

MAURITIUS TIMES

Don't tell people how to do things, tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results. -- George Patton

What's happening on the Covid-19 front?



"Locally we are at 346 cases and 10 deaths, whereas our next-door neighbour Reunion island has registered a recent increase to a tally of 2346 cases and 13 deaths, i.e. Reunion has nearly seven times as many cases as we have. At the beginning of the pandemic there was a headlined comment in the local media by a doctor from Reunion that there were lacunae in the Mauritian Health System which accounted for a higher number of cases here than in Reunion. Now that the situation is reversed there has been no observation forthcoming from that source..."

By Dr R Neerunjun Gopee See Page 3

Interview: Sameer Sharma, Data Science Consultant
& Former Central Banker

"Mauritius is stagnating and the outlook is not rosy"

'Unemployment, seasonality adjusted monthly Government tax revenues and near zero tourist arrival numbers point to a Mauritian L-shaped recovery'

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La solution par les tapeurs



"L'attrait du quartier doit beaucoup à ce côté asiatique et rappelle une époque où les premiers migrants ont fait leur nid et aussi leur lit de commerce. C'est en grande partie l'âme de Port-Louis, et c'est sans doute pour cette raison qu'il y a comme un manque, un vide, un rendez-vous raté si on ne prend pas le temps d'y flâner..."

Par Nita Chicooree-Mercier Voir Page 18

Why businesses embrace populists and what to do about it: lessons from Hungary



Fighting populism requires us to recognise its embeddedness in business elites. Viktor Orban's regime is a case in point

By Gabor Scheiring See Page 4

Oil spill impact, compensation and equity

Wever since the oil spill caused by the MV Wakashio shipwreck we have been so bombarded with a surfeit of information that the time has come to step back and review the situation more coolly. The emotional high among the volunteers that was manifested in the cleaning up that followed was also reflected among the several disparate interest groups that marched in the streets of Port Louis on August 29th. However, while the authorities must definitely not discount the magnitude of the numerical and gut reactions, they must beware of responding in kind - that is, emotionally. On the contrary, they must assess the event with objectivity and rigour in a systematic and scientific way so as to sift the relevant facts from the volumes of opinions that have been expressed.

A few basic points about the incident are important to underline. The ship ran aground on the reef near Ile aux Aigrettes, and the oil spill took place in the lagoon's inlet - wherefrom a current flows towards an outlet (with the oil remaining at the inlet site), which in the present case leads away towards Riviere des Creoles and Bois des Amourettes. Compared to shipwrecks elsewhere (e.g. the one that took place shortly after near Sri Lanka), the amount of oil spilt was quite small, although pictures taken up close would naturally show graphically dramatic shots that would impact viewers greatly.

Logically, one must look at the immediate, mid-term and long-term effects on the reef, the sea water, the beach, the sea creatures, the mangroves, and those whose livelihoods revolve around the sea. One must also underline that nature has a tremendous capacity to repair itself, and that over time new equilibria are achieved at altered levels of sustainability.

While there has probably been physical damage to the reef caused by the ship's hull, any biological damage will only become apparent in the mid-term at least, adding to any whitening of the reef that may have already been under way there. Stretching from Pointe d'Esny up to Bambous Virieux, the sea water is clear, and small fish have already been spotted swimming in these waters. And there is no smell of oil at all anywhere in that area. The beach is also cleared of oil. As for mangroves, their very function is to act as biodigesters, and the residual oil over them will be subjected to that biodigestion. Real damage to mangroves occurs when they are physically destroyed, which is not what happened in the present case.

When it comes to the people who have a locus

standi in the area in terms of their livelihood, government has already arranged to assist fishermen to the tune of Rs10,200 per month in addition to their bad weather allowance to a total of Rs 17500. There is also damage caused to their boats, nets and other equipment and paraphernalia, and this will apply to the plaisanciers too, and next are the vendors and hawkers, resto owners. A complete audit factoring in all these aspects has to be undertaken, along with an estimation of the timeline for continuing the additional assistance being given, which will obviously depend on when activities can reasonably be resumed, and not forgetting to take into consideration the Covid-19 element in so doing. Besides, there will have to be regular monitoring of the situation on site and an updating of a complied list of all persons/families recorded therein. In the meantime the legal procedures to obtain compensation from the shipping company will go on, and the modus operandi of settling any claims worked out and implemented in due course, taking into account what has been granted previously.

This is the logical way to proceed for the authorities, whose responsibility when handling taxpayer money is to ensure that disbursements and allocations are made equitably because there are other equally vulnerable and deserving categories of citizens whose problems must also be heard and attended to. An example is the sugarcane planters who produce up to 60 tonnes of sugar per season, and who used to receive an assistance of Rs35,000 per acre for bulldozing, clearing, planting, etc., coming from an EU fund which apparently is empty. They will not be receiving this sum in the current year and uncertainty hangs as to when it will be restored. The question is with the billions of rupees made available to other sectors, why could the shortfall from the EU fund not be made good with allocation from that BOM package? After all, these planters also help to keep the economy going and are also entitled to help from the government. Likewise vegetable growers too must be robustly supported by the authorities, as they suffered much loss during the confinement and their woes are still not over.

It can thus be realized that, while the media blitzkrieg around the Wakashio incident has polarized attention to the oil spill, whose impacts are already being addressed, now that the urgency is over the authorities must give their attention to the other issues that are equally deserving of official attention, and of an equitable share of the country's financial resources.

The Conversation

Earth may temporarily pass dangerous 1.5°C warming limit by 2024, major new report says

The report by the World Meteorological Organisation shows that with large and rapid emissions cuts, we can still avoid the most severe climate change. But worryingly, we also have time to make it far worse

The Paris climate agreement seeks to limit global warming to 1.5°C this century. A new report by the World Meteorological Organisation warns this limit may be exceeded by 2024 - and the risk is growing.

This first overshoot beyond 1.5°C would be temporary, likely aided by a major climate anomaly such as an El Niño weather pattern. However, it casts new doubt on whether Earth's climate can be permanently stabilised at 1.5°C warming.



The world may exceed the 1.5°C warming threshold sooner than we expected.
Photo - Erik Anderson/AAP

This finding is among those just published in a report titled United in Science. We contributed to the report, which was prepared by six leading science agencies, including the Global Carbon Project.

The report also found while greenhouse gas emissions declined slightly in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they remained very high - which meant atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations have continued to rise.

Greenhouse gases rise as CO2 emissions slow

Concentrations of the three main greenhouse gases - carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4) and nitrous oxide (N2O), have all increased over the past decade. Current concentrations in the atmosphere are, respectively, 147%, 259% and 123% of those present before the industrial era began in 1750.

Concentrations measured at Hawaii's Mauna Loa Observatory and at Australia's Cape Grim station in Tasmania show concentrations continued to increase in 2019 and 2020. In particular, CO2 concentrations reached 414.38 and 410.04 parts per million in July this year, respectively, at each station.

Growth in CO2 emissions from fossil fuel use slowed to around 1% per year in the past decade, down from 3% during the 2000s. An unprecedented decline is expected in 2020, due to the COVID-19 economic slowdown.

Pep Canadell, Chief research scientist, CSIRO & Rob Jackson, Chair, Stanford University

Mauritius Times

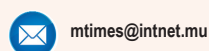
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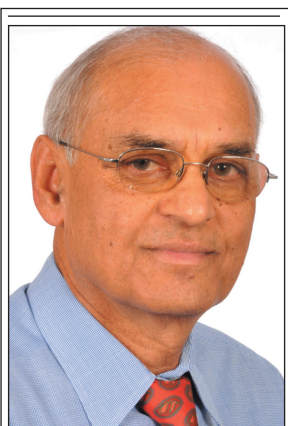
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What's happening on the Covid-19 front?



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

Plenty, as the total number of cases worldwide continue to rise. According to the John Hopkins University website, as at 10 am yesterday, there were 27,766,325 cases worldwide, and 902,468 deaths. The US still leads, with (in rounded figures) nearly 6.4 million cases, followed by India 4.4 million and Brazil 4.2 million which works out at 1944/323/2004 cases per 100,000 people for each country respectively. As regards deaths, again in rounded figures it's respectively 191,000/74,000/129,000 which puts the number of deaths per 100,000 at 58/6/61.

Locally we are at 346 cases and 10 deaths, whereas our next-door neighbour Reunion island has registered a recent increase to a tally of 2346 cases and 13 deaths, i.e. Reunion has nearly seven times as many cases as we have. Again, according to the John Hopkins website, their doubling time - an important parameter in Covid stats - is 3 weeks, whereas for Mauritius it is 10 months.

At the beginning of the pandemic there was a headlined comment in the local media by a doctor from Reunion that there were lacunae in the Mauritian Health System which accounted for a higher number of cases here than in Reunion. Now that the situation is reversed there has been no observation forthcoming from that source.

Suffice it to say that we have a very robust Public Health System, which explains why we have been able to keep the island Covid-free, that is, there is no local transmission since around early May. The latest report is about the family of four who came in from Dubai a couple of days ago, who were tested negative before boarding, but have been found to be positive on testing at arrival, and have therefore been admitted to ENT Hospital for observation despite the fact that they are asymptomatic.

The repatriation of Mauritian citizens seems to be proceeding smoothly enough after the initial lull, a relief to those who have been impatiently waiting to get back, as well as to their families. The returnees are being quarantined in hotels around the coast, and barring some complaints about food in some hotels, they are putting up a brave face as they count down to the 14th day of their isolation before being reunited with family. No need to say that they are enthusiastically looking forward to resume their routine here, where comparatively there are less restrictions on movement and meetings in every respect compared to the more severe constraints that they have had to endure elsewhere, and that have been particularly hard for children.

On the whole I must say that we have behaved rather well as responsible citizens, largely complying with the precautionary measures advised. We have been a little more lax about social distancing in some public places such as supermarkets, but let us not let up on hand washing/sanitizing and wearing of mask which are key to prevention and keeping us Covid-free.

The issue of lifting lockdowns to allow resumption of activities in several sectors - shopping, bars and pubs, gyms, salons, etc., - is giving much headache to all governments the world over, with some countries already having announced recession, something that goes above my head. I therefore stick to the more direct kind of news



"For the first time, Reunion is experiencing real viral circulation", lamented, Friday August 21, the prefect Jacques Billant. Photo - archyworldys.com

“Locally we are at 346 cases and 10 deaths, whereas our next-door neighbour Reunion island has registered a recent increase to a tally of 2346 cases and 13 deaths, i.e. Reunion has nearly seven times as many cases as we have. At the beginning of the pandemic there was a headlined comment in the local media by a doctor from Reunion that there were lacunae in the Mauritian Health System which accounted for a higher number of cases here than in Reunion. Now that the situation is reversed there has been no observation forthcoming from that source...”

report regarding what is happening on the pandemic front, except for the medical and health aspects which are of course of great interest to me.

But I do share the larger concerns that affect all of us. One of them for example is the announcement by no less than UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson himself a few days ago about the 'Rule of 6' - only groups of no more than 6 people will be allowed in public places, and that also they have to comply with the sanitary measures. There will be rigorous legal enforcement. This announcement followed recent surges that have been experienced there after partial lockdowns, which is also the case in France. These two countries, along with Reunion, are the source of a majority of our tourists - and as we contemplate reopening, we are therefore warned. It is a paradox that in some of the most advanced countries with high literacy and educational levels, people have a tendency to be less compliant as they flock to beaches and other public places, with resulting surges.

On the other hand, whereas school opening here has been managed more or less smoothly, elsewhere this is a real conundrum. I read about school opening in Florida, USA which has been followed by a surge of cases among teenagers - reminding us that all age groups are potentially vulnerable. As closures have had to be imposed again, there is a lot of hard thinking that has to be done about how to reengineer the educational system(s) so as to make up for the loss that students have suffered and plan for their future educational cycles upon which their careers critically depend.

But fortunately it's not all bad news. For example, as regards treatment of severe cases of lung infection by Covid-19, a review of studies conducted around the world has confirmed the benefit of treatment by Dexamethasone, which reduces mortality by up to 30% in these cases. The great advantage of this cortisone drug is that it has

been in wide use for a long time and in a variety of conditions by doctors, who are therefore quite familiar with both its effects and side-effects and how to deal with the latter should they arise. Besides, it is used in such large quantities that availability is not a problem - and for the same reason so is the cost, which is quite affordable. It goes without saying that it must be used strictly within a strict protocol guiding treatment of Covid-19 because it is not a panacea that applies indiscriminately to all cases of Covid-19.

On the other hand, as regards vaccine, the Oxford vaccine under trial by the AstraZeneca group has been put on hold after one of the persons in the trial developed an illness, which may or may not be related to the vaccine. He is being investigated in depth, and the arrest of the trial meanwhile is an indication of the concern about efficacy that scientists have when they are developing new vaccines.

The most cautious estimate coming from WHO is that not before well into 2021 will a vaccine be available for Covid-19, and we would be wise not to try and rush the process. Any mishap will sap the confidence of the public, and be grist to the mill of what are known as the 'anti-vaxxers', those who for religious or other obscure reasons are opposed to any form of vaccination.

There has been criticism to the effect that the Ministry of Health has not yet made provision for the procurement of an anti-Covid vaccine. When there are over 100 vaccine candidates under development and no one can give any assurance as to when a *safe and effective vaccine* will be ready, such criticism is unjustified and premature.

Our situation has been under control for nearly four months now. If we continue to behave as responsible citizens, and any reopening is carefully calibrated, we can afford to wait as long as is required until a proper vaccine is ready.

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Why businesses embrace populists and what to do about it: lessons from Hungary

Fighting populism requires us to recognise its embeddedness in business elites.

Viktor Orban's regime is a case in point

The coronavirus crisis has revealed the weaknesses of some populist leaders such as Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil or Donald Trump in the US, yet others are emerging stronger than ever. And they have some unlikely backers.

The Serbian government appears to have manipulated COVID-19 deaths and infections in the run-up to the June elections, allowing president Aleksandar Vucic to tighten his grip on power. Hungary's Viktor Orban also continued to entrench his regime by reducing the financial autonomy of local governments and cutting the funds of political parties, which disproportionately hurts the opposition.

Although the rise of these populist leaders has raised concerns about the future of democracy as they exploit the pandemic for personal and political gain, the roots of democratic backsliding pre-date coronavirus. Unfortunately, these root causes are difficult to fight because they are often misunderstood.

Commentators often treat Orban as an unpredictable, anti-business populist, diametrically opposed to neoliberal governance. Many assert that the only purpose of Orban-type populists is to buy popular support when elections come and, in the meantime, fill the pockets of the ruling elite's friends and family.

I was an opposition MP in Hungary between 2010-14, when Orban came into power for the second time (he was also prime minister from 1998 to 2002). I witnessed firsthand his ability to conceal controversial policies by creating a smoke-screen of symbolic conflicts. Building on this experience, backed up by several years of research, my new book shows that despite his rhetoric, Orban is far from being against globalisation and big business.

There is a method to Orban's madness: business elites are crucial for his authoritarian-populist regime.

Method to the madness

Hungary's global economic integration in the 1990s brought new opportunities and coincided with democratisation. But, as my fieldwork in Hungary's rust belt has shown, de-industrialisation and privatisation eroded working-class culture and decreased the bargaining power of labour. In turn, this slowed wage growth, and even led to increased death rates.

By the end of the 2000s, many of these



Hungary's Viktor Orban with US President Donald Trump

people had grown disillusioned. Without a progressive left-wing alternative, they drifted rightward. Social disintegration allowed Orban's Fidesz party to mobilise workers against "uncaring" cosmopolitan neoliberals during the watershed 2010 national election, which Fidesz won.

However, Orban has another source of support. During his first stint as prime minister, he governed as a centrist conservative, before embracing economic nationalism at the end of the 2000s. Between 1990-2010, Hungary spearheaded the competition for foreign capital in Europe. But the misgovernance of Hungary's global integration resulted in the bifurcation of the economy: transnational corporations have been generating the bulk of export revenue since the 1990s, while domestic companies lack access to such markets.

This economic disintegration also whipped up economic nationalism among Hungarian businesses. They started to support Orban in the run up to the 2010 election in return for state protection, via measures such as increased subsidies, government contracts, reduced taxes and more flexible labour relations. At the same time, Orban's post-2010 regime also welcomes transnational corporations in the productive export sectors and adheres to the logic of global financial markets by keeping the budget deficit low.

In other words, globalisation contributed to both enabling and stabilising right-wing populist regimes such as Orban's.

The international community sometimes exacerbates the problem as well. For example, the EU actively bankrolls illiberal autocrats such as Orban. The European People's Party, which has a majority in the EU parliament, plays a particularly dismal role in turning a blind eye to Orban's abuses.

Orbanomics

This remarkable tolerance for Orban's breed of authoritarian-populism is rooted in the fact that his policies are often business-friendly.

Orban used workers' anger to launch his authoritarian-populist project in 2010, but workers are not the true beneficiaries of the regime. Today, Hungary boasts the highest level of income inequality in the Visegrad region (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia). Orban believes that the time of the welfare state has ended and propagates a social-Darwinist model of "work-based society". In this model "those people who have nothing are worth just that", as Janos Lazar, former minister of the Prime Minister's Office (2012-2018) summed up the philosophy of the ruling elite in a leaked recording in 2011.

Orban's government is not so tight-fisted when it comes to businesses. Hungary offers Europe's lowest corporate tax rate (9%), a 15% flat income tax, generous financial subsidies, partnership agreements, and centrally expedited investment procedures. The beneficiaries go beyond Orban's cronies: the upper-

middle class, national capital and transnational corporations in the tech-intensive export sectors profit from Orbanomics.

While maintaining the alliance with business elites, Orban lost some of his previous working-class supporters. In 2014, Fidesz received fewer votes than in 2006, when they lost the election. But the government has profoundly distorted the electoral system in multiple waves since 2010, favouring Fidesz. It has also subjugated large parts of the media. All of these have so far helped Fidesz to stay in power.

The regime's stability increasingly depends on authoritarian-populist fixes, such as gerrymandering, clientelism, staffing independent institutions with party loyalists, restricting media pluralism, or publicly funding hate campaigns. Combining neoliberalism with an authoritarian state and nationalist chest-beating ensures that the financial victims of the regime turn against each other instead of forming a united opposition front.

The path forward

The decline of democracy and Orban's economic strategy are two sides of the same coin.

Around the world, cosmopolitan neoliberalism, with its focus on human rights and multilateralism, is on the decline. But social democracy is not reviving in its place: national-populist neoliberalism is on the rise. The scholar Reijer Hendrikse's term "neo-illiberalism" aptly captures this trend: instead of being opposed, neoliberal and illiberal tendencies reinforce each other.

This explains why, although an Orban-style authoritarian-populist might not be their first choice, European and other international elites have displayed remarkable flexibility in coming to terms with Hungary's authoritarian populist regime.

Fighting authoritarian populism requires recognising its embeddedness in business elites. But as the first step, the trust of workers needs to be earned back. Progressives have to embrace the state as a champion of social cohesion, convincing businesses along the way that inclusive development is in their long-term interest too.

Gabor Scheiring

Marie Curie Fellow, Bocconi University

Oxford vaccine trial pause won't have impact on Indian trials: Serum Institute CEO



Oxford vaccine trial. Photo - i.guim.co.uk

After clinical trials of the Covid-19 vaccine developed by the Oxford University and AstraZeneca have been halted after a participant had an adverse reaction in the UK-- Serum Institute of India has issued a statement to clear the air on the impending trials of the vaccine in India.

"Nothing untoward has been reported during the vaccine trials in India," Serum Institute CEO Adar Poonawalla told India Today on Wednesday.

"This incident in the UK will have no impact on the Indian vaccine trial being carried out by Serum Institute," said Adar Poonawalla, CEO of Serum Institute of India, that is conducting trials on the Oxford vaccine AZD1222 in India also known as COVISHIELD.

Adar Poonawalla added, "The reaction that has been reported is not directly linked to the vaccine. The person who has had the reaction had an existing neurological condition. During a vaccine trial such

events are common place."

"Our production timelines are on schedule as planned," the Serum Institute CEO further said.

The scientific community has stated that such hiccups are a part of the vaccine trials and that there is a lot of media scrutiny presently that the scientific community is not used to. "There are times when the patient falls ill or even dies after being administered dosing of the vaccine. It is a process that trials need to be halted. The trial investigators are following ethical procedures," said a vaccine expert from AIIMS, Delhi.

The question of whether the present halting of trials will impact the continuity of trial on the vaccine in India is an important one.

"It depends on what the recommendation from the trial DSMB is which will be reviewing the data, based on the one event and then make a recommendation. It will probably be convened urgently and so based on the decision, the implication on the ongoing trial and other planned trials will be clearer," said Anant Bhan, Researcher, Global Health, Bioethics and Health Policy.

"What they have done is good practice from a research and clinical trials perspective," he added.

But with so many hopes riding on a potential coronavirus vaccine and billion-dollar worth of deals, there is immense scrutiny and anticipation on the vaccine trials.

AstraZeneca PLC, which is working with a team of the University of Oxford, on Wednesday decided to temporarily pause the clinical trial of its coronavirus vaccine after one of the volunteers in the UK developed an "unexplained" illness. The candidate developed by Oxford University and AstraZeneca is one of the frontrunners in the race to find the coronavirus vaccine.



1.2 billion people live in 31 countries that are not sufficiently resilient to withstand ecological threats. Photo - Nasa

Climate crisis could displace 1.2bn people by 2050, report warns

More than 1 billion people face being displaced within 30 years as the climate crisis and rapid population growth drive an increase in migration with "huge impacts" for both the developing and developed worlds, according to an analysis.

The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), a thinktank that produces annual global terrorism and peace indexes, said 1.2 billion people lived in 31 countries that are not sufficiently resilient to withstand ecological threats, reports *The Guardian*.

Nineteen countries facing the highest number of threats, including water and food shortages and greater exposure to natural disasters, are also among the world's 40 least peaceful countries, the IEP's first ecological threat register found.

Many of the countries most at risk from ecological threats, including Nigeria, Angola, Burkina Faso and Uganda, are also predicted to experience significant population increases, the report noted, further driving mass displacements.

"This will have huge social and political impacts, not just in the developing world, but also in the developed, as mass displacement will lead to larger refugee flows to the most developed countries," Steve Killelea, the institute's founder, said.

"Ecological threats pose serious challenges to global peace. Over the next 30 years, lack of access to food and water will only increase without urgent global cooperation. In the absence of action, civil unrest, riots and conflict will most likely increase."

The study uses United Nations and other data to assess 157 countries' exposure to eight ecological threats, then assesses their capacity to withstand them. It found that 141 countries faced at least one ecological threat by 2050, with sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa the regions facing the largest number.

Some countries, such as India and China, are most threatened by water scarcity, it concluded, while others such as Pakistan, Iran, Kenya, Mozambique and Madagascar face a combination of threats and a growing incapacity to deal with them.

* More on Page 6

Amazon's Jeff Bezos tops Forbes richest list, pandemic knocks Trump lower

Amazon AMZN.O Chief Executive Jeff Bezos topped Forbes' list of richest Americans for the third year in a row, while US President Donald Trump's ranking dropped as the coronavirus pandemic slammed his office buildings, hotels and resorts, the magazine said Tuesday.

The aggregate wealth of the Forbes 400 list rose to a record \$3.2 trillion, as the richest Americans continued to do well even though the pandemic has devastated the economy, which is short about 11 million jobs compared to where it was in February.

Eric Yuan, chief executive officer of Zoom Video Communications, which has become ubiquitous in the work-from-home era, was one of 18 newcomers on the list with a net worth of \$11 billion.

Trump's ranking dropped to No. 352 from 275 last year and his net worth fell to \$2.5 billion from \$3.1 billion, as office buildings, hotels and resorts, have suffered during the pandemic. His business, the Trump Organization, owns property in all three categories.

Trump has long refused to release his tax records,



Amazon's Jeff Bezos. Photo - reuters.com

and has been locked in a battle with Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance, who subpoenaed Trump for eight years of personal and corporate returns.

The annual list can serve as a way to track the wealthiest people in the country who hold the most power, said Kerry Dolan, assistant managing editor of wealth at Forbes, in an interview with Reuters TV.

"As a society, we all should know who is behind the biggest companies and what they're doing with their money," she said.

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Sikhs to be counted as a separate ethnic group in 2020 US census for first time

For the first time in US history, the Census Bureau will count Sikhs as a "distinct" ethnic group. This is a significant step towards establishing a separate identity away from the composite "Asian Indian" category for people from India who are broadly known as Indian-Americans, reports India Today.

Some experts believe the decision potentially gives ammunition to Sikh separatists who promote the idea of Khalistan from the comfort of their homes in the US, Canada and other western countries.

Others stress there is no cause for anxiety and a counting will help Sikhs become less "invisible" in the context of US government policies.

The Census Bureau is currently engaged in a decennial count by mail, phone and online, and the process is expected to end September 30. Sikhs will be allowed to "self identify" if they write "Sikh" in answer to the question on race and will be counted separately under a unique code. Further, they will go under the broader category of "Asian" and not under "Asian Indian" as was the case in the 2010 count when "Sikh" was seen as a "religious" response.

A decade-long campaign

Sikh community activists have been campaigning for a separate category on the Census Bureau form for more than a decade on grounds they needed an accurate count to better serve their members, access federal funds and engage their political representatives more effectively. But most importantly to protect Sikhs from hate crimes in the wake of 9/11 terrorist attacks when Sikhs were targeted because of their appearance.

The Census Bureau's decision, announced in March, was taken after years of research and outreach, officials



said on background. But some experts criticised the process, warning of long-term political and social implications, stretching far beyond the borders of the United States. In fact, stretching all the way to India via Canada and Britain. They say it's another blow to the already fracturing "Indian" identity abroad.

Sikh community leaders have made a conscious and discernable effort to create a separate identity in the US after 9/11, raising awareness while delicately distinguishing themselves from Muslim Americans who may also wear beards. Sikh spokesmen have gone to great lengths to insist Sikhism is sui generis, and completely separate from Hinduism.

Struggle bears fruit

The Census Bureau's decision, therefore, is seen as a huge victory by Sikhs who were one of the first immigrants from India to arrive on American shores more than 120

years ago. In the early stages, they suffered constant discrimination as they struggled to establish themselves as farmers. Seen as Hindus by immigration officials and barred from citizenship along with other migrants from India, Sikhs have struggled for long.

"Sikhs have borne the brunt of hate and bias crimes, especially since the tragedy of 9/11. Sikh children in schools across the nation are bullied at twice the national average," said Gundeep Singh, media coordinator for United Sikhs. The Sikh Coalition, an organisation working to raise awareness, recorded more than 300 incidents of hate crimes in the months following the attacks on September 11, 2001 by al-Qaeda.

The main arguments for a separate count centre around the fact that Census data is used to allocate \$675 billion in public funds for schools, roads and parks and apportion seats in the House of Representatives. In addition, without a definitive number, Sikhs can't engage political leaders to argue for better services, community leaders argue.

While a reliable count is necessary -- the number of Sikhs in the US ranges from 500,000 to a million -- some academics have questioned the Census Bureau's process and understanding of the complexities involved. An academic who studies immigrant communities said the whole exercise largely "flew under the radar."

There is a difference between publishing a notice in the Federal Register seeking comments and actively reaching out to various stakeholders, he said, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

"The process has the risk of being misconstrued as a covert operation where the Census Bureau had already made up its mind without consulting a full range of experts and Indian community voices," he said.

US to withdraw 2,200 troops from Iraq by end of September

Gen Kenneth McKenzie told reporters the troop presence would be reduced from about 5,200 to 3,000 during September.

Those remaining will continue to advise and assist Iraqi security forces in "rooting out the final remnants" of the jihadist group Islamic State (IS).

Last month, US President Donald Trump reaffirmed that he planned to pull all troops out of Iraq as soon as possible. He is expected to hail the reduction of forces as progress towards his 2016 election campaign promise to disentangle the US from "endless wars".

The presence of US troops has also become a major issue in Iraq since the US killed top Iranian general Qasem Soleimani in a drone strike in Baghdad in January.

What is the reason for the move?

During a visit to Baghdad, Gen McKenzie said the US military had confidence in the Iraqi Security Forces' increased ability to operate independently and to deal with the continuing threat of IS,



which once controlled huge swathes of Iraq.

"In recognition of the great progress the Iraqi forces have made and in consultation and co-ordination with the government of Iraq and our coalition partners, the United States has decided to reduce our troop presence in Iraq from about 5,200 to 3,000 troops during the month of September," he told reporters.

"This reduced footprint allows us to continue advising and assisting our Iraqi

partners in rooting out the final remnants of [IS] in Iraq and ensuring its enduring defeat," he added.

Gen McKenzie said the US would continue expanding "partner capacity programmes", and that its ultimate goal was having local forces who were capable of preventing a resurgence of IS and securing Iraq's sovereignty without help.

The decision also follows a backlash over alleged comments Mr Trump made calling American soldiers killed in action

"losers" and "suckers". The president has denied the claims.

On Monday, Mr Trump also suggested there was a rift with top military leaders, telling reporters: "I'm not saying the military's in love with me."

He added that while the soldiers are, Pentagon officials "probably aren't because they want to do nothing but fight wars so that all of those wonderful companies that make the bombs and make the planes and make everything else stay happy".

The US is also to withdraw troops from Afghanistan and Germany.

All American soldiers could be out of Afghanistan by next April per an agreement signed with the Taliban earlier this year.

In Germany, close to 12,000 troops will be relocated in a move that has seen pushback from lawmakers who believe it will embolden Russia.

Sameer Sharma, Data Science Consultant currently based in the US and former Central Banker, argues in today's interview for a "gradualist risk managed border opening strategy". The collapse in aggregate demand in the economy, he says, is significant and "neither the MIC, interest rate cuts, moratoriums on interest payments nor the wage assistance scheme will be able to make up for the large slack if we do not adopt a gradualist risk managed border opening strategy and implement stimulus measures more efficiently and soon." As regards what type of recovery we should expect post Covid, he says that real economic indicators such as unemployment, seasonality adjusted monthly Government tax revenues and near zero tourist arrival numbers point to a Mauritian L-shaped recovery.

Mauritius Times: How is the Mauritian economy performing relative to the rest of the world more than eight months since the start of the Covid-19 crisis?

Sameer Sharma: As at the beginning of September 2020, high frequency economic data of major developed economies in North America, Europe, Australia and emerging China continued to point to a still fragile but sustained recovery with GDP growth now casts and alternative data showcasing a recovery to levels that are now nearing activity levels last seen in the pre-Covid period.

While these growth indicators are positive, doubts persist. 70% of growth indicators are up compared to last month and are part of a trend seen since April but unemployment rates remain high: 8% in the United States, down from 14.7% in April. In the Eurozone, unemployment rates have moved little because of the social shock absorber system, but recently the unemployment rate has begun to rise from 7.3% to 7.9%: a limited variation but potentially the beginning of a trend that should be followed carefully.

The same applies to default rates especially for non-investment grade companies (Anything below this 'BBB' rating is considered non-investment grade. If the company or bond is rated 'BB' or lower it is known as junk grade, in which case the probability that the company will repay its issued debt is deemed to be speculative). Many other emerging economies which are less prepared to deal with the pandemic or like Mauritius which have chosen to close borders are lagging behind with Mauritius being one of the worst laggards right now.

Sameer Sharma, Data Science Consultant & Former Central Banker

"Mauritius is stagnating and the outlook is not rosy"



cators such as unemployment, seasonality adjusted monthly Government tax re-venues and near zero tourist arrival numbers point to a Mauritian L-shaped recovery. In sum, Mauritius is stagnating and the outlook is not rosy.

Mauritius hosted 1.3 million tourists last year, a figure roughly equal to its population and we have a large number of residents and local citizens stuck abroad. Wages have also been cut and all this is impacting demand.

Furthermore, when you speak about these unconventional monetary policy

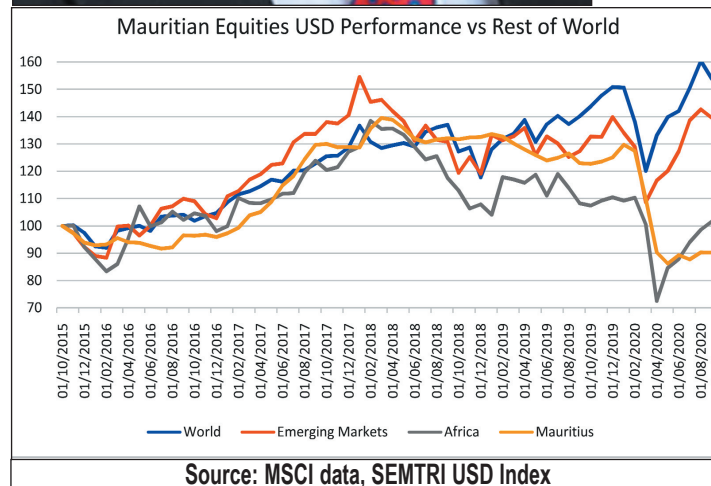
“Many of these companies operating in the tourism and manufacturing sectors did not need more debt but a more optimal capital structure that would correspond to the realities of a post-Covid world. This was why I wrote extensively about the need for convertible preferential shares v/s further debt. I also spoke about the need to have a modern private equity type fund which would strike the right balance between taxpayers getting a decent risk-adjusted return for the bailout and for these companies to get the breathing room...”

*** Why is Mauritius lagging behind despite more than 150 Billion Rupees of unconventional monetary policy, roughly 34.5% (150Bn/435Bn) of this year's projected GDP?**

The Mauritian economy was already out of breath before the Covid-19 crisis started because we have failed to tackle our structural ills, and secondly because the non-financial private sector itself which had unspectacular free cash flow to debt metrics and return on capital metrics coming into the crisis had limited investment capacity. The blacklisting of Mauritius has not helped in terms of global business fee income and the worse is to come if we remain there for

measures, the devil in Mauritius is not about ideas but about implementation. For example, the Bank of Mauritius unlike other central banks which are engaging in asset purchases to quickly throw money into the system decided to expand its liabilities by apparently issuing Bank of Mauritius paper in order to mop up excess liquidity and grant this money to Government.

“The Mauritian economy was already out of breath before the Covid-19 crisis started because we have failed to tackle our structural ills, and secondly because the non-financial private sector itself which had unspectacular free cash flow to debt metrics and return on capital metrics coming into the crisis had limited investment capacity. The blacklisting of Mauritius has not helped in terms of global business fee income and the worse is to come if we remain there for long...”



*** Have the unconventional monetary and fiscal measures taken by the Government worked so far?**

Mauritian policy makers have announced more unconventional monetary policy (quasi helicopter money) measures than almost any other country on earth as a percentage of its GDP, but the SEMTRI1 which had already been lagging behind its emerging and developed market peers over the past 5 years has barely recovered and is now well behind even African equities. Other real economic indi-

long.

Foreign villa investment flows and tourism receipts which kept old skeletons in the closet for years have seen their taps shut off. The collapse in aggregate demand in the economy is significant and neither the MIC, interest rate cuts, moratoriums on interest payments nor the wage assistance scheme will be able to make up for the large slack if we do not adopt a gradualist risk managed border opening strategy and implement stimulus measures more efficiently and soon.

As at June of 2020, the Bank of Mauritius had some MUR 79.6 Billion of monetary policy instruments as liabilities compared to more than MUR 128 Billion in January and as at last week had increased it back to MUR 110 Billion. For the BoM to make the grant, it must increase the amount outstanding by at least MUR 60 Billion.

'Unemployment, seasonality adjusted monthly Government tax revenues and near zero tourist arrival numbers point to a Mauritian L-shaped recovery'

☞ Cont. from page 7

At the same time, the BoM must have enough of these monetary policy instruments so that it can maintain interest rates at a level that is consistent with its monetary policy objective.

All this puts a lot of pressure on its liabilities. The Bank of Mauritius had MUR45 Billion in capital and reserves (equity) in June which is lower than the projected increase in its liabilities in order to fund the one-off grant to Government. Unless there is continued depreciation of the Rupee which will bloat the Rupee value of its foreign assets as has been happening so far, the BoM will have a tough time financing this grant and maintaining an appropriate level of economic capital.

“The level of Mathematics and Science is declining even at the local public university level; do an internet speed test on Mauritian connections and compare it to the rest of the world and see how we rank; look at the ranking of Mauritius when it comes to African Fintech startups which are receiving funding; look at the publicly available AI strategy paper for Mauritius; search for when we plan to have 5G in the smart cities and on the island... do all these and you'll end up with the conclusion that we are perhaps aiming for Zimbabwe but certainly not Estonia...”

You can understand that the way the stimulus has been designed can slow down the implementation and create long lasting balance sheet complications and monetary policy implementation credibility concerns, which is why the BoM must change its strategy. It would have been better for the Government to issue a 100-year perpetual bond bought by the central bank which would have increased the latter's assets rather than the current strategy which pushes up its liabilities. Central banks for this reason expand their balance sheets (purchase bonds to increase assets) not their liabilities. The Zimbabweans had done a similar move with their central bank a decade ago. This is not the example to emulate.

The bulk of Government expenses is for now being financed with debt issuance and by the time this crisis is over our debt levels will be unsustainable even with BoM grants and we will not be able to reconcile this debt burden with that of a low tax regime anymore. This analysis ignores unfunded pension liabilities which will come home to roost soon enough. The risk of a credit downgrade will be much higher post crisis and this is not good for global business companies' deposits held by domestic commercial banks and beyond.

*** Countries like the Maldives, Greece, Israel, just to name a few, opened their borders and saw an increase in Covid cases. Wouldn't opening up our borders not hurt the economy even more if we need to impose another lockdown subsequently?**

We are talking about 60% to 70% effective rate for a Covid-19 vaccine. The current Russian and Chinese vaccines have an effective rate of less than 50%. Even with



a vaccine, we will need to live with this virus and that assumes that everyone in Mauritius gets vaccinated. There is little clarity from Mauritian policy makers in terms of what will trigger a more pronounced opening of the border.

So what will we do: shut down or have limited border openings for months or years to come and take zero risk? Are we even pre-ordering vaccines? A zero risk strategy is not a realistic strategy.

I fear that the current political landscape is influencing the "it is complicated to open the borders" strategy. The more you suppress aggregate demand and bleed corporate balance sheets, the more the Zombie companies you shall create. You will suffer the consequences for years to come in the form of structural unemployment and subdued investment levels. Jobless people suffer too and a balance must be struck in order to avoid rising default risks.

The lack of job creation in Mauritius, and falling tax revenues and increasing debt is not sustainable. Mauritius needs a gradualist risk managed strategy, and it needs competent people who are willing to take accountability and manage the re-opening of the borders so that we minimize the risk of a second lockdown. Beyond hotels, think about what is happening to the bloated foreign villa real estate market right now!

*** Are you advocating for the complete re-opening**

of our borders?

No, I am not for a complete opening of borders at this stage, but we must start in phases and do it soon as a zero-risk strategy is a negative return strategy for sure.

