

MAURITIUS TIMES

• *If you entrust me with the presidency, I will draw on the best of us, not the worst. I will be an ally of the light, not of the darkness. - Joe Biden*

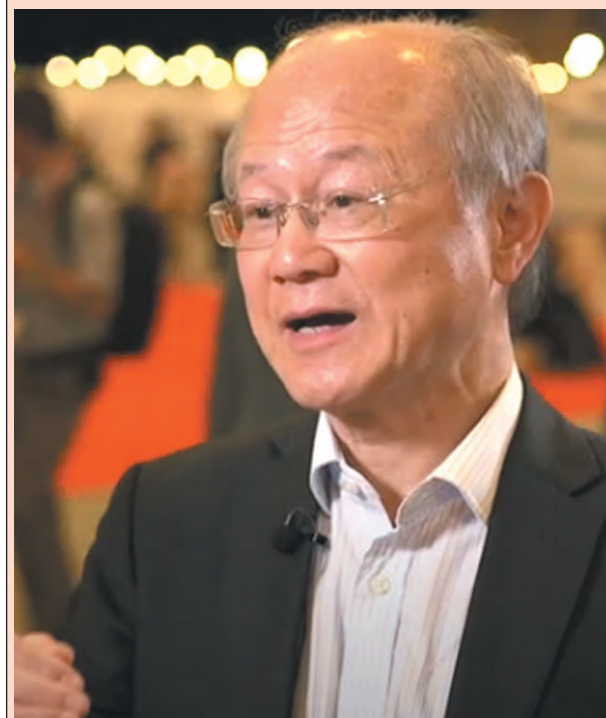
Matters of The Moment

As President I Pledge Not to Divide but to Unify

The divisions in the US have been deep and bitter. America must be United again for, above all, its people

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Covid-19: "It is not time to lower the guard yet. Controlling the borders is key for Mauritius"

'Legalising cannabis beyond medicinal use is not the way forward to help curb the traffic and use of more dangerous drugs'

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US: An Election of Firsts



Election staff carrying Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail machines and ? an Electronic Voting Machine cross a bamboo bridge to reach remote polling stations in Assam, on April 17 2019

"In its last general elections, India had 900 million plus voters registered to cast their ballot at one million booths, all equipped with foolproof electronic machines. With less than a quarter of the number of voters, it is a wonder why a country so advanced in technology as the US still resorts to the older, traditional ballots..."

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Is democracy sacred?

A theologian argues, based on the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, that a political institution has its limits when it comes to being called 'sacred'



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Other Voices

With Kamala Harris, Americans yet again have trouble understanding what multiracial means

While the debates about Kamala Harris' multiraciality may seem new, they are similar to the commentary other high-profile mixed-race people in the US have received about their racial identities

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A Year of Upheavals

The current government will have completed its first year in office this week. It was sworn in on 12th November 2019. The early months of the government have been marked by many an upheaval both locally and abroad. It began with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the impact has been such that to date the global economy is still not out of the woods. Nor is there any indication as to when things will get back to normal. The Mauritian economy has not been spared either; besides its manufacturing sector and tourism experiencing a period of decline and facing new challenges, on other fronts too problems continue to plague the country, not least amongst which are escalating public debt, the financing of electoral promises, the social havoc being caused by what has been called the drug epidemic, etc.

On the political front, the circumstances surrounding the conduct of the last elections have been criticised by the opposition, and electoral petitions have been filed to invalidate the elections in a number of constituencies. The Court will hopefully hear these cases at the earliest, but given the pace at which justice is delivered in these matters it should not surprise us that judgement could be delivered well into the mandate of the government. It has also been a year of significant political upheavals that began with the rejection of the opposition parties by the electorate in November 2019. It is still trying to find its way through an "entente" before something more concrete takes shape, pending the ironing out of potentially contentious issues in relation to the filling of constitutional posts.

The MSM-ML alliance has not been spared either with the dismissal of the former Vice Prime Minister and leader of the ML in the wake of the allegations in the matter of the St Louis Power Plant Redevelopment project. As could be expected, the ICAC has still to complete its inquiry into this matter. But more was to come with allegations levelled by the opposition about the emergency procurement of medical supplies and equipments by companies suspected to be close to the ruling alliance. This has come to mar the efficient

handling of the Covid threat by the government – which had allowed the partial reopening of our borders and the resumption of economic activities.

Another issue which is a matter of serious concern has to do with the functioning of and decisions taken by the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd, set up by the Bank of Mauritius as a Special Purpose Vehicle under its aegis with an initial "ONE-OFF exceptional contribution of Rs 60 Billion" by the Central Bank. The MIC, which has been established by the BOM has the responsibility of providing "through a range of equity/quasi equity instruments in view of ensuring that domestic systemic economic operators are kept afloat...". As yet, it is not known what are the conditionalities that are being applied for the disbursement of the bailout funds. The opacity surrounding the MIC is not only totally unacceptable, but a matter of grave worry for the public whose taxpayer money is here involved directly

There is a wide range of other problematic issues that have plagued the first year of the government, such as the Wakashio shipwreck and latterly the acquisition of property at Angus Road by the Prime Minister, and it would be in the interest of government to come up with the appropriate answers to the queries being raised.

Although the challenges facing Mauritius presently and in the years ahead are daunting, most economists argue that the country has the potential to overcome them if the appropriate conditions are set in place by the government. Overall, our public infrastructures are quite good, despite shortcomings in certain sectors. Nonetheless, economic and institutional transformation has not taken place to keep us going faster and more effectively ahead in keeping with the demands of the time. It may be too early in the day to pass judgement on the intentions of the government about changing course and reversing the trend that is obstructing the proper running of the country, so that confidence and trust can be restored in the country at all levels. These are the twin imperatives that can propel the country forward – if there is a genuine will to this effect.

The Conversation

Is democracy sacred?

A theologian argues, based on the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, that a political institution has its limits when it comes to being called 'sacred'

With millions of votes yet to be counted and the election far from being decided, President Trump falsely claimed victory and called for a halt to vote-counting. His rival, Joe Biden, meanwhile, vowed that every ballot would be counted.

Such moments of political drama could have some of us grasping for religious imagery and language. Indeed, one protester at a post-election rally in Missouri was quoted putting the fight over votes in explicitly sacred terms: "Votes are the host, they are a holy item right."

It echoes the language of politicians themselves. A month before the Nov. 4 election, a Democratic congressman called Trump "a threat to our sacred democracy." And Vice President Mike Pence used explicitly religious language in his speech at the Republican National Convention in August.

This election is "a time of testing," he said. Blending images of the flag over Fort Henry with a biblical passage from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, Pence continued: "So let's run the race marked out for us. Let's fix our eyes on Old Glory and all she represents... And let's fix our eyes on the author and perfecter of our faith and our freedom."

At one level, the use of such religious language makes sense. Nations are, like religions, institutions. Also like religions, they are held together by rituals. A nation coming together to vote may feel a bit like a faith community gathering for worship, especially given that many places of worship double as voting stations.

However, in my research in Christian theology, I have found that the analogy between political and religious activity has important limits.

To understand why, it is worth looking to one of the most influential Christian thinkers on the boundary between the political and the sacred, the 13th-century theologian Thomas Aquinas.

Political virtues

Politics, in Aquinas' reading, is defined as the way humans organize



Voters mark their ballots at a church in Stamford, Conn. Photo - AP

their common pursuit of a good life, a life formed by virtues like courage. If we could all be courageous together, we would be well on our way to being good citizens.

Putting these virtues into practice is challenging, though, and Aquinas says it will involve "some kind of training." Eventually, individuals might live courageously because they want to live in a society where courage is a commonly held to be good.

In the meantime, though, a society needs "training" through laws, proper enforcement and appropriate judicial intervention, so that it can regulate at least a minimal measure of virtue.

Aquinas suspected that some blend of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy was the best path to this common good: Such a state could have a unified voice, a counsel of trusted sages and the voice of the people to hold both accountable.

However, political virtue will always involve the possibility of coercion for those who fail to practice it. Most recently, we see this in the activation of the National Guard to help ensure safe and fair voting procedures throughout the states.

This is appropriate, on Aquinas' terms. When the common good is under threat, "civic virtue comes armed," as American theologian Stanley Hauerwas puts it in his interpretation of Aquinas.

Anthony D. Baker

Seminary of the Southwest

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Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

US: An Election of Firsts

Joe Biden is the oldest first-timer American President-elect, eventually President. His Vice-President Kamala Harris is the first woman to be ever elected to this office in the US



At Thulasendrapuram village in Tamil Nadu state, once home to Harris' maternal grandfather P.V. Gopalan, celebrations broke out with locals lighting firecrackers, praying at its main temple and waving posters bearing the 56-year-old's face. Photo - images.ctfassets.net

Even as the voting was going on, several American commentators were themselves saying that the American election system is broke. For me what seems bizarre about this system is that - again as pointed out by these commentators - every state has different election laws, for example as regards the timings for closure of voting booths or accepting ballots being mailed. One would have thought that the country that prides itself to be the oldest democracy in the world today would have a central statutory body organising its elections, much like is present elsewhere (Electoral Commissioner Offices). Even in tiny Mauritius for that matter!

The other puzzling thing is that there is no voting by electronic machine, which has resulted in the uncertainties if not chaos in the counting of the electoral bulletins. In contrast, in its last general elections, the largest democracy in the world, India, had

charges contesting the procedures and the results in different states, and asking for stopping of counting in some states. 74 million Americans voted for the Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden; leaving him not far behind was Republican Donald Trump, at 70 million votes. Considerable, however one looks at it. But there has to be

“In its last general elections, the largest democracy in the world, India, had 900 million plus voters registered to cast their ballot at one million booths, all equipped with foolproof electronic machines that would issue a slip to the voter after s/he was done to confirm that the vote was that of the registered voter. And the results were declared without any hitch in the expected time frame. With less than a quarter of the number of voters, it is a wonder why a country so advanced in technology as the US still resorts to the older, traditional ballots...”

mother Shyamala in Tamil Nadu; there were more prayers, jubilation, and distribution of sweets in the Indian tradition when her victory was announced, and hope expressed that someday she would visit the village in her capacity as Vice-President.

It must be noted though, that she has always identified herself as Black, having a father of Jamaican origin, an economist whom her mother (herself a nutritionist) met when they were studying at Stanford in the 1950s. They divorced after a few years of marriage, and it was her mother who brought up her and her sister Maya.

Perhaps if Donald Trump had not been as rough spoken as he been all through his four years as President he might have had a greater chance of serving a second mandate. Pro-Republican analysts pointed out some of the positives of his mandate: the American economy has grown by 2-3 trillion USD; unemployment is low; he has countered the ambitious rise of China, and has

brought back jobs that had been outsourced to the dragon; he has given due concern to the military and strategic security of the country by refusing China's 5G; he has thawed relations with North Korea; he has brokered the deal between Israel and a few Arab countries, reducing the perennial tension Israel-Palestine conflict - among others.

Others will highlight the negatives. And those of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris too will no doubt surface in due course.

But for the time being, let them bask in their moments of glory, and let the traumatized American people too savour their hope of 'return to normalcy', as a Mauritian friend of mine, a senior medical researcher formerly at Harvard, wrote to me on Sunday last. These extracts from his mail reflect the new American mood, if I may put it this way, and may it not be betrayed!

'I had thought that in this election, the forces of tribalism, silent, would prevail to add to the traditional Republican/conservative electorate. In this group, overwhelmingly white, they seemed to project a palpable anguish that a way of life they had come to expect, was ebbing away.

...But last night, as Mr Biden declared victory with humility, calling for unity, another America prevailed, the America that Has Always Been There, the America That Has Always Been Great.

That America where brighter possibilities exist in face of indomitable odds to shape our fates into a better tomorrow, that boundless enthusiasm...

I think for the rest of the world, the most potent view of the true American ethos, 'America as an experiment and an idea' was on display in Mr Biden's statement: "And we lead not by the example of our power, but by the power of our example."

This is a time for jubilation, well deserved for the winners.

Yet for me there is sorrow too, for the lives we have lost needlessly because of the pandemic, and more we will lose needlessly in the months to come before there will be normalcy, if there ever will be normalcy.

As private citizens, we will make sure that we continue to force the moral compass North, to strive for justice, dignity and prosperity for all.

We begin the project of healing the soul of the nation even if there will be hard work, and heartbreaks along the way. That is the American spirit.'

