

MAURITIUS TIMES

"Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education." -- Franklin D. Roosevelt

Wakashio and Covid-19: More questions than answers



The sequelae of Wakashio and Covid-19 are likely to bedevil us for a long time to come, unfortunately, and much of it possibly of our own making



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"If the Receiver of Wrecks had taken over the Wakashio the morning after the wreck, there would have been no oil spill"



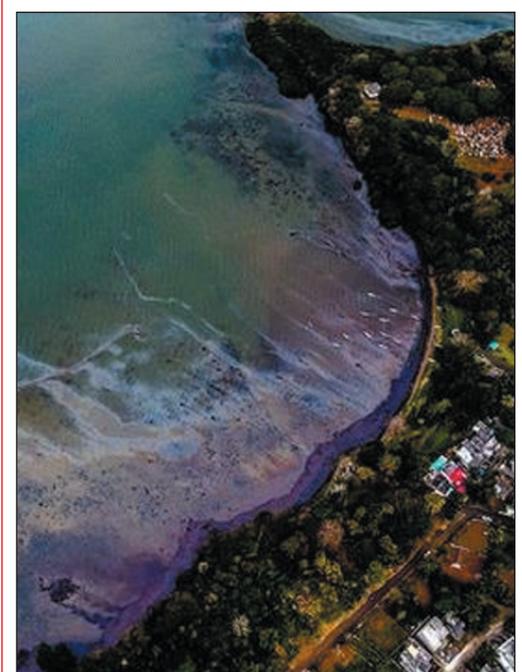
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Mauritius Oil Spill: Was The Government Unprepared?

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Wakashio and Institutional Preparedness

Last week we carried an interview of Prof Christian Bueger, director of SAFE SEAS and a professor of International Relations at the University of Copenhagen, who since 2010 has also been studying issues of maritime security, counter-piracy operations, capacity building and maritime domain awareness. Speaking of the MV Wakashio shipwreck off Pointe d'Esny, he stated that 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.' In another contribution to this paper, this week, he brings another perspective to the debate about the level of preparedness of the authorities for a disaster of this scale. And his conclusion is that 'evidence indicates that Mauritius was very well prepared; the event did not come as a surprise. Importantly, the country dealt with similar incidents very successfully before.'

A look into the archives reveals that the government was anything but unprepared, suggests Prof Bueger. Mauritius was one of the first African countries to finalize in 1990 an oil spill contingency plan with support from the International Maritime Organization and the UN Environmental Programme. The country has also been one of the beneficiaries of the 'Western Indian Ocean Island Oil Spill Contingency Planning' project, funded and run by the World Bank, which allowed for the updating of the national contingency plan. Furthermore, thanks to the Marine Highway Development and Prevention Project, funded by the Global Environmental Facility, the country received more training in oil spill prevention; the Contingency Plan was also updated and reviewed, following which Mauritius received training under the UNEP's Regional Seas Programme and the Nairobi Convention. He also adds that Mauritius is 'one of the main beneficiaries of the MASE project of the European Union under which maritime security structures are developed for the region, and as part of these projects, between 2003 and 2012, the country held five larger exercises and drills on oil spill prevention'.

In short, the country benefited from quite substantial capacity building assistance by the United Nations. Governmental representatives regularly participated in workshops and conducted training exercises. Only some months before the disaster occurred, that is in March 2020, representatives from the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Fisheries of Mauritius participated in the UN Environmental Programme-organised workshop on *Cooperation in preparedness and response to marine pollution incidents* in Zanzibar, where they gave a presentation on the country's national oil spill preparedness status. 'The records of the meeting reveal, first, that officials were very well aware that the country is at a high risk of oil spills due to the vicinity of one of the world's busiest shipping routes. Second, it documents that the country had a range of sophisticated

planning, response and disaster assessment tools,' reveals Prof Bueger.

As regards practical experience of such disasters, the evidence shows that the authorities dealt with two major cases in the past years – though not on the scale of the MV Wakashio incident. 'In April 2005 a collision occurred off Port Louis between the MSC Katie and the MV Nordsun. The MSC Katie sustained cracks and was grounded on a reef to avoid sinking. Mauritian authorities successfully prevented an oil spill.' Second, in June 2016, the MV Benita ran aground not too far from the site of the recent oil spill. 'While the vessel was damaged, a salvage company was quick on site. The contractors pumped the fuel out of the vessel, and only a very minor spill occurred' – which brings Prof Bueger to conclude: 'Mauritius was not only aware of the risk and had elaborated planning tools, the authorities had experience with incidents of this kind.'

Given the level of preparedness at the institutional level as amply outlined by Prof Bueger, this begs a number of questions on the much-delayed response of the authorities to the MV Wakashio shipwreck and the resulting oil spill. Was the government not advised or alerted about the risk of an oil spill, which would explain why the decision was not taken in good time to pump out the 4180 MT of fuel oil aboard the MV Wakashio before the first spill became visible on 6th August? A number of rumours and conspiracy theories have been doing the rounds lately, which cast doubts on the motivations for the time-lag to action by the authorities. Only a proper and independent inquiry into this matter will be able to shed light on what was the expert advice that was given to the Prime Minister, as he said in his interview that he had deferred to such advice. And as, if not more importantly, what elements were factored into the formulation of this advice, such as the then weather conditions, their impact on the seas in the area and specifically around the Wakashio, any calculations that were made therefrom i.e. the quantification of the risk level, etc, and thereafter what actions had been or should have been undertaken by the authorities.

This inquiry will also hopefully examine the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act 2007 and review, if deemed necessary, the role and responsibilities of the Director of Shipping, who by virtue of Section 131 (2) 'shall be the Receiver of Wrecks', in which capacity he 'shall exercise general direction and supervision over all matters relating to wreck and salvage', and is perhaps best placed to evaluate any input given to the Prime Minister. On the other hand, it will surely be realised by the authorities that by shedding light on the circumstances associated with this incident, they will also lay to rest the conspiracy theories. Acknowledging frankly any mishap can only help to make them better prepared for the future, and that should be the core purpose of this exercise.

The Conversation

State of democracy in Africa: changing leaders doesn't change politics

For the last few years the African political landscape has been dominated by high profile changes of leaders and governments. In Angola (2017), Ethiopia (2018), South Africa (2018), Sudan (2019) and Zimbabwe (2018), leadership change promised to bring about not only a new man at the top, but also a new political and economic direction.



Photo: theconversation.com

But do changes of leaders and governments generate more democratic and responsive governments? The Bertelsmann Transformation Index Africa Report 2020 (BTI), *A Changing of the Guards or A Change of Systems?*, suggests that we should be cautious about the prospects for rapid political improvements.

Reviewing developments in 44 countries from 2017 to the start of 2019, the report finds that leadership change results in an initial wave of optimism. But ongoing political challenges and constraints mean that it is often a case of "the more things change the more they stay the same".

Political change occurs gradually in the vast majority of African countries.

More continuity than change

From 2015 to 2019, the general pattern has been for the continent's more authoritarian states – such as Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea and Rwanda – to make little progress towards democracy. In some cases countries became incrementally more repressive.

At the same time, many of the continent's more democratic states – including Botswana, Ghana, Mauritius, Senegal and South Africa – have remained "consolidating" or "defective" democracies. Very few of these dropped out of these categories to become "authoritarian" regimes.

A number of countries have seen more significant changes.

But in most cases this did not fundamentally change the character of the political system. For example, Cameroon, Chad, Kenya and Tanzania moved further away from lasting political and economic transformation. Meanwhile Angola, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe initially made progress towards it, but these gains were limited – and only lasted for a short period in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe.

As this brief summary suggests, at a continental level the trajectories of different states have by and large cancelled each other out. Positive trends in some cases were wiped out by negative trends in others.

Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole has thus seen no significant changes to the overall level of democracy, economic management and governance. For example, the index shows that between 2018 and 2020, the overall level of democracy declined by just 0.09, a small shift on a 1-10 scale. This suggests continuity not change.

Leadership changes often disappoint

In almost all cases, positive trends were recorded in countries where leadership change generated hope for political renewal and economic reform. This includes Angola, after President José Eduardo dos Santos stepped down in 2017, and Ethiopia, following the rise to power of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

Nic Cheeseman, University of Birmingham

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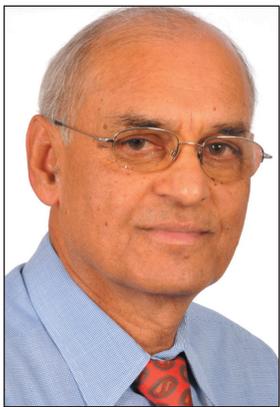
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Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

Wakashio and Covid-19: More questions than answers

The sequelae of Wakashio and Covid-19 are likely to bedevil us for a long time to come, unfortunately, and much of it possibly of our own making

As I have been hearing from friends and acquaintances, this is really a soya (unlucky) year for our country so far, with the Covid-19 pandemic and the downgrade by the European Union, then the problem with the African Development Bank in connection with the bribery case related to the Danish industrial group

that we are facing as a consequence of these two major occurrences.

Moreover, both the Covid-19 pandemic and the Wakashio shipwreck have resulted in health, economic, social and environmental impacts, some immediate and others foreseeable in the long term, and in both cases there is an element of irrepara-

information than they ought to have been, about initial silences that are deemed to be unwarranted in the face of a clear disaster in the making as the ship ran aground. Or possibly was made to do so! -- according to a latest post in the media seen some days ago.

Whatever little plus was gained from

tries, and that is why the cheaper alternatives such as Hydroxychloroquine are still being researched through properly conducted clinical trials in some centres such as in South Africa and in Seattle, Washington, USA. If proved to be effective at one or other stage of the disease, they will definitely reduce the anxiety about the cost of treatment and help to save lives in settings that are less resourced.

From the vaccine point of view, there are uncertainties about the Russian vaccine that has been announced. Scientists are not satisfied that adequate Phase 3 trial has been carried out, and unless there is more information coming from the authorities there, it is unlikely that there will be a global rollout. In India and the UK, the Phase 1 and 2 trials have shown promising results, and Phase 3 trials are under way. As the vaccine experts have pointed out a number of times, the issue here is not about who is first in developing a vaccine. Rather, it is about how safe and effective a vaccine is, and establishing that can only be through rigorously conducted Phase 3 trials.

However, the biggest question of all that is giving sleepless nights to national authorities everywhere is: **to open up borders and economies or not to open?** It is a thorny one, but there is no gainsaying that opening up has systematically resulted in a surge of cases, and that too even in countries which had been held up as models of successful control of disease transmission initially. Australia, New Zealand (where 58 new cases registered in one week has led government to postpone general elections due), Singapore, Vietnam, for example. But this has happened in the UK, France and parts of the US as well.

So as we contemplate to reopen up here, taking a decision is going to be a tough call. Experience from around the world will have to guide us, despite the understandable and increasing pressure to expedite the process. Government will perforce have to ensure that all the measures are in place -- such as for testing -- and will be applied indiscriminately to all, citizens and eventually visitors alike. This has been stressed over and over again, and cannot be overemphasized given the real risks associated with reopening. And of course, this also means assuming the responsibility for finding and working out alternative opportunities and possibilities for citizens adversely affected by the pandemic.

The sequelae of Wakashio and Covid-19 are likely to bedevil us for a long time to come, unfortunately, and much of it possibly of our own making.



Photo: splash247.com



Photo: Reuters

“There are some parallels and commonalities between the Covid-19 pandemic and the Wakashio incident. Thus, Covid-19 is a global phenomenon which spread to our shores, and this was practically inevitable. By comparison, the Wakashio shipwreck is a local incident which has attracted global attention because of its seriousness and especially the international concern about the consequences of the oil spill, on the marine environment in particular. And in both phenomena there is an overload of information which is apt more to confuse rather than to enlighten the layman...”

Burmeister & Wain Scandinavian Contractor and the series of scandals associated with the procurement of turbines for our power supply that has come to be known as the St Louis gate affair, and now the latest catastrophe which is the shipwreck of the Japanese vessel MV Wakashio and the oil spill that has resulted.

This latest incident has brought international notoriety to the island for the wrong reason, and we find that there are some parallels and commonalities between the Covid-19 pandemic and the Wakashio incident. Thus, Covid-19 is a global phenomenon which spread to our shores, and this was practically inevitable. By comparison, the Wakashio shipwreck is a local incident which has attracted global attention because of its seriousness and especially the international concern about the consequences of the oil spill, on the marine environment in particular. And in both phenomena there is an overload of information which is apt more to confuse rather than to enlighten the layman, in fact to even frighten at times. However, only a rational approach based on the best evidence available will be able to solve the problems

ble damage: the death of people in the one and of marine life in the other. Obviously in the case of Covid-19 the health impact is greater, more so as it is immediate. To repeat a cliché that has done the rounds, both events are impacting lives and livelihoods.

And regarding both, there seem to be more questions than answers -- although in the case of Covid-19 medical scientists and doctors are hard at work trying to find them, whereas in the other case demagoguery is erecting walls of opaqueness. This may well prevent the proper facts from being eventually uncovered, since there is less of science involved and more of the subjective human element which is compounded by the politicking that has surrounded the whole issue so far.

So many troubling questions and worries have surfaced in the public domain, raised by direct witnesses of the event, local fishermen and inhabitants, NGOs and other concerned citizens/parties especially about the potential environmental damage, and from politicians of various hues. All of them have been expressing disquiet about the authorities being less forthcoming with

the relatively successful management of the Covid-19 pandemic -- despite some evident lacunae such as the conditions in quarantine centres, the tackling of the hardships faced by citizens stranded abroad, etc., -- has been completely neutralized by what is perceived as being an inept handling of the Wakashio shipwreck which, done properly from the onset, could have significantly prevented the damage that has been done and is continuing, for the long term consequences are likely to be substantial.

On the Covid-19 front, what has become patently clear is that this is not something that is going to go away so soon, as we would have wished it to be. The disease is continuing to spread, and as at yesterday the total number of new cases registered worldwide was a staggering 294,000.

A number of treatments are being used, others are being trialled and it is a long road towards a specific drug, that is, one that effectively attacks and kills the virus. Given the large numbers of patients the cost factor becomes an important consideration especially in less developed coun-

Mauritius Oil Spill: Was The Government Unprepared?



Christian Bueger

The devastating oil spill that wreaked havoc on Mauritius' coastline raises the question of whether the response by the government was appropriate. Was the country unprepared for a disaster of this scale? Were officials over-confident or misjudged the risk?

Evidence indicates that Mauritius was very well prepared; the event did not come as a surprise. Importantly, the country dealt with similar incidents very successfully before. Yet, a public inquiry will have to address a number of questions.

The disaster response

The Mauritius disaster unfolded in the evening of July 25th. The bulk carrier MV Wakashio grounded on its way from China to Brazil close to the shore of Mauritius. The causes are subject of an ongoing investigation.

First analyses indicate that weather was not the problem. Yet, the vessel deviated from the usual course that traffic in the region takes. The ship was on a collision course.

No oil spilled at the grounding. The Mauritius coast guard took preventive actions. The government activated its National Oil Spill Contingency Plan the next day.

By the 28th of July, the Dutch salvage company Smit Salvage had been contracted to work with local logistics giant CELERO to keep the MV Wakashio afloat and pump out the over 4,000 tons of oil and diesel. When the first out of four tugboats arrived three days later, the recovery operation was ready to begin.

The responsible minister of environment said that he 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 observers spotted some minor oil sheen around the vessel. The "the risk of oil spill was still low", the minister argued.

Only hours later, the MV Wakashio flooded and started sinking the next morning. Oil started to spill into the sea at a high rate. As a result, the disaster that is by now well documented unfolded. Government officials radically changed their tone.

In reaction, the Prime Minister not only declared a "state of environment emergency", but also said that the nation did not have "the skills and expertise to refloat stranded ships." The Minister of Fisheries told international news media, "This is the first time that we are faced with a catastrophe of this kind and we are insufficiently equipped to handle this problem."

The foreign minister called upon the UN, the EU, India, its neighbour France, as well other countries and organizations for emergency assistance.

These public statements by governmental officials raise the questions whether authorities were unaware about the risk and unprepared.

Mauritius was prepared

A look into the archives reveals that the government was anything but unprepared. The opposite seems to believe that was the case. It shows that until the disaster, Mauritius was the 'poster' boy of regional oil spill preven-

tion.

Mauritius was one of the first African countries to finalize in 1990 an oil spill contingency plan with support from the International Maritime Organization and the UN Environmental Programme.

Between 1998 and 2003, Mauritius was one of the beneficiaries of the 'Western Indian Ocean Island Oil Spill Contingency Planning' project, funded with 4 million US\$ and run by the World Bank. Through the assistance of the project, the government updated the national contingency plan. Workshops and training were conducted, and a regional agreement signed.

The 'Marine Highway Development and Prevention Project' running from 2007 to 2012 continued this work. Funded by the Global Environmental Facility with 11 million US\$, the country received more training in oil spill prevention and reviewed the plan. After the end of this project Mauritius received training under the UNEP's Regional Seas Programme and the Nairobi Convention.

In addition, the country is also one of the main beneficiaries of the MASE project of the European Union under which maritime security structures are developed for the region.

As part of these projects, between 2003 and 2012, the country held five larger exercises and drills on oil spill prevention. Moreover, Mauritius had plans to conduct an exercise later this year.

In short, the country benefited from quite substantial capacity building assistance by the United Nations family and other actors. Governmental representatives regularly participated in workshops and conducted training exercises.

Level of Preparedness

Only some months before the disaster occurred, governmental officials attended a workshop on the theme. In March 2020 the UN Environmental Programme organised the workshop on 'Cooperation in preparedness and response to marine pollution incidents' in Zanzibar.

As the records show, representatives from the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Fisheries of Mauritius attended. They gave a presentation on the country's "national oil spill preparedness status".

The records of the meeting reveal, first, that officials were very well aware that the country is at a high risk of oil spills due to the vicinity of one of the world's busiest shipping routes. Second, it documents that the country had a range of sophisticated planning, response and disaster assessment tools.

Third, the Mauritian officials highlighted that not all elements of the strategy were very practical, and that some components of it were missing, such as a wildlife response plan.

The presenters emphasized that regional cooperation was not working very well, and that the country has too "limited resources in terms of funds and human capacity".

Earlier incidents

In disaster response, a good plan is not enough. Practical experience matters. Did Mauritian authorities encounter any real life incidents? While not necessarily at the scale of the MV Wakashio incident, authorities had to deal with two major cases in the past years.

In April 2005 a collision occurred off Port Louis

between the MSC Katie and the MV Nordsun. The MSC Katie sustained cracks and was grounded on a reef to avoid sinking. Mauritian authorities successfully prevented an oil spill.

An incident that was very similar to the grounding of the MV Wakashio occurred in June 2016. The MV Benita went aground not too far from the site of the current oil spill.

While the vessel was damaged, a salvage company was quick on site. The contractors pumped the fuel out of the vessel, and only a very minor spill occurred. The company tugged the MV Benita away to India. On route the vessel sank.

As a result, Mauritius was not only aware of the risk and had elaborated planning tools, authorities also had experience with incidents of this kind.

Is this the explanation why the Minister of Environment was so confident that all was under control? It is likely to be the case.

The Mauritius oil spill tells us what can happen even if you are well prepared. Planning does not always go as intended. Capacity building and training has its limits.

A public inquiry: Questions to ask

Mauritius will need to launch a public inquiry into the accident. The investigation will certainly establish that the government's response was not perfect. It will identify areas in which the agencies could have performed better.

First, the authorities had stocked an insufficient amount of containment equipment such as booms. The response had to wait for equipment to arrive or rely on the improvised devices made by volunteers.

Second, was the right salvage company chosen and did the Dutch experts have the right strategy? The ship owner Nagashiki Shipping contracted the company. Yet, it is important to know how the experts cooperated and coordinated with the coast guard and the government overall.

A third major question concerns whether maritime situational awareness could have detected the ship early on. Better maritime surveillance might have recognized the ship earlier. We need to know if the disaster could have been prevented by a coastguard interception.

Finally, the regional dimension needs to be looked at. Why did the regional mechanisms for maritime security and environmental disaster developed in the diverse capacity building projects had no role at all in the response? Would it have made a difference if the government relied on the expertise of organizations such as the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Center?

Learning these lessons will help other countries to prepare for and prevent the next disaster. Moreover, the lessons might lead to a better integration of Maritime security and environmental efforts in capacity building. Perhaps they will even assist in building a less fragmented regional architecture in the Western Indian Ocean.

Professor Christian Bueger is the director of SAFE SEAS and a professor of International Relations at the University of Copenhagen. He has been studying issues of maritime security, counter-piracy operations, capacity building and maritime domain awareness since 2010 and has widely published in the area. He is also the principal investigator of the Lessons Learned Consortium of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia.



Photo: European Space Agency



Passengers seen arriving at Terminal 3, Dubai International Airport as Dubai reopens International travel for tourists and residents. 6th August 2020 Photo: Ahmed Ramzan/ Gulf News

Dubai is back on tourism map with dramatic increase in travellers

Dubai Airport has witnessed a dramatic increase in travellers as the emirate reopened its doors to tourists on July 7.

Brigadier Talal Ahmad Al Shanqiti, general director assistant of Ports Affairs in GDRFA-Dubai, said that when His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, took a decision to welcome back tourists, the airport witnessed a massive increase in travellers.

"It's been a month since the order was issued to open borders for tourists. They trust the safety measures in the country. Tourists who arrive will talk about their experience to others and we expect more to come," Brig Al Shanqiti told Gulf News. "Facilitating the airport procedures helped to reduce the time on travellers."

Brigadier Al Shanqiti said that GDRFA-Dubai has set up 15 counters to complete the visitors procedures in order to make the travel smoother. "Every day we have more than 20,000 travellers through the airport. Majority of travellers are tourists as well as residents travelling in and out the country."

He said that wearing masks have become a habit in UAE and that has helped increase number of tourists. "We expect by November, the peak numbers will be similar to those of 2019," he added.

International delegations

Dubai Airports has received international delegations to check the operation at the airport after easing travel movement around the world. "UAE has taken the lead in opening the airports by taking all precautionary measures to curb the pandemic. UAE has dealt with the pandemic with priority and the results have been positive. Dubai Airports was a pioneer in operating and returning to flying," Brig Al Shanqiti added.

"International delegations inspected the airport and they were impressed with the measures."

Happy tourists

During Gulf News' exclusive visit to the airport, many tourists looked happy to arrive safely to the airport to start their vacation in Dubai.

"I'm here for a holiday to get a nice get away. The airport's procedure is smooth and they greeted me with welcome to Dubai sticker. I know what I'm expecting in Dubai," Robby Thompson, a British tourist, told Gulf News.

For Oumayma Cheikh, who arrived from France, safety measures are key factor to attract tourists back to the city. "It's my first visit to Dubai. I planned to come to the city in March but I couldn't because of coronavirus. I have friends here and wanted to go back to my normal life after the quarantine at home," Cheikh said.

Coronavirus: African innovations to help tackle Covid-19

As Africa passes more than a million confirmed Covid-19 cases, innovators on the continent have responded to the challenges of the pandemic with a wide range of creative inventions. Here are 10 picked out by BBC.

1. 'Doctor Car' robot

Students from the Dakar Polytechnic School in Senegal have built a multifunctional robot designed to lower the risk of Covid-19 contamination from patients to caregivers.

The device is equipped with cameras and is remotely controlled via an app. The designers say it can move around the rooms of quarantined patients to take their temperatures and deliver drugs and food.

2. Automatic hand-washing machine

Nine-year-old Kenyan schoolboy Stephen Wamukota invented a wooden hand-washing machine to help curb the spread of coronavirus.

The machine allows users to tip a bucket of water to wash their hands by using a foot pedal. This helps users avoid touching surfaces to reduce the risk of infection.

3. The Respire-19 portable ventilator

Amid a shortage of ventilators on Covid-19 wards in Nigeria, 20-year-old engineering student Usman Dalhatu attempted to help meet the shortfall.

Dalhatu built the portable automatic ventilator to help people with respiratory problems - often a symptom of a severe coronavirus infection. He now plans to build up to 20 ventilators.

4. 3D mask printing

Natalie Raphil is the founder of Artificial Intelligence company Robots Can Think South Africa.

She's using 3D printers to produce 100 masks a day for use in some of Johannesburg's major hospitals. South Africa accounts for around half of all reported coronavirus cases in Africa.



Usman Dalhatu says he's awaiting approval for his ventilator. Photo - Instagram / Usman Dalhatu

5. Solar-powered hand-washing sink

Amid a lockdown in Ghana aimed at curbing the spread of Covid-19, shoemaker Richard Kwarteng and his brother Jude Osei decided to design a solar-powered hand-washing basin.

When hands come into contact with a sensor on the device, soapy water is automatically released. An alarm goes off after 25 seconds of hand-washing - within the timescale recommended by the World Health Organization.

6. Web-based X-ray lung scans

Engineers in Tunisia have created an online platform that scans lung X-rays to try to determine if a person could be suffering from coronavirus.

When an X-ray is uploaded onto the platform, it runs a test to detect signs of a possible coronavirus infection. Researchers at the National Institute of Applied Science and Technology in Tunis say the tool is 90% effective in indicating the probability of infection.

The platform is still in development, but thousands of lung X-rays have been fed into the system to enable it to recognise the impact of Covid-19 on lungs.

Pentagon to set up new unit to investigate UFOs

The Pentagon said Friday it was setting up a new task force under the US Navy to investigate UFO sightings.

With the creation of the Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Task Force (UAPTF), the Defense Department hopes "to improve its understanding of, and gain insight into, the nature and origins of UAPs," spokeswoman Susan Gough said in a statement.

Rather than little green alien invaders, the US military is actually concerned about "unidentified aerial phenomena" connected with its terrestrial adversaries, reports Agence France-Presse.

Washington is particularly concerned about China's spying capabilities, using drones or other airborne means.

"The mission of the task force is to detect, analyze and catalog UAPs that could potentially pose a threat to US national security," Gough said.

The Pentagon take "any incursions by unauthorized aircraft into our training ranges or designated airspace very seriously and examine each report,"

she said.

"This includes examinations of incursions that are initially reported as UAP when the observer cannot immediately identify what he or she is observing."

The announcement of a new task force comes after the Pentagon in April officially released three videos taken by US Navy pilots showing mid-air encounters with what appear to be UFOs.

The grainy black and white footage had previously been leaked and the Navy had acknowledged they were Navy videos.

One of the videos was shot in November 2004 and the other two in January 2015.

In one, the weapons-sensor operator appears to lose lock on a rapidly moving oblong object which seconds later suddenly accelerates away to the left and out of view.

In another video tracking an object above the clouds, one pilot wonders if it is a drone.

Indian tricolour hoisted for first time at Times Square in New York in historic celebration of Independence Day

For the first time, the tricolour was hoisted at the iconic Times Square in New York on Saturday to celebrate India's 74th Independence Day.

India's Consul General in New York, Randhir Jaiswal hoisted the Indian flag during a special commemoration of the Independence Day at Times Square, organised by the Federation of Indian Associations (FIA), the leading umbrella diaspora organisation in the US, reports Press Trust of India.

Deputy Consul General Shatrughna Sinha, FIA Chairman Ankur Vaidya, FIA veteran and prominent Indian-American physician Sudhir Parikh, renowned entrepreneur, philanthropist and community leader H R Shah, former FIA Presidents Alok Kumar and Srujal Parikh and other senior officials from the organisation and other community groups were joined by a large number of people from the Indian diaspora for the commemoration.

Addressing the gathering, Jaiswal said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has outlined India's way forward and the aspirations to build a new India, and "we are committed to taking our country forward on the basis of those aspirations".

Jaiswal added that the celebration of India's



The Federation of Indian Associations of Tristate held the first ever Indian Independence Day flag hoisting ceremony at Times Square Aug. 15, 2020. Consul General of India in New York Randhir Kumar Jaiswal, hoisted the flag. Photo courtesy FIA

Independence Day "is as much a celebration of friendship with this beautiful country".

He lauded the FIA for organising the "historic event" when the Indian flag was unfurled for the first time in Times Square.

Vaidya said with the unfurling of the tricolour at Times

Square, history has been created.

A large number of people, dressed in traditional Indian clothes and wearing masks, joined the celebration.

Waving the Indian and American flags, the people shouted slogans of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai', 'Vande Mataram' and 'Jai Hind'.

The American national anthem was sung, followed by the unfurling of the Indian flag and the singing of the Indian National Anthem.

The crowd erupted in huge cheers and applause as the Indian tricolour was hoisted in the heart of Times Square, alongside the American flag, commenting that it was indeed a proud and historic moment for all.

Established in 1970, the FIA is among the largest umbrella diaspora organisations. The FIA annually organises its flagship event - the India Day Parade to mark India's Independence Day in August.

Top US political leaders, lawmakers as well as prominent members of the Indian-American community and celebrities from India have participated in the annual parade that draws a crowd of thousands in the heart of Manhattan each year. This year however the parade will not be held due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Controversial US naval base at Diego Garcia hit with massive damage claims



In a press release sent by Dr Jonathan Levy, Attorney & Solicitor, Chagossians who were forcibly deported, are now "seeking justice after the UN ruling in their favour". They are claiming damages of up to \$100,000 each under the US Foreign Claims Act which requires the US Military to set up claims commissions to handle damage claims by foreign citizens.

According to the complaint, "the British have stubbornly refused to permit the Chagossians to resettle the Chagos Archipelago due to the presence of the US naval base at Diego Garcia". The Chagossians have been denied access to their homes for over 50 years even though

the UN recognizes their right to resettlement.

The Chagossians' lawyer, Dr Jonathan Levy, notes: "The damage claims are quite reasonable given the intense sufferings of the Chagossians who as a people were utterly devastated by their deportation. Even though there are several thousand Chagossians, their claims are capped at \$100,000 each. The comparable US base at Camp Lemonier, Djibouti, costs the United States approximately \$70 million per year to lease, the Chagossians (...) are seeking only a small fraction of the back rent."

The Chagos Archipelago is best known for the secretive US naval base on Diego Garcia Atoll but according to the UN and its International Court of Justice, the forced deportation of its residents 50 years ago by the British government to make way for a US naval base was a serious crime.

The United Nations General Assembly, African Union, and International Court of Justice have found that Britain's deportation of the Chagos Islanders a generation ago and continued military occupation of the Chagos Archipelago (the so-called British Indian Ocean Territory) is unlawful and a serious violation of international law.

What to expect as China-US trade talks resume

The US and China are due to resume trade talks in the coming days that last took place in January before tensions escalated



The two economic superpowers have been embroiled in a trade war since 2018 that has damaged the world economy.

In January both countries agreed to ease restrictions imposed on imported goods from each another.

However, relations have become increasingly strained in the last six months over a wide range of issues, reports Justin Harper of BBC News.

US President Donald Trump has clashed with China recently over two Chinese apps, TikTok and WeChat, which could be banned in the US over national security concerns.

This is the latest sticking point between Washington and Beijing; others include China's new national security law for Hong Kong, communications firm Huawei and

the origin of the coronavirus.

These clashes come on top of the already-sensitive trade relationship between the world's two biggest economies.

"Both sides will be doing a temperature check to see where things stand since January, and indeed they have a lot to talk about," Nick Marro, a global trade expert at the

Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) told the BBC.

"At the very least, we expect policymakers in Beijing to now be questioning their commitment to a trade deal that has done little to protect Chinese companies from US pressure."

While WeChat, TikTok and Huawei have all come under fire recently, the Trump administration has added dozens of Chinese companies to economic blacklists.

"The US government will take further measures to prevent US data from being stored on Cloud-based systems owned by Chinese firms as well as impacting upon the use of undersea cables connecting the US to the global internet," added Rajiv Biswas, a chief economist at London-based consultancy IHS Markit.

From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

4th Year No 144

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 10 May 1957

• *He that never thinks can never be wise. - Samuel Johnson*

Somduth Bhuckory

We thought that the campaign against **Mount Ory** was over after what had been said in the press. That is why when Hon. Koenig spoke about it on Tuesday the 16th of April in Council there was such an outburst of surprise everywhere.

So much has been said about the **Mount** that one has the feeling sometimes that a mountain is being made out of it. But the fundamental fact remains that the French language has it fearless defenders.

How the defenders take to their task may be quite a different matter. Take Hon. Koenig for example. He bandied quite a few angry words across the floor of the Council. He spoke with such vehemence, *in fact, that one would have thought that he was bent on asserting the superiority of his community.*

While all this took place, there were undertones of *Entente Cordiale*. In the fair name of the *Entente*, Hon. Koenig went so far that he sometimes sounded unreasonable and sometimes at daggers drawn with the communities that have a weakness for English.

One can understand and appreciate the love that Hon. Koenig has for the French language. What is strange in his attitude towards the English language and the intellectuals who favour it.

Hon. Koenig spoke of the *Entente Cordiale* - the Anglo-French *Entente Cordiale* of course. He seems to be caring for that *Entente* and no other. Hence his disdain for the communities which would not qualify for the narrow *Entente*.

We are all born here and we have to bury our bones here. This blatant fact does not strike Hon. Koenig at all. He is living for cordial Anglo-French relations. Whether he hurts others in trying to please a handful of people, it does not matter to him.

People of Eastern culture have been described recently as having thick skulls which would not allow Western culture to pass through. That was not enough to show their inferiority. Now Hon. Koenig has chosen to treat them as "so-called intellectuals of certain local communities."

What an untutored lot of savages European colonization has produced in Mauritius!

* * *

While Hon. Koenig tried to foster a narrow *Entente Cordiale* and to prove how the Mauritian community cannot understand English as a whole, the Labour Party passed the following resolution, among others, at its May Day meeting: "This meeting most heartily endorses the principle of the mutual respect and understanding of the language, religion and culture of the various elements which make up our Community."

Leaving aside the question as to how far the Labour Party will be able to implement that resolution, one cannot deny that it embodies the broad principle on which a true *entente* will rest.

Our aim today is to lay emphasis on "the mutual respect and understanding" concerning the languages of our various communities.

Entente Cordiale

Anthony Greenwood, Jules Koenig, Gaëtan Duval and Raymond Devienne at Lancaster House on September 7, 1965

Two points emerge distinctly from the speech of Hon. Koenig: the English language is not generally understood in Mauritius, and the intellectuals who favour English are half-baked.

After nearly a century and a half of British occupation of this island, that is the position of the English language. One must not be an ardent supporter of any *Entente Cordiale* to say that the teaching of English in Mauritius deserves careful attention. English is the official language of the colony and yet it is forcefully said that the people cannot understand a communiqué broadcast by the M.B.S. to the effect that water must be boiled before drinking.

Hon. Koenig may have been perfectly entitled to criticize the authorities for giving information in a language which he considered to be Greek to the bulk of the population. BUT - to use the forceful one which Hon. Koenig so often uses - was he entitled to drag in supporters of the English language so mercilessly?

In trying to make his point Hon. Koenig said: "Whatever we may read in certain local papers about certain intellectuals belonging to certain communities who only speak English, not the British born, Sir, I am not alluding to them but certain members of local communities who pretend to speak only English, we all know that the bulk of the population does not understand English." Hon. Koenig, went on: "It is a great pity - I will not say the Central Administration - certain departments should seem to support the view of these so-called intellectuals of certain local communities in giving these communiqués only in English."

* * *

In spite of the shortcomings of Hon. Koenig - including his valiant thrust at the so-called intellectuals with whom we may be

identified - Hon. Koenig stands as a doughty champion of his language. He would fight for it at any cost. He would even walk into the footsteps of Hon. Bissoondoyal, which lead to the jail of Beau Bassin.

Anybody who feels so strongly for his language must, we believe, understand the feelings of Hindus, Muslims and Chinese concerning their languages. When these people fight for their languages, they only claim to be treated fairly. Let nobody call them communalists!

And this brings us to the teaching of Oriental Languages in our primary schools.

In 1950 a batch of students was trained to teach Oriental Languages but it was only in 1954 that most of them were employed.

In the Budget from 1954-55 we find the following:

- For the years 1954-55 & 1955-56 ... 70 teachers of Oriental Languages.
- For the years 1956-57 & 1957-58 ... 95 teachers of Oriental Languages.

How does this compare with the increase in the general staff?

For the year 1956-57	For the year 1957-58
95	107 Head Teachers
190	226 1st Class Teachers
874	1090 2nd Class Teachers
425	566 3rd Class Teachers

Out of a total of about 100,000 school population, it is estimated that 60,000 children are children whose mother tongues are Oriental Languages. At the beginning of this year about 24,000 children were admitted and next year there will be fresh admissions. And yet the number of Oriental Language teachers remains the same.

We are of opinion that Oriental Languages are not receiving the consideration they deserve in schools. Now that the Budget is being discussed, we appeal to our M.L.Cs. - including Hon. Koenig - to see to it that the number of Oriental Language teachers is increased at least by twenty-five this year.

It is by speaking in one voice on this clear issue that our M.L.Cs. can foster real *entente cordiale* in this colony - an *entente cordiale* that will be a prelude to peaceful co-existence.

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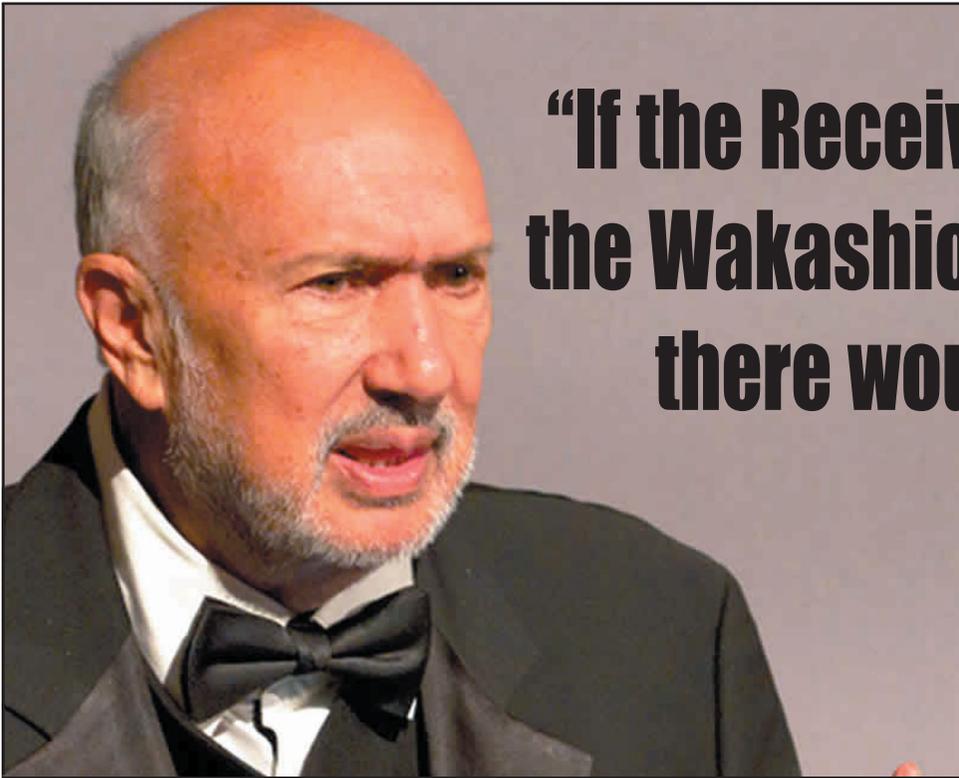
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Dr Michael Atchia

“If the Receiver of Wrecks had taken over the Wakashio the morning after the wreck, there would have been no oil spill”



Preparedness is the key, says Dr Michael Atchia in today's interview, to dealing with crises as and when they occur. “Like we are adequately prepared for Class 4 cyclones,” he says, so must we be when it comes to a major oil spill, especially so since Mauritius is equipped with a National Oil Spill Plan since the late 80s, elaborated by UNEP in collaboration with IMO, at the request of the Government of Mauritius, “which should have been implemented and regularly updated” as well as conducting “regular oil-spill drills which would have enabled the country to deal with the Wakashio case easily”.

Michael Atchia is the former chief and programme director with the United Nations Environment Programme. He has been a pioneering specialist in the field of sustainable development and has worked internationally in educational reform, international and regional environmental project management and conflict resolution, environmental education and curriculum development.

Mauritius Times: What are the lessons do you think the country and the authorities should learn from the shipwreck of MV Wakashio on 25 July 2020 off Pointe d'Esny, and the subsequent oil spill 12 days later?

Dr Michael Atchia: Preparedness is the key. Like we are adequately prepared for Class 4 cyclones, but are **not**, for example, equipped to deal with pandemics, war/terrorist attack, financial crash, tsunami/volcanic eruption, or a major oil spill. But we are a resilient and disciplined nation; the proof is how we took measures which everybody applied, to become a CV-19 free country. A solid achievement indeed.

Can we maintain this as we bathe in success and at all levels relax and take it easy? (another characteristic of Mauritians!). Another aspect of decision making at top level in a crisis situation is to have experienced ministers heading key ministries (unlike Maudhoo, Ramano or Balgobin). I am all for new blood in government, but then considering such an arrangement as Minister Mentor (successfully done in the case of a new young PM, with the experienced SAJ as mentor)? Or

again my suggestion some time back of a shadow cabinet with a counterpart from the opposition (had suggested Bhagwan a former Minister of Environment as shadow Minister to Ramano).

Part of preparedness, for crises, (take the lesson of all previous events) is that disaster does **not** come with prior warning!

Specifically, on oil spills: In 1986, the Government of Mauritius approached the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) with a request for assistance in the development

“Our human resources, a superb characteristic of Mauritius, come out so clearly in moments of crisis. Voluntarily, in solidarity. I would much prefer to be here in a crisis than let's say in Nigeria, Iraq or Panama, to mention but three countries. We could even enter this as a character of Mauritius in our Social Studies manuals...”

of a national oil spill contingency plan for Mauritius. This National Oil Spill Plan of 1987 was elaborated by UNEP (which I joined in 1986 as Chief of EE), in collaboration with IMO, at the request of the Government of Mauritius. It is a detailed 100-page plan, which should have been implemented and regularly updated. It required conduct of regular oil-spill drills (like you conduct fire drills) which would have enabled the country to deal with the Wakashio case easily.

The plan also included how to:

- determine the legal authority requirements for the implementation of an oil spill contingency plan;
- determine the shoreline sensitivities for all geomorphic coastal segments;
- review the known sensitive biological coastal resources;
- review the socio-economic coastal resources;
- develop an environmental sensitivity atlas for Mauritius at a scale of 1:25,000,
- indicating priority areas for spill response and preferred cleanup methods;
- determine the available equipment for oil spill cleanup operations;
- recommend mitigation techniques for the preservation of birds and vegetation;
- recommend methods of the disposal of oily wastes;
- conduct a three-day seminar to discuss the implementation of the recommended contingency plan; and
- conduct a spill drill to test the response to a simulated spill.

The mission was undertaken in 1987 in consultation with local officials and national institutions to ensure that proper consideration was given to local and national problems and priorities in drafting the national oil spill contingency plan.

An update of this UN plan and its implementation is obviously recommended.

In short if the Receiver of Wrecks of the Port had taken over the Wakashio the morning after the wreck (26th July), and started the pumping of oil in earnest with the ship surrounded by booms, there would have been **no oil spill**. The 12-day wait for action was to say the least, gross

negligence, wrong decision-taking. What if it was an asteroid approaching the earth due to fall in the Indian Ocean? Or a 200,000-capacity oil tanker (like some which regularly pass close to us on the Asia/Africa shipping route) adrift near our coast?

Another aspect of preparedness: What is true for air traffic control was lacking for the naval counterpart: how come a large ship can approach and enter our waters (our territory) without permission, no reply, no change of route, without our knowledge and no immediate action such as a helicopter sent out to the ship?

“Science and technology have NO frontiers even more so in this digital age, even more so in this era of confinement where online conferencing has become current. Never has exchange of expertise, project and ideas been so widespread. Mauritius, together with its scientists, researchers and experts, participates fully in these exchanges. My experience with the Tertiary Education Commission points to the fact that we are well on the way with the 55 or so Universities or University antennae operating here to build such a hub of expertise in science, medicine, engineering, etc...”

* There have been lots of rumours and conspiracy theories doing the round since the spillage started, and it is clearly not possible to get to the bottom of what went wrong unless and until an inquiry is conducted into the circumstances that led to the shipwreck. Wouldn't it serve the interests of the government itself, which has been criticised for its management of this crisis, to come clean and tell the people about what it had been doing since the day the ship ran aground?

100% YES! We all await and need the conclusion of that (crucially independent) court of enquiry which the Government has rightly set up to shed light on the circumstances that led to the shipwreck.

☞ Cont. on page 9

'The 12-day wait for action was to say the least, gross negligence, wrong decision-taking'

Cont. from page 8

Including the mystery hidden in the black box of the ship and the mystery of the people who may have disembarked from the lifeboats left in Blue Bay that 25th July morning: Who were they? How many men? Coming for what purpose: terrorism? Illegal immigration? Covid positive Mauritians, unable to get aboard planes, trying to return? If so, could these become a source of reinfection for our Covid-free island? At this stage, these are only questions.

*** We have seen scores of experts and salvage crews flown into the country to assist the authorities with the clean-up operations of the environment and the pumping of the oil out of the tanks of the stranded cargo ship. Why is it that we have to date been unable to reduce our dependence on foreign expertise and to equip our institutions with the local experts necessary for the country's vital economic sectors?**

“Do you know that we have a retired IMO Senior staff in Mauritius whose assistance in this Wakashio case would have been vital? A major neglect also is that of local people and their on-the-ground knowledge of the environment. Take the case of the indigenous people of the Amazon for knowledge of medicinal plants, or the fishermen of Mahebourg for their knowledge of coral reefs and currents...”

I am well placed to answer that question: as a previous Director at UNEP I had to deal with requests from member states for assistance in specific environmental fields. So from our extensive data of available experts we would contact, hire and send (when available, the best one often not available at the time) to the situation concerned. No country has expertise in all fields, so the 'exchange' is a good practice either done bilaterally or with UN assistance. Take an example: dozens of agencies responded to the situation in Rwanda after the genocide of 1993 and the coordination of action was vital: who does what, who provides what, always in close link with the local authorities which in this case was literally absent.

A major fault in a country requesting help has often been neglect of its own available expertise. A new initiative from our Academy of Science and Technology (MAST) in July 2020 has been to set up a

register of such available expertise, often from ex-UN cadres, private sector experience, etc. Already Government uses such expertise in fields such as research, radiation, environment, transport, health, agriculture but clearly insufficiently. Do you know that we have a retired IMO Senior staff in Mauritius whose assistance in this Wakashio case would have been vital? A major neglect also is that of local people and their on-the-ground knowledge of the environment. Take the case of the indigenous people of the Amazon for knowledge of medicinal plants, or the fishermen of Mahebourg for their knowledge of coral reefs and currents.

*** Given our overdependence on foreign experts, we really do not have to date the means and capacity to realise our ambitions to develop an education or medical or whatever hubs politicians have been talking about down the years, isn't it? The knowhow will have to be imported, right?**

Science and technology have NO frontiers, even more so in this digital age, even more so in this era of confinement where online conferencing has become current. Never has exchange of expertise, project and ideas been so widespread. Mauritius, together with its scientists, researchers and experts, participates fully in these exchanges. My experience with the Tertiary Education Commission (whose programme committee I have chaired for 5 years, 2015-2020) points to the fact that we are well on the way with the 55 or so Universities or University antennae operating here to build such a hub of expertise in science, medicine, engineering, etc. Now that the Higher Education Commission has replaced the Tertiary Education Commission with a wider mandate, this objective remains fully achievable.

*** You have been involved with the education sector for over 50 years and you were chairperson of the Mauritius Research Council at one time. Tell us how did you react to the latest ranking scored by our national university on the African continent?**

The 55 or so Universities or University antennae operating here including the public universities (UOM, UTM, OU, MIE, UdM, MGI) are doing well at, of course, different levels of achievement, innovation, quality, teaching and research.

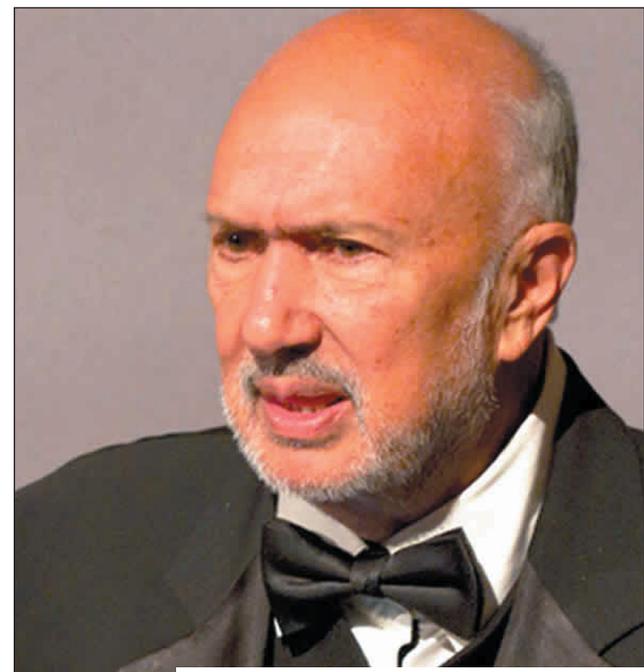
*** Our human resources constitute a significant asset for the country. What's your assessment of the management of this asset presently and in view of challenges ahead?**

Our human resources, a superb characteristic of Mauritius, come out so clearly in moments of crisis. Voluntarily, in soli-

arity. I would much prefer to be here in a crisis than let's say in Nigeria, Iraq or Panama, to mention but three countries. We could even enter this as a character of Mauritius in our Social Studies manuals. Take 4 examples:

- During the last two years of the Second World War (1944-45), when provision of basic food was missing (rice, flour, etc.), there was a tremendous movement of solidarity and action to grow sweet potatoes, cassava, maize, etc., and share the harvest;
 - In 1960. After the destruction caused by Cyclone Carol we created the movement of *Compagnons Bâisseurs* and for 3 to 6 months the young and older volunteers helped rebuild damaged and destroyed houses. I personally spent 3 months of my life on sites as a volunteer builder! Such a drive once started does not die!
 - In 1968, after the *bagarres raciales*, there was solidarity from numerous Mauritians to relodge displaced people and specially do the reconciliation. For me, once again, another 3 months spent between Plaine Verte and Cité Richelieu!
 - And in 2020 this magnificent movement of solidarity to construct artisanal brooms, clean-up fuel, a real and magnificent ecological awakening of the population. The Wakashio has been, as some have said "*un mal pour un bien*". We introduced Environmental Studies in our school curricula as early as 1977; this, plus the positive action by NGOs and these voluntary citizens actions auger well for the future of our islands' environment!
- * Speaking of the environment, a lot has said about the need for investing in the green economy as well as in green tourism in view of global warming and the attendant risks of rising sea levels to our tourism industry. Do you think there is more to our island than 'sun, sea and sand' and that Mauritius has the potential to develop a green destination tourism industry?**

Yes indeed, both a green destination and a medical hub, both a university studies hub and a conference venue. Take the attraction of the Medine Campus to cite but one example, where the tropical garden setting, pleasant living also lead



“In 1986, the Government of Mauritius approached the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) with a request for assistance in the development of a national oil spill contingency plan for Mauritius. This National Oil Spill Plan of 1987 was elaborated by UNEP, in collaboration with IMO, at the request of the Government of Mauritius. It is a detailed 100-page plan, which should have been implemented and regularly updated...”

you to obtaining the same top French degree as obtainable in the parent university.

*** In the meantime, 'sun, sea, sand and Covid-free' might also constitute a unique selling point for the Mauritius destination?**

Indeed, including the sympathy over the oil spill!

*** Mauritius' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) extends over an area of about 2.3 million Km². The exercise of our rights over the EEZ means that the country will have access to potentially vast natural and mineral resources in years to come. What's hampering progress in developing the much-talked about blue economy?**

Still a long way to go, from the points of view of protection, exploration, exploitation. In the meantime, some of the resources are being fished out by other nations. We need a Ministry for EEZ and Continental Shelf Resources!

How Mauritians in Canada are trying to help their island community recover from massive oil spill

'I know for sure this is going to be impacting the economy and the environment,' one resident says



Joy Nursiah — a Canadian who was born in Mauritius — remembers the devastation she felt when she saw the usually stunning turquoise waters of her homeland stained black and brown.

In late July, a Japanese-owned ship ran aground off Mauritius and began leaking oil. Soon, the oil spill had become so large it was visible from space.

"I feel sad for my country," Nursiah the Mississauga resident told CBC News.

"I know for sure this is going to be impacting the economy and the environment and we highly depend on the Mauritian environment for tourism, which is our biggest export."

Nursiah no longer lives in Mauritius, but she knew she had to do something to help.

So she decided to collaborate with other Mauritians in the GTA to raise funds to help with the huge clean-up

effort and help restore the biodiversity hotspot where more than 1,000 tonnes of fuel have leaked.

Nursiah launched a Facebook group called WAKASHIO-Oil Spill-Canada, which she says it is working with non-profits including EcoSud, Sovlanatir and Lagon Blue.

The hope is to raise enough funds to purchase bio microorganisms that would help with breaking down oil in areas where manual clean-up is impossible.

"We're hoping to get funding as well for a coral reef plantation and conservation," Nursiah said.

"We're currently trying to [communicate] with NGOs [in Mauritius] to find out what supplies they need the most and we're hosting fundraisers for PPEs, for waterproof full body suits and masks," Nursiah said, adding volunteers doing clean-up are being exposed to toxic crude-oil.

"The focus is moving more towards clean-up around the animals and the wild life — more like replanting [and] conservation," Nursiah explained.

Mauritian waters are extraordinarily rich in biodiversity, thanks to an abundance of coral reefs, seagrasses and mangroves.

According to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the island's marine environment is home to 1,700 species including around 800 types of fish, 17 kinds of marine mammals and two species of turtles.

Muritians uniting across Canada to help

Like Nursiah, Pamela Pakium, president of the Ottawa chapter of the Canada Mauritius Cultural Association, has also been mobilizing fundraisers.

Pakium said she is reaching out to CMCA's in each province to consolidate their efforts.

Initially, they were hoping to purchase a skimmer, but they have since been advised it's no longer needed. Instead they're looking at a longer-term project focused on preserving marine life.

Pakium said various Mauritius-based NGOs will be asked to submit a technical sheet detailing the project plan.

"We are going to choose three different universities here in Canada to help us vet which projects we should associate with," she said.

"The three different universities have their own marine biology programs, so the professors would be able to help us assess the technicality of the project and the viability of each and every project.

Then, she said, the Mauritian community in Canada will be able to vote on the three projects.

"And whichever wins that competition we are going to put the funding towards that," Pakium said.

'Tourism is one of the pillars of our economy'

Many Mauritians, including fishermen, need the ocean for daily living, Pakium says.

Beyond that, she points to the importance of tourism to the Mauritian economy.

"Tourism is one of the pillars of our economy, so obviously if we are not able to get the marine life back, tourism obviously is going to decrease," she told CBC News.

"The fishermen won't be able to have a living and the population in itself will be very sad and very depressed. For a Mauritian, going to the beach every weekend is an activity or a hobby, so they look forward to that."

Fundraising in the time of Covid-19

Nursiah says she's aware it's a strange time to be trying to raise money given the global pandemic underway.

But given the extraordinary circumstances, she says she had no choice but to try to help.

She's also hoping others will pitch in once more people become aware of the magnitude of the oil spill.

"Personally, I'm very, very de-



Volunteers work to clean up an oil spill after a Japanese ship spilled an estimated 1,000 tonnes of its 4,000 tonnes of oil into the sea, fouling the coastline of Mauritius, including a protected wetlands area. (Submitted by Joy Nursiah)

icated to this movement, but as I'm fundraising and spreading awareness, I have to take into consideration that not everyone is going to be as involved as I am, especially because it's a problem directly, personally to me," she said.

"So it has been difficult, especially since not everyone is aware of what's happening and with everything happening around in the world."

Environmental group Greenpeace Africa warned that the consequences of the oil spill may be lasting, with some experts saying the impact is likely to remain for years.

Desmond Brown - CBC News



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State of democracy in Africa: changing leaders doesn't change politics

● Cont. from page 2

It also includes Zimbabwe, where the transfer of power from Robert Mugabe to Emmerson Mnangagwa was accompanied by promises that the Zanu-PF government would show greater respect for democratic norms and values in future.

Sierra Leone also recorded a significant improvement in performance following the victory of opposition candidate Julius Maada Bio in the presidential election of 2018. Nigeria has continued to make modest but significant gains in economic management since Muhammadu Buhari replaced Goodluck Jonathan as president in 2015.

The significance of leadership change in all of these processes is an important reminder of the extent to which power has been personalised. But it is important to note that events since the end of the period under review in 2019 have cast doubt on the significance of these transitions.

Most notably, continued and in some cases increasing human rights abuses in countries such as Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zimbabwe suggest that we have seen "a changing of the guards" but not a change of political systems.

Nowhere is this more true than Zimbabwe, where the last few weeks have witnessed a brutal government crackdown. Not only have journalists been arrested on flimsy charges, but the rule of law has been manipulated to keep them in jail. Following this sustained attack on democracy,

it is now clear that the Mnangagwa government is no more committed to human rights and civil liberties than its predecessor was.

There is no one 'Africa'

So what does the future hold? I often get asked what direction Africa is heading in. My answer is always the same: where democracy is concerned, there is no one "Africa". The Bertelsmann Transformation Index report shows how true this is.

In addition to the well-known differences between leading lights like Botswana and entrenched laggards like Rwanda, there is also a profound regional variation that is less well recognised and understood.

From relatively similar starting points in the early 1990s, there has been a sharp divergence between West and Southern Africa – which have remained comparatively more open and democratic – and Central and Eastern Africa, which remained more closed and authoritarian. There is also some evidence that the average quality of democracy continued to decline in Eastern and Central Africa in the past few years. Because it continues to increase in West Africa, we have seen greater divergence between the two sets of regions.

These variations reflect the historical process through which governments came to power, the kinds of states over which they govern, and the disposition and influence of regional organisations. In particular, East Africa features a

number of countries ruled by former rebel armies (Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda). Here political control is underpinned by coercion and a longstanding suspicion of opposition.

This is also a challenge in some Central African states. Here the added complication of long-running conflicts and political instability (Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo) has undermined government performance in many ways.

A number of former military leaders have also governed West African states, including Ghana, Nigeria and Togo. But the proportion has been lower and some countries, such as Senegal, have a long tradition of plural politics and civilian leadership. In a similar vein, Southern Africa features a number of liberation movements. But in a number of cases these developed out of broad-based movements that valued political participation and civil liberties. Partly as a result, former military or rebel leaders have had a less damaging impact on the prospects for democracy in Southern and West Africa.

It is important not to exaggerate these regional differences. There is great variation within them as well as between them. But, this caveat notwithstanding, we should not expect to see any convergence around a common African democratic experience in the next few years. If anything, the gap between the continent's most democratic and authoritarian regions is likely to become even wider.

Ganesh Chaturthi 2020

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PROGRAMME

Saturday, 22 August 2020: 8-9 am - Ganesh Pooja (Mandir) & Murthi Sthapan & Pooja Vidhi
Whole night Pooja - Aarti - Bhajans - Kirtans - Drama - Jhakri Groups

Sunday, 23 August 2020: 11 am - Maha Yagna & Aarti

1pm: Procession will leave Mandir to Flic en Flac beach for Visarjan
Maha Prashad will be served on both days

Officiating Priest:
Acharya Prafull Dave Ji
Managing Committee
BSMS



COMMUNIQUE

MRA BLOOD DONATION 2020

To mark the 14th anniversary of the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA), a Blood Donation will be organised on **Wednesday 19 August, 2020 from 08h00 to 17h00** at the following locations:

- **MRA Head Office, Eham court, Cnr. Sir Virgil Naz & Mgr. Gonin Streets, Port Louis**
- **Custom House, Mer Rouge**
- **PATS Freight Forwarders Centre, Old Airport Road, Plaine Magnien, and**
- **SSR International Airport**

The public is hereby informed that all operational activities will run normally and services will be provided as usual.

The MRA appeals to the indulgence and kind understanding of its stakeholders, should the workflow be slightly affected as a result of this event.

Moreover, members of the public, eligible to donate blood, are kindly invited to participate in this noble cause.

MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY

15 August 2020

Eham 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



Why a Honduran bridge is a perfect metaphor for disruption

-- Brett Munster, Medium.com

If you haven't heard the story of the Choluteca Bridge in Honduras, you are probably not alone. I hadn't heard of the bridge until recently, but after hearing the story, it occurred to me that it's an excellent metaphor for the constantly changing dynamics of markets and business.

The Choluteca Bridge is a suspension bridge located in Choluteca, Honduras. Originally constructed in 1930, the bridge was rebuilt in 1996. The Honduras government, knowing the bridge was likely to face extreme weather conditions, commissioned some of the best architectural minds in the world to build a bridge that could withstand any hurricane. It was state-of-the-art at the time, providing a much-needed access point for the people of Honduras and was built to withstand the high winds and hurricanes that plagued the region.

Sure enough, in 1998, Honduras was hit by Hurricane Mitch, a category 5 storm that devastated the Caribbean. Honduras was wrecked. Roads were wiped out, there was considerable damage to buildings and every other bridge in Honduras was destroyed. However, the Choluteca Bridge stood its ground and survived in near perfect condition.

It was an amazing architectural achievement. Or, at least it should have been.

Even though the bridge stood its ground, there was one problem, the storm caused the river to carve a completely new path which no longer ran under the bridge. That's right, the Choluteca Bridge no longer stood over the river, rendering it essentially useless.

It is quite remarkable how quickly things can change. Even knowing that a hurricane would eventually hit Honduras, the designers of the bridge were still unable to anticipate future conditions under which the bridge would operate, regardless of how technologically advanced the bridge was at the time. This situation demonstrates how even the simplest of assumptions about the state of the world (the location of the river) may prove to be incorrect. The most successful innovators are able to consider how markets and behaviours will change and invalidate those assumptions.

There are some great examples throughout tech's history of the river moving from beneath the bridge. IBM was the preeminent technology company in the 80s until the



personal computer came along. The internet and its zero distribution costs disrupted every form of media including print, music, and video. But maybe the best fit for this analogy is Microsoft.

By collaborating with the early hardware manufacturers and embedding its software into their machines, Microsoft became the dominant operating system for over 20 years. The beauty of this business model was how the activities of developers, customers, and PC manufacturers all worked to create further lock in for Windows. Thus, Microsoft became the linchpin in the value chain - the Windows operating system was hardware agnostic, which made switching costs between PC manufacturers low and drove that part of the ecosystem toward commodity pricing. Microsoft held a near monopoly on PC operating systems.

Microsoft built the most successful "bridge" (Windows) in tech over one the largest, fastest growing "rivers" (the PC) in the market, and in doing so had built one of the great defensive moats in the history of business.

Then the internet hit, which dramatically reduced Windows application lock in. More importantly, the mobile wave came, which over time became capable of handling many of the capabilities of the PC but with added benefits such as geo location. As a result, the computing market shifted out from underneath Microsoft and what worked so well in the PC era, did not transfer over to the new paradigm.

What's more, Microsoft saw it coming but could not predict the forces that would dictate competition in the mobile era. It wasn't like they had their heads in the sand and dismissed mobile the way Blockbuster dismissed Netflix. Microsoft, much like the architects who built the Choluteca Bridge, recognized the threat and tried hard to build a solution. Microsoft made aggressive plays into mobile going so far as to release their own phone in 2010 and later buying Nokia.

As we all know, it didn't work. It wasn't that the people at Microsoft were incompetent or blind to the rising importance of mobile, it was the fact that Microsoft assumed that the dynamics of the mobile market would follow those of the PC market. Under that assumption, why wouldn't the Windows-centric approach help Microsoft achieve dominance in mobile? And why wouldn't they? For nearly three decades it made everything the company did possible. As Ben Thompson puts it, "Windows had the ecosystem and the lock-in, and provided the foundation for Office and Windows Server, both of which were built with the assumption of Windows at the center." [1]

The problem wasn't that they didn't recognize the threat, it was they were still operating from a Windows centric viewpoint. The real problem was the landscape had shifted and Microsoft was ill equipped and too locked in to Windows to build for that new landscape. I'm sure the Choluteca Bridge architects could sympathize.

Today, Microsoft's share of the entire computing market, which now includes smart phones, tablets, watches, and other connected devices, is in decline. It's no surprise that Microsoft's new CEO Satya Nadella has essentially forsaken Windows and is focused on building new bridges in cloud and services.

Today, Facebook, Apple, Google and Amazon seem unstoppable, much like Microsoft once did, but that's only because we can't always anticipate how the tech landscape will morph in the future, just like the bridge designers could not have predicted that the entire river would shift completely beyond the Choluteca Bridge. The best entrepreneurs know how to survey the landscape and see when the river has or is about to move right out from beneath an existing bridge. That's how startups can compete with and beat established incumbents.

[1] <https://stratechery.com/2018/the-end-of-windows/>

Today's Tip

Don't Let a Setback Drag Your Team Down

Every team experiences setbacks - the customer you didn't land, the client meeting that didn't go well. And because of our natural negativity bias, these disappointments can often overshadow what is going well. Well, the good news is that bad news doesn't have to drag you all down.

You can adopt what the leadership scholar John Gardner called "tough-minded optimism" and exhibit excitement, enthusiasm, and grit. Go out of your way to remind colleagues of the progress they're making. Celebrate small wins frequently and memorably. (There's a reason so many startups ring a bell or bang a gong every time they land a new customer.) Organize a Friday celebration to revel in the week's good news. Make it a point to emphasize - even overemphasize - good news in

order to lessen the impact of the bad.

While keeping your team excited and focused on the future, you might also have to deal with any "bad apples" - people who gossip, carry grudges, and otherwise bring the team down. Their negativity can be contagious, so it's important you coach them to change their attitude or ask them to move on.

This tip is adapted from "Don't Let Negativity Sink Your Organization," by Bill Taylor

* * *

Working parents: Bring old routines into your new normal

With schools closed and child care largely unavailable, being a working parent is more challenging than ever. How are you supposed to make it work? The good

news is you don't have to reinvent your schedule. In fact, it's better not to. Stick to old routines as much as possible. Maintaining your regular schedule will give you a firm foundation to support both your work and family responsibilities. Create a weekly calendar that lists these routines at a high level.

Next, break them down into tasks, and block off time for each one. Set boundaries around your work time, and if it's possible, assign shifts to different family members for tasks like meals, chores, and child care. Be sure to schedule breaks and unstructured time to unwind and connect with your partner and kids.

This is going to be a marathon, and it's important to prevent burnout. Building on your existing schedule, rather than starting from scratch, will help you do your best to stay productive at work and present at home.

Harvard Business Review's Management Tip

In a light vein

Wife: From the market, bring 1 packet of milk. And, if you see any lemon in the market, then bring 6.

Husband brought 6 packets of milk.

Wife: 6 packets of milk...?

Husband: Yes, I brought 6 packets, because I have seen lemons in the market.

Now tell me where is the husband wrong? If you do not believe me, then read again..

* * *

There is an increase in Covid-19 cases because there has been an increase in testing.

If more people took IQ tests, there would be a increase in idiots too.

* * *

A ship engine failed and no one could fix it, so they brought it a guy with 40 years' experience.

He inspected the engine very carefully, top to bottom.

After looking things over, the guy reached into his bag and pulled out a small hammer.

He gently tapped something. Instantly, the engine burst back into life. The engine was fixed!

Seven days later, the owner of the ship got his bill for \$10,000.

"What?" the owner said. "You hardly did anything. Send us an itemised bill."

The guy's reply stated:

"Tapping with a hammer: \$2.

"Knowing where to tap: \$9,998."

Moral: Never underestimate experience.

Conversation between two friends who have just migrated to Australia...

Zozefine: Alo my dear! What manner? Are you well?

Marzorie: Like this like that.

Zozefine: Where are you going on your thirty-one like that, hair in the wind? Did you sell your pig?

Marzorie: I tell you a secret. I am going frequenting. I told mama I am going magazines.

Zozefine: Enough! Since when do you have a pointer.

Marzorie: Since last week but rest quiet. We are joining in hide. You know how those long tongues like to make commentaries.

Zozefine: Extra that! Don't talk! Where does he rest?

Marzorie: He rests behind the bazaar after the round point in a flat with two chambers on the second stage.

Zozefine: Where did you join him?

Marzorie: I joined him at a Mauritian ball. He lifted me to dance a slow. He made sweet eyes at me and I made a colinos smile at him.

He traces very well. When he dances the sega he breaks, breaks his kidneys and does small steps, small steps. He wore an elephant leg costume which has returned in the mode with varnished shoes. He invited me to his table and offered me fried bread with apple of

love chutney and asked me if I wanted a little strong. We drank a health and then we went outside to pull a dam. Since then we have been seeing our comrade underneath, underneath.

Zozefine: How does he call?

Marzorie: He calls Zerard Beautiful heart.

Zozefine: A beautiful boy?

Marzorie: Yes, he resembles a little bit like Sacha Distel.

Zozefine: I can see he is tiring your head.

Marzorie: I husband like him!

Zozefine: Business is good, serious serious. Is marriage behind the door?

Marzorie: I am not pressed. I have to look well.

Zozefine: You have reason don't be pressed. You have to profit life and amuse yourself well before.

Marzorie: My taxi has arrived an i need to go shopping in melbourne , my car is in pane. I'm retarded, let me go. We'll join later.

Zozefine: Salam my sister, make compliments to your pointer for me.

Life's Lessons

A business man gets stranded in a lonely highway in the US. The tyres of his car get stuck badly in a mud pool.

He looks around for help and finally finds an old farmer. The businessman goes to him asking for help to get his car out of the mud.

The farmer gauges the situation, and agrees to help him and says, 'Let us take the help of Warwick, an old bull at the farm.'

The farmer ties the bull to the car and start shouting loudly, 'Fred, pull! Jack, pull! John, pull... Warwick, pull.'

As the farmer keeps shouting these words, the bull Warwick gets the car out of the pool of mud.

The businessman is relieved but has a doubt in his mind.

He thanks the farmer and asks him, 'You said the bull's name was Warwick, and he was alone; then who were these Fred, Jack and John?'

The farmer coolly answered, "See, Warwick is old and is also blind. He does not know he is pulling this car alone. The moment he hears the other names, he thinks he is in a team, and he gives his best. So is the case with all of us. The very thought that there are people to help us blesses us with a great deal of comfort, hope, confidence and enthuases us to put our heart and soul into any task that we undertake.'

Indeed, the greatest civilizations have always been built on the foundations of a greater level of cooperation from their citizens.

Moreover, the smartest animals we know - apes, elephants, wolves, dolphins, and crows - tend to live together in cooperative groups and work together for survival.

As H.E. Luccock said, 'No one can whistle a symphony. It takes an orchestra to play it.'

It's not without reason that the very word "team" is said to stand for "Together Everyone Achieves More".

'Leader and the Team', as narrated by Dr APJ Abdul Kalam

WIFE TO DRUNK HUSBAND:

From now on, if your lips touch liquor you will never touch my lips

HUSBAND: Awwwwww??

WIFE: Now what are you thinking ??

HUSBAND: Deciding.....

WIFE: Deciding what ??

18 years old SCOTCH...or
40 years old LIPS...



YouTube/laughingcolours1



I wonder, do we lazy people go to heaven or does anyone come to take us ?!



Your Health

Top Migraine Hacks

An orgasm, a tennis ball, and even some coffee beans may help you ward off a migraine attack

Does light make you wince in pain? You could be one of the many people with migraine who have light sensitivity, called photophobia. If you can't dim the brightness around you by drawing the curtains or turning off the lights, make your own darkness and wear sunglasses indoors.

Stick to a schedule

The key word is "regular." Pick set times to go to bed and wake up every day. Exercise regularly. Stick to usual times for meals and snacks. Consistency helps your body know what's coming up next and may give you fewer migraine attacks.

Get a grip on your stress

It's one of the biggest triggers for migraine pain. So aim to boost calm in your life. Un-busy your schedule where you can, but carve time for things you enjoy. Steady relief is your friend. If you stay stressed during the work week and relax only on the weekend, the shift can bring on migraine, too.

Block the scents

If someone's perfume or other odors set off your migraine, reach for a soothing scent like mint or coffee beans. A sniff of the substitute scent can block the smell that causes pain and may head off an attack.

Aromatherapy therapy

Speaking of scents, some smells may help dull headaches. Peppermint may make you less aware of pain, and lavender may lower your anxiety. You can apply them in their oil form to your temples or the inside of your wrist.

Turn up the heat

Warm compresses, a steamy shower, or a toasty soak in a bath can ease the tension of tight muscles that might add to your migraine pain.

Cool down

Go the other way and try a cold comfort. Some studies show that wrapping a cold pack around your neck when a migraine hits can lower your headache pain. Experts don't know why that helps. Cooling down the blood as it makes its way to your brain may lower swelling and dull your pain.

Tame screen glare

Blue light is usually the hardest hue to handle when you deal regularly with migraine. That's the color that glows from your computer and smartphone. So break away from screens when you feel a migraine coming on. Some people say rose-tinted glasses help by blocking blue light.

Have an orgasm

It doesn't work for everyone, but sex can be a migraine-buster for some. Experts think it may be because endorphins, aka the feel-good hormones, released during an orgasm act like natural painkillers. Masturbation is also an option.

Roll away pain

Relaxing your feet can ease tension in other parts of your body, including your head. Sit and put your bare or sock-covered foot on a tennis ball and roll it around. Notice areas that are especially tender and focus in on those. Repeat on the other foot.

Pinch your hand

Another spot you can target for tension relief is the fleshy pad between your thumb and first finger. Pinch this area with two fingers and feel around for soreness. One reason this might help is by giving you a feeling of control over your pain.

Breathe mindfully

Focus as you breathe in and out for at least 10 minutes. That can flood your body with calm and lower your stress. Boost your relaxation and target the different muscle groups in your body as you inhale and exhale to release all your tension.

Mute the noise

Migraine can be triggered by just about any of your senses, including your hearing. Just like lights, loud noise can set off your migraine. Get to a quiet space when it hits. If you can't, carry earplugs to block out the din on the spot.

Settle your stomach

If migraines give you nausea, keep motion-sickness bands handy to ward off a queasy stomach. Sip peppermint tea and nibble saltines, which also can help a crummy tummy.

WebMD

That's Life

It happened to me...

Here's something I wanna share with you guys.

Yesterday, I went to the supermarket with the prudence dictated by the new normal. Mask, safe entry and safety distance.

I then started to get the things that were on my short-list, and when I was lining up to pay, between taking the money and storing the phone, the Rs 2000 note I had to pay fell on the floor, and the man who was in front of me finishing paying his purchases slowly bent down and picked up my note.

Woww, how much education and kindness in these pandemic times, I thought. I held out my hand, waiting for him to give me back my money, trying to stay away, so that he would feel safe, while preparing to thank him for the gesture.

But suddenly, what he told me was shocking: What's on the floor belongs to whoever finds it! And just like that, he left... naturally, as if he hadn't done anything wrong.

I looked at the lady behind me and the people next to me and they all looked at me in shock and disbelief, whispering things between them.

For a moment, there I was trying to evaluate myself. I wanted to do justice on my own... I left my purchases, because I had no way to pay (I forgot to bring my credit card), and went after him to the car park, to have my Rs 2000 returned.

However, I realized that the people closest to the line came after me, curious to know what was going to happen.

I spoke to him demanding my money, but he just looked at me with contempt and acted like I was invisible.

When he got to the car, he slowly put his two shopping bags on the floor to take the key out of his pocket and open the trunk, and I thought - It's now or never!

I took the two bags and told him the same thing he had said to me: What is on the floor belongs to those who find it! - and I started running towards the exit, between fright and laughter, proud of my revenge.

The spectators started to applaud and I saw that the "smart guy" had been irritated after all, as he left the parking lot dropping security cones in his path.

I swear I felt a rush of adrenaline, fright and nervousness, but then I cried with laughter.

When I got home I opened the bags and found:

- 2 kg shrimp

- 1 kg of salmon
- ham, cheese and yogurt of two flavours
- whole grain bread
- 1 bottle of white wine
- 2 bottles of red wine
- 2 jars of strawberry jam
- 2 kg of very good quality salami
- 1 jar of mayonnaise

I had never made so many purchases with only Rs 2000.

And now here I am ... Having a glass of wine, eating and thinking as I write - Am I a vigilante or a vindictive person?

Have you read this until here?

This obviously did not happen to me. It's just a campaign to promote reading!

Reading stimulates the mind and imagination, makes us travel to other places and even helps communication.

If you want to copy and paste and produce a smile from your friends.

Please go ahead, stimulate someone else's mind. Reading an entire article also prevents you from becoming a victim of click bait and fake news.

Bhagyashree on Bollywood: Even when I was going to enter films 30 years ago, it was said 'it's a very bad world', but it is not that at all

Actor Bhagyashree wasn't even planning to enter films when she was offered *Maine Pyar Kiya* (1989), and she became an overnight sensation. And now, when we talk about the alleged rampant practices such as nepotism, groupism and favouritism in Bollywood, we ask her whether it is indeed the 'big family' it's said to be.

"I have never had any ugly experiences. There probably have been some where I might have been a little disillusioned and hoped something would work, but it didn't work out for some reasons. I look at it as a learning experience, maybe something lacking on my part, not being able to fulfil what I wanted," says the 51-year-old. Her son, Abhimanyu Dassani, too is an actor himself, having made his debut with *Mard Ko Dard Nahi Hota*.

With so much debates going on currently, especially after actor Sushant Singh Rajput's untimely demise, one can get a sense of how the film industry itself is being seen in a negative light, with its reputation as a proper workplace at stake.

She reveals such was the perception earlier too. "*Jab hum filmon mein aa rahe the, tab bhi tha* 'films are a very bad world, no person from a good family would be allowed to go to the film industry'. This was there even 30 years ago. Over a period of time, things have changed. You look at it as any other work place would be. There are women



in every aspect, right from set designing, to make-up. I would say it still remains an industry," reasons the actor.

She goes on to add it comes into light only because 'everyone is associated with the film industry visually, or through social media'. "Having said that, again, it's come through real people. We are talking only about Sushant's untimely demise, but we have been talking about mental issues, suicide or murder cases, which have been happening all over everywhere — it's just the frustration of people in general, they are not mindful. Like I said, being happy with your journey in life is what matters, and in that journey, taking care of people around us. How many times we call someone and ask 'how are you?' and don't even wait for them to say 'I am okay'? We start talking about something else! We are not mindful to our own people living in our homes, it's not about the industry," says Bhagyashree.

Emphasising on the industry not being 'a bad place at all', she says it is like any other industry would be, with some good and bad people, "As is the way of the world. The industry just makes it possible for things to come to light very easily and out there in the open. As people in the rest of India like to emulate you, it gives you a sense, of how we should conduct ourselves in public," she tells us.

Raai Laxmi on his 'Julie 2' co-star Nishikant Kamat: I will always remember him for his simplicity



The untimely demise of director-actor Nishikant Kamat has shocked one and all in the Indian film industry. While messages of condolences are pouring in from all sides, we got in touch with actress Raai Laxmi who worked with him in *'Julie 2'*. In an exclusive interview with ETimes, Raai Laxmi said, "It is really shocking. I just got to know about the news. I was shooting today. I have worked with him. He was a gem of a person. He was someone who enjoyed his life to the fullest. He never cared about what people thought. He was one free bird. He used to love what he did. He was a very simple person."

Elaborating more, she added, "He was too young to be gone. It is really shocking. I don't know what went wrong. I have known for more than three years now. He has taken care of everything. I don't understand how he did not take care of himself. I was in touch with him a couple of years back. Everything seemed normal then."

Talking about the time they spent together on the set while shooting, she said, "I have had long conversations with him as a director, actor and as friend. In fact, we also connected on a philosophical level. He was somebody who looked at life in a very positive way. I remember he was a part of John Abraham starrer *'Rocky Handsome'* where he played a negative character. He used to talk about John and the film."

"I will always remember him for his simplicity. He was not an egoistic person. He has done some great films. He is also very down to earth. He was amazingly talented. We have lost a major talent in the film industry. He was multitalented in fact," she concluded.

Shruti Haasan: I'm always looking to improve myself



Shruti Haasan has completed 11 years as an actor and she is happy with the way her career has shaped up, though she is always looking to improve herself.

"In a way I am happy and thankful I am still here but I think my personality is such that I always look for room to improve. So I am always looking to get better at what I do," Shruti told.

Shruti made her Bollywood debut in 2009 with *"Luck"* and was seen in films like *"D-Day"*, *"Gabbar Is Back"*, *"Ramaiya Vastavaiya"* and *"Welcome Back"*.

She gained recognition with her roles in Telugu films like *"Oh My Friend"* and *"Anaganaga O Dheerudu"*, and the Tamil thriller *"7aum Arivu."*

Sameer is a true gentleman says Shamata Anchan

Shamata Anchan talks about her co-star Sameer Arora from *Bin Kuch Kahe*. And the admiration is mutual, reports Deccan Chronicle.

The love for tea-time chit chat and a thorough professional attitude at work is what binds co-stars Shamata Anchan and Sameer Arora together. In a candid interview to Deccan Chronicle, the two talk about their off-screen chemistry, on-screen drama and more.

*** You play journalists on the show. Have you drawn inspiration from a real journalist?**

Shamata: I haven't taken any reference from a real life journalist. Our producer and directors were clear about what they wanted from Myra's character. They did not want me to borrow from any character, just do my own thing.

Sameer: It's a light hearted romantic show, and we were briefed well about what was expected from us. We didn't have to seek any reference point.

*** What's your relationship like off-screen?**

Shamata: We are professional actors. We don't hang out together when we're not working, but we are very comfortable with each other on the sets.

Sameer: The set is full of young people and we all have a great time together.

*** What's the one ritual you follow on the sets?**

Sameer: We have tea together on the sets. It infuses a sense of togetherness and team work which motivates productivity. We all sit together and discuss our scenes and life in general.

Shamata: We're all tea lovers on the sets, so whenever we have some time, we sit around and have a cup of tea while chatting about this, that and the other. It has to be the most peaceful part of our day.

*** You've shot intimate scenes together, one of which was very close to a particular scene from *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (DDLJ). What was it like?**

Shamata: We haven't tried to recreate any scene from DDLJ. It's a scene about a one-night stand, with a twist that will be revealed only later. The director made me very comfortable while shooting this scene. There were very



few people on the sets. Only those who were required to shoot were allowed to remain present.

Sameer: It was not an attempt at recreating anything that SRK and Kajol have created - not even close. We have come up with something fresh and given it our best.

*** Which one has been the most challenging scene on the show so far?**

Shamata: The most challenging part was shooting an outdoor scene in the scorching heat in Jaipur, where I was reporting something. There was a lot of chaos in the back-

ground, because that's what the scene required. It was difficult to control the crowd and mouth long dialogues, but we managed to shoot somehow.

Sameer: I will not be able to disclose it right now, it's yet to come on air. I hope the viewers will love it.

*** Do you have awkward moments romancing each other on screen?**

Shamata: Shooting for romantic scenes is generally awkward if the co-star is not cooperative. Luckily, my co-actor Sameer is a true gentleman. He totally

understands my side of the story, so he lightens up the mood by cracking a joke before the start of the scene. He is also from the film industry and worked with Sanjay Leela Bhansali for *Ramleela* and knows all the aesthetics of shoots. He shares valuable tips.

Sameer: Romantic scenes are a part of the package. But when you are a professional actor, these scenes are not awkward, but they are more like a job that has to be done. These scenes get easier when you have a good co-actor. I feel fortunate that we share a good bond.

Rapid Fire

Your favourite corner on the sets:

Shamata: The chair in my makeup room.

Sameer: Spot dada's tea room.

Your favourite food on the sets:

Shamata: Tea.

Sameer: Tea with Parle-G.

Your 2 am buddy on the sets:

Shamata: Nirvana and Nikhil.

Sameer: Nirvana Sawhney who plays Rhea Kohli.

Things you cannot do without on the sets:

Shamata: My jacket and my green tea.

Sameer: The camera.

Your favourite line on the sets:

Shamata: "Break."

Sameer: "Action!"

Your stress buster on the sets:

Shamata: My actor friends, with whom I hang out.

Sameer: When technicians smile.

Your dream date:

Shamata: Ranbir Kapoor at Ibiza.

Sameer: I would rather not reveal.

Your wildest fantasy:

Shamata: Going back home to Mumbai.

Sameer: An Oscar in my hand.

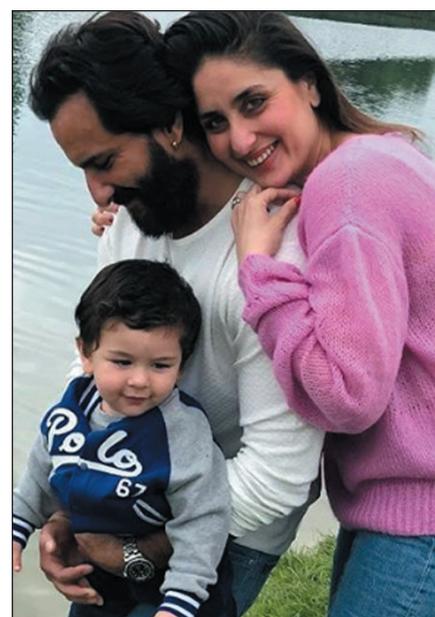
Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor to welcome their second baby around this date

Recently, Kareena Kapoor and Saif Ali Khan shared the good news that the couple is expecting a second baby and we saw their fans celebrating this announcement. They released the official statement, which reads, "We are very pleased to announce that we are expecting an addition to our family. Thank you to all our well wishers for all their love and support." The actress is currently in the first trimester and will welcome the baby in March 2021. Bebo's father and veteran actor Randhir Kapoor revealed this news and told PinkVilla, "Bebo and Saif gave us the news a few days ago. I am delighted and very very happy. Kareena is due for sometime around March next year."

On the work front, Kareena Kapoor will be next seen in *Laal Singh Chaddha* along with Aamir Khan. Talking about the film, we all know that it is a remake of Tom Hanks' *Forrest Gump*. The latter was based on a 1986's novel by the same name, written by Winston Groom. Tom Hanks played the lead character alongside Robert Wright and Gary Sinise. The movie received several accolades and was the biggest hit of that year. *Forrest Gump* swept the

Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Visual Effects and Best Film Editing. Meanwhile, Hanks was applauded for his performance with the Best Actor Oscar award. The movie also performed well at the Golden Globes, People's Choice Awards, and Young Artist Awards. It is written by Atul Kulkarni and directed by Secret Superstar helmer Advait Chandan.

On the other hand, Saif Ali Khan will be next seen in *Bunty Aur Babli 2* along with Rani Mukerji. The film marks the reunion of the duo after 11 years. Saif and Rani have worked together in films like *Hum Tum*, *Ta Ra Rum Pum* and *Thoda Pyaar Thoda Magic*. The sequel will



see a huge time leap of 10 years and will feature two pairs of Bunty and Babli. Talking about the film, Saif Ali Khan earlier said, "*Bunty Aur Babli 2* is a completely rebooted sequel and is set in today's time. It is a fantastic script that hooked me on instantly. It is an out and out entertainer for the entire family to sit and enjoy and this is what I loved and connected with. Also, it's a new role for me, new language and milieu and that's what I really look for in a script. I also love the dynamics between the originals and the new *Bunty Babli* in the film. It's fresh, hilarious and extremely engaging. Rani and I have always had a lot of fun working with each other and I'm looking forward to our creative collaboration again. It's also equally amazing to be back home at YRF again."



Mardi 18 août - 21.15
For The Love Of George

Avec Nadia Jordan, Rex Lee, Rosanna Arquette



Mercredi 19 août - 21.15
La Parole Est Au Colt



Jeudi 20 août - 21.15



	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
mardi 18 août	07.00 Entrepreneurat Au Feminin 09.40 Local: Couleur Marine 10.25 Mag: Euromaxx 11.30 Mag: Mixeur, Les Gouts.. 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Mag: Women Who Changed 12.30 Doc: Visite Guidee 14.00 Rencontre avec Nos Aînés 14.30 D.Anime: Kid-E-Cats 14.47 D.Anime: Le Quiz De Zack 14.51 D.Anime: Chuck's Choice 15.05 D.Anime: Twirlywoos 16.11 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies 17.31 Serial: Lucas Etc 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.00 Ganesh, Dieu Du Savoir... 21.10 Film: For The Love Of George 22.45 Serial: The Blacklist	10.00 Serial: CID 10.44 Serial: Ye Vaada Raha 12.04 Film: Ghar Ek Mandir Starring: Shashi Kapoor, Mithun Chakraborty, Ranjeeta 14.36 DDI Magazine 15.00 Mag: Strictly Street 15.24 Serial: Honaar Soon Mee... 15.48 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 16.10 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 16.33 Serial: Ki Jaana Mein Kaun 16.54 Mehandi Tohra Naam Ke 17.17 Serial: Gangaa 18.00 Serial: Dr. Quin 18.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Local: Tamil Programme 20.30 Film: Bemisal Starring: Amitabh Bachchan, Rakhee Gulzar, Vinod Mehra 22.52 DDI Live	06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa 06.44 Mag: World Stories 07.00 Mag: Voa Connect 07.29 Doc: In Good Shape 07.51 Doc: Amazing Gardens 09.00 Doc: 360 GEO 10.36 Soul Ladies 11.21 Mag: Eco@Africa 11.54 Mag: Sur Mesure 12.05 Mag: World Stories 12.17 Mag: Voa Connect 12.52 Mag: In Good Shape 14.23 Doc: 360 GEO 15.09 Mag: Global 3000 16.08 Doc: Soul Ladies 16.46 Mag: Eco@Africa 17.12 Mag: Urban Gardens 17.30 Mag: Voa Connect 18.23 Mag: Urban Gardens 18.30 Live: News 18.44 Mag: Healthy Living	01.27 Film: Arena 02.56 Serial: The Good Doctor 03.35 Film: Boone 05.06 Tele: Totalement Diva 05.57 Serial: Shades Of Blue 06.39 Film: Mike Hammer 09.00 Serial: NCIS 09.45 Tele: Soleil Levant 10.35 Serial: The Good Doctor 11.25 Tele: Dulce Amor 11.53 Film: Boone 13.33 Tele: Totalement Diva 14.45 Film: Mike Hammer 16.46 Serial: NCIS 17.24 Serial: Shades Of Blue 18.10 Tele: Soleif Levant 19.10 Tele: Dulce Amor 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: Shades Of Blue 21.15 Serial: Unforgotten Avec Nicola Walker, Sanjeev Bhaskar, Peter Egan	08.00 Film: Disco Dancer 12.04 / 19.54 - Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam 12.26 / 20.11 - Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 12.48 / 20.32 Radha Krishna 13.09 / 21.09 - Bin Kuch Kahe 13.31 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.56 / 21.46 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.20 / 21.59 - Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki 14.28 / 22.25 - Bin Kuch Kahe 15.09 Film: Ajay Starring: Sunny Deol, Karisma Kapoor 18.00 Live: Samacher 18.30 Kumkum Bhagya 18.51 Piya Albela 19.13 Mere Angne Mein 19.33 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai
mercredi 19 août	06.30 Local: La Mauricienne 07.30 Local: Priorite Sante 09.00 Mag: Painting The Nation 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Local: Women Who Changed 12.35 Local: Groov'in 14.00 Local: Priorite Sante 14.35 D.Anime: Nos Voisins Les... 14.46 D.Anime: Le Quiz De Zack 14.50 D.Anime: Chuck's Choice 15.02 D.Anime: Petit Creux 15.14 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies 16.14 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill 16.32 D.Anime: G-Fighters 17.30 Serial: Lucas Etc 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.00 Prod: Lottotech 21.10 Film: The Pirate 22.45 Serial: The Blacklist 23.30 Local: Le Journal	10.00 Pyar Ka Dard Meetha... 11.17 Suhani Ek Ladhi 12.00 Film: Nanha Farishta Stars: Pran, Ajit, Anwar Hussain 14.38 DDI Magazine 15.00 Mag: Strictly Street 15.23 Honaar Soon Mee Hya Gharchi 15.50 Mooga Manasulu 16.10 Apoorva Raagangal 16.34 Ki Jaana Mein Kaun 16.55 Mehandi Tohra Namam Ke 17.18 Serial: Gangaa 17.38 Serial: Kulvadh 18.00 Serial: Dr. Quin 18.30 Serial: DDI Magazine 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Programme In Marathi 20.26 Local: Excerpts Of Ganesh Chaturthi Celebrations 2019 23.00 DDI Live	06.00 Mag: Rev: The Global 06.26 Mag: Urban Gardens 06.57 Mag: Check In 07.54 Doc: Garden Party 08.49 Doc: World Stamps 08.55 Doc: Programmed To Kill 10.09 Local Prod: Klip Seleksion 12.07 Mag: Urban Gardens 12.38 Mag: Check In 14.31 Doc: World Stamps 15.49 Local: Klip Seleksion 16.38 Doc: Global Conflagration 17.19 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto.. 17.54 Mag: Motorweek 18.23 Mag: Urban Gardens 18.44 Mag: Healthy Living 19.30 Doc: A Question Of Science 20.30 Doc: The World From Above 20.58 Doc: World Stamps 23.51 Mag: Urban Gardens 23.56 Doc: A Poisoned Legacy 00.22 Mag: Arts.21	00.20 Serial: Shades Of Blue 01.28 Serial: Unforgotten 02.57 Serial: The Good Doctor 03.39 Film: Hailey Dean Mysteries 06.06 Serial: Shades Of Blue 06.48 Film: Nessie & Me 09.00 Serial: NCIS 09.45 Tele: Soleil Levant 10.35 Serial: The Good Doctor 11.25 Tele: Dulce Amor 11.49 Film: Hailey Dean Mysteries 13.30 Tele: Totalement Diva 14.19 Mag: Hollywood On Set 14.45 Film: Nessie & Me 16.40 Serial: Mission: Impossible 17.23 Serial: Shades Of Blue 18.12 Tele: Soleil Levant 19.00 Tele: Dulce Amor 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Tele: Esmeraldas 21.15 Film: La Parole Est Au Colt 22.46 Tele: Totalement Diva	08.00 Film: Ajay 12.04 / 19.54 - Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam 12.26 / 20.11 - Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 12.47 / 20.32 Radha Krishna 13.09 / 21.09 - Bin Kuch Kahe 13.31 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.56 / 21.46 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.20 / 21.59 - Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki 14.36 / 22.25 - Bitti Business 15.09 Film: Dii Wale Starring: Ajay Devgn, Sunil Shetty, Raveena Tandon 17.35 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 18.00 Live: Samacher 18.30 Kumkum Bhagya 18.51 Piya Albela 19.13 Mere Angne Mein 19.33 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai
jeudi 20 août	06.00 Klip Seleksion 07.00 Local: Arsv MBC 09.00 Local: Painting The Nation 09.30 Local: World Stories 12.00 Le Journal 12.35 Doc: Visite Guidee 14.15 Local: Nou Later Nou Lamer Nou Rises 14.30 D.Anime: Kid-E-Cats 14.35 D.Anime: Nos Voisins Les... 14.46 D.Anime: Le Quiz De Zack 14.51 D.Anime: Chuck's Choice 15.02 D.Anime: Petit Creux 15.14 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies 15.40 D.Anime: Les Enquêtes De... 15.56 D.Anime: Fils De Wouf 16.12 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Jamai Raja 19.30 Le Journal 20.06 Film: Ek Rishtaa	10.00 Karm Phal Data Shani 12.05 Film: Rampur Ka Lakshman Starring Randhir Kapoor, Rekha, Shatrughan Sinha 14.11 DDI Magazine 14.45 Mag: Strictly Street 15.12 Honaar Soon Mee Hya Gharchi 15.36 Mooga Manasulu 15.59 Apoorva Raagangal 16.47 Mehandi Tohra Naam Ke 17.09 Gangaa 17.30 Local: Amrit Vaani 18.00 Serial: Dr. Quin 18.30 Serial: Ghar Pahucha Da Devi Maiya 20.00 Magazine: MBC Production 21.00 Film: Avenging The Throne Starring Andrei Claude, Lori MacFadyen, Joseph Calleja 22.39 DDI Live	06.00 Mag: Motorweek 06.25 Mag: A Poisoned Legacy 07.26 Doc: Garden Party 08.48 Doc: Master Of Engineering 10.38 Doc: The Berlin Wall 11.16 Mag: Motorweek 11.46 Doc: A Poisoned Legacy 12.12 Mag: Arts 21 15.26 Mag: Focus On Europe 17.28 Mag: Arts.21 18.24 Mag: Urban Gardens 18.30 Live: News 19.05 Open Univ: Student Support 19.26 Doc: A Question Of Science 20.05 Doc: Comme Un Poisson... 21.03 Doc: 360 Geo 21.53 Mag: Strictly Street 22.19 Doc: The Emperor Of The Red Gold 23.40 Mag: Eco India 00.06 Mag: Urban Gardens	01.25 Film: La Parole Est Au Colt 03.02 Serial: The Good Doctor 03.42 Film: PSYCH 05.08 Tele: Totalement Diva 05.56 Tele: Esmeraldas 06.44 Film: A Sunday Horse 09.00 Serial: NCIS 09.45 Tele: Soleil Levant 10.35 Serial: The Good Doctor 11.31 Tele: Dulce Amor 12.00 Film: PSYCG 13.30 Tele: Totalement Diva 14.45 Film: A Sunday Horse 16.46 Serial: NCIS 17.26 Tele: Esmeraldas 18.05 Tele: Soleil Levant 19.00 Tele: Dulce Amor 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: Esmeraldas 21.15 Film: Hailey Dean Mysteries 22.46 Tele: Totalement Diva	08.00 Film: Dilwale 12.04 / 19.54 - Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam 12.26 / 20.11 - Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 12.47 / 20.32 Radha Krishna 13.09 / 21.09 - Bin Kuch Kahe 13.31 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.56 / 21.46 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.20 / 21.59 - Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ke 14.36 / 22.25 - Bitti Business Wali 15.09 Film: Bajatey Raho Starring: Tusshar Kapoor, Dolly Ahluwalia 17.30 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 18.00 Live: Samacher 18.30 Kumkum Bhagya



Jeudi 20 août - 15.09
Stars: Tusshar Kapoor, Dolly Ahluwalia, Ranvir Shorey, Ravi Kishan, Vinay Pathak, Vishakha Singh



Jeudi 20 août - 20.10
Stars: Amitabh Bachchan, Rakhee Gulzar, Akshay Kumar





Nita Chicooree-Mercier

Toxic Media

The public should not be made to gulp down news from sources which are imbued with the spirit of division, and lead to 'parochialism'. It is high time to clean up the pollution which has infected 'our once cosmopolitan spirit and mind'

To the already heightened tensions triggered by different political protagonists for weeks, the oil spill at Pointe d'Esny has released more toxin than the serenity one would have expected when the country is faced with a major environmental issue. Everyone kept presenting their selected experts to justify their points of view and undermine those of their opponents. Constant bickering among warm-blooded males blowing hot air in media talks is quite distressing and brings nothing constructive to rationally enlighten the public on key issues. Everyone watching BBC around the world caught a glimpse of Mauritian-style tropical island male palaver disguised as serious talk on the one hand, and frayed nerves causing loss of composure rather than cool-headed defence of one's standpoint on the other, much to the disgrace of the whole island.

When a BBC journalist does his job without compromising on principles, that's no good reason to spit fire at the BBC or to ban it, or whatever. As things stand, though no channels are perfect, there is a serious need to draw Mauritian viewers to fairly good standards of English-language channels to promote the language, in the first place, and to counterbalance the effects of what Samad Ramoly, in the July 20th issue of Mauritius Times, calls 'a French brand of satellite idiot box' that 'continues to conquer screens and minds'. The end result is that after four decades, starting from the 1980s 'parochialism slowly pollutes our once cosmopolitan spirit and mind,' promoted by the English language. The satellite idiot box, most probably refers to Parabole and Canal Satellite, which loads of people think are better equipped to give them a sound view of everything under the sun.

Lucky enough for the reputation of Mauritius, the BBC did not interview the leader of a party who surprised everyone by boasting about how France, through its forces and expertise in Reunion, had been the saviour in handling the ecological disaster. That leader further triumphantly announced that the French minister of overseas islands and territories would soon be visiting Mauritius. First, if any French minister is to visit the country, it should be the Minister of Foreign Affairs because Mauritius is an independent country, and not any of the Dom-Tom which heavily rely on monthly French transfers of huge sums to pay teachers, the police force, firemen and all the functionaries. What suddenly took hold of the politician to brandish France loudly indicates a subtle, underground tug-of-war going on between different forces vying for political and cultural influence in Mauritius. The ramblings of a man for the land of his ancestors? The days of colonialism are over. Mauritius cannot be compared to Lebanon, Algeria or former French protectorates and colonies in Africa where every visit of the French president triggers a craving for the old system amongst some citizens, which French media capture in their lens and gladly broadcast to the whole world. The opinion of one or two aggrieved citizens over the state of affairs in their homeland is made to reflect the mood of the whole population, as is the case in Lebanon.

Over here, events such as the recent inauguration of the new Supreme Court is engendering dissatisfaction in some sections of the population who hold different views on which countries Mauritius should warm up to. Better swallow their discontent because the 21st century has begun to outline new geopolitical configurations which bring together countries from different continents sharing



the same values, and the scenario enacted in the Indian Ocean reinforces cooperation and ties between a few countries, and does not oppose these countries or create conflicting interests.

Only those thinking from the 'idiot box' see things with blinkers and through deep-seated local inter-ethnic prejudices, and dream of reshaping Mauritius back to its former situation of cultural and political predominance. The 21st century is turning a few countries in Europe into minor powers on the world stage, and their strength lies in how strongly they can build the European Union, which is unlikely to happen soon.

The hailing of France on a private radio, close to the drivelling politician who could have sold out CWA to Vivendi, lately culminated in the broadcast of the French national anthem on 14th July. The star anchor openly dreams of a separate status for Rodrigues. The private radio feels entitled to comment on the election of the president of Mauritius Sanatan Dharma Temples Federation, a religious association, something which he spares other religions from.

It is worth mentioning that the much-lauded sense of solidarity at Blue Bay also displayed once again how a few people feel concerned about environmental safety especially when they and their brethren live in bungalows in the area. So, children, teenagers, adults and grandmothers were all present there, busy lending a hand to save their region. It is only such rare cases which pull them out of their confined and no-trespass places to mix socially with the public. Otherwise, they tend to be non-existent to help others in flood-stricken zones at Fond du Sac, for instance, or elsewhere.

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What beats it all is when you hear simple folks at Triolet referring to the opinion expressed on France 24 over how Mauritius could have avoided Covid-19 contamination if lockdown restrictions were put in place earlier. You have to tell people that four cases of infection broke out early February in eastern France, and it started confinement only by 17th March, and that 90 French citizens, including doctors, are suing the government for not informing the public of Covid-19 cases as early as in October, which by then caused the death of a number of people in Paris itself. The reason for withholding information was, according to public opinion, to put business first, and this implied open frontiers with China.

France certainly has health services of very high standard, but the technocrats at the helm of power have a different set of priorities, and the people are not used to submitting to imposed rules of discipline. So, France 24 is not in a position to pontificate on Mauritian management of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The MBC has to review its foreign source of news during its prime time news programme in French. French channels primarily aim at the French public and its sensibilities, influenced by their own political, economic and cultural agendas. Last year, a France 24 broadcast on MBC news showed the Indian PM in a church in Sri Lanka two months after the bomb blast. No one here got to appreciate the content of his speech because it was cut off in the middle of the first sentence he articulated.

It would not be surprising that France 24 is in tune with other French media outlets like Le Monde which reflects the mainstream French way of thinking and its worldview, shaped largely by the French Revolution, and which boils down to simple-minded binary visions of power struggles everywhere, and divides the world between oppressors and oppressed, the good and the bad, the strong and weak, the rich and the poor, etc. Simple-mindedness over world affairs and politics is a current phenomenon in conversations with average French citizens, mostly influenced by their media. Hard thinking is discarded for fine phrases. So too with a few mainstream international media, mainly with a leftist bent.

A broader view of world news on the MBC should include different sources, not rely only on a French channel. The public should not be made to gulp down news from sources which are imbued with the spirit of division, and lead to 'parochialism'. It is high time to clean up the pollution which has infected 'our once cosmopolitan spirit and mind.'