If you just take Beachcomber, Lux Island Resorts, Sun Resorts and Constance Hotels Services Ltd and just focus on their Mauritius sourced revenues and adjust for the first quarter of 2020, we are talking about more than MUR 14 Billion in foregone revenues for this year alone on aggregate. It will take years for revenues to come back which means that the bleed in revenues will be much more than this just for these companies and I am ignoring Air Mauritius, restaurants, smaller hotels, sugar companies turned smart city developers and so on.

The rest of the world is not crazy to open up. They have realized that maintaining closures can do more harm than good especially when death rates due to Covid-19 are manageable. Mistakes are being made but they are learning from them. We must learn to live with the virus but with strict sanitary norms and do risk management. Sure, we will not be flooded with tourists at first, but it will help us get ready and be well-prepared and also it will help us not lose more market share.

“The lack of job creation in Mauritius, and falling tax revenues and increasing debt is not sustainable. Mauritius needs a gradualist risk managed strategy, and it needs competent people who are willing to take accountability and manage the re-opening of the borders so that we minimize the risk of a second lockdown. Beyond hotels, think about what is happening to the bloated foreign villa real estate market right now!...”

*** Won't the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd help make up for the slack?**

If one were to assume that all will be over soon with a magical vaccine and that Mauritius will have a miraculous V-shaped recovery, then surely that would amount to wishful thinking.

When I wrote about the need to engage in unconventional monetary policy measures way back in early March, I did it because I was familiar with the realities of local corporate balance sheets and also because I think this virus and its consequences on the global economy will be with us for much longer than we could just borrow for. This crisis is a multi-round game under Game Theory and the recovery will be gradual and fragile for Mauritius. There was also a need to act quickly because Mauritius will not benefit from low levels of inflation forever and will at best only have one shot to get things right.

Many of these companies operating in the tourism and manufacturing sectors did not need more debt but a more optimal capital structure that would correspond to the realities of a post-Covid world. This was why I wrote extensively about the need for convertible preferential shares v/s further debt.

☞ Cont. on page 9

'If one were to assume that all will be over soon with a magical vaccine and that Mauritius will have a miraculous V-shaped recovery: Wishful thinking'

☞ Cont. on page 8

I also spoke about the need to have a modern private equity type fund which would strike the right balance between taxpayers getting a decent risk-adjusted return for the bailout and for these companies to get the breathing room they needed in the form of capital that was needed. A gradual opening up of borders with strict rules will also help generate some revenues.

If taxpayers who own the central bank do not get a decent return on investment for the risk they will be taking, then the populist wrath will be terrible. Think about the losses and opportunity costs that can come from a badly managed MIC which loses money and is unable to save jobs. Think about smaller business owners and the average person who sees large firms getting bailouts while he is left with peanuts.



“The bulk of Government expenses is for now being financed with debt issuance and by the time this crisis is over our debt levels will be unsustainable even with BoM grants and we will not be able to reconcile this debt burden with that of a low tax regime anymore. This analysis ignores unfunded pension liabilities which will come home to roost soon enough. The risk of a credit downgrade will be much higher post crisis ...”

A suboptimal outcome for the MIC is worse than no MIC. The idea of what is now known as the MIC was to create an off-balance sheet and bankruptcy remote special purpose vehicle with good governance like that of Western peers. It would itself have an optimal funding structure financed by the state and the central bank in order to optimize its returns, and then invest in distressed albeit viable companies accompanying them in this long journey as a partner as they restructure and change business models.

In order to avoid any perception of conflict of interest and get the Government out of managing private companies, I wrote about the need to have a qualified board with relevant experience in global or private markets to issue an investment policy statement. It would not just focus on returns but on impact investing criteria especially on the jobs front, and outsource the investment job to investment professionals who have proven experience and track record in distressed investing or private equity. This is not a field where one can be penny wise and pound foolish, nor can anyone google for this kind of knowledge.

I still believe that we need to move in this direction and fast because the struc-

tural ills which plague the private sector will not magically disappear post Covid-19; nor will the State be able to remain the sole sheriff in town when it comes to investing in the economy for much longer. You need a healthy private sector to do that.

*** You spoke about structural ills which plague the Mauritian economy and you paint a gloomy outlook. Lord Desai recently spoke about Mauritius needing to follow the Estonia model, but that was before the onset of the Covid pandemic. As someone who works in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) space in the United States, what are your thoughts about Mauritius following that?**

Mauritius is an easy fix if you put the right people in the right places. I am concerned about the future of my country, but I am hopeful that at least one of the unintended consequences of this crisis is a less benign population who will demand better from the Government.

Regarding Estonia, we need to be realistic. The level of Mathematics and Science is declining even at the local public university level; do an internet speed test on Mauritian connections and compare it to the rest of the world and see how

we rank; look at the ranking of Mauritius when it comes to African Fintech startups which are receiving funding; look at the publicly available AI strategy paper for Mauritius; search for when we plan to have 5G in the smart cities and on the island... do all these and you'll end up with the conclusion that we are perhaps aiming for Zimbabwe but certainly not Estonia. Google, Huawei and Microsoft are setting up AI research hubs in the continent, not in Mauritius.

*** How do we correct that perception?**

Rather than building a high-tech hub with bricks and mortar, we should be investing in our data infrastructure and we should be busy revamping our education system. The University of Mauritius is free yes, but how about quality?

In the United States more than one third of companies struggle to implement a profitable AI strategy because AI is not easy. It is about data quality, it is about having the right information architecture with scalability in place, it is about having the best and brightest (think openness to immigrants), it is about having good AI governance to avoid unintended consequences of AI, etc. From watching parliamentary debates with the current Speaker, do we seriously believe that a sophisticated debate can be held about AI regulations? As one former Governor of the Bank of Mauritius told me last year, Mauritius is already full of artificially intelligent political nominees. We have a different kind of AI over here.

Take the Safe City project which apparently has facial recognition capabilities. Typically, one uses Convolutional Neural Networks with transfer learning in order to obtain high detection rates, but what I can tell you is that such models have been found to be as racist as the

“The rest of the world is not crazy to open up. They have realized that maintaining closures can do more harm than good especially when death rates due to Covid-19 are manageable. Mistakes are being made but they are learning from them. We must learn to live with the virus but with strict sanitary norms and do risk management. Sure, we will not be flooded with tourists at first, but it will help us get ready and be well-prepared and also it will help us not lose more market share...”

data which feeds them especially against African Americans having high false positive rates (rejections and security alerts). Did we even think about such unintended consequences in Mauritius? Will we conduct bias testing? Do we know how to?

Natural language processing models like BERT which leverage transformers and which you have all used when you google has been found to be racist and sexist. Credit underwriting models using AI models, which are not well tuned, discriminate too. AI can be good in that it allows you to replace humans who do mundane repetitive tasks and, if well-tuned, it can be a force for good and increased productivity given its ability to scale up. But if we think that building a technology park on the island will bring AI, we are indeed living in Dodo Land.

1. The Total Return Index, the SEMTRI, is an index, which tracks the price performances of the constituents of the SEMDEX and ensures that the dividends paid by these constituents are reinvested. (Stock Exchange of Mauritius)





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1956-2020

From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

4th Year No 146

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 24 May 1957

• *Nothing can bring you peace but yourself; nothing, but the triumph of principles.* -- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Thank You, Mr Johnson

Somduth Bhuckory

An interesting debate took place at the request of the Labour Party on British colonial territories, which do not hit the headlines usually and the South African Protectorates in the House of Commons, on the 6th of this month. It started at 3.44 pm. and ended at one minute to ten in the night. Sixteen members took part in the debate – eight from the Labour side and eight from the Conservative side.

much associated with the continent of Africa. The sooner it is regarded as an isolated island in the Indian Ocean with its own peculiar problems, the better.

The debate has also given students of colonial affairs an excellent opportunity of comparing notes. Just as the Commonwealth, the British Colonial Empire is a big family. We cannot be indifferent to what is happening elsewhere. We can always profit from the experience of others and learn from their mistakes. The progress of other territories should act as an incentive to better efforts. The way and means adopted

very start when he said: "I shall hope to show that in British colonial policy today we have one of the most inspiring endeavours which have ever been undertaken in the whole history of humanity." He then proceeded to consider "some of the more recent achievements and some of the developments which are now in progress in various colonies." In this context he dealt briefly with Ghana, the Federation of Malaya, Nigeria, Tanganyika, Zanzibar and in some detail with Mauritius, Singapore, Sierra Leone, the West Indies, British Guiana, Aden and Somaliland Protectorates, Miss Jennie Lee (Labour) interrupted Mr Profumo while he was speaking on British Guiana to know the effect of nomination, "whether the wishes of the electorate will be respected." Mr Profumo made this striking declaration: "It would be wholly wrong for us to say anything by way of committing the Governor or Her Majesty's Government as to how the nominations will be made." Even when Mr Callaghan referred to the guarantee given to Mauritius that "the nominations procedure will not be used in such a way as to frustrate the will of the electorate," Mr Profumo remained adamant. As regards Mauritius, Mr Profumo outlined the main features of the London Agreement.

* * *

What the other Members said was not as comprehensive as what Mr Callaghan and Mr Profumo had said. Most of them chose one or two specific territories and dealt with them. In the end Mr Creech Jones (Labour) wound up for the Opposition and Mr Lennox-Boyd for the Government.

We, in Mauritius, are particularly interested in what Mr James Johnson and Mr Fenner Brockway say at the House of Commons. As was to be expected, Mr Johnson spoke with knowledge and conviction on Mauritius. In a nutshell, he described Mauritius thus: "The colonial shoe is pinching here and there, but in one Colony it does not pinch, and that is Mauritius. It has given the Foreign Secretary a lovely pair of carpet slippers." Referring to the proposal of dividing Mauritius into 40-single member constituencies, Mr Johnson said: "I think that the task is almost impossible. I say that advisedly." And he had this to say about the list system of voting: "I am not altogether happy about what is the suggested alternative." About the ministerial system, Mr Johnson said: "There are to be nine Ministers. Are they to be a loose, inchoate coalition of nine in a ministerial set-up and not those pale shades – the former Liaison Members?"

In the course of his speech, Mr Johnson

paid a glowing tribute to Mauritians, for which we should be grateful to him: "The Mauritians are not unfit to look after their own affairs, as some people alleged Africans are. They have a high standard of culture and are a society of people who can talk and debate."

After dealing with the constitutional proposals, Mr Johnson said: "When the elections are over, two things should be looked at." And he referred to unemployment and overpopulation.

In conclusion, Mr Johnson sounded this note of warning: "As I said earlier, the Colonial Secretary has a pair of Mauritius carpet slippers to walk in today, and not a pair of shoes that pinch him; but the shoes may pinch him in the years to come if he does not take steps in the near future for the welfare and development of this beautiful island in the Indian Ocean."

Mr Fenner Brockway spoke exclusively on the South African protectorates – Bechuanaland, Swaziland and Basutoland. Do we take it that he was in perfect agreement with Mr Johnson?

One other member, Mr R.T. Paget (Labour) deserves to be quoted. Speaking of the Kenya Constitution, he remarked: "I think that in any multi-racial society we will never get a satisfactory Constitution by consent. I do not think that that will ever happen, because a Constitution by consent will have built into it so many bargains that it will be unworkable." Watch the miracle in Mauritius, Mr Paget.

* * *

Winding up the debate for the Opposition Mr Creech Jones said: "I feel that this ventilation of problems is helpful and that it reveals the very genuine interest of Members and their strong feeling for the future of the dependent Commonwealth. That is true even if the attendance has not been what some of us would have liked." Mr Creech Jones did not speak on any colony in particular but on colonial policy in general.

And winding up for the Government, Mr Lennox-Boyd dealt with a number of specific territories. He took in Mauritius when he saw that he had still two minutes unexpectedly available! He referred briefly to the London Agreement to fill up part of the time. So, it was only by accident that Mr Lennox-Boyd thought of us. Is the magic of the slippers wearing off?

When we reached the end of the debate, our heart was full of gratitude for Mr James Johnson. And so we say to him: Thank you, Mr Johnson, for all you have done for us in that memorable debate.

The full text is available online.

Please consult:

www.mauritiustimes.com



James Johnson, second from right, with the Headscarf Revolutionaries (four Hull fishwives whose heroism in taking on the fishing industry has saved countless lives at sea) at the House of Commons in 1968. Photo - Daily Mirror

We have read avidly the Hansard containing an account of the debate. We were eager to know how much Mauritius came into the picture. Our curiosity was particularly heightened because we had been told that the London Agreement was elaborated in consultation with members of the British Labour Party. We wanted to know what those members or anyone of them had to say on the Agreement. We may say at once that we have been disappointed: our curiosity is still unsatisfied. Only Mr James Johnson, the official member for Rugby and the unofficial member for Mauritius, spoke of us in some detail from the Labour side. We are disappointed because while Mr Johnson reflected more or less the views of the **Mauritius Times**, nobody stood up for the Agreement.

This particular debate took place at a very convenient time for us Mauritians. It reflects what little interest Members of Parliament take in our little island at a time when our Constitution is in the making. It should prompt us to make Mauritius known to leading Members of Parliament so that at material times they may be in a good position to appraise our progress and make sensible suggestions for our further development. We should not wait until a delegation goes to London to brief them. One has an irresistible feeling that Mauritius is too

elsewhere to achieve self-government should inspire us to work for our own salvation.

* * *

Let us now consider the highlights of the debate, keeping Mauritius in view. Mr James Callaghan (Labour) opened the debate. He started off with Tanganyika. He explained Mr Nyerere's policy tersely in these terms: "His case is that minorities should not have more influence than majorities." From Tanganyika he passed on to West Africa and he dealt with Nigeria and Sierra Leone. He then added a word about Singapore and rounded off with British Guiana. Mr Callaghan mentioned Mauritius only in passing while speaking on the Constitution of British Guiana. He said: "I also understand that in the agreement which has been reached for the forthcoming elections in Mauritius it has been promised that the Governor will not use his powers of nomination to frustrate the will of the electorate."

* * *

Mr John Profumo, the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, followed Mr Callaghan. It will be remembered that it was Mr Profumo who discussed with our delegation on behalf of the Government.

Mr Profumo struck a sublime note at the

AI: This is the natural evolution

Bhavesh Jas Canhea

Artificial intelligence (AI) has been showing high positive impact in our daily life in many different sectors. Advanced technology and new customers' demands have accelerated the AI process of adoption and its speed of propagation. The insurance sector is realizing the need of this game-changing concept to radically alter the relation between insurance players and their customers.

The drivers for the adoption of AI are numerous, but three trends are emerging: first, the adoption of Big Data along with the explosion of multi-format gathered information require finding cost-effective solutions to efficiently make good decision. Second, recent economic pressure has driven organisations to make archaic processes more efficient by minimising the delays and guaranteeing information security in an environment where less human resources are operating. And third, the power needed in terms of AI computation and the ability to follow higher and higher demand has only been reached recently, mostly within cloud architecture.

More specific to the insurance sector, customers' behaviour and new communication technologies have changed the traditional landscape. Understanding these changes and being able to respond to the new operational and functional needs are



Artificial intelligence at work. Photo - innovationnetwork.ieee.org

too complex to be handled manually, and thus require relying on automated learning rules and patterns from data utilizing Machine Learning approaches.

Also, the new generations of users are more empowered: they were born within a digital environment, they demand high-level customer experience while considering quality as a standard, they use vocal interface, comment quickly on social media, want to be in control while demanding transparency and security, and are supported by strong regulations

about privacy and traceability. They are also massively using mobile and cloud to access their professional and personal life on their smartphones, anywhere and at any time. Lastly, they are impatient; they live in an era of instant gratification brought by digital vehicles such as Facebook or Instagram.

Latest innovations in technology and adoption of smart mobile devices have changed in depth the way documents are captured, read and analysed. Since tablets and smartphones have cameras,

they become part of the document management process, at the same level of smart and connected scanners. AI concepts and mostly Deep Neural Networks (DNN) along with piloted scanning, document classification, automatic data extraction and data validation are done today almost entirely at the device level, with the absence of or very little human intervention. DNN ensures more than 99% of automated recognition of complex documents, such as handwritten ones, mobile snaps, barcodes, multi-formats, multi-language, low quality pictures, unstructured and unconstrained documents. However, integrating all AI and DNN features into the claim processing may easily reduce by 70% the overall handling time, reduce financial costs and dramatically increase customer satisfaction.

Artificial Intelligence, including behavioural intelligence, secured and proven capture of documents, automatic reading, classification and extraction of data independently from language and formats, supported by attended RPA and DMS, can only grow in importance and capability

Finally, leaving a large part of the processing to Artificial Intelligence will free staff from unnecessary manual tasks and validations, and develop human intelligent interactions.

This is not a revolution, this is a natural evolution.

Bhavesh Jas Canhea is a Software Developer at Swan Mauritius

Are we heading towards a modern democracy?

Shakun S Harris

Rarely has democracy been so acclaimed yet so breached, so promoted yet so disrespected, so important yet so disappointing as under the new regime in Mauritius.

It is striking how eager governments have become to pass themselves off as 'democracies'. Why else, for example, would so ruthless a leader as Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov choose to stage elections? Why bother? He heads a government that has imprisoned some 7000 people for political and religious reasons, routinely tortured detainees, and as recently as 2005 massacred hundreds of protesters in Andijan. No one dared mount a serious challenge to his rule in the December 2007 elections, and even a constitutional prohibition against a third seven-year presidential term did not stand in his way. Yet, this brutal president found utility in holding an electoral charade to legitimize his reign. So, in recent years, have Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, Mwai Kibaki of Kenya, Than Shwe of Burma, and Vladimir Putin of Russia.

“In Mauritius, people have just had enough seeing the same heads bob up as soon as elections are announced. Each wave of a major election in the country has brought the favourite slogan of all 'we want change'. Paul Berenger, who should now be considered the dean of all political parties' members and leaders, has brandished the coinage of 'change' under the purple flag of his party. And yet, today change is again sought...”

The task the regimes face is to appear to embrace democratic principles while avoiding any risk of succumbing to popular preferences. Electoral fraud, political intimidation, press censorship, repression of civil society, even police rule have all been used to curtail the prospect that the proclaimed process of democratization might actually lead to a popular say in government.

Media are essential for conveying popular concerns between elections - a necessary input because a single vote cast every few years is a crude and insufficient method to make popular concerns known. It is thus no surprise that governments trying to control the democratic process seek to silence the press. The nation's voice is rising to a certain

level, but is curtailed by all the machinations the ruling dispensation is resorting to.

We cringe to realise that there is no International Convention on Democracy, no widely ratified treaty affirming how a government must behave to earn the democracy label. The meaning of democracy lies too much in the eye of the beholder. It is not that pseudo-democratic leaders gain much legitimacy at home. The local population knows all too bitterly what a farce the elections really are. At best, these leaders gain the benefit of feigned compliance with local laws requiring elections.

In Mauritius, people have just had enough seeing the same heads bob up as

soon as elections are announced. Each wave of a major election in the country has brought the favourite slogan of all 'we want change'. Paul Berenger, who should now be considered the dean of all political parties' members and leaders, has brandished the coinage of 'change' under the purple flag of his party. And yet, today change is again sought. One should then ask: what type of change was brought about by each party which came to power to form a government?

But if 'the road to democracy' permits locking up political opponents, dismissing independent lawyers, and silencing the independent press, it is easy to see why tyrants the world over would be tempted to believe that they, too, might be eligible. As such unworthy claimants as the leaders of Egypt, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, and Nigeria wrap themselves in the democracy mantle with scant international objection, the concept of democracy gets cheapened, its key human rights components cast aside.

Is a nation of 1.3 millions in population turning to this type of disguised democracy?

The full text is available online. Please consult: www.mauritiustimes.com

In a light vein

Hilarious laws not taught at school

Law of equality:

The time taken by a wife when she says 'I'll get ready in 5 minutes' is exactly equal to the time taken by husband when he says 'I'll call you in 5 minutes!'

Law of Queues:

If you change queues, the one you just left will start to move faster than the one you are in now.

Law of Telephone:

When you dial a wrong number, you never get a busy tone.

Law of Mechanical Repair:

After your hands become coated with grease, your nose will begin to itch.

Law of the Workshop:

Any tool when dropped will roll to the least accessible corner.

Bath Theorem:

When the body is immersed in water, the telephone rings.

Law of Encounters:

The probability of meeting someone you know increases when you are with someone you don't want to

be seen with.

Law of the Results:

When you try to prove to someone that a machine won't work, it will.

Law of Bio-Mechanics:

The severity of the itch is inversely proportional to the reach.

Theatre Rule:

People with the seats at the farthest from the entry arrive last.

Law of Coffee:

As soon as you sit down for a cup of hot coffee, your boss will ask you to do something which will last until the coffee is cold.

Law of Proposals:

After you accept a proposal you will get a better one.

Law of Getting Late:

When you reach early for something it will never start on time.

Law of Exams:

If you didn't read a page which is of least importance, the first question will be from that page.

Management Lessons

During a robbery in Hong Kong, the bank robber shouted to everyone in the bank: "Don't move. The money belongs to the government. Your life belongs to you." Everyone in the bank laid down quietly.

This is called "mind changing concept" - changing the conventional way of thinking.

When a lady lay on the table provocatively, the robber shouted at her: "Please be civilised! This is a robbery and not a rape!"

This is called "being professional". Focus only on what you are trained to do!

When the bank robbers returned home, the younger robber (MBA trained) told the older robber (who has only completed Year 6 in primary school): "Big brother, let's count how much we got."

The older robber rebutted and said: "You are very stupid. There is so much money it will take us a long time to count. Tonight, the TV news will tell us how much we robbed from the bank!"

This is called "experience". Nowadays, experience is more important than paper qualifications!

After the robbers had left, the bank manager told the bank supervisor to call the police quickly. But the supervisor said to him: "Wait! Let us take out \$10 million from the bank for ourselves and add it to the \$70 million that we have previously embezzled from the bank."

This is called "swim with the tide" - converting an unfavourable situation to your advantage!

The supervisor says: "It will be good if there is a robbery every month."

This is called "changing priority" - personal happiness is more important than your job.

The next day, the TV news reported that \$100 million was taken from the bank. The robbers counted and counted and counted, but they could only count \$20 million.

The robbers were very angry and complained: "We risked our lives and only took \$20 million. The bank manager took \$80 million with a snap of his fingers. It looks like it is better to be educated than to be a thief!"

This is called "knowledge is worth as much as gold!"

Life's Lessons

A happy woman!

My mom had a lot of problems. She did not sleep and she felt exhausted. She was irritable, grumpy, and bitter. She was always sick, until one day, suddenly, she changed. The situation was the same, but she was different.

One day my dad said to her: 'I've been looking for a job for three months and I haven't found anything, I'm going to have a few beers with friends.'

My mom replied: 'It's okay.'

My brother said to her: 'Mom, I'm doing poorly in all subjects at the University...'

My mom replied: 'Okay, you will recover, and if you don't, well, you repeat the semester, but you pay the tuition.'

My sister said to her: 'Mom, I hit the car.'

My mom replied: 'Okay daughter, take it to the workshop, find how to pay and while they fix it, get around by bus or subway.'

Her daughter-in-law said to her: 'Mother-in-law, I come to spend a few months with you.'

My mom replied: 'Okay, settle in the living room couch and look for some blankets in the closet.'

All of us at my mom's house gathered worried to see these reactions. We suspected that she had gone to the doctor and that she was prescribed some pills of "I don't give a damn about 1000 mg." She would probably also be ingesting an overdose.

We then proposed to do an "intervention" to my mother to remove her from any possible addiction she had towards some anti-tantrum medication.

But what was not the surprise when we all

gathered around her and my mom explained:

'It took me a long time to realize that each person is responsible for their life, it took me years to discover that my anguish, my mortification, my depression, my courage, my insomnia and my stress, did not solve their problems but aggravated mine.'

I am not responsible for the actions of others, but I am responsible for the reactions I express to that.

Therefore, I came to the conclusion that my duty to myself is to remain calm and let each one solve what corresponds to them.

I have taken courses in yoga, meditation, miracles, human development, mental hygiene, vibration and neurolinguistic programming, and in all of them, I found a common denominator: finally they all lead to the same point.

And, it is that I can only interfere with myself, you have all the necessary resources to solve your own lives.

I can only give you my advice if you ask me and it depends on you to follow it or not.

So, from now on, I cease to be: the receptacle of your responsibilities, the sack of your guilt, the laundress of your remorse, the advocate of your faults, the wall of your lamentations, the depositary of your duties, who should solve your problems or spare a tire every time to fulfill your responsibilities.

From now on, I declare all independent and self-sufficient adults.'

Everyone at my mom's house was speechless.

From that day on, the family began to function better, because everyone in the house knows exactly what it is that they need to do.



Once a man asked God:
"Why all girls are so cute & sweet,
and all wives are always angry?"



God answered:
"Girls are made by me.. And you
make them wife... Your problem.."



What is the difference between a priest, a lawyer and a politician?

A priest wouldn't tell a lie, a lawyer couldn't tell the truth and a politician doesn't know the difference !!!!

R. K. Laxman in his book 'A Vote for Laughter'

Healthbeat

5 of the best exercises you can ever do



If you're not an athlete or serious exerciser - and you just want to work out for your health or to fit in your clothes better - the gym scene can be intimidating and overwhelming. What are the best exercises for me? How will I find the time?

Just having to walk by treadmills, stationary bikes, and weight machines can be enough to make you head straight back home to the couch.

Yet some of the best physical activities for your body don't require the gym or ask you to get fit enough to run a marathon. These "workouts" can do wonders for your health. They'll help keep your weight under control, improve your balance and range of motion, strengthen your bones, protect your joints, prevent bladder control problems, and even ward off memory loss.

No matter your age or fitness level, these activities are some of the best exercises you can do and will help you get in shape and lower your risk for disease:

1. Swimming

You might call swimming the perfect workout. The buoyancy of the water supports your body and takes the strain off painful joints so you can move them more fluidly. "Swimming is good for individuals with arthritis because it's less weight-bearing," explains Dr. I-Min Lee, professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School.

Research has found that swimming can also improve your mental state and put you in a better mood. Water aerobics is another option. These classes help you burn calories and tone up.

2. Tai chi

This Chinese martial art that combines movement and relaxation is good for both body and mind. In fact, it's been called "meditation in motion." Tai chi is made up of a series of graceful movements, one transitioning smoothly into the next. Because the classes are offered at various levels, tai chi is accessible - and valuable - for people of all ages and fitness levels. "It's particularly good for older people because balance is an important component of fitness, and balance is something we lose as we get older," Dr. Lee says.

Take a class to help you get started and learn the

proper form. You can find tai chi programs at your local YMCA, health club, community center, or senior center.

3. Strength training

If you believe that strength training is a macho, brawny activity, think again. Lifting light weights won't bulk up your muscles, but it will keep them strong. "If you don't use muscles, they will lose their strength over time," Dr. Lee says.

Muscle also helps burn calories. "The more muscle you have, the more calories you burn, so it's easier to maintain your weight," says Dr. Lee. Similar to other exercise, strength training may also help preserve brain function in later years.

Before starting a weight training program, be sure to learn the proper form. Start light, with just one or two pounds. You should be able to lift the weights 10 times with ease. After a couple of weeks, increase that by a pound or two. If you can easily lift the weights through the entire range of motion more than 12 times, move up to slightly heavier weight.

4. Walking

Walking is simple, yet powerful. It can help you stay trim, improve cholesterol levels, strengthen bones, keep blood pressure in check, lift your mood, and lower your risk for a number of diseases (diabetes and heart disease, for example). A number of studies have shown that walking and other physical activities can even improve memory and resist age-related memory loss.

All you need is a well-fitting and supportive pair of shoes. Start with walking for about 10 to 15 minutes at a time. Over time, you can start to walk farther and faster, until you're walking for 30 to 60 minutes on most days of the week.

5. Kegel exercises

These exercises won't help you look better, but they do something just as important - strengthen the pelvic floor muscles that support the bladder. Strong pelvic floor muscles can go a long way toward preventing incontinence. While many women are familiar with Kegels, these exercises can benefit men too.

To do a Kegel exercise correctly, squeeze the muscles

you would use to prevent yourself from passing urine or gas. Hold the contraction for two or three seconds, then release. Make sure to completely relax your pelvic floor muscles after the contraction. Repeat 10 times. Try to do four to five sets a day.

Many of the things we do for fun (and work) count as exercise. Raking the yard counts as physical activity. So does ballroom dancing and playing with your kids or grandkids. As long as you're doing some form of aerobic exercise for at least 30 minutes a day, and you include two days of strength training a week, you can consider yourself an "active" person.

Harvard Medical School

In A Light Vein

When Maths died!

Husband borrowed Rs 250 from wife.

After a few days he again borrowed Rs 250.

Seeing some money in husband's purse, she asked husband to return the money.

When asked how much, wife said that he owes her Rs 4100.

On request, below is working given by wife.

1) Rs 2 5 0

2) Rs 2 5 0

Total Rs 4 10 0

Husband is still finding the school where she learned Maths.

Later husband gave her Rs 400 back and asked how much balance he has to pay back.

She wrote:

Rs 4100-

Rs 400

Rs 100

He gave Rs 100 back.

Both lived happy ever after. Only Maths died.

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Her Bollywood actor boyfriend's death prompted a media firestorm. Now, she's been arrested on alleged drug offenses



Rhea Chakraborty with Sushant Singh Rajput

Rhea Chakraborty, 28, was arrested on Tuesday by India's Narcotics Control Bureau for allegedly buying cannabis for boyfriend Sushant Singh Rajput, according to Mutha Ashok Jain, the deputy director of the Narcotics Control Bureau for southwest India, reports Julia Hollingsworth and Esha Mitra, CNN.

Rajput, 34, was found dead in his flat in Mumbai in June in what police described as a suicide. Indian authorities have conducted an autopsy but have not made an official statement on the result.

Shortly after his death, Rajput's father KK Singh filed a police complaint in Bihar, the Indian state he lives in, accusing Chakraborty -- who is a lesser-known Bollywood star -- of stealing money from her boyfriend's bank account and abetting his suspected suicide. Authorities have not provided details on how she may have allegedly abetted Rajput's suicide.

Chakraborty has denied those allegations. "It is really sad that it is 2020 and in India I am still having to pay this price today just because I'm in his life, I loved him and lived with him," she told CNN affiliate News 18 last month.

According to a court document, Chakraborty and Rajput lived together, although a few days before Rajput's death, Chakraborty moved into her own Mumbai residence.

In August, a case based on Rajput's father's allegations was transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation, a federal law enforcement agency.

Chakraborty has been remanded for 14 days over a range of offenses including allegedly purchasing and consuming drugs, Jain said. The authorities did not recover any drugs from Chakraborty, who admitted buying drugs for her boyfriend, Rajput, according to Jain. Those offenses carry a possible penalty of 10 years in prison and a fine of 100,000 rupees.

Chakraborty has not yet been charged of a crime.

Although authorities have arrested 10 people, they have not charged anyone with aiding Rajput's suicide.

"The case is about drugs ... it is not our mandate to look into the suicide," Jain said. "The investigation is progressing and as we go along we will try to do some more work and look at the entire network."

For months, Rajput's death and the ensuing fallout have been covered extensively in Indian media.

But the coverage has often become sensationalist, with unverified conspiracy theories and allegations given air time on nationwide news-casts.

Chakraborty has borne the brunt of the media circus. In a tweet in July, Chakraborty begged the Union Home Minister Amit Shah to launch an investigation into the case. "I only want to understand what pressures prompted Sushant to take this step," she said.

In a press release earlier this month, the CBI said it was conducting an investigation into Rajput's death in a "systematic and professional way."


"Certain media reports attributed to CBI investigation are speculative and not based on facts," CBI said in the release.

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YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

Your children will do some foolish things; however there'll be no need to raise your voice. For most natives, next week will be marked by enthralling love affairs and blazing sensual pleasures. At work, criticisms and jealousy can hurt your self-pride.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 11, 12, 15, 21, 30

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

A beautiful meeting in sight. It will be now or never the time to take some daring initiatives on the material plane; your cleverness in money matters, doubled with unusual chance, will enable you to work wonders.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 9, 11, 15, 22, 30

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

In order to be sure always to charm and never to displease, just be yourself, don't overdo things. Disagreements may appear in your conjugal life; try to find a compromise. Don't let yourself be influenced unduly.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 9, 12, 14, 30, 36

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

Learn how to take life as it comes, while refusing to ruminate over your problems. You'll hardly be inclined to faithfulness; love affairs could take place in the professional milieu; all this could have unpredictable consequences.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 17, 20, 23, 26, 30

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

Your optimism and energy will help you to charm and win over everybody. Easy gym, yoga or swimming could be the best means of relaxation for you. At work, you'll be able to face all your responsibilities. To solve a difficult problem, don't hesitate to ask for help from your friends.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 14, 20, 21, 23, 36

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

Marriage will attract singles with a particular power. Don't spend too much money for your love affairs. Your relationships with your family circle will be pleasant, without any clouds. This time you'll be very busy; however, take time to breathe: that's indispensable.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 14, 20, 23, 26, 30

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

Your charming power will prove tremendously efficient, and you'll know how to use it to make a maximum of conquests. Workwise, it'll be high time to roll your sleeves up, to muck in. Physical shape in decline: a cure of complete vitamins would be useful.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 12, 17, 20, 23, 30

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

The stars will accentuate your taste for conquest. Workwise, you'll be very much motivated to succeed. This time, it'll be necessary to put your common sense aside and only to listen to your heart.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 7, 19, 20, 30, 31

Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

Good understanding and complicity with the loved one. Try to conciliate your family life and your professional activities: it's difficult, but you can get to it. A very good week for reorganizing your finances, for considering new investments.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 9, 13, 20, 21, 25

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

Determined and efficient, you'll prove to have good common sense. You'll carry out your tasks valiantly and won't have time to get bored. Try to dissipate certain misunderstandings between you and your partner.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 17, 18, 26, 30, 37

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

It'll be necessary to show imagination and tact in your love frolics, if not your beautiful passion will die. Grant more place in your life to friendship; learn how to listen to others and to devote yourself to them. In work, conflicts are likely to burst out.

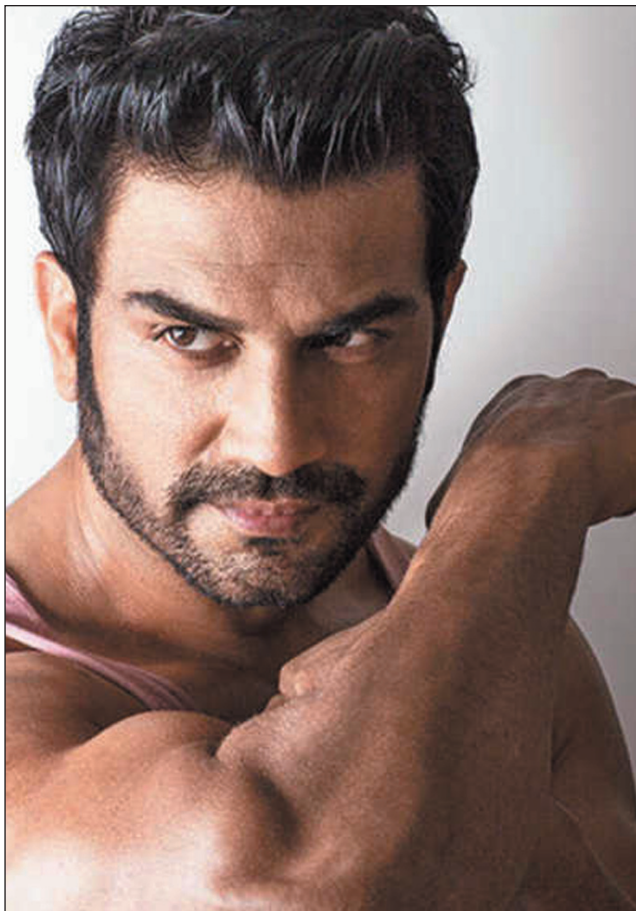
Lucky Numbers: 1, 4, 12, 16, 33, 39

Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

In your love relations, you'll be very idealistic. This astral climate will incline you to far-sightedness; why not think about organizing your succession as of now? Rather good health, except for heavy smokers.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 2, 7, 9, 11, 21

Sharad Kelkar: I used to shop from Chor Bazaar during my college days



Sharad, who has starred in films like *'Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela'*, *'Bhoomi'* and *'Baadshaho'*, says that acting in a multi-starrer was never a concern for him. "I think multi-starrers can help my career. The reach is quite big there. I did not do *'Baahubali'*, I just dubbed it

and everybody knows about it so you understand the reach of it. When a film is big, the reach is huge and it benefits everyone associated with it. I do single-starrers and multi-starrers both because for me, the role is important. The cast matters, but the first thing which I pay attention to is the script and the role. Whenever I am offered a role, I always think, 'What will I learn from this film? Have I done a role like that before?

I got everything from TV and it was all very close to my heart. There is a lot of money also. We don't do ten films in a year, so letting go of all of that was a big task for me but I told myself that it is a conscious call and I have to stick to it. Daily soaps are fantastic, you work 300 days in a year, you buy houses, cars. For me, to leave all of that was the biggest challenge. That was the biggest task," he says.



'Lockdown Ki Lovestory': Mohit Malik praises on-screen mom Jayati Bhatia in the sweetest way possible

Not only does Mohit like Jayati's screen presence, but is also in awe of the lovely person she is. So, taking to his social media, he complimented his 'Lockdown Ki Lovestory' costar, in the loveliest way possible.

Sharing a picture of the two of them together on set, Mohit captioned it saying, "If I want to be like someone in life, it has to be you amma!", also calling it a 'self-goal' to be like the veteran television actress herself.

The show stars Sana Sayyad alongside Mohit. It is a light-hearted show, unlike the typical *saas-bahu* sagas.

After playing some diverse roles in *Kullfi*, *Doli Armaano Ki*, Mohit is eager to take on this particular role in this romantic series because it is something he has never experimented with before.

He is not a Delhi boy yet people confuse him for being a *'Dilli ka launda'*. Actor Sharad Kelkar, who will now be seen in *'Housefull 4'* was in Delhi recently and reminisced about the good ol' days of his visits to the city. He tells Riya Sharmad of TNN that he used to shop from Chor Bazaar, a place known for selling branded shoes and clothes at cheap prices. "I belong to Gwalior and I was in a sports college there. That time we had no money to buy branded stuff, so on weekends we would visit Delhi to just buy 'branded shoes' from Chor Bazaar. We used to travel overnight, straight Chor Bazaar jaate thay and would stop at Karim's to eat. I know the city but I get confused with the directions. Since I am a foodie, I know the places that are popular for food. Like Kamla Nagar, Bengali Market and CP. I have good memories here," he says.

Talking about his 'Delhi boy vibes', Sharad says that it is probably because of his college. "I am not from Delhi but maybe it's because of my college friends; since many of them were from Delhi, people get this vibe that I am *'Dilli ka launda'*."

Sharad adds, "My attitude and body language, it gives that vibe that I am a Delhiite. A lot of people in Mumbai initially thought that I was from Delhi and they used to think that I was a jaat because of my physique but when I would tell people that I am from Maharashtra, they would never believed that."

'I don't want people to typecast me'

How is it going to help me?' If you follow my TV record, it was a conscious decision for me to not do something like *'Saat Phere: Saloni Ka Safar'* after playing Nahar for four years. After that, doing a role of another loyal loving husband was boring and I knew I will not learn anything new. So, I chose *'Bairi Piya'* consciously. It was a weird character but people appreciated it. Post that, people started offering me negative characters so I chose *'Kuch Toh Log Kahenge'*. Then, after that, people started offering me the same kind of roles but I chose *'Agent Raghav - Crime Branch'*. In films also, a similar pattern followed but then I chose to do a show in 2017 and I played a blind guy. So I keep on changing the perception about myself. I don't want them to typecast me. I don't want people to judge me and be like, *'Ye toh aise hi characters karega'*," he elaborates.

'Nothing came to me served on a platter'

While he did his last TV show in 2017, Sharad asserts that he has not quit television or made a complete shift to the big screen. "If something good comes my way, I will definitely do it. But let me tell you, nothing came to me served on a platter. It was a very conscious decision to make a shift. When you are doing TV, there is a lot of fame.

TV SERIAL

Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai

Friday 11 Sept: The confrontation starts amongst the two of them and they start arguing. Manoj scolds Sameer and tells him about how people used to praise their love and now, look at them both. Both, Sameer and Naina go their respective houses and open up in their confidants.

Monday 14 Sept: Naina is worried because she left Sameer when he needed her the most. While she is searching for a rickshaw to go back to her house, a car hits her on the road. Sameer's mother tells him that he is incomplete without Naina and he must tell her everything that happened at the factory truthfully.

Tuesday 15 Sept: After Sameer's uncle throws him out of the business, he and Naina are in a tough spot. Bela gives this news to her husband who is shocked to hear this. Sameer's mother offers him and Naina to come live with her in Delhi.

Wednesday 16 Sept: After the mishap in Naina and Sameer's life, Anand gives some advice to Naina and Sameer regarding what to do next in business. He asks Sameer to take up a job as an insurance policy seller and asks Naina to open up a boutique.

Thursday 17 Sept: Sameer and Naina set up a Saree exhibition with their family. Sameer tries to control his anger when his uncle comes in at the exhibition. His uncle tells him that if he can sell more than two dresses he himself will come and work as a salesman for him.

Kahan Hum Kahan Tum

Friday 11 Sept: Deepa reveals Rohan's shocking truth to Tanya. Later, Raima stuns the Sippys and the Rastogis with an unexpected announcement.

Monday 14 Sept: Rohit is delighted to receive a romantic note from Sonakshi. Later, Karan threatens Rohit in order to extort money from him.

Tuesday 15 Sept: Rohit gets shot when he attempts to play a clever trick on Karan. Later, Sonakshi is perplexed when Rohit's staff tells her the shocking truth.

Wednesday 16 Sept: Naren and Rohit get embroiled in a spat. Later, the Sippys and the Rastogis fix Sonakshi and Rohit's wedding date unaware of the danger approaching the duo.

Thursday 17 Sept: Suman and Sonakshi are scared when Rohit puts forth a outrageous demand. While Naren agrees for the marriage, Mahesh vows to ruin it.

CINE 12

Vendredi 4 sept - 21.15

Il Suffit D'une Nuit

Avec: Kristin Scott Thomas, Sean Penn, Anne Bancroft



MBC 1

Samedi 12 sept - 21.10

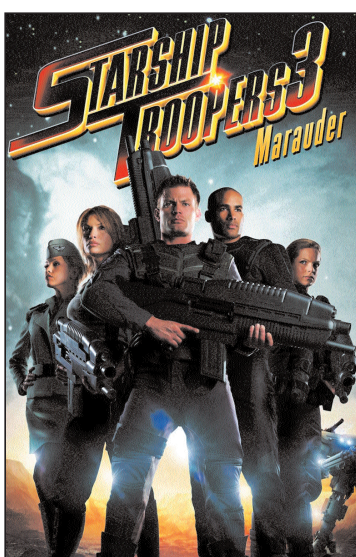
Pitch Black

Star: Radha Mitchell, Cole Hauser, Vin Diesel



MBC 1

Dimanche 13 sept - 21.10



MBC 1

vendredi 11 septembre

07.05 Local: Passerelles
09.45 Local: Later Set Kouler
10.15 Local: Itinerer - Rodrig
11.00 Local Prod: Saver Kil Tirel
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Mag: Women Who Changed
12.35 Mag: Eye On SADC
14.21 Prod: MFDC Road Safety...
14.30 D.Anime: Kid-E-Cats
15.14 D.Anime: Petit Creux
15.57 D.Anime: Kid-E-Cats
16.01 D.Anime: Fils De Wouf
16.30 D.Anime: Uma And Devan...
17.05 D.Aimes: Trollhunters
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.10 Prod: Komiko - No 18
21.45 Serial: The Blacklist
23.00 Le Journal
23.35 Mag: Eye On SADC

MBC 2

10.00 Serial: Mah-E-Tamaam
11.20 Serial: Tum Mere Paas Raho
12.04 Film: Un Samayal Arayil
Starring: Prakash Raj, Sneha, Urvashi
14.02 DDI Magazine
15.00 Mag: Comedy Classes
15.21 Serial: Honaar Soon Mee
15.43 Serial: Mooga Manasulu
16.07 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal
16.28 Serial: Bisaat-E-Dil
16.49 Mehendi Tohra Namam Ke
17.11 Serial: Gangaa
18.00 Serial: Die Now
18.30 DDI Magazine
19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol
19.30 DDI Magazine
20.00 Serial: Tawaan
20.44 Local: Anjuman
21.11 Local: Urdu Programme
22.11 DDI Live

MBC 3

06.00 Mag: Eco India
06.44 Mag: Shift
07.00 Mag: Border Crossing
07.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today
08.01 Doc: Comme Un Poissn...
09.08 Doc: 360 GEO
10.01 Displaced: Oil And Ruin
11.31 Mag: Sur Mesure
11.45 Mag: Shift
12.01 Mag: Garden Makeover
12.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today
13.05 Mag: Comme Un Poisson...
14.45 Mag: Strictly Street
15.50 Doc: Japan 2020
16.00 Mag: Eco India
16.47 Mag: Shift
17.02 Mag: Garden Makeover
17.44 Doc: To The Moon
18.23 Mag: Urban Gardens
18.33 Doc: Obsession Magnifique
19.00 Open Univ: Student Support

Cine 12

01.30 Film: Page Eight
01.30 Film: Page Eight
03.09 Serial: Dynasty 2
05.27 Tele: Totalement Diva
06.18 Tele: Esmeraldas
06.59 Serial: The Quest
09.00 Serial: Chicago Fire
09.45 Tele: Soleil Levant
10.35 Serial: Dynasty 2
11.31 Tele: Dulce Amor
12.00 Film: A Date With Miss...
13.38 Tele: Totalement Diva
14.55 Serial: The Quest
16.40 Serial: Chicago Fire
17.30 Tele: Esmeraldas
18.11 Tele: Soleil Levant
19.10 Tele: Dulce Amor
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Serial: Hawaii Five-0
21.15 Film: Il Suffit D'une Nuit
23.05 Tele: Totalement Diva

Bollywood TV

08.00 Film: Kanoon
12.05 / 19.54 -
Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam
12.30/ 20.11 -
Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala
12.47 / 20.32 Radha Krishna
13.10 / 21.09 - Bin Kuch Kahe
13.36 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek
13.53 / 21.46 -
Bade Acche Lagte Hai
14.17 / 21.59 -
Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki
14.43 / 22.25 - Bitti Business...
15.00 Film: Laila
Starring: Anil Kapoor, Poonam Dhillon, Sunil Dutt
18.00 Live: Samacher
18.30 Kumkum Bhagya
18.51 Piya Albela
19.14 Mere Angne Mein

samedi 12 septembre

06.00 D.Anime: Robot Trains
07.25 D.Anime: Kid-E-Cats
08.50 D.Anime: The Garfield Show
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Local: People
12.35 Doc: Builders Of The Future
14.10 Local: Rodrig Prog
14.30 D.Anime: Kid-E-Cats
14.35 D.Anime: Bob Le Bricoleur
14.46 D.Anime: The Minimighty Kid
15.14 D.Anime: Petit Creux
15.27 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies
15.30 D.Anime: Poko
16.12 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill
16.27 D.Anime: Uma And Devan...
17.30 Serial: Lucas Etc
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.35 Entertain: Nach Baliye
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.00 Prod: Lottotech
21.10 Film: Pitch Black
23.00 Le Journal

07.00 Film: Bolo He Chakradhari
10.00 Bade Acchelagte Hai
12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhya Bhare
12.50 Serial: Brundavanam
13.12 Annakodiyum Ainthus Pengalum
13.35 Serial: Anu Pallavi
14.00 Dil Hai Hindustani
15.00 Serial: Comedy Classes
15.30 Film: Ek Hi Raasta
Starring: Ajay Devgn, Raveena Tandon, Raza Murad
18.00 Mag: DDI Magazine
19.00 Zournal Kreol
20.05 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha
21.00 Film: Deewar
Starring - Amitabh Bachchan, Sanjay Dutt, Akshaye Khanna, Amrita Rao
23.37 DDI Live

06.00 Doc: To The Moon
06.49 Doc: Obsession Magnifique
07.14 Mag: Global 3000
07.48 Mag: Euromaxx
08.14 Doc: Wildlife Heroes
09.00 Mag: Women Who Changed
09.57 The Sound Of Freedom
11.25 Doc: To The Moon
12.09 Mag: Urban Gardens
12.39 Mag: Global 3000
13.13 Mag: Euromaxx
15.22 Doc: The Sound Of Freedom
16.55 Student Support Prog...
19.30 Doc: Obsession Magnifique
19.55 Doc: Japan 2020
20.05 Doc: L'evolution En Marche
21.00 Local: News (English)
21.15 Other: 35th International...
22.55 Doc: Like Me: The Selfie...
23.37 Doc: Amazing Gardens
00.03 Doc: Digital Nomads
00.29 Doc: The World From Above

01.41 Film: Il Suffit D'un Nuit
03.32 Serial: Chicago Fire
04.10 Film: Dominion
05.33 Tele: Destiny
06.20 Serial: Hawaii Five-0
07.02 Serial: Sherlock
08.30 Serial: Mike Hammer
09.18 Serial: 12 Monkeys
09.59 Serial: Counterpart
10.52 Film: Sox: A Family's Best...
12.18 Serial: Chicago Fire
13.00 Tele: The Magicians
13.45 Tele: Premiere Dame
15.05 Serial: Dynasty 2
16.30 Mag: Hollywood On Set
17.00 Serial: Hawaii Five-0
17.45 Film: A Doggone Adventure
19.18 Mag: Hollywood Best Film
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Series: Hawaii Five-0
21.15 Film: The Last Bridesmaid
22.45 Tele: Eva Luna

04.05 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum
04.26 Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala
04.51 Radha Krishna
05.14 Zindagi Ki Mehek
05.27 Bade Acche Lagte Hai
06.01 Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki
06.22 Bitti Business Wali
06.45 Kundali Bhagya
07.07 Piya Albela
07.29 Mere Angne Mein
08.00 Zindagi Ki Mehek
10.12 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai
14.02 Bin Kuch Kahe
16.00 Pavitra Rishta
18.30 Film: Nanu Ki Jaanu
Starring Abhay Deol, Patralekha, Manu Rishi
20.34 Serial: Siya Ke Ram
21.16 Serial: Naagin
22.02 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek

dimanche 13 septembre

06.00 D.Anime: Robot Trains
06.27 D.Anime: HTDT
08.45 D.Anime: The Garfield Show
09.27 D.Anime: Astrology
09.35 Serial: Dark Oracle
12.00 Le Journal
12.30 Local: Elle - No 112
15.00 D.Anime: Kid-E-Cats
15.05 D.Anime: Bob Le Bricoleur
15.24 D.Anime: In The Night Garden
15.47 D.Anime: Petit Creux
16.27 D.Anime: Kid-E-Cats
16.32 D.Anime: Fils De Wouf
16.49 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill
17.24 D.Anime: Roger
17.30 D.Anime: Roger (2018)
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Local: Yeh Shaam Mastani
19.30 Le Journal
20.00 Prod: Mett Sa Ladan
21.10 Film: Starship Troopers 3

07.00 Film: Bazaar
Starring: Farooq Shaikh, Smita Patil, Naseeruddin Shah
09.22 DDI Magazine
10.00 Local Production: Exerpts Of Shikhar Kalash Puja
11.00 Serial: Santoshi Maa
12.00 Film: Fun2Shh...Dudes in...
Starring - Gulshan Grover, Paresh Rawal, Farida Jalal
14.32 DDI Magazine
15.00 Mag: Comedy Classes
15.21 Serial: Mooga Manasulu
15.44 Eka Lagnachi Teesri Gosht
16.06 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal
17.00 Serial: Mahakali
18.30 Local: Tipa Tipa Nu Avance
19.30 DDI Magazine
20.00 Serial: Maharakshak
20.44 Serial: Naagin

