

# MAURITIUS TIMES

• "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." -- Mahatma Gandhi



Interview : Eric Ng Ping Cheun, directeur  
de PluriConseil

**“La philosophie économique  
du Gouvernement, c'est de  
taxer, dépenser, dévaluer et  
créer de la monnaie”**

‘Il n'est pas difficile aux grands  
groupes économiques de faire peur  
à un ministre des Finances  
inexpérimenté et à un Premier  
ministre politiquement affaibli’

\* Voir Pages 7-8-9

## Opinion

### **Is there a case for an alternative government?**



*Any electoral alliance for an alternative government cannot disregard the changing  
mood and aspirations of the people who ultimately decide which government will  
take charge of their destiny*

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### **Is reaching zero Covid-19 possible?**

*With a vaccine, yes, elimination is possible. But we need  
to be realistic about how long this might take*

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## Truth and Justice & Land Division

**I**n April 2008 a Truth and Justice Commission (TJC) was set up with the task of uncovering the truth about slavery and indentured labour in Mauritius during colonial days. Its report was submitted to the President of the Republic at the end of November 2011.

One could not expect the then government to implement all of the recommendations contained in the report, but it was hoped that it could at least have proceeded with those which were thought implementable at the earliest, and which would have made a difference in the lives of those affected by past - and continuing - discrimination. That was not to be, except for the introduction of Creole language in schools, and the setting up of the Equal Opportunities Commission, an important step in the right direction which the TJC had subsequently equally recommended for ensuring fairer social justice in Mauritius. An inter-ministerial committee presided by Hon Xavier Duval with a mandate of looking into the implementation of the TJC's recommendations (the Commission had come up with 158 recommendations and other subsidiary recommendations) was thereafter set up. It does not seem that much had been achieved on this front as well.

As it happened in South Africa, such commissions generate a host of expectations on the part of those who have been victims of past injustice and oppression. The Commission did find evidence of the huge atrocities inflicted by the combined concerted efforts of the Catholic Church, the Chamber of Commerce and the Sugar industry.

The Commission also found out how exploiters, including unscrupulous notaries acting vicariously for those exploiters, wrenched away the possessions of those who could not defend themselves against the legal and commercial armada which the exploiters assemble. But it did not recommend monetary compensation against all the abuses made by the powerful of those days in view of an identification problem as to who really are the descendants of slaves today. There is also the impracticality of tracing out the guilt of those who are sitting on huge fortunes inherited through the rogue practices of those days. However it is known that a lot of land was seized unlawfully or 'prescribed' against the helplessness of their true owners. The economic elite that has emerged out of this process has gone on consolidating its gro-

wing power 'sans partage'.

Last year, the question of land dispossession again came up eight years after the TJC submitted its report. It took a hunger strike by Clency Harmon for the Government to become alive to the need for some form of redress in the matter of land dispossession. One may conveniently seek refuge in a legalistic approach, and contend that the issue of land dispossession and redress is complex. But it also amounts to a government failing to live up to its constitutional and moral obligations to promote the norms of justice, fairness, and equity. There seems to be a conspiracy of silence, an impenetrable veil behind which have been hiding those who have been pulling the strings and directing governments to give in to their agenda, which is not necessarily in the national interest or the general welfare of the people.

One is left to wonder why do they wield such influence? Such as in the energy sector where, for example, the IPPs get away with using coal at the same time as this is denied for other promoters on environmental grounds. Or the massive property development projects which are resulting in the expanding 'betonisation' of our land with the consequences that others outside of these privileged zones have to bear the brunt of.

It would seem that things will now take concrete shape. The Prime Minister announced at the inauguration of the first phase of the Intercontinental Slavery Museum, this week, that the Government is going forward with the setting up of a Land Division within the Supreme Court, as earlier announced in the Government's 'Discours Programme' last January. This move will surely be welcomed by those who have reason to feel aggrieved and who can now harbour the hope that reparation is on the way. The road will no doubt be arduous and long, given the amount of research that will have to be done to seek out the relevant documents pertaining to land, all of which were written in the archaic French of that time, and which will need expert interpretation.

The findings that result from these searches and eventual rulings by the Land Division should also help to remove once and for all the misconceptions about who among the powerful of those days were responsible for dispossessing the claimants, instead of playing the game of blaming others who were equally the victims of such injustices.

## The Conversation

# Is reaching zero Covid-19 possible?

*With a vaccine, yes, elimination is possible. But we need to be realistic about how long this might take*

**M**ost scientists agree that stringent control measures, involving efficient contact tracing, testing and isolation, together with social distancing and mask wearing, are required to limit the spread of SARS-CoV-2. South Korea, Taiwan, China and New Zealand have all successfully used these approaches to suppress the virus.



While it's possible to flatten the curve, getting to zero Covid-19 is more difficult. Photo - qrius.com

A few have even called for a zero Covid-19 approach, attempting to eliminate the virus rather than contain its spread. New Zealand almost succeeded but, after 100 days without a case, new infections emerged from international travel and other unknown sources. While it's possible to flatten the curve using these control measures, getting to zero Covid-19 with them is more difficult.

It might be possible for some island countries, but New Zealand's example shows that it's then necessary to prevent the virus from being re-imported. This would probably require prolonged and severe travel restrictions and rigorous testing of passengers pre and post travel.

Given there's little appetite for prolonged closure of borders, and community control measures alone aren't enough to eliminate the virus, getting to zero isn't currently possible. But it could be in the future if we use different approaches.

### Immunity is the best strategy

The most effective way of containing Covid-19 exploits the body's natural defence mechanism: the immune system.

Recovering from a viral infection is usually associated with the development of immunity. Whether infection with SARS-CoV-2 protects against reinfection is not yet known, but there are very few examples of people getting reinfected.

Most infected people develop anti-

bodies against the virus, and while those who don't develop symptoms may not generate antibodies, infection can still activate the immune system's T cells, which provide an alternative defence. So it seems infection generates immunity in the majority of people, at least in the short term.

Knowing this, some scientists have recently suggested the virus should be allowed to spread through the population - while protecting the old and vulnerable - to allow herd immunity to develop. This is where enough people in a population have become immune to stop a disease from spreading freely. The threshold for this happening is as high as 90-95% for a highly transmissible virus like measles. Some have suggested it may be as low as 50% for SARS-CoV-2. The consensus is that it will be around 60-70%.

But the percentage of people who have been infected with SARS-CoV-2 and recovered is currently nowhere near this. Studies that test for antibodies suggest that about 3% of people in Dublin have had the virus. In New York City, that figure is much higher: 23%. But the high rate of infection in New York has resulted in many more people there dying, even taking into account its larger population.

### Kingston Mills

Professor of Experimental Immunology,  
Trinity College Dublin

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## Mauritius Times

Founder/Editor: Beekrumsing Ramlallah - Aug 1954-Sept 2000

Editor-in-chief: M. Ramlallah / Senior Editor: Dr RN Gopee

*This paper has been produced with the assistance of*

**Doojesh Ramlallah, Sultana Kurmally and Kersley Ramsamy**

Pearl House 4th Floor Room 406 - Sir Virgil Naz Street, Port Louis -- Tel: 5-29 29301 Tel/Fax: 212 1313



mtimes@intnet.mu



www.mauritiustimes.com



facebook.com/mauritius.times



# Ever widening inequality



Mrinal Roy

**C**ovid-19 has yet again highlighted the extent of inequality in the world. The world has woken up to the painful reality that the management of the sanitary and socio-economic impact of a pandemic is extremely costly. These costs include protective gear for hospital and other frontliners, Covid-19 testing kits, dedicated Covid-19 treatment hospitals including ICU facilities, quarantine centres and all the related medicine and equipment for treatment.

The costs also include various support measures to economic actors and employees unable to operate because of lockdowns and various confinement measures taken to contain the spread of Covid-19. There is obviously a wide inequality in the quantum of financial resources, doctors, nurses and other health personnel as well as hospital infrastructure available in diverse countries to manage the Covid-19 pandemic.

There is also growing evidence that inequality is also widening in the world because blue-collar jobs although essential in agriculture to produce food, in construction and in the manufacturing sector, etc., tend to be remunerated much less than college and university educated white-collar jobs. The top brass executives are in contrast

*A much fairer remuneration policy which bridges salary-based inequality instead of widening it will enable swathes of workers to improve their standard of living and to cut loose from the humbling dependence on social housing and other state support social schemes*



Photo - The Conversation

excessively remunerated. The blue-collar workers are therefore particularly affected by the adverse economic consequences of Covid-19. In 2019 in Mauritius more than 150,000 employees or some 32% of the total workforce earned up to Rs 10,000 whereas some 262,500

“There is also growing evidence that inequality is also widening in the world because blue-collar jobs although essential in agriculture to produce food, in construction and in the manufacturing sector, etc., tend to be remunerated much less than college and university educated white-collar jobs. The top brass executives are in contrast excessively remunerated. In 2019 in Mauritius more than 150,000 employees or some 32% of the total workforce earned up to Rs 10,000 whereas some 262,500 employees representing about 56% of the work force earned up to Rs 15,000...”

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This lopsided remuneration structure and an economic model which thrives on maintaining blue-collar workers on under par salaries to generate profit, reminiscent of a bygone era, cannot be sustainable. In the current Covid-19 pandemic, the blue-collar workers bear some of the brunt of the crisis. Whether they work in agriculture, in the construction industry or in the tourism sector in Covid-19 afflicted countries, they have to report back to work the moment the economy is reignited into activity after lockdowns and other restrictions are lifted as they totally depend on their salaries to meet their existential needs. They are thus particularly exposed to the risk of being infected and have to take every precaution to protect themselves against the virus. It is a catch-22 situation.

## A new approach

So many blue-collar jobs are however essential in society. For example, carers to look after people suffering from Alzheimer's and Dementia, Parkinson's disease and other debilitating diseases are of key importance in hospitals, private clinics and homes. An efficient society also needs well-trained and efficient farmers to produce organic and naturally cultivated vegetables and fruits as well as highly educated professionals in every field and research scientists making cutting edge discoveries. In our daily rat race we however hardly think about the workers who pick up our garbage every week.

We must realize that not everyone can be a graduate or aspires to be one. It is therefore high time for a new approach. We need to value and fairly remunerate every profession on its own merits and importance in society as well as change our perception of blue-collar jobs. Society needs a good and efficient mix of professions. Society cannot function efficiently and thrive without agricultural workers, planters, carers, factory workers and garbage collectors etc as well as well-qualified and competent professionals in every field.

It is therefore essential to have a fairer sharing of the fruits of prosperity instead of a skewed one. A much fairer remuneration policy which bridges salary-based inequality instead of widening it will enable swathes of workers to improve their standard of living, be more self-reliant and to cut loose from the humbling dependence on social housing and other state support social schemes.

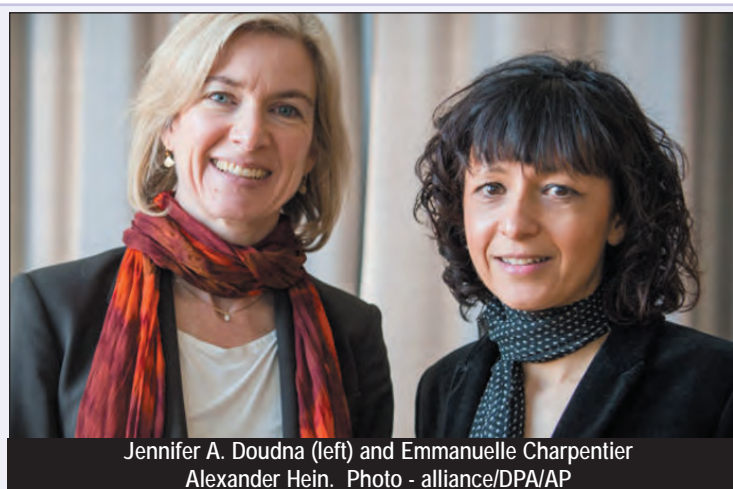
## Gene therapy

*Will the high costs of gene therapy make it accessible only to the wealthy? Will it be another vector of widening inequality in the world?*

**T**he 2020 Nobel Prize for Chemistry was awarded earlier this month jointly to Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer A. Doudna for the path-breaking discovery of CRISPR/Cas9 genetic scissors, a potent tool for genome editing. This remarkable tool enables researchers to change the DNA of humans, animals, plants and microorganisms with extremely high precision. This innovative technology is a game changer for life sciences. It can help find new pathways for curing inhe-

rited diseases.

CRISPRs (pronounced crisper) are a family of DNA sequences found in bacteria, which code for cas (CRISPR associated) proteins. Cas proteins are part of bacteria's immune response to bacteriophage (viruses which infect bacteria). Cas9 (or "CRISPR-associated") is one of these proteins which acts like a pair of molecular scissors, capable of cutting strands of DNA. The ability to modify genes in cells allows



Jennifer A. Doudna (left) and Emmanuelle Charpentier Alexander Hein. Photo - alliance/DPA/AP

researchers to find out more about life's inner workings. This process used to be time-consuming, difficult and sometimes impossible to realize. The CRISPR/Cas9 genetic scissors now enables researchers to alter DNA sequences, modify

gene function, correct genetic defects, treat and prevent the spread of diseases.

The story of the discovery of these genetic scissors is quite amazing. Whilst studying *Streptococcus pyogenes*, one of

the bacteria that cause the most harm to humanity, Emmanuelle Charpentier discovered a previously unknown molecule, *tracrRNA*. Her research published in 2011 showed that *tracrRNA* is part of the bacteria's ancient immune system, *CRISPR/Cas*, that disarms viruses by cleaving their DNA.

