

MAURITIUS TIMES

• "When you allow people to get back in the game and have a job, everything moves". - Joe Biden

Interview: Kugan Parapen

"We are still living in the era where profits are privatised and losses are socialized"

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Matters of The Moment



The CSG Bone of Contention

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Habitat



To meet water-related Sustainable Development Goals, countries now need to better understand how they will achieve it, and to build national action plans that will ensure real sustainability for all.

We've come a long way

By Dr R Neerunjun Gopee
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Even in losing the election, Trump has taken on a messianic aura with his followers. One is tempted to think that if he had proclaimed himself a new prophet, he could have sold whatever religion he wanted.

Trump lost but who will have the last laugh?

By Anil Madan * See Page 18

Renewal of Leadership for Party Survival

The Indian Congress Party is in the throes of a meltdown over its disastrous performance in the recent Bihar elections and in four other states. The performance of the Congress in the Bihar polls, winning only 19 out of the 70 seats it contested, has led to many senior Congress leaders, who were already on a warpath over the "organisational mess in the party", to speak out against the senior leadership of the party. Former Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram has joined the ranks of 23 senior Congress leaders, who had on 23rd August written a letter to Sonia Gandhi and demanded sweeping changes in the party's functioning.

P. Chidambaram has condemned the Congress' poor organisational strength on the ground and mentioned that a comprehensive review is needed to reflect on the defeat. "These results show that the party either has no organisational presence on the ground or has been weakened considerably. Why we lost despite being so close to victory is something that needs comprehensive review," the Rajya Sabha MP was quoted as saying by the *Times of India*. Earlier, senior Congress member Kapil Sibal had launched an attack on the top brass and declared that the people no longer view the party as an effective alternative in the political spectrum.

The Indian National Congress is a political party with widespread roots in the subcontinent. Founded in 1885, it was the first modern nationalist movement to emerge in the British Empire in Asia and Africa. The Mauritius Labour Party (MLP) was founded on February 23, 1936, and like the Congress it has straddled the past and the present and dominated the political landscape for many decades, that is up to 2014, after leading the country to Independence in 1968. Besides having an illustrious past, it has pioneered many social, political and economic developments. However two consecutive debacles at the polls - in 2014 and 2019 - have left the party in a "precarious predicament", as stated by Rama Sithanen in last Friday's interview in these columns. Like the Indian National Congress, it runs the risk of losing its relevance in Mauritian politics.

Rama Sithanen is of the view that the "MLP 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 marginalized... 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.

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"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... With the current leadership of the Labour Party, I believe it will be a repeat of the last four elections... 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."

Rama Sithanen is voicing out publicly what has been said earlier by Yousuf Mohamed regarding the need for the current leadership to give way to another generation of leaders. In other words, "to remove itself from active politics, and merely serve as the guiding force for politicians who will take the party to a higher orbit" It's for the Party to do its introspection and decide what is in its best interests in the present circumstances in view of the generational change that has taken place amongst its following that, unlike earlier generations of Labourites, may not be as emotionally, politically and therefore unconditionally bound to the Party. The Party may decide to leave it to "experienced minds, experienced hands and those who understand political realities", as suggested by Kapil Sibal, the Congress Party's articulate lawyer-politician and former cabinet minister for charting the party's future course, but a change in leadership alone will not suffice.

The times dictate that parties which want to survive should abide by a higher internal democratisation process. The functioning, the finances of such parties, the distribution of electoral tickets, etc., cannot and should not be left to "le bon vouloir" of one individual. Fostering internal debate, adopting clear rules of governance and operating as transparently as possible, promoting meritocracy within the party - that is the level of internal democratisation which is absolutely necessary to cope with an external environment which is becoming increasingly complex by the day as well as cruel in view of the political culture that animates some of its adversaries on the political ring.

This is the ground reality, and unless it is recognised and faced any party will have to contend with the risk of disappearing from the political scene along with its fading leadership.

The Conversation

Is this the beginning of the end?

Covid-19 vaccines: How Pfizer's and Moderna's 95% effective mRNA shots work

The Covid-19 pandemic has driven a massive allocation of resources towards producing solutions, from identifying life-saving medications, tracking how the virus spreads and ultimately to preventing infection with vaccines.

As a physician scientist, I study how the virus has evolved over the pandemic, since any changes in the virus could also

change the effectiveness of current treatments. On Nov. 9, Pfizer announced preliminary trial results showing that a vaccine it developed with BioNTech was about 90 per cent effective. That was followed up nine days later with final trial results and two months of safety data, indicating a 95 per cent effectiveness rate.

Pfizer announced on Nov. 18 that it intends to file for emergency authorization with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Meanwhile, on Nov. 16, Moderna announced preliminary results for its own vaccine, developed with the U.S. National Institutes of Health, which also indicated effectiveness of about 95 per cent.

This is good news, but we need to understand what it means so life can ultimately go back to normal.

DNA, messenger RNA and proteins

Both Pfizer's and Moderna's vaccines are mRNA-based. In each of our cells, DNA produces messenger RNA (mRNA) containing the templates for making proteins. It's called messenger RNA because it carries that information to other parts of the cell, where the instructions are read and followed to produce specific proteins.

When a patient is injected with mRNA in a vaccine, their cells use the information in that mRNA to create a protein: in this case, a version of the spike protein from the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. The immune system recognizes that protein as a signal to produce antibodies and immune cells.

An mRNA vaccine has some advantages for mass vaccination. It can produce robust immunity, can be made rapidly at low cost, and, like inactivated and subunit vaccines, it is impossible for it to cause someone to develop the illness.

Building immunity

This vaccine has the potential to protect many people from this devastating virus. When it is said that a vaccine is 90 per cent effective, this means that if 100 people received the vaccine and were then exposed to the virus, 90 would be unlikely to get sick.

Julian Daniel Sunday Willett,
McGill University



US-based Pfizer developed the vaccine alongside German pharmaceutical company BioNTech using genetic material from the virus which can be injected to force the body's own cells to create 'spike' proteins that the immune system can practise on - A technician in a Pfizer lab in St Louis, Missouri - Photo - VIA Reuters)

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Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

We've come a long way

Under the normal circumstances of daily living in the developed world, who would want to have a conversation about toilets? No one, right? It's a no-no topic because we take things for granted: after all, according to the 2014 National Habitat Report on Mauritius, over 99% of Mauritian housing units had access to piped water across

be of major interest and concern to all of us. World Toilet Day on 19th November comes to remind us that water and sanitation go together: they are the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 6. As we enjoy the availability of water and sanitation facilities, we could perhaps spare a thought for the billions in the world who are still deprived of them in various degrees.

But even we have come a long way from the days of the bucket toilet or the pit latrine - located at the outer limit of the mostly bare earth yard because of the smell - to today, with flush toilets inside the house, many with more than one toilet/bathroom, and clean potable water coming out of taps in them, as well as outside for watering of lawns and gardens.

My Malaysian friend and classmate from medical college tells me that we must not linger too much on the past but rather look forward and build the future from where we are - meaning that's what we should let our children do. I do concur, but I also feel that it is our duty to educate them about how we have come to be where we are, the struggles and hardships we have undergone so that they realise that nothing was handed over on a platter. It is not that they have to suffer through a similar trajectory, but it is only this awareness - never mind that they will label us 'retro'! - that can create in them the sense of value for the material goods and creature comforts that they are privi-

leged to enjoy, which is denied to the billions that are living below the poverty line. This sobering perspective may help them to better appreciate the facilities they avail of, and may spur some of them - at least so I hope - to engage in improving the lives of their fellow human beings.

As the UN reminds us:

Over half of the global population or 4.2 billion people lack safe sanitation.

40% - or three billion people - of the global population live without basic handwashing facilities with soap and water available at home.

Around 297,000 children under five - more than 800 every day - die annually from diarrhoeal diseases due to poor hygiene, poor sanitation or unsafe drinking water.

Globally, 80% of the wastewater generated by society flows back into the ecosystem without being treated or reused.

By 2050, up to 5.7 billion people could be living in areas where water is scarce for at least one month a year, creating unprecedented competition for water.

In fact, it has even been said that 'water wars' will be the next big wars of the 21st century - but that was before Covid-19. However, whereas the latest developments on the vaccine front have kindled hope that the pandemic will in a foreseeable future be brought under control - unfortunately there's no equivalent of a vaccine to ameliorate in a short term the situation of those billions without safe sanitation.

World Toilet Day celebrates toilets and raises aware-

ness of the 4.2 billion people living without access to safely managed sanitation, taking action to tackle the global sanitation crisis and achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030, the theme this year underlining the importance of 'Sustainable sanitation and climate change'.

“Water being fundamental to the emergence of life and its sustenance, everything to do with it should be of major interest and concern to all of us.

World Toilet Day on 19th November comes to remind us that water and sanitation go together: they are the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 6. As we enjoy the availability of water and sanitation facilities, we could perhaps spare a thought for the billions in the world who are still deprived of them in various degrees. But even we have come a long way from the days of the bucket toilet or the pit latrine to today, with flush toilets inside the house, many with more than one toilet/bathroom...”

Indeed, 'climate change is accelerating. Flood, drought, and rising sea levels are threatening sanitation systems - from toilets to septic tanks to treatment plants. Floodwater can contaminate wells used for drinking water or flooding might damage toilets and spread human waste into communities and food crops, causing deadly and chronic diseases'. The horrifying visuals of the 'toxic soup' flooding habitations in the wake of devastating cyclones in the Philippines, for example, come to my mind. We are more fortunate here that we don't have to face such catastrophic scenarios, though this in no way mitigates the difficulties that are faced when there are inundations in several areas in the island, and which must be addressed with the degree of seriousness and urgency that is required.

But we will all agree that 'everyone must have sustainable sanitation, alongside clean water and hand washing facilities, to help protect and maintain our health security and stop the spread of deadly infectious diseases'.

Many of us have come a long way - but there are many more in the world that still have a longer way to go.



Can you imagine not having a toilet? 4.2 billion people live without access to safely managed sanitation. Photo - img2.chinadaily.com.cn

both urban and rural areas, and nearly 98% were connected to a solid waste collection service. Given the 'progress' we are making in all sectors, if we go by official declarations made outside of and in the National Assembly, I would presume that these figures would probably have shown a further improvement since.

Notwithstanding these statements, we are still left grappling with the loss of nearly 50% of the water from the reservoirs because of leakage from the old distribution pipes, despite the billions spent on replacing them. As we all are aware though, that's a rather complicated story the details of which are best left to those who know better to throw light on.

However, water being fundamental to the emergence of life and its sustenance, everything to do with it should

“It has even been said that 'water wars' will be the next big wars of the 21st century - but that was before Covid-19. However, whereas the latest developments on the vaccine front have kindled hope that the pandemic will in a foreseeable future be brought under control - unfortunately there's no equivalent of a vaccine to ameliorate in a short term the situation of those billions without safe sanitation. World Toilet Day celebrates toilets and raises awareness of the 4.2 billion people living without access to safely managed sanitation, taking action to tackle the global sanitation crisis and achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6: water and sanitation for all...”

Local Government Employees Association

The Annual General Meeting of LGEA will be held on Monday 14th December 2020 at Noon, at Morc, St André Community Centre

AGENDA:

1. Reading and approval of minutes of the last AGM
2. Matters Arising
3. Finance
4. President's / Negotiator's report
5. Amendments to rules (if any) / Motions.
6. Election / selection / reshuffle of Managing Committee (if any).
7. AOB & Lunch

If there is no quorum, the AGM will be fixed at the same place on 26 December 2020 at noon.

Secretary



Mrinal Roy

The CSG Bone of Contention

The responsibility of government is to ensure that the pension right of employees in both the private and public sector is safeguarded through fair, adequate and non discriminatory pension schemes

The appellation Contribution Sociale Généralisée (CSG) is verbose and a bit of a mouthful. It has become a major bone of contention.

The private sector is up in arms against the CSG. Business Mauritius, which coordinates the stance and actions of the private sector has distributed a pamphlet to argue its case, is contesting the government decision in the Supreme Court and has roped in the opposition parties to its cause. Workers' trade unions have joined the fray. This tug of war distracts focus away from fundamental issues relating to pension schemes in the country which need to be urgently and comprehensively addressed and remedied.

Beyond the hype and the hullabaloo, the focus of the debate should be the tenor of pension schemes, the quantum of pension obtained by the employees of the private sector on retirement and the transparency and accountability of the manner pension funds are managed in the country. The pamphlet produced by Business Mauritius indicates that the private sector employee presently obtains the National Pension Fund (NPF) pension to which is added the Basic Retirement Pension of Rs 9,000 payable to all citizens after the age of 60 years.

As contributions to the NPF were based on a salary cap which was progressively increased to the present ceiling of Rs 19,900, the NPF pension amounts up to some Rs 5,700 which is basically a pittance. Had the basic pension not been increased from Rs 3,623 in 2014, the retired private sector employee would basically be receiving a paltry pension.

Effete and laboured

Business Mauritius argues in the pamphlet that the employee of the private sector will be worse off as a result of the replacement of the NPF by the Contribution Sociale Généralisée as the private sector employee will only obtain Rs 4,500 as from 2024 on reaching the age of 65 from the CSG over and above the Basic Retirement Pension of Rs 9,000. This will increase the Basic Retirement Pension to the promised Rs 13,500 by 2024. Does the private sector not have its own pension schemes to top up and indiscriminately assure an adequate pension to all its employees?

The other arguments advanced in the pamphlet are effete and patently laboured. They beg a host of germane questions

Why compare the contribution of a messenger earning Rs 10,000 per month to the SCG with that of a Minister when the country knows that Ministers do not contribute to their handsome pensions? The political class have voted an extremely generous employment package for themselves which includes the payment of a full pension after serving only two terms of office, without having to make any pension contribution. It is a decried exception to the rule of contributory pensions.

However, as regards the SCG, the Minister of Finance has confirmed that all MPs and Ministers will pay their SCG contribution as from September 2020 and that the public sector will also contribute to the SCG. 89% or a



Photo - akm-img-a-in.tosshub.com

large majority of all employees earning less than Rs 39,800 per month will thus pay less SCG contribution than under the NPF.

“Civil servants obtain on retirement a pension equal to two-thirds of their last salary or a lump sum and a reduced pension equal to half their salary. Does the private sector not have its own in-house pension schemes to top up the paltry NPF pension so as to ensure that all its employees benefit from an adequate pension on retirement comparable to that prevailing in the public sector?”

In short, is the private sector basically contesting and locking horns for the remaining 11%?

It is also preposterous to suggest that a doctor operating a successful private practice with monthly revenues of Rs 200,000 would dare pay his CSG contribution on the basis of an income of Rs 10,000 under the vigilant watch of the Director General of the MRA. Too many professional practitioners having a successful private practice have been nabbed and penalized by the MRA for understating their revenue. No cause can be canvassed on the basis of tenuous and contrived arguments.

Why also trump up the flawed argument of comparing the pension of private sector employees with the pension obtained by employees of the public sector as the pension of these two categories of employees are determined by their and their employers' pension contributions and the terms of their respective pension schemes. Civil

servants obtain on retirement a pension equal to two-thirds of their last salary or a lump sum and a reduced pension equal to half their salary. Does the private sector not have its own in-house pension schemes to top up the paltry NPF pension so as to ensure that all its employees benefit from an adequate pension on retirement comparable to that prevailing in the public sector? The responsibility of government is to ensure that the pension right of employees in both the private and public sector is safeguarded through fair, adequate and non discriminatory pension schemes.

Test of transparency and accountability

Pensions are a key and essential element of an employment package. Those familiar with the private sector know that it has its own in-house pension schemes as well as pension schemes subscribed with private insurance companies to top up and guarantee an adequate pension on retirement to employees covered by such pension schemes. However, quite a few things are amiss in the pension system prevailing in the country which have to be urgently set right.

For example, there is patent opacity in the manner the pension funds in the country are managed. They cannot be administered as a closed shop where representatives of employers call the shots, as those entrusted with the important responsibility of judiciously maximising revenue from the pension fund for the benefit of their members are trustees of colossal pension funds.

The management of pension funds must therefore meet the test of transparency and accountability. This means that pension funds must necessarily be managed by independent professionals specialized in pension fund management in accordance with best practice norms prevailing in the world.

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Britain to ban sale of petrol, diesel cars from 2030



£1.3bn will be invested in electric vehicle charging points as part of the plan. Photo - static.ffx.io/images

Britain will ban petrol and diesel vehicle sales from 2030 as part of a 10-point plan for a "green industrial revolution" to be unveiled Wednesday by Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

The British premier has earmarked 12 billion pounds for the wide-ranging plans, which he hopes will secure up to 250,000 jobs and help meet a target for the UK to become carbon neutral by 2050, reports AFP.

The proposals include quadrupling offshore wind power within a decade while scaling up hydrogen production capacity for industry, transport, power and homes.

Investment will also be made in zero-emission public transport, alongside research into zero-emission planes and ships, and in making cycling and walking "more attractive".

The plans contain broader aims to make Britain a "world-leader" in carbon capture technology and the

City of London a "global centre of green finance".

The British government will also spend 525 million pounds on developing large and smaller-scale nuclear plants, and new advanced modular reactors, in a move likely to anger environmentalists.

Johnson is hoping the ambitious proposals can help deliver on pledges to reduce Britain's stark regional inequality and repair some of the economic damage done by the pandemic.

They are also being seen as an opportunity to reset his faltering government and align with the priorities of US President-elect Joe Biden, ahead of the UK hosting global climate talks next December.

The 2030 ban on petrol and diesel cars and vans follows what Downing Street called "extensive consultation with car manufacturers and sellers".

Johnson had said in February his government would aim to end such sales by 2035, but will now only allow the sale of hybrid vehicles until that year.

Under the new plans, it will invest 1.3 billion pounds on expanding electric vehicle chargepoints in homes and streets across England, and make 582 pounds million available in grants for people to buy zero or ultra-low emission vehicles.

Meanwhile nearly 500 million pounds will be spent in the next four years on the development and production of electric vehicle batteries.

Under proposals to reduce carbon-emitting gas usage, another 500 million pounds is earmarked to trial using hydrogen in homes for heating and cooking.



Prime Minister Modi said he looked forward to working with US President-elect Joe Biden. Photo - www.deccanherald.com

Biden calls Modi, both reiterate commitment to strategic India-US ties

Indian PM Narendra Modi spoke to US President-elect Joe Biden on Tuesday to congratulate him on his win and reiterate India's firm commitment to its strategic partnership with the United States. In the phone call from Mr Biden, PM Modi also offered his congratulations to Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, saying that her success was a matter of pride for the Indian-American community, reports NDTV.

"Spoke to US President-elect Joe Biden on phone to congratulate him. We reiterated our firm commitment to the Indo-US strategic partnership and discussed our shared priorities and concerns - the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region," the Prime Minister tweeted at around midnight on Tuesday.

"I also conveyed warm congratulations for Vice President-elect Kamala Harris. Her success is a matter of great pride and inspiration for members of the vibrant Indian-American community, who are a tremendous source of strength for Indo-US relations," PM Modi added.

The US statement on the phone call also talked about "strengthening democracy at home and abroad".

"The president-elect noted that he looks forward to working closely with the prime minister on shared global challenges, including containing COVID-19 and defending against future health crises, tackling the threat of climate change, launching the global economic recovery, strengthening democracy at home and abroad, and maintaining a secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific region," said a statement from Mr Biden's transition team.

Mr Biden thanked PM Modi for his congratulations and "expressed his desire to strengthen and expand the US-India strategic partnership alongside the first vice president of South Asian descent," said the readout of the call.

Apart from working together to combat terrorism and climate change, and defeat the Covid pandemic, Mr Biden is expected to support India's claim to a permanent UN Security Council seat.

According to a policy paper released during the election, the President-elect feels "no common global challenge can be solved without India and the US working as responsible partners".

Mr Biden rose to India's defence in October, before the election began, after Donald Trump referred to "filthy air" in India as he defended his decision to pull out of the Paris accord.

"It's not how you talk about friends - and it's not how you solve global challenges like climate change," he tweeted. He later said that his government would focus on working with India to reduce carbon emissions and secure clean and renewable sources of energy.

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UN releases USD 100 million to avert famine during pandemic

The United Nations said Tuesday it is releasing \$100 million in aid for seven countries that include Ethiopia to help them avoid famine because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Ethiopia, where fighting has broken out between the central government and the northern Tigray region, will receive one fifth of this money.

The other recipients will be Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Yemen.

"No one should view a slide into famine as an inevitable side effect of this pandemic," said Mark Lowcock, UN under secretary general for humanitarian affairs.

"If it happens it is because the world has allowed it to happen. Famine can be prevented. But we have to act in time to make a difference," Lowcock said in a statement.



United Nations will release \$100 million in aid for seven countries. Photo - www.aljazeera.com

"Right now, more money for the aid operation is the quickest and most efficient way to support famine-prevention efforts."

On a planet where there is more than enough food for everyone, Lowcock wrote, "famines result in agonizing and humiliating deaths. They fuel conflict and war."

'Tibetan Buddhists should pick the next Dalai Lama': US official



The 85-year-old Dalai Lama is the 14th leader of Tibetan Buddhists.

Photo - google.com

instructions on where to find the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, but the Chinese government has asserted that it has the right to determine who becomes the leader of the Tibetan Buddhists.

"We think that's completely wrong of the Chinese Communist Party to assert that they have that right," Brownback told reporters during a telephone briefing.

"The Tibetan Buddhists have successfully picked their leader for hundreds of years, if not longer, and they have the right to do that now," he added.

The Dalai Lama has said that when he reaches around 90, he will consult other lamas, the Tibetan public and followers of the religion to decide "whether the institution of the Dalai Lama should continue or not".

If it was decided that there should be a successor, the officers of the Dalai Lama's Gaden Phodrang Trust will have the primary responsibility for recognising the person in accordance with the past traditions and that he would leave written instructions for it, he added.

The US backs the right of the Tibetan Buddhists to select the next Dalai Lama and the Chinese Communist Party does not have the authority, according to a US official dealing with international religious matters.

"The United States is opposed to China picking the next Dalai Lama," Samuel Brownback, the ambassador-at-large for international religious

freedom said on Tuesday.

"They have no right to do that. They have no theological basis to do that," he said.

The 85-year-old Dalai Lama is the 14th leader of Tibetan Buddhists and he fled the Chinese takeover of the Tibet to India and took refuge there.

Traditionally the Dalai Lama gives

Six Indian scientists among top 10 in their fields

Six scientists from India rank among the top 10 contributors to their fields globally, and 11 are among the 10 most cited in their fields over the past year.

The list, compiled by researchers from Stanford University, Elsevier Research Intelligence and SciTech Strategies last month, is an updated database of the top scientists in the world. Of the 160,000 most cited scientists in the world of all time, 1490 are from India. Among those most cited over the past year, 2313 are from India. Given the vast differences between research disciplines, the paper says, "We discourage raw comparisons of scientists across very different fields."

Within their own subfields, 26 Indian scientists figure among the top 50 most cited scientists in the career-long list and 66 among the top 100. The metrics over the past year are even better - 44 among the top 50 in their own subfields and 104 in the top 100.

The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, has an edge over all other institutes in India, with 94 scientists on the all-time list and 97 on the past year's. Next come the IITs - Delhi (64 all-time, 81 last year), Kharagpur (43 and 68) and Bombay (40 and 50).

The British Labour Party stands on the brink of civil war after a defiant response from the party's left wing to leader Sir Keir Starmer's decision to block Jeremy Corbyn from sitting as a Labour MP. Sir Keir said his predecessor had "undermined" efforts to restore confidence in the party's ability to tackle antisemitism following a damning report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission last month, reports The Independent.

Some 28 MPs - almost one in seven of the parliamentary party - signed a letter demanding the former leader's reinstatement, while the leader of the Unite union, Len McCluskey, denounced the withholding of the Labour whip as "vindictive and vengeful". Describing Mr Corbyn's treatment as "persecution", Mr McCluskey, whose union is Labour's biggest financial donor, told Starmer to "pull back from the brink".

British firms fast-tracked for lucrative coronavirus-related contracts

Like it happened in Mauritius, hundreds of British firms were fast-tracked for lucrative coronavirus-related contracts following tips from ministers and MPs as the government handed out £18bn in funding under emergency rules, a damning report reveals on Wednesday. The way procurement and transparency rules were ripped up in the scramble for personal protective equipment - with some deals secured by Conservative allies - is sharply criticised in

Labour: On the brink of civil war



Sir Keir Starmer (L) and Jeremy Corbyn. Photo - i.inews.co.uk

the new assessment from the spending watchdog, reports The Independent.

Its report confirms a secret "high-priority lane" for favoured firms, with at least 144 put forward from ministers' private offices as MPs suggested "a possible manufacturer in their constituency". The source of more than half of the 493 recommendations has not been identified, of which 47 secured deals - and just 55 per cent of the 1,644 contracts worth more than £25,000 awarded up to the end of July have been published.

Donald Trump has fired a top cybersecurity official who had rejected his false claim that the 2020 US presidential election was rigged. In his latest attempt to claim, contrary to all the evidence, that he was the victim of fraud and that Joe Biden is not the legitimate winner, Mr Trump said he was firing Chris Krebs, the director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.

The president directly tied the decision to recent comments from Mr Krebs, to the

effect that there was no evidence of any tampering with the election apparatus, despite Mr Trump's refusal to concede the election and his decision to try and fight Mr Biden's victory in the courts.

On the other hand, Donald Trump reportedly asked his White House advisers last week for "options" to attack Iran's nuclear facilities. The outgoing president made the request in the Oval Office last Thursday but was talked out of it by senior administration officials, according to The New York Times. Mr Trump was reportedly told by vice president Mike Pence, secretary of state Mike Pompeo and others that such action could lead to a wider escalation of conflict in the final weeks of his presidency.

The Oxford coronavirus vaccine shows a promising immune response in people over 60, boosting hopes that it will be able to help protect those in the most vulnerable age brackets. Researchers described the phase two findings as "encouraging" and results from the crucial late stage trial are expected within weeks.

The development follows promising results in phase three trials from three other candidates, with Pfizer-BioNTech, Sputnik and Moderna all raising hopes of a successful vaccine on the horizon.

Compiled by Doojesh Ramlallah

Kugan Parapen

"We are still living in the era where profits are privatised and losses are socialized"

'It is totally unacceptable that those who have engaged in irresponsible profit maximizing behaviour over the years emerge unscathed from the crisis and that it is up to the taxpayers to foot the bill'



Mauritius Times: The Government appears to be pulled in different directions and at pains to manage, on the one hand, the economic crisis in the wake of the Covid pandemic and, on the other hand, the opposition's attacks on both the economic and political fronts, especially with regard to issues of good governance, alleged corruption, etc. It certainly has a lot on its plate. How do you see it doing?

Kugan Parapen: Barring the MMM-PSM chaotic start in 1982, this has got to be the worst first year in office for any government in living memory. One gets the impression that whatever could have gone wrong has gone wrong.

Governing a majority government with a minority electoral support was always going to be a major challenge for Pravind Jugnauth in any circumstances. Back in February, in these very same columns, we concluded that the current regime had to

consolidate itself if it was to stand the test of time. Some nine months later, we observe that it is quite the opposite that has happened. The government is as isolated as ever and getting increasingly unpopular. Will there be a turning point?

We've seen many pro-government supporters celebrate Joe Biden's presidential victory in the United States, and this comes as quite a surprise given the similarities between the Trump administration and the Mauritian government. Let's elaborate.

There is no doubt that the values of democracy have suffered greatly under President Trump as epitomised by the ill-timed nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court days before the presidential election. Parallels can be drawn to the attempt of the MSM government to nominate politically tainted individuals on both the Electoral Supervisory Committee and the Electoral Boundaries

Kugan Parapen, economist and member of *Rezistans ek Alternativ* notes that the government instead of consolidating itself - which he had thought should be the case in February last in his interview - has weakened itself and our democracy by the opaque way in which it has been governing. He is worried about the state of the economy and the continuing depreciation of the rupee, and fears that recovery is not likely in a near future, and certainly things will not go back to the 'old normal', as the changes brought about in the world of work and social living generally is forcing a new culture to emerge.

Commission prior to the last elections as well as their malicious move to prevent those who refused to declare their ethnic identity to be part of the last general elections.

We seem to have gone one step further in the wrong direction on the domestic front though. Our Parliament, the sup-

dards, the Prime Minister was prepared to axe them; the last high-profile victim being Ivan Collendavelloo. The whole campaign in 2019 was centred around the fact that he was different from Navin Ramgoolam. Should the allegations in the Angus Road affair be proven to be true, things could unravel very quickly on the political front.

“It seems that the government expects a return to normalcy in 2021. While a recovery is on the cards in 2021, it will likely take many more months for the economy to return to pre-Covid levels of economic activity. Unfortunately, the mismanagement of macroeconomic affairs over the years has taken its toll such that the scope for fiscal stimulus remains quite limited...”

posed sacred temple of our democracy, has turned into a horror show. While we had become accustomed to the systematic selective reporting of political events by the national broadcasting service, the current Speaker of the National Assembly has upped the game to a whole new level. In hindsight, this had to be expected. With parliamentary debates being live, this process had to be reinvented. It had to occur at source...

The weakening of the democratic fabric is unfortunately not the only similarity. As in the United States, the Mauritian population is as divided as ever with the disturbing emergence of a far-right culture. Resorting to a divide and rule strategy has been a popular play by politicians with their back against the wall and has had mixed results depending on the political set-up. This brings us to the potential game changer, Angus Road!

Since his exoneration by the Privy Council in the MedPoint saga, Pravind Jugnauth has played the high moral standards card relentlessly. When his collaborators were perceived to lack such stan-

The upcoming village elections will be a good barometer...

* As regards the economic situation, we should ideally have an experienced hand looking after the Finance and Economic Planning portfolio in these particular testing times. Do you have the impression that the economy is receiving the attention and leadership that the current challenges call for?

The economy is in dire straits and unlikely to improve markedly anytime soon. There seems to be an ever increasing disconnect between the government and the private sector while the spectre of mass unemployment is looming large, especially in the tourism and manufacturing sectors.

Initially the government played into the hands of the private sector by loosening labour laws, but had to backtrack following major discontent from trade unions and the population in general.

“When his collaborators were perceived to lack such standards, the Prime Minister was prepared to axe them; the last high-profile victim being Ivan Collendavelloo. The whole campaign in 2019 was centred around the fact that he was different from Navin Ramgoolam. Should the allegations in the Angus Road affair be proven to be true, things could unravel very quickly on the political front...”

'Will corruption still be rampant in public bodies? Will a political dynasty still be ruling the Republic?'

When do we wake up from this nightmare? Many questions with simple answers...'

☞ Cont. from page 7

We get the impression that the government is buying time and hoping for the best.

It seems that the government expects a return to normalcy in 2021. While a recovery is on the cards in 2021, it will likely take many more months for the economy to return to pre-Covid levels of economic activity. Unfortunately, the mismanagement of macroeconomic affairs over the years has taken its toll such that the scope for fiscal stimulus remains quite limited.

Government recently announced another line of credit with India to the tune of Rs. 12 billion and, if tapped, this will further increase the indebtedness of a country already crippled with debt. Remember that the Minister of Finance changed the methodology for the calculation of public debt in his last budget. Do you change a winning formula?

Rezistans ek Alternativ has been advocating for a new economic model for many years and the pandemic presented a unique opportunity to lay the foundation for this much needed model. Alas, the status quo has been maintained. Are we throwing good money after bad money once more? The structural imbalances within our economy are here to stay and will likely give rise to further economic problems down the road. How can we expect different results if we keep repeating the same mistakes?

The introduction of the Contribution Sociale Généralisée (CSG) is in effect a disguised progressive income tax which along with the Solidarity Tax for high earners reduces the fiscal burden imbalance. However, the exemption of high earners of the public sector, including MPs and Ministers from the CSG contribution, leaves us dumbfounded. This might have more to do with political calculations rather than those of economic nature - this would not be the first time...

*** There are also threats facing the Global Business sector and major issues in the aviation and tourism sector, in the sugar industry, and business is not doing well. Economists have been talking of lack of "visibility" on the economic front generally; the common man is concerned not only about the long term, but he is now worried about the here and now as regards his job, his standard of living... Do we have answers to all these questions?**

A recent survey carried out by Statistics Mauritius points to at least one household in three experiencing a fall in income since the end of the lockdown while no more than one in ten households experienced a rise in income... Figures do not lie. The population has been hard hit by the pandemic and the oil spill.

Given the uncertain outlook, there is a real possibility for the standard of life of the average Mauritian household to stagnate, if not deteriorate, in the foreseeable future. There will obviously be a bounce back once the airspace reopens and frontiers become more permeable. However, the long-term prospects aren't very bright with most of the traditional economic sectors struggling to expand further while new promising sectors are not emerging.

In so many ways, Mauritius has missed the train. On the technological front, we are lagging behind while our renewable energy sector is a midget version of what it



“*Rezistans ek Alternativ* has been advocating for a new economic model for many years and the pandemic presented a unique opportunity to lay the foundation for this much needed model. Alas, the status quo has been maintained. Are we throwing good money after bad money once more? The structural imbalances within our economy are here to stay and will likely give rise to further economic problems down the road...”

“Will life be more expensive than it currently is? Most likely. Will the level of indebtedness of the country have increased? Yes. Will corruption still be rampant in public bodies? Will an electoral reform be forthcoming? Will a political dynasty still be ruling the Republic? When do we wake up from this nightmare? How do we change things around? Many questions with simple answers...”

“A recent survey carried out by Statistics Mauritius points to at least one household in three experiencing a fall in income since the end of the lockdown while no more than one in ten households experienced a rise in income... Figures do not lie. The population has been hard hit by the pandemic and the oil spill...”

could have been. Access to new technological products like mobile phones and smart TVs has little to do with an improvement in purchasing power but rather a collapse in costs of production.

What will Mauritius look like in ten years? Do we expect much fundamental change or rather an updated

version of the current setup? Yes, our road infrastructure will be improved. Yes, the metro network will probably be expanded. Yes, a few MUGA centres will have been built in other regions. But what else?

Will life be more expensive than it currently is? Most likely. Will the level of indebtedness of the country have increased? Yes. Will corruption still be rampant in public bodies? Will an electoral reform be forthcoming? Will a political dynasty still be ruling the Republic? When do we wake up from this nightmare? How do we change things around? Many questions with simple answers.

*** There is moreover widespread concern about the functioning of the MIC and the opacity surrounding the disbursements of funds and conditions attached thereto, if any, to the large distressed companies. What's your take on that?**

It was obvious to seasoned financial observers that the State would have to support the tourism and manufacturing industry in the pandemic context. Back then, the debate was centred around whether the country should have recourse to quantitative easing (money printing) to fund the bailout programme. Ultimately, the government decided to plunder the accumulated reserves at the Bank of Mauritius...

While the primary reason behind the setting up of the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd (MIC) was to rescue the hoteliers and the manufacturers, one cannot ignore the broader picture. A wave of defaults in key economic sectors locally would have significantly weakened our domestic banking sector with the possibility of one or more of the major banks going under.

The historical credit over-exposure of some banks to the tourism sector is hardly a secret in financial quarters and is an incongruity that has repeatedly featured in the reports of international financial organisations as a key risk for the Mauritian economy. Unfortunately, little action was taken at the local level to address this financial time bomb.

In the face of contagion to the financial sector during the sub-prime crisis in 2008, the Bush administration launched the Troubled Asset Relief Programme (TARP) and invested nearly USD 300 billion in US banks to shore up the industry. The concept of being 'too big to fail' was coined to explain the intervention of the US authorities. Eventually, this major bailout of the financial sector would fuel the Occupy Wall Street movement and trigger the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform Act.

By all accounts, we can say that the local economy has also experienced its 'too big to fail' moment in the wake of Covid-19. It remains to be seen whether a far-reaching reform of our financial and banking sector will ensue. To many, including some in the financial sector, it is totally unacceptable that those who have engaged in irresponsible profit maximizing behaviour over the years emerge unscathed from the crisis and that it is up to the taxpayers to foot the bill. It seems we are still living in the era where profits are privatised and losses are socialised.

Coming to the modus operandi of the MIC, the lack of transparency is of course a major concern and, without any doubt, a red flag.

☞ Cont. on page 9

'The structural imbalances within our economy are here to stay and will likely give rise to further economic problems down the road'

☞ Cont. from page 8

Some members of the Board of Directors seem to be conflicted while the track record of the current regime at effective management of public assets is dreadful, to say the least. Truth be told, the reserves at the Bank of Mauritius ballooned mainly due to the non-rupee denomination of these reserves!



“The quasi-shutdown of the tourism industry is expected to be of cyclical nature but should the shutdown transform into a more structural one, we will have a major challenge on our hands. The short-term survival of the tourism industry is vital for the local economy; however, over the long-term, it would be wise to revisit the domestic economic model to ensure a lesser dependence on this particular sector overall...”

*** On the other hand, our sugar industry is, as always, going through difficult times. Now the tourism industry has been hard hit by the Covid pandemic and is looking for massive funding from taxpayers through the MIC to keep it going. The question that arises is how long will it remain viable and at what cost. What do you think?**

The outlook for the tourism industry is clouded with uncertainty. No one can predict with precision what the industry will look like in the coming years. In the best-case scenario for hoteliers, tourists flock back to the destination and a return to normalcy is only a few months away. The likelihood of such an occurrence is minimal. The base case scenario is a slow and progressive recovery over the next three years. Given the highly leveraged business model of the hotel industry, such a scenario will be a painful experience.

If we remember correctly, the debate around the sustainability of the tourism sector was raging even before the pandemic struck with many thinking that this particular sector had already peaked, especially after taking into consideration ecological and social constraints.

That said, the tourism industry is a major pillar of our economy and the economy is heavily dependent on it for foreign exchange earnings. An imminent demise of the sector would spell trouble for the economy at large.

Currently, the quasi-shutdown of the tourism industry is expected to be of cyclical nature but should the shutdown transform into a more structural one, we will have a major challenge on our hands. The short-term survival of the tourism industry is vital for the local economy; however, over the long-term, it would be wise to revisit the domestic economic model to ensure a lesser dependence on this particular sector overall.

*** PMSD leader Xavier Duval stated recently that we could soon go the Zimbabwean way with the constant and “vertigineuse” depreciation of the rupee. Isn't that farfetched?**

In this instance, I believe it is the journey that mat-

ters more than the destination. We can all agree that we are far from experiencing the economic and social hardships of Zimbabwe but the ultimate question that we need to answer is whether we are closing in on the Zimbabwean experience.

An honest assessment from any savvy economist would surely point towards a weakening of economic fundamentals and a worrying worsening balance of trade deficit. Remember that for a number of successive years, we've relied on foreign powers and on the reserves of the Bank of Mauritius to fund our national budget. Jugnauth's governments have broken the piggy bank and that says it all.

At the worst in Zimbabwe, locals lost confidence in the local currency and preferred to hoard US Dollars while inflation was rampant. The same cannot be said of Mauritius at this stage. But one should never say never. The Mauritian Rupee has weakened significantly in 2020 on account of a major economic slowdown and should recover somewhat once borders re-open fully. However, the trend for the local currency has always been a depreciating one since Independence and that is worrisome.

An increasing number of Mauritians keep part of their assets, mainly their savings, in non-rupee terms and that suggests a lack of confidence in the long-term value of the local currency. If that sentiment becomes mainstream, a run on the Mauritian rupee could occur, especially if it coincides with major economic shocks.

*** The world will hopefully have the Covid vaccines soon. Will things get better thereafter, that is will we be going back to the 'old normal'?**

“An increasing number of Mauritians keep part of their assets, mainly their savings, in non-rupee terms and that suggests a lack of confidence in the long-term value of the local currency. If that sentiment becomes mainstream, a run on the Mauritian rupee could occur, especially if it coincides with major economic shocks...”



The positive news regarding the development of seemingly effective vaccines by Pfizer Inc. and Moderna have been celebrated across the world and there is a collective belief that life could go back to the 'old normal' in the future.

If history is any indication, we should expect human life on earth to be altered permanently in many ways going forward. The pandemic has negatively affected many industries including the travel and hospitality industries. At the same time, numerous industries have benefited from the crisis as Covid-19 has ushered in a new lifestyle.

Humans have discovered the need for greater self-sufficiency while a new work-from-home culture has emerged. Many of these cultural changes are here to stay. Are we going to be better off in this new world? The jury is out...

Is this the beginning of the end?

* Cont. from page 2

While 10 would be at risk of still developing the infection, fortunately protection from vaccines is not all-or-nothing. These 10 individuals could have milder disease than someone who did not receive the vaccine.

It takes time for immune systems to prepare to fight infections. Think of building immunity to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, like preparing to run a marathon. First, the runner must register, just as the immune system must be exposed to the infectious agent. Then, they need to build stamina. For the immune system, this means making antibodies and immune cells. Finally, they run the marathon: the bolstered immune system now removes the infectious agent from the body, or prevents it from doing further damage.



A man stands outside an entrance to a Moderna building in Cambridge, Mass., on May 18, 2020. (AP Photo/Bill Sikes)

In both the Pfizer and Moderna clinical trials, subjects received the vaccine in two doses, three or four weeks apart, respectively. That's about how much time it takes for the stimulated immune system to produce meaningful protection. A booster vaccine was given to produce even more antibodies and immune cells. In terms of the marathon example, this is like doing a practice marathon around three weeks into training. The runner will do better than they would have on day one, but more training is likely still needed. The booster vaccine provides that extra training.

The beginning of the end

Should we expect the pandemic to be over once a vaccine is available for public use? Not exactly. A vaccine will not be perfect, and it takes time for the immune system to be ready to protect us.

In addition, it is possible that the vaccines will be less effective than cited. Clinical trials are carefully set up, but it is possible that the virus will have evolved enough since the vaccines were designed so they will provide less benefit. It will also take time for enough vaccine to be made and administered for the population to achieve herd immunity.

Masks and social distancing will still most likely be necessary throughout 2021 because it takes time to accomplish such large-scale projects. We cannot expect herd immunity from our neighbours getting sick to get the world back to normal, even while neighbours are receiving vaccines. The human cost is unacceptable and the virus is too infectious for this to produce meaningful results unless 67 per cent of the population is infected, with a lot of people dying up to that point and afterwards.

We are in a scary time but have reason to have hope. The news of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines is good news and could potentially bring the world back to something more normal. We must not forget that it will take time and all of us working together. Masks and social distancing are our reality right now, and will remain so until at least next year. We must persevere with these measures, even when we find them frustrating. There is a light at the end of the tunnel and we can all reach it if we work together.

Perth Mauritians have not forgotten where they come from



Ben Genevieve

As a people Mauritians are very adventurous and very inventive. They are intelligent, clever, and immensely adaptable. They integrate easily into any environment without losing their Mauritian-ness.

They are very successful in whatever they do and are very popular with their neighbours whether they are Australian-born or not. They belong to clubs and organizations, and engage fully in all activities.

Mauritians work hard but also know how to relax and enjoy themselves. They love a BBQ and a party, but they also delight in Mauritian food and events such as pétanque, quiz nights, cabarets, dances, bingo nights and fancy-fairs. While these activities are highly entertaining, their main purpose is to raise funds for charities.

For nearly 30 years, a large group of Mauritians in and around Perth have been doing so for a not-for-profit organization called COMMSSA-Western Australia. This stands for Children of Mauritius Medical and Surgical Support Association. COMMSSA is run by a management committee of volunteers elected at the AGM. No committee member receives any remuneration, thus allowing virtually all funds raised to go towards making a difference in the lives of disadvantaged children of Mauritius and Rodrigues. The funds are used to finance various types of medical

and surgical treatment and, in some cases, medications and equipment which are forwarded to Mauritius.

Founded in 1991, COMMSSA has financed more than 80 episodes/cases of care for children who could not be treated in Mauritius. Those children, referred by SACIM in Mauritius, are flown to Perth for treatment. They are usually accompanied by a family member and are accommodated with a Mauritian family for the duration of their stay in Perth. All their treatment costs and living expenses during their stay in Perth are met by COMMSSA.

Since 2016, in conjunction with SACIM-Australia in Melbourne, COMMSSA has also assisted in funding the treatment of more than 25 disadvantaged children in private hospitals in Mauritius. Many complex cases can now be treated locally by an excellent team providing surgical, orthopaedic, intensive, neonatal and general paediatric care.

In 2017 the Medical Directors of COMMSSA identified the need for the specialized training of nurses in stoma and wound care in Mauritius. In 2018 and 2019, under the auspices of the Nursing Council of Mauritius, COMMSSA initiated and financed nurse training programs which were conducted in Mauritius and Rodrigues by nurse educators from Australia.

This tells you that Mauritians here have not forgotten where they come from and that they do care about their island and its people, especially the 'little' people who cannot help themselves.

What's going on in the customs office?

On another note, I would like to draw the attention of the Mauritian authorities regarding the handling of packages dispatched from Perth.

We sent a package of 14 Christmas cards and 6 letters from Perth, Western Australia to a recipient in Mauritius. The package was sent via Australia Post. The



local Customs Declaration identified the contents as Cards and Letters with a nominal value of 20 Australian dollars i.e. \$1 for each letter and card.

When the package arrived at Plaisance, someone from Customs rang the recipient to say that a sum of Rs 2100 had been levied on the package because it was deemed to have a "commercial value". The recipient was asked to come down to Plaisance to pay the levy and then to come back two days later to collect the package. The recipient replied that the journey would be a long one let alone two journeys. Customs suggested that the levy could be paid in Mahebourg instead. After some more discussion, it was agreed that Ebene would be agreeable to both parties.

The recipient was asked to pay the levy in cash and not electronically. Then he arranged for his son to pick the package two days later. When the package finally reached its destination, the recipient discovered that someone had placed an official looking red sticker across the package so that the original Customs Declaration was covered up.

The official looking red sticker proclaimed that the package was a Service

Alert thus triggering a protocol. Apparently the description of the contents as containing "Cards and Letters" was not clear enough. The protocol required that the package be treated as containing commercial products and therefore subject to the aforesaid levy.

Some two or three weeks beforehand, we had sent a similar package via Australia Post and the package was delivered directly to the recipient. So obviously something had changed in the meantime.

I believe that this is either a scam by some very imaginative and enterprising individuals who have found a very lucrative way to earn some Rupees. I found the fact that he had to pay the levy in cash very suspicious indeed. If I am right, it could mean that some officials in any of these offices would be involved in a scam.

It would be interesting to find out if other recipients in Mauritius have been asked to pay a levy on packages arriving from abroad.

Ben Genevieve
Western Australia



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor

The Journey of Commitment

Many people have not witnessed a loving relationship between their parents, so they don't know what it looks like.

Loving and committing to another person is a spiritual process whether it involves a wedding or any other type of commitment ceremony. Often when we enter into a relationship, we allow our emotions to lead us forward without thinking more deeply about what true commitment involves. If we can understand that sharing our lives with another person is not just based on love but also

on the hard work of being able to compromise and enter into a dialogue with them, then we are much more likely to find the key to having a successful relationship with our partners. So many people have not experienced a loving relationship between their own parents and therefore have no role model of what love should feel like or look like.

Many of us have been exposed to the idea that love should be romantic and sweep us off our feet. While this is a natural part of any relationship, the true test of our love comes from our willing-

ness to explore this world with another person; to not only share in the delights that we encounter but also to negotiate the bumps in the road together. Generally this often takes the form of a mutual exchange of ideas, but because any relationship is based on the needs and experiences of two people, we might also face a certain amount of misunderstanding. Learning to be open and receptive to our partners and to treat their wants and ideas with respect can help us navigate even the most difficult situations. One way to do this is to take a deep breath, holding our partner in a space of

love, and allow ourselves to listen fully with our hearts to what they have to say. Should this become difficult to do, we can also turn toward people whose relationships we admire for advice or guidance. Knowing that there are resources out there to help us and being up for exploring them with our partner will only serve to deepen and strengthen our relationship.

Entering into a committed relationship is in fact a spiritual journey that we undertake with another person. By being able to love and care for someone else with an open heart, we will find that we can reach a greater level of personal transformation, evolving along our path and learning powerful lessons about ourselves that we might not otherwise be able to do on our own.

Ashok Kallooa takes us on a Journey through Time



'Eskuli: Laswer e Kreasion'. Photo - lexxpress.mu

From the colonial days before independence to date, Ashok Kallooa takes visitors through a journey in time with 'Eskuli: Laswer e Kreasion'.

Ashok Kallooa is a sculptor, painter and a photographer. He is an artist with a remarkable record of accomplishments. He has held solo exhibitions at L'Alliance Française at Bell Village, Beau Séjour and Forbach. He had also exhibited his bronze sculptures and installations at the Jahangir Art Gallery in Mumbai, L'Alliance Française in New Delhi and his photographs in Seoul and Barcelona. The artist has won several awards and prizes at national and international levels.

'Eskuli' is a series of three exhibitions. 'Eskuli: Laswer e Kreasion' is the first exhibition and is organised in the context of the commemoration of the arrival of the first indentured labourers in Mauritius at the Aapravasi Ghat, UNESCO's World Heritage Site. Ashok intends to organise the second exhibition in the context of the commemoration of the abolition of slavery next February and finally in May 2021 to mark Labour Day.

'Eskuli', arouses the curiosity of many visitors but Ashok explains that he has deliberately linked two words: slave (*esclave*) and coolie (*kuli*) to create the new term. He 'does not reject the different identities of slaves and coolies but he asserts that it is high time take a different lens to view their joint contribution to the socioeconomic development of our country'. Instead of an 'ongoing commemoration', Ashok believes that we must celebrate the hard work and achievements of the descents of slaves and coolies in weaving the strong fabric of the Mauritian 'quadricolore'.

As we go up the historical steps of the Aapravasi Ghat, we can see the first installation: an ox cartwheel and a bicycle, motorcycle as well as a car wheel swinging from the branches of a tree. Ashok integrates to this installation three sepia photographs of an old man, Mr Karriman, who was among the rare artisans to make cartwheels during the 1970s at Rivière du Rempart. The evolution of our transport system is obvious and the wind that moves the other wheels over our heads creates

the dynamism of a fast moving society.

Another installation shows different pieces of wood hanging from the branches of another tree; one is white, the others are yellow, brown and black respectively. Finally, all pieces are linked to a common circular tin painted in red, blue, yellow and green. Ashok states explains: 'There is no problem in feeling the link with the countries of our ancestors but it is a natural law that umbilical cords detach after birth and should be tied and cut. This process is important in the making of independent and unique individuals. It is important to value our roots but it vital to allow new buddings, flowers and cross-fertilisation. This is essential in the building and the consolidating our *nation arc-en-ciel*'.

fruit. Photographs of vegetables and fruits sellers of the Port Louis market can be seen swinging and turning with the wind.

As you move from one room to the other, you feel carried in a journey through time. The rooms used during colonial days such as horse stable, cart-room, kitchen, surgery and ward of the Aapravasi Ghat have been used by Ashok Kallooa to display photographs of cow-keepers, Chinese shopkeepers, traditional cuisines and families as well as sugar camps respectively. On the wall in the open space, you can contemplate large size monochrome photographs of women and men at work. Aly Liaquat Soobraty, traditional baker; Clarel Jean Batiste, rattaner; Jayranee Buleeram, weaver; Kheen Pyng



The monochrome pictures of Ashok Kallooa integrate very well with the colour of the black stones, lime and sand joints of the walls of the Aapravasi Ghat. Apart from mangoes, the mango tree in the middle of the Ghat seems to bear a different type of

Lipiang Nam, chef, and many others who are sweating to create (Laswer e Kreasion) the products of their labour.

Ashok Kallooa's 'Eskuli: Laswer e Kreasion' is a wonderful and worthwhile

Life's Lessons

There was a Professor whose lectures used to be very interesting since he had an interesting way to teach and explain the concepts.

One day, in the class, he asked the following questions:

1. What is ZERO?
2. What is INFINITY?
3. Can ZERO and INFINITY be same?

We all thought that we knew the answers and we replied as follows:

ZERO means "nothing".

INFINITY means "a number greater than any countable number".

ZERO and INFINITY "are opposite and they can never be same".

He countered us by first talking about

How do you know you are rich?

infinity and asked, 'How can there be any number which is greater than any countable number?'

We had no answers.

He then explained the concept of infinity in a very interesting way, which I remember even after more than 35 years.

He said that imagine that there is an illiterate shepherd who can count only up to 20.

Now, if the number of sheep he has is less than 20 and you ask him how many sheep he has, he can tell you the precise number (like 3, 5, 14, etc.). However, if the number is more than 20, he is likely to say "TOO MANY".

He then explained that in science infinity means 'too many' (and not uncountable) and in the same way zero means 'too few' (and not nothing).

As an example, he said that if we take the diameter of the Earth as compared to the distance between Earth and Sun, the diameter of earth can be said to zero since it is too small.

However, when we compare the same diameter of earth with the size of a grain, the diameter of earth can be said to be infinite.

Hence, he concluded that the same thing can be ZERO and INFINITE at the same time, depending on the context, or

your matrix of comparison.

The relationship between richness and poverty is similar to the relationship between infinity and zero.

It all depends on the scale of comparison with your wants.

If your income is more than your wants, you are rich.

If your wants are more than your income, you are poor.

I consider myself rich because my wants are far less than my income.

I have become rich not so much by acquiring lots of money, but by progressively reducing my wants.

If you can reduce your wants, you too can become rich at this very moment.

The CSG Bone of Contention

* Cont. from page 4

This is particular important in a Covid-19 afflicted world where stock values and revenues on investment have been impaired. We should recall that pension funds and the pensions of employees and pensioners were severely eroded during the 2008 financial crisis. Groping blindly in uncharted waters is not an option if the management of pension funds are to be judiciously steered through the present Covid-19 related economic crisis. This is not a job for the dilettante. It is therefore high time to professionalize the sound management of pension funds in the country. The pension pot and the pensions of employees are determined by pension contributions of employees and employers and the sound and expert management of the pension fund.

The pension scheme is an important and cardinal component of an employment package across the world. In the UK, private sector companies very often offer pension schemes with more generous contributions by the employer significantly above the norms prevailing generally in order to attract and invest in talented and high quality cadres. The employee has the option to choose from different pension schemes and can track the performance of the chosen pension fund as well as his projected pension live.

The management of the pension fund is entrusted to independent trustees who use the expertise of professional pension fund managers to maximize pension value. Representatives of employees are also members of the board of trustees of the pension fund. This is a far cry from

“The Sugar Industry Pension Fund (SIPF) which is one of the first pension funds established in the country is an impersonal juggernaut which has accumulated and owns prime assets such as Rogers House and Cerne House as well as various other properties. The core object of the Fund must be to ensure that there are no conflicts of interests and that revenues from the diverse assets of the Fund are systematically maximized for the benefit of pensioners...”

the manner pension funds are managed in Mauritius and the prevailing norms of transparency and accountability governing the administration of pension funds in the country.

Pensioner friendly Juggernaut

For example, the Sugar Industry Pension Fund (SIPF) which is one of the first pension funds established in the country is an impersonal juggernaut which has accumulated and owns prime assets such as Rogers House and Cerne House as well as various other properties. The core object of the Fund must be to ensure that there are no conflicts of interests and that revenues from the diverse assets of the Fund are systematically maximized for the benefit of pensioners.

As a matter of principle, it is essential that each generation of pensioners draw the full benefit of a professional and

judicious management of the portfolio of diverse assets of the Sugar Industry Pension Fund during their lifetime. It therefore needs to be independently managed by pension fund management professionals with apt employee representatives on the board of the Fund having their say in the decision making process.

The SIPF Act is a patent snapshot of the mindset of a bygone era. It is an inchoate jumble of clauses which clouds the thrust and core elements which are relevant to the members of the Fund. The Act must therefore be urgently streamlined by cutting through the dense maze to bring clarity and above all render it more intelligible and user friendly to the large number of sugar industry pensioners and members of the Fund.

International best practice norms

The debate over the CSG must therefore urgently trigger a long overdue overhaul of the operating framework of pension funds in the country to ensure that their tenor and management are benchmarked on the norms of best practice prevailing in the world. The CSG pension fund has to be brought under the ambit of the operating framework to ensure strict governance, transparency and accountability.

The cardinal rule must be that all pension funds must necessarily be administered by independent trustees assisted by the professional expertise of seasoned pension fund managers instead of a caucus of employers' representatives driven by parochial interests. The interests of pensioners must therefore remain paramount and prevail at all times.

Mrinal Roy

1 THE EXPERTISE - JMLS CANCER SUPPORT CUP
1450 m Valeur [0-15] Time - 12h15
1 NEVER FEAR CD 3-2-1-1/2 62(-4) A.Sonaram 6 340
2 SEVENTH SILVER RG 10/1-4-7-8 62(-3) A.Roy 1 800
3 KEMAL KAVUR G 9-6-5-7-R 61 S.Rama 5 1600
4 CAPTAIN FALCON G 7-6-7-7-5 60.5 T.Juglall 2 800
5 VALERIN CD 3-5-2-3-1 60.5 I.Chisty 7 350
6 DOUBLE GRATITUDE RM 0-6-7-9-7 60 P.C.Orffer 8 800
7 SEVEN CARAT SN N/1-1-4-4 60(-4) N.S.Batchameah 4 600
8 BIG SMOKE CR 9-6-8/5-6 59.5(-4) B.Deenath 3 2500

2 THE PINEHURST CUP
1850 m Valeur [0-25] Time - 12h50
1 MIDNIGHT ORACLE CD 4-1-3-5-4 61 I.Chisty 11 650
2 BOUCLETTE TOP G 6-7-6-2-5 60 S.Rama 3 1000
3 TANJIRO CD 10-6-6-3-6 60(-4) A.Sonaram 6 1400
4 SIR CAPERS PM 4-2-1-4-6 59.5 C.Segeon 8 800
5 DAREDEVIL AVIATOR JMH 2-1-4-4-7 59 T.Juglall 2 1000
6 ITALIAN WAY VA 6-7-2-1-3 59 B.Fayd'herbe 4 450
7 BARKING IRONS JMH 7-9/8-4-4 58 G.D.Aucharuz 9 1100
8 REDWOOD VALLEY RM 7-4-3-5-5 58 P.C.Orffer 5 420
9 NAPOLI SN 7-2-8-8-8 57 R.Hoolash 10 1600
10 DESERT THIEF RG 2-3-5-3-1 56.5 D.David 7 480
11 TIGER'S BOND [EA] PM 9-4-10-5-3 56.5 ----- 1 ----

3 VEEJAY KUMAR BEEHAREE MEMORIAL CUP
1650 m Valeur Benchmark 31 Time -- 13h25
1 WEST COAST WARRIOR RG 5-9-3-6-3 60 D.David 5 600
2 BARAK LAVAN SN 5-4-2-6-5 59.5 G.D.Aucharuz 1 750
3 DECLARATOR RG 9-2-3-6-R 59.5 J.Allyhosain 9 1400
4 RON'S JOY GR 0-0-0-0-1 59.5 N.Juglall 4 310
5 SIBERIAN HUSKY CR 7-8-3-9-7 59.5 B.Bhaugerothee 2 700
6 EMAAR CD 2-5-1-9-5 59 I.Chisty 3 600
7 IMPERIAL RAGE SJ 0-0-0-0-6 59 T.Juglall 7 2000
8 JET PATH VA 1-3-10-4-8 58.5 B.Fayd'herbe 6 1200
9 STAR OF ZEUS PM 1-2-5-4-3 58 C.Segeon 8 650

Programme des Courses

4 THE ISHOP BY LEAL TROPHY
1400 m Valeur Benchmark 36 Time -- 14h00
1 DRIVEN FORCE GR 2-5-4-4-3 60 N.Juglall 2 750
2 KINGSMAN PM 0-0-R-R-4 59 C.Segeon 5 470
3 ALSSAKHRA G N-7-4-2-5 58.5 T.Juglall 3 1400
4 LAGACIO G 2-2-1-4-4 58.5 G.D.Aucharuz 4 500
5 COPENHAGEN VA 5-1-2-7-10 58 B.Fayd'herbe 6 600
6 SILVER HERITAGE RM 5-3-1-2-2 58 P.C.Orffer 1 200

5 THE BELKIN TROPHY
1650 m Valeur Benchmark 41 Time - 14h35
1 BLACKBURN ROC GR 0-0-0-0-8 61 N.Juglall 2 300
2 CAPTAIN GONE WILD RG 5-2/1-5-4 60.5 D.David 1 550
3 MOSCHINO VA 3-1-2-3-1 60.5 B.Fayd'herbe 5 500
4 TICKET HOLDER SJ 2-3-2/6-7 59.5 J.Allyhosain 3 720
5 UNCLE FRANK SPN 4-3-1-4-1 59.5 B.Bhaugerothee 6 1100
6 SUBTROPICAL CD 5-7-6-8-4 58(-4) A.Sonaram 4 2500
7 KAYDENS PRIDE RM 4-2-1-5-2 57 P.C.Orffer 8 260
8 LASAIR SN 0-0-0-9-8 57 R.Hoolash 7 9995

6 LEAL COMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATICS TROPHY
1400 m Valeur Benchmark 46 Time -- 15h10
1 SEATTLE KID CD 1-2-2-1-1 60 I.Chisty 3 280
2 CHILI CON CARNE RG 8-10-9-3/10 59.5(-4) N.S.Batchameah 6 2200
3 GUNSTON SH 10-5-6-7-7 59 R.Boutanive 4 2000
4 TRIP TO THE SKY SJ 7/8-8-3-3 58.5 J.Allyhosain 2 350
5 WATCH ME DAD GR 1-2-2-1-1 58.5 N.Juglall 5 280
6 VARSIDE SH 4-1-1/2-5 57.5 S.Rama 1 900

7 THE DEVIALET - ANOTHER CLASS OF SPEAKER TROPHY
1400 m Valeur [61] Time -- 15h45

1 PALACE CHAPEL SJ 3-3-2-1-2 60.5 J.Allyhosain 2 190
2 EHSAAN G 0-0-1-2-4 60 G.D.Aucharuz 11 1000
3 ELUSIVE PATH VA 8-7-4-3-6 59 B.Fayd'herbe 10 2500
4 IDEAL SECRET RM 4-3-2-2-4 59 P.C.Orffer 4 670
5 KAZAAR PM 5-5-4-5-3 59 C.Segeon 9 2000
6 ARABIAN AIR JMH 0-2-1-5-9 58(-4) N.S.Batchameah 3 1800
7 BIG MISTAKE SPN 4-2-2/6-8 58 B.Bhaugerothee 5 1500
8 WAVE G 0-0-0-0-A 57.5 T.Juglall 7 1100
9 SUGOI SH 0-0-4-4-6 54 S.Rama 8 1400
10 SEA DANCE CD 0-0-0-0-4 52.5(-4) A.Sonaram 1 470
11 HENRY TUDOR [EA] CD 4/2-2-6-6 57.5 ----- 6 ---

27e Journée
samedi 21 novembre 2020

8 THE TABASCOREZ CUP
1365 m Valeur Benchmark 31 Time -- 16h20
1 OCEAN DRIVE SOUTH CD 5-2-4-2-7 60 I.Chisty 4 550
2 STOCKBRIDGE SPN 7-3-8-6-7 59.5 B.Bhaugerothee 2 1100
3 BOLLINGER PM 0-0-0-8-2 59 C.Segeon 5 320
4 CAPTAIN GARETT GR 0-0-0-0-6 59 N.Juglall 7 650
5 LEARNING TO FLY P nouveau 59 S.Bussunt 3 1000
6 FAIRBANKS VA 3-4-4-4-1 58.5 B.Fayd'herbe 6 500
7 MAJESTIC MOON SPN 2-8-5-1-1 58 G.D.Aucharuz 1 500

9 THE H. MARC WIEHE PLATE
990 m Valeur [0-25] Time -- 17h00
1 KU DU TU VA N-8-3-4-4 62 B.Fayd'herbe 2 290
2 ENGAGE AND BEWARE SJ 5/R-8-0-R 61 R.K.Chumun 1 3300
3 HARDWIRED PM nouveau 61 C.Segeon 9 770
4 THOMAS HENRY G nouveau 61 S.Rama 3 370
5 TROJAN QUEST JMH 2-4-5-8-4 61 J.Allyhosain 7 900
6 WHAT A KID RG 0-0-0-5-6 61(-4) B.Deenath 5 3300
7 MARK TAPLEY VA 9-8/10-8-8 59.5(-3) A.Roy 4 3000
8 TROJAN WINTER SPN 5-7-2-5-6 59.5 G.D.Aucharuz 8 1100
9 TAKE OFF MODE SN 3-3-1-2-3 58.5(-4) N.S.Batchameah 6 430

Selections
1. NEVER FEAR, VALERIN, SEVEN CARAT
2. DESERT THIEF, ITALIAN WAY, MIDNIGHT ORACLE
3. RON'S JOY, STAR OF ZEUS, WEST COAST WARRIOR
4. SILVER HERITAGE, KINGSMAN, DRIVEN FORCE
5. KAYDENS PRIDE, MOSCHINO, UNCLE FRANK
6. WATCH ME DAD, SEATTLE KID, TRIP TO THE SKY
7. PALACE CHAPEL, EHSAAN, SEA DANCE
8. MAJESTIC MOON, BOLLINGER, FAIRBANKS
9. KU DU TU, TAKE OFF MODE, THOMAS HENRY

In a light vein

Wife: "In my dream, I saw you in a jewellery store and you bought me a diamond ring."

Husband: "I had the same dream and I saw your dad paying the bill."

A mom text, "Hi! Son, what does IDK, LY, & TTYL mean?" He texts back, "I Don't Know, Love You, & Talk To You Later."

The mom texts him, "It's ok, don't worry about it. I'll ask your sister, love you too."

A: I have the perfect son.

B: Does he smoke?

A: No, he doesn't.

B: Does he drink whiskey?

A: No, he doesn't.

B: Does he ever come home late?

A: No, he doesn't.

B: I guess you really do have the perfect son. How old is he?

A: He will be six months old next Wednesday.



An Amish husband, wife and son travel to the city on vacation. They visit a shopping mall and while the mother is shopping, the father and son are standing in awe in front of an elevator (having no idea what it is).

As they watch, an elderly lady walks into the strange silver doors and the doors close. The father and son watch as the numbers go up, and then back down. When the doors open, a beautiful young woman walks out.

A: A chalkboard.

A husband got his mother-in-law a cemetery plot for Christmas. It came with a coffin, tomb stone, and the works.

Next Christmas comes by and the husband gets her nothing.

When the mother-in-law asks, "Why didn't you get me a gift?" the husband says, "You haven't used the one I got you last year!"

Q: Why are hairdressers never late for work?

A: Because they know all the short cuts!

A little girl is serving her father tea while her mother is out shopping. The mother comes home and the father says, "Watch this!"

The little girl goes and serves the mother tea. The mother responds, "Did it ever occur to you that the only place she can reach to get water is the toilet?"

I couldn't find the lock, so I wrote "Covid-19 positive" on the door and left.

When I came back, I saw that the inside was empty, my Corona notice disappeared

And instead hung another notice: 'Disinfection done. Everything cleaned.'



The father leans over and whispers to the son, "Son, go get your mother!"

Q: What is white when it's dirty and black when it's clean?

Life's Stories

A Singer and the Saint

Here is a beautiful story from the life of Swami Vivekananda.

Before he went to America and became a world-famous figure, Swami Vivekananda was invited by the Maharaja of Jaipur, given a royal welcome and hosted in the best suite of the palace with amenities beyond imagination. Exhibiting opulence has been the lifestyle of rich and moneyed people, specially maharajas and millionaires.

Their hospitality managers followed established tradition and protocol of organising dining, drinking and dancing whenever some high-ranking guests had to be entertained. A most accomplished singer, dancer and entertainer was invited to add a unique flavour to the reception, not realizing that to receive a *sanyasi* with singing and dancing girls will be contentious.

Vivekananda at that stage was still on the path of spiritual evolution; he had not reached the pinnacle of self-mastery. He was a young man with self-imposed discipline. When he saw the dancing girls, he withdrew to his room and refused to join the reception.

The Maharaja came and apologised for the misdemeanour of his staff. He said, 'My people had no experience of receiving a spiritual dignitary. We always receive kings, queens and who is who of society. We are sorry, but now it will be too insulting for the famous singer, dancer and entertainer of the country if we ask her to go away without performance and if you do not come and bless her. She will feel very extremely hurt and humiliated. Kindly come out just for a short while.'

Vivekananda was hesitant to join; as it was improper and breach of tenets of the pure life expected of a *sanyasi* -- a condemnation: "Watching performance of dancing girls?" He considered it improper and firmly said, "No".

The artist started singing without him, and she sang a song addressed to a saint. The song was very beautiful. The lyric resounded that "I know, I am not worthy of you, but you could have been a little more compassionate. I am dirt and dust on the road; that I know. But you need not be so

antagonistic towards me. I am nobody -- an ignorant and a sinner. But you are a saint -- you should embrace and uplift me instead of avoiding me?"

Vivekananda heard the melodious voice and moving words from his room. The lady was weeping and singing and he realized the anguish he had caused to the singer inadvertently, prompted by unfounded insecurity within.

Why was he afraid? He reflected; fear exists only if one can be charmed and tempted by desires. One may be afraid of women if besotted and distracted by them. When one is not infatuated, the fears disappear. Non-attachment without any antagonism liquidates all fears.

He opened the door: greeting everybody with customary courtesy and politeness Vivekananda joined where the other guests were waiting. He sat during the performance smiling, with eyes closed. The singer continued her presentation in a soulful voice.

At night, he wrote in his diary: "A new revelation has been given to me by the divine. I was afraid... but the strength of my inner consciousness and contemplation created a new dimension within me. The woman was practising her own dharma, her unique duties with righteousness, her 'swadharma' like a pure soul. The tears were so innocent and the singing and the dancing so holy that I would have missed a memorable experience. Sitting near her, for the first time I became aware that it is not a question of 'who is there outside'; it is a question of 'what is within and inside'."

That night he wrote in his diary 'I transcended fear'.

'That beautiful singer helped me transcend it. This was a miracle. Nobody knows from where the help will come. Nobody knows what is evil and what is good. Who can decide? Mind is always at crossroads and helpless. Do not let preconceived notions cloud your attitude: the development from attachment to detachment and non-attachment will emerge and desireless actions will pave the way to liberation.'



Healthy Living

Get Fit for Life

You should keep moving no matter your age. Learn how to fit exercise into your schedule



It's important to keep moving no matter how old you are. Exercise keeps your body and your brain healthy. How does it do that? And what's the best way to work it into your life?

Exercise can help you live a longer, healthier life because it can:

- * Keep your bones, muscles, and joints healthy
- * Make you less likely to have things like diabetes, colon cancer, and osteoporosis
- * Lower your blood pressure
- * Manage stress and improve your mood
- * Ease symptoms of anxiety and depression
- * Lower your chances of heart disease
- * Manage chronic conditions like arthritis or diabetes by helping with things like stamina, joint swelling, pain, and muscle strength
- * Help with your balance, so you're less likely to fall and break bones

How much exercise?

As you get older, you may be a bit afraid of exercise. Maybe you think you might hurt yourself or that you have to join a gym. Or you may not be sure what exercises you should do.

The key isn't how or where you get active; it's just to start moving.

Healthy adults should aim for 150 minutes of activity that gets your heart going and your blood pumping every week. Sure, you can do that in exercise classes. But you can also get it by brisk walking. It's also important to do movements that work all your major muscles at least 2 days a week. Also try to do

flexibility exercises 2 or 3 days a week to help with your range of motion.

While 150 minutes may sound like a lot, you don't have to do it in big chunks. You can take a 10-minute walk or spend 10 minutes sweeping the porch. It all adds up.

If you're feeling energetic, you'll get even more health benefits if you work up to 300 minutes or more of exercise a week.

But a simple goal is to try to get 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise on most days. You may be able to do that some weeks and not others. Remember, it's a goal and not a rule. Do what works for you.

How to get moving

There are two ways to move: exercise and physical activity.



Exercise is planned activity like aerobics classes, tai chi, spin classes, or swimming. Physical activity is the way you "sneak" movement into your day, like walking the dog or gardening. Adding both to your routine will help you stay healthy and live longer. But always check with your doctor before suddenly being more active.

You don't need fancy clothes or equipment. To get in motion in a less formal way, you can:

- * Take a brisk walk or jog
- * Ride a bike
- * Rake leaves or push a lawn mower
- * Sweep or dust
- * Play tennis
- * Walk up and down stairs
- * Carry groceries

You should start to feel stronger and have more energy in just a few weeks. Then if you decide you're up to it, you can go to the gym or community center and take water aerobics or dance classes or strength-training exercises.

The Smelly Truth about Romantic Relationships and Health

Study participants slept better when they were exposed to their absent partner's scent. Photo - Shutterstock

Having trouble sleeping? Nervous about an important interview? Smelling your partner's worn clothing may help improve your sleep and calm your nerves.

While it may sound strange to smell your partner's clothing, these behaviours are surprisingly common. In one study, researchers asked participants if they had ever slept with or smelled their partners' worn clothing during periods of separation. Over 80 per cent of women and 50 per cent of men reported they had intentionally smelled an absent partner's clothing. Most of them said they did so because it made them feel relaxed or secure.

Social scents and health

Along with colleagues at the University of British Columbia, Marlise Hofer and Frances Chen from the Department of Psychology, conducted research to examine whether exposure to the scent of our romantic partner might have benefits for our psychological and physical health.

Specifically, a first experiment tested whether a partner's scent improved sleep, and the results of that research have been accepted for publication in the journal *Psychological Science*. The second study, which tested whether these scents

reduced stress, was published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

People reported that their sleep was better on nights when they thought they were smelling their partner's scent. However, data from the sleep watches revealed that people's sleep efficiency was higher - in other words, they experienced less tossing and turning - on nights they were actually sleeping with their partner's shirt. This increase in sleep efficiency occurred regardless of whether participants guessed that the shirt was their partner's. This suggests that the effects of exposure to a partner's scent can occur outside of our conscious awareness.

Participants in the study experienced an average of more than nine additional minutes of sleep per night when exposed to the scent of their partner, equating to more than one hour of additional sleep per week. This increase was achieved without participants spending any more time in bed. The average improvement in sleep efficiency from sleeping with a partner's scent was similar in magnitude to improvements documented for melatonin supplements, which are often used as a sleep aid.

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Preity Zinta and other Bollywood actresses who kept their wedding a secret

The weddings of Bollywood actors always make it to the headlines. While some actors make this a grand event for fans to recall it even after years, others like to keep their wedding low-key and get married in a private ceremony. Here are names of some of the popular celebrities from the Indian entertainment industry who kept their wedding a secret affair, as reported by Pooja Dhar of Republic World.



Preity Zinta and Gene Goodenough

Preity Zinta met Gene Goodenough in Santa Monica, Los Angeles, and the two instantly felt a connection. After dating each other for over five years, the couple finally decided to take their relationship to the next level.

On February 28, 2016, Preity Zinta tied the knot with her longtime boyfriend, Gene Goodenough. The couple tied the knot in a Hindu style wedding ceremony in Los Angeles, with an intimate gathering of family and very close friends only.



Rani Mukerji and Aditya Chopra

Rumours of Rani Mukerji and Aditya Chopra being in a relationship had been making rounds for a very long time. After keeping their relationship very discreet and under the wraps for years, the couple got married in the same manner too.

Bollywood actor Rani Mukerji and the head of Yash Raj Films, Aditya Chopra, tied the knot on April 21, 2014, at an intimate ceremony outside India.

Madhuri Dixit Nene and Dr Sriram Nene

Madhuri Dixit Nene was at the peak of her career when she decided to settle down with a cardiovascular surgeon based in Los Angeles, Dr Sriram Nene. The couple tied the knot on October 17, 1999, and have been happily married for over two decades.

The marriage was a secret affair, as it was only the next day (October 18, 1999) when Madhuri Dixit Nene's longtime manager, Rikku Rakeshnath, informed the media about the marriage. Madhuri Dixit Nene and Dr Sriram Nene got married in the US.

Niti Taylor and Parikshit Bawa

Niti Taylor tied the knot with her childhood sweetheart and Indian Army Captain Parikshit Bawa on August 13, 2020. The wedding was an intimate affair, having family and close friends only at a Gurudwara in Gurgaon.

The actor has often mentioned on many media platforms that the couple instantly connected with each other because of their common qualities and likings. The news of the wedding was made public through the couple's official Instagram handle.



Neha Dhupia and Angad Bedi

Neha Dhupia and Angad Bedi are one of the most talked-about couples in the entertainment industry. This love story, which started with being "one-sided" as Neha Dhupia had already rejected Angad Bedi's marriage proposal once, went ahead to grow into a strong bond of love and friendship.

On May 10, 2018, the couple got married at an intimate ceremony at a Gurudwara.

YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

Everything won't be so easy during this week: despite some valuable awareness, you'll go through moments of stress, disillusion, and conflicts. If your heart is free to be taken, you'll make an encounter of paramount importance during a meeting at your close relatives' house.

Lucky Numbers: 14, 21, 27, 29, 30, 38

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

Let your close relations act more or less in their own way, otherwise you'll risk having big fights within your family circle. You'll use your energy better and will succeed in a difficult project. Do not impose your viewpoint on your colleagues, which won't be very much appreciated.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 9, 10, 11, 13, 27

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

You're likely to have some clashes in your friendships as well as in your love affairs; sometimes you'll have the feeling of talking to others as if they were deaf. Refrain from

expenses that aren't planned in your budget.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 3, 7, 9, 20, 31

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

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

Lucky Numbers: 3, 5, 12, 20, 23, 25

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

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

Lucky Numbers: 3, 17, 25, 31, 39, 40

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

If you wish to strengthen your bonds within a community, it will be now the perfect moment for you to do. You'll spend some good moments with an old friend. Favourable circumstances will allow you to progress with

giant steps in your professional activity.

Lucky Numbers: 20, 22, 27, 29, 30, 37

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

Your friends will give you lots of joys. After an angry outburst, you'll be a little upset; from now on, don't take the smallest incident as if it was a tragedy. You'll have a chance to meet great love.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 14, 20, 23, 27, 30

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

Good bargains are presently possible. You'll charm with disconcerting ease; your heart will be very happy. One certainly can't blame you for lacking initiative; you'll make excellent decisions.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 9, 13, 14, 17, 31

Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

It'll be necessary to control your tongue because this time it's likely to be too loose. You'll go through hesitations and painful moods. Take your family's advice into consideration, especially as far as budgetary

questions are concerned.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 10, 15, 17, 25, 27

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

Renew contacts with your former friends and make new ones; it's owing to your friends that you'll be able to progress. Don't let anyone meddle with your private life, and stand up energetically against impenitent intruders.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 19, 30, 35, 39, 40

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

Strokes of luck will occur in many domains, particularly in your emotional life and at work. You'll be entitled to real and whole satisfactions if you follow the path that you've traced for yourself. Devote a little more time to your family.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 3, 18, 21, 27, 38

Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

Your love affairs will be fine, but they'll tend to be more of an intellectual nature than usual. Your ideas will be clear, and some friendly advice could very positively help you. You'll feel like flying after having signed an immensely profitable contract.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 7, 14, 21, 30, 32

Samir Kochhar: Didn't know 'Bade Achhe Lagte Hain' was so popular

Samir Kochhar on his first day on the set of Bade Achhe Lagte Hain and working with Ekta Kapoor, Ram Kapoor and Sakshi Tanwar.



Actor Samir Kochhar is glad that his first TV show *Bade Achhe Lagte Hain* is back on Sony TV. The soap, which originally aired between 2011 and 2014, was produced by Ekta Kapoor, and starred Ram Kapoor and Sakshi Tanwar in the lead roles.

In an exclusive chat with indianexpress.com, Samir reminisced how the show was a phenomenon when it first aired. "I frankly didn't know that the show was so popular when I signed it. It was my first outing on television. It had received some of the highest TRPs back then. My character

itself was phenomenal. People watched it then, and there is this new generation which is watching it now. It's good that it's back," Samir remarked.

Samir Kochhar played the character of Rajat Kapur. He recalled his first day on set in Dubai. "Initially, I didn't realise how the madness during shooting culminates into so much love. I remember my first day at shoot. It was Sakshi's entry scene in Dubai. An assistant director handed me a file, which I thought was for the coming months of the show. He said, 'No sir, this is for today.' I was

shocked. I understood that I needed to get my mugging skills in place."

"In Dubai especially, there was chaos. There were permission problems and every day was like a roller-coaster ride. The ratings were rising, expectations were up and there were last-minute changes because of this. Ekta is brilliant at managing all that," the actor added.

In the show, Samir Kochhar's character Rajat owns a bookstore in Dubai where Sakshi Tanwar, who plays Priya, works. Recalling his rapport with Sakshi and Ram Kapoor, Samir shared, "Sakshi is a super cool and super fun person, completely away from her onscreen persona. I had a blast with Ram too. We've laughed together, grumbled together. I worked with Ram and Sakshi in Balaji's *Karle Tu Bhi Mohabbat* too, which is a variation of the same theme."

According to Samir, the fact that *Bade Achhe Lagte Hain* was a departure from the regular *saas-bahu* sagas that flooded television, makes it watchable even today. "It was an early slice-of-life show made for a pan India audience. It wasn't about the drama between mother and daughter-in-law or the usual storylines that TV soaps offer," he commented.

TV SERIAL

Kahan Hum Kahan Tum

Friday 13 Nov: The Sippys are shocked to see Rani in their mansion. While Rohit rebukes Sonakshi, Tanya secretly installs the tracking device in Rohan's car.

Monday 16 Nov: Veena gets concerned when Pooja plans to watch Sonakshi's rain dance with the family. Later, Sonakshi and Rohit share a moment before he leaves for Delhi.

Tuesday 17 Oct: Naren is enraged after hearing some vulgar comments about Sonakshi's alluring dance. Later, Sonakshi gets tensed when he summons her to his room.

Wednesday 18 Oct: Sonakshi is in a dilemma after Naren makes a shocking announcement. While Nishi makes an unexpected demand, Pari puts forth a cute challenge to Rohan.

Thursday 19 Oct: Nishi and YK enjoy their marriage anniversary as the Sippys host a grand party. While Tanya spots Rohan and Pari in the kitchen, Suman taunts Nishi.

Chahatt Khanna: People's minds get corrupted after watching 'saas-bahu' serials

Bade Acche Lagte Hain actor Chahatt Khanna recently interacted with indianexpress.com on Instagram. She spoke about the television industry, Mika Singh and OTT platforms, among more.

How was your lockdown?

It has been good for me. Quite a soul-searching quarantine, I must say.

You shot for a video song titled "Quarantine Love" with Mika Singh. How was the experience?

Shoot was very good. Mika was very kind and decent to me. I don't know why people have a problem with him.

Your photo with Mika Singh sparked dating rumours.

Even now people think I am dating Mika. People actually bought it. Not just the fans, even my friends were not believing me when I told them that I am not his girlfriend. I don't know what to say (laughs).

How do you handle all the attention - good or bad?

I am a very normal and simple person. I get offended with trolling. I am sensitive. I feel hurt. I scream and tell it out loud. I should not care but then I explain. It gets to me but I have my ways to get out of it as

well.

You have been in the TV industry for quite long. How has your journey been?

As a person, I will say "Woah, what a journey." If God gives me an option to redo my life, I will still live it this way. I am not a "star", I am an artiste. However, I believe I could have done well only if I had compromised my morals, to be honest. But I am happy. I am content. I sleep peacefully.

How much do you think the industry has evolved?

Evolving and how! Things are so much better, especially for women. Casting couch has reduced. Women have become broad-minded. It is good.

With OTT gaining value, do you think it will give good competition to other mediums?

OTT is not giving competition, it is our future. No matter how much we try to preserve theatres, OTT is going to take over. And the change has already



started.

I love watching films at the theatres. Also, I am a very OTT person. I have never watched television. In fact, I have never seen my shows. TV is very silly. I cannot relate to Naagins dancing around in the house, a husband doing black magic or a wife claiming to bring back her husband from the dead. I cannot relate to such stuff. I am one of them but I have not done any such work. The makers of TV shows make such a fool out of our innocent audience.

People's minds get corrupted after watching the *saas-bahu* serials. I tell my friends to do a favour on themselves and not watch TV. You have to be sane. I know it is my bread-butter but then you cannot play with people's mind like that.

However, as an actor, it is a safe medium because of its predictability. I can be a part of a series like *Bade Acche Lagte Hain* but cannot be a daayan or chudail (laughs).

Any project you are working on?

I am not sticking myself to the Indian film industry. I am exploring the world cinema. I am interested in creating more content as a director and writer. I have already written three scripts. So, I think this is my space. I do not relate to actors anymore.

As an actor, I have three series which I am working on behind the camera. Then I'm working as a maker on a theatrical.

CINE 12

Samedi 20 Nov - 21.15

Clarity

Avec: Ryan Merriman, Kayla Ewell,
Sarah Minnich

CINE 12

Samedi 21 Nov - 21.10

Xenophobia

Starring: Kristen Renton, Manu
Intraymi, Brinke Stevens

MBC 1

Dimanche 22 Nov - 23.00



vendredi 20 novembre	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
	07.05 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 10.30 Local: Arts.21 11.00 Doc: A Question Of Science 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.50 Doc: 360 GEO 13.55 Doc: World Stamps 14.00 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 14.30 D.Anime: The Zoo 15.03 D.Anime: Nutri Ventures 15.57 D.Anime: Little Spirou 16.07 D.Anime: Alisa Knows What 17.30 Massive Monster Mayhem 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.05 Magazine MBC Prod 21.10 Serial: When Calls The Heart 22.35 Serial: The Blacklist 23.20 Le Journal 23.55 Mag: Eye On SADC	10.00 Serial: Ki Jaana Mein Kanu 12.00 Film: Haak - Marathi Film Starring: Arun Nalawade 14.07 DDI Magazine 15.00 Mag: Comedy Classes 15.21 Serial: Honaar Soon Mee 15.43 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 16.07 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 16.28 Serial: Bisaat-E-Dil 16.49 Mehendi Tohra Namam Ke 17.11 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.35 Serial: Chhanchhan 18.00 Serial: Bloody Romance 18.30 DDI Magazine 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Serial: Tawaan 20.44 Local: Anjuman 21.11 Local: Noor-E-Iman 22.06 DDI Live	06.00 Mag: Eco India 06.34 Mag: Shift 07.05 Mag: Border Crossing 07.20 Mag: Tomorrow Today 07.46 Doc: Charles Pathé & Léon... 08.38 Doc: 360 GEO 09.47 Mag: Strictly Street 11.27 Mag: Eco India 12.14 Mag: Border Crossing 12.48 Mag: Tomorrow Today 13.14 Doc: Charles Pathé & Léon... 15.01 Mag: Strictly Street 15.28 Doc: Klaus-Dieter Lehmann... 16.10 Doc: The Berlin Wall?? 16.54 Mag: Eco India 17.20 Mag: Shift 18.00 Doc: Like, Date, Delete 18.42 Mag: Green Touch 19.00 Student Support Prog... 21.00 Local: News (English) 21.10 Doc: Margherita S, La Fem...	01.27 Film: The Boss 03.07 Serial: Chicago Med 03.47 Film: Dominion 05.59 Serial: Seal Team 06.44 Film: Boone 09.00 Serial: The Magicians 09.45 Tele: Soleil Levant 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.00 Serial: Chicago Med 12.00 Film: Dominion 13.30 Tele: Totalement Diva 14.46 Film: Boone 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: The Night Shift 21.15 Film: 2 Years Of Love 22.45 Tele: Totalement Diva	08.00 Film: Pyar Kiya To Darna Kya 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: Ghar Ghar Ki Kahani Starring: Rishi Kapoor, Jaya Prada, Govinda 18.00 Live: Samacher 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.51 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka 19.14 Mere Angne Mein
	06.00 D.Anime: Little People 06.23 D.Anime: Fruit Ninja Frenzy... 08.12 D.Anime: Looped 08.28 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Local: People - No93 12.30 Local: Glwar Dantan: Fanfan 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: Alisa Knows What 17.30 Enter: Massive Monster... 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: Noel Des Coeurs Brises Avec: Cindy Busby, Travis Milne, Mark Milburn	07.00 Film: Taqdeer Starring: Shatrughan Sinha, Hema Malini, Mithun Chakraborty, Zeenat Aman 09.35 DDI Magazine 10.00 Bade Achhelagte Hai 12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhyia Bhare 12.35 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 12.52 Serial: High School 13.16 Annakodiyum Ainthus Pengalum 13.42 Serial: Anu Pallavi 15.26 Film: Kambakkht Ishq 17.32 Mag: DDI Magazine 19.00 Zournal Kreol 20.05 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha 20.30 Serial: Bitti Business Wali 21.00 Film: Ek Thi Daayan Starring - Emraan Hashmi, Huma Qureshi, Konkona Sen 23.07 DDI Live	06.00 Doc: Like, Date, Delete 06.42 Mag: Green Touch 06.50 Mag: Global 3000 07.21 Mag: Euromaxx 08.42 Doc: Margherita S, La Fem... 09.35 Doc: Discarded Children 10.17 Doc: The Loneliness Epidemic 11.05 Doc: Like, Date, Delete 12.18 Mag: Urban Gardens 12.23 Mag: Euromaxx 12.51 Doc: My Life With A Robot 13.44 Doc: Margherita S, La Fem... 15.20 Doc: The Loneliness Epide... 16.05 Mag: Green Touch 19.30 Mag: Check In 21.00 Local: News 21.10 Doc: 360 GEO 22.02 Doc: Waterworld 22.44 Doc: Looted Art In The Third 23.27 Doc: Amazing Gardens 23.53 Doc: Ville En Fête	01.26 Film: 2 Years Of Love 02.54 Serial: Chicago Fire 03.35 Film: The Evil Within 05.13 Tele: Destiny 05.58 Serial: The Night Shift 06.40 Film: Savage Pampas 08.30 Serial: The Quest 09.18 Serial: Shades Of Blue 10.02 Serial: Unforgotten 10.45 Film: Hope Dances 12.15 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: The Night Shift 17.45 Film: Père Noël, La Magie... 19.17 Mag: Ultimate Countdown 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: The Night Shift 21.15 Film: Xenophobia 22.47 Tele: Dulce Amor	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 06.59 Ek Rishta Saajhed Ka 07.22 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 15.27 Sanjivani 18.30 Film: Game Starring Abhishek Bachchan, Kangana Ranaut, Anupam Kher 20.39 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 21.24 Serial: Naagin 22.08 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 00.01 Serial: Mere Angne Mein
	06.00 Local: Palette 06.30 Local: Des Histoires A... 07.10 Doc: Scanning The Great... 08.40 Local: Retrovizer 09.00 Elections Villageoises 2020 10.30 Local: Les Grrandes Lignes 11.00 Local: Nu Rasinn 12.00 Le Journal 12.40 Local: Saver Kil Tirel 13.10 Local: Elle - No 121 14.35 Local: Itinerer Moris 15.30 Elections Villageoises 2020 17.30 Local: Entrepreneuriat Au Feminin 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Live: Plateau Special: Elections Villageoises 2020 23.00 Film: Kill Kane Stars: Vinnie Jones, Nicole Faraday, Sebastian Street	07.00 Film: Biradari Starring: Starring Shashi Kapoor, Faryal, Lalita Pawar 09.20 Mag: DDI Magazine 10.00 Local Production 11.00 Serial: Oru Kai Osai 11.23 Serial: Santoshi Maa 12.00 Film: Dil Maange More Starring - Shahid KapoorSoha Ali Khan Ayesha TakiaTulip Joshi 14.06 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: Tita Tita Nu Avance 19.00 Zournal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.05 Serial: Maharakshak: Devi	06.00 D.Anime: Little People 06.22 D.Anime: Fruit Ninja Frenzy 06.45 D.Anime: The Deep 07.15 D.Anime: Trollhunters 08.00 D.Anime: Monster House 09.30 Serial: Lucas Etc. 09.58 Doc: Waterworld 11.23 Doc: Amazing Gardens 12.17 Doc: The World From Above 13.49 Serial: Open Heart 16.21 Film: Space Dogs 19.00 Doc: Zambia 19.31 Mag: Future Mag 21.00 Doc: Code 22.03 Doc: Riding The Rails Across Mongolia 22.45 Doc: Better Brain Health 23.28 Doc: Olivia's Garden 23.53 Doc: Garden Party 00.16 Doc: Zambia 00.46 Mag: Future Mag	01.08 Mag: Close Up 01.34 Film: Xenophobia 03.40 Film: Black Wake 05.08 Tele: Destiny 06.01 Serial: The Night Shift 06.43 Film: Boone 08.30 Serial: The Quest 09.18 Film: Noel Des Coeurs Brise... 10.47 Film: Père Noël 12.15 Serial: Hawaii 5-0 13.09 Serial: Amanda 13.45 Tele: Premiere Dame 15.05 Serial: Chicago Med 17.08 Serial: The Night Shift 17.48 Serial: Hawaii 5-0 18.26 Film: Hope Dances 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: The Good Doctor 21.15 Film: Nowhere To Run 22.49 Tele: Dulce Amor	00.45 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 02.25 Bin Kuch Kahe 03.31 Sanjivani 06.00 Film: Game Starring: Abhishek Bachchan, Kangana Ranaut, Anupam Kher 08.06 Motu Patlu 08.19 Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki 09.54 Jaana Na Dil Se Door 11.40 Piya Albela 14.00 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum 15.38 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.23 Punar Vivaah 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Film: Singh Saab The Great Starring: Sunny Deol, Urvashi Rautela, Prakash Raj 20.53 Nach Baliye 21.42 Bade Acche Lagte Hai

MBC 2

Samedi 21 Nov -
21.00Stars: Emraan Hashmi, Huma
Qureshi, Konkona SenDimanche 22 Nov
- 18.30Stars: Sunny Deol, Urvashi Rautela,
Prakash Raj

Breakfast With Bwana

Trump lost but who will have the last laugh?



Anil Madan

As we look back to June 2015, it would have been hard to predict that Donald Trump, riding down the escalator in Trump Tower would affect this nation so profoundly.

In November 2020, even in losing the election, Trump has taken on a messianic aura with his followers. One is tempted to think that if he had proclaimed himself a new prophet, he could have sold whatever religion he wanted. It may yet happen. The Church of the Last Laugh. It might have been.

The apparent truth is that in November 2020, just about two weeks ago, Trump flopped. He evolved into a colossal failure, taking on the mantle of the Ouroboros. (The ouroboros is often interpreted as a symbol for eternal cyclic renewal or a cycle of life, death, and rebirth.) But is this the end of the Trumpian era? Was he truly the loser? Who will have the last laugh?

One is tempted to think that Joe Biden and Kamala Harris will be laughing all the way, he to the White House and she to the Vice Presidency, she a heartbeat away from becoming the first woman to lead (or try to lead, as many previous Vice Presidents have tried) the nation. She may well be the next President even before the four-year term is up. That's a last-laugh performance if things so unfold. But we have to wait and see.

No matter what, theirs is not as big a last laugh as Mitch McConnell -- Moscow Mitch -- gets. While we may think of Trump as having nominated three Supreme Court justices and 224 federal judges so far, the real credit here goes to McConnell. And his laugh is deep, profoundly impactful, and essentially irreversible. McConnell was single-handedly responsible for stalling the confirmation of federal judges, even of a Supreme Court justice when President Obama nominated Merrick Garland. When he got the chance with a Republican president in the White House, he acted swiftly. Trump gets the nominal credit here but the reality is that he picked judges from a slate of candidates vetted by the Federalist Society.

As people look back on America four decades from now, the federal judiciary

populated by McConnell judges and three Supreme Court justices will have had a profound rightward shift in American jurisprudence. Who knows how regulatory action will be slowed down and who knows how profoundly free-for-all capitalism will have taken hold?

Not to be missed is the fact that his wife Elaine Chao has been a cabinet secretary in the George W. Bush administration (Secretary of Labor) as well as in the Trump administration (Secretary of Transportation). He whose wife laughs with him laughs longest.

America will evolve from a white majority country to a brown majority nation. But contrary to expectations of even two decades ago, the dominant brown people will not be Hispanics but Indians, not of the feather, but of the subcontinent. Even now, Indians have assumed the helm of many of America's largest corporations: Google, Microsoft, IBM, Adobe, Mastercard, Arista Networks, Nokia, Palo Alto Networks, Micron, Reckitt Benckiser. And they will be prominent voices in biotech and medical circles, perhaps in politics too.

“America faces great challenges, as great as ever in our history. Chief among these are the current immediacy of the Covid-19 pandemic. After that, not necessarily in order of importance, for they are all profound, are the need to revamp our infrastructure, the reality of China as a competitor and even an existential threat, an immigration system that has gone beyond collapse, soaring deficits and an untenable level of the national debt, a profound societal division at home, a melting pot where everyone is welcome in the mix and viewed as an American, and not as a distinct element...”

Among Democrats Adam Schiff, Jerrold Nadler, Nancy Pelosi, and Chuck Schumer may rejoice at having done in Donald Trump. Perhaps their impeachment sullied Trump enough and led to his loss. But then, their party's candidates suffered profoundly at the polls. Surely, not the last laugh for them as voters seem to have rejected the Democrats' homegrown brand of socialism.



America will have the last laugh. If not, it is no laughing matter. As for Donald Trump, we have yet to see his next act. Photo - i.guim.co.uk

It is difficult to see the Republican Party prevailing with its right-wing, religion-crazed, Democrat-hating, gun-toting, anti-government stance. But if anyone could miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity, the Democrats can.

The opening for a third party, even a fourth party is gaping.

Can those who led the charge of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement and the crusade against institutional racism claim the last guffaw here? Sadly, those movements have transmuted into misdirected violence and they may have lost the plot. That is no laughing matter. These movements spell more doom for the Democratic Party and its hoped-for brand of new socialism.

One might think that China will have the last laugh here as well with Trump gone. Contrarily, as ineffective as Trump's attempts to rein China's expansionist policies have been, he has succeeded in exposing them. The jury is out on this one. Will Biden have the nerve and the insights needed to curb what could be an existential threat to U.S. dominance and the survival of Nepal, Bhutan, India, Sri Lanka, and Taiwan? Again, no laughing matters here.

The media, particularly the left-leaning media: CNN, MSNBC, NBC, the NYT, Washington Post, The Atlantic, may be tempted to laugh that they did Trump in. Perhaps they did, as much as he did himself in. Some years ago, with his characteristic braggadocio, Trump declared that HE was responsible for the revival of the "failing" New York Times and other media outlets. He may have had a point. These media outlets will have little cause to laugh as the Internet era pro-

duces realignments and shifts. News is no longer reliably just news but is an opinion pancake slurped with syrupy "analysis" to project a viewpoint. One has to believe that discerning listeners and viewers will be driven away while those seeking confirmation bias are likely to get bored with their own inanity.

America faces great challenges, as great as ever in our history. Chief among these are the current immediacy of the Covid-19 pandemic. After that, not necessarily in order of importance, for they are all profound, are the need to revamp our infrastructure, the reality of China as a competitor and even an existential threat, an immigration system that has gone beyond collapse, soaring deficits and an untenable level of the national debt, a profound societal division at home, a dysfunctional healthcare system that works well at some level but not for all, economic and racial tensions that will test how we make equal opportunity a reality without succumbing to handouts to placate the less fortunate, and the challenged of becoming, once again, a melting pot where everyone is welcome in the mix and viewed as an American, and not as a distinct element.

We have seen that the Covid-19 virus has nearly had the last laugh. Perhaps Pfizer, Moderna, and the other technology companies that have developed vaccines will let us laugh again as a nation.

If that laugh lasts, America will have the last laugh. If not, it is no laughing matter.

As for Donald Trump, we have yet to see his next act.

Cheerz...
Bwana