

MAURITIUS TIMES

'The further a society drifts from the truth, the more it will hate those that speak it.' -- George Orwell

Matters of The Moment

Lessons from the Wakashio catastrophe



It is patently obvious that the model of governance based on nepotism and cohorts of political appointees and advisors carries high risks of backfiring. This is evidenced by the long list of costly blunders which have littered the governance of successive governments

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"Mauritius has signed no less than 30 IMO conventions... However, a national oil contingency plan requires regular updating"

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The lessons of the MV Wakashio disaster. An International Perspective



Prof Christian Bueger: "Mauritius will receive some basic compensation. But how do you calculate the price of restoring a marine habitat, or the cost of a dead bird?"

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Mauritius is severely wounded

The MV Wakashio is a bulk carrier sailing under the Panama flag, with a deadweight tonnage (the total amount of cargo, stores and bunkers) of 203,130 tons, and 300 metres length, 50 m wide. It was on its way from China to Brazil. The sheer size of the vessel classifies it as an enormous one.

It was carrying 3897 metric tons of low sulphur oil, 207 metric tons of diesel and 90 metric tons of lubricant oil. Its cargo, compared to its deadweight tonnage, means that it was practically empty save for the petroleum products on board.

On 25 July, having deviated from its course, it got stuck on the coral reef off the coast of Pointe d'Esny, an environmentally sensitive zone, and was grounded.

Up to now there are a lot of unanswered questions.

What is known is that:

1. Prior to being grounded, the vessel was contacted by the local authorities and did not respond by maintaining radio silence.
2. On the 26 July, the Commissioner of Police held a press briefing stating that immediately after the grounding of the vessel the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan, under the responsibility of the Director of Environment, was actioned. The Director of Shipping had also contacted the Japanese owner of the vessel to get the services of a salvage company. It is only when the contract between the salvage company and the owner of the vessel would be signed and received by the Director of Shipping that the salvage operations could begin. The specialised equipment required for the salvage would be transported by air cargo to save time. It is only when the salvage company would be on the site that it would make an assessment of the situation, including whether the oil would be pumped out or not from the ship. We were also informed that the situation was under control.
3. On 6 August, the oil spillage started.
4. As at 11 August, 1000 tons of oil have spilled in the blue lagoon, and 500 tons have been pumped out.

What is not known is:

1. Why did the vessel depart from its trajectory? Why a few minutes after the captain had stated that he was on course the vessel was grounded?
2. Why after the vessel had departed from the seaway in our territorial waters and did not respond to calls from the local authorities, no action was taken to approach it and possibly stop it?
3. Why were calls for assistance from friendly countries delayed?
4. Why is it that given our distance far from countries where salvage facilities are available – but nevertheless close to seaways with intense traffic and with the experience of ships grounded on our reefs in the recent past – the authorities have not deemed it necessary to equip the country with the logistics and trained manpower to face such disasters?

5. As per the International Maritime Organisation's Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, all ships of 500 gross tonnage must be fitted with an automatic identification system (AIS). The AIS consists of means to determine and display, amongst other things, the range and bearing of shorelines and navigational marks to assist in navigation and in collision avoidance. AIS transceivers are also used by onshore authorities to view and monitor the movements of ships in the local traffic. Are our local authorities equipped with an AIS which would have allowed them to track the movement of MV Wakashio well in advance when it departed from its route?

Prior to the oil spillage, the authorities were confident that this would not happen. All efforts appeared to be geared to dislocating the vessel from the reef. A press release on the eve of the oil spillage stated that "according to the expert team, the Wakashio is stable contrary as it appeared on those pictures on social media. The vessel is not sinking and will not sink. The process for the Salvage Operation is on-going. All measures are being taken by the Salvage team to re-equilibrate the vessel."

And the following day that is on Thursday 6th August 2020, the spillage started and all hell broke loose.

It was clear that the authorities had failed and this caused anger among large sections of the local population. People decided to take matters in their own hands and started to deal with the situation with whatever means they could be mobilize.

The excuses put forward by the authorities appear to be lame ones. However two of them need to be addressed.

The first excuse put forward is that the authorities could not act prior to the grounding of the ship as they were complying with established protocols and maritime laws. It is to be remembered that the very same authorities engaged in procurement exercises, bypassing established protocols and even legal requirements during the recent Covid-19 lockdown. Were we not then told that the gravity of the situation was such that they had to act fast in the face of adversity? Does it mean that the authorities will henceforth, come what may, respect and comply with protocols and laws - whatever the consequences to the country?

The second excuse is that, had they bypassed protocols, there would have been voices of protests, mostly from the opposition. This is true. Would it be a difficult choice for a patriot, *un vrai fils du sol*, to make when faced with a situation where he would be subjected to criticisms by taking initiatives and bypassing the law, even suffering a personal blow to his political career on one hand or conform to strict protocols and parameters, knowing that his motherland would be severely wounded on the other hand? Would that be a Cornelian dilemma for a true patriot?

The choice was made, and the whole country is now crying upon the desecration of the motherland.

K. Murali

The Conversation

Lessons taught in English are reshaping the global classroom

Universities and schools across the globe are offering an increasing number of courses taught in English. Parents and politicians alike are pushing for this change as English is considered a world-wide language of opportunity in education and business.



The decision to use English as medium of instruction has very important implications for the education of young people in non-anglophone countries and yet little research evidence is available.

EMI Oxford, a new research centre at Oxford University's department of education, is currently carrying out global research into this issue to explore where and why English is being introduced as a teaching language and what happens in the classroom when it is.

Our first report has been written with support from the British Council, setting out the size and shape of English language teaching in 55 countries. Initial findings, being presented at the Going Global conference on international education, show that 83% of countries surveyed believed that they did not have enough qualified teachers to teach through English.

What "qualified" means is not yet clear as teaching qualifications do not seem to exist. It may be that not all teachers can teach in English. For example, older, more experienced teachers may find it difficult. If teachers cannot speak good English, the home language may still be used most of the time.

Going anglophonic

There is no still clear definition yet of what teaching in English actually means and how it includes other forms of bilingual education. It is also not yet clear exactly what the consequences of introducing English as a teaching language are on teaching, learning, assessment and teachers' professional development.

There are many reasons why countries introduce English as a teaching language. They want their students to become bilingual, improve their knowledge of a target culture, and see English as opening up opportunities for students to work and study abroad. Countries may want to spread their own culture throughout the world or have political reasons for adopting English as a medium for instruction, such as nation-building and aligning a country with English-speaking neighbours.

Some institutions are not so sure why they are adopting English to teach in. One European institution told us: "Other universities hurry to copy us, but they don't really know what is the objective of this hurry."

Julie Dearden, Senior Research and Development Fellow,
University of Oxford

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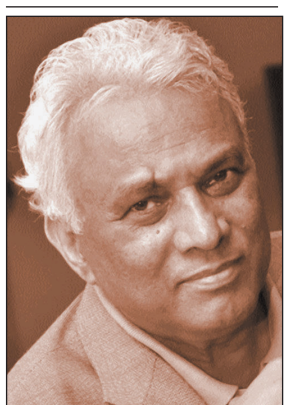
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Mrinal Roy

Lessons from the Wakashio catastrophe

It is patently obvious that the model of governance based on nepotism and cohorts of political appointees and advisors carries high risks of backfiring. This is evidenced by the long list of costly blunders which have littered the governance of successive governments

The oil spill from the bulk carrier Wakashio which ran aground on the reefs off Pointe d'Esny on 25 July has caused an unprecedented ecological catastrophe in the country. It has polluted the pristine lagoon, destroyed marine life, blackened our golden sandy beaches, endangered the Ile aux Aigrettes Nature Reserve and the Blue Bay Marine Area and impaired the coastal wetlands in the region. The fuel oil started spilling into the sea on 6 August, 12 days after the bulk carrier was shipwrecked on the reefs. By 10 August, some 800 metric tons of fuel had spilled into the lagoon and an extensive stretch of the coastal waters of the South East of Mauritius. It has caused tremendous damage to the coastal ecosystem, marine life and the tourism sector. The aerial pictures of the oil spill are chilling.

Response strategies to prevent the dire impact of oil spills have been honed and perfected in the world over the years on the basis of the experience and lessons drawn from previous ecological disasters caused by major oil spills which have occurred in the world over the past decades. Oil spills kill fish, marine birds and life, pollute beaches and have a disastrous impact on tourism, the marine environment and ecosystem. Every country which is exposed to such risks directly related to the density of sea traffic in its waters must necessarily have a well-conceived and efficient contingency plan to prevent the risk of oil spills in its lagoons and coastal waters. As is the case for drills carried out in the context of contingency plans to respond efficiently to disasters such as a plane crash or a tsunami, countries at risk must also be geared through simulated drill exercises to action a prompt and efficient response to prevent oil spills in their coastal waters or minimize its fallout.

Prevent and contain

It is not rocket science to fathom that the most important actions to be taken to prevent an oil spill when a ship runs aground on the reefs is to first and foremost pump out the fuel oil aboard the ship and to deploy oil booms to contain any oil spill within a tightly circumscribed perimeter around the ship so as to securely protect the shore and beaches, marine life, the wetlands as well as the marine and nature reserves in the area.

Have the crying lessons from the shipwreck of another bulk carrier, the MV Benita on the outer reef off the coast of Le Bouchon in June 2016 which caused a minor oil spill into our coastal waters not been learnt? This is the more disconcerting as one of the immediate actions recommended after the MV Benita shipwreck was to 'prepare an oil pollution response plan which also covers a worst case scenario'. Amidst a wide range of criticisms at the time, there were also calls to 'have the necessary equipment to deal with such disasters'.

The ecological, environmental and economic damage caused by the Wakashio oil spill is most certainly an example of a disastrous scenario. Does the government not have a well-conceived and robust contingency plan to promptly deal with risks of oil spills from bulk carriers such as the Wakashio which ran aground on our reefs

with more than 4,000 metric tons (MT) of fuel oil aboard?

Misguided strategy?

Against such a backdrop the scale of the ecological and economic catastrophe in such a short lapse of time begs a host of legitimate questions. Have government and the authorities not been sufficiently alert to the potent risk of an oil spill? Was the initial strategy adopted to deal with the shipwreck misguided? Why were immediate steps not taken to pump the 4180 MT of fuel oil aboard the Wakashio after it was shipwrecked on 25 July? Why were oil booms not mobilized and promptly deployed around the bulk carrier to coral and contain any oil spill in the sea within a secure perimeter distanced from the shore and vulnerable ecosystems? Why were skimmers,

disconcerting reality that we did not readily have the required equipment and barges to pump the fuel from the ship or the storage tanks to store the fuel pumped out of the Wakashio or the recycling facilities to extract the fuel from the oil mopped from the sea?

It was Taylor Smith, which is a key economic actor in the marine services sector in the country, which finally provided a 5,000 MT tank to government to store the totality of the fuel oil pumped from the Wakashio. The country also did not have the required number of skimmers to mop up the oil spilled into the sea or sufficient oil booms to contain the spread of the oil spill. Why was help from France through Reunion and other friendly countries to urgently pump out the oil aboard the vessel not sought earlier? These cogent questions will hopefully help chart a more efficient response strategy to avert such dire catastrophes in future.

The country must now direct its efforts to the enormous task of using skimmers to mop up the fuel oil spilled into the sea and assuring through tests that the sea is safe from contamination as well as cleaning up our beaches.



Indian Oil (Mauritius) Ltd barge deployed to evacuate 1000 tonnes fuel oil from Wakashio (Image: Twitter)

“The oil pumping operations which started after the oil spill, on 8 August removed most of the 3380 MT of fuel remaining on board the Wakashio in five days on 12 August despite the operations being hampered by bad weather on 10 August. Could the country have prevented the oil spill had we acted more promptly to pump the fuel oil from the vessel during the 12 days between the shipwreck and start of the oil spill on 6 August from cracks in the hull of the Wakashio, taking into consideration the prevailing weather conditions?”

oil pumping barges, oil storage tanks, oil recycling facilities and other essential equipment not mobilized immediately after the Wakashio ran aground on the reefs?

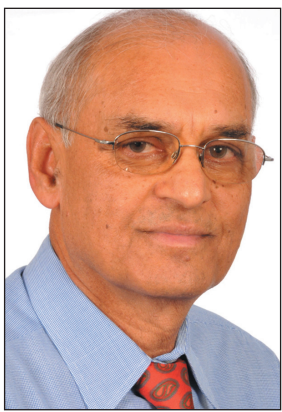
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Why was the local expertise in ship building and engineering, marine surveys and diverse marine sciences not tapped for advice and guidance to help manage the potent risks associated with the shipwreck and contain the disastrous impact of the oil spill on our beaches and over a long stretch of our coastal waters? Why is it that it was only when oil starting leaking into the sea from the Wakashio on 6 August that the country woke up to the

Changing a failed system

The standard response from government repeated as a leitmotiv that 'in Mauritius we do not have the expertise required' cannot explain the patent lack of preparedness of the authorities to deal efficiently with the diverse risks associated with a shipwreck on our reefs. This overdependence on foreign experts delayed potent actions and a prompt response to stem these risks. It is however essential that independent experts are chosen as opposed to those representing the owners of Wakashio or the insurance companies.

How can a country not have seasoned and talented experts in every field and sector of key importance to assure its robust and sustained growth and development in a competitive world which is more and more driven by pointed skills and expertise? We need to urgently create such an ecosystem in the country. There is no place for the dilettante. This is one of the major failings of the system of governance in the country.



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

Protests, Yes – but why the mob violence?

Violence of any kind is so upsetting to those of us who belong to the health professions and are in the frontline having to deal with the damage done to, more often than not, innocent people

American publication, the author Noah Rothman writes:

'News consumers can be forgiven for assuming that the unrest in America's cities that erupted after George Floyd's death had largely abated. Media's coverage of that lawlessness has certainly ebbed, but, as events in Chicago on Sunday night demonstrated, the organized assaults on American cities did not.

'The story in Chicago is now a familiar one. Police officers responded to a Sunday afternoon call about an armed man in the city's Englewood neighborhood. A scuffle broke out. Police were shot at, and they returned fire. The suspect, who was wounded, was taken into custody.'

And he goes on to describe how shortly afterwards a mob started to gather, seemingly spontaneously, but the fact that vans and other vehicles came in with arms and other equipment, and mayhem followed with pelting, arson and looting of shops that were broken into suggested that this assault was more likely an orchestrated one. Similar scenes were seen in other cities in the US in the immediate aftermath of the Floyd George incident in Minneapolis, such as in New York where streets with high-end shops were pillaged by marauding mobs.

Chicago is considered to be the most violent city in the US and I learnt this as far back as 1979, when I was attending a revision course for my final exam in surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh. The surgeon who gave us the lecture on abdominal injuries had spent a year at the Cook County Hospital in Chicago, which dealt with practically all the trauma cases that resulted from the endemic violence in the city.

Under normal civilian conditions the worse types of injuries that we encounter as surgeons are those from road accidents. They are bad enough, and it's a tough call trying to save lives and limbs. Fortunately, I must say, I have never worked in zones of the type of violence seen in war or when mobs rampage with lethal weapons. But I can imagine the nightmare that colleagues face as they battle to repair mangled bodies, and feel for them.

That is why violence of any kind is so upsetting to those of us who belong to the health professions and are in the frontline having to deal with the damage done to, more often than not, innocent people.

Even as I was writing these lines came the news of

another rampage, this time in the 'silicon valley' city of India, Bengaluru, generally known for its IT hub and as a garden city as I saw for myself when I visited there in 1967 during my student days, and again in 2009 with family – though the scene had changed, in Cubbon's Park for example, which had contracted in size because



"To those who want 'to drive the narrative of it (the Bengaluru riot) being a spontaneous act', 'a simple question' is asked of them: 'If their (i.e. the mobsters') anger was against Congress MLA, why were they asking names of people going on the streets and also attacking police station? Why are police department targeted? Despite violence and destruction of properties everywhere, how is it that there was none in the residential areas of miscreants?'"

Photo - gumlet.assettype.com

of buildings that were not there during my first trip.

I was pained to see the visuals on Indian TV channels, and scanned the coverage in the print media to gain some understanding of what was happening. And what I read were echoes of the reflections made by Noah Rothman about the situation in the US. Thus, one headline read 'The Bengaluru riots point towards a well-planned conspiracy, not a spontaneous reaction' and the sub-heading was, almost predictably, 'There is an attempt from some quarters to drive the narrative of it being a spontaneous act'.

"I was pained to see the visuals on Indian TV channels, and scanned the coverage in the print media to gain some understanding of what was happening. And what I read were echoes of the reflections made by Noah Rothman about the situation in the US. Thus, one headline read 'The Bengaluru riots point towards a well-planned conspiracy, not a spontaneous reaction' and the sub-heading was, almost predictably, 'There is an attempt from some quarters to drive the narrative of it being a spontaneous act'..."

And next we read, 'a huge mob assembled were hurling stones at Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy's home (NB: a Congress MLA) and setting it on fire. They also attacked fire engines that rushed to the spot. Thereafter they barged into KG Halli Police Station, the local police station. Setting two vans parked there on fire, they began attacking the police station. Not stopping at that, the mob indulged in violence against the cops and media too'.

Further on, a more graphic account: '... a mob gathered with bottles filled with petrol, diesel, kerosene and stones and at first arrived and attacked the Congress MLAs house', and then the sequence of the attacks: 'They attack legislator's house; set fire to police van; vandalise and set fire to police station; lock up DCP who went there to pacify the mob (as informed to media by Minister A Ashoka); setting DCP's car on fire; fearing reprisals and police reinforcements arriving, attack police quarters; erect barricades to block roads; continuous stoning; another attempt to vandalise KG Halli Police Station'.

To other commentators, this was a replica of what happened in New Delhi when President Donald Trump visited last year, and as police investigations are now revealing that was well planned in advance, with the involvement and active support of a local politician whose own terrace was used to stock material that was used by the rioters. On the terrace were set up makeshift catapults that were used to launch incendiary bombs on the neighbourhood houses.

Coming back to Bengaluru, the same interrogations are being raised: 'What was the provocation for this incident? What was the background? Who was the architect behind this mindless act? What were their objectives? Was it spontaneous or pre-planned?'

And to those who want 'to drive the narrative of it being a spontaneous act', 'a simple question' is asked of them: 'If their (i.e. the mobsters') anger was against Congress MLA, why were they asking names of people going on the streets and also attacking police station? Why are police department targeted? Despite violence and destruction of properties everywhere, how is it that there was none in the residential areas of miscreants?'

And: 'What was the basic trigger? A Facebook post – Seriously? All this violence for a Facebook post? It is here that it takes a different turn'. And a more searching remark: 'Despite all these, if anyone still thinks this violence was spontaneous, and the result of a trivial Facebook post, one has to be very naïve and needs to view the world a bit more intelligently'.

It won't surprise if the police investigations in this yet another troubling incident will reveal patterns linked to the Delhi riots, but whether as in the case of the US, it will be for India too 'The riots that never ended' is an issue which the authorities will have to tackle on practically a war footing, that is, preparedness and swinging into immediate action.

On a more positive note

The *élan de solidarité nationale* (national solidarity spirit) that has brought all Mauritian citizens together in a collective effort to deal with the oil spill from MV Wakashio. Though I had to perforce curb the enthusiasm of a 45-year old who went with like-minded friends to Blue Bay on Sunday, setting off before dawn from Curepipe to help mop up the oil, etc. He toiled till past midday – and next morning he got up with a painful, stiff back: recurrence of the symptoms that he had seen me for and had to be admitted almost a year ago. Fortunately, it was not the same disc problem, but he still needed treatment and rest.

May that spirit spread and endure!

Biden's VP pick: Why Kamala Harris embraces her biracial roots

US Senator Kamala Harris - chosen by Joe Biden as his Democratic vice-presidential candidate - is known as a prominent black politician. But she has also embraced her Indian roots.

"My name is pronounced 'comma-la', like the punctuation mark," Kamala Harris writes in her 2018 autobiography, *'The Truths We Hold'*.

The California senator, daughter of an Indian-born mother and Jamaican-born father, then explains the meaning of her Indian name.

"It means 'lotus flower', which is a symbol of significance in Indian culture. A lotus grows underwater, its flowers rising above the surface while the roots are planted firmly in the river bottom."

Early in life, young Kamala and her sister Maya grew up in a house filled with music by black American artists. Her mother would sing along to Aretha Franklin's early gospel, and her jazz-loving father, who taught economics at Stanford University, would play Thelonius Monk and John Coltrane on the turntable, reports Soutik Biswas India correspondent of BBC News.

Shyamala Gopalan and Donald Harris separated when Ms Harris was five. Raised primarily by her Hindu single mother, a cancer researcher and a civil rights activist, Kamala, Maya and Shyamala were known as "Shyamala and the girls".

Her mother made sure her two daughters were aware of their background.

"My mother understood very well she was raising two black daughters. She knew that her adopted homeland would see Maya and me as black girls, and she was determined to make sure we would grow into confident black women," she wrote.

"Harris grew up embracing her Indian culture, but living a proudly African-American life," wrote the Washington Post last year.

When she ran for a senate seat in 2015, the *Economist* magazine described her as the "daughter of an Indian cancer researcher and a Jamaican economics professor, she is the first woman, first African-American and first Asian attorney general of California".

The 55-year-old senator says she has not grappled with her identity and describes herself simply as "an American". In many ways, say people who know her, Ms Harris straddles both communities effortlessly.

In a video with Indian-American comedian and actress Mindy Kaling, posted to the senator's Youtube page during Ms Harris's presidential run, the two cook Indian food together and chat

about their shared south Indian background.

Kaling says that while not everyone knows about that half of Ms Harris's heritage, other Indian-Americans she meets often bring up the fact.

"It's like our thing we're so excited about, to have you running for president," says Kaling.

Kaling asks Ms Harris whether she was raised eating south Indian food.

Ms Harris reels off names of Indian dishes made at home: "Lots of rice and yogurt, potato curry, dal, lots of dal, idli".



Kamala Harris is biracial but was raised by her Indian mother, who was the biggest influence in her life. She stayed connected to her roots with trips to India as a child. Photo - behindwoods.com

She also says when she visited her mother's home in India, her grandfather would cheekily ask for French toast - made with eggs - when her vegetarian grandmother was out (in India, eggs are considered non-vegetarian).

In her book, she writes about making Indian biryani - and spaghetti Bolognese - at home.

When Ms Harris got married to Douglas Emhoff, a lawyer, in 2014, "in keeping with [our] respective Indian and Jewish heritage", she put a flower garland around her new husband's neck and he stomped on a glass.

Ms Harris's public image has been more tied to her identity as an African-American politician, especially recently during the current conversation around race and the Black Lives Matter movement in the US.

But Indian-Americans also view her as one of their own, her candidacy suggesting a potential wider recognition of the Indian and South Asian communities in the country.

US Democratic Party activists like Shekar Narasimhan say her candidacy would be "seismic" for the Indian-American community. "She's a woman, she biracial, she will help win the election for Biden, she appeals to various communities and she's really smart."

"Why should Indian-Americans not be proud of her? It's a signal that we are coming of age."



Photo - static.euronews.com

World's biggest gambling hub reopens for business

Macau has taken its first steps on the road to recovery as the casino capital starts issuing tourist visas again.

Asia's gambling hub became a ghost town after coronavirus lockdowns saw a severe downturn in visitors.

Macau authorities said they will slowly start handing out tourist visas from Wednesday to bring gamblers back.

Casino operators have been losing \$15m (£11.5m) daily in expenses, according to estimates, reports BBC News.

Visas for both individuals and group tours from mainland China will be restored in phases. Macau,

like Hong Kong, is a special administrative region (SAR) of China.

Authorities did not say when visas will be made available to tourists wanting to travel to Macau from outside China.

Macau's neighbour Zhuhai is the first mainland city to be issued tourist visas. The opportunity will gradually be rolled out to the rest of the country during August and September, according to a statement from China's National Immigration Administration.

Casino operators are excited by the relaxation of the travel ban, which was introduced in late January to contain the spread of the

coronavirus. Their revenues are typically five times that of the Las Vegas Strip, driven largely by Chinese demand.

On top of the re-issuing of visas, a two-week quarantine imposed on Macau travellers upon their return to mainland China was lifted across the country on Wednesday.

Macau has seen a very low level of coronavirus infections with just 46 cases and no deaths.

In the red

Macau's economy is heavily reliant on the tourism and gaming industry, which shrank 49% in the first quarter of this year.

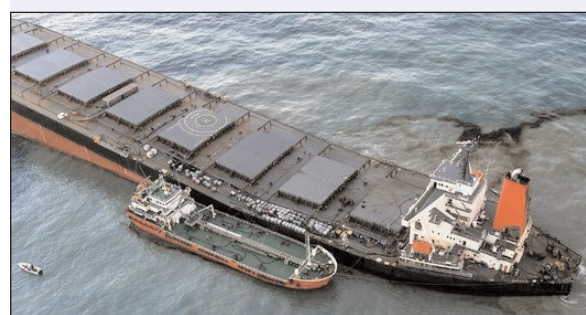
While casino operators were permitted to reopen after a 15-day shutdown in February, the world's biggest gambling hub was virtually deserted as no tourists were allowed in.

Visitors from mainland China make up more than 90% of Macau's tourists, which is home to major casino operators including Sands, Wynn, Galaxy and MGM.

Investment bank Morgan Stanley has warned casinos in Macau could rack up losses of \$1bn over the April to June quarter.

Visitor numbers for the first half of the year are down 84% compared to 2019.

India assists Mauritius in evacuating oil from breached Japanese vessel



Indian Oil (Mauritius) Ltd barge deployed to evacuate 1000 tonnes fuel oil from Wakashio. Photo - Twitter

India on Tuesday started assistance work in evacuating fuel oil from the breached Japanese vessel Wakashio in reefs off the Mauritian coast. The evacuation had started Monday night after the sea swells went down.

The MV Wakashio, owned by the

Nagashiki Shipping Company, struck the reef on Mauritius' southeast coast on July 25, causing a massive ecological disaster to an island nation that is home to world-renowned coral reefs, reports India Today.

Indian Oil (Mauritius) Ltd (IOML) has made itself available with a large barge to evacuate 1000 T fuel oil from the breached vessel Wakashio.

Tweeting about the evacuation work, the Indian mission in Port Louis wrote, "Standing together - Indian Oil (Mauritius) Ltd. IOML barge Tresta Star has started evacuating fuel oil from the breached vessel Wakashio."

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Trump: Tech giants challenge US foreign worker crackdown

Some of America's biggest tech firms on Monday backed a challenge to President Donald Trump's restrictions on foreign workers.

Amazon, Apple and Facebook are among the companies arguing that the temporary visa bans will damage US firms.

Mr Trump imposed restrictions on some foreign workers to safeguard jobs for Americans during the virus pandemic.

Many of those affected by the measures are technology workers from India.

Microsoft, Netflix, Twitter and other big technology companies also backed the lawsuit, which was filed last month by major US business associations, reports BBC News.

Those industry groups included the National Association of Manufacturers, which represents 14,000 firms, and America's biggest business association, the US Chamber of Commerce.

The brief argued that the visa restrictions, which were announced in June, will hurt US businesses.

The companies said Mr Trump's proclamation was based on a "false assumption" that it would protect American jobs as it would mean they may now have to employ people in other countries.

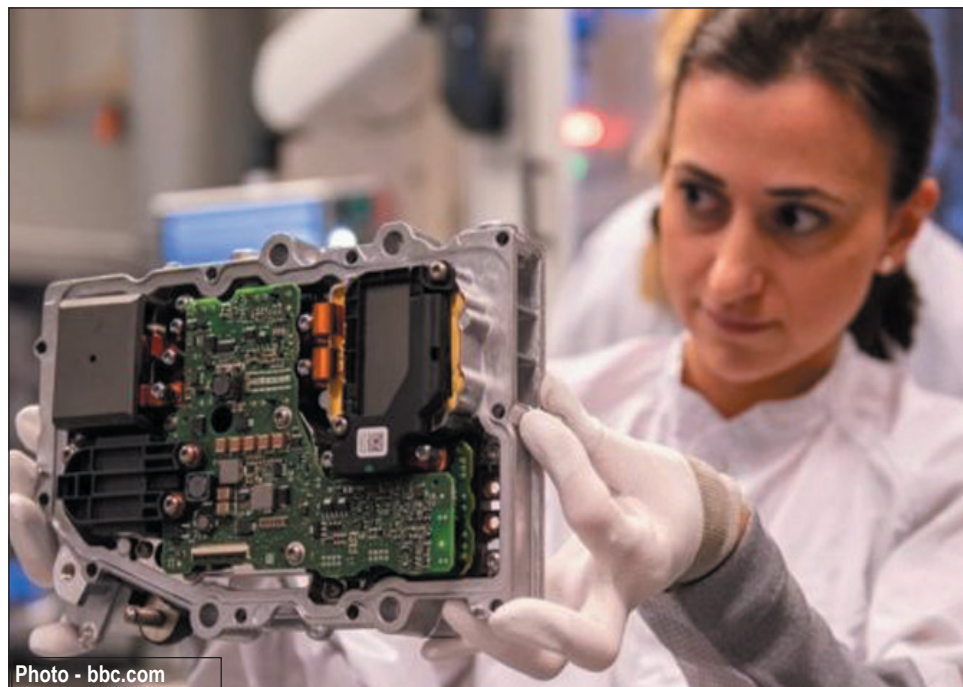


Photo - bbc.com

The brief said: "Global competitors in Canada, China, and India, among others, are pouncing at the opportunity to attract well-trained, innovative individuals.

"And American businesses are scrambling to adjust, hiring needed talent to work in locations outside our nation's borders," it continued.

They also contended that it could do irreparable damage to American businesses, workers and further hurt the

already struggling US economy.

Mr Trump's proclamation suspended the entry of a range of foreign workers until the end of this year.

Silicon Valley reaction

Shortly after the announcement in June some of America's biggest technology companies condemned the move.

Facebook said the order "uses the Covid-19 pandemic as justification for

limiting immigration" and warned: "In reality, the move to keep highly skilled talent out of the US will make our country's recovery even more difficult".

Apple boss Tim Cook wrote on Twitter that he was "deeply disappointed" by the new proclamation, while Sundar Pichai, head of Alphabet - the parent company of Google and YouTube - said immigration was critical to the success of his company and the country.

Amazon, which received more than 3,000 H-1B visas last year - more than any other firm - called the order "short-sighted".

Who is affected?

The Trump administration said the freeze would impact about 525,000 people.

That included an estimated 170,000 people blocked by the decision to extend a ban on some new green cards - which grants permanent residence to foreigners.

The White House first announced it was halting those visas in April. Existing visa holders are not expected to be affected under the new restrictions.

The order also applies to H-1B visas, many of which are granted to Indian technology workers.

Critics say those visas have allowed Silicon Valley companies to outsource American jobs to lower-paid foreign employees.

Last year, there were about 225,000 applications competing for 85,000 spots available through the H1-B visa programme.



Photo - static.independent.co.uk

Pupils in England have said they are prepared to take to the streets in protest at this year's A-level results as ministers come under fire for a last-minute change to the grading system that critics said "beggars belief". The National Union of Students backed the use of demonstrations, saying schoolchildren had been left with no choice.

Ministers are facing increasing pressure after Ofqual,

1,000 new positive cases of coronavirus for the first time since late June. In an update on Wednesday, the government official data said 46,706 people had died in hospitals, care homes and the wider community after contracting Covid-19 — up by 77 on the previous day. The Department of Health and Social Care added that in the 24-hour period up to 9am, there had been a further 1,009 lab-confirmed cases. Overall, a total of 313,798 cases

British pupils prepare to protest over exam results 'fiasco'

the exams watchdog, said it could not clarify an eleventh-hour change to allow mock grades to be considered, in some cases until days after the results are released. The U-turn by ministers had been designed to head off anger when pupils receive their grades on Thursday but appears to have only inflamed the tensions, reports The Independent.

The UK has recorded a second consecutive day of more than 1,000 new positive cases of coronavirus for the first time since late June. In an update on Wednesday, the government official data said 46,706 people had died in hospitals, care homes and the wider community after contracting Covid-19 — up by 77 on the previous day. The Department of Health and Social Care added that in the 24-hour period up to 9am, there had been a further 1,009 lab-confirmed cases. Overall, a total of 313,798 cases

have been confirmed.

Universities 'must hold places for students challenging their A-level grades after exams scrapped'

Ministers have issued a plea to universities to hold places for students challenging their A-level grades this year amid fears of chaos on results day. Universities minister Michelle Donelan urged institutions to reserve spaces and warned that "nobody should have to put their future on hold" because of the coronavirus crisis. In return, universities will be allowed a number of extra places for students who meet certain conditions as part of their appeal, she announced. The government is expected to face a huge backlash from parents and pupils when A-level results are announced on Thursday. Exam boards are also braced for a large number of appeals.

Compiled by Doojesh Ramlallah



Vimalen Reddi

The Law & MV Wakashio

What does the law say? Answers to certain basic questions about maritime/ admiralty law in the wake of the MV Wakashio shipwreck

What is the flag state of MV Wakashio? MV Wakashio is a bulk carrier sailing under the flag of Panama. This means that MV Wakashio is registered, licensed under and governed by the laws of Panama.

The flag state specifies the conditions for registration of a vessel in its registry. Some traditional flag states, such as the UK or Greece, have strict requirements and scrupulously follow the relevant international conventions (such as the International Convention on Safety of Life at Sea or the International Convention for Prevention of Maritime Pollution, etc). Many other countries have open registries (also called flags of convenience) with far less strict requirements and standards together with tax advantages. Panama is one of those countries.

What law applies to the present case of MV Wakashio's shipwreck?

The simple answer is Mauritian law and international law, but only to the extent recognised by or consistent with Mauritian law. For example, the Merchant Shipping Act expressly recognises the Salvage Convention of 1989, which has the effect of importing rules under the Salvage Convention into our domestic law. Our Maritime Zone Act incorporates the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

All ships sailing in 'Mauritius waters', except for warships, are thus subject to Mauritian Law. Mauritius waters means our territorial sea, our internal waters, our archipelagic waters and our historic waters, including their beds, subsoils, resources and the air space above them.

Even outside the context of a shipwreck, Mauritian law applies anyway. This goes to the territorial integrity of Mauritius, a fundamental norm recognised in international law, aside from our own Constitution.

Our law, consistent with international law, recognises the innocent passage on vessels in our seas. However, all ships entering our seas are monitored by our National Coast Guard.

The National Coast Guard Act, again consistent with international law, empowers the Coast Guard to stop, arrest, board and search any vessel in Mauritius waters, irrespective of its flag state. It can do so to prevent entry by sea or any activity that is likely to constitute a threat to the maritime zones, including the seabed, the flora, the reefs, the beach and the coastline. The law goes as far as to expressly provide that the National Coast Guard may fire at or into the vessel which does not stop immediately and lie to or manoeuvre in such a way as to permit it to be boarded.

What does our law provide in the case of a shipwreck?

Our law (see the Merchant Shipping Act) is fairly comprehensive regarding shipping casualties, which include the stranding, grounding or damage of a ship.

The Director of Shipping has broad powers under the law, including the power to exercise general direction and supervision over all matters relating to wreck and salvage, as well as the power to seize and detain any wreck. Thus, the law expressly recognises the power of the Director to give directions in relation to any salvage operation.

The Director is also empowered to take measures to protect the environment from pollution or threat of pollution. All these rights are recognised in our domestic legislation as well as the Salvage Convention.

Our law also empowers the Director to carry a preliminary enquiry in the circumstances of the shipping casualty. This is in addition to and independent of the power of the Minister responsible for shipping to cause a formal investigation to be held by a 'Court of Investigation' – chaired by a



Photo: i.dailymail.co.uk



Photo: qz.com/africa

“Our law specifically provides that any person affected in any way by a spill has a right to damages from the owner of the pollutant. Our law uses the expression 'affected in any way'. Now, our environmental law expressly recognises that every Mauritian has stewardship of the environment. It may then be possible to argue that every Mauritian has standing before a court of law as an affected person to seek damages from the owner/s of the pollutant. The general principles relating to 'faute' under our Civil Code also provide a fallback position...”

judge or former judge and assisted by two other persons with skills and knowledge in maritime matters. A Court of Investigation has the same powers as a Commission of Inquiry.

Where a shipwreck results in oil spills, as is the case here, our environmental laws also come into operation. The Environment Protection Act imposes several obligations on the owner of the pollutant being spilled. The owner of a pollutant is defined under the Act as the owner or the person having the charge, management or control of a pollutant which is spilled or unlawfully discharged. There may thus be more than one owner of a pollutant. The owner of the spill must do everything practicable to prevent, eliminate or reduce the adverse effects of the spill, including to restore the environment to the state it was in prior to the spill.

Who is liable to pay for damages caused by oil spills?

Our law specifically provides that any person affected in any way by a spill has a right to damages from the owner of the pollutant. Our law uses the expression 'affected in any way'. Now, our environmental law expressly recognises that every Mauritian has stewardship of the environment. It may then be possible to argue that every Mauritian has standing before a court of law as an affected person to seek damages from the owner/s of the pollutant. The general principles relating to 'faute' under our Civil Code also provide a fallback

position.

International law provides a comprehensive regime dealing with liability for oil pollution. There is the 1969 International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage and the 1992 Civil Liability Convention. Whilst Mauritius is a party to these conventions, these would not apply in the present case as they deal with pollution by oil tankers. The relevant convention would be the International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage 2001, to which Mauritius is also a party.

While liability of the registered owner of a vessel is not generally difficult to establish (liability is generally strict, even in the relevant international conventions), there are some additional considerations.

For example, the 1969 and 1992 Conventions applying to oil tankers provide a two-tier compensation regime. The registered owner of the vessel bears sole liability, but if adequate compensation cannot be recovered, the Conventions have funds (the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds) for additional compensation to be paid.

In contrast, the 2001 Convention (relating to bunker oil spills) only provides a single-tier regime, although liability is not limited to that of the owner. Classification societies, charterers, salvors, operators or even in certain circumstances state authorities (e.g. 1992 Aegean Sea incident) may all be held liable.



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Raj Prayag, former Director of Environment

“Mauritius has signed no less than 30 IMO conventions... However, a national oil contingency plan requires regular updating”



The MV Wakashio struck a reef at Pointe d'Esny on July 25. Fuel started leaking from the cracked vessel last week and officials and environmentalists feared the worst. The Japanese firm that operates the MV Wakashio - Mitsui OSK Lines - has been involved in accidents before, including a 2006 oil spill in the Indian Ocean. Many questions remain unanswered as to how the vessel ran aground on the reef of Mauritius as well as the response of the Mauritian authorities to the shipwreck. Raj Prayag, former director of Environment, says it is difficult to make a proper and detailed assessment of the management of the oil spill in the absence of precise information regarding the strategy deployed by the Incident Command Centre, but offers an insight into the development of contingency planning in the field from the late 1980s and how it has evolved over the years.

Raj Prayag is a Chartered Civil Engineer and is the Vice President of the Institution of Engineers Mauritius; he was also at one time the Regional Project Coordinator for the Commission de l'océan Indien and the World Bank, and chairperson of the Mauritius Oceanographic Institute. He is presently the chairman of the Central Procurement Board.

Mauritius Times: What's your assessment of the management of the oil spill resulting from the grounding of MV Wakashio off Pointe d'Esny since 25th July in terms of the response and mitigation measures taken by the authorities?

Raj Prayag: It is important at the outset to explain that the Mauritian government had, as far back as 1987, then under the leadership of Prime Minister Sir Anerood Jugnauth, taken the initiative of enlisting the cooperation of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and, with their assistance, of developing an oil spill contingency plan for the country.

“Developing a 'Blue Economy' is easier said than done. If it was easy to develop a blue economy, I am sure it would have been done already. I understand that Mauritius has sought expert assistance from amongst other agencies the World Bank to develop this sector. It will surely happen, but it will no doubt require massive investments and time for it to take shape...”

Two main objectives were achieved, namely 1) the formulation of a National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCP), and 2) the creation of a Coastal Sensitivity Atlas (with 19 maps on a scale of 1:30,000). The Atlas covers the entire coastline of Mauritius, inclusive of the islets. It is colour-coded to indicate the priority areas for containment and clean up. Living and socioeconomic resources are indicated by symbols and suitable response actions are specified, detailing the sensitive resources of Mauritius and the strategies to protect them. Both the Contingency Plan and the Sensitivity Atlas were prepared and finalised by Maylo Murday (a Mauritian operating from New Jersey, USA) and Eric Gundlach in

January 1990.

This NOSCP was revisited and updated between 1998 and 2002 when the World Bank funded the Western Indian Oil Spill Contingency Project for the IOC Island States. In the process, essential equipment and materials such as booms, floating tanks, absorbents, dispersant, skimmer pumps, etc., were provided, and, very importantly, the necessary training was provided to all major players such as the SFM, NCG, MPA and DOE, etc.

The scope of the Oil Spill Contingency Plan was further reinforced between 2008 and 2012 when the World Bank (again) funded another Western Indian Ocean Marine Highway project with a huge component on 'National Oil Spill' that included the setting up of a Regional Oil Spill Response Centre in Mauritius. Again, the Mauritian Units concerned were provided with operational training on the management of oil spills; this time the training was extended to the legal field as well: two lawyers were trained on maritime laws and conventions such as the CLC, International Funds, Marpol, etc., at the UN University in Malta. Mauritius was the envy of other countries of the region for its proactiveness and foresightedness with regard to oil spill contingency planning.

To answer your question, it is difficult for me to make a proper and detailed assessment of the management of the oil spill from MV Wakashio in the absence of precise information regarding the strategy deployed by the Incident Command Centre, except from what I have gleaned from media reports. However, given the weather conditions prevailing with strong southeast winds pushing the MV Wakashio onto the reef, I cannot imagine what could have been done differently. With the benefit of hindsight, we can give our opinion on what should have been, but the situation is what it is. Only an enquiry by the authorities, mainly the Director of Shipping, can establish the facts from the moment the ship entered our territorial waters to its grounding.

By the way, let me add that 'Part V - Spill And Environmental Emergency' sections 29 to 33 of the Environment Protection Act define the power and the responsibilities of the Director of the Department of Environment, from the moment a spill occurs to its clean-up and the preparation of claims for prejudices suffered. And Section 34 provides for the Prime Minister to declare an Environmental Emergency upon advice from the Minister responsible for Environment.

* PM Pravind Jugnauth stated in Parliament, this week, that the experts of the Salvage Team had ruled out the possibility of any fuel pumping due to bad weather conditions between July 27 and August 6, and instead worked on trying to tow the ship. One should reasonably expect the experts to know better, isn't it?

This is an area which requires extensive specialised expertise, and experts in oil spill management are trained to do just that; this is what they do day in, day out. Now if the experts advised that that was the only way to deal with the situation at that point in time, that was the best advice available at the time. Experts' advice comes with responsibility and liability and, unless you are a better expert, it would not be a prudent to act otherwise.

“All Small Islands States including Mauritius can only take measures to mitigate the impacts and plan according to projected impact scenarios over time. Today through mathematical models it is possible to work out the impacts of sea level rise, say for a sea level rise by 50 cm or by 75 cm or 100 cm. With this knowledge, coastal development plans and the tourism sector will have to adapt to the changing scenario over time...”

Protection and indemnity insurance, more commonly known as P&I insurance, or the P&I Club or the secretariats of CLC and the International Funds or the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation Ltd (ITOPF), which is the leading, not-for-profit marine ship pollution response advisers providing impartial advice worldwide on effective response to spills of oil, etc., would not have taken it kindly had the authorities gone against the advice tendered by the recognised and accredited experienced experts.

* The Prime Minister also stated that the worst case scenario is being envisaged even if the leak from a damaged oil tank on board the MV Wakashio had stopped; the ship still had 2,000 tonnes of oil in two other, undamaged tanks. We do not know at this stage how things will unfold, but what do you estimate would be the extent of ecological damage to the surrounding seas and coastlines if the worst were to happen?

☞ Cont. on page 9

'Experts' advice comes with responsibility and liability and, unless you are a better expert, it would not be a prudent to act otherwise'

☞ Cont. from page 8

My understanding is that all the oil from the remaining two tanks was to be emptied and probably has been emptied by the time of this interview.

If so, then the consequential oil remaining on board will be residuals sticking to the sides of the tanks. Ideally we should try to "depollute" the tanks, etc. However, in the present circumstances where huge cracks have appeared on the ship's body and it is showing signs of splitting apart, this would be quasi impossible to do.

☞ Mauritius has signed no less than 30 IMO conventions including the MARPOL, SOLAR, FUNDS 92, OPRC 90, and OPRC/HNS 2000. However, a national oil contingency plan requires regular updating, on-the-ground testing and training of the main stakeholders. The equipment also needs to be kept in working conditions through regular testing and exercises...☞

Post spill, the choices are either (1) to spray the oil slick with an appropriate dispersant so that the oil coagulates and settles onto the sea floor, but this is only recommended in seas at a depth of over 20 m. This is definitely not a solution near any reef barrier or near a sensitive protected zone; (2) maximum skimming of the oil from sea surface and minimise the volume that might drift towards the lagoon and the shoreline; and (3) shoreline clean up.

The techniques for undertaking these three measures are well defined in guidelines provided by the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association, ITOPE and IMO, and hands-on training have been provided to those concerned with the updating of the NOSCP and those responsible for managing an oil spill in all Western Indian Ocean countries.

The prevailing South East current and surface winds will determine where the oil will end up, and the existing NOSCP provides for scenarios to calculate areas likely to be impacted. Beaches are the easiest to clean since the techniques for beach cleaning are well known. As far as it is humanly possible, mangroves must be protected by booms, because once the oil penetrates the mangroves and get in-between the stools, it becomes impossible to flush out the oil. Officers of the Mauritius Oceanography Institute would be best placed to carry out an assessment of any short-, medium- or long-term impacts on mangroves.

*** Since much of the country's economic growth has been the result of the expansion of its luxury tourism sector, one would have expected that Mauritius would have worked out the contingency measures and invested in the necessary equipments as well as the training of local expertise to deal with such disasters. We do not seem to have made much progress on this score, isn't it?**

Mauritius has been the first country in the Western Indian Ocean to have a NOSCP and to have the equip-

ment and provided training for the main stakeholders. We had also organised oil spill drills at Bain des Dames, Albion as well as at Port Mathurin, Rodrigues.

Mauritius has signed no less than 30 IMO conventions including the MARPOL, SOLAR, FUNDS 92, OPRC 90, and OPRC/HNS 2000. However, a national oil contingency plan requires regular updating, on-the-ground testing and training of the main stakeholders. The equipment also needs to be kept in working conditions through regular testing and exercises.

This is very important because in our public service, officers are regularly transferred from one service to another and therefore through regular exercises, you get to train newcomers to the plan. Furthermore, equipment kept over long periods in containers under tropical conditions tends to deteriorate faster and hence regular checks, testing and servicing is a must.

*** Speaking of our tourism industry, do you share the view that this thriving sector will be doomed within the next five to six decades in view of rising sea levels across the world? If there is a very real risk of that happening, what do you think could be envisaged in terms of mitigating measures to save our tourism industry?**

Scientific studies undertaken by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have confirmed that sea level rise due to global warming is already occurring. The consequent climate change is giving rise to dramatic events such as floods, droughts, the melting of ice caps, and hence sea level rise. Scientists are convinced beyond any reasonable doubt that this is already happening.

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All Small Islands States including Mauritius can only take measures to mitigate the impacts and plan according to projected impact scenarios over time. Today through mathematical models it is possible to work out the impacts of sea level rise, say for a sea level rise by 50 cm or by 75 cm or 100 cm. With this knowledge, coastal development plans and the tourism sector will have to adapt to the changing scenario over time.

Will there be buildings close to the shoreline with rising high-water mark? Those responsible for planning would be best placed to advise. Also food security is a major problem associated with climate change worldwide. It is very comforting to see that in Mauritius steps are being taken in anticipation of climate change by



encouraging new and innovative farming practices in controlled environments, e.g. in green houses to guard against severe drought or severe flooding.

*** What about the highly publicized 'Blue Economy' project, which was sold as having a great potential for higher and faster GDP growth? Have we made some progress or is it still stalled at the study stage?**

This is easier said than done. If it was easy to develop a blue economy, I am sure it would have been done already. I understand that Mauritius has sought expert assistance from amongst other agencies the World Bank to develop this sector. It will surely happen, but it will no doubt require massive investments and time for it to take shape.

*** As Vice President of the Institution of Engineers Mauritius since 2016, how do you see the future as an engineer?**

I am very optimistic for the future. We have shown great resilience in moments of crisis, and we will all rise to the challenges we are facing. It is also a matter of pride that Mauritians hold important high-level jobs at international level and this is to the credit of Mauritius.

A lot of effort is being made by our three universities that run engineering degrees to review their programmes to meet the benchmark set by the Washington Accord, an international agreement which establishes a benchmark standard of technical proficiency for engineers, which is internationally recognised. This means that our engineering graduates will be recognised internationally, and it will also encourage foreign engineering students to study in Mauritius. We will thereby develop Mauritius as a regional educational hub in the Western Indian Ocean zone.

In a changing world where technologies are constantly evolving, we need a new breed of engineers who can think on their feet and solve complex problems. We are working hard at the Institution of Engineers Mauritius since 2016 to make this happen.

The lessons of the MV Wakashio disaster. An International Perspective

'There are a number of unknowns involved which will matter significantly in learning the lessons from the shipwreck'



Christian Bueger is Professor at the University of Copenhagen and a Honorary Professor at the University of Seychelles. He is one of the leading experts in maritime security. In an article in *The Diplomat*, he argued that governments in small states need to see oil spills as national priorities. They need to undertake reviews of the national response plans in the light of the disaster.

keep the MV Wakashio afloat and pump the over 4000 tons of oil and diesel out of it. The first of the four tugboats to assist in this operation arrived three days later.

The recovery operation was ready to begin. The Environment minister was confident that all "necessary precautionary measures to prevent any kind of pollution at sea" had been taken.

The weather conditions were against the minister's plans. The recovery operation was put on halt. The sea was too rough. By August 5th some minor oil sheen was observed around the vessel. The "the risk of oil spill was still low", the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping argued.

Only hours later, the MV Wakashio flooded and started to sink the next morning. Oil started to spill into the sea at a high rate. The Prime Minister declared a "national environment emergency". The Foreign Affairs minister called upon the UN, the EU, its neighbour France, as well as other countries for emergency assistance. A large-scale recovery operation was launched with thousands of volunteers, and support from France and the UN.

“Based on other oil spill litigation cases, financial compensation will firstly take a long time. The destruction needs to be economically calculated, and responsibilities and obligations clarified. Mauritius will receive some basic compensation. But, how do you calculate the value of an eco-system, the price of restoring a marine habitat, or the cost of a dead bird?”

At the time of the interview the leak was reported to have been stopped, and the remaining fuel had been pumped out of the vessel.

This, I think, are the core facts of how the disaster unfolded. There are a number of unknowns involved which will matter significantly in learning the lessons from the shipwreck.

* What are these unknowns?

Attention has been focused and rightly so on why the MV Wakashio ran aground. An investigation is required that reconstructs the grounding in detail.

While this will take weeks if not months, lessons from other oil spills may give us an indication of the answers we will obtain. In the majority of spills, some form of crew fatigue or minor technical faults are part of the explana-

tion. It is likely that the investigation will lead to a story like this. We can expect that the crew and shipping company will also refer to the Covid-19 situation and the stress these have imposed on the international seafaring community.

There are however other open questions, in particular, in relation to the response by the government.

* What kind of questions do you think the government should answer?

I think the Mauritian public needs answers to a series of questions. These are not necessarily about personal responsibilities. A disaster like this should not necessarily be used for political purposes. It is more important to find out what led to the disaster.

An issue that certainly requires explanation relates to the choice of the salvage company by the government. We also need to know what alternative companies, recovery plans or courses of action the government could choose from before the spill occurred. What were the reasons for this choice, and what alternatives would have been available to react differently?

A related question concerns the implementation of the recovery operation. Why did it take such a long time to kick start the operation? While the bad weather was blamed for the delay, would there have been ways to circumvent it and act differently?

* Are you implying that one of the causes of the disaster is that the government contracted the wrong company which could not implement a proper response in time?

The point cannot be to blame the salvage company for the disaster, or to argue that the government made the wrong choices. But it is important to find out what options the government had, and what criteria it used to decide between these. Were it price calculation, reputation, or other factors that mattered? And were there any alternatives?

There was something I found puzzling when I started to reconstruct the event in detail. How could the government be so confident, at least in public, that the situation was under control, but then once the spill started it quickly admitted to international news media that they lacked skills and expertise and were "insufficiently equipped to handle this problem."

The government should be transparent about why and how this shift of interpretation occurred and whether the reliance on outside experts, or industry played a role here.

* What other observations did you find surprising?

Mauritius is next to one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world: the international shipping route between Asia, Europe and South America around the Cape of Good Hope. Mauritius has been at risk for a long time. It was fortunate that such a disaster did not happen before.

An event like this could have been anticipated. It is always easy to argue this in the aftermath, but I find it puzzling that there was such a lack of preparedness? Why did the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan fail in such a spectacular way?

* Contd on page 11

* How has the disaster been internationally received?

The disastrous oil spill in Mauritius has shocked honeymooners, beach lovers, divers and environmentalists across the world. How will the pristine beaches and coral reefs look like at their next visit? That's the question they must be asking themselves. For the tourism industry in Mauritius the spill is bad news. Huge financial resources will be needed for recovery and conservation activities, but also for promoting the country as a green destination, once the initial clean-up is done.

* What are the next steps the country should take?

It is now time to think about the lessons Mauritius might learn from the disaster. The government needs to carefully review what went wrong. Together with civil society, the authorities also need to make efforts so that a repeat of a disaster of this scale does not happen in another country. Mauritius has to become an international champion advocating for better prevention in Africa but also amongst the Small Island Developing States.

I think we need to start with a recollection of what by now is established, and what is unknown and needs urgent investigation.

* What are from your perspective the most important facts on the disaster?

A number of basic facts are now well established. To revisit these from the outside:

The bulk carrier MV Wakashio grounded on 25 July. No oil spill occurred then. The National Coast Guard and Special Mobile Force were quickly on site and took preventive actions. The government activated its National Oil Spill Contingency Plan the following day.

By 28 July, the Dutch company Smit Salvage was contracted to work with local logistics giant CELERO to

'There are a number of unknowns involved which will matter significantly in learning the lessons from the shipwreck'

* Cont. from page 10

* What will happen after the clean-up is done?

The clean-up will take quite some time to start with. The oil and diesel that leaked is quite toxic, so it will take a lot of time and efforts. It time now to start thinking about what kind of measures could help the marine habitat to recover.

Also, the question of what happens to the wreck of the MV Wakashio needs to be urgently addressed. It is likely that the wreck contains further toxic substances.

It is now also time to think to

examine the disaster in detail and consider the legal consequences, and the question of compensation as well.

* Do you think the financial compensation the country will receive will pay for the clean-up?

Based on other oil spill litigation cases, financial compensation will firstly take a long time. The destruction needs to be economically calculated, and responsibilities and obligations clarified. Mauritius will receive some basic compensation.

Yet, how do you calculate the value of an eco-system, the price



of restoring a marine habitat, or the cost of a dead bird? Whatever compensation received it will not do justice to the damage done.

Ocean recovery will take years, if not decades. And let's not forget the reputational damage, and the consequences for tourism in Mauritius as well.

* You suggest that Mauritius has now special responsibilities and should become an international champion?

The whole country, not only the government, must ensure that the experience with the spill are recorded. The core lesson from the disaster must be documented and shared internationally. A civil society, or university-led taskforce or commission could be the right way of organizing this.

It is important that other countries, in particular small island states learn from this event, which will allow them to review

their strategies, do exercises and develop their capacities.

Any crisis is also an opportunity. Mauritius must now become an international champion advocating internationally for better strategies and more capacities. It must take leadership on the issue in forums such as the Southern African Development Community, the Indian Ocean Rim Association or the African Union. Also, the engagement in the International Maritime Organization, the core regulatory body of the shipping industry needs to be re-thought. This organization is the core platform in which Mauritius can advocate for a better regulation of the shipping industry and for more capacity building efforts to help countries to prepare.

Lessons taught in English are reshaping the global classroom

● Cont. from page 2

The use of English is indisputably growing, especially in the private sector where it can give a school or university the edge over its competitors and is seen to offer students an international education with all the benefits that can bring.

The future of English

On the other hand, what will happen to English itself? If teachers in non-anglophone countries use English in a classroom of international students, the English used may well be very different from country to country and even classroom to classroom. Another interesting question is that if everyone is using classroom English as well as their home language, most of the world will be at least bilingual so will native speakers of English be at a disadvantage, will they be the only monolinguals?

Exams and assessment also pose a great challenge. If a subject is taught, or supposed to be taught, in English, which language should it be examined in? What is being examined, the subject content or the English? Who should write and mark these exams?

There are examples of countries such

as Tanzania where many students fail exams as they are taught in a home language and then expected to take the exams in English.

Teachers in our research so far believe that English can improve communication, help the exchange of ideas and create relations between countries. They see English in the classroom as a way of facilitating world peace. Home students benefit from a language which opens doors and enables them to move globally in academia and business. Teachers are also internationally mobile and this creates opportunities for them to teach abroad.

In the classroom itself though, there is little guidance as to whether "English as a medium for instruction" means teaching in English only or a bilingual education. There seems to be a lack of clear guidelines on how to teach through English and a lack of support and teaching resources. Institutions find it difficult to find enough teachers and to resource exams.

What's clear is that more research is needed in order to find out the long-lasting impact of English as a medium of instruction around the world.

NOTICE FOR PERMISSION FOR LAND USE

Take notice that **BPL MOTOPARTS LTD** will apply to the Municipal Council of **Port Louis** for a Building & Land Use Permit for **Sale of parts and accessories for motorcycles (& bicycles)** at **1, Seychelles street, Port Louis**.

Any person feeling aggrieved by the proposal may lodge an objection in writing to the above-named council within 15 days as from the date of this publication.

14 August 2020

NOTICE FOR PERMISSION FOR LAND USE

Take notice that **Mr NEEDHEERAJ SOOKALOO** will apply to the District Council of **Flacq** for a Building & Land Use Permit for a proposed building (hydroponic structure) at ground floor level for **Growing of other Vegetables** at **Mission Cross Road, Lallmatie**.

Any person feeling aggrieved by the proposal may lodge an objection in writing to the abovenamed council within 15 days as from the date of this publication.

14 August 2020



High Commission of India
Mauritius

INVITATION

73rd anniversary
INDIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY
Flag Hoisting Ceremony
15 August 2020
9 AM
Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture
Phoenix

भारतीय उच्चायोग
मॉरिशस

निमंत्रण

73 वीं वर्षगांठ
भारतीय स्वतंत्रता दिवस
ध्वजारोहण समारोह
15 अगस्त 2020
9 बजे प्रातः
इंदिरा गाँधी भारतीय सांस्कृतिक केंद्र
फ्रीनिक्स

☛ Cont. from page 3

It is patently obvious that the model of governance based on nepotism and cohorts of political appointees and advisors hand-somely paid from public funds to head or be on the board of key government institutions and state companies without having the credentials and required expertise, carries high risks of backfiring. This is evidenced by the long list of costly blunders which have littered the governance of successive governments.

The way forward

Satellite tracking of the Wakashio transponder by Windward, a global satellite analytics

Lessons from the Wakashio catastrophe

company, revealed that it entered the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Mauritius on 23 July, two days before it collided into the reefs without slowing down from its cruising speed. Transponder based systems such as Automatic Identification System (AIS) helps assure the surveillance of a country's EEZ by providing real time information about the movement of vessels in the EEZ. The flow of trade has created dense sea traffic with more than 2000 vessels passing close to the Mauritian coast in July which enhances the risk of mishaps and

“Have the crying lessons from the shipwreck of another bulk carrier, the MV Benita on the outer reef off the coast of Le Bouchon in June 2016 which caused a minor oil spill into our coastal waters not been learnt? This is the more disconcerting as one of the immediate actions recommended after the MV Benita shipwreck was to ‘prepare an oil pollution response plan which also covers a worst case scenario...’”

accidents. It is therefore important, if that is not presently the case, for government to subscribe to one of the real time vessel tracking services to help better oversee ship movement including illegal fishing in our EEZ and also be better tuned to prevent the risk of other shipwreck of ships on our reefs.

It is equally important that the country has a more robust contingency plan to prevent the risk of another ecological catastrophe. The required pool of equipment comprising barges to pump out fuel oil, oil booms, skimmers as well as

storage capacities, etc., must be built at the regional level so that these can be mobilized at short notice should circumstances such as the Wakashio shipwreck warrant it. A team of experts preferably from the region specialized in managing shipwrecks and oil spills, etc., should also be retained as consultants for countries of the region.

The Wakashio was a gruelling acid test for the government. We need as a nation to draw from the many lessons learnt to prevent the recurrence of such an ecological and economic catastrophe in future.

Mrinal Roy

NOTICE FOR PERMISSION FOR LAND USE

Take notice that Mr **LOUIS FERNANDO ROUSSEAU** will apply to the Municipal Council of **Port Louis** for a Building & Land Use Permit for **General Retailer-Foodstuff (excluding Liquor) and Non foodstuff (foodstuff predominant) at E37, La Tour Koenig, Pointe Aux Sables.**

Any person feeling aggrieved by the proposal may lodge an objection in writing to the above-named council within 15 days as from the date of this publication.

14 August 2020

NOTICE FOR PERMISSION FOR LAND USE

Take notice that **Right Road All In One Garage Ltd.**, will apply to the District Council of **Grand Port** for a Building and Land Use Permit for a proposed (1) panel beating and/or paint workshop (2) Maintenance and repair of motor vehicle n.e.c Automotive workshop (employing less than 10 persons) (3) Retreading and rebuilding of rubber tyres (workshop for vulcanization etc.) at Royal Road Rose Belle, backyard of Le Vieux Moulin.

The following equipment will be used

- (1) One air compressor 2.0 HP, 120/240W
- (2) One grinder Makita 9.6 Amp-220 volt-50-60-Kz
- (3) One removing Tyre machine (1600 mm - 1.5 kw - 380 volt-50-60)
- (4) One wheel balancing machine (0.2 Kw - 037 Kw - 22 watt)
- (5) One welding machine 220 volt.

Any person feeling aggrieved by the proposal may lodge an objection in writing to the above-named Council within 15 days from the date of this publication.

14 August 2020



COMMUNIQUE

e-EDF - 2020/21 ELECTRONIC EMPLOYEE DECLARATION FORM

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) informs all employees who wish to claim deductions for Income Exemption Threshold and other reliefs and allowances, that they may, henceforth, file their Employee Declaration Form (EDF) **ONLINE** through MRA website: www.mra.mu.

Employees

In order to access the e-EDF, employees have to go onto the MRA website, click on the banner [e-EDF 2020/21](#), and insert the following information:

- **National Identity Card Number (NID)**
- **Card Control Number (found at the back of the NID card)**
- **Mobile Phone Number (to receive an One-Time-Password-OTP)**

On accessing the electronic EDF, employees will have the option to select their respective Income Exemption Threshold and other reliefs and allowances to which they are eligible. Before submitting the e-EDF, they will have to confirm the correctness of the information provided therein.

Employers

An Employer will have to login to the MRA e-services using his **EMPLOYER REGISTRATION NUMBER (ERN)** and **PASSWORD** to download an excel file showing the deductions claimed by his employees in their e-EDF for the year ending 30 June 2021.

The MRA kindly requests all employers to inform their employees that they should, henceforth, submit their **EDF online** through **MRA Website: www.mra.mu**.

For further information, kindly visit MRA website or phone MRA Helpdesk on **207 6000** during working hours.

MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY

10 August 2020

Ehram Court, Cnr Mgr. Gonin & Sir Virgil Naz Streets, Port Louis, Mauritius
T: +230 207 6000 | F: +230 207 6048 | M: headoffice@mra.mu | W: www.mra.mu



In a light vein

Never make a woman angry!

A woman arrived at the Gates of Heaven. While she was waiting for Saint Peter to greet her, she peeked through the gates and saw a beautiful banquet table. Sitting all around were her parents and all the other people she had loved and who had died before her. They saw her and began calling greetings to her, "Hello. How are you! We've been waiting for you! Good to see you."

When Saint Peter came by, the woman said to him, "This is such a wonderful place! How do I get in?"

"You have to spell a word," Saint Peter told her. Which word?" the woman asked.

"Love."

The woman correctly spelled "Love" and Saint Peter welcomed her into Heaven.

About a year later, Saint Peter came to the woman and asked her to watch the Gates of Heaven for him that day. While the woman was guarding the Gates of Heaven, her husband arrived. "I'm surprised to see you," the woman said. "How have you been?"

"Oh, I've been doing pretty well since you died," her husband told her. "I married the beautiful young nurse who took care of you while you were ill. And then I won the multi-state lottery. I sold the little house you and I lived in, and bought a huge mansion. And my wife and I travelled all around the world. We were on vacation in Cancun and I went water skiing today. I fell and hit my head, and here I am. What a bummer! How do I get in?"

"You have to spell a word," the woman told him.

"Which word?" her husband asked.

"Pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis", she replied.

Moral of the story: *Never make a woman angry... there will be Hell to pay!*

NB: The longest word currently listed in the Oxford dictionary is the supposed lung-disease: pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis (45 letters). Now you've learned a new word!

Jack goes to his buddy Bob and says: "I'm sleeping with the priest's

wife. Can you hold him in church for an hour after mass for me?"

The friend doesn't like it but being a buddy, he agrees. After mass, Bob starts talking to the priest, asking him all sorts of stupid questions, just to keep him occupied. Finally the priest gets annoyed and asks him what he's really up to.

Bob feeling guilty, finally confesses to the priest: "My friend is sleeping with your wife right now, so he asked me to keep you occupied."

The priest smiles, puts a brotherly hand on Bob's shoulder and says: "You better hurry home now. My wife died a year ago."

A plane made an emergency landing on water.

The air hostess asked the passengers to slide down to the lifeboats, but the passengers refused. She then asked the captain to help.

The captain being very knowledgeable and experienced, guided her:

- You tell the Americans this is an ADVENTURE.
- Tell the British this is an HONOUR.
- Tell the French this is a ROMANTIC activity, and tell the Germans this is the LAW.
- Tell the Japanese this is an ORDER, and everyone will be sorted out.

How can I convince the Pakistanis?

Yes dear, just whisper, 'This is a suicide mission.'

And what about the Singaporeans?, she persisted.

The captain, taking a deep breath, patiently explained: You need not tell the Singaporeans anything, my dear. Once they see a QUEUE, they will join it without questions.

The air hostess remembered the flight had some passengers from India.

What about them, she asked.

The captain laughed.

Easy. Just tell the Indians this activity is FREE.

Life's Lessons

Be parents and not friends to your children

Have we failed in bringing up our 'modern' kids?



-- Narayana Murthy - Co-founder of Infosys

A very distressed neighbour shared that he had driven home after a long day at work. As he entered, he saw his wife in bed with fever. She had laid out his dinner on a tray.

Everything was there just as he wanted it. The dal, vegetables, salad, green chutney, papad and pickles... "How caring," he thought, "Even when she is unwell, she finds the strength to do everything for me."

As he sat down to eat, he realised that something was missing. He looked up at his grown-up daughter who was watching TV and said, "Beta (child), can you get me my medicine and a glass of water, please?"

She rolled up her eyeballs to show her displeasure at being disturbed, but did the favour nevertheless.

A minute later he realised that salt was missing in the dal.

He said, "Sorry beta, can you please get me some salt?"

She said, "Uffff!" and got the salt but her stomping shoes made it clear that she did not appreciate the disruption.

A few minutes later he said, "Beta..."

She banged the TV remote on the table and said, "What is it now Dad? How many times will you make me get up? I too am tired; I had a long day at work!"

The man said, "I'm so sorry beta..."

Silence prevailed.

The man got up and placed the dishes in the kitchen sink and quietly wiped the tear escaping his eye.

My heart wept... I often wonder: "Why is it that the youngsters of the so-called modern world behave like this? Have we given them too much freedom to express? Have we failed to discipline and give them the right values?"

"Is it right to treat children as friends?" Think of it this way, they have lots of friends. But they have only one set of parents. If they don't do

'parenting', who will?

Today the "self-esteem" of even a new-born or an infant is being talked about; but what about the self-esteem of the parents? Are they supposed to just fan the egos of their children, while the children don't care two hoots about theirs?

Often parents say, "*Aajkal ke bachhe sunte kahaan hain* (Where will you find obedient children in these times)?" Why?

The other day, we were at a dinner party. All the seats were occupied except for one bean bag. One of our fifty-something friends told his teenaged daughter to move to the bean bag, so that he could sit on the high back chair she occupied. She said, "Why can't you sit on the bean bag?"

I was zapped; we all knew that the father had a back ailment, and even otherwise... Well!

Later as everyone was taking leave of the host, the same guy realised that he had left his car keys inside. He asked his daughter to go and get them.

"Why can't you go and get them yourself? I am not your maid!"

I looked away in disgust and disbelief. The poor guy had no option but to make light of the situation saying, "Ya, Ya, but Daddy is your eternal servant, my princess!"

He went inside to fetch the car keys. This is what our social behaviour has become! Why?

If we need to teach children about self-respect, self-esteem and self-confidence, we also need to tell them that howsoever big and rich and famous they may be, their parents shall always be their parents... children can never be their equals, let alone be their bosses!

Remember to pay: RENT - Respect, Empathy, Niceness, and Time!

I always advise parents to be parents and not friends. Your kids can have n number of friends but have only ONE set of parents.

So, don't be afraid to set rules and make the children obey them.

Diet & Weight Management

A Bellyful of Facts: Digestive Myths Debunked

"Beans make the most gas." "Heavy lifting causes hernias." These common assumptions aren't entirely right.

Can spicy foods cause ulcers?

Foods with a lot of heat may make ulcers worse for some people, but they don't cause them.

- Photo - i.ytimg.com



It might seem like gum could stick around in your gut for a long time. After all, it doesn't dissolve in your mouth like other foods, and your stomach can't break it down if you swallow it. But there's no truth to this claim. Gum doesn't gum up your insides. Your digestive system moves it along just like everything else, and it comes out in your stool in a few days.

Myth: spicy foods cause ulcers

Hot sauce lovers, rejoice! People used to think that too much spicy food would give you an ulcer. But we now know that most of these sores in your stomach lining happen because of an infection with bacteria called *Helicobacter pylori* (H. pylori) or because of pain medications such as aspirin, ibuprofen, or naproxen. Foods with a lot of heat may make ulcers worse for some people, but they don't cause them.

Myth: heavy lifting causes hernias

It's one, but not the only, cause of these injuries. You might also get them from long-lasting constipation or a cough. Hernias happen when there's both pressure and an opening or weakness in muscles lining the inside of your belly. An organ or fatty tissue then bulges out through the opening. They're most common in the groin, belly button, or upper part of the stomach.

Myth: only alcoholics get cirrhosis

It's true that alcoholism is the most common cause of cirrhosis, a condition in which healthy liver cells are damaged and replaced by scar tissue. But there are other causes, too, such as hepatitis B and C. And although drinking too much almost always causes some liver damage, it doesn't always lead to cirrhosis.

Myth: nuts lead to diverticulitis

In the past, doctors told people with this condition, in which pouches in the wall of the colon get inflamed and infected, to avoid nuts, corn, popcorn, and food with small seeds, like strawberries. The fear was that pieces of these foods would lodge in the pouches and cause pain. But new studies suggest the opposite -- that people who eat a high-fiber diet have a lower risk of the disease.

Myth: beans cause the most gas

Beans may not be the "magical fruit" you thought they were. Dairy products cause more gas than other foods,

particularly as we age and our bodies are less able to absorb the sugar in milk (lactose). To ease the problem, look for lactose-free products or take the over-the-counter medicine lactase before you eat dairy foods.

Myth: no dairy for lactose intolerant

People with lactose intolerance differ in how much dairy they can handle. While one person may get symptoms from one glass of milk, others may be able to drink up to two. Some people can enjoy yogurt or ice cream, but never straight milk. Aged cheeses, such as Swiss and cheddar, are often better choices. It's usually a matter of trial and error to find out which dairy foods -- and how much -- are "safe" for you.

Myth: smoking relieves heartburn

Another reason to kick the habit. Smoking may actually add to heartburn. Nicotine can relax the muscle at the top of your stomach that keeps acid from splashing back (reflux) into your esophagus. More acid reflux means heartburn.

Myth: aging causes constipation

People are more likely to have constipation as they get older, but the aging body itself is not to blame. Older adults often take medications that can make the digestive tract sluggish. They're also less likely to get enough exercise, eat well, and drink enough fluids, all of which help keep things running smoothly.

Myth: fiber no help with diarrhea

At first, it doesn't make sense that fiber, which is so well-known for improving constipation, could also aid with the flip side: diarrhea. But it's true. The nutrient helps keep the stool from being too hard or too loose. It works by either pulling more water from the colon to loosen stools (for constipation) or absorbing some of the fluid in the intestine to firm them up (for diarrhea).

Myth: you'd know if you had cancer

Colon cancer often has no symptoms until its later stages, which makes early detection so important. In general, most people at average risk should start getting tested at age 50. Routine colorectal checks should include fecal

tests each year, a flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years, a CT scan of the colon every 5 years, or a colonoscopy every 10 years. Talk to your doctor about which one is right for you.

Myth: colonoscopies are terrible

The dreaded colonoscopy is actually not as dreadful as you might think. The procedure, which doctors use to diagnose and treat problems in the colon and rectum, typically only lasts about 30-60 minutes, and you get medicine to put you to sleep while it happens. But it's the prep for the test that might make people squirm. You have to empty your colon with the help of a liquid diet and a laxative drink a day or so beforehand. Talk to your doctor to see what your options are.

Myth: heartburn? Sleep sitting up

There's no medical backing to the claim that people with heartburn must sit up in bed to avoid symptoms. You might get some relief by raising your head and chest 4-6 inches with blocks under your bedposts. But that's as upright as you need to go.

Myth: IBS is all about your diet

Although foods can trigger irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) symptoms, changes to the diet are generally not enough to stop the condition. Sometimes just the act of eating can cause the pain, bloating, diarrhea, or constipation the disease is known for. And stress and anxiety can add to the problem, too. A food and symptom journal can help you identify your specific triggers.

Myth: stress causes IBD

While stress can make many health conditions worse, the cause of inflammatory bowel disease, or IBD, is unknown. IBD includes both Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, conditions in which the lining of the small or large intestines gets inflamed. Genes seem to play some role in who gets the disease, as do changes in the body's immune system, possibly from bacteria or a virus.

Myth: celiac means ongoing pain

The best-known celiac disease symptoms include bloating, gas, and diarrhea, but many people with the condition never have any of these problems. Doctors can misdiagnose the condition -- an intolerance to the protein gluten -- when they look only for the classic signs. Other symptoms can include: anemia, osteoporosis, depression, growth problems, and a skin rash called dermatitis herpetiformis.

WebMD

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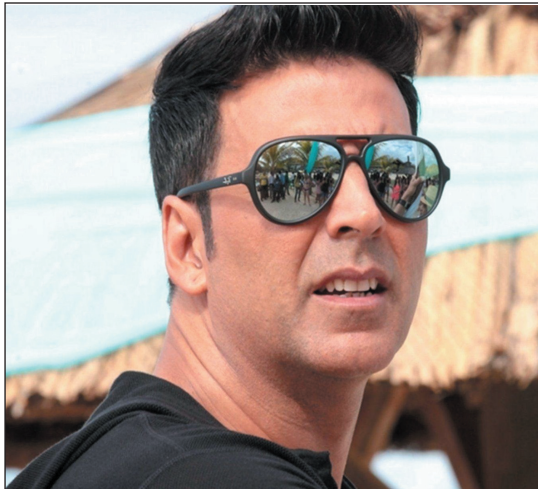
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societe.rchundunsing@intnet.mu

Akshay Kumar BEATS Jackie Chan and Will Smith to grab 6th position in the Forbes highest paid actors' list

Akshay Kumar had joined Dwayne Johnson, Ryan Reynolds and others in Forbes' Highest-paid actors' list. The list has been tallied based on their earning between 1st June 2019 to 1st June 2020



Akshay Kumar is one of the busiest stars in the Hindi Film industry. He is the only actor who is known to do 3-4 films in a year. He is highly disciplined and also has a bunch of brand endorsements in his kitty. Which is why he is the only actor named in the top 10 Forbes' highest-paid actors' list this year. The actor is ranked 6th on the list. The calculations are tallied based on the celeb's earning between 1st June 2019 to 1st June 2020. The list came out on Tuesday and Akshay Kumar is said to have earned about a whopping \$48.5 million.

Topping the list is *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* actor, Dwayne Johnson. He has reportedly earned about \$87.5 million which includes \$23.5 million fees for starring in *Red Notice* that had an OTT release. Grabbing the second position in Dwayne's *Red Notice* co-actor Ryan Reynolds. He pocketed \$71.5 million which includes, \$20 million for *Red Notice* and another \$20 million for the film, *Six Underground*.

Mark Wahlberg grabbed the third spot with \$58 million while Ben Affleck earned about \$55 million in the last year. *Fast and Furious* star Vin Diesel is said to have taken home \$54 million hence, grabbing the fifth position. Hamilton star and musician Lin-Manuel Miranda is placed 7th with earnings of \$45.5 million this year.

Actor-comedian and musician, Will Smith earned about \$44.5 million dollars making him the 8th highest-paid actor. Adam Sandler may not be at the peak of his career but the actor earned about \$41 million dollars and is ranked 9th on the list.

And last but not least is Jackie Chan who is still favourite of many. The actor has been in the industry for about six decades and is still at the top of his game. He earned about \$40 million dollars in the past year.

Sanjay Dutt diagnosed with lung cancer

Reportedly, Sanjay Dutt will be soon flying to USA for the treatment

Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt was hospitalised last week after he complained of breathing problems and uneasiness in the chest. He was discharged after being kept under observation for 2 days. He updated his fans regarding his health by tweeting, "Just wanted to assure everyone that I'm doing well. I'm currently under medical observation & my COVID-19 report is negative. With the help & care of the doctors, nurses & staff at Lilavati hospital, I should be home in a day or two. Thank you for your well wishes & blessings."

Earlier today, Sanjay Dutt announced that he is taking a break from work due to medical treatment and wrote, "Hi friends, I am taking a short break from work for some medical treatment. My family and friends are with me and I urge my well-wishers not to worry or unnecessarily speculate. With your love and good wishes, I will be back soon." While the actor made sure people don't speculate anything, popular trade expert Komal Nahta revealed that the Munnabhai MBBS actor has been diagnosed with lung cancer. As per the insiders the actor will be taken to USA for treatment and that is the reason behind his break from work.

A close friend of Sanjay Dutt told Bollywood Hungama, "Baba is devastated. He has little chil-



dren. Fortunately, they are in Dubai right now with their mother. But breaking this awful news to them would be an ordeal." He further added, "It is curable. He needs instant and rigorous treatment for which he leaves immediately."

On the work front, Sanjay Dutt will be next seen *Sadak 2*, which also features Aditya Roy Kapur, Alia Bhatt and Pooja Bhatt in pivotal roles. Directed by Mahesh Bhatt, the film will premiere on OTT on August 28. Apart from *Sadak 2*, Sanjay Dutt will also feature in films like *Bhuj: The Pride of India*, *Prithviraj*, *Torbaaz* and *KGF 2*.

Here's praying for the speedy recovery of our favourite star.

YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

You'll be entitled to real and whole satisfactions if you follow the path that you've traced for yourself. Devote a little more time to your family. Be careful of your exaggerated reactions, which sometimes go counter to your interests.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 7, 14, 25, 26, 30

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

The circumstances will compel you to take a position, to implicate yourself, and to make clear-cut choices. You'll have a chance to meet great love, the one written with a capital L; live it intensely, but avoid proclaiming it all over the place.

Lucky Numbers: 15, 16, 17, 20, 38, 39

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

You'll be confronted with complicated and painful circumstances; be confident, everything will work out to the best of your interests. At work, someone will try to tread on your path; put the intruder in place immediately, politely but firmly.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 16, 20, 24, 28, 30

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

You'll succeed at best possible in inspiring confidence and in getting increased responsibilities. You'll have to cope with staunch adversaries, but it's you who'll triumph. Be careful if you practise sports or if you drive a car. Don't let yourself be blocked by fixed ideas.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 20, 26, 28, 30, 31

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

Stimulating contacts with your friends: you'll have a thousand and one things to tell one another. You'll need a lot of tact and diplomacy if you work in a team or if you have a staff under your orders.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 12, 15, 17, 25, 30

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

You should benefit from exceptional intuition that will put you on the road to success in many different areas. You'll feel galvanized by a recovered affection; take advantage of it to do whatever you've never dared to do before.

Lucky Numbers: 15, 19, 21, 27, 33, 40

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

You'll be capable of precisely evaluating the financial risks to take so as to enable your resources to bear their fruits. Your sentimental relationships are likely to turn sour; control your utterings.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 9, 14, 17, 22, 30

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

Efforts will have to be made to overcome your usual reserve and express your feelings: that's what will be expected of you. Heartwise, you'll feel a great need for tenderness; don't look somewhere else for happiness that's just simply at your home.

Lucky Numbers: 14, 18, 20, 23, 26, 30

Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

Good bargains are presently possible. Don't hesitate to fancy up your home, but without emptying out your bank account. You'll charm with disconcerting ease; your heart will be very happy.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 2, 9, 12, 16, 18

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

A touch of vanity will have to be fought because it'll encourage you to want to be right toward and against all. Excellent financial perspectives - you'll take the right initiatives and you'll succeed in increasing your income.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 14, 16, 20, 27, 30

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

Beware of a tendency to want to start all over again in your family or marital life! You'll succeed in achieving your best professional ambitions. Your material situation will be clearly on the ascent.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 13, 19, 20, 21, 30

Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

During this week everything will coincide to offer you the maximum of chances in all fields. You'll often tend to clash with members of your close family or your co-workers because of problems that don't really exist. At work, keep a very low profile.

Lucky Numbers: 20, 23, 27, 30, 33, 36



No channel was ready to air *Saans*: Kanwaljeet Singh

Actor Kanwaljeet Singh is known for his roles in serials '*Buniyaad*', '*Saans*', '*Farmaan*', among others apart from films like '*Raazi*' and '*Satte Pe Satta*'. The actor was in Lucknow sometime back and shared some memories of his memorable shows and how he actually had joined the Army but became an actor eventually.

An actor by chance

I never wanted to be an actor. *Pata nahin kaise acting mein aa gaya main*. I went to the National Defence Academy, I was part of the 41st course in NDA. I gave my SSB in Dehradun. And then I joined the Merchant Navy. But then destiny played its part and I got into acting.

Saans made me the Agony Uncle of Men

Maine hamesha yahi koshish kari ki main koi aisa character karun, bhale hi woh negative ho jo log appreciate karein. So although in '*Saans*', my character was very negative, he was appreciated. Because at the back of my head I always had my family in my mind. Even when I go to the modern woman, I always come to Neena Gupta and my kids in the show. I remember that serial had made such an impact that I once went to a club and there were a few of my friends there and they said I'm doing a wonderful job in the show. Then once I met Sanjay Khan's daughter in the gym and she was just gushing about the show. I was surprised that she was watching '*Saans*'. But that's how popular that serial had become.

I also remember that at that time I had become the Agony Uncle of men who would come to me with their woes of lovers, partners and wives. *Ab mein unko kaise samjhata ki meri bhi situation aisi hi hai*. I would tell them *ki bhai main bhi acting kar raha hoon*, mujhe bhi iska solution *kuchh maloom nahi hai*. Also that was a very difficult time for me professionally. In the sense that I was also doing '*Daraar*' simultaneously in which I was playing a paralysed man. So I used to be scared to go for the shoot because it used to be so difficult. *Aur yahan do aurtein mere peeche padi hain* (laughs). So I had actually gone in a depression, but thankfully I got '*Yeh Meri Family*' which was a comedy show and that really changed my life.

No channel was ready to air *Saans*

Another interesting thing related to '*Saans*' is that for more than a year, no channel was prepared to air it saying *yeh hit nahi hoga*. And it went on to become one of the most remembered shows on Indian TV.

Anita Hassanandani on her negative role in *Naagin*

'I'm content with my two seconds of fame'

Anita Hassanandani resumed work on last month to wrap up the fourth season of the TV show *Naagin*. Her pics and videos from the shoot were also doing the rounds.

Anita has been playing the antagonist for past two seasons and looks like her character won't return for season 5. And she is also not worried if her character is bumped off. In an interview with Mumbai Mirror, the actress shared, "I'm fortunate to have been a part of two seasons and would love to be in the next one, too. But I think my character has exhausted her run. I am content with my two seconds of fame."

She is expecting to complete the season in 45 days.

Anita also shared that her husband Rohit Reddy was scared to send her back to work. But the actress shared that, "On Ekta's (Kapoor) set, the actor's well-being is always top priority."

She spoke about precautionary measures she is following and said, "I keep sanitising my hands often and wash them whenever I go into the vanity van. I am also careful not to touch my face much," she says, adding, "Everyone's safety is more important right now than how the show looks."

KHKT's Veena Sippy aka Shalini Kapoor reveals being an actor is not easy

Kahaan Hum Kahaan Tum is one of the popular shows of the small screen. The daily has been entertaining the viewers ever since its first episode. Dipika Kakar and Karan V Grover's fresh pairing got instantly hit among the viewers.

The show is still doing quite well and fans were enjoying every bit of it. However, the viewers' happiness didn't last long as the news of KHKT going off-air hit the social media. Everyone was shocked and heart-broken. Not just the fans but also the star cast was shocked to hear this news.

Well, there's nothing can be done now but the star cast is still shooting and enjoying their last days on the sets of the show.

Shalini Kapoor who plays the role of Veena Sippy in the show is quite active on Instagram and often shares amazing pictures and videos.

The actress has now shared a fun video in which she revealed how she did 18 scenes in a day and that an actor's life is not that easy.



TV SERIAL

Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai

Friday 14 Aug: Sameer calls up Taiji and expresses his displeasure for the situation she put Naina under. The next day, Sameer and Naina go sightseeing. Naina's dress is torn while walking in the coffee plantations. Sameer is annoyed with Naina and the two quarrel about their not so happening trip.

Monday 17 Aug: Sameer sees a stranger lurking around the room and calls the security. Naina appreciates Sameer and the two resolve their differences. Sameer and Naina finally return home and find that Naina switched off the fridge, which has resulted in a stench in the house.

Tuesday 18 Aug: Anand announces to Bela and Preeti that he is going to get another chance to go to America and this time he wouldn't be going alone and is taking Bela with her for a long duration. Sarla overhears their conversation and is jealous of it.

Wednesday 19 Aug: While troubling each other, Naina spills water on aunts face and she is not happy about it. She screams at Naina for being reckless in the house and criticises her for being like this as she has never been in a house this big. Sameer apologises for the fault.

Thursday 20 Aug: Both Sameer and Naina are preparing for their respective exams. Elsewhere, Anand's elder brother calls Anand and asks him to get all the jewellery that Bina had received from her mother-in-law, so that they can be divided too.

Kahan Hum Kahan Tum

Friday 7 Aug: Rohit is thrashed brutally by some goons and gets kidnapped while the Sippys learn about Sonakshi's sacrifice. Elsewhere, Raima regains consciousness.

Monday 10 Aug: Sonakshi guides Rohan and YK to save Rohit from danger. The Rastogis and the Sippys perform the Ganpati puja while Sonakshi and Rohit get trapped in a truck.

Tuesday 11 Aug: Rohit takes a drastic step to save Sonakshi from the cold while the Sippys makes a shocking confession to the media. Later, Rohit plays a prank on Sonakshi.

Wednesday 12 Aug: Rohit and Sonakshi have an intimate conversation after they get stranded. Later, Raima's vitals show improvement while Sonakshi is certain Rohit loves her.

Thursday 13 Aug: Rohit arrives with a Dhol party to celebrate Ganapati Visarjan at Sonakshi's house. Later, he forgets Raima's birthday and blames Sonakshi for not reminding him.

CINE 12

Samedi 14 août - 21.15

A Sunday Horse

Avec: Nikki Reed, Ryan Merriman,
Cassi Thomson

CINE 12

Samedi 15 août - 21.15

The Last Bridesmaid

Star: Rachel Boston, Paul
Campbell, Jeremy Guilbaut

MBC 1

Dimanche 16 août - 21.10



vendredi 14 août

MBC 1

07.05 Local: Passerelles
09.45 Local: Later Set Kouler
10.30 Local: Arts.21
11.00 Local: Saver KilTirel
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Mag: Women Who Changed
12.35 Mag: Eye On SADC
14.00 Local: Rodrig Prog
14.46 D.Anime: Le Quiz De Zack
15.02 D.Anime: Petit Creux
15.15 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies
16.11 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill
16.33 D.Anime: G-Fighters
17.05 D.Aimes: Spirit
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.00 Prod: Goute A Tout
20.35 Prod: Komiko
22.20 Serial: The Blacklist
23.00 Le Journal

MBC 2

10.00 Serial: Mah-E-Tamaam
11.20 Serial: Tum Mere Paas Raho
12.04 Film: Kadaikutty Singham
Starring: Karthi, Sathyaraj,
Sayyeshaa
14.20 DDI Magazine
15.00 Mag: Strictly Street
15.23 Serial: Honaar Soon Mee
15.47 Serial: Mooga Manasulu
16.20 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal
16.33 Serial: Ki Jaana Mein Kaun
16.55 Mehendi Tohra Namam Ke
17.17 Serial: Gangaa
18.00 Serial: Dr. Quin
18.30 DDI Magazine
19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol
19.30 DDI Magazine
20.00 Prod: Tawaan
20.44 Local: Anjuman
21.11 Local: Urdu Programme
22.11 DDI Live

MBC 3

06.00 Mag: Eco India
06.44 Mag: Shift
07.00 Mag: Border Crossing
07.35 Mag: Tomorrow Today
08.01 Doc: Comme Un Poisson...
09.08 Doc: 360 GEO
10.01 Doc: Lead In The Blood
11.26 Mag: Urban Gardens
11.44 Mag: Shift
12.00 Mag: Border Crossing
12.26 Doc: A Question Of Science
12.59 Doc: Comme Un Poisson...
14.49 Doc: Majuli
15.15 Doc: Lead In The Blood
16.27 Mag: Urban Gardens
17.01 Mag: Border Crossing
17.27 Doc: A Question Of Science
18.00 Doc: The Tyrannosaurus...
18.30 Live: News
18.47 Mag: Arts And Culture
19.00 Open Univ: Student Support

Cine 12

01.30 Film: Hailey Dean Mysteries
02.51 Serial: The Good Doctor
03.32 Serial: Island Doctor
05.02 Tele: Totalement Diva
05.53 Tele: Esmeraldas
06.38 Film: SOX: A Family's Best...
09.00 Serial: NCIS
09.45 Tele: Soleil Levant
10.35 Serial: The Good Doctor
11.31 Tele: Dulce Amor
12.00 Serial: Island Doctor
13.30 Tele: Totalement Diva
14.45 Film: SOX: A Family's Best...
16.40 Serial: NCIS
17.21 Tele: Esmeraldas
18.11 Tele: Soleil Levant
19.10 Tele: Dulce Amor
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Serial: Emerald City
21.15 Film: The Karate Kid
23.30 Tele: Totalement Diva

Bollywood TV

08.00 Film: Ghar Ho To Aisa
12.05 / 19.54 -
Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam
12.16 / 20.11 -
Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
12.46 / 20.32 Radha Krishna
13.09 / 21.09 - Bin Kuch Kahe
13.31 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek
13.53 / 21.46 -
Bade Acche Lagte Hai
14.17 / 21.59 -
Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki
14.39 / 22.25 - Bitti Business...
14.57 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
15.21 Film: Joru Ka Ghulam
Starring: Govinda Twinkle
Khanna, Kader Khan
18.00 Live: Samacher
18.30 Kumkum Bhagya
18.51 Piya Albela
19.14 Mere Angne Mein

samedi 15 août

06.00 D.Anime: Robot Trains
07.25 D.Anime: Kid-E-Cats
08.50 D.Anime: The Garfield Show
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Local: People
12.35 Mag: Garden Party
13.05 Local: Generations J: La Voix
14.10 Local: Rodrig Prog
14.35 D.Anime: Nos Voisins Les...
14.46 D.Anime: Le Quiz De Zack
15.01 D.Anime: Petit Creux
15.14 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies
15.17 D.Anime: Poko
16.11 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill
16.35 D.Anime: G-Fighters
17.30 Serial: Lucas Etc
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.35 Entertain: Nach Baliye
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.00 Prod: Lottotech
21.10 Film: A Sunday Horse
23.20 Le Journal

10.00 Bade Acchelagte Hai
12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhyia Bhare
12.50 Serial: Brundavanam
13.12 Annakodiyum Ainthus
Pengalum
13.35 Serial: Anu Pallavi
14.00 Dil Hai Hindustani
15.00 Mag: Strictly Street
15.30 Film: The Legend Of Bhagat
Singh
Starring: Ajay Devgn, Sushant
Singh, D. Santosh
18.30 Mag: DDI Magazine
19.00 Zournal Kreol
20.05 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki
Rahasya Gatha
20.28 Serial: Bitti Business Wali
21.00 Film: Kesari
Starring - Akshay Kumar
23.39 DDI Live

06.00 Doc: The Digital Age
06.47 Mag: Arts And Culture
07.00 Mag: Global 3000
07.30 En Direct De Notre Dame Du
Bon Conseil: Mess De
L'assomption
09.00 The Real Dr. Strangelove
09.48 Doc: Nollywood
10.59 Doc: The Digital Age
12.05 Mag: Global 3000
12.34 Mag: Euromaxx
15.34 Doc: Desert Patrol
16.03 Doc: The Digital Age
18.30 Live: News (English)
18.45 Mag: Shift
19.00 Mag: Word On The Street
19.30 Mag: Mixeur, Les Goûts...
19.56 Mag: Women Who Changed
20.06 Doc: Nom De Code
21.04 Doc: 360 GEO
21.50 Doc: Opera
22.35 Doc: Mega Yachts

01.00 Film: The Karate Kid
03.14 Serial: Chicago Fire
03.53 Film: The Perfect Guy
05.27 Tele: Destiny
06.14 Serial: Emerald City
06.56 Serial: Sherlock
08.30 Serial: Mike Hammer
09.18 Serial: Brooklyn Nine Nine
09.59 Serial: Counterpart
10.52 Film: Hailey Dean Mysteries
12.18 Serial: Chicago Fire
13.03 Tele: Amanda
13.45 Tele: Premiere Dame
15.05 Serial: The Good Doctor
17.00 Serial: Emerald City
17.45 Film: Nessie & Me
19.18 Mag: Hollywood News Feed
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Series: Emerald City
21.15 Film: The Last Bridesmaid
22.45 Tele: Eva Luna

04.05 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum
04.26 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
04.43 Radha Krishna
05.05 Zindagi Ki Mehek
05.27 Bade Acche Lagte Hai
05.55 Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki
06.14 Bitti Business Wali
06.38 Kumkum Bhagya
06.58 Piya Albela
07.20 Mere Angne Mein
08.00 Zindagi Ki Mehek
10.02 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai
10.02 Bin Kuch Kahe
16.00 Pavitra Rishta
18.30 Film: 1942: A Love Story
Starring Anil Kapoor,
Jackie Shroff and Manisha
Koirala
21.01 Serial: Siya Ke Ram
21.43 Serial: Naagin
22.27 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek

dimanche 16 août

06.00 D.Anime: Robot Trains
06.27 D.Anime: HTDT
08.45 D.Anime: The Garfield Show
09.24 D.Anime: Astrology
09.35 Serial: Dark Oracle
12.00 Le Journal
12.30 Local: Elle - No 109
15.00 D.Anime: Nos Voisins Les...
15.16 D.Anime: Le Quiz De Zack
15.20 D.Anime: Chuck's Choice
15.31 D.Anime: Petit Creux
16.10 D.Anime: Les Enquêtes Des...
16.26 D.Anime: Fils De Wouf
16.41 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill
17.02 D.Anime: G-Fighters
17.29 D.Anime: Roger
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Local: Yeh Shaam Mastani
19.30 Le Journal
20.00 Prod: Mett Sa Ladan
21.10 Film: 3: 10 To Yuma

07.00 Film: Agent Vinod
Starring: Mahendra Sandhu
Nazir Hussain, Asha
Sachdev
09.25 DDI Magazine
10.00 Local Production
11.00 Serial: Santoshi Maa
12.00 Film: Jeans
Starring - Prashanth,
Aishwarya Rai, Nassar
15.00 Mag: Strictly Street
15.23 Serial: Mooga Manasulu
15.43 Eka Lagnachi Teesri Gosht
16.06 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal
17.00 Serial: Mahakali
17.44 Serial: Kisna
19.30 DDI Magazine
20.00 Serial: Maharakshak
20.44 Serial: Naagin
21.27 Serial: CID
22.15 Serial: Piya Rangrez

06.00 Doc: Amazing Gardens
06.26 Doc: Ville En Fête
06.52 Doc: The Blockchain...
07.15 Mag: Mixeur, Les Goûts...
08.36 Doc: World Stamps
10.13 Doc: Mega Yachts
11.26 Doc: The Blockchain...
12.18 Mag: Mixeur, Les Goûts
17.20 Doc: World Stamps
17.26 Doc: Set One
17.18 Mag: Mixeur, Les Goûts...
18.00 Doc: Trajectory
18.30 Local: News (English)
19.05 Doc: Builders Of The Future
19.30 Mag: Mixeur, Les Goût Etc...
21.00 Doc: 360 GEO
21.52 Doc: Battle Of Social...
22.34 Doc: Looted Art In The Third
23.17 Doc: The Tattooed Lady
23.43 Doc: Garden Party
00.09 Doc: Builders Of The Future

01.32 Film: The Last Bridesmaid
02.56 Serial: Hawaii 5-0
03.37 Film: Mike Hammer
05.10 Tele: Destiny
05.58 Serial: Emerald City
06.40 Film: For The Love Of George
08.30 Serial: Mike Hammer
09.15 Serial: Brooklyn Nine Nine
09.56 Serial: Counterpart
10.48 Film: Nessie & Me
12.20 Serial: Hawaii 5-0
13.02 Tele: Amanda
13.44 Tele: Premiere Dame
15.05 Serial: The Good Doctor
17.08 Serial: Emerald City
17.50 Serial: Hawaii 5-0
18.31 Serial: Mission: Impossible
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Serial: Incorporated
21.15 Serial: Island Doctor
22.46 Film: For The Love Of George

00.30 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
02.12 Bin Kuch Kahe
04.03 Pavitra Rishta
05.28 Film: 1942: A Love Story
08.06 Motu Patlu
08.16 Chhanchhan
08.54 Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki
10.05 Jaana Na Dil Se Door
12.01 Piya Albela
14.00 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum
15.45 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
17.00 Punar Vivaah
18.00 Samachar
18.30 Film: Jawani Zindabad
Starring: Aamir Khan,
Farha Naaz
21.25 Entertainment: Nach Baliye
21.58 Bade Acche Lagte Hai
23.48 Piya Albela

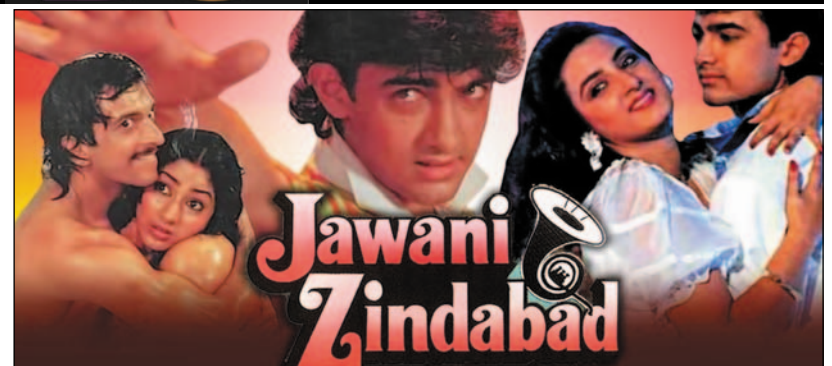
MBC 2

Samedi 15 août - 21.00

Stars: Akshay Kumar,
Parineeti Chopra,
Anurag Singh

Dimanche 16 août -

18.30

Stars: Aamir Khan, Farha
Naaz



Nita Chicooree-Mercier

Sri Aurobindo on Indian Culture and India's role in the world

When circumstances so required, it was none other than Sri Aurobindo himself who came forward to give a clear picture of the foundations of Indian culture, its spiritual separation and ideals, the shapes and forms of its political and social systems, its findings in science, creativity in art,

poetry and aesthetics. The dark spots, positive imperfections and heavy shortcomings he also referred to, but then which civilisation has been without its unfulfilled parts, its negative aspects, its deep stains, lacunae and blind alleys, he asked.

Sri Aurobindo replied in a most unbiased manner to criticism of Indian civilisation by Western scholars, and to Western cultural assaults attempting to break down the forms of Eastern culture in general. Sri Aurobindo was an outstanding intellectual, a thinker, mystic and poet, well-versed in Sanskrit, Bengali, Greek and Latin and had a high command of the English language. In his reply to English critics, he underlined that at the same time of cultural attacks there was 'a large, subtle and silent appropriation of much that is valuable in the East for the enrichment of Occidental culture.'

In his book entitled '*The Foundations of Indian Culture*', he warns that to bring forward the glories of our past and scatter them on Europe and America will be a liberality that will enrich and strengthen India's cultural assailants, and that may serve to give a misleading and useless self-confidence if it is not made a force of will for a greater creation. It is important for India not only to confront the attack with new and more powerful formations to push it back, but even, where that is possible and helpful to Indians, to carry the war into the assailant's country. Wherever there is a need for assimilation of external influences, it should be a strong creative assimilation that answers to India's needs and responds to the Indian spirit, and not a stark appropriation.

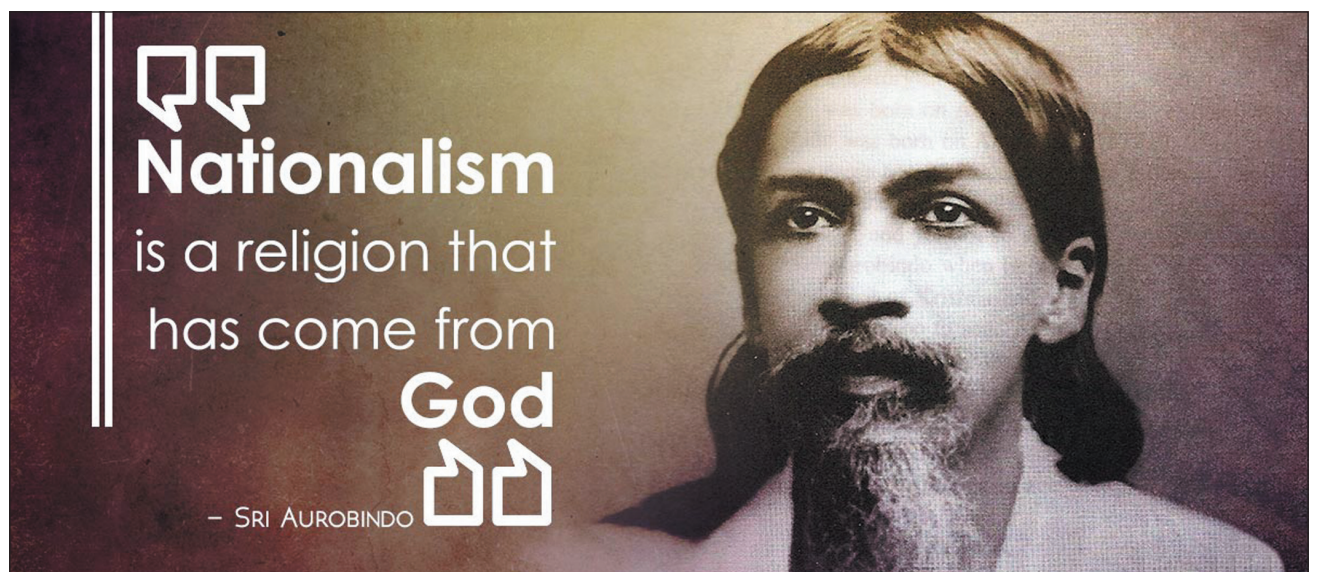
An Indian ideal of the future

There have been positive movements in some directions while others have created an unintelligent mixture, crude and undigested borrowings attempting to create a rationalised and Westernised India, a brown ape of Europe. An awakening to the situation instills the ability to think and create in certain fields, which avoids imitation, haphazard borrowing of Western methods, without assimilation. A mastery and helpful assimilation of new stuff into an eternal body has always been in the past a peculiar power of the genius of India. Assimilation is one thing, but there are alleys internal to the culture to be fully explored to be creative, founts of native power from which more vital and fresher streams of power of life can be drawn, more stimulating to the nature of the Indian way of being, and more packed with creative suggestions.

A forward look from the past and present towards an Indian ideal of the future, not a foreign one, is the way ahead. Changes, he wrote, must be cast in the spirit and mould of India, not in any other - America, Europe or Russia.

Sri Aurobindo's writings are highly enlightening and relevant a hundred years later. A fierce opponent of British rule, he was imprisoned and sentenced to death. A revelation he had while in jail changed the course of his life. He escaped from prison and fled to Pondicherry which was under French administration, and there he set up an ashram where he wrote profusely and took the battle of liberation and awakening to higher levels.

Cultural assaults as well as attacks on territorial integrity continued and took different forms since Sri



Aurobindo's time. International standards to settle culture clashes and territorial disputes were mainly devised from a Western perspective and from Western history in the wake of calamities that have torn away countries, mostly of European makings and Russia's ideological threats in the mid-20th century. India, the ancient possessor of the truth of the spirit, has shown its determination to face challenges on its own terms for the past years. Static defense, Sri Aurobindo wrote, is of no value, because it is inconsistent with the truth of things and doomed to failure. While the Shakti of the world is moving, the Shakti of India, too, must move.

A vision of future possibilities

It was of utmost urgency for India to be led by leaders who are imbued with the ancient spirit of India, with a clear view of its past glories, its dynamism, also its flaws, an inspiration which shapes a vision of its future possibilities. The more so following the pressure of dominant European ideas and motives and the swift transformation of the world, which always threatens to leave little time for the growth of sound thought and spiritual reflection. In every calamitous period of wars that defined the 20th century up to present times, seekers of new truth from other continents, from Europe, America, and even from the hot spots of today's conflicts, have turned to India for guidance, and many, despite living abroad, have found their spiritual home in India. This phenomenon stands little chance of reversion and places Indian culture and ideals in a stronger position.

As of today, Europe and the West still resort to the force of mechanical institutions to establish a form of unity by the accommodation of conflicting interests. Such an attempt is not founded at all or is founded on sand. Why? Because the West does not possess the spirit of unity. The European mind, Sri Aurobindo says, gives the first place to the principle of growth by struggle to arrive at some kind of consensus -- a consensus which is hardly more than an organization for growth by competition, aggression and further battle. An organisation that is precarious at its base and in its centre because it is founded on half-truths that deteriorate into whole falsehoods.

In such circumstances, peace is constantly breaking into a fresh strife of principles, ideas, interests, races and classes. Indian culture strove to find its base in a unity and reached out again toward some greater oneness; it achieved peace and stability, but was imperfect because it lost its force of aggression and weakened its power of assimilation and expansion. So, when powerful and aggressive forces broke in from outside, Hindu society was left with a mere permission to live, with restricted assertion of its ancient spirit.

All this has undergone change in past decades, and more so under the present government, which from a Western point of view may look like an antithesis of their own brand of secular leaders, a definition of secularism which fits Western leaders and which does not take into account the role of political leaders in upholding their civilisational ethos, but act merely as technicians to boost GDP and prop up the economy.

From an Indian point of view, the present team of political leadership has to address not only economic issues but also re-assert and reinforce its civilisational ethos and cultural ideals inspired by its eternal ancient spirit. In the history of mankind, no other country has been so aggressively assaulted, occupied physically, its culture and religion attacked, and politically subjugated for centuries. International discourses are in deep ignorance of inner Indian concerns, which only people of Indian origin are knowledgeable in.

So, as of today, one leading motive of India remains its endeavour to achieve a greater outward expression of spiritual and psychological oneness in a larger statement of Indian civilisation, but with a diversity that is alien to the mechanical method of Europe: a unity with the rest of mankind, in which India maintains its spiritual and outer independence, a unity of mankind which the West sees only in idea, but cannot achieve because it does not possess the spirit.

The onus is on the sons and daughters of Indian civilisation not to opt for a rationalized and Westernized India, and to adjust to changes with the ancient spirit which makes spirituality a prime motive, not a superficial emotional influence that gives a spiritual colouring to the predominantly vital vigour of the Teuton and the intellectual clarity and sensuous refinement of the Latins, as depicted by Sri Aurobindo. Of all ancient civilisations, Indian civilisation is still standing on its feet and will have to deploy all the potential of its Shakti in various fields to keep its spirit unique and the rich mass and diversity of its thousand lines of inner experience a heritage that still India alone can preserve in its intricate truth and dynamic order.

Swadharma, the law of 'our nature', Sri Aurobindo says, 'the aim of Nature in us' contains essential idea-forces which cannot be thrown aside and a permanent spirit to which the people must cling to and will remain permanent hereafter. These idea-forces are essential not only for India, but for humanity as a whole.

We wish India, the Indian diaspora, people of Indian origin and lovers of Indian culture a happy celebration of National Day on August 15th.