## Genetic scissors

In the wake of the discovery, Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer Doudna started a research collaboration in 2011. Together, they succeeded in recreating the bacteria's genetic scissors in a test tube and simplifying the scissors' molecular components so that they are easier to use.

\* Cont. on page 11





Dharam Gokhool

# Is there a case for an alternative government?

*Any electoral alliance for an alternative government cannot disregard the changing mood and aspirations of the people who ultimately decide which government will take charge of their destiny*

**F**or a few weeks and a couple of months, the three main opposition parties have taken the initiative to forge an electoral alliance and present an alternative government to the population. There is also the possibility that the Reform Party of Roshi Bhadain could be roped in. Is there a case for an alternative government and could an enlarged electoral alliance be a credible game changer?

## Popularity, public discontent and provocation

Hardly has a year gone by since the MSM acceded to power, with a comfortable parliamentary majority, than we are already in the presence of a concerted move by the main opposition parties to forge an electoral alliance with a view to ousting a government, whose popularity rating has taken a downward trend. The BLD protest movement led by Bruneau Laurette on 29th August 2020, supported by a broad spectrum of civil society in the wake of the mishandling of the MV Wakashio shipwreck as well as a string of high-profile corruption cases like the St Louis Gate, has provided additional impetus to the growing public discontent against the present Government.

If we were to exclude a few positive measures, like the doubling of the universal old-age pension, the minimum wage, the negative income tax and a few costly, prestigious infrastructural projects, without much scope for being financially and economically viable in the absence of sustained public subsidies, the Government's track record, so far, is a huge disappointment. Covid-19 has further complicated matters for the Government with the slow-down of the economy and its adverse impact on the purchasing power of the households, in particular of the poor and the middle classes.

Not only a disappointment, but an outright provocation with a cocktail of reprehensible practices to which the general public is particularly allergic, namely blatant nepotism and favouritism, numerous alleged cases of corruption, repressive legislation to silence critics, abuse of the MBC-TV as a political platform, perversion of the democratic process in the National Assembly and the prevention of the Opposition from exercising its watchdog functions, an unprecedented political interference in all public institutions, an inability to stop drug proliferation reaching school premises and children as young as aged 6-9, persistent unemployment/underemployment among the youth and women, and a shameful wastage of public funds as brought out in the last National Audit Office report... and this list is not exhaustive.



**“While the idea of an electoral alliance by the Opposition has been mooted, the bigger challenge for the protagonists will revolve around the answers they will have to provide in respect of a number of expectations, concerns and apprehensions that various sections of the Mauritian society hold in their minds and hearts as far as the future of the Republic is concerned...”**

## Victory by default and political opportunism

General elections were held in November 2019 and after nearly a year, the MSM-led Government has been running the country with a comfortable parliamentary majority. Thanks to an electoral system based on the *First Past The Post* formula and, a three-cornered fight, whereby the MSM bagged 37% of votes polled. Some 20% of the registered voters abstained from voting either the MSM or the opposition parties. If the score of the MSM were to be computed on the basis of the total number of registered voters, the % in favour of the MSM would be around 28%. *Some political analysts have even gone so far as to suggest that it is a case of people voting against the Opposition and not for the MSM.*

Any right-thinking government, with such a low poll out-turn in its favour, should have acted responsibly in order to avoid public criticism and alienation. It's true that the Government, on paper, has some four more years to go on their present mandate but as Prime Minister Wilson of the UK had rightly said in the 1960s: *“A week is a long time in politics”*. These words seem to be quite relevant today as the political landscape can change drastically in a short span of time,

especially with a government which may command the majority in Parliament but which lacks popular support.

In a Westminster system of government, the parliamentary opposition can legitimately claim to represent an alternative to the government and given the adverse circumstances of those in power, it is quite legitimate that the Opposition crafts its strategy for an alternative government. Since such a move can pose a threat to the government, it is also logical and legitimate that it will be vigorously countered and discredited.

Already the first shots have been fired by a few spokespersons from the Government ranks. To Minister Ganoo, the Opposition's electoral alliance will be a blatant case of political opportunism and is bound to be torn apart due to the conflictual nature of the personalities involved. It is no coincidence that Minister Ganoo, who has some recently proven expertise in matters of political opportunism, should be in the frontline to nag the Opposition...

## Collaborative process, electoral alliance and alternative Government

But the idea of an electoral alliance of opposition parties did not surface out of the blue. The three components of the

Opposition in the National Assembly - Labour, MMM and PMSD - were already engaged in a collaborative process in Parliament. The feel-good factor that people expected was not *au rendez-vous*.

The overall mismanagement of numerous sectors (the most glaring being the inclusion of Mauritius in the EU blacklist), issues and dossiers of public interest and the unprecedented opacity surrounding major decisions involving institutions with no accountability to the National Assembly, for example the MIC (Mauritius Investment Corporation with a portfolio of some 80 billion rupees of public money), the deteriorating social climate, fuelled by unbridled hate campaigns in social media, being seemingly handled in a discriminatorily selective manner, and ICAC's proverbial lethargy to track corrupt cases involving cronies of the powerful, amongst others, have created a fertile ground for the public to distance itself from the government of the day. In such circumstances, is it expected that the Opposition should sit still and twist their fingers for the next four years?

The idea of an electoral alliance forged by the Opposition is not only the next stage in the collaborative process already engaged by the opposition parties within the National Assembly but it is also a response to the erosion of public support towards the Government. That the Opposition combines its energy to forge an electoral alliance in such circumstances does not debar in any way any other political pretenders, to take their own initiatives either against or in favour of the present Government.

While the idea of an electoral alliance by the Opposition has been mooted, the bigger challenge for the protagonists will revolve around the answers they will have to provide in respect of a number of expectations, concerns and apprehensions that various sections of the Mauritian society hold in their minds and hearts as far as the future of the Republic is concerned. Invariably, the initiators of the idea of an electoral alliance will have to come forward and provide clear, convincing and coherent responses to the following set of public concerns:

- 1 **Alternative government for what and why?**
- 1 **Alternative government for whom and by whom?**
- And, of course, to complete the triad on any political agenda:
- 1 **Alternative government for how long?**

Any electoral alliance for an alternative government, be it of the Opposition or of the Government, cannot disregard the changing mood and aspirations of the people who ultimately decide which government will take charge of their destiny. If the Opposition can put people's interests first, there is no reason why an electoral alliance cannot be forged for an eventual alternative government.



# India opening new front with China in Taiwan?

The year 2020 is turning out to be an inflection point in the world's relationship with China. This also opens up new possibilities for Taiwan, which has had limited diplomatic and trade relations with the world. China objects to such ties and countries respond positively to Chinese concerns.

Taiwan has been pressing for a formal trade deal with India for years now. India has been reluctant given that it has supported the One-China policy, and also because a formal trade deal with Taiwan may engage it in a trade dispute with China at the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Now, reports suggest that India and Taiwan are finally talking about having a trade deal. This comes at a time when both India and Taiwan are seeing their bilateral relations with China deteriorate sharply. Many see India and Taiwan as natural partners as both are democracies, reports Prabhash K Dutta of IndiaToday.

Though there is no official word on an India-Taiwan trade deal, the reports have gained currency from Chinese reaction. China said it is "firmly opposed" to such a deal asserting that "the one-China principle is the common consensus of the international community including India, and serves as political foundation for China to develop relations with any country".

## What will happen with a deal?

A trade deal between India and Taiwan is expected to be beneficial for both the countries as India's dependence on Chinese export would reduce, and also increase the volume of foreign direct investment (FDI) in India. Currently, Taiwan ranks 40 among FDI investors.



Taiwan can reduce the dominance of China particularly in telecom and electronic goods sectors.

For Taiwanese companies, India would be the biggest market opportunity as their markets in ASEAN, China, Japan and South Korea have reached a saturation point. A formal trade deal will also bring down tax rates on imports from Taiwan.

China claims Taiwan is its "inalienable" part. Taiwan says it is an independent country.

China disputes Taiwan's claim citing history. Its claim dateline has origins in 239 AD. It is the year that finds a mention in Chinese records as the time a team of navigators had been sent to Taiwan by

then rulers of China.

As has happened with many places having ancient civilisations, different parts of China saw different powerful kingdoms rise and exert their influence on distant lands. China says since it controlled Taiwan in the past, it has legitimate right to claim the territory now.

## Growing China-Taiwan tension

Over the years, the people of Taiwan pushed for democracy for which a process was initiated by Chiang Kai-shek's son Chiang Ching-kuo in late 1980s. The process culminated in 2000 when Taiwan elected its first non-Kuomintang president in Chen Shui-bian.

Chen was a pro-independence leader and his victory prompted China to announce an anti-separatism law in 2005. Relations have worsened between Taiwan and China following the victory of Tsai Ing-wen as Taiwanese president first in 2016 and again early this year.

She is an aggressive pro-independence leader and deepened Taiwan's ties with the US angering China. Growing US-Taiwan relation has come in the wake of Chinese assertion in South Asia -- including a military standoff with India -- and territorial claims over South China and East China seas.

The US on its part is bound by the Taiwan Relations Act, which empowers its forces to intervene if there is a security threat to Taiwan. China has been posturing all through 2020 dropping hints that the Xi Jinping regime is ready for a military takeover of Taiwan.

China has attempted to stall all efforts by Taiwan to join an international body. Recently, it even resisted Taiwan's attempt to join the World Health Organisation (WHO). On the other hand, Taiwan is asserting its independent identity. In a recent move, it announced a roll out of its new passport in January 2021, dropping words, "Republic of China" and enlarging the word "Taiwan" on it.

Earlier this month, two Chinese diplomats engaged in a fist-fight with Taiwanese foreign office staff in Fiji during Taiwan National Day celebrations. Taiwan has demanded a probe by Fiji police while China has denied any wrongdoing.

# Amazon to let employees work from home till June 2021

In May, Twitter Inc became the first major tech company to allow employees who can work remotely to do so indefinitely.

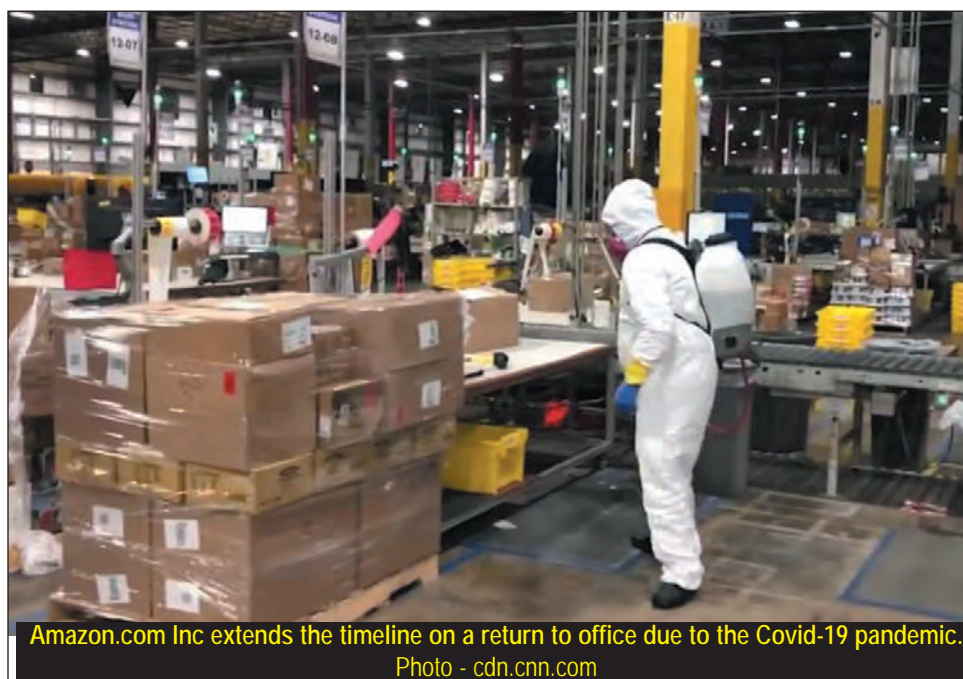
Amazon.com Inc on Tuesday told employees whose work can be done from home that they can do so until June, extending the timeline on a return to office due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Employees who work in a role that can effectively be done from home are welcome to do so until June 30, 2021", an Amazon spokeswoman said in an emailed statement on Tuesday, adding the guidance is applicable globally.

Amazon had earlier allowed that option until January, reports Reuters.

The development comes less than three weeks after the world's largest online retailer said more than 19,000 of its U.S. frontline workers contracted the coronavirus this year.

Some staff, elected officials and unions in recent months have said that Amazon



Amazon.com Inc extends the timeline on a return to office due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Photo - cdn.cnn.com

put employees' health at risk by keeping warehouses open during the pandemic.

"We have invested significant funds and resources to keep those who choose

to come to the office safe through physical distancing, deep cleaning, temperature checks, and by providing face coverings and hand sanitizer," the Amazon spokeswoman said on Tuesday.

In May, Twitter Inc became the first major tech company to allow employees who can work remotely to do so indefinitely.

Other tech giants have extended the work from home option for their employees with Microsoft Corp saying earlier this month it will let most employees work remotely for up to half their weekly working hours.

Facebook Inc had said it would allow its employees to work from home till July next year, while Google had extended the remote working period for employees who do not need to be in the office till June.

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# Navratri celebrations in Karachi unite minority communities of Pakistan

**L**ights, colour, music and dandiya almost all through the night. One would imagine this a city in Gujarat during the Navratri festival, but it is not. It is a city across the border - Karachi, Pakistan.

Culturally, there are more minorities living in Karachi or the Sindh province than any other place in Pakistan.

This is Narayanpura, home to a large number of minorities from the Hindu, Sikh and Christian community. There are six temples, one gurdwara and two churches in this area.

Around 10,000 minorities are members of the Hindu community and most of them are Gujarati speakers. Thus, Navratri is being celebrated in full spirits in these colonies of Narayanpura, reports Geeta Mohan of IndiaToday.

"We fast for nine days, we come here and pray every evening. It is a beautiful festival. We are having a lot of fun," said one of the ladies partaking in the festivities.

"We thank the administration for facilitating the event," said another Hindu man.

While nobody would openly talk about the threats they face or the insecurities they live with, they have faced much trouble from the radical fundamentalists in



Navratri Garba being celebrated at Lord Shiv Temple, Karachi.  
Photo - facebook.com

Pakistan.

But when you see them during Navratri, the smiles on the faces of the children, the joy among men and women

dancing to the tunes of dandiya music, the fun and frolic, normalises the whole scenario.

Jog Maya Mandir, one of the first

temples in Narayanpura is dedicated to Goddess Sherawali where the main prayers take place during the Navratri festival.

Narayanpura today looks like any city in the subcontinent that completely immerses itself in festivities, welcoming one and all. There are many from other communities who join in the festivities.

The neighbourhood was established in 1824 by an activist named Narayandas. It came under attack after the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 in Ayodhya.

Since then, the minorities, including Hindus, Christians and Muslims, have faced much discrimination.

But Pakistan still is their motherland. On the tenth day, the entire community will come together and carry out a procession in the evening to Native Jetty bridge.

Before they head to the seashore, they visit the Lakshminarayan temple which is situated under the bridge. After offering prayers at the temple, the idols are immersed into the sea.

In the old days, the procession used to be on foot, but now for security purposes and for convenience as well, the procession goes in cars and buses.

# Pope Francis publicly endorses same-sex civil unions



**P**ope Francis has publicly endorsed same-sex civil unions for the first time. The pontiff was being interviewed for a feature-length documentary about his life that made its premiere at the Rome Film Festival on Wednesday.

While serving as archbishop of Buenos Aires, Francis endorsed civil unions for gay couples as an alternative to same-sex marriages. However, he had not previously spoken publicly in favour of civil unions as pope, reports

The Independent.

"Homosexual people have the right to be in a family," he said. "They are children of God. Nobody should be thrown out or be made miserable over it."

\* \* \*

Two-thirds of American voters are concerned the upcoming presidential election will not be fair, suggesting Donald Trump's sustained attacks on mass mail-in ballots

are working.

"That's the only thing I'm worried about," the president said at a Monday afternoon rally in Prescott, Arizona, urging his supporters to become poll watchers: "You have to watch them, too."

Sixty-six per cent of voters described themselves as "very or quite" concerned that the election will not be free or fair, with 68 per cent saying they doubt the result will be clear come 4 November, the day after Election Day, according to a JL Partners-Independent survey.

What's more, 65 per cent of respondents said they were worried that mail-in ballots will not be counted or will be counted incorrectly.

On the Other hand, Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden maintains a double-digit national lead over Donald Trump but a new poll conducted on behalf of The Independent shows some warning signs for the former vice president.

Mr Biden has the support of 52 per cent of voters against the president's 42 per cent, with Americans deeply concerned about Mr Trump's handling of the coronavirus crisis, according to a survey conducted by JL Partners and The Independent.

There are deep partisan divides among voters over the two candidates' endorsement of a coronavirus vaccine. Mr Trump saying a potential vaccine is safe drives confidence in one lower than Mr Biden saying the same. The president received low marks on a number of other issues and has just two weeks to change enough voters' minds if he wants to secure a second term.



Interview : Eric Ng Ping Cheun,  
directeur de PluriConseil



**Mauritius Times : N'est-ce pas trop tôt de parler de reprise de l'économie post-Covid en se basant sur une augmentation de la vente des automobiles et des transactions bancaires ou même du niveau des recettes fiscales, comme l'a fait récemment le ministre des Finances ?**

**Eric Ng Ping Cheun :** Effectivement, je ne vois aucun signe de reprise de l'économie à ce stade. Le ministre des Finances s'est essayé à un exercice de relations publiques, mais il a lamentablement échoué, d'autant plus qu'il n'est pas dans son rôle. De plus, il s'est contredit en affirmant dans la même foulée que 2020 connaîtra une contraction économique. Comment peut-il y avoir de reprise économique dans une année de contraction ? Les activités ont repris après le confinement national, mais les opérateurs ont moins de commandes qu'avant l'écroulement de la Covid-19.

Soyons sérieux. Notre pays ne produit pas des automobiles, mais il les importe. Or les importations réduisent le produit intérieur brut (PIB). Cependant, cette soustraction est compensée par le fait que la vente du produit importé est comptabilisée comme consommation. Ce sont seulement les services autour de cette vente qui constituent une valeur ajoutée à l'économie.

Les transactions bancaires, elles, augmentent sans doute par leur valeur monétaire en raison des injections importantes de la monnaie dans le système bancaire. Mais la croissance économique se mesure par l'accroissement du volume de production ou de dépenses. Or, la production nationale s'est contractée de 32,5% au deuxième trimestre de 2020, selon Statistics Mauritius.

Dans cette même période, la consommation globale a reculé de 34,2% en termes réels. Si les recettes de la TVA ont augmenté, cela ne serait dû qu'à l'effet de la forte dépréciation de la roupie sur les prix des produits importés, et non à un volume accru de la consommation locale. En tout cas, les recettes fiscales totales en juillet-août 2020 sont inférieures de Rs 1,4 milliards au montant de juillet-août 2019. C'est dire que l'économie mauricienne est en décroissance.

**\* Le manque de visibilité, l'incertitude quant aux perspectives, les paramètres macroéconomiques, la tendance des taux d'intérêt : l'effet combiné de tous**

## “La philosophie économique du Gouvernement, c'est de taxer, dépenser, dévaluer et créer de la monnaie”

*Alors que les problèmes économiques associés à la pandémie mondiale augmentent mois après mois, le secteur privé mauricien conserve sa lourdeur d'esprit habituelle et s'accroche au Gouvernement pour traverser la crise en douceur. Quant à la population, comme ailleurs dans le monde, elle se tourne vers les élus pour améliorer son niveau de bien-être et elle marche dans les rues pour faire entendre ses revendications. La tension augmente car les manœuvres du Gouvernement sont faibles : elles sont centrées sur les prochaines élections, et non pas sur les réalités économiques mondiales. L'avenir paraît sombre et inquiétant. Eric Ng Ping Cheun nous en parle avec des arguments à l'appui.*

**ces facteurs a fait que beaucoup de nos businessmen ont choisi de se protéger en adoptant une attitude de 'wait and see'. Ont-ils tort ?**

Les hommes d'affaires n'ont pas tort de se montrer prudents dans la conjoncture actuelle. La situation économique, ici et ailleurs, n'est pas normale, nos marchés d'exportation peinent à se relever, les chaînes d'approvisionnement sont perturbées, nos frontières ne sont que partiellement ouvertes, et les risques d'une seconde vague du coronavirus se précisent : ce sont là des facteurs réels.

Même des taux d'intérêt proches de zéro pourcent, qui auraient dû stimuler l'investissement et la consommation, ne peuvent pas compenser ces handicaps structurels. Les politiques monétaires accommodantes et les politiques budgétaires expansionnistes n'y changeront rien. C'est dangereux de continuer à relancer l'économie par les déficits publics et la création monétaire, comme s'obstinent à le faire les autorités mauriciennes.

Il faut dire que le secteur privé traditionnel est favorable à de telles politiques parce qu'elles leur

**“Je me demande si la MIC n'a pas conclu un marché de dupes avec ces grands groupes privés. Pourquoi la MIC doit attendre la fin de l'échéance de son investissement (au terme de neuf années) pour convertir les obligations en actions, alors que l'emprunteur peut rembourser tout le capital à n'importe quel moment sans pénalité ?”**

pas difficile aux grands groupes économiques de faire peur à un ministre des Finances inexpérimenté et à un Premier ministre politiquement affaibli pour obtenir ce qu'ils exigent.

Je peux comprendre qu'ils veulent protéger leur patrimoine, mais il est inacceptable qu'ils adoptent une attitude de "wait and see" par rapport à leurs propres faiblesses. La crise doit être une occasion pour les entreprises privées de revoir leur structure de gouvernance, leur politique de rémunération, leur style de gestion, bref leur capacité de leadership.

**\* Quelles sont vos plus grandes inquiétudes pour l'économie mauricienne présentement malgré tout l'effort et le soutien financier du Gouvernement en vue de relancer la reprise ? Et croyez-vous que la situation va effectivement se détériorer dans les mois à venir, comme on le dit ?**

Ce qui m'inquiète beaucoup, c'est que le Gouvernement ne fait qu'injecter des milliards de roupies dans l'économie et accroître son endettement sans régler les problèmes fondamentaux de l'économie. Il prend la voie inflationniste de la création monétaire sans demander des efforts de la part de la population. Il fait donc croire aux gens qu'ils peuvent toujours compter sur l'argent public comme solution. Il aurait dû profiter de la crise exceptionnelle de la Covid-19 pour insuffler un nouveau dynamisme à l'économie mauricienne.

Sans des réformes structurelles, la situation économique ira de mal en pis.

- Au lieu d'attaquer le problème de productivité dans la fonction publique, on va recruter plus de 1,700 personnes, ce qui va alourdir la bureaucratie.

- Au lieu de rendre les services publics et les organismes régulateurs performants, on continue de caser des gens incompetents à des postes à responsabilité.

- Au lieu de rationaliser la pension de vieillesse, on accroît les dépenses de retraite et on rend leur financement plus compliqué.

- Au lieu d'introduire la concurrence dans l'espace aérien, on protège le transporteur national même si c'est au détriment de l'exportation et de l'importation.

- Au lieu de rendre les lois du travail plus flexibles, on décourage la restructuration des entreprises.

**“Les trois dernières grandes manifestations de rue ne faisaient pas appel à un gouvernement d'unité nationale, mais plutôt à la démission du Gouvernement. Si celui-ci n'est pas capable de sortir le pays d'une crise économique et sociale, il n'a qu'à dissoudre l'Assemblée nationale pour retrouver une nouvelle légitimité démocratique et un nouvel état de grâce...”**

permettent de faire de l'argent sur le dos des contribuables et du pouvoir d'achat du petit peuple. Il n'est

\* Siute en page 8



# 'Il n'est pas difficile aux grands groupes économiques de faire peur à un ministre des Finances inexpérimenté et à un PM politiquement affaibli'

\* Suite de la page 7

\* D'une part, l'un des seuls indicateurs économiques positifs actuellement, c'est l'inflation tournant autour de 1,8% en moyenne sur les 12 derniers mois, mais la réalité des prix aux supermarchés est tout autre. D'autre part, le taux de chômage est en hausse, et le *Monetary Policy Committee* de la Banque de Maurice affirme que " *the outlook remains bleak* ". Si la situation économique se détériore dans les mois à venir, quelles vont être les conséquences d'une telle détérioration sur le niveau de vie des Mauriciens et, par conséquent, sur le plan social ?

Le taux d'inflation paraît faible, mais il monte rapidement. Il était à 0,5% en glissement annuel en décembre dernier, et il atteindra 2,8% en décembre prochain, selon Statistics Mauritius. C'est quand même une hausse de 460% du taux d'inflation ! Milton Friedman disait que la variabilité du taux d'inflation est plus problématique que le niveau du taux d'inflation. Quand le taux change trop vite, cela désoriente les gens et rend difficile tout calcul économique.

Dans les supermarchés, les prix ont grimpé plus fortement que ce que laissent croire les taux d'inflation officiels, en raison des hausses des droits d'accise, des frais portuaires et de la dépréciation de la roupie. L'effondrement de la roupie entraîne un appauvrissement de la population. Ajoutez à cela des pertes d'emplois massives, et vous avez tous les ingrédients d'une explosion sociale.

Le taux de chômage a déjà dépassé les 10% en juin dernier. Les entreprises qui ont bénéficié du 'Wage Assistance Scheme' ne peuvent pas licencier jusqu'au 31 décembre 2020. Mais au-delà de cette date, une vague de licenciements est à craindre, que le Gouvernement reconduise ou non ce plan de soutien. Je pense notamment aux secteurs textile et touristique. Pour l'heure, le Gouvernement n'a pas de stratégie claire pour les relancer face à une pandémie qui va durer.

\* Maurice étant une économie ouverte, il y a des facteurs exogènes qui ont considérablement freiné la croissance dans le secteur du tourisme, de la manufacture, de la construction, de l'immobilier et des services financiers. Selon le Fonds monétaire international (FMI), la longue ascension de l'économie mondiale vers des niveaux d'activités, comparables à ceux d'avant la pandémie, demeure exposée à des revers. La reprise, paraît-il, ne sera pas de sitôt, et ce n'est pas très rassurant pour notre économie, n'est-ce pas ?



Il est un fait que l'économie mauricienne dépend des marchés extérieurs pour croître. L'exportation de biens et services représente presque 40% de notre PIB. Quand l'économie mondiale éternue, Maurice est grippée.

En 2008, la crise mondiale était financière, impactant indirectement la croissance mauricienne, laquelle a fléchi mais est restée positive, à 3,3% en 2009. C'était même mieux que les 3,0% de 2019 ! En 2020, ce sont les secteurs réels des économies qui sont affectés, ce qui fait que l'impact sur Maurice est direct. Une contraction mondiale de 4,4% est un grand choc exogène pour notre pays qui subit ainsi une croissance négative de 14% cette année.

A l'instar de l'économie mondiale qui rebondira de 5,2% selon le FMI, on s'attend à une reprise de l'économie mauricienne en 2021. Cela n'a rien d'extraordinaire au vu d'un effet de base statistique favorable. Une véritable croissance économique est celle qui est générée par des gains de productivité, par des créations d'emplois privés ou par des investissements dans des équipements et des machines plutôt que dans des travaux de construction.

Tout compte fait, le niveau du PIB en 2021 sera toujours inférieur à celui de 2019. Et pourtant, il est gonflé artificiellement par le recours à la planche à billets. La prospérité est constituée par un accroissement du volume, et non de la valeur monétaire, de la production

nationale.

\* Dans ces conditions très incertaines, sauf si les laboratoires réussissent à développer un vaccin efficace contre la Covid-19, comment va-t-on s'y prendre pour faire face à une telle situation ?

En attendant qu'on trouve un vaccin efficace, nous devons apprendre à vivre avec le virus. Malheureusement, depuis le confinement national, pendant six mois, le Gouvernement n'a pas su responsabiliser la population. Il a adopté des réglementations qui sanctionnent le non-respect du port du masque en public, mais il a laissé régner le laxisme. Personnellement, je n'ai jamais vu un policier arrêter un récalcitrant. C'est un régime faiblard qui ne sait pas discipliner les gens, sauf à tomber dans l'autoritarisme quand cela l'arrange. Or un gouvernement fort doit faire preuve d'autorité.

En cas d'une seconde vague de l'épidémie, un gouvernement responsable ne saurait se contenter de fermer les frontières et d'asphyxier ainsi l'économie tout en créant de la monnaie à partir de rien. Bien gérer le pays, c'est savoir gérer tous les risques, et non les fuir. C'est aussi gouverner dans la transparence, la rigueur et la méritocratie.

Au Gouvernement de donner l'exemple avant de faire la leçon à la population. Et nous n'avons pas besoin d'autres scandales de corruption, de passe-droits et de népotisme pour frustrer les gens, déjà stressés par les conséquences de la Covid-19...

\* Déjà le Gouvernement a injecté des milliards de roupies pour soutenir les employés du privé et les 'self-employed', et aussi les grandes entreprises dans les secteurs les plus touchés par la Covid-19. Voyez-vous le Gouvernement disposer d'une certaine marge de manœuvre financière pour faire autant ou davantage dans les prochains mois ?

Vous savez, avec la planche à billets et une banque centrale aux ordres du Gouvernement, il dispose d'une marge de manœuvre financière illimitée, pouvant injecter des dizaines de milliards de roupies dans l'économie tous les ans. De plus, en l'absence de règles fiscales, il n'y a aucun plafond à l'endettement public. La question est de savoir si le Gouvernement est assez fou pour mener le pays à la banqueroute. Je crains fort qu'il soit tenté par cette option si c'est la seule condition pour lui de gagner les prochaines élections générales.

\* Suite en page 9

“ Si l'Etat doit réguler les marchés, c'est pour les rendre plus efficaces dans leur fonctionnement, et non pour assurer une illusoire égalité de résultats. Afin d'inciter les entreprises à l'innovation et à l'investissement dans la qualité, les marchés doivent être ouverts, et non fermés à une élite économique ni protégés de la concurrence étrangère...”

“ C'est dangereux de continuer à relancer l'économie par les déficits publics et la création monétaire, comme s'obstinent à le faire les autorités mauriciennes. Il faut dire que le secteur privé traditionnel est favorable à de telles politiques parce qu'elles leur permettent de faire de l'argent sur le dos des contribuables et du pouvoir d'achat du petit peuple...”



# 'L'Etat doit veiller à ce que les marchés soient concurrentiels, que les conditions du marché soient égales pour tous'

**“En cas d'une seconde vague de l'épidémie, un gouvernement responsable ne saurait se contenter de fermer les frontières et d'asphyxier ainsi l'économie tout en créant de la monnaie à partir de rien. Bien gérer le pays, c'est savoir gérer tous les risques, et non les fuir. C'est aussi gouverner dans la transparence, la rigueur et la méritocratie...”**

\* Suite de la page 8

L'introduction de la Contribution Sociale Généralisée (CSG) en est un parfait exemple. Dans un contexte aussi difficile pour les entreprises privées, le Gouvernement choisit quand même de les taxer davantage juste pour accorder une pension de vieillesse de Rs 13,500 en 2023. Il sait pourtant que les recettes de la CSG aux taux actuels ne seront pas suffisantes pour maintenir les dépenses de retraite dans les années suivantes.

Dans le même esprit, je ne serais pas étonné que l'indemnisation partielle des salaires soit maintenue au-delà de 2020. Le ministre des Finances croit fermement dans la consommation comme moteur de croissance, alors que le pays importe une large part de ce qu'il consomme. La philosophie économique du Gouvernement, c'est de taxer, dépenser, dévaluer et créer de la monnaie. Avec la complexité de la Banque de Maurice, l'irresponsabilité fiscale n'a pas de limite.

**\* Plusieurs voix se sont élevées pour réclamer une rupture avec l'ordre établi sur le plan du modèle économique et de la gouvernance générale. Aussi, cette crise a créé de nouvelles opportunités de changement de nos structures économiques, ou la consolidation du rôle de l'Etat comme régulateur des marchés, l'instauration de nouvelles pratiques de gestion dans les secteurs public et privé, et la mise en place d'une société plus égalitaire. Pensez-vous que le pays saura saisir l'occasion pour permettre cette rupture**

**si indispensable à un renouveau national?**

La crise économique actuelle est due à un petit virus, et non à un dysfonctionnement des marchés ou au libre-échange. Partout dans le monde, c'est l'Etat qui a décidé de confiner la population et, par conséquent, de mettre l'économie à l'arrêt. C'est ce qui a jeté 150 millions de personnes dans la pauvreté, alors que l'économie de marché et la mondialisation ont grandement fait diminuer le nombre de pauvres ces dernières décennies.

L'Etat doit veiller à ce que les marchés soient concurrentiels, que les conditions du marché soient égales pour tous. Si l'Etat doit réguler les marchés, c'est pour les rendre plus efficaces dans leur fonctionnement, et non pour assurer une illusoire égalité de résultats. Afin d'inciter les entreprises à l'innovation et à l'investissement dans la qualité, les marchés doivent être ouverts, et non fermés à une élite économique ni protégés de la concurrence étrangère.

Le modèle économique de Maurice fondé sur l'ouverture au monde, et sur une collaboration entre l'Etat et le secteur privé a bien fonctionné. Le problème est que les entreprises privées sont devenues trop dépendantes du Gouvernement, ce qui ne déplaît pas à ce dernier. On voit cette collusion surtout dans le développement immobilier que le pouvoir politique favorise délibérément avec des avantages fiscaux. Dividendes pour les actionnaires contre dividendes politiques dans les régions rurales. C'est du capitalisme de copinage.



**\* Justement, il y a une certaine opacité dans l'aide consentie par l'Etat, par le biais de la Mauritius Investment Corporation (MIC), à certaines de nos grandes entreprises. Il paraît que l'Etat n'aurait rien demandé en contrepartie (la sécurité d'emploi garantie, la prise de participation au capital d'entreprise ou le remboursement à terme de l'aide). Votre opinion ?**

Je m'élève contre cette opacité, car c'est l'argent des contribuables qui est en jeu. Je me demande si la MIC n'a pas conclu un marché de dupes avec ces grands groupes privés. Pourquoi la MIC doit attendre la fin de l'échéance de son investissement (au terme de neuf années) pour convertir les obligations en actions, alors que l'emprunteur peut rembourser tout le capital à n'importe quel moment sans pénalité ?

Le taux de coupon doit être suffisamment élevé pour compenser ce facteur défavorable à la MIC. Pour faire une analogie, est-ce qu'une banque accepterait un remboursement sans frais

d'un emprunt de neuf ans après seulement une année ?

**\* Dans une récente interview, l'historien Jocelyn Chan Low nous disait que "si le pays s'enfonçait dans une crise économique et sociale avec des manifestations de rue spontanées, il sera extrêmement compliqué de gérer le pays... Une solution idéale est évidemment de constituer un gouvernement d'unité nationale..." Comment réagissez-vous à cela ?**

Les trois dernières grandes manifestations de rue ne faisaient pas appel à un gouvernement d'unité nationale, mais plutôt à la démission du Gouvernement. Si celui-ci n'est pas capable de sortir le pays d'une crise économique et sociale, il n'a qu'à dissoudre l'Assemblée nationale pour retrouver une nouvelle légitimité démocratique et un nouvel état de grâce. Il en a bien besoin.

the years even if some have managed to acquire a plot through social mobility.

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# How does being bilingual affect your brain?

## It depends on how you use language

*Why the benefits of bilingualism aren't consistent*



Studies in patient populations have shown that being bilingual can delay the onset of dementia by about four to five years. Photo: ©iStock

Depending on what you read, speaking more than one language may or may not make you smarter. These mixed messages are understandably confusing, and they're due to the fact that nothing is quite as simple as it's typically portrayed when it comes to neuroscience.

We can't give a simple "yes" or "no" to the question of whether being bilingual benefits your brain. Instead, it is becoming increasingly evident that whether and how your brain adapts to using multiple languages depends on what they are and how you use them.

Research suggests that as you learn or regularly use a second language, it becomes constantly "active" alongside your native language in your brain. To enable communication, your brain has to select one language and inhibit the other.

This process takes effort and the brain adapts to do this more effectively. It is altered both structurally (through changes in the size or shape of specific regions, and the integrity of white matter pathways that connect them) and functionally (through changes how much specific regions are used).

These adaptations usually occur in brain regions and pathways that are also used for other cognitive processes known as "executive functions". These include things like working memory and attentional control (for example, the ability to ignore competing, irrelevant information

and focus on a target).

Researchers measure these cognitive processes with specifically designed tasks. One example of such tests is the flanker task, in which participants have to indicate the direction of a specific arrow that is surrounded by other arrows that face in the same or opposite direction. Being bilingual can potentially improve performance on tasks like these, typically in either faster reaction times or higher accuracy.

### Mixed results?

But not all studies consistently find these performance improvements. In fact, some find that bilinguals and monolinguals perform very similarly.

The degree to which the brain adapts structurally and functionally from bilingualism also varies. Some studies suggest bilinguals and monolinguals use the brain differently to complete an executive function task, even if the performances between the two groups is similar.

Other studies have found differences in brain structure, but how these differences manifest and the brain regions and pathways involved are not always consistent. This variability, especially on executive function tasks, has led some to question whether speaking more than one language has a robust impact on the brain at all.

However, bilingualism comes in many shapes and forms. For example, some

bilinguals learn a second language from birth and others much later. Some bilinguals constantly need to switch between their two languages, while others speak one language at home and another at work.

It would be surprising if this variability in bilingualism did not make a difference to how the brain adapts. So, there is a growing case for considering bilingualism as a spectrum of experiences rather than just a binary distinction of bilingual versus monolingual. Several models have been proposed for how different brain adaptations might link to specific bilingual language experiences.

A growing number of studies have also examined specific aspects of bilingual experience, such as how long someone has been using more than one language, the regularity or diversity of use, and the amount they switch between languages. These studies crucially find that different language experiences have distinct effects on brain adaptation and performance on tasks measuring certain executive functions.

What's more, these adaptations are dynamic, meaning the brain seems to keep adapting with continued and changing experience. For instance, in the early

stages of learning and using an additional language, or if both languages are frequently used in the same setting, the brain adapts regions in frontal areas of the cortex (regions highly used for executive functions) to more effectively handle the increased effort required to select and control the languages.

However, if someone stays actively bilingual for a long time, other brain regions such as the basal ganglia and cerebellum also adapt. These regions are used to more efficiently or automatically complete a task, like your body can as you become more physically fit or gain increased muscle memory. Such adaptations in brain structure indicate a shift towards more efficiently handling of language competition.

The next step is to figure out how much these different experiences and outcomes relate to one another. Recently, my colleagues and I have mapped what we know about the relationships between different bilingual language experiences and the different ways in which the brain might adapt to them.

What about our original question: does bilingualism benefit your brain? Well, it depends. While there is still a lot to learn about how exactly the brain adapts to the bilingual experience, it's clear that how you use an additional language makes a big difference.

**Vincent DeLuca**

University of Birmingham

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# Gene therapy



In July, Gray was recovering following the medical procedure which involved infusions of billions of her bone marrow cells, which had been edited using the gene-editing technique CRISPR. Her father Timothy Wright (right) travelled from Mississippi to keep her company. Photo - Meredith Rizzo-NPR

“As gene therapy involves making changes to the human genome, it raises many fundamental ethical concerns. Will the high costs of gene therapy make it accessible only to the wealthy? Will it be another vector of widening inequality in the world? Could the widespread use of gene therapy make society marginalize people who are different? Should people be allowed to use gene therapy to tweak basic human traits to, for example, enhance height, intelligence or athletic ability?”

\* Cont. from page 3

In a path-breaking experiment, they then reprogrammed the genetic scissors. In their natural form, the scissors recognize DNA from viruses, but Charpentier and Doudna proved that they could be controlled so that they

can cut any DNA molecule at a pre-determined site. Cutting the DNA makes it easy to rewrite the code of life.

The use of the CRISPR/Cas9 genetic scissors has exploded since its discovery by Charpentier and Doudna in 2012. This tool has contributed to many important discoveries in basic research. Plant researchers have been able to develop crops that withstand mould, pests and drought. In medicine, clinical trials of new cancer therapies are underway and the hopes of being able to cure inherited diseases are about to come true. The genetic scissors have taken life sciences into a new era of extremely pointed research and discoveries and in many ways are bringing tremendous benefit to mankind.

## Ethical issues

A gene is the basic physical and functional unit of heredity. Genes are made up of DNA which is the code of life. The genetic scissors enable defective genes to be repaired. However, apart from representing enormous potential for correcting genetic defects, treating and preventing the spread of diseases, in research for new cancer therapies and in improving crops, this cutting edge technology also raises fundamental ethical questions.

As gene therapy involves making changes to the

“The use of the CRISPR/Cas9 genetic scissors has exploded since its discovery by Charpentier and Doudna in 2012. This tool has contributed to many important discoveries in basic research. Plant researchers have been able to develop crops that withstand mould, pests and drought. In medicine, clinical trials of new cancer therapies are underway and the hopes of being able to cure inherited diseases are about to come true...”

human genome, it raises many fundamental ethical concerns. These concerns beg a number of germane questions. For example, who decides which genes/traits are normal and which constitute a disability or disorder? There is also the question of costs and affordability. Will the high costs of gene therapy make it accessible only to the wealthy? Will it be another vector of widening inequality in the world?

Could the widespread use of gene therapy make society marginalize people who are different? Should people be allowed to use gene therapy to tweak basic human traits to, for example, enhance height, intelligence or athletic ability? CRISPR/Cas9 genetic scissors are certainly not a tool enabling research centres or society to play god. It is therefore essential that the wide potential of genetic scissors and gene editing be governed by strict ethical rules, robust safeguards and a well-couched legal framework to prevent any misuse.

It must however be flagged in the current Covid-19 afflicted world that whilst CRISPR is a remarkable tool to help cure genetic diseases and develop cancer therapies, it does not help treat infectious diseases such as Covid-19 and malaria.

Mrinal Roy

# Is reaching zero Covid-19 possible?

\* Cont. from page 2

And Sweden, which adopted a liberal policy on containing the pandemic that resulted in a high number of cases, has had ten times as many deaths per million people as neighbouring Finland and Norway.

The impact of a second wave will likely be lower in places like these, where many people have already been infected, but if the threshold for herd immunity hasn't been reached, the population as a whole still won't be protected. And the consequence of attempting to reach that threshold through natural infection will be many more deaths in at-risk groups: older people, people with obesity and those with underlying medical conditions. On top of this, some who are infected go on to develop long-term health complications, even if their initial infection isn't too severe.

So for most, the associated risks of pursuing herd immunity make it an unacceptable strategy for suppressing the virus, let alone eliminating it.

## Vaccines won't be a quick fix

However, achieving herd immunity



New Zealand lost its zero COVID-19 run after 100 days. Photo: Unsplash - Logan Weaver

through vaccination has, in theory, the potential of getting us to the elusive zero Covid-19. Vaccines have reduced the incidence of diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and haemophilus influenzae type B to close to zero in many developed countries.

There are more than 200 vaccines in development against SARS-CoV-2. But to have one eliminate Covid-19 is a high bar. Any vaccine would need to be highly effective at both preventing the disease

and stopping the virus spreading to people who haven't had it.

The vaccines currently furthest along in development, however, have set their sights on a much lower target: of being at least 50% effective, which is the threshold needed for them to be approved by the US Food and Drug Administration. Creating a highly effective vaccine at the first attempt might be over-optimistic. Vaccines will also need to be effective across all age groups and safe to administer to the whole

population. Safety is key, as any concerns in any age group will reduce confidence and uptake.

The vaccine will also need to be produced in sufficient quantities to vaccinate over 7 billion people, which will take time. For example, AstraZeneca – which is developing one of the leading vaccines – has deals in place to produce 2 billion doses by the end of 2021. Making enough for the whole world could take years.

The impact won't be instantaneous either. The last natural smallpox case was in 1977, ten years after the World Health Organization launched a global eradication programme for that disease, and nearly 200 years after the first smallpox vaccine was developed. And it's taken more than 30 years since the launch of Global Polio Eradication Initiative to eliminate polio everywhere except Pakistan and Afghanistan.

So while an effective vaccine offers the best chance of reaching zero Covid-19, we should be realistic about what's possible. Eliminating the virus across much of the world, while not unthinkable, could take a significant number of years.



# Five ways to increase protein intake as we age

*Protein is extremely important for our health as we age*

**P**rotein is an essential part of a healthy diet. It helps us build and maintain strong muscles and bones, helps us better recover from illness and injury, and reduces likelihood of falls and fractures. But, as we age, many of us don't get enough protein in our diet. This is partly because our appetites diminish naturally as we get older. Convenience, effort, and value for money, are also reasons that older adults may not get enough protein.

However, protein is extremely important as we age. This is because our bodies become less able to convert the protein we eat into muscle and other important biological factors that help us better recover from illness and injury - so we actually need to eat more protein as we get older.

Here are five tips to help you get enough protein in your diet as you age.

## 1. Add sauces and seasonings

Research shows that the taste and flavour of high-protein foods can encourage older adults to consume more of them. And taste and flavour are easily added with sauces and seasoning.

In studies where we have offered older adults a hot chicken meal either with or without sauce or seasoning, we find more chicken was eaten from the meals with sauce or seasoning compared to plain meals. Meals with sauces and seasonings were also rated as more pleasant and tastier than the plain meals.

Adding sauces and seasonings to meals can increase the consumption of high-protein foods. Participants also subsequently ate equal amounts of protein at the next meal following flavoured meals and plain meals, meaning that their protein intake was increased overall.

## 2. Add cheese, nuts or seeds

Some foods that add flavours are naturally high in protein themselves. Good examples are strong cheeses - like blue cheese - as well as nuts and seeds.

As well as protein, cheese is full of calcium and other micronutrients, including Vitamins A, D and B12, which also help maintain strong bones. Cheese can be easily added to soups, salads, pasta or mashed potatoes.

Nuts and seeds can be added to breakfast cereals, salads and desserts such as yoghurts, and can provide an interesting texture as well as added flavour. Nuts and seeds are good sources of plant-based protein, and are also high in healthy fats, fibre, and many vitamins and minerals, and can reduce risk of many chronic conditions, such as cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. However, nuts and seeds may not be suitable for everyone (as they can be difficult to chew), but cheese is soft and full of flavour.

## 3. Eat eggs for breakfast

Breakfast meals tend to be low in protein - so eating eggs for breakfast is one way to boost protein intake.

Our recent study found egg intake could be increased by providing people with recipes and herb or spice seasoning packets that increased the taste and flavour of eggs. We gave participants recipes that used both familiar and exotic ingredients, from a variety of countries, for dishes that required a range of preparation methods. Egg intakes increased after 12 weeks by 20%, and were sustained for a further 12 weeks in those who had received the recipes.

Eggs are a nutritious source of protein, and are typically easy to prepare and chew, good value for money and have a long shelf life. Egg dishes can also add taste and



We actually need to eat more protein as we age. Photo - aging.com

flavour to the diet. However, eggs may not be suitable for everyone (including those with certain diagnosed conditions), but for most people egg consumption is considered safe.

## 4. Make it easy

Try to make cooking as quick and easy as possible. Many types of fish are available that can be eaten directly from the pack, or simply need heating - such as smoked mackerel or tinned sardines. Fish is also full of many vitamins and minerals, as well as omega-3 fatty acids (which are present in oily fish like salmon) which is good for heart health. To allow easier and quicker cooking, purchase meat that is pre-cut, pre-prepared or pre-marinated, or fish that has been deboned and otherwise prepared, and then make use of your microwave. Fish can be very easily and quickly cooked in the microwave.

Beans, pulses and legumes are also easily bought in cans and ready-to-eat, and are all rich sources of protein for those who wish to consume a more plant-based diet. They also contain fibre and many vitamins and minerals, and can protect against many chronic conditions including cardiovascular disease, diabetes and some cancers.

## 5. Eat high-protein snacks

Many people reach for biscuits or a slice of cake at snack time, but try eating a high-protein snack instead next time. Many high-protein foods are already prepared and easy to consume. Some examples include yoghurts or dairy-based desserts - such as crème caramel or panna cotta. Yoghurts and other dairy-based desserts can offer many health benefits, including improved bone mineral density, as necessary for strong bones. Nuts, crackers with cheese, peanut butter, or hummus are also great choices.

Inadequate protein intake can result in poor health outcomes, including low muscle mass and function and decreased bone density and mass, leading to increased risk of falls, frailty, and loss of mobility. To avoid these harms, researchers currently recommend consuming 1.0-1.2g protein per kilogram of bodyweight for older adults

compared to 0.8g of protein per kilogram of bodyweight for all adults.

Katherine Appleton and Emmy van den Heuvel,  
Bournemouth University

## In A Light Vein

Boy: "Hey, I like you and I was wondering if you would be my girlfriend."

Girl: "I have a boyfriend."

Boy: "I have math test tomorrow."

Girl: "What does that have to do with anything?"

Boy: "I thought we were listing things we could cheat on."

\*\*\*

A man put out a classified ad that read, "Wife wanted." The next day he received a hundred responses all saying the same thing: "You can have mine."

\*\*\*

A guy walks into a bar and says to the barman, "Give me six double vodkas."

The barman says, "Wow, you must have had one hell of a day."

"Yeah, I just found out my oldest son is gay."

The next day, the same guy comes into the bar and asks for six more double vodkas. When the bartender asks what's wrong, the man says, "I just found out that my youngest son is gay, too!"

On the third day, the guy comes into the bar and orders another six double vodkas. The bartender says, "Jesus! Doesn't anybody in your family like women?"

The man downs the first drink and shakes his head, "Yeah, my wife!"

\*\*\*

Q: Why didn't the man report his stolen credit card?

A: The thief was spending less than his wife.



In a light vein**Insults coated with humour**

Insults when coated with humour and wit make for a great combination. Here are some for you to enjoy

- \* She dresses to kill -- and cooks the same way.
- \* He was born in the United States -- Terrible things happen in other countries too.
- \* His obesity is surplus gone to waist.
- \* He left his job because of illness and fatigue -- his boss was sick and tired of him.
- \* His credit is so bad he cannot even borrow trouble.
- \* He kept learning more and more about less and less until now he knows everything about nothing.
- \* What he lacks in intelligence he makes up in stupidity.
- \* He may talk like a fool and act like a fool but don't get the wrong idea about him --- he is a fool.
- \* It is not that he does not have presence of mind - his trouble is absence of thought.
- \* He is as phoney as a dentist's smile.
- \* He started out in life as an unwanted child -- now he is wanted in 10 states.
- \* She has a keen sense of rumour.
- \* He is jack of all trades and out of work in all of them.
- \* They are in iron & steel industry -- she irons the clothes and he steals.
- \* She thought she was getting a model husband -- too bad he is not a working model.
- \* He is so boring he cannot even entertain a doubt.
- \* He gave a very moving performance - everyone moved towards the exit door.

\*\*\*

A young couple is on their honeymoon. The husband is sitting in the bathroom on the edge of the bathtub saying to himself, "Now how can I tell my wife that I've got really smelly feet and that my socks absolutely stink? I've managed to keep it from her while we were dating, but she's bound to find out sooner or later that my feet stink. Now how do I tell her?"

Meanwhile, the wife is sitting in the bed saying to herself, "Now how do I tell my husband that I've got really bad breath? I've been very lucky to keep it from him while we were courting, but as soon as he's lived with me for a week, he's bound to find out. Now how do I tell him gently?"

The husband finally plucks up enough courage to tell his wife and walks into the bedroom. He walks over to the bed, climbs over to his wife, puts his arm around her neck, moves his face very close to hers and says, "Darling, I've got a confession to make."

She says, "So have I, love."

To which he replies, "Don't tell me, you've eaten my socks."

\*\*\*

The secret to a long marriage is that we take time to go to a restaurant two times a week. A little candlelight, dinner, soft music and dancing. She goes on Tuesdays. I go on Fridays.

\*\*\*

In the first year of marriage, the man speaks and the woman listens. In the second year, the woman speaks and the man listens. In the third year, they both speak and the neighbours listen.



\*\*\*

A man placed some flowers on the grave of his dearly departed mother and started back toward his car when his attention was diverted to another man kneeling at a grave.

The man seemed to be praying with profound intensity and kept repeating, "Why did you have to die? Why did you have to die?"

The first man approached him and said, "Sir, I don't wish to interfere with your private grief, but this demonstration of pain is more than I've ever seen before. For whom do you mourn so deeply? A child? A parent?"

The mourner took a moment to collect himself and replied, "My wife's first husband."

\*\*\*

A man came home from work, sat down in his favourite chair, turned on the TV, and said to his wife, "Quick, bring me a beer before it starts".

She looked a little puzzled, but brought him a beer. When he finished it, he said, "Quick, bring me another beer. It's gonna start."

This time she looked a little angry, but brought him a beer. When it was gone, he said, "Quick, another beer before it starts."

"That's it!" She blows her top, "You bastard! You waltz in here, flop your fat ass down, don't even say hello to me and then expect me to run around like your slave. Don't you realize that I cook and clean and wash and iron all day long?"

The husband sighed. "Oh shit, it started!"

\*\*\*

An old man goes into the Social Security Office and fills out an application. Too old to have a birth certificate, he is asked to prove he is old enough. He opens his shirt and shows them the gray hair on his chest and they accept that as proof.

He goes home to his wife, shows her the check, and explains to her what has happened. She replies, "Well get back down there, pull down your pants, and see if you can get disability!"

Food for Thought**Young and Old**

When young, I was worried about my pimples.  
When I am old, I am worried about my wrinkles.

When I was young, I was waiting to hold her hand.  
When old, I am waiting for someone to hold my hand.

When young, I was longing to be alone.  
When I am old, I am worried why I am alone.

When I was young, I hated being advised.  
When old, there is no one around to talk or advise.

When young, I admired beautiful things.  
When I am old, I see beauty in things around me.

When I was young I felt I was eternal.  
When I am old, I know soon it will be my turn.

When I was young, I celebrated the moments.  
When I am old I am cherishing my memories.

When I was young, I found it difficult to wake up.  
When old, I find it difficult to sleep.

When I was young, I wanted to be a heartthrob.  
When old, I am worried when will my heart stop.

At extreme stages of our life, we worry  
But we don't realize, life needs to be experienced.

It doesn't matter whether young or old.  
Life needs to be lived and lived with love.

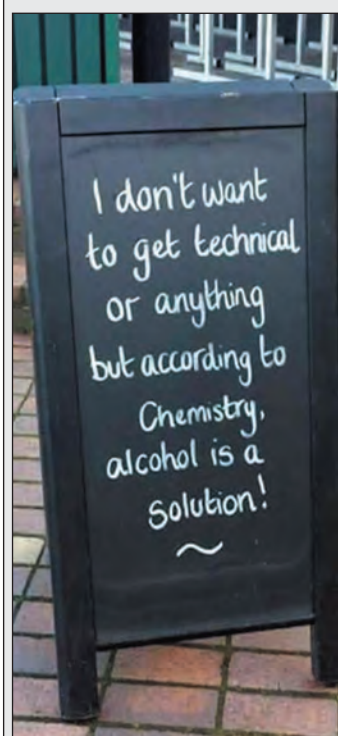
**Enjoy Life!**

A couple, both age 78, went to a sex therapist's office. The doctor asked, "What can I do for you?"

The man said, "Will you watch us have sex?"

The doctor looked puzzled, but agreed.

When the couple finished, the doctor said, "There's nothing wrong with the way you have sex," and charged them \$50.



This happened several weeks in a row. The couple would make an appointment, have sex with no problems, pay the doctor, then leave.

Finally, the doctor asked, "Just exactly what are you trying to find out?"

"We're not trying to find out anything," the husband replied.

"She's married and we can't go to her house. I'm married and we can't go to my house. The Holiday Inn charges \$90. The Hilton charges \$108. We do it here for \$50... and I get \$43 back from Medicare."



## Men's Health

**Why screening tests are important**

Getting the right screening test at the right time is one of the most important things a man can do for his health. Screenings find diseases early, before you have symptoms, when they're easier to treat. With early detection, colon cancer can be nipped in the bud. Finding diabetes early may help prevent complications such as vision loss and impotence. The tests you need are based on your age and risk factors.

**Prostate cancer**

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer found in American men after skin cancer. It tends to be a slow-growing cancer, but there are also aggressive, fast-growing types of prostate cancer. Screening tests can find the disease early, sometimes before symptoms develop, when treatments are most effective.

**Tests for prostate cancer**

Screenings for healthy men may include a digital rectal exam (DRE) and possibly a prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test. Government guidelines recommend against the routine use of the PSA test. The American Cancer Society advises each man to talk with a doctor about the risks and possible benefits of the PSA test. Discussions should begin at:

- \* 50 for average-risk men.
- \* 45 for men at high risk. This includes African-Americans.
- \* 40 for men with a strong family history of prostate cancer.

**Testicular cancer**

This uncommon cancer develops in a man's testicles, the reproductive glands that produce sperm. Most cases occur between ages 20 and 54. The American Cancer Society recommends that all men have a testicular exam when they see a doctor for a routine physical. Men at higher risk (a family history or an undescended testicle) should talk with a doctor about additional screening. Some doctors advise regular self-exams, gently feeling for hard lumps, smooth bumps, or changes in size or shape of the testes.

**Colorectal cancer**

Colorectal cancer is the second most common cause of death from cancer. Men have a slightly higher risk of developing it than women. The majority of colon cancers slowly develop from colon polyps: growths on the inner surface of the colon. After cancer develops, it can invade or spread to other parts of the body. The way to prevent colon cancer is to find and remove polyps before they turn cancerous.

**Tests for colon cancer**

Screening begins at age 50 in average-risk adults. A colonoscopy is a common test for detecting polyps and colorectal cancer. A doctor views the entire colon using a flexible tube and a camera. Polyps can be removed at the time of the test. A similar alternative is a flexible sigmoidoscopy that examines only the lower part of the colon.

# Are you due for these screening tests?

*Men: Getting these nine tests at the right time is one of the most important things you can do for your health*



Some patients opt for a virtual colonoscopy -- a CT scan -- or double contrast barium enema -- a special X-ray -- although if polyps are detected, an actual colonoscopy is needed to remove them.

**Skin cancer**

The most dangerous form of skin cancer is melanoma (shown here). It begins in specialized cells called melanocytes that produce skin color. Older men are twice as likely to develop melanoma as women of the same age. Men are also 2-3 times more likely to get non-melanoma basal cell and squamous cell skin cancers than women are. Your risk increases as lifetime exposure to sun and/or tanning beds accumulates; sunburns accelerate risk.

**Screening for skin cancer**

The American Cancer Society and the American Academy of Dermatology recommend regular skin self-exams to check for any changes in marks on your skin including shape, color, and size. A skin exam by a dermatologist or other health professional should be part of a routine checkup. Treatments for skin cancer are more effective and less disfiguring when it's found early.

**High blood pressure (hypertension)**

The risk for high blood pressure increases with age. It's also related to weight and lifestyle. High blood pressure can lead to severe complications without any prior symptoms, including an

aneurysm -- dangerous ballooning of an artery. But it can be treated. When it is, you may reduce your risk for heart disease, stroke, and kidney failure. The bottom line: Know your blood pressure. If it's high, work with your doctor to manage it.

**Screening for high blood pressure**

Blood pressure readings give two numbers. The first (systolic) is the pressure in your arteries when the heart beats. The second (diastolic) is the pressure between beats. Normal blood pressure is less than 120/80. High blood pressure is 130/80 or higher, and in between those two is prehypertension -- a major milestone on the road to high blood pressure. How often blood pressure should be checked depends on how high it is and what other risk factors you have.

**Cholesterol levels**

A high level of LDL cholesterol in the blood causes sticky plaque to build up in the walls of the arteries (seen here in orange). This increases your risk of heart disease. Atherosclerosis -- hardening and narrowing of the arteries -- can progress without symptoms for many years. Over time it can lead to heart attack and stroke. Lifestyle changes and medications can reduce this "bad" cholesterol and lower the risk of cardiovascular disease.

**Determining cholesterol levels**

The fasting blood lipid panel is a blood test that tells your levels of total chole-

sterol, LDL "bad" cholesterol, HDL "good" cholesterol, and triglycerides (blood fat). The results tell you and your doctor a lot about what you need to do to reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. Starting at age 20, men should be screened if they are at increased risk for heart disease. Starting at 35, men need regular cholesterol testing.

**Type 2 diabetes**

One-third of Americans with diabetes don't know they have it. Uncontrolled diabetes can lead to heart disease and stroke, kidney disease, blindness from damage to the blood vessels of the retina (shown here), nerve damage, and impotence. This doesn't have to happen. Especially when found early, diabetes can be controlled and complications can be avoided with diet, exercise, weight loss, and medications.

**Screening for Type 2 diabetes**

A fasting blood sugar test, glucose tolerance test, or an A1C all can be used alone or together to screen for diabetes. Healthy adults should have the test every three years starting at age 45. If you have a higher risk, including high cholesterol or blood pressure, you may start testing earlier and more frequently.

**HIV screening tests**

HIV-infected individuals can remain symptom-free for many years. The only way to know they are infected is with a series of blood tests. The first test is called ELISA or EIA. It looks for antibodies to HIV in the blood. It's possible not to be infected and still show positive on the test. So a second test called a Western blot assay is done for confirmation. If you were recently infected, you could still have a negative test result. Repeat testing is recommended. If you think you may have been exposed to HIV, ask your doctor about the tests.

**Glaucoma**

This group of eye diseases gradually damages the optic nerve and may lead to blindness -- and significant, irreversible vision loss can occur before people with glaucoma even notice any symptoms. Screening tests look for abnormally high pressure within the eye, to catch and treat the condition before damage to the optic nerve.

**Glaucoma screening**

Eye tests for glaucoma are based on age and personal risk:

- \* Under 40: Every 2-4 years
- \* 40-54: Every 1-3 years
- \* 55-64: Every 1-2 years
- \* 65 up: Every 6-12 months

Talk with a doctor about earlier, more frequent screening if you fall in a high risk group, including African-Americans, those with a family history of glaucoma, previous eye injury, or use of steroid medications.

WebMD



# Anushka Sharma, Alia Bhatt, Shraddha Kapoor; Bollywood actors who turned vegetarians



On Wednesday 14th Oct, Bhumi Pednekar announced that she has turned into a vegetarian. The actor revealed that she has not been eating non-vegetarian food for over six months and continues to do so. Talking about the same, she had said in a statement, "For many years I had the want to go vegetarian but breaking habits are the toughest thing to do. My journey with *Climate Warrior* taught me a lot of things and I just didn't feel like eating meat anymore."

Before Bhumi, Riteish Deshmukh and Genelia Deshmukh announced that they have become vegetarians in order to have healthy organs as they pledged to donate it, reports DNA.

There are numerous Bollywood celebrities who have been practising vegetarianism and veganism for several years now. Celebs namely Alia Bhatt, Anushka Sharma, Jacqueline Fernandez, Richa Chadha, Shahid Kapoor, Shraddha Kapoor, Sonam Kapoor and many others have spoken about changing their lifestyle.

Many are ardent animal lovers and stated that as the major reason for giving up consuming non-vegetarian food.

Let's take a look at the ten Bollywood actors who turned into vegetarians in detail below:

## 1. Alia Bhatt

Alia Bhatt had earlier revealed that she has adopted a vegetarian diet to stay healthy. As per *Cosmopolitan India*, the actor had said, "It's definitely because of the heat that I am staying off meat, and I'm beginning to enjoy my new diet. I never was a hardcore non-vegetarian anyway. As of now, I am a vegetarian, and I hope it will last."

## 2. Anushka Sharma

In 2018, Anushka Sharma announced that she is a vegetarian. She had said, "Going vegetarian was one of the best decisions I ever made. I have more energy, I feel healthier, and I'm so happy that no animals had to suffer for my meals."

## 3. Bhumi Pednekar

Being a climate warrior, Bhumi Pednekar has decided to go vegetarian. In a statement, she said, "For many years I had the want to go vegetarian but breaking habits are the toughest thing to do. My journey with *Climate Warrior* taught me a lot of things and I just didn't feel like eating meat anymore."

Bhumi added, "I was never heavy on non-

vegetarian, but I took a call in the lockdown. It was actually something that happened organically. It's been six months and I'm good, guilt-free and feel physically strong as well."

## 4. Genelia Deshmukh

On ditching meat, Genelia Deshmukh had confessed, "Turning vegetarian was a choice I took a couple of years ago. I honestly thought it was going to be really really tough but I was determined to make it work. On my journey I realised the beauty of plants, the various colours I see through them and eventually the nutrients I get through them but most importantly I feel less cruel to animals..."

## 5. Jacqueline Fernandez

An ardent animal lover, Jacqueline Fernandez decided to give up meat and live a healthy life with vegetarian diet. Moreover, she has been on a meat and dairy free diet for many years now.

## 6. Richa Chadha

Richa Chadha has been following veganism since 2014. She had recently discussed with PETA about going vegan. The actor said, "I wanted to be able to talk about it without sounding preachy. The whole concept of veganism stems from 'live and let live', so the idea is not to force people to convert to veganism. Food is connected with culture and nostalgia. But by speaking about it in a practical fashion, we are hoping that people give this a shot. They can start by becoming vegan a few days a week. Hopefully, 2020 will usher in a lot of changes in mindset."

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## YOUR STARS

### Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

A week of luck in several respects. Your optimism will be at a peak; your love affairs, your children, your leisure will bring you many pleasures. But beware of foolish expenses: a lean period is not so far away as it seems!

**Lucky Numbers:** 7, 13, 17, 22, 27, 32

### Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

If you've suffered from loneliness, it'll end: you'll have the opportunity to make rich and enhancing encounters. Your work will be marked with temporary constraints or destabilizing events.

**Lucky Numbers:** 14, 17, 18, 25, 26, 33

### Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

Your relationships with your family circle will be placed under the sign of ease and well-being. New friendship ties will be created and bring you great joys. If you plan to carry out important financial transactions, go ahead!

**Lucky Numbers:** 2, 15, 18, 24, 25, 29

### Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

You can't refrain from imagining the worst incidents in your affective life; you'll be anxious, on the defensive, and this attitude will only contribute to complicate your relationships with your close relations.

**Lucky Numbers:** 7, 9, 14, 19, 26, 31

### Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

Try to make your loved ones understand just how much you cherish them. You'll feel very intense sentiments and emotions. If you're on the lookout for a soulmate, you'll find him/her in the course of this week.

**Lucky Numbers:** 8, 4, 7, 19, 22, 28

### Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

An unfavourable week for dealing with delicate affairs. Try to maintain an affectionate and continuous contact with your old parents. Your couple life will give you many joys; passion will be present. A very important encounter is possible.

**Lucky Numbers:** 5, 7, 14, 18, 21, 35

### Gemini: May 21 - June 20

Annoyances of all kinds are likely to come and bother you; hold on! In your couple, don't try to dominate your partner; if you do, very strong tensions will be unavoidable.

**Lucky Numbers:** 3, 6, 20, 24, 26, 32

### Cancer: June 21 - July 22

Beware of a lack of lucidity: don't embark on utopian projects, You'll be tempted to make extravagant expenses; promptly get hold of yourself to avoid a catastrophe.

**Lucky Numbers:** 6, 9, 15, 16, 17, 20

### Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

A very favourable week for taking up a training course. This climate will be lucky for those who wish to find a soulmate. You'll see far and have daring projects: your ideas would have all chances to be accepted.

**Lucky Numbers:** 2, 9, 11, 17, 20, 25

### Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

You can meet somebody with whom you'll fall in love instantaneously. With your children, give priority to complicity; and with your parents, show comprehension. You'll be lucky in your financial negotiations.

**Lucky Numbers:** 14, 18, 20, 26, 33, 38

### Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

You'll obtain good results in your work if you adapt yourself to the development of the situation. All your past sentimental disappointments will be quickly forgotten, and you'll experience new, exquisite love affairs.

**Lucky Numbers:** 1, 3, 8, 9, 15, 24

### Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

You'll feel in great physical and mental shape. At work, your slightest effort will be crowned with success. Regarding In family, you'll accept dialogue, which will allow reconciliation and also will give the possibility of clearing up certain misunderstandings.

**Lucky Numbers:** 12, 14, 20, 33, 36, 40



# Dipika Kakar: "I was destined to do 'Kahaan Hum Kahaan Tum'"

After taking home the winning trophy of 'Bigg Boss 12', popular television actress Dipika Kakar returned to fiction with her new show, 'Kahaan Hum Kahan Tum'. Here's what the talented actress had to say to Mohnish Singh of starbiz.com about her new beginning on Indian television.



**D**ipika Kakar became a household name after essaying the character of Simar Bhardwaj in Rashmi Sharma Telefilms' long-running show, *Sasural Simar Ka*. After headlining the show for six long years and gaining unparalleled popularity, she quit *Sasural Simar Ka* and waited for something more interesting to come her way.

In October 2018, Dipika Kakar participated in Salman Khan's *Bigg Boss 12* and, after staying locked up inside the glass-walled house for a couple of months, emerged as the winner of the season. Now, the actress is back in news for her new soap opera, *Kahaan Hum Kahaan Tum*, which hit the airwaves on Star Plus.

Starbiz correspondent Mohnish Singh met Dipika Kakar and tried to find out more about *Kahaan Hum Kahaan Tum*, her character Sonakshi Rastogi, the life

after winning the coveted *Bigg Boss* trophy and much more...

**Dipika, you are returning to fiction after a break. How are you feeling?**

There is a lot of excitement. *Kahaan Hum Kahaan Tum* is really a very different show. It is a North-South show for me if I compare it to what I have done all these years - from getting into the supernatural zone and doing fantasy stuff to now doing a show like this.

I am very excited about the show. The team that I am working with is very positive. Sandeep Sikand, the producer of the show, has created all characters so impeccably that what all we actors need to do is to come to the sets and mold ourselves in our characters. It was like that. I am very excited.

After *Bigg Boss 12*, I am coming up with such a different show. My look is very different and so is my character. It is a very relatable character. It is very much me.

**You seem to have shed a lot of weight.**

Yes, I have and I have deliberately done it for the character of Sonakshi. I felt that if I am coming on the screen after some period, then I should look fresh. I wanted people to realize that I was not the same Dipika who they have been watching over all these years. Thankfully, I have been successful in achieving that.

**How did winning *Bigg Boss 12* help you professionally?**

Honestly speaking, I feel I was destined to do *Kahaan Hum Kahaan Tum*. As I told you, I had already done a meeting for the show before entering the *Bigg Boss* house, so I don't feel that winning *Bigg Boss 12* has opened the door for a lot of avenues in my career. But if you talk about love from fans and if you talk about the fame that you get, it definitely helps you get a major boost if you do a show like *Bigg Boss* and win it.

That connect that you build up with your fans through a show like *Bigg Boss* is amazing. I have some fans that have made an Instagram group and they have added me in it. At times, I chat with them there. It is so heart-warming. It feels so good.

**Not every television actress is lucky enough to bag the second show as the female lead. How do you feel after making the impossible possible?**

I really feel lucky. I am very blessed and fortunate that I got such a big show after *Bigg Boss*. Honestly, I value this show very much. Every artist wants to do something different and this show is really very different. I would have done any other good show also, but this is something outstanding for me.

**What are the plus and minus of *Kahaan Hum Kahaan Tum*?**

Honestly speaking, I do not see any minus here; everything is plus for me. As I said, my look in the show is very fresh and the story is very fresh. The story of the show will definitely hook everyone. Somebody just asked me that there is no saas-bahu drama in the show, then how will we manage to hook the audience. I said to him that to keep the audience hooked, a story should have interesting twists and turns and that twists and turns can be there in any relationship.

## TV SERIAL

### Bade Achhe Lagte Hain

**Friday 23 Oct:** Priya is seeking help in the reception area. Later, Ram guides Pihu as she was locked up in the bathroom and succeeds in releasing her. On the other hand, Ram shares Pihu's incident with Rajit and thus he feels extremely guilty of whatever he said to Priya in the reception area. Later, Ram asks Rajit to apologize Priya but the former vehemently disagrees. Ram however forces Rajit to apologize Priya in front of him. Priya is surprised to see Aisha's poster in the mall.

**Monday 26 Oct:** Rajat fumes in anger as he observes Cady's poster in his bookstore and orders her to leave the mall. Soumya and Ram shares some light moments together. In Mumbai, Neha and Vikram's relationship is on the verge of break-up, thus they decide to file a divorce. In Dubai, Ram meets Pihu in the bookstore and invites her and her mother to the "Kya Super Cool Hain Hum" party. Priya is surprised to see Ram and Pihu together in her bookstore but does not meet him and gets emotional when Priya decides to find out about the incidents that have taken place in Ram's life in the past 5 years.

**Tuesday 27 Oct:** Cady reveals to Rajat that one of his colleague, Rahul, assured her that Mr Anjaan is in Dubai and will soon visit her mall. Ram does not react to it and also convinces Rajat to allow Cady to come to the "Kyaa Super Kool Hain Hum" party. Priya also agrees to go to the party as she has decided to introduce Pihu to her father Ram. Actor Tusshar and Ritesh share some funny moments together.

**Wednesday 28 Oct:** An excited Priya decides to introduce Pihu to her Ram. Rajat introduces Ram's wife in the party and Priya is shocked to see Aisha Ram Kapoor and breaks down in tears as she couldn't believe that Ram is married to her sister Aisha. Rajat apologizes to Priya, but the latter ignores him as she was devastated by the incident that took place. Ram looks for Pihu's mother in the party, but Cady informs Ram that she has already left the party. At the hotel, Ram reveals to Aisha that he still cannot forget Priya and also understands the situation in which both of them got married when Priya was not around.

**Thursday 29 Oct:** Priya is extremely upset with the shocking news of Ram and Aisha's marriage. Pihu tells her mother Priya to call her parents as it will make her feel better. Priya calls her father Sudir. The following day, Pihu tries to cheer up Priya by serving a delicious breakfast and also requests her to have it as she left the party without having dinner. Priya is unwilling to open her bookshop as she will not be able to pay the rent to Rajat. Rajat is shocked to see Priya's bookstore closed.

### Kahan Hum Kahan Tum

**Friday 23 Oct:** Rohit and Sonakshi are nervous about their first night. Later, the couple finds solace in each other's arms after a trivial fight.

**Monday 26 Oct:** A stranger secretly clicks Sonakshi's photographs while she performs Yoga. Later, Veena is infuriated after receiving an anonymous phone call.

**Tuesday 27 Oct:** Veena's strict order leaves Sonakshi in a fix. Later, Rohit makes a hilarious blunder, to complete Sonakshi's challenge.

**Wednesday 28 Oct:** Sonakshi is stunned by Nethra's ultimatum while the police catch Rohan and Pari getting intimate in a car. Later, Veena is irked by Naren's cousin, Sundari's comments.

**Thursday 29 Oct:** Veena is proud of Sonakshi while Rohan and Pari are in for a shock at the police station. Later, Sundari's words about Sonakshi leave the Sippys speechless.



## CINE 12

Vendredi 23 oct - 21.15

## E.T. L'Extraterrestre

Avec: Henry Thomas, Drew Barrymore,  
Peter Coyote

## MBC 1

Samedi 24 oct - 21.10

## Mise A L'Epreuve 2

Avec: Ice Cube, Kevin Hart



## CINE 12

Dimanche 25 oct - 21.15



vendredi 23 octobre

## MBC 1

07.05 Dessin Anime  
10.50 Mag: Origami  
11.00 Doc: A Question Of Science  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir  
12.50 Mag: Urban Gardens  
13.00 Mag: Eye On SADC  
13.30 Doc: World Stampps  
14.30 D.Anime: Raju The Rickshaw  
15.21 D.Anime: Lucky Fred  
15.55 Film: Bound  
16.40 Film: Shopkins, Des  
Courses De Folies!  
17.22 D.Anime: Astrology  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.10 Local Prod  
21.10 Serial: When Calls The Heart  
22.30 Serial: The Blacklist  
23.50 Mag: Eye On SADC

## MBC 2

10.00 Serial: Mah-E-Tamaam  
12.00 Film: Y.D Family  
Starring: Disha Patel, Sagar  
Panchal, Tej Sapru  
14.05 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 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala  
17.35 Serial: Chhanchhan  
18.00 Serial: My Little Princess  
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  
22.06 DDI Live

## MBC 3

06.00 Mag: Eco India  
06.34 Mag: Shift  
06.47 Mag: Border Crossing  
07.16 Mag: Tomorrow Today  
07.42 Doc: Car Wars  
08.37 Doc: 360 GEO  
09.33 Mag: Strictly Street  
11.27 Mag: Eco India  
12.01 Mag: Shift  
12.14 Mag: Border Crossing  
12.47 Mag: Tomorrow Today  
13.09 Doc: Car Wars  
14.00 Mag: Women Who Change...  
16.09 Doc: A Charged Business  
16.55 Mag: Eco India  
17.34 Doc: The Synagogue With...  
18.16 Mag: Arts And Culture  
18.29 Open Univ: Student Support  
19.00 Live From Gokhoola Temple  
21.00 Local: News (English)  
21.10 Mag: Women Who Changed

## Cine 12

01.40 Film: Sept Ans Au Tibet  
03.51 Serial: Chicago Med  
05.03 Tele: Totalement Diva  
06.42 Serial: Seal Team  
07.23 Film: Annabelle Hooper And  
The Ghosts Of Nantucket  
09.00 Serial: The Magicians  
09.45 Tele: Soleil Levant  
10.35 Serial: Chicago Med  
11.32 Tele: Tanto Amor  
12.00 Film: Love: Space Time  
13.30 Tele: Totalement Diva  
14.45 Film: Annabelle Hopper...  
16.44 Serial: The Magicians  
17.25 Serial: Seal Team  
18.05 Tele: Soleil Levant  
19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor  
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir  
20.30 Serial: Hawaii Five-0  
21.15 Film: E.T. L'Extraterrestre  
23.10 Tele: Totalement Diva

## Bollywood TV

08.00 Film: One Two Three  
12.05/20.05  
Kahan Hum Kahan Tum  
12.30/ 20.11 -  
Kullfi 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...  
15.25 Film: Khullam Khulla Pyar  
Karen  
Starring: Govinda,Preity  
Zinta,Prem Chopra  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Kundali Bhagya  
18.51 Piya Albela  
19.14 Mere Angne Mein

samedi 24 octobre

06.00 D.Anime: Little People  
06.27 D.Anime: HTDT  
07.07 D.Anime: Linkers  
08.20 D.Anime: Tintin Et Le Lac...  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.25 Local: People  
12.30 Doc: Builders Of The Future  
14.30 Local: Teenie Fables  
14.37 D.Anime: Monster Math...  
15.08 D.Anime: Investigation Story  
15.22 D.Anime: Alisa Knows What...  
15.47 D.Anime: Hogie The Globe...  
16.00 Film: Starship Troopers  
17.25 Mag: Zoboomafoo  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Entertain: Nach Baliye  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.00 Prod: Lottotech  
20.15 Local: RDV Muzikal  
21.10 Film: Mise A L'Epreuve 2  
Avec Ice Cube, Kevin Hart

07.00 Film: The Legend Of Devi  
Durga  
08.13 DDI Magazine  
10.00 Bade Acchelagte Hai  
12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhya Bhare  
12.29 Serial: Mooga Manasulu  
12.52 Serial: Brundavanam  
13.16 Annakodiyum Aintus  
Pengalum  
13.35 Serial: Anu Pallavi  
15.23 Film: Jai Santoshi Maa  
17.25 Mag: DDI Magazine  
18.00 Local: Excerpts Of  
Purnahottee Ceremony  
19.00 Zournal Kreol  
20.05 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki  
Rahasya Gatha  
21.00 Film: Sindoor  
Starring - Shashi Kapoor, Jaya  
Prada, Jeetendra, Rishi Kapoor  
23.46 DDI Live

06.00 Doc: The Synagogue With...  
06.49 Doc: Arts And Culture  
07.02 Mag: Global 3000  
07.29 Mag: Euromaxx  
07.58 Doc: Wildlife Heroes  
09.00 Doc: Cary Grant, De L'Autre  
09.47 Doc: Omnipotent Amazon  
11.12 Doc: The Synagogue With...  
11.57 Mag: Green Touch  
12.16 Mag: Global 3000  
12.44 Mag: Euromaxx  
13.16 Doc: Wildlife Heroes  
15.40 Doc: Farming Policies For...  
16.26 Open Univ: Student Support  
19.29 Mag: Check In  
20.05 Doc: Empires Of Silver  
21.00 Local: News  
21.10 Mag: Women Who Changed  
21.15 Doc: 360 GEO  
22.07 Doc: After Ice What Will...  
22.49 Doc: The Black Tears Of...  
23.32 Doc: Amazing Gardens

01.07 Film: E.T. L'Extraterrestre  
03.02 Serial: Chicago Fire  
03.41 Film: The Hit List  
05.55 Serial: Hawaii Five-0  
06.38 Film: Sparkle  
08.30 Serial: Emerald City  
09.11 Serial: Shades Of Blue  
09.51 Serial: Les Experts  
10.40 Film: Woonchi, Le Magicien...  
12.45 Serial: Chicago Fire  
13.24 Tele: Amanda  
14.07 Tele: Premiere Dame  
15.05 Serial: Midnight, Texas  
16.31 Mag: Hollywood On Set  
17.00 Serial: Hawaii Five-0  
17.45 Film: I Think My Babysitter's  
19.45 Mag: Hollywood News Feed  
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir  
20.30 Series: Hawaii Five-0  
21.15 Film: The Quiet Hour  
22.45 Film: Mike Hammer

04.05 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum  
04.26 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala  
04.51 Radha Krishna  
05.14 Zindagi Ki Mehek  
05.34 Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
06.22 Bitti Business Wali  
06.38 Kundali Bhagya  
07.07 Piya Albela  
07.29 Mere Angne Mein  
08.00 Zindagi Ki Mehek  
10.12 Yeh Pyaar Nahi Toh Kya...  
12.00 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein  
14.22 Bin Kuch Kahe  
16.00 Pavitra Rishta  
18.30 Film: Karlo Time Pass Yaar  
Starring Tiku Talsaniya,  
Ketaki Dave and Piyush  
Der  
20.39 Serial: Siya Ke Ram  
21.21 Serial: Naagin  
21.43 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek  
23.59 Serial: Mere Angne Mein

dimanche 25 octobre

06.00 D.Anime: Little People  
06.23 D.Anime: HTDT  
08.20 D.Anime: Iqbal, L'Enfant Qui...  
09.35 Serial: Waffle The Wonder...  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.30 Local: Saver Kil Tirel  
14.00 Local: Nou Later Nou Lamer...  
14.30 D.Anime: Teenie Fables  
15.23 D.Anime: Alisa Knows What...  
15.49 D.Anime: Hogie The Globe...  
16.05 Film: Swan Princess  
17.20 D.Anime: Astrology  
17.30 Mag: Zoboomafoo  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Local: Yeh Shaam Mastani  
19.30 Le Journal  
20.00 Local: Info 7 Sur 7  
21.20 Film: Space Station 76  
Starring: Patrick Wilson, Liv  
Tyler, Marisa Coughlan

07.00 Film: Mohre  
Starring: Nana Patekar,  
Madhuri Dixit, Sadashiv  
Amrapurkar, Anupam Kher, Alok  
Nath  
10.00 Local Production  
11.00 Serial: Oru Kai Osai  
11.21 Serial: Santoshi Maa  
12.00 Film: Dabangg 2  
Starring - Salman Khan,  
Sonakshi Sinha, Arbaaz Khan,  
Vinod Khanna  
14.02 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  
19.00 Journal Kreol  
19.30 DDI Magazine

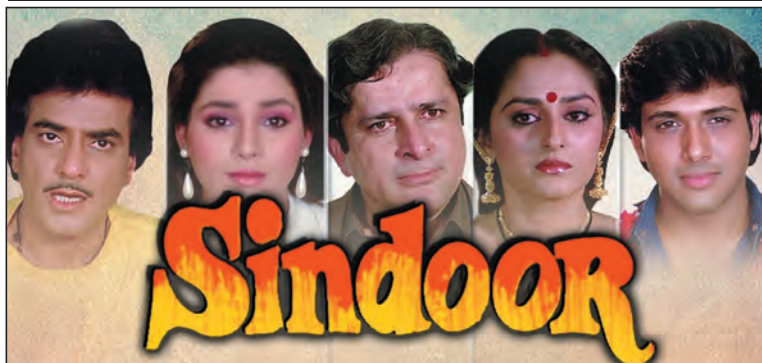
06.00 Doc: Amazing Gardens  
06.26 Doc: Ville En Fête  
06.52 The World From Above  
07.15 Mag: Check In  
08.39 Mag: Women Who Changed  
08.44 Doc: 360 GEO  
10.18 Doc: The Black Tears Of The...  
11.09 Doc: Amazing Gardens  
12.19 Mag: Check In  
16.31 Doc: Ville En Fête  
17.22 Mag: Set One  
17.30 Live From Shri Krishna  
Devaalayam, Belle Rose -  
Vijaya Dashami Celebrations  
2020  
21.00 Doc: News (English)  
21.10 Doc: Japan 2020  
22.07 Doc: Battle Of Social...  
23.31 Doc: Olivia's Garden  
23.57 Doc: Garden Party  
00.23 Doc: The Tyrannosaurus of...

01.29 Film: The Quiet Hour  
03.36 Film: Astronaut  
05.09 Tele: Destiny  
06.10 Serial: Hawaii Five-0  
06.52 Film: Hope Dances  
08.30 Serial: Emerald City  
09.11 Serial: The Enemy Within  
09.53 Serial: Les Experts  
10.40 Film: I Think My Babysitter's  
12.15 Serial: Hawaii 5-0  
13.09 Serial: Amanda  
13.45 Tele: Premiere Dame  
15.05 Serial: Midnight, Texas  
17.08 Serial: Hawaii Five 0  
17.48 Serial: The Enemy Within  
18.30 Film: Android Apocalypse  
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir  
20.30 Serial: The Good Doctor  
21.15 Film: Sniper 7: Ultimate Kill  
22.45 Film: I Think My Babysitter's  
An Alien

00.45 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein  
02.25 Bin Kuch Kahe  
04.22 Pavitra Rishta  
05.51 Film: Karlo Time Pass  
Yaar  
Starring: Tiku Talsaniya, Ketaki  
Dave and Piyush Der  
08.06 Motu Patlu  
08.31 Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki  
09.54 Jaana Na Dil Se Door  
11.40 Piya Albela  
14.00 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum  
15.47 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala  
17.32 Punar Vivaah  
18.00 Samachar  
18.30 Film: Yeh Jawaani Hai  
Deewani  
Starring: Ranbir Kapoor, Deepika  
Padukone, Aditya Roy Kapur  
21.56 Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
23.47 Piya Albela

## MBC 2

Samedi 24 oct - 21.00

Stars: Shashi Kapoor, Jaya Prada,  
Jeetendra, Rishi KapoorDimanche 25 oct  
- 18.30Stars: Ranbir Kapoor, Deepika  
Padukone, Aditya Roy Kapur



## Breakfast with Bwana

# Trump -- Incompetence, Lunacy, and Flagellation

**F**lagellation is described as "flogging or beating, either as a religious discipline or for sexual gratification."

At times you have to wonder if Donald Trump flogs or beats himself for sexual gratification. The word "discipline" does not apply to him except in the sense that he is disciplined about showing his lack of discipline.

Today, Jeffrey Toobin a writer for *New Yorker*, and a legal analyst for CNN has been suspended for masturbating during a Zoom call. Apparently, he was on another Zoom call with journalists about an "election simulation" while at the same time, doing an erection simulation with a cam girl.

Now, let's just pause for a second. Toobin is a graduate of Harvard Law School, a classmate of Elena Kagan, and is paid hundreds of thousands, if not millions, by CNN. He has a "job" worthy of Hunter Biden -- big bucks for doing nothing. So in one day, he blew it.

What does Toobin have in common with Trump? They both have a sense of entitlement and that they can get away with anything. BTW, so do Biden and his crooked son. But we have a choice to make. We must choose the evil of the two lesser and opt for the lesser evil.

Isn't that symptomatic of what this country has devolved to?

To keep Jeffrey Toobin company on the slide down the road to perdition, our President let loose today another shameful and destructive tirade: "People are tired of Covid. I have the biggest rallies I've ever had, and we have Covid. People are saying whatever. Just leave us alone. They're tired of it. People are tired of hearing Fauci and all these idiots."

Trump is not averse to compounding his stupidity: "You know, Biden wants to lock it down," Trump said. "He wants to listen to Dr Fauci. He wants to listen to Dr Fauci."

Biden with uncharacteristic pithy brevity, replied: "Yes."

Now, just in case Trump's stupidity was not totally clear, he made no mistake that it would be: "He'll listen to the scientists," Trump warned at a Nevada rally on Sunday. "If I listened to the scientists we'd have a country in a massive depression."

Trump is just not right in the head. There is something deranged about him.



"We have two candidates, each unfit to be President and one member of this species is going to survive": Trump versus Biden. Photo - [img.thedailybeast.com](http://img.thedailybeast.com)

Yes, he gets that his core supporters have certain issues that motivate their base instincts.

But how much more despicable can a President be than to decry science. This is reminiscent of the Middle Ages.

At some point, Americans who support Trump have got to have the courage to say "ENOUGH!"

We are at that point. ENOUGH!

This man has crossed the line between incompetence and lunacy.

\* \* \*

## A Darwinian view of the first un-presidential debate

Years ago, when Barack Obama first ran for President, Michelle Obama was taken to task for saying "For the first time in my adult life, I am proud of my country because it feels like hope is finally making a comeback."

On September 29, for the first time since I came to the US, I was embarrassed for our country as I watched the first Trump versus Biden un-Presidential

debate.

How did we go from being the greatest country, with the greatest promise, the greatest ideals, the greatest will to do what is right, to a state where we are embarked on writing a new book, "*The End of (the American) Species*" an excursion in the survival of the un-fittest?

Some years ago, I commented on a phenomenon I have witnessed over and over again. If you ask Americans (and I suspect this is true of all people) almost anything, there is a high likelihood that you will get one-third saying yes, one-third saying no, and one-third will respond either "I don't know" or "I don't have an opinion." So it was after that night's debacle. A poll reported that one-third thought Biden won, one-third thought Trump won, and one-third thought neither won (or neither one).

So, did anyone "win" the debate? From my vantage, what I saw and heard was a disgrace. For anyone to suggest that either of the two participants "won" the debate is an insult to the intelligence of any American who is willing to use his/her head and reason.

That said, arguably Biden won some points by not losing; Trump lost some points by not winning; Trump's name-

calling was equaled by Biden's personal insults and low-class approach when he, unprovoked, called Trump a liar, then told him to "shut up" and later called him a clown.

I have heard and read partisans on each side rationalizing, trying to excuse, and even praise Biden and Trump, each for doing what he did. I remain unconvinced.

Then there was the so-called moderator, Chris Wallace. He began with a stupid question, in effect, asking each: "My first question to both of you tonight, why are you right in the argument you make and your opponent wrong?" In other words, start to spit at each other. The question was about the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court. There is something about encouraging two gladiators, each ill-trained and ill-equipped, sword-drawn, perhaps a shield in hand and leather strip skirt covering his raisins, to step into the arena and fight the other. With all respect, since the nomination is a done deal and confirmation likely, who cares what Joe Biden thinks of it? By the way, on this question, I thought Trump scored one of his very few moments of coherence.

Or, take the second question that took about five minutes to get out (yes, Trump's fault): "What is the Trump healthcare plan?" Mercy! We know that there is no Trump healthcare plan, so why waste the country's time on this nonsense? Why not ask each candidate to outline how he would reform healthcare in America? But that assumes that either one of these clowns (yes, I used Joe Biden's word) wants to reform healthcare in America.

Biden next, and totally unprovoked, called Trump a liar. I've heard Biden people justifying this and I've heard Trump people excoriating Biden. For me, it was sad that a former Vice President and Senator would speak thus to a sitting President and doubly sad that the President has so repeatedly lied, that millions of people would take it in their stride. Or consider that Biden called the President of this country a clown and 66 million or so will think that is just okay. Or that Biden told the President to "shut up" - not that he shouldn't have shut up way earlier in the debate.

Folks, we have two candidates, each unfit to be President and one member of this species is going to survive.

Cheerz...  
Bwana

*This column by Bwana has been contributed by Kul Bhushan, who worked as a newspaper Editor in Nairobi for over three decades and now lives in New Delhi.*