06.00 Doc: Amazing Gardens
06.26 Doc: Digital Gardens
06.52 The World From Above
07.15 Doc: Obsession Magnifique
08.36 Mag: Women Who Changed
10.23 Doc: Like Me: The Selfie...
11.09 Doc: Amazing Gardens
12.27 Doc: Obsessin Magnifique
16.34 Doc: Digital Nomads
17.31 Doc: Obsession Magnifique
18.00 Doc: Trajectory
18.30 Love Matches Not Wanted
19.05 Doc: The Rich, The Poor...
19.30 Mag: Future Mag
21.00 Doc: News (English)
21.10 Mag: Women Who Changed...
22.07 Doc: It's In Our Genes
22.49 Doc: Alpine Twilight
23.32 Doc: Trajectory
23.58 Doc: Love Matches Not Wanted

01.02 Film: Memories D'une Geisha
02.25 Serial: Hawaii 5-0
03.06 Film: Le Masque De Zorro
05.18 Tele: Destiny
06.00 Serial: Hawaii Five-0
06.40 Film: Hope Dances
08.30 Serial: Mike Hammer
09.16 Serial: 12 Monkeys
09.57 Serial: Counterpart
10.50 Film: A Doggone Adventure
12.23 Serial: Hawaii 5-0
13.03 Serial: The Magicians
13.47 Tele: Premiere Dame
15.05 Serial: Dynasty 2
17.08 Serial: Hawaii Five-0
17.50 Serial: The Enemy Within
18.31 Serial: Mission: Impossible
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Serial: The Good Doctor
21.15 Film: Inferno
23.12 Film: A Doggone Adventure

00.40 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
02.23 Bin Kuch Kahe
04.13 Pavitra Rishta
05.55 Film: Nanu Ki Jaanu
Starring Abhay Deol, Patralekha, Manu Rishi
08.06 Motu Patlu
08.11 Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki
09.54 Jaana Na Dil Se Door
11.40 Piya Albela
13.27 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum
15.21 Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala
17.00 Punar Vivaah
18.00 Samachar
18.30 Film: Tathastu
Starring: Sanjay Dutt, Ameesha Patel, Jaya Prada
20.14 Nach Baliye
21.04 Bade Acche Lagte Hai
22.48 Piya Albela

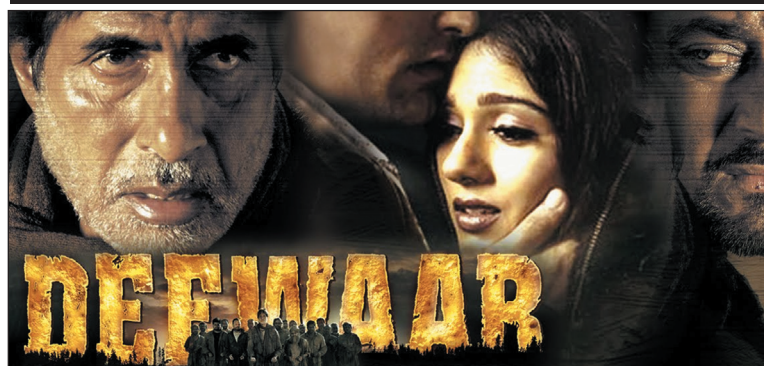
MBC 2

Samedi 12
septembre - 21.00

Stars: Amitabh Bachchan, Sanjay Dutt, Akshaye Khanna, Amrita Rao

Dimanche 13
septembre - 18.30

Stars: Sanjay Dutt, Ameesha Patel, Jaya Prada





Nita Chicooree-Mercier

La solution par les tapeurs

C'est l'heure du déjeuner, la mise en place est faite, les tables recouvertes d'une nappe et les couverts attendent les clients. Presque tous les locaux sont des constructions anciennes où les pierres taillées et massives, et les poutres en bois solide s'imposent comme matériaux principaux, et témoignent d'une autre époque où la construction de la ville ne lésinait pas à mettre à la disposition des bâtisseurs les matériaux prisés.

Dans ce quartier de China Town peu fréquenté depuis quelques années en raison même de la migration et du dépeuplement, les commerces survivent, s'accommodent du changement des habitudes et s'adaptent à la demande de la clientèle d'aujourd'hui. Les cuisiniers ne sont plus chinois, et l'authenticité de certains plats semble avoir suivi la tendance moderne des chefs d'occasion. Le rouge vif brillant sied parfaitement à ces pierres massives, déborde sur les poutres et atteste de la couleur dominante de l'Empire du Milieu.

Le rouge cache un peu l'aspect vieillot et délabré de certains locaux entretenus au minimum. Cette couleur relève aussi l'apparence de ces petits édifices, tout en conférant un air convivial et accueillant à l'atmosphère qui y règne et à ceux qui s'y invitent.

L'attrait du quartier doit beaucoup à ce côté asiatique et rappelle une époque où les premiers migrants ont fait leur nid et aussi leur lit de commerce. C'est en grande partie l'âme de Port-Louis, et c'est sans doute pour cette raison qu'il y a comme un manque, un vide, un rendez-vous raté si on ne prend pas le temps d'y flâner et de se restaurer lors d'un déplacement dans la capitale.

Propriétaires et gérants guettent l'arrivée des premiers clients sur le seuil de leur petit restaurant, et parfois, ils essaient un marketing direct : " Venez, venez, c'est prêt. " Comme partout dans la ville et dans le reste du pays, les clients se font courtiser et les commerces tournent au ralenti. Dans une des rues de prédilection, quelques petits restos favorisent l'invitation à la détente. Le portrait du docteur Sun Yat Sen souriant s'affiche çà et là, témoin de l'attachement porté à un personnage du pays que les anciens ont laissé derrière eux au 19^{siècle}.

Un brin de causette avec la patronne d'un petit commerce familial : cela est en fait la raison d'une détente fréquente et aussi pour grignoter quelque chose à chaque visite. Son fils l'aide à tenir ce petit local exigu où une sorte de tablette sert à poser plats et bols, et quelques tabourets s'ajoutent au confort des convives. Il doit avoir la quarantaine. Le regard vif, et tirant sur une cigarette dès que les derniers clients commencent à vider les lieux, il se tient souvent sur un tabouret à l'entrée du commerce, et de là, il s'engage dans une conversation animée avec les habitués du quartier chinois de tout âge.

Aujourd'hui, c'est un homme du même âge qui s'arrête et discute avec lui. Le monde souterrain dont on ne se doute pas s'invite soudain dans ce paysage qu'on croit paisible.

-- Un tel a envoyé des tapeurs chez un commerçant.

Le fils l'interroge davantage.

-- Ah oui ? On sait qui c'est ?

-- Ils débarquent parfois en plein jour. Ils sont deux, trois, et plus.

On les voit de loin, ajoute-t-il. Ils sont identifiables par leur " battage ", blouson noir et lunettes de soleil.

A la mère qui se tourne vers moi, je renchéris :

-- Ils voient ça dans les films !

Remarque qui fait rigoler, mais pourquoi donc cette descente des tapeurs ? Intimidation et règlement de compte.

Les gens ont peur.

-- Les Chinois ici sont des " capons ", conclut l'autre.

Paiement de dette, concurrence, disputes surchauffées : ce sont des tapeurs venant d'ailleurs qui débarquent. C'est un moyen de communication qui est bien ancré dans les habitudes de gestion de désaccord et d'antagonisme, appelé dans le jargon moderne : conflict management ou gestion de



China Town. Photo - reddit.com

conflit.

Comme dans les mauvais films, il est assez courant de voir certains propriétaires de restaurant pavoiser dans les rues ou sur la plage, arborant des lunettes de soleil comme symbole de réussite sociale, flanqués de deux ou trois individus faisant fonction de gros bras, comme un signe que leur précieuse personne est sous bonne protection. Ce comportement des " mâles ", comme d'autres exemples de leurs travers, est d'une bêtise monumentale.

Les exemples ne manquent pas. Eh bien, tenez ! Lui, il vient de l'Europe, et avec sa mère, il ont bénéficié de la nationalité mauricienne il y a plus de dix ans. Cette dernière exhibe fièrement une photo avec un de nos ex-ministres, et pas le moindre, pour signifier qu'ils bénéficient d'un appui en haut lieu ; les call girls d'Europe de l'Est forment partie de la bande, dit-on. Une activité suspecte à la tombée de la nuit est la source principale de leur aisance financière, assurée par la présence des complices tapeurs. Le jeune propose ses tapeurs à qui veulent régler des comptes, dont un individu qui veut jouer au caïd du quartier, ou l'autre qui drague la femme des autres, ou encore un tel qui roule avec une musique à tue-tête... Sa solution : Des gros bras pour les calmer.

L'ADSU a fini par mettre la main sur le jeune homme et ses complices. Il faut dire que l'ADSU n'a pas chômé pendant le confinement. Un autre homme de bonne famille, qui est tombé sous la coupe des mauvaises fréquentations, s'était aussi adonné à l'enrichissement facile et il envoyait des tapeurs à quiconque osait lui chercher noise. Il a déjà fait la prison pour sauver la peau de son mentor très haut placé.

A moins d'avoir la mémoire courte, il est connu de la majorité que le recours aux tapeurs est bien ancré dans les mœurs de certains biens placés que compte le pays. Cela rappelle les époques sombres de l'histoire récente, et les individus dont la mémoire collective et la propagande médiatique n'ont retenu que les qualités.

Loin d'être une spécialité locale, c'est une pratique courante dans d'autres pays aussi. Aux tapeurs se sont joints les bouncers musclés, imberbes ou barbus qui ont affûté leurs armes dans des contrées bienveillantes en vue de la défense de leurs intérêts divers. Et parmi les commanditaires ou parrains des gros bras, hormis les médiocres individus, se trouverait-il une gamme hétéroclite d'individus à col blanc et à l'esprit tordu ?

Entourés de leurs congénères lors des rassemblements, ils y puisent leur force. Et ils expédient sur le terrain, dans un exercice de harcèlement, les bras armés tels des chiens bien dressés, soumis à leur desiderata tordu tandis que d'autres, attablés devant une montagne de milliards de billets bancaires et espérant d'en accumuler davantage dans les deals avec les gouvernants du jour, n'ont aucun mal à ressortir de leur tiroir collectif une de ces armes qui a bien fonctionné dans le passé : leurs marionnettes du jour, idéologiquement inféodées à leurs intérêts depuis des lustres.

Et comme certains vulgaires patrons de restaurant qui envoient des tapeurs au China Town, ils espèrent obtenir des résultats que le moyen conventionnel de négociation échoue à leur procurer.

Maîtres et commanditaires d'un côté, loyaux serviteurs et exécutants obéissants de l'autre, un schéma vieux comme le monde. Et, entre les deux, les discours animés de bruit et de fureur.



Tree of Knowledge

Vedika Hurdoyal-Chekhori

I am good, why do I suffer?

Why is there so much suffering in the world?

If God is omnipotent, benevolent and omniscient, then how does one account for the evil that manifests in the form of suffering? Epicurus, the Greek philosopher, has articulated the dilemma, "If God is willing to prevent evil but not able, then he is not omnipotent; if he is able but not willing, he is not benevolent; if he is both able and willing, whence come evil?"

Some theologians tried to unsuccessfully solve the riddle of evil by glorifying suffering:

"Suffering is not always a misfortune. It often helps us to grow. In the depths of sorrow we receive light";

"Suffering is not punishment but the prize of fellowship. It is an accompaniment of all creative endeavor";

"Suffering takes us to the center of things and away from trivialities of life".

St. Augustine puts forth three views about evil in the following:

1. Evil is necessary for the enhancement of the greater good, in the same manner in which the shadow in the moon enhances the beauty of the full moon.
2. Evil is not a positive, but privative good which simply means the deficiency of good.
3. Not God but man is responsible for his moral fall.

A brief metaphysical explanation of the above unfolds is evil is not good, but it is good that there is evil. What appears as evil is not really evil. It is only to enhance the excellence of good. For example, in explaining the birth of a man born blind, Jesus said that this man was born blind so that the glory of God may be made manifest.

Secondly, evil is the privation of good that is the present absence of the expected good. For example, there is the evil of blindness, but it is simply the present absence of the power of vision. In due course, this good could be restored. As for the third argument, it suggests that the first man Adam had free will, but with his fall by disobedience to God, Adam lost his free will. This condemnation of Adam being a sinner has been transmitted to the whole of mankind. This is the doctrine of Original Sin. 'In Adam's fall, we sinned all.'

As an alternative, the doctrine of karma offers a satisfactory solution to the riddle of suffering. According to it, God's creative act is in conformity with the Law of Karma.

Though He is omnipotent and can overrule the Law of Karma, He does not do so because that would be inconsistent with His moral nature and violative of the principle of natural justice.

He, however, bestows man with the power of reasoning, to enable the latter to discern between right and wrong, to choose his action out of the free will, and to seek His Grace ultimately.

Dr (Mrs) Vedika Hurdoyal- Chekhori teaches Philosophy at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute.