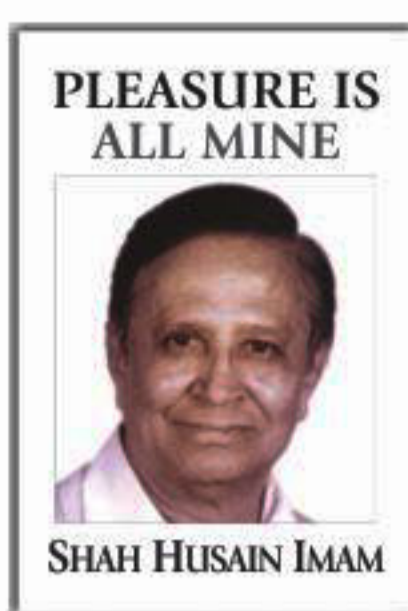


Of conflict of interest and public accountability



PLEASURE IS ALL MINE
SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

PEOPLE in high places are privileged with getting away with minor indiscretions, especially in a developing country. It goes with the VIP

administrative error, the proper forms were not completed and gift was not declared within 30 days," emailed Trudeau's Press Secretary Eleanore Catenaro explaining the lapse.

It is not, however, the first time the prime minister has fallen foul of the Conflict of Interest Act.

The Canadian newspaper *The Star* (December 20, 2017) and *The Guardian* on the same date in Ottawa said that Justin Trudeau broke Conflict of Interest Rules with his stay at Aga Khan's private island in December 2016.

The Star reported quoting the watchdog commissioner as saying Trudeau flouted the laws by accepting a family vacation organised by his spouse Sophie Gregoire Trudeau. Since the prime minister was in the know of the extent of Aga Khan's official dealings with the federal government, he should have been wary of the venture, so it was implied.

The point to note here is the respect for law from the chief executive of the country—a contrite Trudeau was quick to assure that "He will take all precautions in future", and that "He will be clearing all future proposed travel with the ethics commission."

Nevertheless, he pointed out that Aga Khan was a family friend and that he had been a pall bearer at the funeral of Trudeau's illustrious father who headed the government through the Cold War era.

One important take from the Canadian prime minister's self-



President Donald Trump welcomes Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the White House in Washington, DC, on October 2017. PHOTO: AFP

corrective stance is this: When asked if anyone in his office would pay a price for the lapse, Trudeau said, "The buck stopped with him. This was a family vacation that I am responsible for and I take the responsibility."

Justin Trudeau's "infractions" of the Conflict of Interest Rules appear to be a peanut when compared with what is stacked up against US President Trump's column.

According to BBC News dated April 18, 2012, "As head of the executive branch and a business owner—Trump Organisation is an umbrella company

for Donald Trump's hundreds of investments in real estate, brands and other businesses—he has the ability to influence both US policy and government agencies to benefit his bottom line."

Ethics experts have implored Trump to liquidate his business holdings in order that he can avoid any "appearance" of a conflict because the public nature of his businesses means it's "impossible" to prevent him from knowing how government policies affect his stocks in trade.

Some analysts admit that, because

his business is private, the full extent of his holdings—and the potential for conflicts—is not known.

At any rate, eight domestic conflicts of interest domains are cited. Of them snapshot views of three are furnished below: 1) The Trump International Hotel—the Trump Organization leases the old Post Office Building from US government's general services administration (GSA) for the hotel in Washington DC. The president is both landlord and tenant of the building; 2) 40 Wall Street—Trump Organisation has the right to lease the space to office accommodation. There are five on-going federal investigations into the status of current and previous tenants of 40 Wall Street, mostly for security fraud; and 3) Deutsch Bank—one of his major lenders in real estate property development.

American BBC Monitoring contributed to the report that Trump has investments or own companies in at least 20 countries—Argentina, Brazil, China, Dominican Republic, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Turkey, UK (Golf Courses)—to name the prominent destinations.

Quite a mosaic of cross-cutting inter-relationships—where, as Clinton titles his latest book, "The Missing President", may seek, and actually find vindication.

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On June 22 this year, the Canadian parliament's ethics watchdog fined the prime minister USD 100 for failing to declare a gift of sunglasses worth more than USD 200 within a month of accepting it.

The answer to that question is simple: That is not the subject matter of my writing here. I am delving into the ethics of high office—the higher you go, the more demanding is your obligation to comply with the laid down code of conduct.

The Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau though used to making news for all the good, weighty reasons, has made it for apparently a minor frailty. On June 22 this year, the Canadian parliament's ethics watchdog fined the prime minister USD 100 for failing to declare a gift of sunglasses worth more than USD 200 within a month of accepting it.

Although the penalty from the office of Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, Mario Dion was symbolic, yet it served the purpose of public accountability. "As a result of an

PROJECT SYNDICATE

Why governments should invest in sports



AS the World Cup unfolds, captivating soccer fans around the globe, the broad appeal of high-level sports is on full display.

But the impact of sports extends far beyond major international events, as impressive they may be, to include far-reaching benefits for ordinary people.

Initiatives that encourage people to exercise regularly can help to reduce the incidence of strokes, cancer, and depression, resulting in higher productivity and lower health-care costs. These are important goals for a region like Latin America and the Caribbean, where one in four adults is obese—a trend that has worsened over the last decade.

Sports can also strengthen social relationships, by bringing together people from different backgrounds and creating a sense of shared purpose and identity. Moreover, they can provide a productive outlet for young people, keeping them focused and engaged and boosting their self-esteem, thereby reducing their vulnerability to harmful social influences. And they can promote qualities like perseverance, teamwork, and leadership—the kinds of soft skills employers seek in job candidates—while even supporting gender equality.

In short, sports programmes are good for individuals, communities,



Afghan children playing football. PHOTO: AFP

and countries. That is why, since 2004, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), of which I am president, has supported sports-for-development programmes for at-risk youth in 18 countries. Such programmes often combine the sport itself (namely, soccer) with vocational training and internships.

The results are promising, to say the least. Around 70 percent of participants complete the programme; of those, more than 65 percent get formal jobs, return to school, or start a business within one year. A project carried out in El Alto,

Bolivia, used soccer to enable more than 600 girls to learn leadership and other useful life skills. Though we have only limited data on their progress, we know from other research carried out in the United States that participation in sports can have long-term benefits for women, including higher educational attainment and job earnings.

Despite these benefits, Latin American and Caribbean countries spend a relatively modest 0.1 percent of GDP on sports programmes with broad social goals—about one-third as much as their European

counterparts. Does this mean that these countries should increase their investment in sport? It depends on the investment.

Not all sports programmes are created equal. In Europe, researchers have found that youth recreation centres where activities are not structured sometimes become gathering places for kids involved in high-risk behaviour such as gang activity.

Highly structured programmes that build strong relationships between students and their coaches or other mentors are much more

Much like scoring a goal, hitting a home run, or dunking a basketball, making sports-for-development programmes work requires a lot of practice, not just to master the technique or approach, but also to be able to apply it to diverse circumstances.

effective. For example, supervised sports programmes for schoolchildren can be strengthened as part of efforts to extend the school day—an accelerating trend across Latin America and the Caribbean.

The IDB's research and experience with sports-for-development programmes supports these conclusions, indicating that the value of public investment depends on the specific strategy. But it is not yet clear precisely which strategies work best. Thus, to maximise the economic and social benefits of government investment in sports, policymakers

need more information.

Specifically, there is a need for more experimentation, improved data collection, and careful evaluation, including reliable comparisons with competing approaches. At the IDB, we have found that the key is to test pilot projects and assess the data that are generated. Governments and other organisations, including development institutions like the IDB, can then work together to scale the programmes that prove most effective, while applying the lessons of less effective interventions.

Much like scoring a goal, hitting a home run, or dunking a basketball, making sports-for-development programmes work requires a lot of practice, not just to master the technique or approach, but also to be able to apply it to diverse circumstances. What happens on the playing field depends on everything that happened before—the failures as well as the successes.

If governments are not willing to put in the work, their investments will not be worthwhile. If, however, they commit to the experimentation, evidence collection, and evaluation that all smart public spending requires, sports-based investment can go a long way toward strengthening communities and enabling young people to live healthier, happier, and more productive lives.

Luis Alberto Moreno is President of the Inter-American Development Bank.

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QUOTABLE Quote

TONI MORRISON (b.1931)
PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING NOVELIST

All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Diner side dish
- 5 Get naked
- 10 Game with mallets
- 11 Kingdom division
- 13 Car
- 14 Danny of "Moon-struck"
- 15 Secure firmly
- 17 Curvy letter
- 18 "The Twilight Zone" creator
- 19 Methane or ethane
- 20 Green and Gore
- 21 Postmark part
- 22 Highland groups
- 25 Nat and Natalie
- 26 Singer Jenny
- 27 Fiddling need
- 28 Finish
- 29 Not as old
- 33 Cool -- cucumber
- 34 Go boom
- 35 Give a new title to
- 37 Casino figure
- 38 Hunting dog
- 39 Stepped down
- 40 College heads
- 41 Coloring agents

DOWN

- 1 Petty arguments
- 2 Comic Anderson
- 3 Change
- 4 Forested area
- 5 Gives rise to
- 6 Article
- 7 Deli bread
- 8 Outlawed
- 9 Throb
- 12 Forest growths
- 16 Artist's medium
- 21 Get an app, say to
- 22 Erases
- 23 Flax product
- 24 Slow tempo
- 25 Overthrow
- 27 Ring competitors
- 29 Oman neighbor
- 30 Devout
- 31 "Frasier" dog
- 32 Trakes ten
- 36 One -- time

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BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

SARGE, WHY IS THERE SO MUCH VIOLENCE IN THE WORLD?
INTERESTING QUESTION, AND A GOOD TIME TO ASK IT!
LET'S SIT DOWN AND DISCUSS IT

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

MOM, HAMMIE IS SO ANNOYING!
HE'LL GROW OUT OF THAT, ZOE.
AND THEN SOMEDAY YOU TWO WILL BE BEST FRIENDS.
OUR FUTURE IS CURSED?
IS MOM MAKING TORU AGAIN?!

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

P	E	N	T	U	P	S	A	G	S
A	R	O	U	S	E	P	S	A	T
I	R	O	N	E	R	R	U	S	E
L	O	N	E	R	C	A	S	T	E
S	L	E	D	M	U	T	U	A	L
	J	O	N	A	S	S	A	L	K
P	A	N	M	E	E	T			
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G	A	T	O	R	S	A	S	H	A
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E	I	C	O	N	A	G	E	O	L
T	A	T	A	P	A	S	T	E	S