now. Artistic pursuits are especially healing. A hidden issue may come to light — handle it gently. Avoid financial risk. Sleep and meditation are vital.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 11, 18, 20, 26, 33

ARIES: MARCH 21 - APRIL 19

This week demands calm over confrontation. Tensions may rise at work, but diplomacy wins. Financial decisions require caution — avoid impulse buys. A friend may seek your advice. Nurture your health with better rest.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 9, 14, 22, 29, 36

TAURUS: APR 20 - MAY 20

Stability returns in finances. You may hear good news about a delayed project. A romantic relationship deepens through honest conversations. Midweek brings clarity on a personal goal. Stay grounded.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 8, 17, 21, 30, 34

GEMINI: MAY 21 - JUNE 20

Communication is your superpower now. Use it to settle an old misunderstanding. Travel or study plans get a green light. Career moves require more research. Prioritize proper nutrition and mental balance.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 10, 16, 19, 27, 39

CANCER: JUNE 21 - JULY 22

You're more sensitive than usual—shield your peace. A family matter may surface but ends constructively. Financially, hold off on major investments. Creativity peaks — use it in small personal projects.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 7, 15, 20, 28, 33

LEO: JULY 23 - AUG 22

Career shines under spotlight. Use early week momentum to propose or pitch. An authority figure supports your growth.

However, don't ignore your emotional needs.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 11, 18, 23, 31, 38

VIRGO: AUG 23 - SEPT 22

Work and health are your focus. A new method of doing things saves time. Colleagues seek your precision. Romantic energies simmer—let things unfold slowly.

Guard against overthinking by spending time outdoors.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 13, 19, 24, 32, 37

LIBRA: SEPT 23 - OCT 22

The week brings beauty and harmony. Your charm opens doors in love and business. A financial negotiation goes in your favour. But don't ignore subtle signals from your body — take breaks. Creativity is high.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 12, 16, 26, 30, 35

SCORPION: 23 OCT - 21 NOV

Home life draws your attention. Tidy up loose ends around the house or with family. Relationship truths may surface—handle them with maturity. Finances remain steady, but career feels slow. Be patient.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 9, 14, 25, 29, 40



Life Insurance

Pensions

General Insurance

Deposits

Loans & Leasing

Investment



Growing Awareness of Alcohol's Cancer Risk

Public understanding of the link between alcohol consumption and an increased risk of cancer has grown significantly in recent months. A new survey by the Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) of the University of Pennsylvania reveals that 56% of U.S. adults now acknowledge that regularly consuming alcohol raises the likelihood of developing cancer. This marks a notable increase from 40% in a similar survey conducted in September 2024.

The shift in awareness follows an advisory issued by U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy on January 3, 2025. His statement urged updated warning labels on alcoholic beverages, explicitly stating that alcohol consumption increases the risk of at least seven types of cancer, including breast, colon, and liver cancer. The advisory received widespread media attention and has played a significant role in shaping public perception.

Changing attitudes toward alcohol consumption

The survey, conducted between January 30 and February 10, 2025, among 1,700 U.S. adults, highlighted the growing awareness and behavioral shifts in response to recent reports on alcohol's health effects.

Key findings include:

- **48%** reported hearing or reading about alcohol's health risks.
- **46%** specifically recalled the Surgeon General's advisory.
- **29%** stated they were less likely to accept an alcoholic drink at social gatherings.
- **61%** said the reports had no effect on their drinking habits.
- **9%** said they were more likely to drink after reading



the reports.

Although most respondents indicated no change in their drinking habits, nearly one-third of those surveyed reported being less likely to accept alcohol in social settings, suggesting that public health messaging is making an impact.

Other reports on alcohol's health risks

While the Surgeon General's warning was the most widely recognized, other recent reports have reinforced the risks associated with alcohol consumption:

• **In December 2024**, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) reviewed research linking moderate alcohol consumption to increased cancer and cardiovascular disease risks.

• **On January 14, 2025**, a federal report from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration found that even moderate drinking increases the risk of liver disease, cancer, and injuries.

Despite these findings, the survey revealed that few people were aware of these reports compared to the Surgeon General's advisory.

Rethinking the role of alcohol in health

Historically, moderate alcohol consumption -- defined as one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men -- has been associated with certain health benefits. However, emerging research and official advisories emphasize the risks, particularly the link between alcohol and cancer.

When asked about moderate drinking, respondents who had heard of a report on alcohol's effects said:

- **47%** believed moderate alcohol consumption has harmful health effects.
- **25%** believed it has both harmful and beneficial effects.
- **20%** were unsure of the report's conclusions.

The Surgeon General's warning, in particular, has had a measurable impact, influencing nearly one in three Americans to think twice before accepting a drink. As more research emerges, public attitudes toward alcohol may continue to shift toward greater caution.



If you scoop a bucket of water out of the ocean, does it get lower?

Technically, you'd think so. But some things are just too small to measure.

This is a great question Ellis! The short answer is yes, but the change in water level will be extremely tiny. You can actually test this idea at home.

For starters, you'll need a glass of water and a teaspoon. Fill the glass almost to the top, and take note of the water level. Now, carefully remove a teaspoon of water. Can you see the difference in the water level? Maybe you can, but maybe not.

You could repeat this experiment in the kitchen sink, or a bathtub if you have one. The key point is that the water level does drop, but only by a very small amount. If you scoop a teaspoon of water out of the bathtub, you probably won't see the difference with the naked eye.

Millions of buckets

So, let's return to the ocean. It's truly huge, especially compared to a bucket.

Let's say that you have a bucket that fits ten litres. Using the information here, there are about 137 million, million, million buckets of water in the ocean (that is, all of Earth's oceans combined).

I crunched the numbers. If you took a bucket of water from the ocean, the water level would drop by around 0.0000000-



Lizzie Lamont/Shutterstock

000277 millimetre. You can see how small a millimetre is on your school ruler. We don't have anything on Earth that can measure anything this small. For example, this is way, way, way smaller than even a single atom.

So, the more detailed answer to your question is: yes, the water level gets lower, but by such a small amount that we

can't even measure it.

But wait, there's more

Earth is a really interesting place. When you take your bucket of water, all that water is moving through something called the water cycle.

Sea levels are actually constantly changing. Each year, a lot of water evaporates from the ocean. Some of it is

even lost to outer space.

However, most of the evaporated water rains back down directly onto the ocean, or onto the ground, with that water making its way to rivers that eventually flow to the ocean. There is also a lot of water stored underground, and some of it makes its way to the ocean, as well.

So, if you poured your bucket of water onto the ground, eventually it would end up back in the ocean via the water cycle!

A few fun facts

There's a lot to know about water. Some more fun facts (and big numbers):

1. There are 1,500,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 molecules of water (H₂O) in a single drop of water. That's 1.5 million, million, million.

2. The oldest water in the world is estimated to have fallen as rain more than 1.6 billion years ago.

3. Most (about 98%) of the world's fresh, liquid water is underground -- that's why it's called groundwater.

Dylan Irvine

Outstanding Future Researcher - Northern Water Futures, Charles Darwin University



The Cadillac Dealer's Tariff

Trump's Tariff Policy Explained...

A wealthy Cadillac dealer orders a pizza for his family every Friday night.

His family loves pizza from a particular restaurant because it's the best tasting pizza, and the Cadillac dealer likes the price. He's even developed a friendship with the pizza delivery boy who cycles several miles to bring them their pizza.

One day the Cadillac dealer is doing his accounts and has a thought:

"Over the years, I've given the pizza delivery boy thousands of dollars, and yet never once has he bought a Cadillac Escalade from me. How is that fair? This guy is ripping me off."

The more he thinks about it, the more angry he becomes.

"I'm running a massive trade deficit with that kid on that bicycle. He is deliberately not buying my cars to screw me over. I'm a Cadillac dealer, and he's a puny kid on a bike. I hold all the cards. I'm going to put a stop to this."

So, the following Friday night he confronts the delivery boy.

"You have been robbing me for years. I'm subsidising your business with thousands of dollars, and yet you never buy my Escalades. So, I'm going to impose a 50% surcharge on every pizza you deliver to this house, and there's nothing you can do about it!"

The pizza delivery boy looks confused.

"I'm sorry, but I couldn't afford to buy or run a Cadillac Escalade even if I needed one, which I don't."

"I don't care," says the Cadillac dealer. "It's not fair me subsidising you thousands of dollars. Why should I be paying you these subsidies?"

"Because you like my pizza, and that's what they cost. That's not a subsidy. It's called trade," answers the delivery boy.

"Well, it's not trade if you refuse to buy a Cadillac, so I'm going to charge 50% on top of the price of your



pizzas so I get some payback."

"Who are you going to charge?"

"My family!"

"How's that going to work?"

"They're going to be livid! They'll be so angry that the pizza is going to cost 50% more that they'll stop telling me to buy them from you. They'll start making their own pizzas, and you'll go bust!"

"Can they make pizzas this good? Do they even want to?"

"That's not the point!"

"And how many more Cadillacs will you sell if we go bust?"

"Who cares? At least I won't be being ripped off by a mere pizza delivery boy on a bicycle!"

"OK. Here's your pizza. Keep the tip. It was nice doing business with you."

* * *

A Scottish Misunderstanding

A Scot entered a retail store with his zipper down. A lady cashier said to him, "Your barracks door is open."

This is not a phrase Scots use, so he went on his way looking a bit puzzled. When he was about to finish his shopping, a guy approached him and informed him that his fly was open. He zipped up and afterwards intentionally got in the line to check out where the cashier who had told him that his barracks was open was seated. He was planning to have a little fun with her.

When he reached her counter, he said, "When you saw that my barracks were open, did you see a Scottish soldier standing in there in attention?"

The lady thought for a while and said, "No, I didn't, all I saw was a disabled veteran sitting on two duffel bags."

* * *

Lottery Winner's Lament

A Scot bought two tickets for the lottery. He won two million pounds.

A newspaper reporter asked him how he felt after the big win.

"Disappointed, my other ticket didn't win anything," he replied.

Insufficient Funds

A young student came running to his father. "Dad, you gave me wrong advice," she cried. "You told me to put my money in that famous bank, and now that big bank is in trouble."

"What are you saying? That's one of the largest banks in the world, surely there must be some mistake," he said.

"I don't think so, they have returned one of my cheques with a note saying (insufficient funds)."

* * *

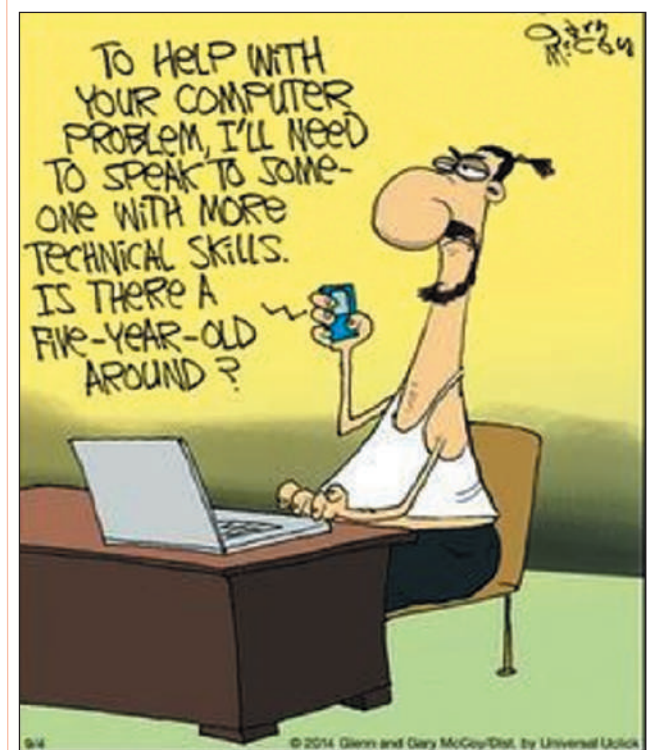
A Day at the Race Course

Two female teachers took a group of students from grades 1, 2, and 3 for a field trip to Flemington race course to watch horse racing.

When it was time to take the children to the 'bathroom', it was decided that the girls would go with one teacher and the boys would go with the other.

The teacher assigned to the boys was waiting outside the men's toilet when one of the boys came out and told her that none of them could reach the urinal.

Having no choice, she went inside, helped the little boys with their pants, and began hoisting them up one by one, holding on to their 'wee-wees' to direct the flow away from their clothes and shake them dry.



As she lifted one boy up, she couldn't help but notice that he was unusually well endowed. Trying not to show that she was staring at his equipment, the teacher said, "You must be in Grade 3?"

"No ma'am," he replied. "I am the jockey riding Black Caviar in the next race, but I really appreciate your help."

* * *

Looking for directions in the Australian outback is often a tricky business. A salesman asked a farmer for directions to Goombungee.

The farmer said, "Take this road here for about two kilometres and turn left at the hollow log. Keep going for about three kilometres until you reach Riley Dam, then turn left again. About four kilometres down the track, you'll come to a big sign advertising sheep dip — turn left again and keep going."

"And I'll reach Goombungee then?"

"No, that'll just bring you back here. If I give you all the directions at once, it'll only confuse you."



Life can be better...

