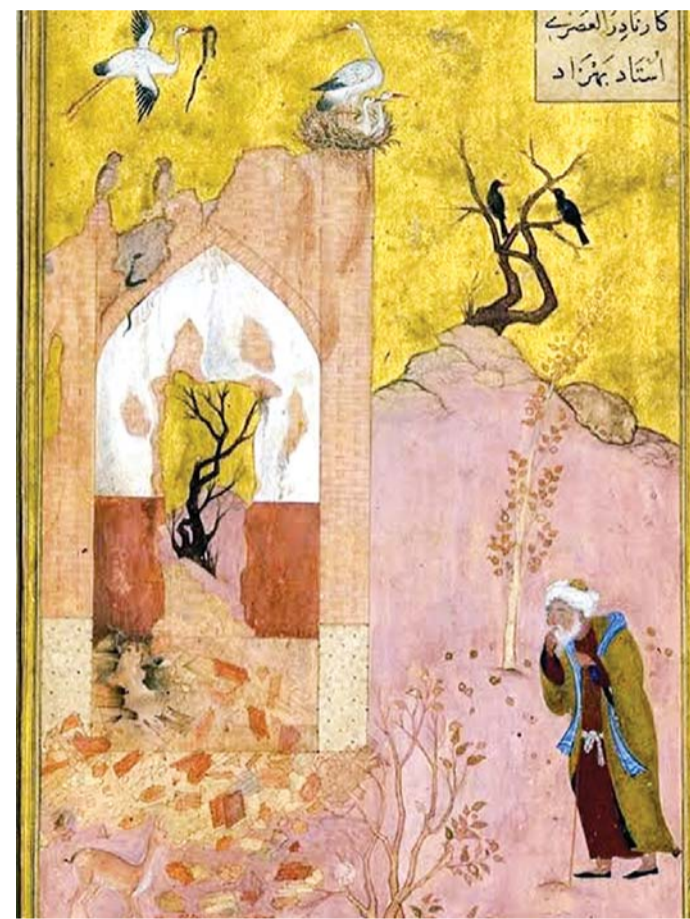


Observed on April 24, the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace underscores the importance of collective action and dialogue among nations to address global challenges. Established by the United Nations, the day promotes cooperation, respect for international law, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts through diplomacy. In an increasingly interconnected world, multilateralism plays a crucial role in tackling issues such as climate change, security, and sustainable development. The occasion highlights the need for inclusive partnerships and strong international institutions, encouraging countries to work together to build a more stable, peaceful, and equitable global order.

#MAKHZAN AL-ASRAR

As Many Ruined Villages As You Like...

Realizing the destruction caused by his love of war and conquest, Nushirvan is moved to reform his rule and restore justice to his lands



This Persian miniature by Ustad Behzad, titled *Nushirvan and the Owls*, depicts a moralising tale from the Makhzan al-Asrar ("Treasury of Secrets"), the first poem in the Khamsa (Quintet) of Nizami Ganjavi. While the inscription on this specific detached folio ascribes the work to the legendary artist Kamal ud-Din Behzad, many such inscriptions were added later to enhance a work's prestige, and the British Museum identifies this particular painting as being falsely ascribed to him.

The Story Behind the Painting

The scene illustrates a story told by the vizier (minister) to the Sasanian king Nushirvan (also known as Anushirvan or Khosrow I).
The Setting: While traveling through his kingdom, the king and his vizier come across a ruined village.

The Owls: Two owls are perched atop a ruined building, hooting at each other.

The Dialogue: The king asks his vizier to translate what the birds are saying.

The Moral: The vizier explains that one owl is offering the other's daughter in marriage, and as a dowry, he promises as many ruined villages as the other likes. He tells the king that as long as Nushirvan remains an unjust ruler, there will be no shortage of ruined cities.

The Outcome: Realizing the destruction caused by his love of war and conquest, Nushirvan is moved to reform his rule and restore justice to his lands.



Ustad Behzad.

Visual Characteristics

The painting showcases the refined style of Persian miniature art.

Ruins: The central focus is the crumbling brick archway, symbolising the decay of the kingdom under an unjust ruler.

Birds: Multiple birds are shown, including the two owls on the ruins and storks in a nest above, which add to the narrative layer of nature taking over human neglect.

The King: Nushirvan is depicted as a contemplative figure in the lower right, often shown with a pensive expression as he listens to the vizier's interpretation.

Color and Detail: Typical of the Safavid period, it uses fine pigments, gold leaf for the sky, and minute details in the foliage and architecture.



• Verna Mohan

The Chagossian people, an indigenous group from the Chagos Archipelago in the Indian Ocean, have a tragic history tied to the geopolitical interests of the United States and the United Kingdom. At the heart of this history

is the island of Diego Garcia, which became a focal point for the establishment of a major US military base during the Cold War. This dark chapter in Chagossian history not only disrupted a peaceful and thriving community but also resulted in severe social, psychological, and cultural destruction for an entire population.

The Chagossian Community Before Displacement

The Chagos Archipelago, composed of around 60 islands, was home to a small, self-sustained, and isolated population known as the Chagossians. The people lived on these islands for generations, subsisting on fishing and agriculture. The Chagossians spoke a Creole language, practiced Christianity, and lived a close-knit communal lifestyle. For centuries, they were the unsung custodians of the islands.

However, this peaceful existence came to a violent halt in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In a covert operation between the British and American governments, the Chagossian people were forcibly

In what can only be described as a deal sealed in secrecy, the US offered the UK a way out of this debt. According to declassified documents and testimonies, the US promised that if the UK agreed to help them acquire the Chagos Archipelago, particularly Diego Garcia, the debt would be wiped clean. This economic incentive was pivotal in securing the UK's cooperation. The agreement, however, came with two strict conditions: first, the operation had to be kept secret, and second, the Chagossian population had to be removed from the islands to ensure the establishment of a military base.



Aerial view of Diego Garcia island.

The Story of Diego Garcia and the Military Base

#THE CHAGOSSIAN PEOPLE



The Forced Removal

The British government, under pressure from the United States, began to expel the Chagossians in 1965. Families were given little time to prepare for their displacement, and the removal was carried out under brutal conditions. Men, women, and children were forced to board ships and were sent to the island of Mauritius and Seychelles, where they had no ties and limited resources. They were left in foreign countries, often living in poverty and without the support of their traditional community structures.

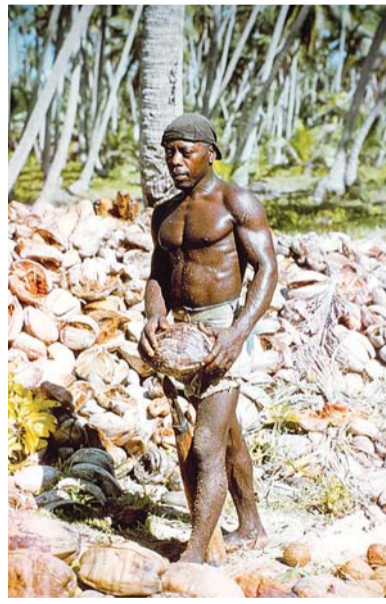
Many Chagossians, having never left the Archipelago, were unable to adapt to their new lives in these distant lands. They were also stripped of their land, their homes, and their culture. This severance from their ancestral land not only caused immediate hardship but also created long-lasting trauma.

The Role of the US and UK Governments

The expulsion was not an isolated event but part of a larger strategy to build and maintain a US military presence in the Indian Ocean region. The island of Diego Garcia, strategically located between Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, became an essential military hub during the Cold War, hosting military assets, including bombers and nuclear weapons.

To ensure the base's construction, the British government provided full support to the US, including the forced removal of the Chagossians. The US, in return, made several agreements with the UK to share intelligence and military resources, further cementing the political alliance between the two nations.

Despite promises made to the Chagossians by the UK government, they were never consulted about the removal or the construction of the



An unnamed Diego Garcia island at the time of the US encampment, 1971.

base. Their consent was neither sought nor considered, and the idea of negotiating on their behalf was done without their knowledge or approval.

The Voice of Bernadette

Bernadette, one of the survivors of the forced displacement, became a powerful voice in the fight for justice for the Chagossian people. She recalls the traumatic events of being forcibly removed from Diego Garcia: "I never gave my consent to anybody to negotiate on my behalf," she says, her voice filled with the pain of being silenced and ignored by the very governments that had claimed to act in her best interests.

For years, Bernadette and other members of the Chagossian community have fought for recognition, compensation, and the right to return to their homeland. Their struggle for justice continues today, as they seek to reclaim not only their physical land but also their cultural heritage, which was decimated by the forced displacement.

A Legacy of Injustice

In 2016, the British government rejected the right of the Chagossians to return to the islands after a 45-year legal dispute. In 2019, the International Court of Justice issued an advisory opinion stating that the United Kingdom did not have sovereignty over the Chagos Islands and that the administration of the archipelago should be handed over "as rapidly as possible" to Mauritius. Since this, the United

Nations General Assembly and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea have reached similar decisions. China abstained in the 2019 UN vote, which was a step towards reaching an agreement to return the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius.

In October 2024, the UK agreed to hand over the Chagos Islands to Mauritius and stated that Mauritius "will now be free to implement a programme of resettlement on the islands of the Chagos Archipelago, other than Diego Garcia." The UK will also set up a trust fund for the scattered Chagossian diaspora, now numbering 10,000. In 2021, Mauritius amended its Criminal Code to outlaw "Misrepresenting the sovereignty of Mauritius over any part of its territory," with the penalty of a fine or jail term up to 10 years but only for a "person who is acting under the authority or instructions of, or pursuant to a contract with, or with the direct or indirect financial support of, a foreign State or any organ or agency of such a State."

The story of the Chagossian people is one of displacement, trauma, and resistance. The forced removal from Diego Garcia is not just a historical event but a continuing injustice. The community's calls for justice echo around the world, asking for recognition of their rights and the restoration of what was taken from them.

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#NOSTALGIA

The Story of India's First Antiseptic Cream

"Shurobhitto antiseptic cream Boroline." No Bengali simply reads these words, they sing them. Borrowed from a legendary jingle...

From a symbol of Swadeshi self-reliance to a timeless household remedy, Boroline carries with it the scent of India's history and collective memory. Encased in its unmistakable green tube, Boroline is not merely a cream, it is an emotion, deeply rooted in Bengali homes and familiar across generations of Indians.

"Shurobhitto antiseptic cream Boroline."

No Bengali simply reads these words, they sing them. Borrowed from a legendary jingle that once echoed across radio waves and television screens, the phrase translates to "antiseptic cream Boroline." Even today, the sight of that green tube can instantly transport a Bengali, anywhere in the world, back to childhood, home, and care. More often than not, Boroline travels abroad tucked safely inside suitcases, just in case.

For many, Boroline is inseparable from memories of scraped knees, minor burns, winter-dry skin, and a grandmother's confident touch. In countless households, it was the first response to cuts, bruises, swelling, or cracked heels. Its healing reputation was never questioned; it simply worked. Long before modern skincare flooded the market, Boroline quietly earned trust through everyday use.

Origins and Swadeshi Roots

Boroline was launched in 1929 in Kolkata by Gour Mohon Dutta, a member of the city's merchant community, who founded GD Pharmaceuticals with a vision of manufacturing high-quality Indian medicinal products. This was a time when the freedom struggle was not only political but economic. While some resisted colonial rule through protest, others embraced self-reliance as resistance. Boroline emerged from this ethos, becoming a tangible expression of the Swadeshi



movement. Formulated with boric acid, zinc oxide (jasad bhasma), lanolin, paraffin, perfume, and essential oils, Boroline was marketed as an antiseptic Ayurvedic cream. Its moss-green tube soon became a fixture in Indian homes, transcending regional and cultural boundaries. From frostbite relief in Kashmir to sun protection in southern India, Boroline proved its versatility and dependability across climates.

Cultural Presence and Advertising Legacy

Vintage Boroline advertisements, both in English and Bengali, played a vital role in shaping its identity. Hand-drawn illustrations, poetic language, and traditional imagery portrayed Boroline as a symbol of family care, trust, and everyday healing. Unlike modern beauty advertising, Boroline's messaging focused on protection rather than perfection. Over time, these ads helped transform the cream into a Bengali cultural archetype,

associated with tradition, reassurance, and home.

Beyond Commerce: A Brand with a Conscience

After Independence, Boroline's significance extended beyond business. GD Pharmaceuticals embraced social responsibility by supporting underprivileged patients, funding medical treatment for children, and adopting environmentally conscious practices such as recyclable packaging and plantation initiatives near its Kolkata facilities. The brand aligned itself with nation-building, reinforcing its people-first identity.

Evolution Without Losing Essence

While Boroline remains the flagship product, the brand has expanded to include products like Suthol, Eleen hair oil, Glossoft face wash, and Penorub. Yet, despite changing consumer trends and fierce competition from multinational brands, Boroline has retained its original formulation, purpose, and packaging. Adhering to Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and operating fully automated facilities, the brand balances tradition with modern standards.

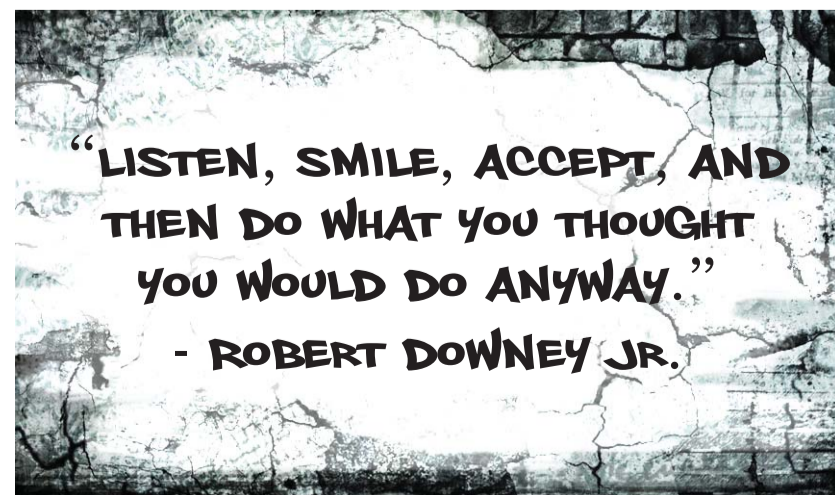
Boroline as an Icon

Today Boroline stands as more than India's first antiseptic cream. It represents trust, resilience, nationalism, and middle-class Bengali identity. Passed down through generations, it is a shared cultural memory, one that continues to heal, comfort, and connect people across time and borders.

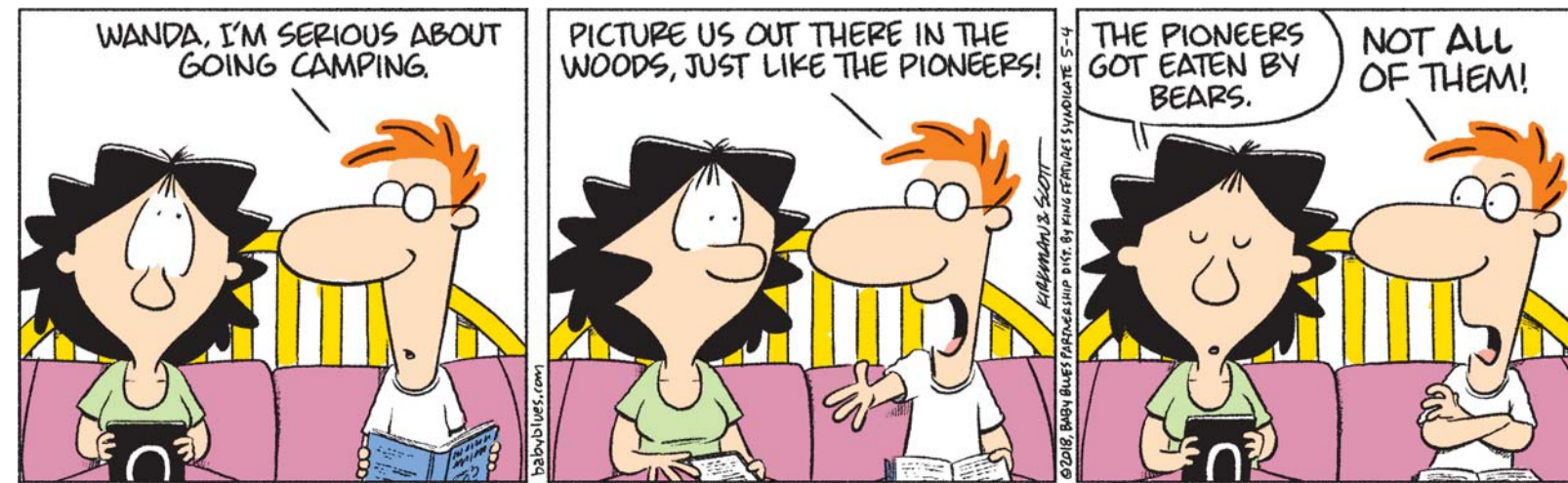
Boroline is not just a product; it is a legacy. And the green tube endures, quietly reminding us of where we come from.



THE WALL

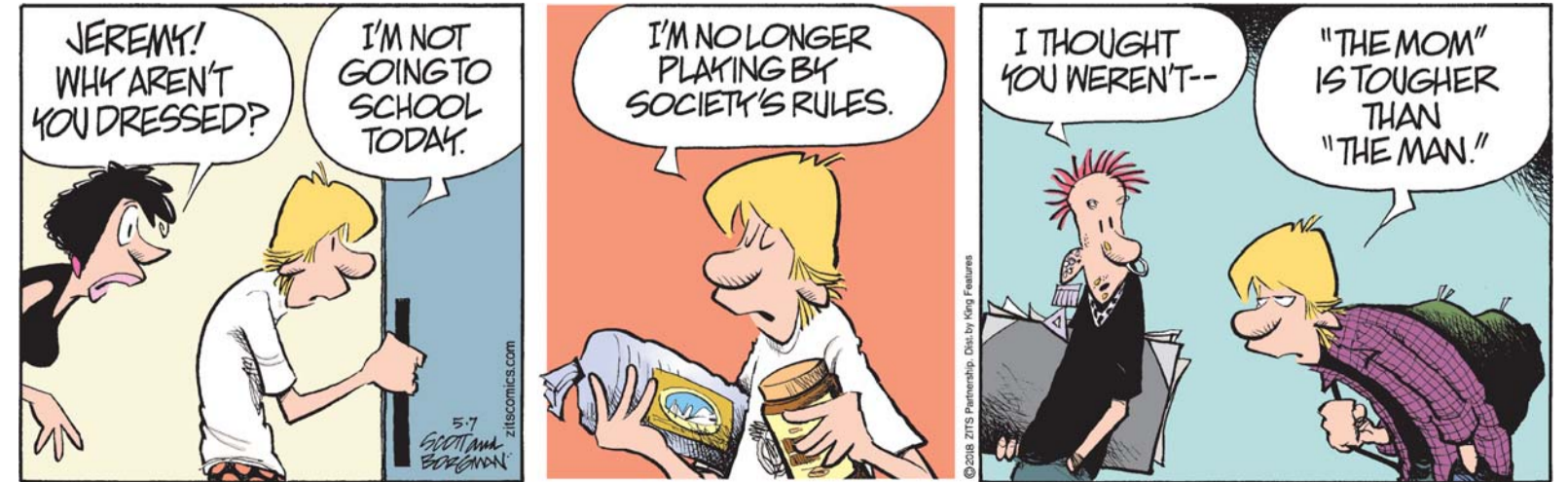


BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman