

# MAURITIUS TIMES

• "I speak to everyone in the same way, whether he is the garbage man or the president of the university." -- Albert Einstein

Interview: Rama Sithanen

## "We will witness the sharpest decline in our economy since 40 years"

## "The Labour Party is disturbingly in a precarious predicament"

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### Divali: The Truth of Light All



Covid-19 is showing that the world is in a permanent need of healing, of forgiving and being forgiven. Let the lights of Divali, which is celebrated worldwide, carry this message far and wide

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### Pfizer COVID vaccine: promising results - here's what needs to happen next



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# Covid Update

**M**auritius has recorded what could be considered its first local case of Covid-19 since April 26. The patient had returned from Australia at the end of October, and was tested positive on arrival. He was therefore handled as per the established protocol. That is, he was admitted at the ENT Hospital for further monitoring and management.

At the end of the period of quarantine at 14 days he was tested negative and therefore sent home. However, several days later feeling unwell he attended one private clinic, and was found to be positive. He was therefore sent back to ENT Hospital. In the meantime, staff of the clinic have been tested and have been placed in quarantine. Contact tracing is being carried out as well to identify any case that may have been contaminated.

It is a fact that several countries that had managed the Covid situation very well at the first outset of the disease are now facing a surge, and have had to impose restrictions, and even complete second lockdowns. It would be recalled that shortly into the pandemic, this possibility had been evoked, given the uncertainties about the behaviour of the virus and the difficulties in controlling its spread. It was felt that there may well be periods of lockdown followed by lifting of the lockdown - but we were warned that this pattern could be repeated as the pandemic unfolded. The term 'rolling lockdown' was used to refer to this phenomenon.

It now seems that this anticipated pattern has materialized in a number of countries - the rich European ones in particular. Till date we seemed to have been able to stave off the spectre of another lockdown after our initial one. Our economic woes are dire enough for us to not want another lockdown. So the question that arises is whether we are doing enough to control the situation. Undeniably we have a good track record compared to many other richer and more advanced countries, but that places on us the onus and the hope of remaining Covid-free.

We are entering summer and therefore less likely to develop the cold. But we still have to be vigilant and to protect ourselves by implementing the recommended measures - namely, social distancing, washing our hands with plain soap and water, using hand sanitizer and avoiding touching, wearing a mask, and keep mentally strong.

Elsewhere, in the North hemisphere, winter is coming, and this is the influenza period for both Europe and North America. This is likely to aggravate the Covid situation.

Is there a need to revisit the protocol that is in place? How reliable are the tests being carried out? The population needs to be reassured about the validity of the measures being taken, and given clear advice about what they are expected to do to prevent themselves and others from catching the infection.

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## The Conversation

# Pfizer COVID vaccine: promising results – here's what needs to happen next

*Interim analysis of trial data isn't unusual – but leaves us with many things we still need to find out.*

**P**reliminary data from the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine trial suggests it provides 90% efficacy at preventing the disease. At the very least, this news will result in a large sigh of relief across the vaccine community. It signifies a breakthrough – it's the first announcement that a vaccine can protect against SARS-CoV-2 infection in humans.

This shows it can be done. But how well it can be done is still a big question that no one has the answer to. These results are promising, but there's a lot more we now need to confirm.

The 90% efficacy is a strong result, but we should remember that this is an interim analysis, based on 94 cases of disease that have occurred across those receiving either the vaccine or a placebo. Pfizer has noted in its trial protocol that it needs at least 164 cases of disease to occur across the study to reliably assess the vaccine's efficacy.

If subsequent cases occur more frequently among those who have had the vaccine rather than the placebo, then this efficacy figure will fall. So we don't yet know if this number is truly reflective of the vaccine's protective ability – meaning crucially, we need to get to the end of the trial.

But if this is the case, why announce these interim results now? An interim analysis of trial data like this isn't uncommon, particularly in phase 3 vaccine trials, as it's not unusual for trials to fail during testing. Therefore, you need to determine as soon as you can, with as much robustness as you can, whether pursuing the trial is worthwhile. Continuing when things are futile is a waste of resources – and in some cases unethical.

The only way to see whether continuing is the right option is for the trial's independent data and safety monitoring board to look at some or all of the results. For COVID-19, where time is a major constraint, many efforts have been made to incorporate interim analysis into studies in a way that provides an answer, with some confidence, in as timely a manner as possible.

This interim review was therefore planned at the start of the trial, and has fulfilled its purpose. It is a very positive signal that the trial needs to continue – even if the actual data from the review leaves us with many questions.

### What we still need to find out

One key thing these interim results don't tell us is how long protection lasts. Participants in this phase 3 trial received two doses of the vaccine, and measure-



The 90% efficacy measure is taken at the point in time when we would expect the immune response to be at its strongest. Rana Mudassar/Shutterstock

ment of its efficacy was taken seven days after the second dose was given. This is likely around the height of the initial immune response. It will be really important to understand how durable this initial protection is after this point.

A pessimist would hope for retaining efficacy for at least three months. An optimist would hope for retaining high levels of protection for a number of years. However, being realistic, this mRNA-based vaccine platform is new, and so we'll need time to understand if and when the initial response starts to wane. We also need to understand if this vaccine and others in development can induce good memory responses from the immune system that will provide protection for years to come.

It's also important to identify the exact immune response that is mediating protection – what are called the "correlates of protection". Is it a particular type of antibody or T cell that's involved, and what is the threshold amount of these needed to protect an individual? With this knowledge, future trials can focus on measuring the quantity of these immune markers in individuals to better assess whether vaccines are working.

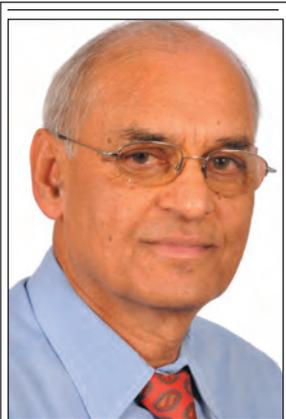
One other important thing we need to know is whether the vaccine completely prevents people from getting infected with any virus at all, or if it simply makes people more effective at fighting the virus off if they do succumb to some infection. This will govern whether the vaccine prevents only disease or can prevent viral transmission as well.

**Anne Moore**

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# Divali: The Truth of Light All

*Covid-19 is showing that the world is in a permanent need of healing, of forgiving and being forgiven. Let the lights of Divali, which is celebrated worldwide, carry this message far and wide*



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

All festivals and celebrations that touch us very deeply have in one way or another got to do with light in all its various forms of manifestation, towards which we contribute too. There is an *absolute* dimension of light, its brightness which is an expression of the dance of energy that is its source, most visibly to us as the sun. Without the sun there simply would not be anything: no existence as we know it. And the sun is itself part of and identical in essence with the initial cosmic

source, known in astronomy as the 'Big Bang'.

There is the *relative* or manifested dimension of light, as it transforms into shapes and colours, some of it natural, for example the rainbow or the *aurora borealis* in the northern hemisphere. But we also create artificial representations such as when we play with sparklers, light up earthenware lamps or candles, ignite firecrackers that create patterns in space, or use electronics to generate kaleidoscopic displays (on the dance floor, etc) among so many other inventions.

As we gradually matured as human beings, we sought not only to survive by exploiting whatever was available in our surroundings, but also began a larger quest of trying to understand the world and our place in it. We found out that our planet Earth was one of several others circling around our star the sun in a solar system, and that there are innumerable galaxies made of solar systems too – all together comprising a larger entity called the universe or cosmos.

The ancient Indian sages or *rishis* came to view the cosmos as possessing an intrinsic *cosmic order*, what in Hinduism is known as *Rta* (Sanskrit: *rtam* 'that which is properly joined; order, rule; truth'). It is the principle of natural order which regulates and coordinates the operation of the universe and everything within it. This cosmic order is in turn made up of a *physical order*, which is explored by science, and a *moral order*. The latter is the domain of philosophers who approach it with an open mind, men of religion whose minds are constrained, and spiritual people who go beyond the mind in their search for the deeper truth that underlies existence.

The latter's pursuit is to understand and explain the origin of the world (the universe, existence) and of where man fits in. They seek insights about his origin and essential nature, his evolution, his mind, the basis of his actions, his relationship with others at individual and collective levels, his relationship with plants, animals and inanimate or non-living objects, and more importantly his larger purpose and goal as part of the cosmos.

We already know from the science perspective that all that exists, both living and non-living, finally resolves into atoms which are themselves but energy, and when released in its purest and visible form that energy is light – of the sun, of the nuclear bomb. By no means are we walking or ticking nuclear bombs! – but from a fundamental point of view we can see that physically we emanate from light.

But how does light become life - life that thinks, ima-



Singapore streets decorated for Divali

gines, dreams, plans, enjoys, undergoes pleasure and pain, that gets drawn into the cycle of birth and death? What is it that energises light, as it were. This is where our *rishis* come in, because their enquiry by means of *sadhana* or spiritual discipline revealed to them that all of existence (living and non-living) is but an emanation of a One and Only Reality (*sat*) whose essential nature is bliss unlimited or *ananda* and self-aware consciousness or *chit*: *satchitananda* - a cosmic Divine Light which can be apprehended by all who are prepared to follow the *sadhana* as the Inner Light which is embodied within us.

**“Covid-19 is showing that the world is in a permanent need of healing, of forgiving and being forgiven. Let the lights of Divali, which is celebrated worldwide, carry this message far and wide, so that we can begin to aspire to a better tomorrow - one of hope, of freedom from fear, one where compassion will prevail as an expression of that Oneness that we have been proclaiming – and which, unbeknown to us, is at the very root of who we are, as the *rishis* have taught...”**

People who take to this path live a more disciplined and balanced life in which material things are relegated to their only role place of fulfilling needs, i.e. there is no excessive yearning for or attachment to worldly objects.

Beyond everything else, this is what the lights of Divali are meant to convey. The *diyas* lit along rows or *avalis* are illustrations and symbols of that Divine Light. Spiritually, the rows of lights are meant to create awareness about the Light within, the eternal, infinite *atman* which is beyond the transient physical body and mind. In the material world the celebration symbolizes the victory of *dharma* or righteousness over *adharma* or unrighteousness, as well as the Light

of Higher Knowledge dispelling the darkness of ignorance, which masks one's true nature, the *atman*. With this awakening comes the awareness of the oneness of all things in the universe, arousing compassion towards all and a feeling of all-pervasive bliss or *ananda*. Hence the sharing of sweets and gifts and forgiving rifts and wrongs done in the year gone by.

It has required an unrelenting pandemic to make us realise our interconnectedness! This has been an overarching theme in the discourse of all involved in battling this devastating malady, from world leaders to scientists, to environmentalists, to economists and businesses that depend on the global order to survive. 'We are all one!', 'We are all in it together!' – have been heard umpteen times over the past ten months since the pandemic is with us. And yet, even as this reality was repeatedly emphasized, there was a narrowing down to various kinds of nationalisms that were surfacing - about vaccines, medicines and other supplies among others.

And just as the Light reveals itself as the Truth of all in due course, so do lower truths of the material world become revealed however we may try to conceal them. We see this over and over again across the world, when shady dealings and transactions especially those involving the high and mighty burst upon the national scene and shake the foundations of a country.

Covid-19 is showing that the world is in a permanent need of healing, of forgiving and being forgiven. Let the lights of Divali, which is celebrated worldwide, carry this message far and wide, so that we can begin to aspire to a better tomorrow - one of hope, of freedom from fear, one where compassion will prevail as an expression of that Oneness that we have been proclaiming – and which, unbeknown to us, is at the very root of who we are, as the *rishis* have taught. The world would certainly be a happier and more peaceful place if as human beings we lived by this Truth.

*Divali abhinandan* to all.

# Buying a coronavirus vaccine for everyone on Earth, storing and shipping it, and giving it safely will all be hard and expensive

*Side agreements signed by some wealthy nations threaten to undercut global efforts to ensure a fairly equitable worldwide vaccination effort*



Buying a coronavirus vaccine - Photo - global.unitednations.entemediadb.net

**I**nfectious diseases do not respect borders.

An estimated 3 billion people in low-income countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America are likely to lack access to a COVID-19 vaccine for years after it becomes available. In poor nations, many communities lack the health care workers needed to administer vaccines, as well as the capacity to handle vaccines properly by keeping them extremely cold.

As a bioethicist studying global access to essential medicines, I'm closely monitoring what wealthy countries, foundations and international organizations are doing about this problem.

## COVAX

The COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility, or COVAX, is a joint effort by 184 countries working with international organizations to make it possible for people everywhere to get affordable access to COVID-19 vaccines as they become available.

So far, COVAX has raised about US\$1.8 billion toward an initial target of \$2 billion to cover the cost of manufacturing and distributing COVID-19 vaccines around the world.

The goal of this initiative is to produce 2 billion doses by the end of 2021. However, many of the rich countries taking part are striking their own deals apart from COVAX to assure that they will get early access to a vaccine.

These instances of "vaccine nationalism" threaten to undermine COVAX and other attempts to equitably distribute new COVID-19 vaccines and treatments.

Several large industrialized countries -

including the U.S. and Russia - have opted to stay out of the agreement altogether. They are making their own arrangements with pharmaceutical companies instead.

## UNICEF

Distributing COVID-19 vaccines could prove as hard as or harder than coming up with the money to pay for them.

That's because the most promising vaccines require constant and extremely cold storage. Especially in areas where access to electricity is unreliable or missing altogether, there simply are not enough health facilities with the required refrigeration capacity.

Nearly 3 billion people around the world live in places lacking the temperature-controlled storage needed for a wide-scale immunization campaign. How bad this problem turns out to be will depend on which vaccines are ultimately approved, because not every vaccine undergoing clinical trials requires storage at the same cold temperatures.

What's more, there are not enough health workers to administer the vaccines, and it's extremely hard for many people in poor communities to travel to health clinics.

The United Nations Children's Fund, a U.N. agency that provides aid to children worldwide, is leading the COVAX initiative's vaccine distribution plans. UNICEF has worked with the public-private partnership called GAVI, formerly Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations, in the past to supply developing countries with the specialized refrigeration technology needed to keep vaccines ice-cold.

In addition, UNICEF aims to stockpile

520 million syringes by the end of 2020, up to 1 billion syringes by 2021 and 5 million safety disposal boxes.

## International organizations and foundations

Several other international organizations are also working to make sure that people in low-income countries will have access to a COVID-19 vaccine and to treatments as well.

As of October 2020, the World Bank planned to provide US\$12 billion to finance vaccine acquisition and deployment in low-and middle-income countries like India and Nigeria.

Other regional development banks are also playing an important role, since COVAX will not provide enough vaccines for everyone in the world. For instance, in sub-Saharan Africa, only 28% of health care facilities have access to reliable electricity, so the African Export-Import Bank has \$3 million in grant funding to help communities procure equipment and supplies. Moreover, the bank is talking with the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention about allocating \$5 billion to buy COVID-19 vaccines.

And the Global Fund has allocated \$665 million of the estimated \$20 billion needed to vaccinate everyone in the whole world. Their COVID-19 Response Mechanism will improve supply chains for vaccine distribution and health systems in general.

Other organizations with extensive experience in vaccination campaigns are also stepping up to help.

For example, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative is providing staff

trained to do polio surveillance to test wastewater for COVID-19, distribute masks and hand sanitizer, and perform contact tracing. When a vaccine becomes available, this polio group will likely help out as well.

Foundations, especially the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, are also playing a role.

The Gates Foundation is teaming up with GAVI and the Serum Institute of India to speed up COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing.

The vaccines will be sold for no more than \$3 a dose to 92 low- and middle-income countries including Brazil, Chile, Singapore and South Africa.

In 1999, the Gates Foundation pledged \$750 million to launch GAVI, and it has given \$4 billion to the organization to date. At the 2020 Global Vaccine Summit, a virtual meeting hosted by the U.K., the Gates Foundation promised to spend \$1.6 billion to vaccinate 300 million children against several diseases, including COVID-19 once vaccines become available.

The Gates Foundation is also participating in a joint effort with the World Health Organization and several other international organizations to pay for 100 million antigen rapid diagnostic tests being made available in low- and middle-income countries - where they are priced at \$5 or less.

Likewise, many other philanthropic efforts are underway in conjunction with companies and international agencies.

**By Nicole Hassoun,**

Professor of Philosophy, Binghamton University, State University of New York

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# Bihar election: India's BJP coalition wins key state election

India's governing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allies have won a close race in the key state of Bihar. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said "democracy has once again won in Bihar" in a vote many viewed as a test of his government's Covid-19 response. His National Democratic Alliance (NDA) won 125 seats in the 243-member assembly, the Election Commission said, reports BBC News.

Tuesday's election was the first major poll in India since the Covid-19 pandemic.

The NDA beat regional heavyweight Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) despite exit polls that suggested the RJD-led coalition would emerge victorious. They had predicted a wave of anti-incumbency against long-time Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

But in a nail-biting contest the NDA edged past its chief challenger, even though the RJD became the single largest party with 75 seats.

Mr Modi tweeted his coalition were victorious around midnight on Tuesday:



The BJP-led alliance won 125 seats in the 243-member assembly. Photo - bbc.com

"Democracy has once again won in Bihar with the blessings of the people," he wrote. "I congratulate the workers and express my heartfelt gratitude to the people of Bihar."

The BJP's base is concentrated in

India's so-called Hindi heartland - states such as Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Bihar, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. But Bihar is the only one where the party has never won on its own.

Despite decisive parliamentary victo-

ries in 2014 and 2019, the BJP has failed to script similar wins in state polls.

It has not won a clear majority in any state since elections in Uttar Pradesh four years ago. And in the last two years, it has lost six state elections. It won just one by cobbling together a majority with a regional rival-turned-partner.

But the BJP's patchy electoral record in states is not necessarily indicative of waning popularity, writes BBC's Soutik Biswas. He says observers believe that it's also the result of local leaders "who appear to lack charisma beside Mr Modi's larger-than-life, presidential personality".

The chief opposition, the RJD, led a "grand alliance" that included India's main opposition party, Congress, and a clutch of Left parties.

Its candidate for chief minister was Tejashwi Yadav, the 31-year-old son of two former chief ministers. His father, Laloo Prasad Yadav, is now serving a jail term for corruption.

## 50,000 Covid deaths in the UK

The UK has passed a grim milestone to become the first European country to suffer 50,000 deaths from the coronavirus. In a bleak reminder of the threat that Covid-19 continues to pose, despite recent hopes of a potential vaccine, Britain's official death toll increased by 595 in the deadliest single day of the pandemic since May.

The Prime minister, Boris Johnson, acknowledged "we're not out of the woods yet" and urged Britons to continue to observe the restrictions that will see pubs, restaurants and non-essential shops in England closed and most social contact banned until 2 December.

Deputy chief medical officer, Professor Jonathan Van-Tam, also warned that the breakthrough announced by Pfizer and BioNTech on Monday will not provide a "short cut" out of lockdown, reports The Independent.

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### Go home!

University students in England are being told to go home to spend Christmas with their families as soon as the lockdown ends next month. Face-to-face learning should end by 9 December, new guidance says, allowing young people to travel at a time when the risk of Covid-19 transmission is lowest - after the four weeks of restrictions.

A week-long "student travel window" from 3 December will see universities set staggered departure dates, to ease the



UK coronavirus deaths surpass 50,000. Photo - cdnuploads.aa.com.tr

pressure on public transport. The guidance follows the furore over suggestions that students might be trapped in their halls of residence over the festive period to prevent them spreading the virus across the country.

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### Donald Trump continues to contest presidential election

In the US, where Donald Trump continues to contest last week's presidential election result as winner Joe Biden begins choosing cabinet members for his new administration, the southern state of Georgia has agreed to manually recount all 5 million ballots cast after the step was requested by Mr Trump's legal team, reports The Independent.

Mr Biden currently leads the sitting President in the popular vote by 5 million, a number that's expected to grow as more votes come in from New York and California. He also leads by 295 electoral votes to Mr Trump's 217. But those

numbers haven't stopped the Trump campaign from preparing lawsuits and declaring "fraud" without evidence.

On the other hand, Joe Biden held his first policy speech on Monday, which focused on the coronavirus pandemic. In the address, he implored Americans to wear a mask due to fears an additional 200,000 people could die in the country from the novel virus.

Joe Biden also defended the Affordable Care Act in his first major policy speech on Tuesday as Republicans backed by Donald Trump once again challenged the law, known as Obamacare, in the Supreme Court.

His comments came as international observers criticised Mr Trump for pushing "baseless allegations of systemic deficiencies" in last week's US election following his defeat. Candidates should be responsible and not promote "harmful speculation", the Organisation of American States warned.

Meanwhile, US attorney general Bill Barr has authorised Department of Justice (DOJ) prosecutors to investigate claims of voter fraud in the presidential election. The decision, announced in a DOJ memo, contradicts the longstanding practice of the department staying out of election processes.

The investigation comes after officials in Arizona, Georgia, Nevada and Pennsylvania were all forced to defend their counts in response to allegations by outgoing President Donald Trump and his supporters.

## Pfizer CEO sold stock worth \$5.6 million on same day as vaccine announcement

Pfizer Chief Executive Officer Albert Bourla sold company shares worth \$5.56 million, according to a regulatory filing that showed the sale was made on Monday, the same day the drugmaker reported positive data on its experimental Covid-19 vaccine.

The company said on Wednesday the sale was part of a pre-announced trading plan, adopted by Bourla on Aug. 19.

Bourla sold 132,508 shares at \$41.94 per share, according to a Securities and Exchange Commission filing late Tuesday, reports Reuters.

"The sale of these shares is part of Dr Bourla's personal financial planning and a pre-established (10b5-1) plan, which allows, under SEC rules, major shareholders and insiders of exchange-listed corporations to trade a predetermined number of shares at a predetermined time," Pfizer said.

Pfizer on Monday said its experimental Covid-19 vaccine was more than 90 percent effective based on initial trial results, sending its shares higher along with the broader markets.

Pfizer and German partner BioNTech have said no serious safety concerns were found so far and expect to seek U.S. emergency use authorization

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Foreigners can now house hunt in 25 areas of Qatar.  
Photo - i1.wp.com

## Qatar puts up “for sale” sign with new property visas

**G**as-rich Qatar has flung open its property market to foreigners, with a scheme giving those purchasing homes or stores the right to call the Gulf nation home.

The scheme, announced in September, is the latest in a series of measures designed to diversify Qatar's economy away from fossil fuel dependency and attract foreign capital ahead of the 2022 World Cup, reports AFP.

Well-heeled individuals are being invited to consider the glistening seaside tower blocks of Doha's man-made Pearl island or the brand new Lusail city project that flanks a World Cup stadium. Retail units in malls also qualify buyers for residency, reports NDTV.

The reforms could also help soak up an oversupply of units, which has left gleaming towers half-empty and seen prices drop by almost a third since 2016, according to consultancy ValuStrat's Price Index for residential property.

Previously, investors needed sponsorship from a Qatari business or individual for residency, but now a \$200,000 property purchase secures temporary residency for the term of ownership. A \$1 million purchase buys the benefits of permanent residency, including free schools and healthcare.

Foreigners can now house hunt in 25 areas of Qatar -- mostly in and around the capital Doha -- nine on a freehold basis and the rest with

99-year leaseholds.

### Seaviews for most

Gulf nations have long depended on foreign skills and expertise to convert their petrodollars into the region's towering cities, but have seldom made it easy, or cheap, for expats to make their moves permanent.

Similar schemes exist elsewhere in the Gulf, but for a significantly greater outlay. Dubai offers a 10-year residency visa for an investment of \$2.7 million, 40 percent of which must be in property.

So-called "golden visas" and investment passport schemes in several countries have also faced scrutiny over allegations they have attracted corrupt individuals and money laundering.

In Qatar's case, it remains unclear how attractive the tiny, ultra-conservative nation -- where strict curbs apply to free speech and alcohol sales -- will be to wealthy global buyers.

Investment of \$200,000 buys a 50 square metre studio in Lusail's new Fox Hills development north of Doha, while \$1 million would cover a 330 square metre three-bed seaview apartment in the Pearl.

This marks a step change in the Gulf emirate, where 90 percent of the 2.75 million people are temporary guest workers, mostly employed on projects linked to the 2022 tournament.

## Mike Pompeo announces 7-Nation Tour of US allies as Trump refuses to concede

**U**S Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Tuesday announced a seven-nation tour of US allies, which have congratulated President-elect Joe Biden despite Donald Trump's refusal to concede.

Pompeo said he will leave Friday for Paris and then head to Istanbul and the former Soviet republic of Georgia before visiting Jerusalem and three key Gulf Arab allies -- Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, reports NDTV.

The trip will discuss Trump's "historic efforts to forge peace and cooperation throughout the Middle East," said Pompeo.

The trip will likely be awkward as Trump has denied that he lost last week's election and his administration has refused to start the transition to Biden, who will be inaugurated on January 20.

France, which like many European nations had strained relations with Trump, swiftly voiced hope of working with Biden, who shares French priorities on fighting climate change, cooperating against the Covid-19 pandemic and pursuing diplomacy with Iran.

But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan -- all friends of Trump -- have also congratulated Biden.

The Democrat has pledged to place a higher priority on human rights and democracy, calling for a re-evaluation of the relationship with Saudi Arabia and for support for Turkey's opposition.

Pompeo on his trip is expected to discuss raising further pressure on Iran in the remaining two months of the Trump administration, which in 2018 bolted from a multinational denuclearization accord with Tehran and imposed punishing unilateral sanctions.

Israel and Gulf Arabs have seen growing relations as they share the Trump administration's hostility to Iran.

In September, both the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain said they would recognize the Jewish state and Trump had pressed Saudi Arabia to follow suit. Sudan has also said it will normalize relations with Israel.

## India, China have a three-step Ladakh cool-off plan but no agreement to implement it

**I**ndia and China have readied a three-phase plan for disengagement in eastern Ladakh where the two sides have been in a stand-off since May this year, senior Indian government sources have said.

However, there is no signature or agreement on the plan's implementation as yet, the sources said. No time period has been agreed upon within which to implement the plan; neither is the extent to which it will happen decided between the two sides.

The disengagement includes the Chinese and Indian forces pulling back armour - tanks and armoured personnel carriers from close to the Line of Actual Control. The Chinese would return to the Finger 8 region on the North Bank of the Pangong Lake, vacating their existing positions. India, in turn, would return to its pre-existing position prior to when the tension began, reports Vishnu Som and Harish Pullanoor of NDTV.

India would move back forces on the South Bank of Pangong where India dominates the heights to positions before the tension began.

India's been watchful ever since the Galwan valley clash in June this year in which 20 Indian



Indian soldiers in Ladakh. Photo - static.theprint.in

soldiers lost their lives, as did many Chinese soldiers, including a commanding officer.

The Indian security establishment, including National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat, Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane, and Air Force chief RKS Bhaduria, had responded with strong military measures like occupying the dominating heights along the southern and northern bank of Pangong Lake on the LAC.

While China mobilised its troops in a massive deployment along the LAC, India moved close to 60,000 troops for forward deployments, besides bringing in reserve divisions.

## Rama Sithanen

# “We will witness the sharpest decline in our economy since 40 years”



**R**ama Sithanen, former Finance Minister, is well placed to comment on the state of the economy in the time of Covid. He is concerned about the attitude of both the government and the private sector, who are behaving as if as nothing has changed whereas it's the exact opposite, with an economy which is already in recession. He is emphatic that the Labour Party must reinvent itself radically if it wants to stay relevant and be electable, and do more than to point out the downsides of the government - which is good enough to be in opposition, but not as a potential contender when it comes to ruling the country. 'The tragedy often in politics,' he says, 'is that almost everyone knows what needs to be done. Yet emotion, self-interest, the belief that one is irreplaceable... trump informed judgement, reasoned behaviour and rational choice. And we end up with the worst of both worlds.' Read on:

**Mauritius Times: Save lives, fix the economy and win re-election: that's what any government would strive to do in the present testing circumstances. Does the Government's handling of the economy in the wake of the Covid pandemic indicate that it's well on track to achieving its objective?**

**Rama Sithanen:** It is not clear there is a causal relationship between how a Government handles the economy and its chances of re-election. There are other important factors at play in determining who wins even if the state of the economy has a bearing.

**\* Where do matters really stand as regards the state of the economy?**

The economy is in dire straits. All the fundamentals are in the throes. We are in a very deep economic recession as growth will contract by around 15% in 2020. The budget deficit and public debt have surged astronomically to unprecedented level and if we add the off-budget financing and the colourable devices used to compute actual debt, the predicament is worse.

Unemployment has risen sharply, and if we include discouraged workers, underemployed employees, those who work few hours or are on furlough or unpaid leave, it could morph into a social crisis with income falling for a large section of our population. It is an unmitigated disaster for self-employed, independent workers and SMEs.

The balance of trade, the current account and the ba-

“There will be a bounce back in 2021, but it will be a technical one as the growth in 2021 will be measured on the very low 2020 figures. It will be then fade as is the case in many countries. The recovery will be slow, weak, unequal and unstable with borders still closed and a second wave of the pandemic in countries which buy our goods and provide us with tourists and investments...”

lance of payments will post massive deficits of 27%, 16% and 6% of GDP respectively in 2020. Exports, investment and consumption have all collapsed while savings is at an all-time low of 6.7% of GDP. Trust and confidence are at a very low ebb. The old economy represented by sugar, textiles/clothing and tourism are in agony. The financial services sector is operating with the triple threats of the grey and black lists, falling demand and hot competition while the seafood hub is facing boycott.

**\* Things got worse with the pandemic?**

The economy was struggling well before the pandemic hit us. Tourism had reached the end of a cycle and was showing signs of weaknesses while sugar had turned sour in the absence of structural reforms to lower unit cost and raise revenue for all stakeholders. The export-oriented industries have posted significant negative growth for the last five years. Apparel continues to face tough challenges and now the seafood hub is under stress.

The status quo is not sustainable for global business as the world environment has changed considerably. There has hardly been a new economic pillar developed for a long time. A lot of talk but little actions whether in terms of food security, the blue, green and the circular economy, the Africa Strategy, the digital economy, Fintech and the various hubs.

**\* As they say, things will get worse before they get better, right?**

The closure of borders, the lockdown and the sharp fall in demand for our goods and services have amplified the gravity of the problems. As the tide has receded, we have been found swimming naked. We will witness the sharpest decline in our economy since 40 years.

There will be a bounce back in 2021, but it will be a technical one as the growth in 2021 will be measured on the very low 2020 figures. It will be then fade as is the case in many countries. The recovery will be slow, weak, unequal and unstable with borders still closed and a se-

cond wave of the pandemic in countries which buy our goods and provide us with tourists and investments.

**\* Are you saying we have not yet reached the normalisation stage where growth is moving closer to the pre-Covid levels? What conditions are necessary for an economic revival and how long will it take?**

We are still in the induced coma phase with many sectors being supported by artificial economic respiration through wage support, financial assistance to firms and the MIC rescuing some big corporates. We are not yet in recovery phase for many sectors. And, more importantly,

“Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and build a new world. Some of the changes in the digital economy, remote work, video conferencing, e-commerce, Fintech, online teaching, shorter supply chains, reshoring of activities, food security, telemedicine and delivery services will be permanent... Governments will be bigger as it plays the role of insurer and investor of last resort while public debt will balloon, creating financial challenges...”

we have not started to adapt to the new economic environment in the wake of this severe health and economic shock as the world will be different with no return to the pre-Covid situation.

Covid-19 has caused widespread economic damage with long-term implications for countries, especially those dependent on global trade in goods and services and FDIs. The shock is more than three times worse than the 2008 financial crisis. There is extreme uncertainty about the path, duration, magnitude, and impact of the economic disruption.

# “The Labour Party is disturbingly in a precarious predicament”

*‘Either it adapts and reforms and becomes electable again or it runs the risks of staying in the opposition and be marginalised’*

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In some sectors, the worst may be ahead of us as there is always a lag before we feel the full effects of the economic cyclone. It will not be a V-shaped recovery, especially with the second wave and the new lockdown in many countries. More likely to be a W- or K-shaped bounce back with a second decline in output after a recovery.

Some sectors will recover relatively quickly while others will take a very long time and some will be permanently scarred. In terms of GDP, we are unlikely to reach the 2019 level before 2023. Tourism and travel will take around four to five years to attain the 2019 level. Our GDP per capita will collapse from US\$ 11100 in 2019 to around US\$ 8800 in 2020 which is the level we were 10 years ago.

Even before Covid-19, we had the lowest growth for many years at 3% in 2019. Without structural reforms, the outlook is bleak. The heights to scale are daunting and just burying our heads in the sand will not make these problems disappear. We need sound, robust and sustained policies and hard work to recover and transform the economy.

**\* Money does not seem to be an issue for the government. It has had recourse to the special reserves of the Bank of Mauritius, and more funds would be forthcoming from an Indian line of credit. But the government seems adamant about keeping a lid on the disbursements of the Mauritius Investment Corporation (MIC) and the conditionalities attached thereto. Is there scope for any abuse there?**

There is a limit to raiding the reserves of the Bank of Mauritius, to printing money to monetise the fiscal deficit and to borrowing to finance elevated expenditures. We have gone past the acceptable limit for all three of them. We need to be careful of the impact on trust, confidence and credibility of a policy that systematically and cynically uses the Bank of Mauritius as an ATM to finance reckless expenditures. The consequences will be unsustainable debt and deceitful creative accounting that will place a heavy burden on our children.

Furthermore, the various wage subsidies are clearly not sustainable, neither for Government nor for the private sector. They do not meet the totality of fixed costs, hence their recourse to quasi equity from the MIC. Rs 80 b is a huge amount and nobody knows the evaluative criteria and whether the MIC has the technical competence and knowledge to appraise such complex files.

There must be transparency, accountability and governance in the structure of the MIC and the way it allocates public funds to corporates. A parliamentary oversight would have reined in the risks of excessive monetisation and careless indebtedness and potential abuses in the use of these funds. In some cases, it looks like the MIC is simply throwing good money after bad ones as some business models are not sustainable in a post-Covid era.

**\* You also seem very concerned about the economic recovery strategy of Government. Why?**

Covid-19 is teaching us some important lessons. I am

worried that the strategy of Government and also many in the private sector is to try to recover quickly from the economic downturn and go back to the same pre-Covid situation. While this is understandable, I believe it will be a serious policy mistake. We need economic leadership, strategic vision and a capacity to anticipate to stay ahead of the curve. The pandemic will change our day-to-day life and will likely have permanent effects on the way we work, live, buy, eat, socialise, behave and travel. Yet Government and the private sector are reacting as if nothing has changed.

Reliance on more of the same is simply untenable. Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and build a new world. Some of the changes in the digital economy, remote work, video conferencing, e-commerce, Fintech, online teaching, shorter supply chains, reshoring of activities, food security, tele-medicine and delivery services will be permanent. There will be a movement towards a greener economy, a substitution of capital for labour with greater emphasis on robotics, and a slowdown of globalisation and urbanisation. Governments will be bigger as it plays the role of insurer and investor of last resort while public debt will balloon, creating financial challenges.

The attitude and behaviour of people towards travel and tourism will change. Will the future of travel and tourism be smaller and different? Business travel will decline substantially with Zoom and Microsoft Teams and tech innovations making video meetings much better. Meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) will be severely impacted as virtual events take hold.

Long haul destinations may be replaced by domestic staycations and regional trips. Large and crowded hotels could lose out to villas, private homes and short-term rentals like Airbnb. There will be an acceleration in the digitalisation of the tourism sector with as little human contact as possible. The question is whether the destination, hotels and airlines can reinvent themselves to meet these new needs and lifestyles in travel, including long stay tourists and people seeking safer locations to migrate to.

The biggest challenge for policy makers is how to embrace strategies that will speed up recovery while concurrently transforming the economy to meet the new challenges and capture the emerging opportunities unlocked by the health pandemic. Provided that the measures for recovery do not collide with the transformation of the eco-



“The structure, character and dynamics of the campaign will change in a straight fight between LP-MMM-PMSD and the MSM Government. This is not rocket political science. Identity politics is taking a more central role in many countries. The recent US presidential election is a case in point. It was largely based on identity politics and economic interest with a twist of 'cultural' differences...”

“How will the Labour Party defend this LP-MMM-PMSD coalition among its supporters if it has fewer than 30 candidates out of 60 and these are likely to be in rural areas where it will be very vulnerable to the onslaught of the MSM? Even if it wins, it could end up as a junior partner both in Parliament and in Cabinet. How will the MMM convince its supporters that Ramgoolam should be the leader of that alliance?”

nomy.

We have yet to see a clear strategy that reconciles recovery with transformation. Some jobs will disappear permanently while some industries will go under as the economy evolves. There will be creative destruction. We need to support the recovery of sectors that can be resilient and competitive while also helping new sectors that will create future jobs. History shows that policy choices made during crises can shape the world for decades to come. The country needs structural trans-

formation to lay the foundations for the future prosperity of our people on a resilient, sustainable and inclusive manner.

**\* On the other hand, there is also continuing concern about the Contribution Sociale Généralisée (CSG), and Business Mauritius has announced its intention to challenge this new contribution system in replacement of the NPF. What is the Government not telling us about its motives behind the shift to the CSG?**

The current animosity and confrontation on the CSG does not bode well for our economy. This tax is an unnecessary distraction when we need to focus all our time, effort, energy and resources on economic recovery to save jobs and rescue firms.

To be frank, the CSG is discriminatory, inequitable, unfair, unsustainable, ineffective and ill-timed.

Discriminatory as it penalises private sector employees. Inequitable as a doctor who is an employee pays much more than his self-employed counterpart. Unfair as the benefits are not related to employee's contribution.

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# 'Can the 'L'Entente PTr-MMM-PMSD' convince the country that they have what it takes to win an election?

And more importantly to govern! The jury is still out'



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Unsustainable as the contribution would not be enough to meet the outflows due to the ageing population. Ineffective as it will make talented Mauritian less employable with the rising labour costs. And ill-timed as it is disingenuous to fight employees and employers when we need everybody on board to articulate a comprehensive and a coordinated policy response to face the triple health, economy and social crisis.

**\* On the political front, there seems to be a latent discontent with the leadership of the Labour Party, and some are saying in private that this predicament is dragging the party down the road of perdition, and that this has to change. What are your thoughts?**

The Labour Party is disturbingly in a precarious predicament. It must rise to the occasion to regain its momentum. It has an illustrious past and has contributed significantly to many social, political and economic advancements. It has never found itself in the opposition for two consecutive terms. It has arguably a very simple choice to make. The interests of the Party, of its electorate and the country must prevail over personal considerations. Either it adapts and reforms and becomes electable again or it runs the risks of staying in the opposition and be marginalised.

It should follow the example of the Labour Party in New Zealand and in the UK and build an appealing leadership, a diverse and competent team, an ambitious and realizable programme, a modern way of doing politics and a broad coalition of people to become electable again. This is both feasible and desirable if the Party does its soul searching in a dispassionate, composed and calm manner.

We have seen how Jacinda Ardern has made Labour electable in New Zealand after a long spell in opposition. The same is happening to the UK Labour Party under Keir Starmer. The overriding criterion must be electability. Banking on the unpopularity of Jugnauth, on fraud, corruption, and poor economic results may help but is not sufficient for the Labour Party to be back in

“Banking on the unpopularity of Jugnauth, on fraud, corruption, and poor economic results may help but is not sufficient for the Labour Party to be back in office. It must do its self-introspection and embrace a new paradigm in terms of leadership, people, ideas and policies to become the broad church again. Difficult for some, painful for others but absolutely necessary...”

office. It must do its self-introspection and embrace a new paradigm in terms of leadership, people, ideas and policies to become the broad church again. Difficult for some, painful for others but absolutely necessary to become an attractive, effective and electable alternative to the MSM.

In its current shape, it is sadly the single biggest catalyst for another term of Jugnauth, as the frequency, intensity and vigour of the discontent with the current LP leadership seem to be rising.

**\* What is your take on the 'L'Entente PTr-MMM-PMSD'? The leaders of the Labour Party (LP) and of the MMM appear to be keen to go much farther. Do you see that happening?**

The electoral system favours pre-election alliance to avoid vote fragmentation. We saw it at the 2019 elections when the MSM won handsomely in terms of seats with only 37% of the votes. The 'entente' is also important to act as a check and balance on Government.

Will it become an electoral alliance? Anyone with an insight into politics understands that this 'entente' faces six stumbling blocks.

- First, who will lead it against Pravind Jugnauth as potential PM?
- Second, who will hold the major constitutional posts and key ministries?
- Third, how will the 60 seats be split among the three parties?
- Fourth, where will candidates be fielded between urban and rural constituencies?
- Fifth, can they produce a roadmap of policies to address the various problems besetting the country?
- And, sixth, how does the 'optics' composition of that alliance minimise the risks of polarisation between urban and rural areas and between one section of the population and the rest?

Can they crack these six tough nuts, convince their respective supporters and the country at large that they have what it takes to win an election? And more importantly to govern! The jury is still out.

**\* How do you react to the view expressed in some quarters that a large majority of the LP-MSM common vote bank are still supporting the present MSM-led government - despite all the allegations of corruption, nepotism, etc. - for want of a credible alternative?**

As at now, the answer appears to be a contingent yes.

The last four elections were fought on almost exactly the same basis. The LP won in 2005 by maximising its seats in rural constituencies and winning a few seats in urban ridings. The LP-MSM won in 2010 with a similar strategy.

A new coalition of identity politics laced with economic interests delivered the election of 2014 to the MSM. And in 2019, the same menu was served by the MSM. Win most rural seats and fight hard to gain a few urban constituencies. Elections in 1967, 1983 and 1987 were contested along the same lines. The only difference is the party that manages to convince a specific electorate about identity politics and economic interests. Since 2005, the MSM has done it three times, the LP twice and the MMM not at all. This is the stark ground reality.

Hispanic and white women chose Biden. Of course, Biden built a powerful coalition of young, female, minorities and college educated people while minimising his loss among white working class and elderly people.

It will not be dissimilar in Mauritius. The identities and the containment strategy will of course be different. Can Pravind Jugnauth keep his strong rural base and contain his erosion in urban constituencies with a coalition of specific interests? Or could a potential LP-MMM-PMSD alliance flip most urban seats while resisting losses in rural ridings?

With the current leadership of the Labour Party, I believe it will be a repeat of the last four elections. And chip in 1967, 1983 and 1987 and you have the main drivers of the next election campaign.

How will the Labour Party defend this LP-MMM-PMSD coalition among its supporters if it has fewer than 30 candidates out of 60 and these are likely to be in rural areas where it will be very vulnerable to the onslaught of the MSM? Even if it wins, it could end up as a junior partner both in Parliament and in Cabinet. How will the

“There is a limit to raiding the reserves of the Bank of Mauritius, to printing money to monetise the fiscal deficit and to borrowing to finance elevated expenditures. We have gone past the acceptable limit for all three of them. We need to be careful of the impact on trust, confidence and credibility of a policy that systematically and cynically uses the Bank of Mauritius as an ATM to finance reckless expenditures...”



While it is important for the three opposition parties to collaborate and coordinate their strategies and while it might win the municipal elections, it will be a different kettle of fish for the general elections. As it is not only about adding up the sum of the parts to reach the whole when they come together. The structure, character and dynamics of the campaign will change in a straight fight between LP-MMM-PMSD and the MSM Government.

This is not rocket political science. Identity politics is taking a more central role in many countries. The recent US presidential election is a case in point. It was largely based on identity politics and economic interest with a twist of 'cultural' differences. It was a highly cleaved contest in a very divided country. Broadly, the non-college educated, rural, mid-western, white men went for Trump in droves while the college educated, suburban, coastal, black,

MMM convince its supporters that Ramgoolam should be the leader of that alliance?

Yet it could all be different. An informed change in leadership opens up vast opportunities for the Labour Party to become electable, either on its own or in an alliance. Many support the LP but not its current leadership. The interests of the Party should prevail over personal ambition.

Of course, the change must be done decently and honourably. Will change happen? I would say a contingent no. The tragedy often in politics is that almost everyone knows what needs to be done. Yet emotion, self-interest, the belief that one is irreplaceable, the desire to take revenge and plain shortsightedness trump informed judgement, reasoned behaviour and rational choice. And we end up with the worst of both worlds.

## Spectrum of Mauritian Achievers in the UK

# From nursing to restaurant business

## Climbing the ladder the hard way



Kishore Teelanah

It is a well-known fact that most if not all Mauritians who came to settle down in the United Kingdom have made tremendous progress in one way or another. Like the Indians, Chinese and some of Middle Eastern origin, there are few other immigrants who have really made a difference as much as the Mauritian immigrants. The latter have put in more efforts than ever to make ends meet and for their families to lead a more comfortable life here. Here are the stories of a further four Mauritians who have made their fellow Mauritians and relatives back home proud. One quality that makes these compatriots stand out is their ability to adapt and embrace British society and integrate where others have failed.

### Brinda Bungaroo

Brinda is a Mauritian-born lady who came to Britain after getting married to Dharma. She trained as a General



Brinda Bungaroo in her kitchen

Nurse and later specialised in Day Surgery. Her experience allowed her to take up the teaching and training of student nurses at Kingston and Epsom College of Nursing. Her sheer dedication and hard work got her promoted as Day Surgery Ward Sister. Eventually Brinda and Dharma decided to start their own business with the setting up of a Care Home.

Besides her full-time occupation, Brinda has a deep passion for food and for writing about food recipes in her spare time. A blog she started since the last three years has become so popular that her family and friends have encouraged her to open a restaurant. Her blog is available at: <http://www.brindabungaroo.com>

Brinda's drive and inspiration come from her parents and families as well as her supportive husband. She says her father has always taught her that nothing comes on a platter so easily, you have to strive hard to acquire it - "Kuma nu dire: narien pas vine lors plateau".

Both Brinda and her husband find their job challenging but equally rewarding. When she first started sharing pictures of her food recipes on social media, she never expected such positive responses from her fellow countrymen



Dharma and Brinda Bungaroo

and British nationals, who were not familiar with the diversity of Mauritian cuisine.

Brinda's future plan is to continue sharing her passion for food and to popularise the simplicity of Mauritian multicultural cuisine with a wider circle of people. She thinks anyone can learn the art of cooking in the comfort of their own kitchen whatever their ability.

### Kevin and Anusha Lutcmiah

When Kevin and Anusha came to London, the streets were not paved with gold but with obstacles and challenges. However, determined to succeed, they left nothing to chance. Kevin embarked on a degree course in Health and Social Care, following which he completed a postgraduate course in IT. Anusha took up Hospitality and Management studies, and later got a job in the Ministry of Justice; Kevin on the other hand found a career in the Care Sector for several years. In 2008, Anusha decided to make a career change and put her passion to work: she opened a restaurant like her mother had done earlier back home. Details and pictures about Chef Anusha Lutcmiah's award-winning restaurant 'Mauritius Paradise', based in Wood Green Shopping Mall in North London, are available at: [www.mauritiusparadise.co.uk](http://www.mauritiusparadise.co.uk)

By word of mouth, Anusha's restaurant

has become a very popular eating place in North London. Customers travel from all over the metropolis and UK to taste their specialities. Kevin has also joined his wife in their business. Given her love for cooking and experience in this domain, Anusha is currently working on a recipe book.

'Mauritius Paradise' participated in



Anusha and Kevin Lutcmiah

charity aid before and during the Covid-19 pandemic. They provided hundreds of NHS staff and the homeless with free meals. It has also become the leading caterer at Mauritian festivals in the UK. Kevin and his team have been consistent

in delivering food door to door in different areas of inner and outer London. The catering services of 'Mauritius Paradise' specialise in bespoke weddings, functions and full event management across the country. Furthermore, Kevin went farther afield to host a catering service for the Udit Narayan show in February 2020 at the SVICC in Pailles, Mauritius.

'Mauritius Paradise' is a multiple award-winning restaurant and catering services in the UK. It has already won the Mauritian Achievers Award for Best Restaurant Services in the UK; Market Hall Best Food Retailers on numerous occasions; West Indian Food Retailers Award and Healthy Eating Awards by the local Authority.

*Kishore Teelanah, Section Manager for Science Further and Higher Education (London), has over 34 years of experience in teaching, learning and education management in Science having worked in many educational establishments at different levels. He has special interest in the Biomedical Sciences especially in areas such as cancer and diabetes. He is also a mentor to final-year Bioscience degree students at Kingston University.*



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# Biden's climate change plans can quickly raise the bar, but can they be transformative?

*After four years of the US government undoing climate change policies and partnerships, a Biden administration has a chance to rebuild that leadership. But success will require more than quick wins*

**T**he day Joe Biden becomes president, he can start taking actions that can help slow climate change. The question is whether he can match the magnitude of the challenge.

If his administration focuses only on what is politically possible and fails to build a coordinated response that also addresses the social and economic ramifications of both climate change and the U.S. policy response, it is unlikely to succeed.

I have spent much of my career working on responses to climate change internationally and in Washington. I have seen the quiet efforts across political parties, even when the rhetoric was heated. There is room for effective climate actions, particularly as heat waves, wildfires and extreme weather make the risks of global warming tangible and the costs of renewable energy fall. A coordinated strategy will be crucial to go beyond symbolic actions and bring about transformative change.

## Starting on day one

Let's first take a look at what Biden can do quickly, without having to rely on what's likely to be a divided Congress.

Biden has already pledged to rejoin the Paris climate agreement. With an executive order and some wrangling with the United Nations, that will happen fairly quickly. But the agreement is only a promise by nations worldwide to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions driving climate change.

To start moving the country back toward its obligations under the Paris Agreement, Biden can recertify the waiver that allows California to implement its fuel economy and zero-emissions vehicle standards. The Trump administration had revoked it. California is a big state, and its



actions are followed by others, which puts pressure on the auto industry to meet higher standards nationwide.

In a similar way, Biden can direct government agencies to power their buildings and vehicles with renewable energy.

The administration can also limit climate-warming greenhouse emissions by regulating activities like the flaring of methane on public lands. The Trump administration rolled back a large number of climate and environmental regulations over the past four years.

There are even legislative actions that could get through a divided Congress, such as funding for clean energy technology.

## The big job: Transformational change

That's the easy part. The hard part is catalyzing the transformational changes needed to slow global warming and protect the climate our economy was built on.

The last five years have been the hottest on record, and 2020 is on pace to join them. Meeting the Paris Agreement's goals for keeping global warming in check will require reworking how we generate and transmit energy and overhauling how we grow food in ways that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Biden has pledged to lay the groundwork for 100% clean energy by 2050, including investing hundreds of billions of dollars in technologies and industries that can lower emissions and create jobs. His ideas for transforming food systems have been less concrete.

The new administration will have to walk a tightrope. It can't risk spending down its political capital on actions that are possible but don't amount to much. It also has to recognize the risk of public backlash to anything that might raise costs, be labeled "socialism" by opponents or leave part of the country harmed.

Transformative solutions will have to address both the benefits and the costs,

and provide a path to a healthy future for those facing the greatest losses. That means, for example, not just ending coal burning, a significant contributor to climate change, but also helping communities and workers transition from coal mining to new jobs and economic drivers that are healthier for the environment.

## What needs to happen first

One of the big challenges – and the place where Biden needs to start – is the lack of understanding of systemic risks, opportunities and costs of both climate actions and inaction.

Right now, there is no federal agency tasked with developing a systemic understanding of climate change impacts across society.

An existing executive branch entity, such as the Council on Environmental Quality or the US. Global Change Research Program, could convene a task force of political staff, academics and civil society to assess climate policy proposals, identify the benefits and costs and then advise the administration. Working across agencies, the task force would be positioned to look at the entire system and identify the wider effects of proposed policies or actions and how they might interact. Similar entities, such as the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office and Congressional Research Service, are already central to policymaking.

Their work will have to move fast. The very nature of complex systems means the task force will provide advice on climate actions under uncertainty.

**Edward R Carr**

*Professor and Director, International Development, Community, and Environment, Clark University*

# Pfizer COVID vaccine: promising results – here's what needs to happen next

\* Cont. from page 2

All we know at the moment is that it has reduced symptomatic cases by 90%.

## The road to approval

Though it doesn't have the full picture, the US FDA has said it will consider authorising the vaccine for emergency use – ahead of full approval – once the trial has collected two months' worth of safety data on half of the participants. Pfizer expects to have this available by the third week of

November.

The trial will also continue for many months to come – in order to reach that reliability threshold of 164 cases of disease – and there will be further follow-ups looking at the vaccine's safety and the immune responses and protection it elicits in different groups of participants. This should give further transparent information and confidence on how well this vaccine works and in which populations.

If the vaccine's safety and efficacy are

looking good, it will then be submitted to regulatory agencies for full approval. The highest risk groups will then be first in line for immunisation. In the UK, this will likely include care home residents and workers, health and social care workers, and people over 80, assuming the vaccine is shown to be safe and effective in these groups. In Europe, prioritised groups include healthcare and essential workers, those vulnerable to the disease and socioeconomically disadvantaged people.

But even if approved, big challenges remain. Pfizer expects to have 50 million doses ready this year, enough to immunise 25 million people, and 1.3 billion by the end of 2021. Given the size of the world's population – and the fact the vaccine requires two doses – universal coverage is a long way away.

The other vaccines in development therefore remain just as important. We will need more than one vaccine for global coverage, and to ensure we have the right one for each age and health cohort.

Overall, these results should be celebrated, but with the realisation that this is only one step in the journey. We still have a long way to go in getting the world back to normal – but the compass is pointing in the right direction.

# Exercise your way to a better relationship

*Want to spice up your relationship? Or maybe even start a new one off on the right foot? Go on an exercise date*

**E**xercise has a lot of health benefits and can also result in better connection and attraction among people. Those who exercise report higher satisfaction in their relationships. And this is even stronger for people who exercise with their partners.

Compared to non-exercisers, married people who exercise reported more positive marital events and fewer negative ones.

## It's all about the hormones

When you exercise, your body releases hormones such as endocannabinoids and endorphins. Endocannabinoids work on the reward areas of the brain - the same system affected by marijuana - and improve mood. Endorphins are your body's natural opioids: the feel-good hormones that block out pain.

As a result of these hormones, people feel happier after exercise, even after a single session. The effect of exercise is long-lasting and is associated with more positive social engagement, even into the next day. This may be because happier people smile more and smiling people are viewed as more attractive.

Adrenaline is also released as a result of exercise. It raises your heart rate, speeds up your breathing and increases your blood pressure. These are all similar responses to being sexually aroused.

A classic study that purposely created situations to increase adrenaline release and anxiety found a relationship between anxiety and sexual arousal. This is termed misattribution of arousal, in which arousal of any sort, such as from anxiety or exercise, can be misinterpreted as sexual arousal by the body.

Indeed, following a 15-minute exercise session, adults reported greater attraction to pictures of the opposite sex compared to those who didn't exercise, with the attraction increasing based on perceived



Exercise has many health benefits, and can also result in better connection and attraction among people. Photo - Shutterstock

indicators of exercise intensity.

Exercise also improves your confidence and self-image, which can make you more attractive to others. Our confidence, or self-efficacy (belief in our own abilities), tends to be tied to how much exercise we do. When it comes to self-esteem and body image (our satisfaction with your own body), these too are greater in people who exercise, and the more frequently they exercise, the greater the self-esteem.

## Couples who exercise together, stay together

The benefits may also be greater when you exercise with your partner. Some of this may be the result of spending time together and sharing an enjoyable experience. However, couples who completed novel and arousing (or exciting) activities together reported increased relationship quality compared to completion of a more

mundane task, suggesting it's not just the time together that matters.

This is consistent with findings that exercising with another person is more fun compared to exercising alone.

But you don't need to know the person for exercise to have this effect. Exercising with a stranger can also result in attraction to one another.

This was tested in an experiment of cross-sex partners randomly assigned to perform a physical task either at a low or high intensity. After completion of the task, participants answered questions regarding their attractiveness to their study partner. Those participants who performed the task at the higher intensity reported greater attraction for their study partners.

The attraction can be further enhanced when exercising in activities that require similar movements such as dancing or walking in synchronicity. In lab

experiments, people who mimicked the movements of their partner felt stronger emotional connection and greater bonding to one another.

A later study found that the addition of physical exertion amplified these feelings. Compared to a group of people walking randomly, the group marching synchronously felt more connection and co-operation with one another. In another group that was marching at a faster pace, these feelings increased even more.

Exercise is also a form of play. There is no better example of this than watching kids play. Play for them consists of running around, climbing and jumping, very similar activities to most types of exercise. In many instances, such as sports, play is directly inherent in the activity. This social play provides its own reward by releasing endorphins.

## Exercising with a partner adds accountability

The effects of exercising with a partner can also be better for you as well. In addition to being more fun, workouts with others tend to last longer than workouts alone, which can give you an added health boost. Exercising with a partner, friends or a team adds accountability to your routine, as indicated in a study of married couples. Those couples who joined a gym together reported more workouts at the gym and fewer dropouts over one year compared to married individuals joining on their own.

In a way, the effects of exercising together are almost self-fulfilling. It provides accountability, strengthens your relationship and provides more fun, making it more likely that you'll keep exercising and continue the cycle.

**Scott Lear,**

Professor of Health Sciences, Simon Fraser University

## In A Light Vein

**A** child asked his father, "How were people born?"

So, his father said, "Adam and Eve made babies, then their babies became adults and made babies, and so on."

The child then went to his mother, asked her the same question and she told him, "We were monkeys then we evolved to become like we are now."

The child ran back to his father and said, "You lied to me!"

His father replied, "No, your mom was talking about her side of the family."

\*\*\*

Mr and Mrs Brown had two sons. One was named 'Mind Your Own Business' &

the other was named 'Trouble'.

One day the two boys decided to play hide and seek. Trouble hid while Mind Your Own Business counted to one hundred. Mind Your Own Business began looking for his brother behind garbage cans and bushes. Then he started looking in and under cars until a police man approached him and asked, "What are you doing?"

"Playing a game," the boy replied.

"What is your name?" the officer questioned.

"Mind Your Own Business."

Furious the policeman inquired, "Are you looking for trouble?!"

The boy replied, "Why, yes."

\*\*\*

A woman gets on a bus with her baby.

The bus driver says, "That's the ugliest baby that I've ever seen. Ugh!"

The woman goes to the rear of the bus and sits down, fuming. She says to a man next to her, "The driver just insulted me!"

The man says, "You go right up there and tell him off - go ahead, I'll hold your monkey for you."

\*\*\*

A boy asks his father, "Dad, are bugs good to eat?"

"That's disgusting. Don't talk about

things like that over dinner," the dad replies.

After dinner the father asks, "Now, son, what did you want to ask me?"

"Oh, nothing," the boy says. "There was a bug in your soup, but now it's gone."

\*\*\*

Q: Why couldn't the leopard play hide and seek?

A: Because he was always spotted.

\*\*\*

Q: What starts with E, ends with E, and has only 1 letter in it?

A: Envelope.

## Life's Lessons

No two people react to the same situation in a similar way. Here are examples of two legendary personalities who were faced with very similar situations, but their responses were different.

Bhishma of the Mahabharata and Jatayu of the Ramayana were confronted with character-defining assault on womanhood. One chose to die protecting the victim while the other chose to be a mute spectator of the crime.

**Powerful or powerless?**

Bhishma was a powerful and capable warrior-king patriarch and if he wanted, he could have stopped the disrobing of Draupadi, the queen of the Pandavas. But he chose to be a silent witness to the act.

Whereas Jatayu was an old and invalid bird and knew that in all probability, Ravana, the rakshasa king, would kill him. Still, he chose to try his best to protect Sita, the queen of Lord Rama.

'Real power is not about physical strength but about the deep desire to help.'

**Alive or dead?**

Bhishma lived on after the incident but died every day in his own conscience. Whereas Jatayu died once but lived eternally true to his conscience.

'Our only constant companion is our conscience - better to be true to it.'

**Fame or infamy?**

Bhishma's name and fame went down in history because of this one act of not stopping the disrobing of Draupadi.

But Jatayu's name and fame went high in history because of his one act of trying to save Sita.

# The Bhishma Way or the Jatayu Way



'Many of us are going to be mere names in history, sooner or later. Will we be equated with the bad or the good - is our choice.'

**Spoken or unspoken words?**

Draupadi begged and pleaded for protection from Bhishma because she knew that, if someone could protect her, it was only him; yet Bhishma didn't protect her.

Whereas Sita didn't even ask Jatayu for protection. She just wanted him to inform Lord Rama about her kidnapping by

Ravana because she knew Jatayu was not powerful; yet Jatayu tried to protect Sita in whatever way he can.

'The language of the heart is more powerful than the language of the words.'

**Clarity or confusion?**

Bhishma was so confused about his royal duty that he forgot that he had a higher duty - a moral duty.

Whereas Jatayu was so clear about his moral duty that no other duty was a consideration for him.

'When caught up in a moral dilemma, it is best to follow the higher principles, to follow the heart because it always knows the truth.'

**Good or bad example?**

Bhishma set a very bad precedent for generations to come. Whereas Jatayu set the most ideal precedent for generations to come.

'If we can't be a great example, at least let us not be a bad one.'

**Relative or stranger?**

Another interesting point is that Bhishma was an elderly relative of Draupadi but acted as a total stranger in the disrobing episode.

Whereas Jatayu was not at all related to Sita; he was a stranger to her but acted more than a dearest relative.

'True relationship are based on connections of the heart.'

**The saintly or the wicked?**

Both Bhishma and Jatayu had a few moments to decide what to do.

Life sometimes puts us in situations where we need to take quick and crucial decisions. What we decide very much depends on the kind of inner integrity we cultivate by the associations we keep.

Bhishma's intelligence was clouded and it failed the test of life because he associated himself with the wicked-minded, selfish Kauravas.

Whereas Jatayu's intelligence was crystal clear and it passed the test of life because he associated himself with the saintly, selfless Lakshmana and the all-pure Lord Rama.

'Who we are solely depends on whom we associate with.'

**Embrace or neglect?**

Lord Sri Krishna was not at all happy with this attitude of Bhishma so much so that when He came as a peace messenger to Hastinapur, He didn't even bother to look at Bhishma.

Whereas Lord Rama was so happy with the life-sacrificing act of Jatayu that he embraced him and personally performed his final rites - a honour that even his father, Dasharatha, didn't receive.

When we come across injustice or a moral dilemma, we have only two options: Either close our eyes to it or do something about it - follow 'the Bhishma way' or 'the Jatayu way'.

The choice is yours.

## In a light vein

## English is a crazy language!

Oh! English is such an easy language. That's what you think, no? Well then, read on:

This is a clever piece put together by a retired English teacher. Try reading it out loud. Read all the way to the end...the denouement is best of all!

1. The bandage was wound around the wound.
2. The farm was used to produce.
3. The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
4. We must polish the Polish furniture.
5. He could lead if he would get the lead out.
6. The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
7. Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.
8. A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
9. When shot at, the dove into the bushes.

10. I did not object to the object.
11. The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
12. There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.
13. They were too close to the door to close it.
14. The buck does funny things when the does are present.
15. A seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer line.
16. To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.
17. The wind was too strong to wind the sail.
18. Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear.
19. I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.
20. How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?

We take English for granted. But if we explore its paradoxes, we find that:

Quicksand can work slowly;

boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig!

And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't grocer and hammers don't ham? If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth, beeth? One goose, 2 geese. So, one moose, 2 meese? One index, 2 indices?

Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amends? If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetable, what does a humanitarian eat?

In what language do people recite at a play and play at a recital? Ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet that smell?

How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?

That is why, when the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible.

## What men watch in a beautiful woman



A survey was conducted to find out what is the first thing men look at when a beautiful woman passes by.

According to single men, 35% said they look at the woman's face; 30% said they look at the woman's breast; 20% said they look at the woman's buttocks when she walks away; and 15% said they look at the woman's legs.

But 100% of married men said they first look at their wives to check if the wives are watching them.

## Being Mum & Dad

Parenting peacefully does not come easily to many people. Despite a common misconception that being gentle with our children and avoiding the use of punishments is considered lazy parenting, peaceful, gentle and respectful parenting is anything but. Guiding children without the use of fear or threats takes, at times, superhuman effort and can push even the most patient of parents to lose their cool, writes Kate Russell, Mother and Writer/Editor of 'Peaceful Parents, Confident Kids' in Huff Post. Read on:

Our children often take a little more time to use manners, manage emotions and show an understanding of socially acceptable behaviors such as sharing when these issues are addressed respectfully rather than punitively.

Interestingly, for respectful parenting to work, it is vital that parents are able to ride these (often enduring) waves while keeping a cool and unruffled exterior. That, for me, is the hard part. Battling day in, day out with strong-willed children can make it easy to want to release one's own pent-up frustrations and take it out on those nearest and dearest to us when pushed to the brink.

Ensuring I can remain calm, confident and collected in heated parenting moments has taken a great deal of mindfulness, practice and reflection. I have frequently questioned my approach and have ridden a roller coaster through some of the hardest years of my life. But ultimately, I can attest to the fact that my children respond far better and thrive the most when I am consistently able to steady myself and keep a peaceful, yet firm, exterior when they push me to my limits.

I developed the following practices to help me be more mindful, less stressed and better able to remain the peaceful parent I strive to be.

### Mentally prepare for the day ahead

I do this by reading inspiring blog posts or a chapter of a great parenting book. I am usually woken early in the morning by my children, so I normally do this the night before, resolving to put into practice a new technique or idea I have read the next day. Often just reading a success story is enough to help me stay confident in my parenting throughout the day.

In the morning I remind myself how important it is that



## Tips for Staying Calm with Children

I stay on top of my emotions and parent calmly throughout the day. Being conscious of my actions rather than just drifting mindlessly through the day really helps me stay focused on the role I have taken on. Like an actor in a play, I guess.

Much of this mental preparation is centered around shifting my perspectives of the behaviors. Educating myself about the reasons behind challenging behaviors such as limit testing and tantrums really helps me to deal with them with more empathy when they occur.

### Prepare meals on the weekend

Freeing up time during the day so I am not stressed about trying to get dinner made by a deadline with children either clinging to me or trashing something elsewhere in the house is invaluable. I now try to prepare the week's meals on Sundays while my husband is home to help with the children. This way, the weight of this daily chore is lifted and instead I can use the week days to invite the girls into the kitchen to help, inspiring in them a love of food and cooking as we bake and create healthy goodies together.

### Make lunches and snacks at breakfast

When my children are happily occupied eating their toast, I often make lunch for my husband to take to work. It occurred to me one day that it would be only a little extra effort to do the same for my children. So I bought them both lunch boxes with separate compartments for snacks, sandwiches etc. and now I fill their boxes ready to pull out when hunger strikes.

So often I have been caught having nothing prepared and having to scramble something together while my children bite chunks out of the cheese, dip their fingers in the butter or cry because I am not doing it the right way. My stress levels inevitably increase and I sometimes have a hard time staying calm in such moments. Having everything pre-made eliminates this occurrence and also means the kitchen only needs clearing once, after breakfast, because I am not continually preparing food and dirtying dishes.

### Use care giving moments to connect

The realization that my babies will all too soon be old enough to take care of themselves and no longer need me to look after them hit me like a ton of bricks recently. I already knew that caregiving tasks were precious bonding occasions, but when I truly

cherish each one, not only do my children feel more connected and better able to break away from me for extended play periods, I get my own feelings of love, joy and a sense of calm come over me when I give myself fully to my children for periods throughout the day. This further steadies my resolve to parent my children with care.

### Reflect on the day

This is probably the most effective practice I use for becoming a more mindful, peaceful parent. There is rarely a day that goes by where I don't discuss with my husband a situation involving the children which occurred during the course of the day. I recount the events leading up to the situation blow by blow, the dialogue used and the ultimate outcome. Through this reflection I can think, without the pressure of the moment, and decide whether I could improve upon or change my involvement for future occurrences or whether it seemed to be quite successful as it was.

These are just a few of the things I have found have helped me remain the peaceful parent I am determined to be.

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# Karwachauth 2020: Bollywood goes heavy on the red

**K**arwa Chauth 2020 fasting was observed on Wednesday, November 4 this year. The *vrat* (fasting) is observed during Krishna Paksha Chaturthi in the Hindu month of Kartik by married women in India for the long life and well being of their husband. They look at the moon and break their fast at night.

On this day, the ladies dress up primarily in bright red shades and deck up to the nines - almost like they did on their actual wedding day! As compiled from Pinkvilla, here is a rundown of what Bollywood divas wore on that special occasion.

## Shilpa Shetty Kundra

The super fit star was spotted in a red saree with gold foil work. She styled this with a red blouse that bore a knot style at the back and accessorised it with a gold potli, pearl necklace solitaire earrings and bangles.



Kajol Devgan

Kajol looked absolutely radiant, also in a bright red saree with a gold scalloped border. She styled this with a simple blouse that bore golden embroidered spaghetti straps. A gold necklace, matching earrings and bangles made for the perfect accessories. A small red bindi, neutral lips and Kohl-lined eyes completed Kajol's look.



Priyanka Chopra Jonas

Celebrating her second Karwa Chauth with American husband Nick Jonas, PC was all smiles in a bright simple red chiffon saree with a statement spaghetti strap blouse. She accessorised her look well with a statement ring, gold bangles, diamond earrings and her *mangalsutra*. A simple red lip and bindi completed her look.



Sonali Bendre

This cancer survivor skipped out on red but opted for an equally bright rani pink kurta and dupatta set for karwachauth this year. She took to her Twitter to share a picture of herself and her husband, who wore a simple striped shirt for the festival.

## Raveena Tandon

The 90s beauty also looked glamorous as ever in a bright red *sharara*. She took to her Instagram to share pictures of herself in her red outfit that bore a heavy gold border with a scalloped hem. A gold *maang teekah*, heavy earrings, bangles and a scarlet red lip completed her look for the big night.



Bipasha Basu

Also taking a break from bright reds, Bips picked out a bright orange kurta with gold embroidery and embellishments all over it. A sheer *dupatta*, big bangles, a red bindi and red lips completed her look. Her hair was styled in a poker-straight manner and gold *jhumkas* further accessorised her look.

## YOUR STARS

### Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

On the sentimental side, you're likely to be mistaken, to take a purely physical attraction for something much more important and profound. If you wish to try your luck with gambling, go ahead this time; the cosmic influxes will probably bring you pleasant surprises.

**Lucky Numbers: 3, 7, 10, 11, 13, 16**

### Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

Your family relations will cause you some irritation: you'll tend to behave in an authoritarian or dogmatic way. Your intuition will play an important role and will allow you to evolve in the professional sector in a very constructive way.

**Lucky Numbers: 1, 5, 7, 11, 29, 30**

### Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

A simple offense to your self-esteem will risk to cause a great drama, the consequences of which could wind up being disastrous for your couple. Avoid straining

and excessive efforts, sleepless nights.

**Lucky Numbers: 18, 21, 23, 24, 27, 33**

### Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

Couples married since several years will renew their honeymoon. In your professional life, unexpected modifications are possible; but if you're surprised at the beginning, you'll largely benefit from these changes in the long run.

**Lucky Numbers: 8, 11, 16, 20, 30, 31**

### Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

Your qualities will be highlighted and your personal efforts rewarded. In family, there'll be a very happy atmosphere; don't revive an old quarrel. A week that's favourable to sentimental encounters.

**Lucky Numbers: 9, 12, 25, 26, 28, 31**

### Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

You'll be able to make good bargains, and the small delays that annoyed you will be forgotten. Good astral influxes, which will favour your love affairs; you'll have an enthralling feeling of freedom, a desire to

indulge in new experiences.

**Lucky Numbers: 6, 18, 20, 26, 33, 40**

### Gemini: May 21 - June 20

Your relationships with your parents will be warmer than usual. Money matters could be an apple of discord between love mates, but a money entry will arrange everything.

**Lucky Numbers: 1, 7, 19, 22, 23, 26, 33**

### Cancer: June 21 - July 22

You won't be afraid of facing problems; daring, you'll seek and find solutions in an efficient way. Casual meetings can very well lead to profound friendships. Your chances of professional success will be more concrete than ever.

**Lucky Numbers: 19, 21, 27, 29, 31, 35**

### Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

Your love life will be in the limelight: you'll charm with radiance. Take time to rest if you want to avoid fatigue, which could reduce the sharpness of your senses and

lessen your morale.

**Lucky Numbers: 3, 11, 15, 25, 32, 35**

### Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

Be realistic, don't embark on obviously unbounded undertakings. The discussions in your family are likely to degenerate into arguments; an easing of the situation will take place shortly.

**Lucky Numbers: 6, 8, 13, 14, 22, 23**

### Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

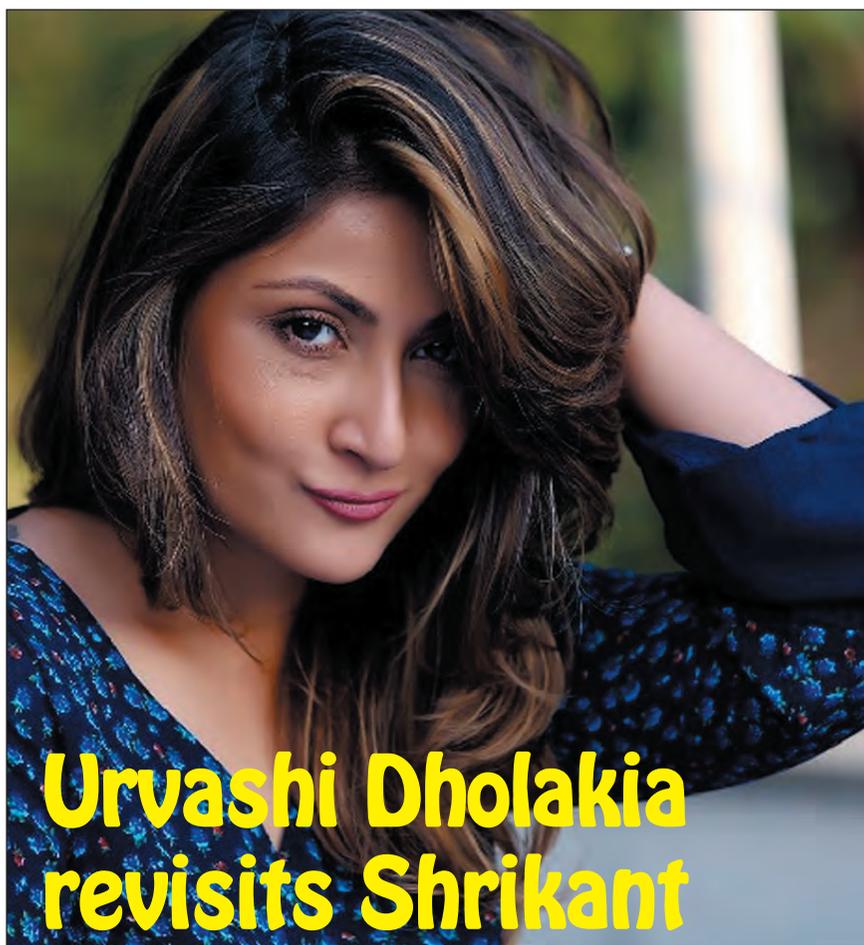
Try to calm your nervousness by practicing yoga or sports. You'll try to improve the comfort of the ones you love, and your relationships with them will be very warm, your professional success having a lot to do with it.

**Lucky Numbers: 5, 9, 10, 15, 17, 28**

### Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

Avoid mingling questions of money with your current good relationships with your friends; never try to borrow money from them; also refuse to lend money to one of them, even though he/she really needs it.

**Lucky Numbers: 16, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35**



## Urvashi Dholakia revisits Shrikant

Urvashi Dholakia has been part of hit TV shows like *Ghar Ek Mandir*, *Kabhii Sautan Kabhii Saheli*, *Kahiin To Hoga* and *Chandrakanta*. It was, however, her turn as Komolika in *Kasautii Zindagii Kay* that remains etched in the minds of the audience.

Urvashi Dholakia believes she was destined to be an actor. Today, her name might remind us of the unforgettable characters she's played on screen, but Urvashi rarely goes back to watch her performances.

While many believe Urvashi's acting debut was 1993 hit Doordarshan show *Dekh Bhai Dekh*, the actor has another story to tell. She considers *Dekh Bhai Dekh* her first commercial show, as her work as a child artist cannot be ignored.

So how did it all begin for Urvashi Dholakia? Here's what the actor shared with Indian Express:

**\* What was your first acting project? How did the project come to you?**

It was around 1986. I was a child. My mom used to send my pictures to every production house. That's how they called me. Those days, sometimes there were no auditions also. They used to just see you because you were a baby.

So, I got selected for this TV show called *Shrikant*. Praveen Nischol, Navin Nischol's brother, was the director, and Bimal Roy's daughter was the controller of the look of the show. My mother took me there. I was basically selected on the basis of the length of my hair because I had long hair.

The show was based on a novel by Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyaya. It was about how Raj Lakshmi (Sujata Mehta) nurses Shrikant (Farooq Sheikh) during a plague. I was playing Raj Lakshmi's younger version. The show had a huge star cast - Irrfan Khan, Mrinal Kulkarni, Rita Bhaduri, Tiku Talsania, AK Hangal and Ajit Vachani. So, to be a part of a show with such stalwarts was a blessing.

**\* What do you remember of your first day on set?**

My first day of shooting was somewhere in Madh Island. That time it was a forest area. The set up was

that of the 19th century when girls were not allowed to go to schools. So there was a school set up with all the boys going there. I remember there used to be karonde (type of berries) which I plucked and ate. They used to treat me like their daughter; I was so pampered. I refused to go on set if they did not give me mangoes. So, they used to bribe me. The atmosphere which we worked in was very homely.

I was supposed to be there for one episode. But Praveen ji took such a liking towards me and my performance that he extended it to a couple of more episodes. We were not ready for that because I had school. And in those days, acting was quite a taboo, not everybody appreciated it. Ultimately, I was a part of at least eight episodes.

**\* Were you nervous?**

I started acting when I was six. Considering I've always been a director's actor, whatever I was asked to do, I did. Acting came very naturally to me. I never went through any

manager or agency. So, I was comfortable.

**\* How was the rapport with your co-stars?**

Considering it was a childhood part, so the kids who were playing the childhood characters of the entire cast were my co-stars. Doordarshan was the only running channel that time. Working with already established names at that time and then not having an ounce of nervousness, was something that makes me feel lucky.

**\* One film or role that inspired you to become an actor?**

When I did *Tejasvini*, it made me realise that acting is not a piece of cake. My favourite actor has been Rekha. It started from *Mr Natwarlal*. Whenever she came on TV, I used to call her 'Rekha mummy'. I remember writing a letter to her, which I never posted. My admiration for her was at another level.

## Kundali Bhagya actor Manit Joura to play the male lead in Balaji Telefilms' next



TellyChakkar broke the news about Balaji Telefilms coming up with a new show on Dangal TV. It will be on lines Balaji Telefilms' earlier hit show *Koshish - Ek Aashaa* which featured Sandhya Mridul and Varun Badola in the lead roles.

Avantika Choudhry has been roped in to play an important role in the show.

According to reports, Keerti Nagpure and Krishna Mukherjee are in the race to play the character of the female protagonist in the show.

Now, we hear that *Kundali Bhagya* actor Manit Joura is most likely roped in to play the male lead in the show.

Acclaimed producer Ekta is currently producing a list of shows like *Yeh Hai Chahatein*, *Kundali Bhagya*, *Kumkum Bhagya* and *Naagin 5* on varied channels.

Ekta is also bringing a new show titled *Maulkki* on Colors. The show will star Amar Upadhyay and Priyal Mahajan in the lead roles. *Maulkki* will mark Amar and Balaji's reunion after several years. Amar played the iconic character of Mihir Virani in Balaji's most popular show *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi*.

### Cinema Sirsa - Castel

## New Movie: 'Suraj Pe Mangal Bhari'

Featuring Diljit Dosanjh, Fatima Sana Shaikh and Manoj Bajpayee

Sunday 15 Nov 2020 - 20:15 (Debut)



Monday 16 to Sunday 22 Nov20  
10:15 - 13:15 - 16:15 - 20:15

### TV SERIAL

## Kahan Hum Kahan Tum

**Friday 13 Nov:** Rohan is tongue-tied when Tanya confronts him about his girlfriend. Meanwhile, Rohit allows Sonakshi to shoot a romantic scene with Sumit but Naren is not convinced.

**Monday 16 Nov:** Sonakshi gives it her best shot after Rohit encourages her to shoot a romantic sequence with Sumit. Later, Rohit warns Rani to stay away from Pooja.

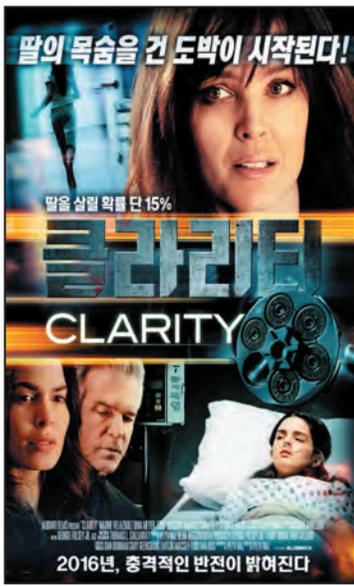
**Tuesday 17 Oct:** Sonakshi is shocked to find Pooja's adoption papers in Rani's bag. While Rani is startled to see Sonakshi at her doorstep, Veena gets into an argument with Suman.

**Wednesday 18 Oct:** Rani confesses a shocking truth to Sonakshi while Rohan and Pari get intimate. Later, Sonakshi informs Akash and Deepa about her meeting with Rani.

**Thursday 19 Oct:** Pooja feels dejected when Sonakshi introduces Rani as her real mother. While Tanya buys a device to spy on Rohan, a rude shock awaits the Sippys.



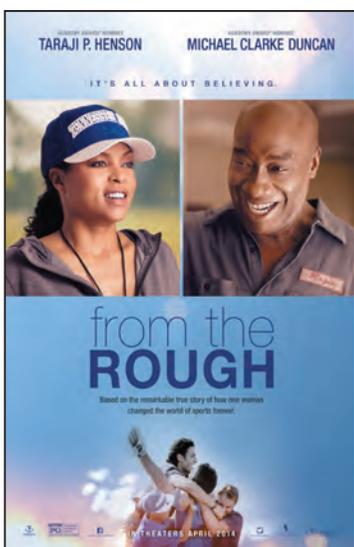
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Avec: Nadine Velazquez, Dina Meyer, Maurice Compte



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Dimanche 15 Nov - 21.20



GYLLENHAAL FERGUSON REYNOLDS  
LA PLUS IMPORTANTE DÉCOUVERTE SCIENTIFIQUE  
LA PLUS GRANDE MENACE POUR L'HUMANITÉ  
**LIFE**  
ORIGINE INCONNUE



	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
<b>vendredi 13 novembre</b>	07.05 Local: Lavi Zoli An XXL 10.30 Local: Saveurs Plus 11.00 Doc: A Question Of Science 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.50 Doc: 360 GEO 13.45 Local: Retrouvizer 14.00 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 14.30 D.Anime: The Zoo 14.52 D.Anime: Nutri Ventures 15.55 D.Anime: Monster Math... 16.07 D.Anime: Invention Story 17.30 Mag: Zoboomafo 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.15 Magazine MBC Prod 21.10 Serial: When Calls The Heart 22.35 Serial: The Blacklist 23.15 Le Journal 23.55 Mag: Eye On SADC	10.00 Serial: Mah-E-Tamaam 12.00 Film: Meelo Evaru Kotteeswarudu Starring: Naveen Chandra Shrutu Sodhi Prudhviraj 14.21 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 Mehandi Tohra Namam Ke 17.11 Kumkum Bhagya 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	06.00 Mag: Eco India 06.34 Mag: Shift 07.05 Mag: Border Crossing 07.33 Mag: Tomorrow Today 08.01 L'Europe A La Reconquete 08.57 Doc: 360 GEO 09.47 Mag: Strictly Street 11.00 Mag: Eco India 12.33 Mag: Tomorrow Today 12.59 Doc: Rewilding 13.54 Doc: 2D Innovations 14.47 Mag: Strictly Street 15.13 Doc: The New Maharajas... 16.00 Mag: Eco India 16.26 Mag: Green Touch 16.47 Mag: Healthy Living 18.00 The Exploitation Of Jungle 18.42 Mag: Green Touch 19.00 Student Support Prog... 21.00 Local: News (English) 21.10 Doc: Bernard Buffet...	01.27 Film: Space Station 76 02.57 Serial: Chicago Med 03.37 Film: Boone 05.59 Serial: Seal Team 06.38 Film: Runaway 09.00 Serial: The Magicians 09.45 Tele: Soleil Levant 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.00 Serial: Chicago Med 12.00 Film: Boone 13.30 Tele: Totalement Diva 14.46 Film: Runaway 16.41 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: S.W.A.T 22.45 Tele: Totalement Diva	08.00 Film: Mere Baap Pehle Aap 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 14.37 / 22.25 - Ikyawann 15.20 Film: Shreemaan Aashique Starring: Rishi Kapoor, Urmila Matondkar 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 19.02 Piya Albela 19.24 Mere Angne Mein
<b>samedi 14 novembre</b>	06.00 D.Anime: Little People 06.23 D.Anime: Fruit Ninja Frenzy... 08.08 D.Anime: Petit Creux 08.28 D.Anime: Darwin And Newts 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Local: Divali 2020 12.30 Doc: Wildlife Heroes 14.30 D. Anime: The Zoo 14.41 D.Anime: Bob Le Bricoleur 15.03 D.Anime: Nutri Ventures 15.33 D.Anime: Gadget And The... 16.00 D.Anime: Bunyan And Babe 17.25 Mag: Zoboomafo 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Entertain: Nach Baliye 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.15 Prod: Lottotech 20.20 Local: RDV Muzikal 21.15 Film: Clarity Starring: Nadine Velazquez, Dina Meyer, Maurice Compte	07.00 Film: Shikshaa Starring: Raj Kiran, Sushma Verma, Beena Banerjee 09.22 DDI Magazine 10.00 Bade Acchelagte Hai 12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhya Bhare 12.29 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 12.52 Serial: High School 13.16 Annakodiyum Ainthus Pengalum 13.35 Serial: Anu Pallavi 15.26 Film: Hum Kisi Se Kum Nahin 18.07 Mag: DDI Magazine 19.00 Zournal Kreol 20.05 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha 20.30 Serial: Bitti Business Wali 21.00 Film: Baaghi 3 Starring - Tiger Shroff, Ritesh Deshmukh, Shraddha Kapoor 23.19 DDI Live	06.00 The Exploitation Of Jungle 06.42 Mag: Green Touch 07.02 Mag: Global 3000 07.37 Mag: Euromaxx 08.03 Doc: Wildlife Heroes 09.00 Doc: Bernard Buffet... 09.51 Doc: Clean Air 11.05 Local: Tamil Programme 12.20 Programme In Marathi 12.46 Local: Divali 2020 12.51 Local: Programme In Telugu 13.23 Local: Deeputsav 15.20 Local: Retrovizor 17.30 Local: Yeh Shaam Mastani 19.49 Local: Composite Program... 21.00 Local: News 21.10 Mag: 2D Innovations 21.11 Doc: 360 GEO 22.02 Doc: Digital Africa 22.45 Doc: The Red Children 23.27 Doc: Amazing Gardens	01.02 Film: S.W.A.T 02.27 Serial: Chicago Fire 03.07 Film: Kingsglave 05.45 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 06.27 Film: The Legend Of Zorro 08.35 Serial: The Quest 09.21 Serial: Shades Of Blue 10.02 Serial: Les Experts 10.45 Film: Bolshoi 12.20 Serial: Chicago Fire 13.00 Tele: Amanda 13.46 Tele: Premiere Dame 15.05 Serial: Chicago Med 16.31 Mag: Hollywood On Set 17.00 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 17.45 Film: A Family's Best Friend 19.34 Mag: Close Up 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Series: Hawaii Five-0 21.15 Film: From The Rough 22.47 Film: Kingsglave	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 06.15 Ikyawann 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: Pagalpanti Starring Anil Kapoor, John Abraham, Ileana D'Cruz 20.39 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 21.21 Serial: Naagin 22.08 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 23.52 Serial: Mere Angne Mein
<b>dimanche 15 novembre</b>	06.00 D.Anime: Little People 06.23 D.Anime: Fruit Ninja Frenzy... 08.09 D.Anime: Le Cygne Et La... 09.35 Serial: Lucas Etc. 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Local: Mon Jardin Ma Maison 13.52 Serial: Open Heart 14.35 D.Anime: The Zoo 15.30 D.Anime: The Minimighty... 15.43 D.Anime: Astrology 16.10 D.Anime: Invention Story 16.16 D.Anime: Alisa Knows What... 17.01 D.Anime: Astrology 17.30 Mag: Zoboomafo 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Local: Yeh Shaam Mastani 19.30 Le Journal 20.00 Local: Info 7 Sur 7 21.20 Film: Life Star: Jake Gyllenhaal, Rebecca Ferguson, Ryan Reynolds	07.00 Film: Saanch Ko Aanch Nahi Starring: Arun Govil, Madhu Kapoor, Sunder 09.16 Mag: DDI Magazine 10.00 Local Production 11.00 Serial: Oru Kai Osai 11.23 Serial: Santoshi Maa 12.00 Film: Jolly LLB2 Starring - Akshay Kumar, Huma Qureshi, Saurabh Shukla 14.16 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 Zournal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.05 Serial: Maharakshak: Devi	06.00 Doc: Amazing Gardens 06.26 Doc: Ville En Fête 06.52 The World From Above 07.15 Mag: Check In 08.39 Doc: 2D Innovations 09.30 Doc: Digital Africa 10.13 Doc: The Red Children 11.01 Doc: Amazing Gardens 12.17 Mag: Check In 13.39 Doc: 360 GEO 16.30 Student Support Prog... 19.00 Doc: Facing Extinction? 19.31 Mag: Future Mag 21.00 Doc: News (English) 21.10 Doc: 2D Innovations 22.03 Doc: Collected Memories 22.45 Doc: Nollywood 23.28 Doc: Olivia's Garden 23.50 Doc: Garden Party 00.16 Doc: Facing Extinction? 00.46 Mag: Future Mag	01.29 Film: From The Rough 03.40 Film: Space Station 76 05.13 Tele: Destiny 06.01 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 06.43 Film: Clarity 08.30 Serial: The Quest 09.11 Serial: The Enemy Within 10.01 Mag: Ultimate Countdown 10.47 Film: SOX: A Family's Best... 12.15 Serial: Hawaii 5-0 13.09 Serial: Amanda 13.45 Tele: Premiere Dame 15.05 Serial: Chicago Med 17.08 Serial: Hawaii Five 0 17.48 Serial: The Enemy Within 18.26 Film: From The Rough 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: The Good Doctor 21.15 Film: Pitch Black 22.59 Film: Clarity	00.45 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 02.25 Bin Kuch Kahe 04.22 Pavitra Rishta 06.00 Film: Pagalpanti Starring: Anil Kapoor, John Abraham, Ileana D'Cruz 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 17.15 Punar Vivaah 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Film: Shirin Farhad Ki Toh Padi Starring: Farah Khan, Boman Irani, Kavin Dave 21.08 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 22.58 Piya Albela

**MBC 2** Samedi 14 Nov - 21.00 Stars: Tiger Shroff, Ritesh Deshmukh, Shraddha Kapoor

**B TV** Dimanche 15 Nov - 18.30 Stars: Farah Khan, Boman Irani, Kavin Dave



TIGER SHROFF  
REBEL FOR LOVE  
**BAAGHI 3**  
SAJID NADIADWALA



**Shirin Farhad**  
ki toh nikal padi

## Breakfast With Bwana

# Countdown and Recounting



Anil Madan

In general, America's presidential elections have been "decided" on election day or in the wee hours after all polls are closed. But the word "decided" is inappropriate. If the results point inexorably to a win in any given state by one of the major party candidates, a media organization such as AP or one of the major TV/Cable networks will "call" that state for the apparent winner. If these "calls" amount to a total of 270 electoral votes, we have a presumptive President-elect.

At that point, the apparent loser, knowing that he or she is done for, calls his opponent and concedes. The election has been effectively decided.

But this is not always so. Al Gore called George W. Bush in 2000 to concede, only to call him back and withdraw his concession as the results in Florida appeared to have been miscalled by media outlets. Eventually, after a recount fiasco and lawsuits by both the Bush and Gore sides, Al Gore conceded a second time following an adverse Supreme Court of the U.S. decision.

A candidate's concession is not required by law and legally it means nothing. But practically, and for purposes of comity to the nation, it means everything. It is a call to the candidate's supporters to "stand down and stand by" if you will. It is a call to the nation to rally behind the next President. It is a call to honour the will of the people. In effect, it says the election has been decided.

But an early concession speech is not the sine qua non of Democracy no matter what the liberal media types tell you.

President Trump has every right to seek a recount. In many states, a recount is automatic if the vote count shows a differential within specified ranges. In some states, a candidate may request a recount under specified conditions.

From what we can see, Trump's accusations of voter fraud and voting irregularities, which are mostly claims of miscounting votes, have no factual basis and put them somewhere between baseless and futile.

But Trump is entitled to his day in court. Yes, even if most of his challenges have been thrown out by the courts. The fact is



Election employees organise ballots at the Allegheny County elections warehouse in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, at the weekend. Photo - Getty Images

**“It certainly appears that Trump has no hope to change the result of the election. But there is a theoretical possibility that it could happen. The classy thing for Trump to have done would have been to say that while he is contesting the result, he will give Biden access to funds, office space, and security briefings in anticipation of a transition. If it turns out that Trump won, no harm, no foul. But since when did anyone expect that Trump would be classy?”**

this election is not yet formally decided.

As of now, Biden is projected to win at least 290 electoral votes. But the state of Georgia will have a hand count recount of its nearly five million ballots. Some states have automatic recounts and some states allow a candidate to ask for a recount provided the vote discrepancy is within specified parameters.

Trump's claims of voting irregularities and voter fraud appear to be baseless. At some point, they will likely appear futile especially if the Georgia recount affirms Biden's apparent win. In general, recounts end up with differences in the hundreds, not thousands of votes. And, as of now, Biden has a 14,000 vote lead out of nearly 5 million votes cast. That's a margin of 0.28%. So, the count could change. But Georgia has only 16 electoral votes so even if he loses Georgia, Biden would still

have enough votes. What is he loses both Georgia and Pennsylvania? Well, then we have a different story. Unlikely, but different.

There is an underlying process here yet to be fulfilled. After mandatory and requestable recounts are done, each state has requirements for certification of its vote. Georgia, for example, requires certification by November 20th. Then, there is a federal deadline for certification: December 14th.

Eventually, in January, the Electoral College meets to cast its votes. And then, if one candidate has enough electoral votes, we have a formal President-elect. If not, the matter goes to the House of Representatives.

It certainly appears that Trump has no hope to change the result of the election. But there is a theoretical possibility that it could happen.

The classy thing for Trump to have done would have been to say that while he is contesting the result, he will give Biden access to funds, office space, and security briefings in anticipation of a transition. If it turns out that Trump won, no harm, no foul. But since when did anyone expect that Trump would be classy?

The sycophantic bootlicking by his fellow Republicans is even more disgusting than Trump's own behaviour.

This too shall pass.

Cheerz...

Bwana

Below are links to a couple of articles pointing to the futility of Trump's challenges.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-election-irregularities-claims/-2020/11/08/8f704e6c-2141-11eb-ba21-f2f001f0554b\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-election-irregularities-claims/-2020/11/08/8f704e6c-2141-11eb-ba21-f2f001f0554b_story.html)

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/11/10/we-can-be-confident-trump-voter-fraud-claims-are-baloney/>

## Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor



## Bowing - Greeting the Divine Spirit



"The divine spirit in me acknowledges the divine spirit in you."

Photo - 4.bp.blogspot.com

**B**owing is a universal gesture of respect and reverence. In many cultures, it is the predominant form of social greeting, and most religions incorporate it into their rituals of worship. In many cases, bowing signifies not only respect but also an acknowledgment of the shared divinity between the bower and the recipient.

Bowing can also be a turning in toward our own divinity when we bow our heads in prayer, contemplation, or meditation. Bows range in form from a slight forward nod of the head to a full body prostration on the ground, and range in meaning from a simple greeting to a complete giving over of the self to the divine.

If you have ever bowed or been on the receiving end of a bow, you know that it is different from a handshake or a hug. Bowing has the quality of consciously evoking spirit and conveys a sense of reverence for the people involved.

The word "Namaste," which accompanies bowing in yoga, actually translates as "The divine spirit in me acknowledges the divine spirit in you."

When we greet one another with this kind of awareness, we can't help but be more conscious that we are deeply connected to one another and to everyone, because this divine spirit resides in all of us.

There are simple bows and complicated bows, and subtle variations carry different meanings depending upon where you are, who you are, and a number of other factors. But we can all practise bowing by simply bringing our two hands together in prayer and pressing the thumb side of our hands lightly into our chests. Keeping a long spine, simply bend your head gently down so that you are looking at the tops of your fingers.

Close your eyes and breathe consciously, paying homage to your spirit, the same spirit that resides within all of humanity.