How to Become an Adult

It's less about age and more about responsibility. Becoming a fully functioning adult can feel like navigating a maze without a map. Thankfully, Jordan Kondrath's "How to Adult: An Illustrated Guide" offers a refreshing and accessible approach to mastering essential life skills. This engaging book uses humour and relatable illustrations to demystify everything from managing your finances to the basics of cooking, social graces, and the crucial practice of self-care. Here are seven key takeaways that offer practical steps towards confident adulting:

- 1. Adulting is less about age and more about responsibility**
Begin cultivating independence by actively managing your budget, maintaining an organized living environment, and thoughtfully planning for your future goals.
- 2. Budgeting is a superpower, not a burden**
Diligently track your income and expenditures,



prioritize setting aside savings, and consciously avoid accumulating unnecessary debt. Utilize helpful apps like Mint or YNAB to streamline this process.

- 3. Cooking at home saves money and your health**
Acquiring basic cooking skills is a fundamental aspect of adulting, offering significant benefits such as saving money, promoting healthier eating habits, and even

impressing your social circle.

- 4. Communication skills can make or break you**
Effective communication, encompassing everything from writing clear emails and negotiating salaries to resolving interpersonal conflicts, is a cornerstone of both personal and professional success.
- 5. Laundry and cleaning are life skills, not chores**
Maintaining a clean and organized living space goes beyond mere aesthetics; it significantly contributes to your mental well-being and prevents the overwhelming feeling of chaos.
- 6. Self-care is not optional**
Prioritize getting adequate sleep, engaging in regular exercise, and nurturing your mental health. Incorporate small but impactful habits like staying hydrated, practicing mindfulness, and setting healthy boundaries.
- 7. No one has it all figured out (and that's okay!)**
Extend patience and understanding towards yourself, learn valuable lessons from your mistakes, and remain adaptable as you navigate life's journey. Adulting is an ongoing process of growth and learning, not a fixed destination.

Stray Thoughts

How to Achieve Happiness?

-- Bertrand Russell

Bertrand Russell's *The Conquest of Happiness* (1930) predates the modern self-help genre by decades and remains one of his most accessible and insightful works. In this excerpt, he explores the deep connection between happiness and our bond with nature:



"Whatever we may wish to think, we are creatures of Earth, our life is part of the life of the Earth; and we draw our nourishment from it just as the plants and animals do. The rhythm of Earth life is slow; autumn and winter are as essential to it as spring and summer, and rest is as essential as motion..."

Russell describes the profound joy of a two-year-old boy encountering nature for the first time:

"The joy that he was experiencing was primitive, simple, and massive. The organic need that was being satisfied is so profound that those in whom it is starved are seldom completely sane."

He contrasts this deep-rooted happiness with fleeting pleasures like gambling and drinking, which leave a person feeling empty. True joy, he argues, comes from reconnecting with the rhythms of nature—whether through love, poetry, or a quiet life in harmony with the Earth:

"A happy life must be to a great extent a quiet life, for it is only in an atmosphere of quiet that true joy can live."

From Bertrand Russell's 'The Conquest of Happiness'

Reflections on Living Well

Here are some insightful observations on navigating life's journey, offering food for thought and practical guidance:

- Embrace risk:** Dare to take risks. Success can lead to leadership, while failure offers invaluable lessons for guiding others.
- Judge by actions:** People's true character is revealed not by their words, but by their deeds. Evaluate them based on their actions.
- The price of greatness:** When you face criticism or hurt, remember that those who bear the sweetest fruits often attract the most stones. It's a testament to your value.
- Seize the moment:** Take all that life offers you, for when life begins to take, it will ultimately take everything, even your last breath.
- Building your path:** The world will inevitably present obstacles to your success. The choice is yours: will you build a wall of resentment or a bridge to overcome them?
- The meaning of overcoming:** Challenges add zest to life; conquering them imbues life with profound meaning.
- No reward without risk:** True joy in victory is only experienced when you've dared to face the possibility of defeat.
- Obstacles as guides:** A life path devoid of obstacles ultimately leads to stagnation and nowhere of significance.
- The past as a visitor:** The past can be a pleasant place to reminisce, but it should never become your permanent residence.
- Focus on the future:** You cannot create a better tomorrow if your mind remains constantly tethered to yesterday.



Continuous growth: If your past accomplishments still overshadow your present efforts, it's a sign you haven't achieved much lately.

Build your own dreams: If you don't actively pursue your own aspirations, you'll likely end up working to fulfill someone else's.

Perspective through effort: You cannot gain a broader perspective and appreciate the wider landscape without making the effort to climb the mountain.

Engage your mind: Don't let your intellect lie dormant; actively use your brain.

The reward of intelligence: You are not compensated merely for possessing intelligence, but for applying it thoughtfully and effectively.

Unused potential as limitation:

Your limitations are not defined by what you lack, but by the potential you possess that remains untapped.

Learning through failure: What you avoid learning intentionally may ultimately teach you a harsh lesson through experience.

Price vs. value: The fundamental difference between a corrupt person and an honest one lies in their core motivation: the corrupt have a price, while the honest possess unwavering values.

The depth of trust: If you deceive someone, don't mistake their trust for foolishness. Understand that they placed a far greater faith in you than you deserved.

The cost of integrity: Honesty is a precious and rare quality; don't expect it from

Oliver Uchenna

How to handle quarrel in marriage

-- Bisi Adewale

The reality of two unique individuals sharing a life often involves the occasional rumble of disagreement. While avoiding conflict entirely is a worthy aspiration, learning to navigate those inevitable storms with grace and respect is paramount to a lasting and healthy union.

The key lies in fighting fair, a concept that moves beyond simply resolving the immediate issue and focuses on preserving the bond and respect between partners. Consider these essential principles when disagreements arise:

The Ground Rules for Fair Fighting:

- 1. Keep it Physicality-Free:** Under no circumstances should a disagreement escalate to physical aggression. Such behavior is destructive and has no place in a loving partnership. Leave physical combat where it belongs – in the realm of fictional drama, not your marriage.
- 2. Guard Your Language:** Foul and abusive language inflicts deep wounds. Choose your words carefully, even in the heat of the moment. Respect your spouse enough to communicate your frustrations without resorting to insults or profanity.
- 3. Divorce and Separation are Off the Table:** The threat of ending the marriage should never be used as a weapon during a quarrel. It breeds fear, insecurity, and undermines the foundation of your commitment.
- 4. Focus on the Issue, Not Personal Attacks:** Avoid condemning, criticizing, or comparing your spouse to



others. Such comparisons are hurtful and unproductive. Address the specific behavior or issue at hand, not your partner's character.

- 5. Leave the Past in the Past:** Dredging up old grievances only clouds the current issue and reignites past hurts. Focus on resolving the present disagreement without bringing previous quarrels into the mix.
- 6. Speak Truthfully and Kindly:** Honesty is crucial, but so is the manner in which you deliver it. Express your feelings and concerns truthfully, but do so with love and respect, avoiding shouting or raising your voice.
- 7. Protect Your Shared Vulnerabilities:** The secrets and confidences your spouse has shared with you are sacred. Never reveal them to outsiders, especially during a conflict. This betrayal of trust can be deeply damaging.
- 8. Embrace Dialogue, Shun Silence:** The silent treatment is a form of emotional withdrawal that creates distance and resentment. Keep the lines of communica-

tion open, even when it's difficult. Continue talking lovingly until you can find a resolution.

9. Look Inward First: The Self-Blame Approach: Resist the urge to solely blame your spouse. Instead, honestly assess your own role in the situation. Acknowledge your errors without self-righteousness. Remember, it takes two to tango, and humility in admitting your mistakes fosters reconciliation.

10. Apologize Sincerely and Generously: A genuine apology can be incredibly powerful in diffusing tension and healing hurt. Be willing to say "I'm sorry" and mean it.

11. Break the Ice of Malice: Don't let resentment fester. Make a conscious effort to break the cycle of negativity through a kind gesture, a gentle touch, or a sincere attempt to reconnect.

12. Cultivate Positive Thoughts: Actively nurture positive thoughts about your spouse and your marriage. Reject thoughts of divorce or separation, and instead focus on the strength and potential of your bond.

13. Embrace Forgiveness: Holding onto hurt and resentment only harms you and your marriage. Make a conscious decision to forgive your spouse when you have been wronged.

14. Harness the Power of Auto-Suggestion: Speak positively to yourself about your spouse. Consciously repeat affirming statements like, "Why am I fighting? I gain nothing. I choose peace and allow love to guide us." This internal dialogue can release anger and create space for reconciliation.

Remember, the goal is not to avoid disagreements entirely, but to navigate them with love, respect, and a shared commitment to a lasting partnership.

Nature's Cure

Guduchi (Giloy): A Treasure Trove of Health Benefits

Guduchi, or Giloy, the "queen of herbs," stands as a testament to the enduring wisdom of Ayurveda. Revered by ancient physicians like Charaka and Susruta, this herb, whose Sanskrit name translates to "imperishable," has been a cornerstone of traditional medicine for centuries. Legend even weaves a divine origin, claiming it arose from the celestial nectar sprinkled by Lord Indra.

"Guduchi, also known as *Tinospora cordifolia*, is a powerhouse of health benefits deeply rooted in traditional Ayurvedic practices," says Ayush Aggarwal, Founder of Rasayanam. "In ancient times, Guduchi was consumed in various forms to harness its healing potential. Ayurvedic texts extolled its virtues, emphasizing its ability to balance the three doshas — Vata, Pitta, and Kapha."

Swagatika Das, Co-Founder of Nat Habit, highlights its blood-purifying properties: "In the realm of Ayurvedic wisdom, Giloy stands as a revered powerhouse with its *Raktashodhaka* properties, effectively removing impurities and empowering the body to combat diverse skin ailments. The bitter taste, referred to as *Tikta* in Ayurveda, serves as a testament to its purifying prowess, detoxifying and cleansing the blood, strengthening liver health and contributing to flawless skin."

Here's a breakdown of the key

BENEFITS OF GILOY/GUDUCHI POWDER

HERBAL ARENA



1.Immunity Booster

2.Relieves stress

3.Reduce respiratory Infections

4.Boosts Liver Function

5.Improves Digestion

6.Health Rejuvenator

7.Anti Ageing Properties

8.Anti-Inflammatory Properties

9.Brings down fever

10.Promotes Sexual Health

benefits:

- Immune Boosting:** Giloy is a potent immunomodulator, enhancing the body's natural defense mechanisms.
- Detoxification:** It supports liver function, aiding in the elimination of toxins.
- Anti-inflammatory:** Its anti-inflammatory properties are beneficial for managing inflammatory conditions.
- Antioxidant Rich:** It combats oxidative stress, contributing to overall well-being and potentially slowing down aging.
- Cholesterol Reduction:** Giloy can help lower cholesterol levels.
- Diabetes Management:** The root of Giloy can help manage diabetes.
- Respiratory Health:** It is effective in treating upper respiratory tract infections,

particularly in children.

- Digestive Health:** Giloy aids in digestion and addresses various digestive issues.

How to Consume Guduchi

Ancient practices utilized Guduchi in various forms, including decoctions, powders, and medicated ghee formulations. Today, modern applications make consumption even more accessible.

- Decoctions:** Boil Guduchi stems in water to extract its active compounds.
- Powders:** Mix Guduchi powder with honey or warm water.
- Capsules or Tablets:** Convenient for consistent and measured intake.

Precautions and Considerations

While Giloy is generally safe, certain

individuals should exercise caution:

- Pregnant or Breastfeeding Women:** Limited research necessitates consultation with a healthcare professional.
- Diabetic Patients:** Giloy may lower blood sugar levels, requiring careful monitoring.
- Autoimmune Disorders:** Individuals with autoimmune conditions should consult their healthcare provider, as Giloy can stimulate the immune system.
- Immunosuppressive Treatments:** Giloy should be avoided by people undergoing immunosuppressive treatments.

"It is crucial to recognise that not everyone is a candidate for Giloy consumption. Individuals with autoimmune disorders or those undergoing immunosuppressive treatments should exercise caution, as Guduchi may stimulate the immune system. Pregnant or lactating women should consult with healthcare practitioners before incorporating Guduchi into their routines to ensure its compatibility with their unique circumstances," says Das.

Guduchi's versatility extends to Panchakarma procedures and both internal and external therapeutic applications. This "imperishable" herb continues to be a valuable asset in the pursuit of holistic health and well-being.

Bolly Bytes

Fans shower Divyanka Tripathi with coconut water and fruits as she battles dengue

Divyanka Tripathi, known for her role in *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein*, is currently recovering from dengue. Fans have been sending her an outpouring of love and thoughtful gifts, including coconut water and fruits.

Sharing a glimpse of the support on Instagram, Divyanka posted a video thanking fans: "You guys are so adorable for sending me such thoughtful gifts — thank you so much. But I've received so much coconut water — please don't send any more for the next two days," she said with a smile. She captioned the post, "Thanks for the thoughtfulness," with a red heart emoji.

She had earlier revealed her diagnosis by posting a photo of a thermometer reading 102.3°F, alongside pictures from a recent award function, writing, "Awards, honors, love, duties, responsibilities... Life is short. Let's make the most of it." She later confirmed, "For the curious ones... Dengue it is. Cheers to knowing and get-



ting better."

On the work front, Divyanka was last seen in the web series *The Magic of Shiri*, directed by Birsa Dasgupta. Rumors also suggest she may soon reunite with her *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein* co-star Karan Patel for an upcoming project, though nothing has been officially announced.

Rashmika Mandanna launches uplifting social media series 'Rashmika & Ru'

Rashmika Mandanna is set to bring stories of joy and hope to social media through a new original IP, *Rashmika & Ru* (R&R), in collaboration with storytelling platform Terribly Tiny Tales and Collective Artists Network.

At the heart of the project is Ru, an animated character inspired by Rashmika's spirit — radiating warmth, kindness, and emotional connection. The goal of R&R is to offer a refreshing escape from negativity online, replacing doom-scrolling with uplifting content.

The initiative kicks off with a comic series celebrating everyday moments, companionship, emotional honesty, and acts of kindness.

"As a person, I believe in joy and kindness as pillars. Ru is an extension of me, reminding us to be gentler with ourselves and others," Rashmika said in a statement. "TTT felt like the perfect collaborators for this vision."



Anuj Gosalia, Founder of Terribly Tiny Tales, added, "Ru represents more than joy — she stands for authenticity, comfort, and emotional connection. *Rashmika & Ru* is a gentle reminder that kindness is powerful."

The IP launches with a comic series, with more formats expected to follow.

Beyond Glamour: Mona Singh, Vikrant Massey & Others Redefine Bollywood Leads

The shimmering world of Bollywood has long been defined by a specific archetype of the lead actor — often young, conventionally attractive, and commanding significant screen time. However, a refreshing and significant shift is underway. Actors like Mona Singh, Vikrant Massey, Shefali Shah, and Vijay Varma are challenging this traditional notion, proving that true leadership on screen lies not in glamour or sheer minutes, but in the power and authenticity of their performances.

This welcome change is significantly influenced by the boom of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms and a discerning audience hungry for narratives that mirror the complexities of real life. These platforms have provided a fertile ground for character-driven stories, allowing actors to delve into nuanced roles that might have been relegated to the sidelines in mainstream cinema.

Mona Singh's compelling portrayal of Bulbul Jauhari in the second season of "Made in Heaven" perfectly exemplifies this evolution. While not the central protagonist, her nuanced performance, layered with wit, vulnerability, and a quiet strength, resonated deeply with viewers. Bulbul became the emotional anchor of the series, proving that a character's impact transcends their position in the narrative hierarchy.

Similarly, Vikrant Massey, even in his relatively limited screen time as the tragic Devdas in "Lootera," left an indelible mark with his poignant portrayal of vulnerability and quiet intensity. His performance underscored the power of subtlety and emotional depth in creating a lasting impression. Vijay Varma's gritty and captivating portrayal of Moeen in "Gully Boy" was another standout example. Despite not being the primary lead, his magnetic presence and authentic portrayal of a complex char-



acter became an integral part of the film's success.

Shefali Shah has consistently delivered powerful performances throughout her career, culminating in a National Film Award for her compelling role in "The Last Lear." Her gravitas and nuanced portrayal demonstrated that a truly impactful performance doesn't require top billing. Even established stars like Vidya Balan, with her return as Manjulika in the "Bhool Bhulaiyaa" franchise, reinforce this trend. Her ability to command attention and electrify the screen, regardless of her character's narrative prominence, highlights the power of a compelling performance.

Collectively, these actors are redefining what it means to be a "lead" in Bollywood. They are demonstrating that true leadership on screen emanates from the emotional resonance and authenticity they bring to their characters. In this evolving cinematic landscape, relatability and depth are becoming the new benchmarks for compelling performances, paving the way for a more diverse and nuanced representation of stories and characters on screen. The focus is shifting from mere screen presence to the profound impact an actor can have through a well-crafted and emotionally honest portrayal, signaling a promising new era for Bollywood.

Nushratt Bharuccha calls 'Chhorii 2' a deeply emotional journey...

Nushratt Bharuccha described her role in *Chhorii 2* as a profoundly emotional journey, as she reprised her character Sakshi and explored the depths of motherhood in the horror thriller's sequel.

"Playing a mother went far beyond just looking the part — it was emotionally one of the toughest roles I've done," Nushratt shared. "In *Chhorii 1*, I was unsure if I could convincingly portray an eight-month pregnant woman. In the sequel, the emotional intensity only deepened."

She credited director Vishal Furia for guiding her performance, helping her strike the right balance in portraying a character caught between fear and fierce maternal instinct. "*Chhorii 2* demanded more from me — physically, emotionally, and spiritually," she added.

Touching on the film's supernatural themes, the actress said, "I believe there are energies — good and bad — that we can't always explain. Thankfully, I haven't had any supernatural encounters, but I do feel those forces exist."

Directed by Vishal Furia, *Chhorii 2* also stars Soha Ali Khan, Gashmeer Mahajani, Saurabh Goyal, and others. The film premiered on April 11 on Prime Video in India and over 240 countries and territories worldwide.

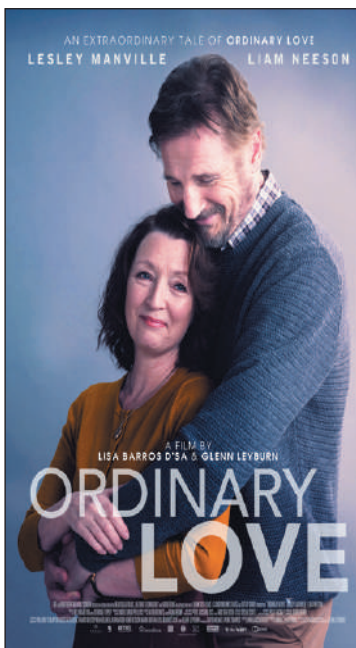
Cinema Sirsa (Castel)

NEW MOVIE SIKANDAR Starring Salman Khan and Rashmika Mandanna

Schedule:

- Friday 18 April to Saturday 19 April 2025: 13:15 - 20:15
- Sunday 20 April 2025: 13:15 | 16:15 | 20:15
- Monday 21 April to Friday 25 April 2025: 13:15 - 20:15

Ticket Price: Rs 250 (Same for adults and children)



Programme TV



	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
vendredi 18 avril	06.02 Serial: Amour Secret 08.47 Tele: Séparé Par L'Amour 09.13 Tele: L'Amour A Mort 09.38 Film: Last Knights 11.30 Your Love Is My Fortune 12.00 Le Journal 12.35 Tele: Wildflower 13.26 Tele: Le Chemin Du Destin 14.00 Tele: La Desalmada 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.21 Tele: Living To Love 16.49 Mag: Close Up 17.30 Your Love Is My Fortune 18.30 Serial: Shiv Shakti 19.00 Serial: Doree 19.30 Le Journal 20.30 Film: First Man 21.50 Tele: Wildflower 23.30 Le Journal 00.31 Serial: Billions 01.31 Serial: NCIS: New Orleans	06.00 Rodrig Prog: Nou La Ter 06.29 Local: En Forme 07.35 Rodrig: Découvertes 10.35 Rodrig: Saver Lokal 11.07 Local: Glwar Dantan 12.43 Local: Metie 13.30 Film: The Story Of Jesus For Children Inspirational 14.30 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 15.28 Local: Lavi Zoli An XXL 16.00 Rodrig: Nou La Ter 16.25 Serial: Tetelestai 18.00 Tele: La Desalmada 18.30 Tele: Séparé par L'amour 19.25 Local: Animalia 20.00 Local: Emission Speciale Vendredi Saint 00.45 La Journee Sous Le Regard 23.00 En Direct: Colisée Vendredi Saint 00.45 La Journee Sous Le Regard	07.00 Mag: Wellness Watch 07.27 Local: Hunarbaaz 08.00 D.Anime: Yeh Hai Omi 10.00 Local: Ramayan 11.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 12.00 Film: Honeymoon Starring: Anil Dhawan, Leena Chandravakar 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.30 Serial: Jai Jai Shiv Shankar 16.00 Serial: Ishaaron Ishaaron 17.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 18.00 Samachar 18.32 Local: Mati Ke Mol 19.00 Yeh Shaam Mastani 20.30 Serial: Vidrohi 21.00 Film: Panchayat Cast: Viraj Bhatt, Kajal Raghwan 23.21 Serial: Mere Sai 00.13 Serial: Waggle Ki Duniya 00.37 Serial: Jai Jai Shiv Shankar	06.25 D.Anime: Hunter X Hunter 07.34 D.Anime: Sonic Boom 09.06 D.Anime: Sam Le Pompier 10.37 Serial: Espoirs Secrets 11.51 Mag: Carnet De Sante 12.09 Mag: Tomorrow Today 12.32 Mag: Greek Islands 13.40 Film: Charlotte Aux Fraises 15.00 D.Anime: Word Party 15.17 D.Anime: Grands Mots... 15.27 D.Anime: Madagascar 15.49 D.Anime: Spacepop 16.23 Stan Lee's Superhero... 17.11 Serial: Intelligence 17.30 Mag: Travel 18.00 Doc: Flavours 18.52 Doc: Japan Video Topics 19.28 Mag: Vous Et Vous 20.01 Tele: All The Flowers 20.50 Doc: Panoramas 21.42 Doc: By Train Through...	14.25 Serial: Radha Mohan 14.55 Serial: Doree 15.30 Film: Zamane Se Kya Darna Cast: Sanjay Dutt, Raveena Tandon 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.31 Kundali Bhagya 19.01 Udaariyaan 19.32 Dharam Patni 20.01 Mithai 20.31 Shrimad Ramayan 21.01 Anupamaa 21.31 Mere Sai 22.01 Keh Doon Tumhein 22.30 Mere Dad Ki Dulhan 22.59 Serial: Mahabharat 23.30 Film: Zamane Se Kya Darna Cast: Sanjay Dutt, Raveena Tandon
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With: Vikrant Mahajan, Kainaz Motivala, Prem Chopra
 20.30 Gadget Guru Ganesha
 21.00 Keh Doon Tumhein
 21.29 Crime Patrol



Cast: Amitabh Bachchan, Hema Malini, Aman Verma
 21.52 Mahabharat
 22.14 Sa Re Ga Ma Pa L'il Champs
 23.06 Rajaa Betaa
 00.49 Kabhi Kabhie Ittefaq Sey



Mardi 22 Avril - 20.10



Mercredi 23 Avril - 21.20



Jeudi 24 Avril - 22.03



Programme TV



mardi 22 avril

MBC 1

06.00 Tele: Amour Secret
07.40 Serial: Hawaii
08.21 Tele: All The Flowers
09.40 Film: Little (2019)
11.31 Tele: Your Love Is My Fortune
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Tele: Wildflower
13.15 Tele: Le Chemin Du Destin
13.40 Tele: La Desalmada
15.25 Film: Jurassic World: Fallen...
18.00 Samachar
18.31 Serial: Shiv Shakti
18.58 Serial: Doree
19.30 Le Journal
20.25 Film: Maman, J'ai Raté L'Avion 2
22.00 Tele: Wildflower
22.45 Tele: Your Love Is My Fortune
23.30 Le Journal
00.05 Serial: Nelle Tue Mani
01.04 Serial: NCIS: New Orleans

MBC 2

07.05 Local: Memwar Dan Ros
10.49 Local: Mangeons Veg
11.19 Le Cosmonaute Segey Kub
12.00 Entrepreneurat Au Feminin
13.00 La Journée Sous Le Regard
13.15 Local: Saver Kiltirel
14.07 Rodrig Prog: Feminin Pluriel
15.01 Local: Fee Main
15.34 Local: Mangeons Veg
16.33 Le Cosmonaute Segey Kub
16.55 Local: Le Mag
18.00 Tele: La Desalmada
19.24 Local: Itinerer Rodrig
20.00 Local: An Eta Dalert
20.30 Local: Metie
21.00 Local: Paroles Agricoles
21.35 Local: Le Mag
22.40 Local: Profil
22.55 La Journée Sous Le Regard

MBC 3

07.25 Serial: Ved Ki Shikshahein
07.49 D.Anime: Yeh Hai Omi
10.07 Kundali Bhagya
11.30 Serial: Radha Krishna
12.01 Film: Bombay To Goa
15.21 Other Serial: Radha Krishna
15.30 Serial: Sajanwa Bairi Ho Gaile Hamar
16.00 Shaurya Aur Anokhi Ki Kahani
17.30 Serial: Radha Krishna
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Local: Tark Vitark
20.30 Serial: Ramayan
21.00 Film: Pati Patni Aur Woh
Cast: Sanjeev Kumar, Vidya Sinha
23.15 Serial: Mere Sai
23.56 Serial: Waggle Ki Duniya
00.19 Local: Tark Vitark
00.46 Local: Humni Ke Sitaare

MBC 5

06.00 D.Anime: Hunter X Hunter
07.46 D.Anime: Wonder Grove
08.04 D.Anime: Dragonero
08.29 D.Anime: Sam Le Pompier
08.51 D.Anime: Edmond Et Lucy
10.17 Serial: Espoirs Secrets
11.31 Mag: The 77 Percent
13.30 Film: Le Royaume Des Elfes
15.03 D.Anime: Yétili
15.18 D.Anime: Word Party
17.05 Serial: The Worst Witch
17.24 Serial: Intelligence
18.00 Mag: Rev
18.30 Mag: Healthy Living
18.45 Mag: Red Carpet
19.30 Doc: Global US
20.01 Tele: All The Flowers
20.50 Tele: Seref Meselesi
22.18 Mag: Initiative Africa
22.44 Doc: Panoramas
23.40 Mag: Euromaxx

Bollywood TV

14.25 Radha Mohan
14.55 Doree
15.30 Film: Golmaal 3
Cast: Mithun Chakraborty, Ajay Devgn, Kareena Kapoor
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Kundali Bhagya
19.03 Udaariyaan
19.33 Dharam Patni
20.06 Mithai
20.29 Shrimad Ramayan
21.07 Anupama
21.29 Mere Sai
22.04 Keh Doon Tumhein
22.30 Mere Dad Ki Dulhan
23.04 Mahabharat
23.31 Film: Golmaal 3
Cast: Mithun Chakraborty, Ajay Devgn, Kareena Kapoor
02.00 Kundali Bhagya
02.30 Udaariyaan

mercredi 23 avril

05.15 Serial: Amour Secret
06.56 Serial: Columbo
08.11 Tele: All The Flowers
09.35 Film: Maman, J'ai Raté L'Avion
11.30 Tele: Your Love Is My Fortune
12.25 Tele: Wildflower
13.14 Tele: Le Chemin Du Destin
13.45 Tele: La Desalmada
14.15 Serial: Seref Meselesi
15.25 Tele: Seref Meselesi
16.10 Serial: Columbo
17.30 Tele: Your Love Is My Fortune
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.31 Serial: Shiv Shakti
18.55 Serial: Doree
19.20 Sayings Radha Krishna
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
21.01 Serial: Nelle Tue Mani
21.56 Tele: Wildflower
22.45 Tele: Your Love Is My Fortune

07.08 Entrepreneurat Au Feminin
08.17 Local: An Eta Dalert
09.37 Local: Le Mag
10.27 Rodrig Prog: A Nou Kwi
10.50 Local: Profil
11.10 Local: Fee Main
11.29 Local: Le Petits Genies
13.40 Local: Priorite Sante
14.02 Local: Paroles Agricole
15.24 Local: Evasion
16.33 Rodrig Prog: Zenn Aktif
17.03 La Journée Sous Le Regard
18.00 Tele: La Desalmada
18.30 Tele: Séparé Par L'Amour
19.00 Journal Kreol
19.20 Local: Le Mag De L'Emploi
20.00 Mon Jardin Ma Maison
20.30 Local: Toc Toc Doc
21.00 Local: Agir Ensemble
21.35 Local: Les Klips
22.31 Local: Mots & Ecrits
22.55 La Journée Sous Le Regard

07.26 Tark Vitark
08.00 Local: Yeh Hai Omi
08.20 D.Anime: Paap-O-Meter
08.40 D.Anime: Guru Aur Bhole
10.00 Shaurya Aur Anokhi Ki Kahani
12.00 Film: Jeevan Mrityu
Cast: Dharmendra, Rakhee Gulzar, Ajit Khan
15.21 Serial: Jai Jai Shiv Shankar
15.47 Serial: Radha Mohan
17.30 Serial: Radha Krishna
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.31 Local: Yatra
20.30 Shanti Ka Anubhav
21.00 Film: Nayak
23.16 Serial: Mere Sai
00.04 Waggle Ki Duniya
23.59 Local: Yatra
00.51 Local: Darshan
01.21 Local: Kala Guest

06.00 D.Anime: Hunter X Hunter
07.46 D.Anime: Wonder Grove
08.04 D.Anime: Dragonero
08.40 D.Anime: Sam Le Pompier
09.02 Film: Rio 2
10.29 Serial: Espoirs Secrets
11.46 Mag: Healthy Living
13.30 Film: Paroles De Champion
15.03 D.Anime: Yétili
15.18 D.Anime: Word Party
17.05 Serial: The Worst Witch
17.24 Serial: Intelligence
18.00 Mag: Afrimaxx
18.30 Mag: Buiness Beyond
18.45 Mag: Planet A
19.30 Doc: Preserving Peatlands
20.01 Tele: All The Flowers
21.05 Film: La Prophetie De L'Horloge
22.50 Mag: Close Up
23.16 Mag: Focus On Europe

14.25 Radha Mohan
14.50 Doree
15.30 Film: Banjo
Cast: Riteish Deshmukh, Nargis Fakhri
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.31 Kundali Bhagya
19.02 Udaariyaan
19.33 Dharam Patni
20.00 Mithai
20.31 Shrimad Ramayan
21.00 Anupama
21.28 Mere Sai
22.05 Keh Doon Tumhein
22.20 Mere Dad Ki Dulhan
22.51 Serial: Mahabharat
23.30 Film: Banjo
Cast: Riteish Deshmukh, Nargis Fakhri
02.00 Kundali Bhagya
02.30 Udaariyaan

jeudi 24 avril

06.01 Tele: Amour Secret
08.19 Serial: All The Flowers
08.43 Tele: Séparé Par L'Amour
09.41 Film: La Prophetie De L'Horloge
11.30 Tele: Your Love Is My Fortune
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Tele: Wildflower
13.20 Tele: Le Chemin Du Destin
13.45 Tele: La Desalmada
14.15 Serial: Entre Justice Et Vengeance
15.25 Film: 12 Mighty Orphans
17.18 Tele: Your Love Is My Fortune
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.31 Serial: Shiv Shakti
18.56 Serial: Doree
19.30 Le Journal
20.10 Film: Selfie
Stars: Akshay Kumar, Mrunal Thakur, Emraan Hashmi
22.19 Tele: Wildflower

07.08 Local: En Toute Intimite
08.02 Mon Jardin Ma Maison
09.00 Local: Agir Ensemble
10.32 Local: Saveurs Plus
11.02 Local: Les Klips
12.00 Local: Mots & Ecrits
12.27 Local: En Toute Intimite
13.00 La Journée Sous Le Regard
13.31 Mon Jardin Ma Maison
14.10 Local: En Forme
15.30 Local: Saveurs Plus
17.03 La Journée Sous Le Regard
18.00 Tele: La Desalmada
18.30 Tele: Séparé Par L'Amour
19.00 Journal Kreol
19.20 Local: Le Mag De L'Emploi
20.30 Local: Les Grandes Lignes
21.00 Local: Le Mag
22.02 Rodrig - Klip Seleksion
22.45 Local: Metie
22.55 La Journée Sous Le Regard

07.20 Local: Yatra
08.00 Yeh Hai Omi
10.00 Serial: Radha Mohan
12.00 Film: Around The World
Cast: Raj Kapoor, Rajshree
15.00 Samachar
15.30 Sajanwa Bairi Ho Gaile...
16.00 Ramayan
17.30 Radha Krishna
18.31 Local: Amrit Vani
18.43 Local: Bhajan Sandhya
19.03 Local: Ayush
19.29 MBC Prod Thursday
20.35 Serial: Ramayan
21.00 Serial: Shiv Shakti
21.30 Yashomati Maiyya Ke Nanlala
22.00 Mag: Dharam Yatra
22.21 Serial: Mere Sai
23.09 Serial: Waggle Ki Duniya
23.32 Local: Amrit Vani

06.00 D.Anime: Hunter X Hunter
07.46 D.Anime: Wonder Grove
08.04 D.Anime: Dragonero
08.30 D.Anime: Berry And Dolly
09.02 Film: L'Odyssée D'Albert
10.14 Serial: Espoirs Secrets
11.31 Mag: Business Beyond
13.30 Film: Miraculous World
14.24 D.Anime: H2O Aquateam
14.52 D.Anime: Yétili
16.49 Serial: The Worst Witch
17.39 Mag: Rev Special
18.00 Mag: Eco India
18.30 Mag: Carnet De Sante
18.45 Mag: Mapped Out
19.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today
20.01 Tele: All The Flowers
20.50 Serial: Columbo
22.05 Film: Paper Towns
00.00 Doc: The Lithium Ion
00.36 Doc: Cywai And Rachela

14.25 Radha Mohan
15.00 Doree
15.25 Film: Sweetiee Weds NRI
Cast: Himansh Kohli, Zoya Afroz, Darshan Jariwala
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Kundali Bhagya
19.00 Udaariyaan
19.30 Dharam Patni
20.00 Mithai
20.24 Shrimad Ramayan
21.02 Anupama
21.34 Mere Sai
22.01 Keh Doon Tumhein
22.29 Mere Dad Ki Dulhan
23.05 Mahabharat
23.31 Film: Sweetiee Weds NRI
Cast: Himansh Kohli, Zoya Afroz, Darshan Jariwala



Jeudi 24 Avril - 15.30

Stars: Himansh Kohli, Zoya Afroz, Darshan Jariwala



Jeudi 24 Avril - 20.10

Stars: Akshay Kumar, Mrunal Thakur, Emraan Hashmi



Separating Church And State: Will Harvard Save American Democracy?

In the battle to keep the Church of Harvard separate from the State of Trump, Harvard will prevail

● Cont. from page 5

There is **no way** that Harvard could have yielded on this. And if there is any institution that would not yield, it is Harvard. As for what is going to happen, the first part is easy. There is **no legal authority** for an American President or any third party to demand that a private university conduct its affairs in conformance to the demands of that third party and particularly not in conformance to governmental demands.

Obviously, if there are steps that Harvard is required to take to comply with laws, whereas the President could demand compliance, that would be simply a political move and the enforcement can only come via the Department of Justice, i.e., a lawsuit brought to enforce compliance. Harvard would be entitled to defend itself, and to due process, even to the point of challenging the law's constitutionality or applicability, as well as to assert any substantive defense showing it is not violating the law.

The second part is the tough part. Trump's threats to suspend financial sup-



Donald Trump has escalated his war against elite US universities - Pic - sbs.com.au

port to the tune of \$2.2 billion or the total of \$9 billion at stake is subject to challenge on two grounds:

1. If the US government has contracts with Harvard (in most cases there are contracts), it must comply with them. But most, if not all, federal contracts have a termination for convenience provision. I think a court could review
2. The money has been appropriated by Congress so the President cannot arbitrarily stop research projects and other activities authorized by Congress and which are part of the laws of the country.

whether termination was proper but see below.

The problem with this second argument

and the argument that termination of a contract was improper, is that the Supreme Court has blown a massive hole in it. The immunity case held that the President is immune from the consequences of his official acts. So, he has unfettered discretion to do whatever he wants and there is no enforcement mechanism left.

There are two possible outcomes that I can project:

- a. Harvard will prevail. It can survive a \$2 billion hit per year even for 4 years, probably even a \$9 billion hit.
- b. The Supreme Court will be forced to limit the scope of its decision. And this may well happen in a case brought by Harvard.

Harvard may well be the catalyst that brings the country together on this. Columbia University and other colleges have acceded to administration demands. But Harvard is different. It is, in a sense, the Church of American education.

And in this battle to keep the Church of Harvard separate from the State of Trump, Harvard will prevail.

I have often said, don't bet against America. Today, I say don't bet against Harvard.

Cheerz...
Bwana

The full text is available online.
Please consult: www.mauritiustimes.com

Tree of Knowledge



Healing Our Bodies

Incorporating human touch into our everyday lives is vital to the healing of our emotional and physical selves

At times, we might concentrate so much on our spiritual lives that we overlook the wonders of being present in our physical form. When we are more aware that our bodies are also important in terms of our personal growth, we may find it easier to nurture them. One of the most powerful ways to do this is through human touch. A loving, comforting touch allows us to access the part of ourselves that yearns for a sense of oneness with the world around us. Even simple forms of touch connect us not just to our bodies but also to the energetic presence of other people.

There are so many ways to incorporate touch in our daily lives. One of the easiest is a heartfelt embrace. Just making a point to hug someone on a daily basis and really feel each other's energy can strengthen the bonds that keep us together. Hugs help us heal any hurt or upset we may have recently experienced by letting us release into the



moment of the embrace and realize that no matter what happens to us, we have someone in our lives who supports and cares for us.

Another nourishing form of touch is massage. While we may think of massage as a luxury, it is actually an ancient form of healing that enables us to open up our energetic pathways in order to receive unlimited energy from the universe. It doesn't matter whether it comes from a loved one or a massage therapist. By giving ourselves the gift of massage every once in a while, we are doing something healthy and beneficial for our bodies. Massage helps our bodies activate their own restorative powers, creating a wonderful way to engage fully in our own healing. Letting ourselves take advantage of the healing nature of touch creates space where we can truly live in and experience the world through our bodies, allowing us to completely immerse ourselves in the loving sense of joy and wonder that is our life.

DailyOM

Shifting Roles

It is natural in a marriage for shifts to take place, and these can be navigated smoothly with open communication.

Throughout the course of a successful marriage or long-term commitment, the two people in the relationship may shift in and out of various roles. For example, one person may support the other person going back to school. In order to do this, the person in the supporting role sets aside certain goals or aspirations to provide a stable base from which their partner can launch in a new direction. There are many gifts of lear-

ning inherent in this role — from having the opportunity to embody a nurturing stance to feeling the pleasure of seeing a loved one thrive. When our partner expands their horizons, ours expand too, and we gain access to a world that would otherwise remain closed to us.

However, there is also much to be said for having a turn at being the one who steps outside the box, perhaps taking time to attend to our personal healing, spiritual pursuits, or other interests. In order to maintain balance within our relationships, it's important that we address these issues each time one person steps into a supporting role, so the other can try something new. When we are conscious about acknowledging that one person is bearing a bit more of a burden so that the other can grow, we stand a better chance of making sure the ebb and flow in the relationship remains fair and equal.

The most important part of this process is open communication, where each person has a chance to express how they feel and come to an understanding about the roles they have agreed to play and when they expect them to shift. Each time a dynamic shift occurs, a ceremony of acknowledgment can lend an air of distinction to the moment. This can be a simple dinner date or an elaborate ritual, depending on what works best for you at the time. Perhaps the most important thing is expressing gratitude to the person in the supporting role and encouragement to the person moving in a new direction. When the flow of feeling and communication is open, a healthy closeness develops that allows each person in the relationship to have a turn at each of these important roles.

