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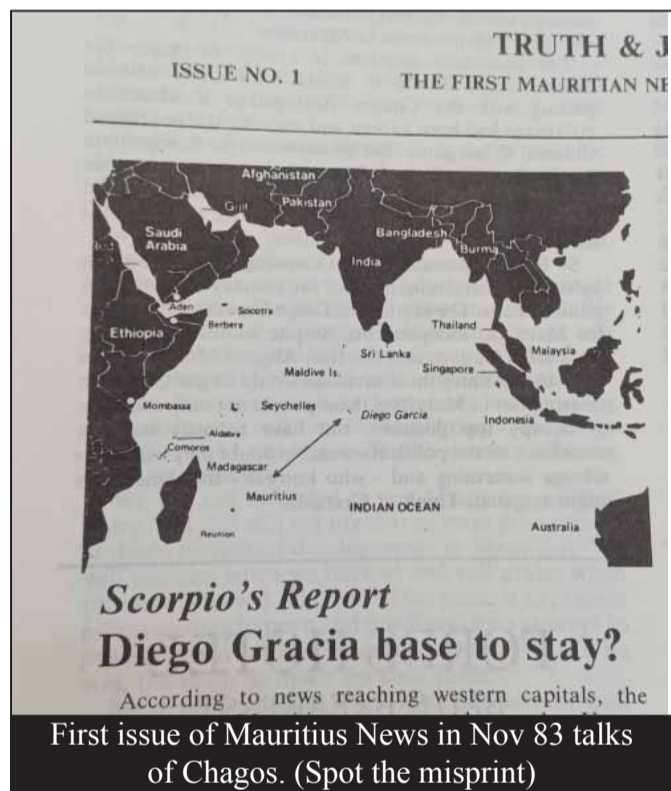
Editor: Peter Chellen (Former Editor of Mauritius News 1983 - 2015)

Views expressed by contributors are their own

Chagos, Chagos, Chagos et toujours Chagos !

Britain freezes Chagos deal: No compensation forthcoming?

In the very first issue of Mauritius News in November 1983, we talked about the Chagos Archipelago. The title of our article was in the form of a question then to posterity “**Diego Garcia base to stay?**”. So much water has passed under the bridge since then. Nearly half a century later, we can say we are the “*posterity*”. Diego Garcia base is still here. It will be here for the next “*posterity+*”. The Americans will own Diego Garcia for the next 99 years on a long lease from the British. Mauritius had no say when “*Le Perfide Albion*” gave the island of Diego Garcia to the Americans for occupation on a 50-year lease in 1966. “we were put before “*un fait accompli*”, former Mauritius High Commissioner to the UK, Sir Satcam Boolell, told me in an interview at the High Commission.



First issue of Mauritius News in Nov 83 talks of Chagos. (Spot the misprint)

Mauritius has again been put “*devant un autre fait accompli*” as regards the present extension of 99 years lease for the US to occupy Diego Garcia. The British who owns the Chagos did not have to consult Mauritius to grant the new lease. As a result of the ruling of the International Court of Justice regarding the sovereignty of the Archipelago, Britain agreed, initially, to pay compensation to Mauritius for the lease to the Americans. The agreed figure was 10 billion rupees per year.

Earlier this year, the American President, Donald

Trump, qualified the British deal with Mauritius over the Chagos as stupid. That was four months ago. British Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer did not contradict the President. He was willing to ignore the comments of Trump, the Manneken Pis character.

But now in April, on the ground of the American objection he has reneged on his decision. He seems to have been influenced at home by characters of the Conservative Party, of whom racist Enoch Powell wanted to rid Britain, like *Pretty Patel* and *beauty* Kemi Badenoch. These True Blue elements of the Party, plus the Farage character, are opposing any deal with Mauritius. They have made it known that when they will be in power, they will not pay any money to Mauritius because Britain is itself bankrupt and is raising pensionable age to 70. The Conservatives will, without any doubt, win the next general election in Britain. To coax the elec-



Paul Bérenger
Former Deputy PM,
leaving sinking ship?

torate, Starmer has agreed to freeze the agreement with Mauritius.

The decision of Mr Starmer is now causing considerable panic within the government of Mauritius. The Finance Minister, Dr Navin Ramgoolam, who happens to be the PM as well, has made it

known that his government will be short of 10 billion rupees to balance the 2025-26 national Budget. The departing Deputy PM, Paul Bérenger, warned the nation before he quit that the nation would have to tighten the belt. Very tough time ahead, he said on his way out. Is he abandoning the sinking ship. The PM is so worried that he is very much out of sight and the nation is wondering where he is.

The big question is how can any government compile a national budget on sheer speculation. In the Mauritian jargon, they call it “*fié disef dan vente poule*”, i.e. a bit like counting the chickens before they are hatched. However, the budget forecasting may be said to be a bit of a speculating exercise. But to depend on a windfall to balance out a national budget is rather unusual.

It is normally believed that the National Recurrent Budget is an estimate based on normal annual revenue and expenditure. A windfall like the Chagos compensation would go to a Contingencies Fund into which the government would dip, as and when necessary. It is strange that no economists or financiers have raised this point in their debates.

P.C.



Dr Navin Ramgoolam,
Premier and
Finance Minister

Picked up from Facebook Page of Devinia Gokulsing Sookia

Today (12/4), the world bid farewell to the famous and talented Indian singer Asha Bhonsley.

Not only she could sing in Hindi but she also sang in English, Bengali, Marathi and Konkani (Goan).

At just 10, Asha Bhosle sang her

first film song "Chala Chala Nav Bala" for the Marathi film *Majha Bal* in 1943, the music composed by Datta Davjekar.

This early foray into the world of cinema marked the beginning of a truly remarkable career.

Asha's Hindi film debut came in

1948 when she lent her voice to the song 'Saawan Aaya' for Hansraj Behl's 'Chunariya'.

Her first solo Hindi film song followed soon after in 'Raat Ki Rani' in 1949.

As her career blossomed, Asha became synonymous with versatility. From the playful energy of 'Piya Tu Ab To Aaja' and 'O Hasseena Zulfon Wali' to the soulful depth of ghazals like 'Dil Cheez Kya Hai' and the classical beauty of 'Tora Man Darpan Kehlaye',

she proved her prowess across genres.

Her voice has emoted every nuance and every mood for actors down generations, right from Meena Kumari to Kajol and hundreds of others in between.



Asha Bosle

Reuters

Positive Thinking on the Sin Tax

By Carmel Crimmins, Host, Reuters Econ World

Hello there,

Global stocks are at record highs as investors bet we are over the worst in the Middle East. Are they being overly optimistic about the prospects for peace? Who knows, but it feels like part of a broader theme of positive thinking on geopolitical risk.

Look at the International Monetary Fund. Yes, it cut its growth outlook but it's still assuming a short-lived war in Iran and oil prices normalizing in the second half of 2026, with an \$82 per-barrel average for the year - well below today's benchmark Brent crude futures price of around \$96.00.

Corporate earnings forecasts have hardly been affected by the oil shock, with 2027 growth forecasts at 18% and 11% for U.S. and European blue chips, respectively. As my colleague Mike Dolan points out, the temptation to screen out the war, bet on eventual de-escalation and focus on the year ahead has been hard to pass up, particularly with AI continuing to boost demand.

But what if the market's compass is wrong? The price of a physical barrel of oil is trading at record highs while futures benchmarks signal calm. In practical terms, that means the real cost of crude for refiners, particularly in Asia, is far closer to \$120 a barrel - about 65% above pre-war levels and the highest since 2022 -- than the \$96 suggested by headline benchmarks. That means inflationary pressure is building up in the system.

The futures price reflects optimism about the war ending, while the physical price reflects the reality on the ground - that Middle East oil production and exports will take months, if not years, to recover to pre-war levels, even if the conflict ends now.

As my colleague Ron Bousso points out, if oil supplies currently being priced into the futures market fail to materialise by early summer - the peak demand period in the Northern Hemisphere - that could have broad consequences for the global economy.

While we wait to see how the geopolitics develop, China's economy put on a better-than-expected performance in the first quarter, riding an export surge before the Iran war sent energy costs soaring. Britain too enjoyed a burst of growth in February, suggesting it was in slightly better shape before the start of the Iran war than many economists had feared. But the joy may be short-lived: Britain suffered the sharpest cut to economic growth forecasts for large rich economies by the IMF, due largely to the conflict.

Before I sign off, a shoutout to this week's Econ World podcast. We went Down Under to look at what happens when sin taxes encourage more bad behaviour. Specifically, how Australia's sky-high cigarette taxes have helped drive a booming black market for illegal tobacco.

Carmel Crimmins

IS 'L'ATTENTE D'ISRAEL DANS LE SEIGNEUR' OVER ?

There was great commotion in the Jewish and the Christian worlds when that picture on the right was circulated on Donald Trump's platform True Social.

The Jews who have been waiting for the Coming of Christ thought that the Messiah, as predicted in the Torah, had at last come. The Jews never believed in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ or Messiah. They stoned Jesus and crucified him as an impostor. They have been waiting for the real one, and when that picture appeared, even Netanyahu was baffled by the resemblance with his friend-in-arms, Donald Trump.

As for the Christians, especially those of the Bible-belt of America, genuinely thought that it was the Second Coming. Jesus had promised to come back. *Like a Thief in the Night*, the Gospel says. "Alleluia," they sang all day, all night.

That coming of Christ, First or Second, seems to fit with **Matthew 10:34-35** talking of the Coming. Jesus is reported to have said:

34 - Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

35 - For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

P.C.



BLOOMING AGAINST THE ODDS THE QUIET STRENGTH OF PLANTS

Mylene



The hardiness of plants and flowers never ceases to amaze me. Up in Hokkaido, they spend months buried under snow, yet as soon as it melts, tiny flowers begin to appear, like the Christmas rose and the bright yellow Amur adonis, as if they've simply been waiting, patiently, for the sunlight to return.

I'm currently in Birkenhead, a town in the north-west of England, in Merseyside, just across the River Mersey from Liverpool.

As I write, it's 6°Celsius here, the kind of weather that calls for a coat and gloves. Yet on my wintry morning walk, I couldn't help noticing how many plants and flowers were already in bloom. Even when the ground feels hard and seemingly lifeless, when ice grips their roots, plants still hold on. Somehow, they find a way to push through the most unlikely places. I've seen entire areas covered in tarmac, only for small shoots to appear later, breaking through what once seemed impenetrable, as if some quiet, unseen force is pressing them upward, inch by inch, until they finally reach the light.

Take the Hawthorn, for example. It thrives in poor soil and lines hedgerows all across the UK. In autumn, it produces small, bright red berries, and by spring, it's covered in delicate white or pink blossoms. It's even been used traditionally in herbal teas.

And then there's the Mexican orange blossom, an ever-green shrub quite happy in the cold, clearly not living up to its warm, sunny name. With its glossy green leaves and clusters of star-shaped white flowers, it brings a citrus scent to the air, even when it still feels like winter hasn't quite let go.

The common primrose, with its soft yellow flowers, pops up naturally in woodlands, hedgerows and gardens. The red primrose, on the other hand, is a cultivated variety. While striking to look at, it's not usually found growing in the wild.

More of these tough, resilient plants include the garden azaleas which can handle cold weather well, unlike their more delicate indoor cousins, and Darwin's barberry, a tough evergreen shrub with vibrant flowers that provide pollen for bees and other pollinators.

Through frost, poor soil and even cracks in concrete, these hardy plants ask for very little yet endure a great deal, and still manage to persist.

There's a lesson in that. Like the lotus flower, which must be rooted in mud to grow, they remind us that beauty doesn't wait for perfect conditions, it simply finds a way.

(Perhaps if space scientists could work out how trees and plants manage to defy gravity, space travel would be a piece of cake.)

Pictures by Mylene



Mon Témoignage

Le Rédacteur en chef, Mauritian Overseas Gazette

Cher Monsieur Chellen,

En raison de cette grande comédie, à la Donald Trump, que joue actuellement Paul Raymond Bérenger, je vous serais très reconnaissant, si vous pourriez publier, à l'intention de vos lecteurs, ce témoignage que j'avais envoyé à mon ami, feu Joseph Tsang Mang Kin, à sa demande.

Veuillez agréer mes salutations respectueuses.

Eliézer François JP.



Eliézer François

A l'intention des lecteurs de ma page Facebook. En voici la suite: -

LA SUITE SUR LA GRANDE TRAHISON DU SURFEUR POLITIQUE, PAUL BÉRENGER

(1) Dans les années 68-71, je dirige le plus puissant syndicat des travailleurs à Maurice, La Port Authority & Other Workers Union, groupant – Le Port, Les Docks, Grenier, Transport (Bus & Poids Lourd), CEB, Propriétés Sucrières, Happy World, Forges Tardieu, Taylor Smith, BAT, Tannerie Merven, KGKK et cetera. Un jeudi, Paul Bérenger, accompagné de Fareed Mattur, il vient me voir au collège St. John à Beau-Bassin. C'est quelque temps après son retour à Maurice. Il n'a presque rien comme syndicat. Néanmoins, il me propose de faire un front commun syndical avec lui pour renverser le premier gouvernement de coalition post indépendance, Ptr.- PMSD. Tandis que Fareed Mattur et mon chauffeur Bouboule Cunden kozé kozé dehors, je lui dis : 'Je suis disposé à faire un front commun syndical, mais pas pour renverser le gouvernement dont je fais partie comme député travailliste.' On se sépare finalement sans arriver à un accord. Mais l'aspect très bouleversant dans cet épisode c'est que durant toute notre conversation, Bérenger ne me dit pas que le samedi suivant, c.à.d. deux jours seulement après notre rencontre, qu'il est candidat contre moi pour la présidence du CEB. J'étais le Président du syndicat CEB. C'est ça Paul Bérenger !

(2) Dans les années 70, il s'est servi du mouvement syndical, principalement les dockers, les stevedores, les travailleurs du transport et autres pour paralyser le pays. Il s'est servi de Guy Ollivry UDM, Sookdeo Bissoondoyal IFB et de Anerood Jugnauth. Mais en 1970, après la victoire du MMM à Triolet avec l'élection de Dev Virasawmy, voici ce que Sookdeo Bissoondoyal avait déclaré à un de ses proches collaborateurs, malgré que l'IFB avait aidé le MMM durant la campagne électorale:- « **Laisse mo dire ou ene zaffaire. Ça Bérenger là, li représente ene grand danger pou l'Ile Moris.** »

(3) Des mois plus tard, Bérenger, Dev Virasawmy et d'autres militants sont mis au cachot, accusés de grèves illégales et d'actions de sabotage. Premdath Juddoo et Roy Seebaruth essoufflés, viennent me voir alors que je mangeais au restaurant Fort Williams. Premdath me dit : « **Paul fine envoy nou dir toi geté ki to kapav fer pou tir nou dan cachot** » A noter que depuis notre première rencontre, Paul et moi ne sommes jamais rencontrés ; nous n'avions même pas échangé un seul mot. Je dis à Premdath et Roy d'informer Paul que je vais faire le nécessaire. Immédiatement, je réunis les délégués de 29 branches de travailleurs pour une grève de sympathie si Paul, Dev et les autres ne sont pas relâchés. Pendant plus d'une heure, mon frère Gédéon et moi négocions avec le premier Ministre, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Sir V. Ringadoo et Sir Harold Walter. Finalement, Sir Seewoosagur me dit : « **Bon nou don toi permission al visit li caserne. Pli tar nou ava geté pou larg li** » Effectivement, je vais visiter Paul au Line Barracks où il était incarcéré. Je lui parle pendant environ 5 minutes. Je lui dis que le Premier Ministre m'a promis qu'il va te faire relâcher, toi ainsi que les autres. Après sa remise en liberté, Pierrot Benoît du journal Le Mauricien lui pose deux questions.- « **eski ti ena kit syndicalist ou dépité ki ti visit ou kan ou ti dan prison ?** » Réponse de Bérenger : « **Non, Personne.** »

Pierrot Benoît : « **Bé la ki pou ou prémier action ?** » Bérenger : « **Mo pou atak léport.** » Alors que moi, j'étais président des travailleurs du Port.

Quelle Ingratitude ! C'est encore ça Bérenger !

(4) En Septembre 1971, alors que la Port Authority & Other Workers Union se préparait pour fêter le Dockers Day à Pointe aux Sables, Bérenger fait circuler une rumeur à l'effet que les Employeurs du Port m'avaient remis de l'argent pour les dockers et stevedores et que j'avais volé cet argent. La rumeur provoqua une révolution parmi les travailleurs du Port. Personne ne voulait entendre raison. Bérenger instigua les travailleurs à demander au gouvernement d'instituer une commission d'enquête immédiatement pour me clouer au pilori. La pression de Bérenger sur le gouvernement fut si forte que le juge Garrioch fut choisi pour présider la commission d'enquête. Je fus totalement blanchi par la commission. Il ne manquait pas un seul sou. Mais malgré ce verdict favorable en ma faveur, Bérenger continua à dire à ces travailleurs que j'étais un voleur. C'est ça le Bérenger que certains veulent glorifier. C'est ça la vérité, la sincérité et l'intégrité de Paul Bérenger. Il a été chef de l'opposition et vice-premier ministre en plusieurs occasions, même Premier Ministre grâce aux Dockers et Stevedores, il n'a rien fait pour les Zenfans Rosbwa qui jusqu'aujourd'hui, se battent en vain, pour obtenir un emploi dans le Cargo Handling Corporation.

(5) En 1973 après la cassure Ptr.-PMSD, j'avais constitué un groupe de jeunes gradués intellectuels que Pierrot Benoît du journal Le Mauricien avait surnommé 'La Nouvelle Équipe.' Le groupe était composé de Rajendra Beesoondoyal, Anand Mulloo, Osman Ghendoo, R. Jingree, S. Reddy, Krishna Coonjan, Koomara Vencatasamy et moi-même. Profitant de mon absence du pays, pendant un court laps de temps, Bérenger prit contact avec un membre de la Nouvelle Équipe pour contracter une alliance avec le MMM, derrière mon dos. Ce qui explique l'inclusion des noms de Krishna Coonjan et de Osman Ghendoo sur la liste des candidats MMM pour les élections de Décembre 1976.

(6) Toujours en 1976, il propose de contracter une alliance avec Sookdeo Bissoondoyal pour les élections générales. Par la suite, il refuse d'accorder à Bissoondoyal 12 tickets (investitures) sur un total de 62 et il laisse tomber l'IFB. Les autres exemples de l'hypocrisie, traîtrise et astuce de Bérenger sont legion.

Depuis la création du MMM en 1969, Paul Bérenger a systématiquement et astucieusement éliminé presque tous ses coéquipiers. Au début, il s'est servi de Dev Virasawmy, les frères Jeerobourkhan, Seereekisoon et Suresh Moorba pour lancer le MMM. Et puis après, il s'est servi, à chaque fois, du président du parti MMM pour grimper les échelons et atteindre le sommet seul. Depuis septembre 1969 jusqu'aujourd'hui, il a toujours eu besoin de quelqu'un comme paravent : - Nahaboo, Bhugaloo, Fokeer, Juddoo, Nababsingh, Anerood Jugnauth, Alan Ganoo.

Aujourd'hui, Bérenger a le culot de parler d'une Alliance MMM-Ptr.-PMSD pour les prochaines élections municipales. Il ferait bien de réfléchir sur cette citation qu'on attribue à Abraham Lincoln, le 16ème Président des États-Unis:-

**«You may fool all the people some of the time,
You can even fool some of the people all the time,
but you cannot fool all the people all the time».**

Eliézer François JP

Crescent Earth

The crew of Artemis II saw Planet Earth as a crescent when their spacecraft was flying by the moon.

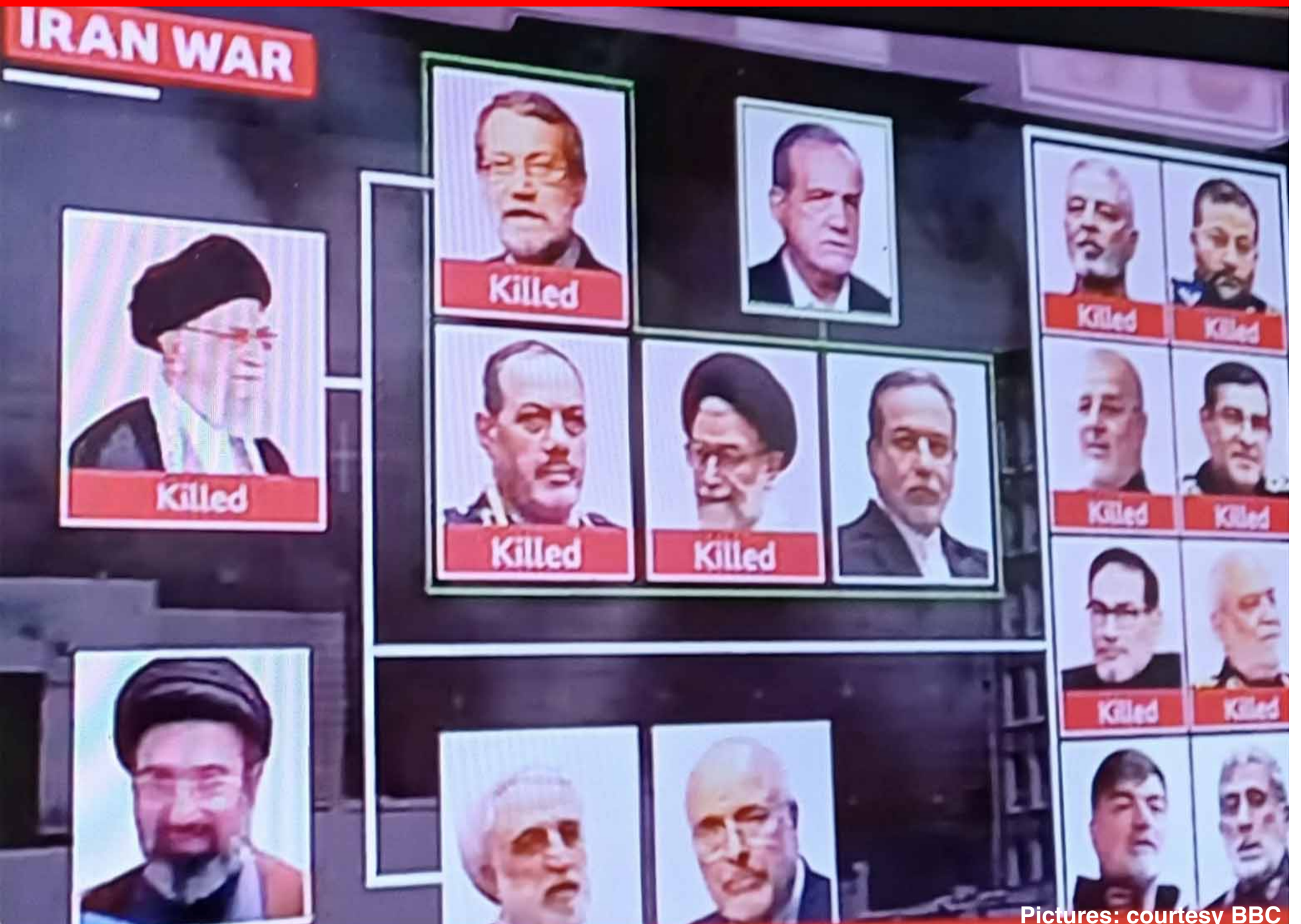
Artemis II was on a study mission and did not actually land on the dark face of the moon. It's dark there because the moon does not rotate and part of its surface is hidden from the sun.

India's spacecraft Chandrayaan-3 did land on the dark side of the moon in 2023. There was no crew.

This lower part of Planet Earth is dark because it is hidden from sunshine

Picture: Courtesy Nasa

The West calls it the Iran War. It is not the Iran War. Iran did not start the war. It should be called the Iran Destruction because American President Trump and Jewish Prime Minister Netanyahu launched the assault on Iran on 28 February 2026. Iran did not start the conflict.



Pictures: courtesy BBC

American President Trump started the attack with the intention of killing the Iranian leaders. Should this be seen as premeditated murder? Was it a fatwa (death sentence) on the Iranians carried out by American and Jewish henchmen? As we have said before, Iran is yet to reach the 21st century. Run by men of religion, it has a reprehensible regime as seen by us used to freedom of action. But does this give Mr Trump the right to embark on a mission to murder the mullahs? He is lucky that the mullahs have not issued a fatwa on him and his Jewish partner in crimes. Will Iran change by itself or by force? Iran should not be a nuclear power but Israel starving and murdering children can.