For me, the great takeaway from Biden's speech is: '*And we lead not by the example of our power, but by the power of our example*'. (italics mine)

A qui de droit...



Election officials make their way to a remote village via tractor in Assam state for electronic voting. Photo - Getty Images

900 million plus voters registered to cast their ballot at one million booths, all equipped with foolproof electronic machines that would issue a slip to the voter after s/he was done to confirm that the vote was that of the registered voter. And the results were declared without any hitch in the expected time frame. With less than a quarter of the number of voters, it is a wonder why a country so advanced in technology as the US still resorts to the older, traditional ballots. So much of acrimony could have been avoided had electronic voting been in place.

Whatever be, the broke system delivered its verdict even as outgoing President Donald Trump's lawyers were busy filing

a winner, and a loser - though Trump is yet to accept that he has lost the election.

The result has highlighted some firsts in a US election. Joe Biden is the oldest first-timer American President-elect, eventually President. He was also third-time lucky, having failed to make it to the Presidency twice before: his patience and perseverance have paid off.

His Vice-President Kamala Harris is the first woman to be ever elected to this office in the US; she is also the first woman of colour to hold such a post; also the first Black and American-Indian in that position. Prayers were said for her over days ahead of the voting in the village of origin of her



Mrinal Roy

As President I Pledge Not to Divide but to Unify

The divisions in the US have been deep and bitter. America must be United again for, above all, its people

It has taken days to determine the outcome of the US presidential elections as it has been a neck and neck battle all the way. It must be said that President Donald Trump echoes the angst and anger of large sections of Americans who feel that they have been let down and short changed by the political class and the political Establishment. He is considered a maverick by the political Establishment but his brand of disruptive policies appeals to large swathes of Americans.

The elections were therefore extremely polarized and divisive. The United States is profoundly divided between those who wanted four more years of Donald Trump policies of putting 'America First' and 'Make America Great Again' and those who wanted to put an end to a presidential term of office which was perceived as disruptive and alien to the values and founding principles of the United States.

The mano-a-mano between the two camps has mobilized the US electorate and has resulted in the highest (66.9%) turnout of voters since 1900. More than 160 million electors out of 239 million voters braved a devastating Covid-19 pandemic to exercise their right to vote. It is evident that the tenor of policies adopted by President Trump to put 'America First' and 'Make America Great Again' commanded support from a broad cross-section of US voters. On the other hand, pro Democratic Party voters who had not exercised their right to vote at the 2016 elections, which they lost to Donald Trump, were determined not to make the same mistake twice. They rallied in support of Joe Biden and voted massively for him. The right to vote was so arduously won from the forces of reaction that it should be anathema for voters across the world not to actively exercise this fundamental right at each election.

Despite the polls giving a commanding lead to Joe Biden before the elections, there was no 'blue wave' of Democrats surging across the United States. The elections were a closer race than pollsters had predicted. The outcome of the elections has been too close to call. There was drama and suspense. The stock market was in turmoil. The uncertainty regarding the result of the elections

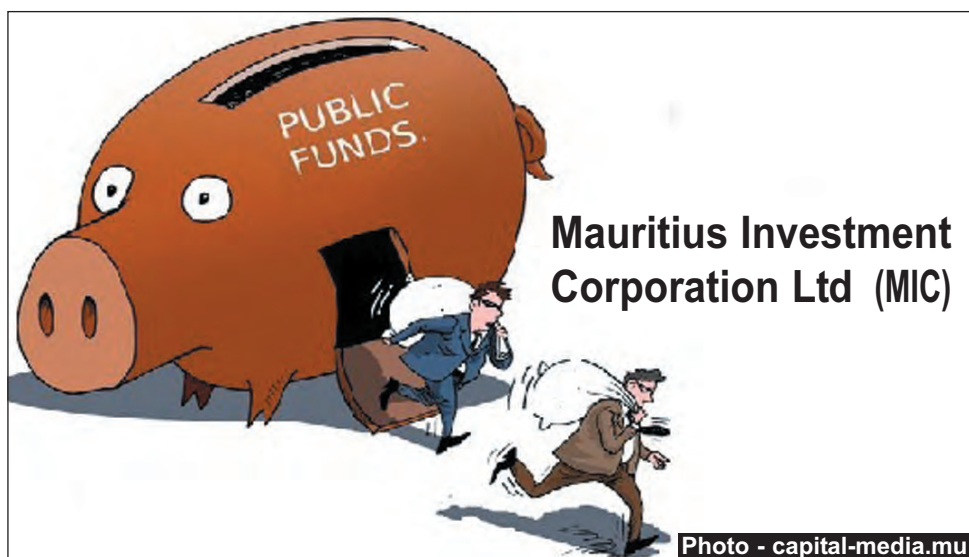


Photo - capital-media.mu

“These lofty ideals and cardinal principles of governance (as stated by President-elect Joe Biden and Kamala Harris) are in sharp contrast with the quality and standard of ethics of the political class and the deplorable state of our democracy undermined by appalling governance, nepotism, ongoing investigations on various allegations of corruption involving politicians, the opacity which shrouds the terms and conditions under which substantial bailout funds drawn from some Rs 80 billion allocated to the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd (MIC) are being advanced to distressed companies, the lack of transparency and accountability in state procurement tenders and public spending...”

lasting several days was a nightmare for markets and leaders across the world. The world had to wait for the counting of all the votes of some of the fiercely disputed battleground states such as Michigan, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Nevada or North Carolina to be completed to know the outcome of the elections. These votes included a huge number of postal votes cast during a Covid-19 pandemic afflicted election. A record 101 million early votes were cast in person and by mail before the polls even opened on election day.

Every vote counts

In a tight presidential race, when the counting of the votes was still going on, Donald Trump made the outrageous and unsubstantiated allegation that 'the election was a major fraud on our nation' and that they would be going to US Supreme Court to contest the election results. It all seemed already scripted after the strong criticisms voiced against mail-in ballots or postal votes during the run-up to the elections. It is flabbergasting that the integrity of the voting system in one of the largest democracies be contested by an incumbent President, especially as there is an online tracker to monitor the counting of the votes including in the fiercely fought battleground states. His campaign team has reportedly filed lawsuits in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Georgia to contest the electoral process and the outcome of the elections. These legal challenges could further delay the official announcement on the outcome of the presidential

elections. Such a stance is bound to exacerbate the deep divide in the country and prevent those who lose the elections to fairly accept the result of a democratic process and help the country come together.

The unsubstantiated allegations of fraud made by President Trump have however not been endorsed by prominent members of the Republican Party such as Utah Senator Mitt Romney or House Representative Will Hurd of Texas who tweeted: "A sitting president undermining our political process and questioning the legality of the voices of countless Americans without evidence is not only dangerous and wrong, it undermines the very foundation this nation was built upon." Senator Pat Toomey from Pennsylvania said in a statement that once the state's final election count is "reached and certified, all parties involved must accept the outcome of the election regardless of whether they won or lost".

It was clear from the trend of the votes count in the last five disputed battleground states, namely Nevada, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Georgia and North Carolina, that fuelled by postal votes from predominantly pro-Democrat counties, Joe Biden had overtaken and gone ahead of Donald Trump in all these states except North Carolina. Donald Trump had urged people to vote in person whereas Joe Biden had encouraged people to vote by post in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Joe Biden won Arizona, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, states that President Donald Trump had won in 2016. He has tallied 279 electoral votes which are more than the 270 electoral votes required for winning the 2020 US presidential elections. He is expected to obtain even more electoral votes when the vote count is completed. Donald Trump is the first incumbent President to lose re-election since Republican George H.W. Bush in 1992.

It is a comforting and historic moment that the outcome of the 2020 presidential elections was decided in Pennsylvania where the US Declaration of Independence was adopted on 4 July 1776 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Changing demographics and voting patterns

It must be flagged that the demographics of the United States and its distribution across US states keep shifting. Research results released in September 2020 showed that in all 50 states in the US, the share of non-Hispanic White eligible voters declined between 2000 and 2018, with 10 states recording double-digit decline in the number of eligible voters. In contrast, Hispanic voters now represent increasingly larger shares of the electorate in every state. These gains are particularly large in states like Nevada, California and Texas which have registered a rapid growth in the Hispanic share of the electorate. For example, in the battleground state of Arizona, Hispanic adults made up about one-quarter (24%) of all eligible voters in 2018. In the US Hispanic voters represent 13% of eligible voters. However, within the Hispanic voters, a majority of Cuban eligible voters residing predominantly in Florida lean towards the Republican Party.

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Back to the golf course for Trump.
Photo - heraldscotland.com

Donald Trump returns to the golf course

tion he plans to concede the race anytime soon amid unsupported claims of widespread voter fraud, although one former Republican presidential nominee - Utah senator Mitt Romney - predicted he eventually will. Mr Bush's statement heaped additional

pressure on Mr Trump to accept the outcome of the ballot. "The American people can have confidence that this election was fundamentally fair, its integrity will be upheld, and its outcome is clear," he said.

* * *

Boris Johnson has cast doubt on the prospects of a trade agreement with the US under Mr Biden,

the president-elect, saying a deal will not be "a pushover". The British PM instead talked up the chances of close cooperation with the incoming Biden administration on climate change as Britain prepares to host the crucial COP26 international summit in 2021.

In the wake of the Democrat's victory, Mr Johnson faces an urgent challenge to forge links with a president-elect whom he has never met and who has previously described him as a "physical and emotional clone of Trump". Mr Biden is known to be an opponent of Brexit, which Mr Johnson championed, and is particularly concerned about its impact on the Good Friday Agreement in Ireland, his family hailing from County Mayo.

Donald Trump returned to the golf course on Sunday after being beaten by Joe Biden in the US presidential election, as former president George W Bush sent a shot across his bows by calling the election "fair", even as Mr Trump pushed ahead with his legal challenge against the results in some states, reports The Independent.

The president gave no indica-



Joe Biden's presidency will be guided by radically different priorities. Photo - www.ft.com

Biden plans immediate executive orders to reverse Trump policies

President-elect Joe Biden is planning to quickly sign a series of executive orders after being sworn into office on Jan. 20, immediately forecasting that the country's politics have shifted and that his presidency will be guided by radically different priorities, reports Washington Post.

He will rejoin the Paris climate accords, according to those close to his campaign and commitments he has made in recent months, and he will reverse President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the World Health Organization. He will repeal the ban on immigration from many Muslim-majority countries, and he will reinstate the program allowing "dreamers," who were brought to the United States illegally as children, to remain in the country, according to people familiar with his plans.

Biden's top advisers have spent months quietly working on how best to implement his agenda, with hundreds of transition officials preparing to get to work inside various federal agencies. They have assembled a book filled with his campaign commitments to help guide their early decisions.

Biden is planning to set up a coronavirus task force on Monday, in recognition that the global pandemic will be the primary issue that he must confront. The task force, which could begin meeting within days, will be co-chaired by former surgeon general Vivek Murthy and David Kessler, a former Food and Drug Administration commissioner.

But there has also been a recognition of those around him that he may have to lean more on executive actions that he had once hoped. He can reorient various federal agencies and regulations, and he can adopt a different posture on the world stage.

But pushing major legislation through Congress could prove to be a challenge.

Although the Democrats will hold a narrowed majority in the House, the final makeup of the Senate is not yet clear. That will be decided on Jan. 5, with two runoff elections in Georgia. Democrats would need to win both races to effectively have control of the Senate - with Vice President Kamala Harris serving as the tie-breaking vote - while Republicans would retain a narrow advantage by winning at least one.

"The policy team, the transition policy teams, are focusing now very much on executive power," said a Biden ally who has been in touch with his team who, like others interviewed for this story, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations. "I expect that to be freely used in a Biden administration at this point, if the Senate becomes a roadblock."

A Republican-held Senate - or even one with a narrow Democratic majority - probably will affect Biden's Cabinet picks given the Senate's power to confirm nominees.

More on page 6

Coronavirus: Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine found to be 90% effective

The coronavirus vaccine being developed by Pfizer and BioNTech has been found to be 90% effective in preventing people from getting the virus.

Phase 3 of Pfizer's trial involved 43,538 participants from six countries. They received two doses of either the immunisation or a placebo, with 90% protected from the virus within 28 days of having their jabs.

Only 94 people who took part in

the trial developed coronavirus and no serious safety concerns were reported, the US pharmaceutical firm said yesterday.

"Today is a great day for science and humanity. The first set of results from our Phase 3 Covid-19 vaccine trial provides the initial evidence of our vaccine's ability to prevent Covid-19," said Pfizer chairman and chief executive Dr Albert Bourla.

The news saw stock markets



Coronavirus: Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine found to be 90% effective. Photo - atalayar.com

surge, with the FTSE 100 jumping by 5.5% - adding £82bn to the value of its shares and resulting in its best trading day since March.

Pfizer and BioNTech's vaccine is one of around 12 worldwide in the final stages of testing, but it is the first to produce any results.

Ayodhya: Diyas to be lit at Ram Janmabhoomi on Diwali

After more than 500 years, earthen lamps will be lit to illuminate the Ram Janmabhoomi site here on Diwali. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will light lamps during the 'Deepotsav' programme in the city on 13 November, reports IANS.



500,000 lamps to celebrate the return of Lord Ram after a prolonged exile. Photo - newindianexpress.com

According to Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust chief Mahant Nritya Gopal Das: "It will be a real Diwali this year, which will celebrate the return of Lord Ram after a prolonged exile."

State Tourism Minister Neelkanth Tiwari said that more than 500,000 lamps will be lit on the occasion of Diwali. "If there was no coronavirus pandemic, hundreds of thousands of devotees would have participated in this programme," he pointed out.

The Chief Minister has already directed that sepa-

rate programmes should be organised daily during 'Deepotsav 2020', following the COVID protocols.

Around 551,000 earthen lamps will also be lit at Ram Ki Paidi in Ayodhya. All monasteries and houses will be illuminated in the holy city on Diwali. Singing of 'bhajans' and Ramayana recitals will be held in monasteries. A grand decoration of Ayodhya on the Festival of Lights is on the cards.

Illumination at all temples, including Shri Ram Janmabhoomi, Kanak Bhawan, Ram Ki Paidi, and Hanuman Garhi would be done through electric lighting.

The devotees, however, will participate through the virtual platforms. A digital broadcast of the Diwali programmes will be done for the devotees who would not be able to physically visit the temples owing to coronavirus restrictions.

Biden administration may give US citizenship to over 500,000 Indians

According to a policy document issued by the Joe Biden campaign, his administration will work towards providing "a roadmap to American citizenship for nearly 11 million undocumented immigrants, including over 500,000 from India, and will also establish a minimum admission number of 95,000 refugees annually", reports India Today.

As a largely immigrant community, but in some cases with American roots reaching back generations, Indian-Americans know firsthand the strength and resilience that immigrants bring to the United States of America, it said. "He (Biden) will immediately begin working with Congress to pass legislative immigration reform that modernises our system, with a priority on keeping families together by providing a roadmap to citizenship for nearly 11 million undocumented immigrants - including more than 500,000 from India," according to the policy document.

The Biden administration will support family-based immigration and preserve family unification as a core principle of the US' immigration system, which includes reducing the family visa backlog, it said.

"And, he will increase the number of refugees we welcome into this country by setting the annual global refugee admissions target to 125,000 and seek to raise it over time commensurate with our responsibility, our values, and the unprecedented global need. He will also work with Congress to establish a minimum admissions number of 95,000 refugees annually," the policy document said.



Biden will remove the uncertainty for Dreamers by reinstating the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) programme and explore all legal options to protect their families from inhumane separation. And, he will end workplace raids and protect other sensitive locations from immigration enforcement actions, it said.

Launched by the Obama administration, the DACA is an immigration policy that allows some individuals with unlawful presence in the US after being brought to the country as children to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and become eligible for a work permit in the US. DACA recipients are

often referred to as Dreamers. To be eligible for the programme, recipients cannot have felonies or serious misdemeanours on their records.

The Trump administration moved to end the DACA programme in 2017 and was ultimately blocked by the Supreme Court from doing so this year. Even so, his administration scaled back the programme and pledged to end it, leaving thousands of the programme's beneficiaries in limbo.

Biden will also restore and defend the naturalisation process for green card holders, the policy document said.

Employment-based visas, also known as green cards, allow migrants to gain lawful permanent residence in the US in order to engage in skilled work.

"He (Biden) will increase the number of visas offered for permanent, work-based immigration based on macro-economic conditions and exempt from any cap recent graduates of PhD programmes in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields," it said.

With a Biden- Harris win in the US presidential elections, there could certainly be continuity in the Indo-US ties on various fronts. As the Vice President during the Barack Obama administration, Biden played a critical role in the US-South Asia strategy. Beginning on a positive note, Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the duo for their "spectacular" victory.

Financial scandal: Pope moves against secretariat of state

Pope Francis has given the Vatican secretariat of state three months to transfer all of its financial holdings to another Vatican office following its bungled management of hundreds of millions of euros in donations and investments that are now the subject of a corruption investigation.

Francis summoned the secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, his deputy, as well as the Vatican's top finance officials for a meeting on Wednesday and gave them a three-month deadline to complete the transfer, Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said.

The Vatican released the letter that Francis wrote to Parolin on August 25 in which he announced he was stripping the secretariat of state of its ability to independently manage the money.

Francis cited the "reputational risks" incurred by the department's previous investments in speculative operations that have cost the Holy See tens of millions of euros, some of it from Peter's Pence donations from the faithful.

Francis's decision was an embarrassing blow to the secretariat of state's standing as the most powerful Holy See office, reducing it to essentially any other department that must propose a budget and have it approved and monitored by others.

Its financial holdings are now to be held by the Vatican's treasury office, known as APSA and incorporated into the Holy See's consoli-



Vatican officials have allegedly bungled the management of hundreds of millions of euros in donations and investments that are now the subject of a corruption investigation.
Photo - Gregorio Borgia/Reuters

dated budget, Francis wrote. The economy ministry will oversee spending.

The outcome is essentially that which was sought years ago by Cardinal George Pell, Francis's first economy minister who clashed with the secretariat of state over his financial reforms and efforts to wrest control of the department's off-the-books funds. He famously boasted in 2014 that he had "discovered" hundreds of millions of euros that were "tucked away in particular sectional accounts and did not appear on the balance sheet" - a reference to the secretariat of state's in-house asset portfolio.

Pell had to abandon those reform efforts in 2017 to face trial for sexual abuse in his native Australia, but he was acquitted and returned triumphantly last month to Rome, where he was granted a well-publicised audience with Francis.

UK will beat Covid-19 like Lord Ram and Sita defeated Ravana: PM Boris Johnson

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson drew parallels between the festival of Diwali and Britain's fight against the novel coronavirus pandemic. Johnson made the remarks during his inaugural address for 'iGlobal Diwali Fest 2020'.

"While undoubtedly there are huge challenges ahead, I have every confidence in the resilience and resolve and good sense of people across the country and that together we will overcome this virus, just as Diwali teaches us that light triumphs over darkness, good over evil, knowledge over ignorance," UK PM Boris Johnson said addressing the country from his official residence, 10 Downing Street in London on Friday.

Drawing parallels between the triumph of good over evil as signified by the festival of lights, Johnson said, "Just as Lord Rama and his wife Sita found their way home after the defeat of the demon king Ravana, their way lit by many millions of lamps, so too we shall find our way through this, and we shall do so triumphantly."

UK PM Boris Johnson also took note of the fact that the festival of Diwali will be celebrated amid lockdown restrictions in Britain. In fact, he went further to praise the Indian community in the UK for the sacrifices they may have to make to ensure a safe and secure Diwali in the midst of the Covid-

19 pandemic.

"I know that celebrating at a distance isn't easy when you want to get together with all your family or visit your friends or share with them the Diwali fun, as well of course the odd samosa or gulab jamun," news agency PTI quoted Johnson as saying.

Praising the spirit of the Indian community in the face of the pandemic, UK PM Boris Johnson added, "So I want you to know that your sacrifices, and your determination to do the right thing really are helping to save lives, and tough though I know many aspects of this year have been, I have been blown away by the inspirational way in which Hindus, Sikhs and Jains have responded to this crisis with compassion, community spirit and a can-do attitude."

A three-day virtual Diwali fest, 'iGlobal Diwali Fest 2020' will see the participation of top British politicians, including UK Home Secretary Priti Patel, Opposition Labour Party Leader Keir Starmer and Liberal Democrat Ed Davey. Music and dance performances will also be a part of the virtual Diwali fest along with an awards ceremony to honour the contribution of the British Indian community across various fields.

Compiled by Doojesh Ramlallah

Prof Kian Fan Chung

Covid-19: "It is not time to lower the guard yet. Controlling the borders is key for Mauritius"

Our interviewee in today's issue is Kian Fan Chung, MD, DSc., a Mauritian who is Professor of Respiratory Medicine and Head of Experimental Studies at Imperial College London, and Physician at the Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Trust, London, UK. He heads the Asthma Consortium of the NIHR-funded Biomedical Research Unit of the Royal Brompton NHS Trust. He has also advised the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life in preparing

an Action Plan for respiratory Diseases. He makes an overview of the Covid situation, commending the Public Health Services of the country for their successful handling of the pandemic to date. He shares his views on the vaccine developments taking place and the rolling out of vaccination eventually, on the need for continuing with the preventive measures, on air pollution locally, and on the medicinal use of cannabis.

Mauritius Times: Europe remains one of the regions worst affected by Covid-19, with ten of the 20 countries with the highest death count per million people being on the continent. The other ten are in the Americas. Isn't it much safer for Mauritius to keep its borders closed in these circumstances, though that they have been partially re-opened, for a longer time?

Prof Kian Fan Chung: It was 10 months since we came to hear of Covid-19 for the first time and it is now the right time to take stock of how different parts of the world have dealt with this pandemic. At the moment, we have two extreme situations, one in countries in the Far East such as China, Taiwan and Singapore where the pandemic has been well-controlled with only cases coming in from abroad and a few local outbreaks that have been dealt with rapidly and efficiently, and the other extreme characterised by European countries such as UK, France, Spain, Italy and Germany and the US where cases are rising very fast to extremely high levels of infection.

It is pleasing to note that Mauritius remains in the first category where the infection has been effectively controlled, and one of the measures taken was to effectively close the borders, which for a (relatively) small island can be done effectively. In the UK, the borders have never been closed and neither had there been an effective quarantine system set up for those who were entering the country. Mauritius also has been effective in the setting up of centres to isolate, quarantine and treat those who had symptoms of Covid-19, with the severe cases transferred to intensive care units, a system that was initiated in Wuhan on a grander scale that has been shown to work, but this has not been done in UK or other European countries. This might be another reason why we in Europe have yet to tame this pandemic.

* **Genome researchers at the University of Huddersfield and Portugal's University of Minho have recently published their findings in the peer-reviewed journal *Microorganisms*, which suggest that travel restrictions across Britain and Europe seem to have**

“It is pleasing to note that Mauritius remains in the first category where the infection has been effectively controlled, and one of the measures taken was to effectively close the borders, which for a (relatively) small island can be done effectively. In the UK, the borders have never been closed and neither had there been an effective quarantine system set up for those who were entering the country...”



been too little and too late. Does this explain why many countries are having to go for a second lockdown?

This is part of the reason but an important one. Indeed, travel restrictions in and out of the UK has really not been imposed in any way and travellers coming into the UK (residents or foreigners) were not strictly asked to confine for 14 days, and only lately they were asked to do this at home. There has been no particular surveillance set out for this. Hence, when UK residents were allowed to spend holidays in Spain and other European countries, many came back potentially carrying the virus and have likely been spreading it in their communities.

There are also other reasons why we are in our second lockdown in England at present. The first lockdown we had in the UK back in March to June (taken at least

one month too late) was successful in suppressing hospital admissions and deaths, but the number of new cases of infection at the lifting of the lockdown was still high with nearly 800 daily new cases being still registered. This, in combination with people less strict in observing the rules of social distancing, mask wearing and hygiene measures, and with the government failing to provide enough Covid tests and an effective contact and trace system, meant the number of cases started to accelerate towards the end of September, three months after the lifting of the earlier lockdown. Hence the second lockdown, which was (again) delayed and should have been taken earlier.

“In the UK, medicinal cannabis can be prescribed by specialist doctors on a case-by-case basis for only certain health conditions notably for certain forms of epilepsy in both children and adults, in those who have received chemotherapy for treatment of cancer that is causing nausea and vomiting, and those with multiple sclerosis condition who have muscle stiffness and spasm. Medicinal cannabis is used as a last resort in these conditions...”

* **It would also appear that most of Africa and Asia, on the contrary, have reported less Covid-related deaths; the ten with the lowest death count per million are in these parts of the world. Would this have to do with a favourable biology or with these (developing) countries' capacities to deal with pandemics more effectively?**

The number of new cases and death rates from Covid-19 in Africa have been lower than the rest of the world. There are potentially a number of reasons for this. First, most African countries took quick and drastic actions such as the introduction of public health measures and lockdown. Second, there was a high level of acceptance by the public of these measures in a continent that has the youngest population where the median age is only 19! Finally, the usual high temperature and reduced humidity of many African countries do not favour the spread of Covid-19. So there has been both effectiveness in dealing with the pandemic, and favourable conditions for the virus to be less effective in infecting and in causing severe illness.

In Asia, the results have been mixed.

'Partial control is not the objective: total control is. One just cannot allow a single virus to lurk around'

☞ Cont. from page 7

There are countries such as India where the spread of the virus is ongoing but with a relatively high death rate although this is disputed. The recent surge in India particularly in New Delhi has been linked to the high level of pollution.

In China, where the virus originated, extreme swift measures were taken to control the infection. The experience of the previous SARS epidemic in 2004 was also a help in galvanising action in China. There was also the setting up of hospitals to isolate, quarantine and treat all those who had symptoms of Covid-19 helping to restrict spread of this very contagious human-to-human transmitted and dangerous virus that killed particularly the elderly vulnerable people.



50 years of age, particularly health workers at the front-line and care home workers and the vulnerable particularly with medical conditions, with the oldest getting priority.

“I would hazard a guess that pollution in Mauritius is likely to be a problem for many Mauritians, and we cannot be certain how much this affects Mauritians without having measurements of pollution done and also without knowing how much personal exposure to pollution is present...”

*** In the meantime, what precautions should one take if one needs to travel?**

To stay safe when you travel particularly on an aeroplane, one needs to obey the usual rules of maintaining social distancing as far as possible, wearing a cloth face mask, avoiding contact with anyone who is sick, limiting contact with frequently touched surfaces, such as handrails, elevator buttons, and using hand sanitizer or washing hands.

In the airplane, the quality of the cabin air is good, with the air that enters the plane consists of 50% air from outside and 50% air that is recycled through very efficient filters.

*** Despite being tenth most densely populated nation in the world, Mauritius has done rather well in fighting the Covid virus. What does this say about our public health system and its level of preparedness to face the Covid pandemic and indeed future ones?**

“The population also must be reminded to follow the rules of social distancing. Overall there has been an excellent level of preparedness, and Mauritius followed closely the successful experience of China in controlling totally the infection. Partial control is not the objective: total control is. One just cannot allow a single virus to lurk around. Within the total control situation, it becomes easier and safer to allow economic activities to resume...”

There is no doubt that Mauritius has done well and, like China, has not recorded any new cases of Covid infection for several months with all new cases occurring in those arriving into the country. However, it is not time to lower the guard yet. Controlling the borders is key for Mauritius. Also surveillance needs to continue so that any potential outbreaks can be dealt with rapidly and efficiently.

The population also must be reminded to follow the rules of social distancing.

“The reason I was pleased that the Promenade Roland Armand was closed was that it does not make sense to exercise in a polluted environment. In 2018, we published work in *The Lancet* which showed that the respiratory and cardiovascular benefits derived from exercise such as walking were annulled by doing it in a polluted environment such as walking along the busy Oxford Street in London results that were picked up in many newspapers round the world...”

*** The questions that are on everybody's mind are how much longer will it take to develop a safe and effective vaccine, and secondly whether we'll be out of the woods once this is done. What do you think?**

The important emphasis is on the safety and effectiveness of any future vaccine. There are intense activities going on in developing vaccines in US, Europe, Russia, India and China, and the most advanced ones in Phase III trials now are in China (Sinovac, Sinophan, CanSino), in US (Moderna, Pfizer) and in UK (Oxford University with Astra Zeneca). Initial results are going to be available in early 2021. One British minister in the UK suggested having the vaccine in the UK by Easter (April) next year. The big issue is the effectiveness of the vaccine.

The AstraZeneca, Pfizer and Moderna protocols revealed that their trials are designed to test whether their vaccines reduce cases of symptomatic Covid-19, not cases of severe disease, such as those that require hospitalization and can end in death. The hope is that there will be at least 60% of prevention of being infected. Is this sufficient? One does not know and we will have to see.

It has just been announced today that the Pfizer coronavirus vaccine can prevent more than 90% of people from getting Covid-19 from a preliminary analysis of the vaccine that has been tested in over 40,000 people in six countries with no safety concerns. This bodes very well for the efficacy and safety of such vaccines.

However it will take time to provide any effective vaccine to the whole population. So, I foresee that we will still be emphasising the precautions that we should all take to reduce the risk of infection and who knows whether this will allow us to go back to some modicum of 'normal' life again. Individually, we would still have to abide by the rules of social distancing and mask wearing.

*** One would assume that some particular groups of persons - frontline health-care workers, the elderly and those who are more vulnerable to serious illness - will get priority access to that safe and effective Covid vaccine once developed, produced and distributed, and initial supplies are going to be limited. It's going to be a long wait for the rest of us, right?**

Priority lists are already being discussed and finalised at various levels such as at WHO and at governmental levels.

The US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine has proposed first to vaccinate health care workers at the frontline, then people with certain conditions that put them at high risk of having severe Covid-19 disease and older adults, then essential service workers at high risk of exposure, people in homeless shelters and prisons and older adults and with underlying health conditions.

In the UK, the Prime Minister has announced that the vaccine will be broadly reserved for those adults above

☞ Cont. on page 11

As President I Pledge Not to Divide but to Unify

The divisions in the US have been deep and bitter. America must be United again for, above all, its people

* Cont. from page 4

These materially changing demographics have a significant bearing on voting patterns and the political leaning of battleground states.

We the people

The Preamble to the United States Constitution begins with the words 'We the People'. It is a brief introductory statement of the US Constitution's fundamental purposes and guiding principles.

The tenor of the statements and acceptance speeches of President-elect Joe Biden and Kamala Harris reflect the letter and spirit of these fundamental principles and depict the ideals which underpin their political engagement and future actions. Speaking on the electoral process, Joe Biden said: "In America the people rule. Power cannot be taken or asserted. It flows from the people. It is their will that determines who will be the President of the United States and their will alone." He further stated: "We have won with the most votes ever cast for a presidential ticket in the history of this nation. I will now be an American president. I pledge to be a president who seeks not to divide, but to unify. Who does not see red and blue states, but a United States."

tion involving politicians, the opacity which shrouds the terms and conditions under which substantial bailout funds drawn from some Rs 80 billion allocated to the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd (MIC) are being advanced to distressed companies, the lack of transparency and accountability in state procurement tenders and public spending as well as the shameful state of parliamentary democracy systematically sapped by decried high-handedness.

No amount of spin doctoring on national TV on the state of our democracy can mask these abject realities. After missing out on the Illovo deal, are those in charge yet again bungling the opportunity of leveraging substantial bail out public funds to recast the ownership of prime assets in the country for the common good?

Legacy

The support for Donald Trump in the US is such that despite being defeated he obtained some 3 million votes more than in the 2016 elections when he was elected President. Being a businessman his outlook on how to deal with national and international problems and challenges was totally different. He questioned the established order and free trade agreements and globalization which he found



Photo - thenationalnews.com

“The tenor of the statements and acceptance speeches of President-elect Joe Biden and Kamala Harris reflect the letter and spirit of the fundamental principles (as enshrined in the Preamble to the United States Constitution) and depict the ideals which underpin their political engagement and future actions. Speaking on the electoral process, Joe Biden said: “In America the people rule. Power cannot be taken or asserted. It flows from the people. It is their will that determines who will be the President of the United States and their will alone.”...”

“Kamala Harris stated in her thanking speech: “America’s democracy is not guaranteed. It is only as strong as our willingness to fight for it, to guard it and never take it for granted. And protecting our democracy takes struggle. It takes sacrifice. But there is joy in it and there is progress, because we the people have the power to build a better future. And when our very democracy was on the ballot in this election, with the very soul of America at stake and the world watching, you the people ushered in a new day for America.” The young aspiring to serve the country must take inspiration from and live up to such ideals...”

Kamala Harris stated in her thanking speech: "America's democracy is not guaranteed. It is only as strong as our willingness to fight for it, to guard it and never take it for granted. And protecting our democracy takes struggle. It takes sacrifice. But there is joy in it and there is progress, because we the people have the power to build a better future. And when our very democracy was on the ballot in this election, with the very soul of America at stake and the world watching, you the people ushered in a new day for America." The young aspiring to serve the country must take inspiration from and live up to such ideals.

These lofty ideals and cardinal principles of governance are in sharp contrast with the quality and standard of ethics of the political class and the deplorable state of our democracy undermined by appalling governance, nepotism, ongoing investigations on various allegations of corrup-

tion detrimental to the interests of the US as it delocalized industries to countries with significant competitive advantages, closed factories and caused unemployment,

deteriorated balance of trade and led to the emergence of new rival superpowers.

He thus renegotiated NAFTA to inter alia significantly reduce the substantial trade deficit with Mexico and impose rigorous norms on auto manufacturing companies to ensure a more level trade playing field to safeguard US manufactures and jobs. He also imposed tariffs on Chinese imports alleging currency manipulation and triggered a trade war with China. As defence is a major cost on financial resources, he asked NATO allies to contribute by spending 4% of their GDP on defence. It is not sure whether the US will revisit these stances and *acquis*.

However, his more contested policies such as withdrawing from the Paris

Agreement on Climate Change and the Iran nuclear deal or his controversial stance on Palestine territories, etc., are expected to be reviewed by the Joe Biden Administration.

Bonding America

The divisions in the US have been deep and bitter. It is time to come together and heal in America. Joe Biden has the persona and the will to trigger this essential process of unifying and bonding America around the ideals, values and founding principles of the United States when he takes office on 20 January 2021. America must be United again for, above all, its people.

Mrinal Roy



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From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

4th Year No 150

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 21 June 1957

● Responsibility walks hand in hand with capacity and power. -- Josiah Gilbert Holland

Somduth Bhuckory

History has been made under our very eyes again. Four ministers have been elected to sit on the Executive Council which will henceforth function as a ministry. But is the page that has been added to our history glorious or ignominious? The future alone will tell.

As everybody knows, the Executive Council will be composed of four elected members, five nominated and three officials. His Excellency the Governor must have finished consulting all concerned about those he intends nominating but up to now what he proposes to do is top secret.

By electing two members of the Labour Party, Dr Ramgoolam and Dr Millien, and two nominees, Hon Sauzier and Hon Osman, the Legislative Council must have put Sir Robert in a very embarrassing position. What can he do to make the Executive Council reflect the composition of the Legislative Council? The nominees, although styled *Independent* lately, cannot be said to have any political colour. What must be done then to bring in the Parti Mauricien element? Nominate elected members when nominees have been elected?

We think that Hon Mohamed may soon be a problem - both to Government and the Parti Mauricien. How can Government discard him when he was elected last time to the Executive Council if Government wants a representative of the Parti Mauricien? If, on the other hand, Hon Mohamed is not made to sit on the Executive Council, he will lose faith in the Parti Mauricien. And he and his supporters will start thinking that last time everything was done to make him succeed in order to make him forget his defeat at the Municipal Elections.

There has been some irony in the election of the four ministers. People were thinking that P.R., the single transferable vote system, was as dead as the dodo in Mauritius. After all what we have been hearing against it, one would not have expected it to be still alive and kicking. But Fate or the Colonial Office or British humour would not have it otherwise. It was that very form of P.R. that kicked the four members up. It is hard to understand why it had to raise its ugly head just once more before dropping dead.

Mr John Profumo, the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, was here to watch our history in the making. The London Agreement was largely his achievement. We presume that Mr Profumo, while sitting in our Council, must have had the same feeling on finding part of the agreement being implemented as a dramatist has on a first night on finding the children of his brain

Changing Skyline



John Profumo

strutting on the stage.

As soon as news was released that Mr Profumo would be coming on the 17th, the first thought that crossed everybody's mind was that he was coming in connection with the inauguration of our Ministerial System. But if one had to rely on the official communiqué only, one would have thought that Mr Profumo was coming to spend his Whitsun holiday over here just as Noel Coward would go to Jamaica. Was that done with a view to attracting tourists to Mauritius?

Anyway, Mr Profumo is among us and we welcome him. We know how the British Government is reluctant to spend money when quiet spots like Mauritius are concerned. Only the other day it was said in the House of Commons that what the British Government spends on the visits of MPs to colonial territories represents one tenth of the sum which an Italian football club was prepared to pay recently to secure a footballer.

It's not every day that Mauritius can expect to have the visit of people like Mr Profumo. We don't know what arrangements have been made to give him an exact picture of Mauritius. We quite agree that one week is too short a time to do justice to the visit, but it's better than none. At least Mr Profumo will be able to think of us in terms of what we really are instead of having to rack his brain identifying us with the people of Africa. The French Week which has set the tricolour and the Union Jack flying side by side must not make him forget the allegiance of others.

Mr Profumo must surely know how the London Agreement was received in Mauritius. If he finds everybody quite quiet today he mustn't fly away with the idea that the Agreement is the ideal thing for Mauritius. There is a peaceful atmosphere

rumoured that there will be six portfolios out of which Labour will get four. As to the number of Labour members to become ministers, it is settled, we understand, that there will be six. How the six ministers will battle against or co-operate with the other six ministers and ex-officio members under the benevolent gaze of the Governor to carry out their plan is a question which is uppermost in the mind of the people.

We take it today that the ministerial system is being tried. It is not rare to find systems of Government emerging out of a process of trial and error. If it is found to be inadequate or unworkable, we hope that people who stand for social progress and political emancipation will have the courage and wisdom to resign and continue to press for other reforms.

The political skyline of Mauritius may change beyond recognition within a comparatively short time. The British Labour Party has outlined its colonial policy as regards colonies like Mauritius in a statement entitled "Smaller Territories". In pursuance of that policy, Mauritius will be granted Dominion Status. The Labour Party has, of course, to come to power in Britain before implementing its policy. But Lord Attlee is confident that Labour will sweep the board at the next general elections. So, in the near rosy future we may find the silhouettes of a Governor-General and a Prime Minister standing out.

The fight henceforth will take another turn - not self-government but Dominion Status will be the battle-cry. Let us behave in such a way as would convince the Colonial Office that we deserve better things. If we pocket all manner of indignities and cling to office, we won't be revealing any statesmanship but only our opportunism.

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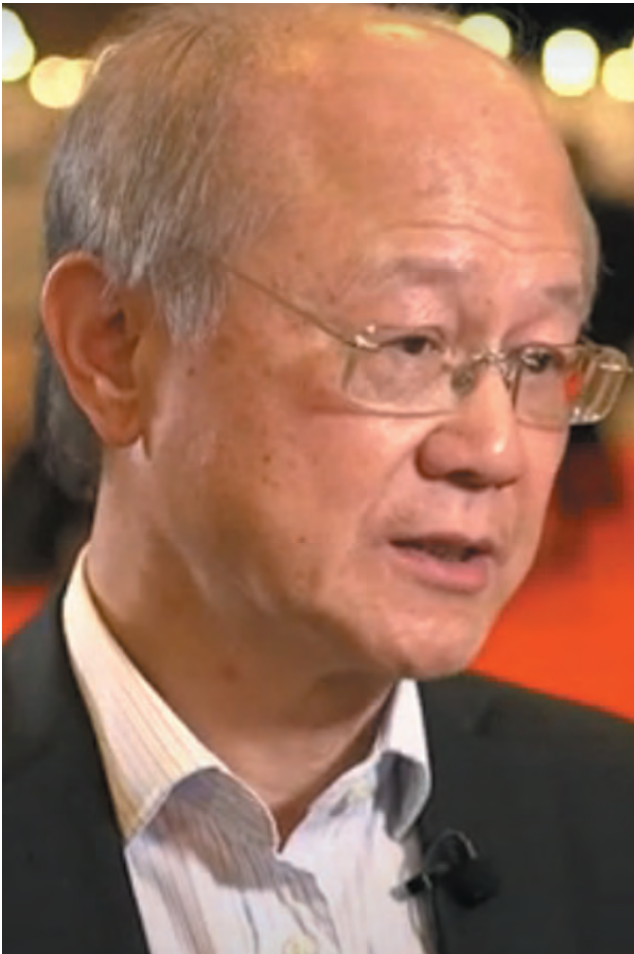
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'Legalising cannabis beyond medicinal use is not the way forward

to help curb the traffic and use of more dangerous drugs'



☞ Cont. from page 8

Overall there has been an excellent level of preparedness, and Mauritius followed closely the successful experience of China in controlling totally the infection. Partial control is not the objective: total control is. One just cannot allow a single virus to lurk around. Within the total control situation, it becomes easier and safer to allow economic activities to resume.

*** On the other hand, you have been quite outspoken about the closure of the Promenade Roland Armand along Vandeermeech Street, Rose Hill, saying that this was the right thing to do in view of the traffic-related pollution in that region. Is it true that exposure to air pollution has more serious health effects than previously thought?**

The reason I was pleased that the Promenade Roland Armand was closed was that it does not make sense to exercise in a polluted environment.

In 2018, we published work in *The Lancet* which showed that the respiratory and cardiovascular benefits derived from exercise such as walking were annulled by doing it in a polluted environment such as walking along the busy Oxford Street in London (*Lancet*. 2018 Jan 27;391:339-349), results that were picked up in many newspapers round the world.

The destruction of the trees on the Promenade would have increased the exposure of any walkers/joggers to

the pollutants. So, advising the public to use alternative greener facilities for their exercise was reasonable, but as far as I know, there has been no measurement of the pollutant levels in those recommended areas. This is something that has to be done.

Yes, there is increasing evidence that air pollution not only affects our respiratory and cardiovascular systems. Reports are now coming through with potential effect on cerebrovascular disease and neuropsychiatric diseases, with interference with children's academic performance at school. This is on the basis that the fine particles found in pollution can cross into the brain directly.

Fine particles of pollution can also transfer across the placenta to the baby in the womb and can therefore damage the baby. There is also the possibility that pollution contributes to the obesity problem in China. More recently, there has been the observation in the US that those who live in highly polluted environments have a worse outcome if they catch Covid-19 infection. These are worrying but these reports need confirmation.

*** We would like to think that the air we breathe in Mauritius is far less polluted than what obtains elsewhere despite the increasing number of vehicles on our roads. Is that indeed the case?**

I have very little information regarding the levels of pollution that exists in Mauritius. There are currently no air quality monitors set up in Mauritius, although I understand that the Government has agreed at the last Parliament sitting to set up a number of stations for this purpose. What I am alluding to is the website run by the World Air Quality Index project at <https://waqi.info/> where one can see the level of pollution in all parts of the world. As of today, for example, many sensors in London are indicating an unhealthy level of pollution, while the sensors in Reunion Island are all indicating a 'good' level of pollution that would not be harmful to healthy as well as those with chronic health conditions such as lung or heart conditions.

“To stay safe when you travel particularly on an aeroplane, one needs to obey the usual rules of maintaining social distancing as far as possible, wearing a cloth face mask, avoiding contact with anyone who is sick, limiting contact with frequently touched surfaces... In the airplane, the quality of the cabin air is good, with the air that enters the plane consists of 50% air from outside and 50% air that is recycled through very efficient filters...”

The other issue that my research is in fact showing is that one needs to measure the pollution exposure at an individual level. The amount of pollution that we get exposed to is dependent on our personal lifestyle, on the mode of transport we use, on the work we do, etc. It is also clear that there is not just traffic-related pollution, but there is also pollution in buildings and at home. Levels of personal pollution exposure can now be measured by

wearing personal pollution monitors, which my team is doing in a research project called INHALE we are doing in London (<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/earth-science/research/inhale/>).

Therefore, because of these two issues, the answer to your question is we do not know. I would hazard a guess that pollution in Mauritius is likely to be a problem for many Mauritians, and we cannot be certain how much this affects Mauritians without having measurements of pollution done and also without knowing how much personal exposure to pollution is present.

“Will it be the 100% solution? Will have to wait and see. Hopefully. In addition, it will take time to provide any effective vaccine to the whole population. So, I foresee that we will still be emphasising the precautions that we should all take to reduce the risk of infection and who knows whether this will allow us to go back to some modicum of 'normal' life again. Individually, we would still have to abide by the rules of social distancing and mask wearing...”

*** We understand that you have also supported the idea of legalising cannabis for medical use in Mauritius. What does the evidence say about the benefits to patients?**

There is a place for the legal use of medicinal cannabis.

In the UK, medicinal cannabis can be prescribed by specialist doctors on a case-by-case basis for only certain health conditions notably for certain forms of epilepsy in both children and adults, in those who have received chemotherapy for treatment of cancer that is causing nausea and vomiting, and those with multiple sclerosis condition who have muscle stiffness and spasm.

Medicinal cannabis is used as a last resort in these conditions when other conventional treatments have not helped. Products containing cannabidiol (CBD) are not considered illegal in UK so long as they contain only traces of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) which is the main psychoactive component of cannabis.

*** The challenge that Mauritius is presently facing in that area is the prevalence of drug use and trafficking in the country. Do you think we should go farther than the legalisation of cannabis for medical use to help curb the traffic and use of more dangerous drugs?**

My personal opinion is that I don't think so. I feel that the answer lies in tackling the source of drug trafficking, but I recognise that this major problem of drug use is a complex issue with many deep-seated societal aspects. However, I do not believe that legalising cannabis beyond medicinal use is the way forward.



Photo: Residents fill in their ballots during early voting at the a courthouse in Iowa. Should Americans be required to vote?
SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

Is democracy sacred?

American colonies were willing to fight for, Founding Father Thomas Jefferson wrote, "we hold these truths to be sacred and undeniable." It was

Benjamin Franklin's pen that gave the phrase its more economic and agnostic tilt: not sacred, but "self-evident." Franklin, Aquinas would have said, hit closer to home, though perhaps for reasons outside the founder's purview. Neither political ri-

tuals nor the values they instill are sacred, even if they can hold the space for practices that are.

The counting of votes is a cornerstone of modern democracy and hearing a president call for a halt to the count is a disorienting moment that could leave many scrambling for the right adjective. According to Aquinas, however, "sacred" is not the right one.

* Cont. from page 2

Religious virtues

Though politics relies on virtue, this does not make it religious.

To be religious is, according to an ancient definition Aquinas first finds in the Roman statesman Cicero, to give special attention, or to "read again": re-legere in Latin. This suggests to Aquinas that religious understanding is acquired through rereading the world, taking in how situations exist "in relation to God."

The virtues and teachings that surround this reorientation are ones that Aquinas calls "sacred teaching." They are "learned through revelation" and "accepted by faith." This does not mean that religion should reject reason, since for Aquinas religious thought uses reason to explore sacred revelations.

The religious learner needs some distance from what theologian Stanley Hauerwas calls the "armed" practices of the political institutions, so that they turn to the world again to see it in sacred ways.

In other words, a state needs a police force so it can protect vulnerable people from failures of virtue. But sacred practices like worship and prayer require the opposite: a freedom from state coercion, so that people can practice religion without that religion being legally enforced.

My research into Reformation-era England offers an example of this. An edict by the queen gave her the authority to prosecute people for not attending Sunday worship. Many found this coercive measure to cast a shadow over the authenticity of that worship itself.

This is not to suggest that the religious and the political ought to be completely isolated realms of life. Aquinas argues that a just society, ordered by laws which ensure that everyone can be given what is due to them, will also allow for the "special honor" that "is due to God as the first principle of all things."

Aquinas thinks then that this second reading – religion – is a necessary component of the common good. A good government will allow for people to pursue the sacred. It will not, though, confuse its own potentially coercive virtues with those sacred practices.

Sacred truths

When seeking his own high-stakes language to describe the rights that the



COMMUNIQUE

DEFERMENT OF TAX PAYMENT (APS/CPS) RENEWAL OF TAX ARREARS SETTLEMENT SCHEME (TASS)

The Mauritius Revenue Authority hereby informs the public that the following measures have been taken to assist taxpayers and employers in improving their cash flow by deferring tax payments under the **Advance Payment System (APS)**, the **Current Payment System (CPS)**, and by renewing the **Tax Arrears Settlement Scheme (TASS)** which provides for full or 80% waiver of penalties and interests on all tax arrears due.

• Advance Payment System (APS)

The last date for the submission of APS Statements and payment of the corresponding tax by companies for any quarter where the due date falls in November 2020, and up to May 2021, is being deferred to **28 June 2021**.

Companies whose accounting period ends in November 2020 are not required to submit an APS Statement for the third quarter ended in August 2020. They will have to submit their annual income tax return by **31 May 2021**.

• Current Payment System (CPS)

Individual taxpayers are not required to submit CPS Statements where the due date falls in December 2020, March 2021 and June 2021. The tax payable shall be paid at the time of submission of annual income tax returns in **September/October 2021**.

• Tax Arrears Settlement Scheme (TASS)

Where tax arrears, outstanding as at 31 October 2020, under an assessment issued or a return submitted on or before 31 October 2020 under the Income Tax Act, the VAT Act and the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act, are fully paid by a person on or before 31 December 2021, any penalty and interest included in the tax arrears will be fully waived, provided that an application for the waiver is made to the MRA on or before **30 June 2021**.

Taxpayers having assessments pending before the Assessment Review Committee, the Supreme Court or Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and who wish to take advantage of the scheme, may do so by withdrawing the case before these institutions.

Where the arrears, outstanding as at 31 October 2020, consist of Training Levy and/or surcharges payable under the Human Resource Development Act, the surcharges shall be reduced by 80 per cent provided that an application for the reduction is made to the MRA on or before **30 June 2021** and the outstanding Training Levy along with the balance of surcharges is paid on or before **31 March 2022**.

For further information, employers/self-employed individuals may visit MRA's website: www.mra.mu or phone the MRA helpdesk on **207 6000** during office hours.

MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY

6 November 2020

Ehram Court, Cnr Mgr. Gonin & Sir Virgil Naz Streets, Port Louis, Mauritius
T: +230 207 6000 | F: +230 207 6048 | M: headoffice@mra.mu | W: www.mra.mu



In a light vein**Airlines Humour!**

Qantas Airlines: Repair Division

In case you need a laugh: Remember, it takes a college degree to fly a plane but only a high school diploma to fix one.

After every flight, Qantas pilots fill out a form, called a 'Gripe Sheet' which tells mechanics about problems with the aircraft.

The mechanics correct the problems; document their repairs on the form, and then pilots review the Gripe Sheets before the next flight.

Never let it be said that ground crews lack a sense of humour.

Here are some actual maintenance complaints submitted by Qantas' pilots (marked with a P) and the solutions recorded (marked with an S) by maintenance engineers.

P: Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.

S: Auto-land not installed on this aircraft.

P: Something loose in cockpit.

S: Something tightened in cockpit

P: Dead bugs on windshield.

S: Live bugs on back-order.

P: Autopilot in altitude-hold mode produces a 200 feet per minute descent.

S: Cannot reproduce problem on ground.

P: Evidence of leak on right main

landing gear.

S: Evidence removed.

P: DME volume unbelievably loud.

S: DME volume set to more believable level.

P: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.

S: That's what friction locks are for.

P: IFF inoperative in OFF mode.

S: IFF always inoperative in OFF mode.

P: Suspected crack in windshield.

S: Suspect you're right.

P: Number 3 engine missing.

S: Engine found on right wing after brief search.

P: Target radar hums.

S: Reprogrammed target radar with lyrics.

P: Mouse in cockpit.

S: Cat installed.

And the best one ...

P: Noise coming from under instrument panel. Sounds like a midget pounding on something with a hammer.

S: Took hammer away from midget.

We all are living in a seriously funny world...

Why is the place in a stadium where people sit, called a stand?

Why is that everyone wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die?

Shall I say that there is racial discrimination even in chess as the white piece is moved first?

In our country, we have freedom of speech, then why do we have telephone bills?

If money doesn't grow on trees, then why do banks have branches?

Why doesn't glue stick to its bottle?

Why do you still call it a building, when it's already built?

If it's true that we are here to help others, what are others here for?

If you aren't supposed to drink and drive, why do bars have parking lots?

If all the nations in the world are in debt, where did all the money go?

When dog food is new with improved taste, who tests it?

If the "black box" flight recorder is never damaged during a plane crash, why isn't the whole airplane made out of that stuff?

Who copyrighted the copyright symbol?

Can you cry under water?

Why do people say "you've been working like a dog", when dogs just sit around all day..?

Pink slipKnow your English

The expression refers to the letter informing an employee that his services are no longer needed.

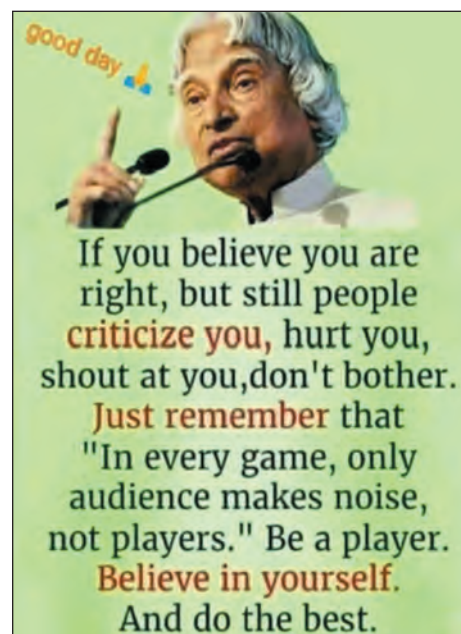
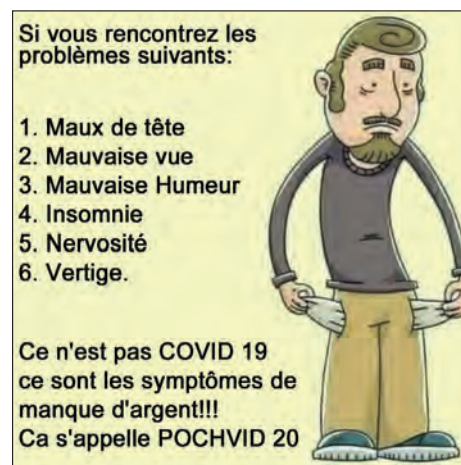
Example: More than twenty workers were given pink slip yesterday.

Pink slip can be used as a verb as well.

Example: The administration is contemplating to pink slip Abhishek if he fails to improve his performance.

The story goes that in the late 1800s workers sometimes received, along with their pay cheque, a letter written on pink stationery. The letter usually informed the receiver that his services were no longer required. This letter written on pink paper began to be called the pink slip.

In Germany, when a person gets fired, he doesn't 'get the 'pink slip' but 'the blue letter'. The French on the other hand refer to such a letter as 'yellow paper'.

In A Light Vein

Dedicated to all Men for their disciplined behaviour

Women are so difficult; always changing their minds.

At 18, they want handsome men.

At 25, they want mature men.

At 30, they want successful men.

At 40, they want established men.

At 50, they want faithful men.

At 60, they want helpful men.

Men are very simple; they never change their taste for any changing condition in their lives.

At 18, they like pretty women.

At 25, they like pretty women.

At 30, they like pretty women.

At 40, they like pretty women.

At 50, they still like pretty women.

At 60, still they like pretty women.

Even at 70 & 80 when they can barely move, they still like pretty women.

Interview with God

After death, George Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump are going for a interview with God.

God asks Bush, "What do you believe in?"

Bush answers, "I believe in the free market, and the strong American nation!"

God is impressed by Bush and tells him, "Great, come sit on the chair on my right."

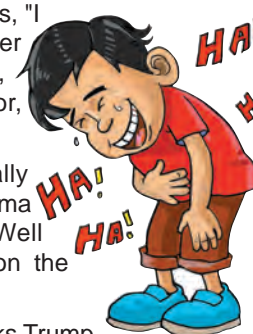
Next, God asks Obama, "What do you believe in?"

Obama answers, "I believe in the power of democracy, helping the poor, world peace, etc."

God is really impressed by Obama and tells him, "Well done, come sit on the chair on my left."

Finally, God asks Trump, "What do you believe in?"

Trump answers, "I believe you're sitting on my chair."



4 ways to prevent your marriage from ending in divorce

Whether it's kids, debt, or changes in interests, your marriage may have quickly evolved out of the honeymoon phase and into a period where you feel like the whole thing may have just been one giant mistake. How is it possible you used to be crazy for each other? Did you really choose to spend the rest of your life married to this person?

Questions like these may have suddenly infiltrated your daily thoughts or maybe you woke up one day with the realization that your partner was not the person you thought you married.

Whatever the case may be, before you run for the hills and forgo the time, effort, and care you put into building your relationship, give your partner and your marriage the benefit of the doubt. Sometimes all you need is a new perspective and the willingness to give your spouse and your relationship a little extra love.

1. Give them the benefit of the doubt

Over years of marriage, it may be hard to remember that you fell head over heels in love with your partner for a reason. Suddenly their lovable qualities seem non-existent while their annoying habits or characteristics become more prevalent. When your spouse does something that annoys you, you may assume it's because they're selfish, careless, or lazy, when

really they may have just been preoccupied, busy, or stressed.

Tiny things, like your partner's inability to put their clothing in the hamper, may lead to resentment and build until they become giant arguments over nothing. By giving your spouse the benefit of the doubt and consciously focusing on their positive qualities, you may just save your marriage.

2. Make time to enjoy each other

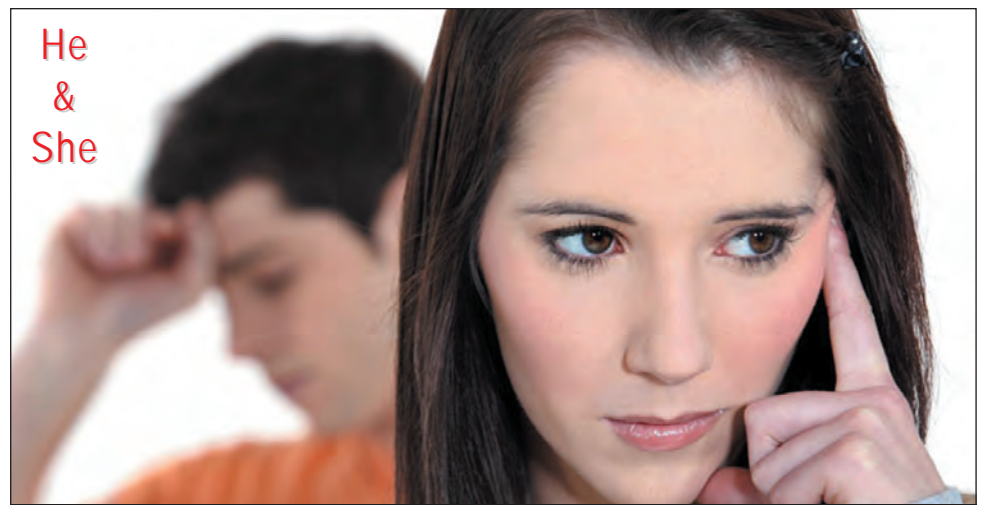
With the addition of mortgages, kids, stressful jobs, and busy lives, your partner may have evolved into your co-worker or co-pilot as you try to navigate this busy life you've created. Rather than enjoying each other and the relationship you've built together, you may be busy checking things off the to-do list.

When you feel like your very relationship has become a chore, it may be time to turn off the to-do list and give yourself some time to enjoy each other. Leave the stresses of life behind and get out of the house together or set aside 30 minutes a day for alone time when you can truly focus on getting back to loving each other.

3. Stick it out

While you may feel like you made a huge mistake marrying your spouse, keep in mind that every relationship has ups and downs. No one, no matter how they por-

He
&
She



Sometimes all you need is a new perspective and the willingness to give your relationship a little extra love. Photo - marriage.com

tray their lives on social media, is in an always-happy, perfect marriage. Sometimes it takes a little perseverance to wait out the tough periods for the reward of a brighter future.

As a couple, you may be adjusting to life with kids, health issues, an overwhelming work life, or added family stresses. These factors can easily impact the way you communicate with your partner and feel about your marriage.

4. Keep realistic expectations

Many people have the tendency to think that their partner should fulfill every

need. Perhaps after a slew of romantic comedies and fairytale endings you're under the impression that your partner should not only be your spouse, lover, and best friend but should be by your side as you cheer on your favorite team, hit the gym, or pursue your hobbies or interests.

In reality, it takes many people to fulfill one person's needs, which should be the role of your friends, co-workers, and family members. By expecting complete fulfillment from your partner, you will almost always end up hurt, disappointed, and angry.

Evie Carrick

Healthy Living



Want to live longer? Eat less

Putting less on your plate each day could be key to a longer life

Putting just a bit less on your dinner plate each day might be key to a longer life, preliminary research suggests.

People who reduced their caloric intake by just 15 percent over two years experienced a significant decrease in their

metabolism, according to a small clinical trial, reports Dennis Thompson - Cell Metabolism.

These folks also saw improvements in biomarkers associated with slower aging and longer life span, said lead researcher

Leanne Redman. She's an associate professor of clinical sciences at Pennington Biomedical Research in Baton Rouge, La.

Specifically, they developed a lower core body temperature, lower blood sugar and insulin levels, and significant drops in hormones that moderate metabolism, researchers reported.

"We know these things are lower in people who live longer lives," Redman said.

Aging studies in animals have tied lower calorie intake to longer lives, but this is the first clinical trial to bridge the gap between animals and humans, said Rozalyn Anderson, an expert with the American Federation for Aging Research who reviewed the findings.

"So much of what they're reporting is entirely consistent with what we've seen in our monkey studies," said Anderson, an associate professor who studies aging and calorie restriction at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health.

For this trial, Redman's team recruited 34 healthy people with an average age of 40 to follow a calorie-restricted diet for two years.

Researchers taught the study participants how to cut 25 percent of their daily caloric intake using three different models of a healthy diet, Redman said. The

participants then were free to follow their diet by any means they chose.

"On their own, they achieved a 15 percent reduction in calorie intake that was sustained for the two years, which is pretty remarkable," Redman said.

On average, the group lost about 20 pounds, mostly in the first year, even though half entered the study at normal weight and the rest were only modestly overweight, Redman said.

Anderson thinks lower calorie intake prompts the body to use energy more efficiently, and that somehow results in benefits for aging.

"We know, for example, there's a really tight connection that we don't understand between fasting and resilience -- the ability to stand up against distress," Anderson said.

People who want to try to eat less in an attempt to live longer should focus on portion size while following a healthy and well-balanced diet, Redman said.

They should aim for lowering calorie intake by 25 percent, with the understanding that they will probably fall short of the goal, Redman said. They shouldn't be discouraged if they don't keep losing weight long-term.

"The goal is not to lose weight. The goal is to have this sustained lower intake," Redman said.

Kangana Ranaut: The star on a warpath with Bollywood



Bollywood, India's hugely popular Hindi film industry, is in ferment. And at the centre of its troubles is Kangana Ranaut - a 33-year-old female star who appears to be on a warpath with many of her colleagues. In the past few weeks, she has accused industry bigwigs of nepotism and sexual abuse, harshly criticised several of her colleagues, alleged others are involved in drug dealing, and called Bollywood a "gutter".

Ranaut says she was "harassed and molested in the industry and faced a drug racket" and that by "removing the obstacles" in her way, she would "clean the path for many others".

But her critics say her vocal criticisms stem from political ambition, reports Geeta Pandey of BBC.

Known for her powerful performances, Ranaut has won several prestigious awards and a Padma Shri (a civilian award given by the government) for her contribu-

tion to cinema.

A small-town girl, who has often spoken of her struggles to fit in with the glamorous crowd, Ranaut rose to become a style icon and one of Bollywood's most bankable actresses, with millions of fans at home and abroad.

"She's an outstanding performer," said Shailaja Bajpai, media editor of news website The Print. "She's a natural actress who's played strong, unusual women in a number of films and carved a special niche for herself."

Over the years, Ranaut also gained a reputation for being "outspoken and brave", Bajpai said.

"She's taken on powerful people in the industry like director Karan Johar, whom she accused of nepotism; she also had a very public spat with Hrithik Roshan, her co-star from *Kites* whom she calls 'a silly ex'." Roshan has always denied that the

two ever had an affair.

Ranaut has also criticised the industry over its alleged "casting couch" culture - a euphemism used to explain the practice of seeking sexual favours from newcomers in exchange for roles.

Her forthrightness has won her praise for standing up to clannish, patriarchal Bollywood bigwigs. But for some months now she has made news by picking new fights on a weekly, if not daily, basis.

It began in mid-June, when Ranaut joined the debate around the tragic death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput - who was found dead in his home. Mumbai police said Rajput had killed himself.

Ranaut tweeted blaming nepotism and some Bollywood insiders for driving the actor to his death. She said he was an "outsider" like her who had no "godfathers" in the industry, and that powerful Bollywood families and directors had "systematically sabotaged" his career.

Weeks later, when Rajput's father accused his son's actress-girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty of abetment to suicide, stealing his son's money and several other claims, Ranaut launched a smear campaign against Chakraborty, calling her "a small time druggie who was living off a vulnerable and broken, self-made superstar".

Chakraborty has denied all the accusations against her. She was arrested earlier this month for allegedly buying drugs for Rajput and she is being investigated by three federal agencies.

Chakraborty has found herself targeted by some of India's most high-profile journalists and social media trolls and become subject of gossip and innuendo and misogynistic abuse, with Ranaut's regular outbursts on the subject adding fuel to the fire.

Ranaut has also taken aim at Bollywood more widely, reviving old battles

and starting several new ones. She has played the victim and the aggressor at the same time. In television interviews and tweets, she's repeated old grudges against director Karan Johar and former co-star Hrithik Roshan. She has called actress Sonam Kapoor a "mafia bimbo", Urmila Matondkar "a soft-porn star" and Swara Bhaskar and Richa Chadha "B-grade actresses".

She's claimed there was a "drug mafia" in Bollywood and renamed the industry "Bollywood" - a place where newcomers and outsiders are not welcome. Her bitter and angry finger-pointing has led many to question her motives.

Ranaut's verbal attacks against Bollywood have been echoed in India's parliament too, forcing MP and veteran actress Jaya Bachchan to defend the industry "which provides direct employment to half a million people daily and indirect employment to five million".

The entertainment industry has a significant influence over people's imagination in India. The press in India, especially television channels sympathetic to the government, has played the story of the unravelling of Bollywood on a loop.

So when Deepika Padukone, one of India's most loved stars, was summoned by the drug authorities investigating allegations of widespread drug use in Bollywood, TV channels provided breathless coverage and reporters chased her car. Similar scenes were witnessed when actresses Shraddha Kapoor, Sara Ali Khan and Rakul Preet Singh were called for questioning. All four have denied any wrongdoing.

Ranaut responded by deriding the actresses in Twitter posts, including one comment targeting Padukone in which she claimed drug used was linked to depression - a claim criticised and debunked by health experts.

Akshay Kumar on 'Laxmmi Bomb'

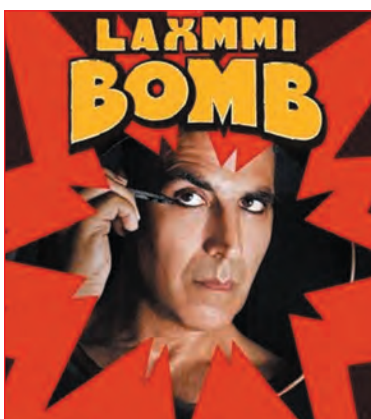
'During the initial days of the shoot, my saree would often unwrap by itself'

Akshay Kumar talks about his upcoming film, *Laxmmi Bomb*, the experience of playing a transgender, and how did he feel after wearing a saree.

Akshay Kumar is gearing up for Raghava Lawrence's *Laxmmi Bomb*, a remake of his own Tamil hit, *Kanchana*. The promo shows the leading man in an avatar that he has never dabbled with, a world he has never experienced. And he opened up on his shooting experiences.

While interacting with Maniesh Paul, when asked about the film and wearing a saree, this is what Kumar had to say, "In one word, saree is the most graceful outfit in the world. Wearing a saree has been one of a kind experience for me. Frankly speaking, donning a saree is very difficult."

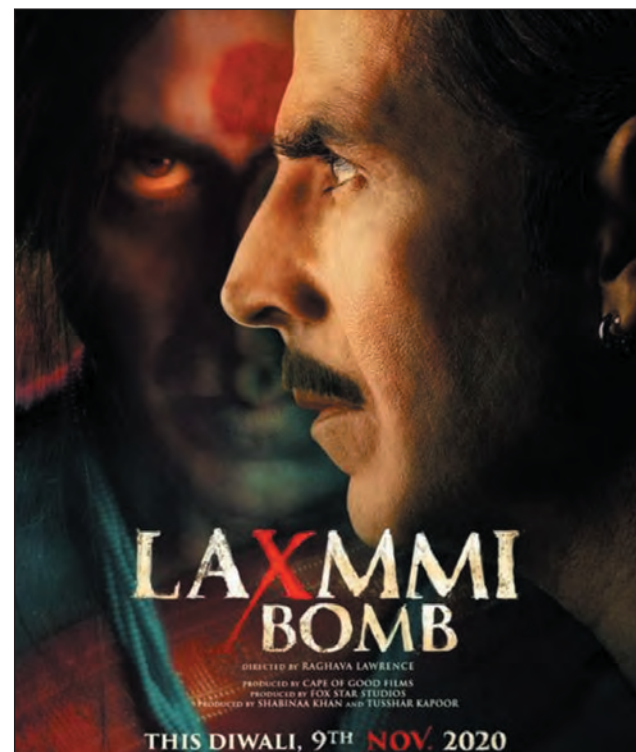
He added, "During the initial days of the shoot, my



saree would often unwrap by itself while shooting. I wasn't able to move properly while being in a saree, forget about dancing and fighting in it. Thanks to my costume designer who would come to my rescue in every break to rearrange the plaits and balance the *pallu*."

He also said how the character of *Laxmmi Bomb* has mentally been the most intensive. He stated, "I've been in my career for 30 years. But the character of Laxmmi has been the most mentally intensive role I've ever played. But somehow, I managed it. And I thank my director. He is behind everything about this character - how it moves, what it says and how it dances."

The film will be released on November 9 on Disney Plus Hotstar on the eve of Diwali. *Laxmmi Bomb* also stars Kiara Advani.



Arjun Bijlani, Shashank Vyas, Debina-Gurmeet and other TV celebs travelling responsibly during the pandemic

If there's one thing we all have missed immensely in 2020, it has to be travelling. Be it a day trip, short getaways or longer hiking trips, we have missed packing our bags and exploring a new destination. However, travel is picking up slowly. Several celebs are taking the road or flying to a destination of their choice while following all safety precautions. If you're looking for some travel inspiration and don't know where to find it, take a cue from these celebs who took a travel break to beat the stay-at-home monotony and revel in the beauty of nature, as reported by S. Iyer of Times of India.



Debina Bonnerjee: 'Ate healthy, followed all safety rules for my two-day vacancy'

Although I wasn't sceptical about travelling post recovering from Covid-19, I knew I had to be extra cautious about our safety. So, we decided to travel a month after my recovery. Guru (husband Gurmeet Choudhary) and I wanted to travel to someplace nearby. So went to this lovely vineyard nearby.

Since I wasn't comfortable taking a flight, we travelled

by our car. We have to start getting accustomed to the new normal. Whenever we stepped out or while having our meals, we followed all safety guidelines and ate healthy. The resort staff also ensured that all safety guidelines were followed.

Shashank Vyas: 'Have followed all safety norms for my trip to Sikkim'

If one is a responsible traveller and takes care of the safety precautions, avoids crowded places and wears a mask all the time, one can travel even amid the pandemic.

For close to eight months, I was locked up at home, so my dad and I decided to take a 10-day trip to Kalimpong, Gangtok, Pelling and Darjeeling. This is my first visit to these places and I'm truly mesmerized by the lush green landscapes, the misty evenings and the cool weather.

Eventually, we have to get back to our routines and ensure to follow precautions and sanitisation.



Arjun Bijlani: 'Cooked all our meals, maintained social distance while in Goa'

Once the lockdown started to ease, we took a trip to Goa in August. The duration of the trip was close to a month. We travelled by air and took all the necessary precautions like wearing a mask, carrying hand sanitiser and maintaining social distancing at the airport and even at every place we visited in Goa.

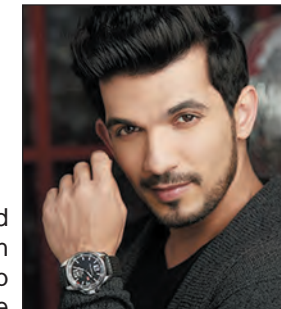
We stayed at our family house, as it was very safe and close to the beach. As it was just us, we cooked on our own and went for a stroll on the beach often. We enjoyed every minute of our family time and realised the small joys of life bring utmost happiness.

Aditi Sanwal: Sanitised everything in my hotel room in Udaipur

I wanted to unwind, relax and rejuvenate post the wrap up of Kasautii Zindagii Kay. So, I decided to take a quick and short 3-day trip to Udaipur. I took a flight from Mumbai to Udaipur.

Although I followed all the safety precautions right from the moment I left home for the airport, I was a little sceptical. But once I reached my hotel and slowly started settling in, I started to enjoy my vacation.

While the hotel took utmost care and followed all safety precautions, I ensured to sanitise everything in my room, avoided meeting a lot of people and preferred visiting places with fewer people.



Archana Mittal's real and reel life cafe coincidence

The *Bin Kuch Kahe* actor is a small-time restaurateur in the show and off-screen too. It sure looks like many of our favourite TV celebrities have their own alternate professions apart from acting. It becomes quite the interesting coincidence, however, if they happen to play the same role on-screen and off it. Archana Mittal, who is currently seen in Zee TV's show *Bin Kuch Kahe* plays the role of leading lady Myra's on-screen mother - Mrs Kohli in the show who runs a café in Jaipur with her daughters called the Kohli Kanteen. Ironically, off screen too, the enterprising lady owns a cafe in Bangalore. The actress is smoothly balancing her café and acting career without compromising on either front, reports Times of India.

Archana says, "I am extremely happy that I am playing the role of a mother who runs the Kohli Kanteen with her daughter; off-screen too, I am into the hospitality business, running my own café in Bangalore. So, it doesn't really feel like acting. What else do you need in life when you can pursue both your passions together? I am blessed and thanks to producer Rajshree Ojha for this wonderful role. Hope viewers enjoy my performance and appreciate the show."



Appartement à louer - long terme



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Tel: 57809413 - 57530881



Mardi 10 Nov - 21.05

Kingsglaive

Avec: Aaron Paul, Lena Headey, Sean Bean



Mercredi 11 Nov - 21.10

Fired Up!



Jeudi 12 Nov - 21.15

Avec: Aaron Stanford, Robin Tunney, Peter Gerety



MBC 1

07.15 Local: Sekirite La Route
07.30 Local: Lavi Zoli An XXL
08.30 Local: Rodrig Prog
09.45 Local: Eco Logik
10.15 Local: Fam Model
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
12.55 Local: Elle - No7
13.55 Mag: Entrepreneuriat Au...
14.30 D.Anime: The Zoo
14.41 D.Anime: Little People
15.33 D.Anime: Gadget And The..
17.05 Serial: Grandpa In My Pocket
17.30 Mag: Zoboomafoo
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.10 Local: Divali 2020
20.15 Local: Focus
21.05 Film: Kingsglaive
23.00 Serial: The Blacklist

MBC 2

10.00 Serial: CID
10.43 Serial: Ye Vaada Raha
12.04 Film: Mela
Starring: Feroz Khan, Sanjay Khan, Mumtaz
14.11 DDI Magazine
15.00 Mag: Comedy Classes
15.21 Serial: Honaar Soon Mee...
15.43 Serial: Mooga Manasulu
16.06 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal
16.32 Serial: Bisaat-E-Dil
16.50 Mehendi Tohra Naam Ke
17.14 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
18.00 Serial: My Little Princess
18.30 DDI Magazine
20.00 Local: Tamil Programme
20.30 Film: Farz Aur Kanoon
Starring: Rati Agnihotri, Asrani, Jeetendra, Hema Malini
23.07 DDI Live

MBC 3

06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa
06.26 Mag: Green Touch
07.00 Mag: Voa Connected
08.00 Doc: Amazing Gardens
09.02 Doc: 360 GEO
10.15 Mag: Washington Forum
11.30 Mag: Eco@Africa
11.56 Mag: Green Touch
12.00 Mag: Arts And Culture
12.17 Mag: World Stories
12.58 Mag: Urban Gardens
13.28 Doc: Amazing Gardens
14.27 Doc: 360 GEO
15.25 Doc: Global 3000
16.12 Doc: Youth-Inducing Yogurt?
17.00 Mag: Eco@Africa
17.39 Mag: World Stories
18.27 Mag: Green Touch
18.35 Doc: Land Grab
19.00 Student Support Prog...
19.34 Mag: Made In Germany

Cine 12

01.28 Film: Space Station 76
03.06 Serial: Chicago Med
03.47 Film: Meurtre à Hollywood
05.45 Tele: Totalement Diva
06.51 Film: Kingsglaive
09.00 Serial: The Magicians
09.45 Tele: Soleil Levant
10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor
11.00 Serial: Chicago Med
12.00 Film: Meurtre à Hollywood
13.35 Tele: Totalement Diva
14.48 Film: Kingsglaive
16.40 Serial: The Magicians
17.23 Serial: S.W.A.T
18.05 Tele: Soleil Levant
19.10 Tele: Tanto Amor
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Serial: S.W.A.T
21.15 Film: Bolshoi: Le Grand Saut
22.51 Tele: Totalement Diva
23.42 Serial: The Magicians

Bollywood TV

08.00 Film: Aanaat
11.55 / 19.54 - Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam
12.23 / 20.11 - Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
12.44 / 20.32 Radha Krishna
13.09 / 21.09 - Bin Kuch Kahe
13.29 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek
13.52 / 21.46 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai
14.20 / 21.59 - Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki
14.39 / 22.25 - Ikyawann
15.30 Film: Soldier
Starring: Raakhee, Bobby Deol, Preity Zinta
18.00 Live: Samacher
18.30 Kundali Bhagya
18.51 Piya Albela

mardi 10 novembre

mercredi 11 novembre

jeudi 12 novembre

06.45 Local: La Mauricienne
07.30 Local: Generation J
09.45 Local: Entractes
12.00 Le Journal
12.55 Mag: Urban Gardens
13.55 Local: Tous Egaux
14.16 Local: Entrepreneuriat Au...
14.30 D.Anime: The Zoo
14.40 D.Anime: Little People
14.51 D.Anime: Nutri Ventures
15.22 D.Anime: The Minimighty...
15.54 D.Anime: Monster Math...
16.06 D.Anime: Invention Story
17.05 Serial: Grandpa In My Pocket
17.30 Mag: Zoboomafoo
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.00 Local: Divali 2020
21.10 Film: Fired Up!
22.40 Serial: The Blacklist
23.25 Local: Le Journal

10.00 Serial: Pyar Ka Dard Meetha
11.16 Serial: Suhani Si Ek Ladki
12.00 Film: Meri Bhabhi
Stars: Sunil Dutt, Waheeda Rehman, Mehmood
15.00 Serial: Comedy Classes
15.21 Honaar Soon Mee Hya...
15.44 Mooga Manasulu
16.10 Apoorva Raagangal
16.30 Serial: Bisaat-E-Dil
16.53 Mehendi Tohra Namam Ke
17.12 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
17.33 Serial: Kulvadh
18.00 Serial: My Little Princess
18.30 Serial: DDI Magazine
19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol
19.30 DDI Magazine
20.00 Programme In Marathi
20.30 Film: Coffee Ani Barach Kahi
Starring: Vaibhav Tatwawadi, Prarthana Behere, Neha Mahajan

06.00 Mag: REV: The Global Auto
06.34 Mag: Land Grab
07.00 Mag: Check In
07.29 Mag: Urban Gardens
08.00 Doc: Garden Party
08.54 Doc: Abderrahmane Sissako
10.11 Mag: Klip Seleksion
11.42 Mag: REV: The Global Auto
12.16 Mag: Land Grab
12.42 Mag: Check In
13.11 Mag: Urban Gardens
13.15 Mag: Made In Germany
14.32 Doc: 2D Innovations
15.28 Mag: Close Up
16.39 Doc: Ten Dollar Trip
17.24 Mag: REV: The Global Auto
17.50 Mag: Green Touch
18.00 Mag: Motorweek
18.30 Local Prod: Recipes
20.05 Mag: Tendance XXI
20.31 Doc: The World From...
21.00 Local: News (English)

00.26 Serial: S.W.A.T
01.08 Film: Bolshoi
02.43 Serial: Chicago Med
03.24 Film: The Legend Of Zorro
05.29 Tele: Totalement Diva
06.21 Serial: S.W.A.T
08.31 Mag: Hollywood Best Film
09.00 Serial: The Magicians
09.45 Tele: Soleil Levant
10.30 Tele: Chicago Med
11.11 Tele: Tanto Amor
11.33 Film: The Legend Of Zorro
13.38 Tele: Totalement Diva
14.45 Film: Second In Command
16.43 Serial: The Magicians
17.21 Serial: S.W.A.T
18.05 Tele: Soleil Levant
19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Serial: Seal Team
21.15 Serial: The Head Hunter

08.00 Film: Soldier
12.04 / 20.06 - Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam
12.23 / 20.26 - Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
12.47 / 20.46 Radha Krishna
13.09 / 21.09 - Bin Kuch Kahe
13.31 / 21.31 - Zindagi Ki Mehek
13.56 / 21.46 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai
14.20 / 21.59 - Jai Kanhaiya Lal..
14.36 / 22.25 - Ikyawann
15.25 Film: Pratikar
Starring: Amitabh Bachchan, Vinod Khanna, Shammi Kapoor, Neetu Singh, Shabana Azmi
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Kumkum Bhagya
18.51 Piya Albela
19.13 Mere Angne Mein
19.35 Yeh Pyaar Nahi Toh Kya..

06.00 Local: Klip Seleksion
06.45 Local: Sur Prise
09.55 Local: Encounter
10.30 Mag: Palette
11.00 Mag: A Question Of Science
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
12.55 Local: RDV Muzikal
14.00 Local: Zanfan Nou Zil
14.30 D.Anime: The Zoo
14.52 D.Anime: Nutri Ventures
15.15 D.Anime: The Minimighty...
15.33 D.Anime: Gadget And The...
15.55 D.Anime: Monster Math Squad
16.06 D.Anime: Invention Story
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Jamai Raja
18.55 Local: Chaar Dham Tirth...
19.30 Le Journal
20.15 Film: Why Cheat India
22.15 Serial: The Blacklist

10.00 Karm Phal Data Shani
12.05 Film: Blackmail
Starring: Dharmendra, Raakhee, Shatrughan Sinha
14.18 DDI Magazine
15.00 Serial: Comedy Classes
15.21 Honaar Soon Mee Hya Gharchi
15.43 Mooga Manasulu
16.06 Apoorva Raagangal
16.29 Bisaat-E-Dil
16.51 Mehendi Tohra Naam Ke
17.13 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
17.34 Local: Amrit Vaani
18.00 Serial: My Little Princess
18.30 Serial: Ghar Pahucha Da Devi Maiya
20.00 Local: Les Grandes Lignes
21.00 Film: Talhotblond
Starring: Garret Dillahunt, Brando Eaton, Laura San Giacomo

06.00 Mag: Motorweek
06.25 Mag: Green Touch
07.00 Mag: Arts.21
07.29 Doc: Urban Gardens
08.54 Doc: 2D Innovations
11.53 Mag: Green Touch
12.05 Mag: Georgia On The Move
12.27 Mag: Arts 21
12.56 Mag: Urban Gardens
14.21 Doc: 2D Innovations
16.55 Mag: Motorweek
18.00 Mag: Eco India
18.26 Mag: Green Touch
19.05 Open Univ: Student Support
19.34 Mag: Tomorrow Today
20.05 Doc: Rewilding
21.10 Local: News (English)
21.10 Doc: 2D Innovations
22.29 Doc: The New Maharajas...
23.11 Mag: Eco India
23.37 Mag: Green Touch

00.20 Serial: S.W.A.T
01.26 Film: The Head Hunter
02.39 Serial: Chicago Med
05.13 Tele: Totalement Diva
05.41 Serial: Seal Team
06.58 Film: Savage Pampas
09.00 Serial: The Magicians
09.45 Tele: Soleil Levant
10.35 Tele: Tant Amor
11.00 Serial: Chicago Med
12.00 Serial: Sherlock
13.30 Tele: Totalement Diva
14.45 Film: Savage Pampas
16.40 Serial: The Magicians
17.27 Serial: Seal Team
18.05 Tele: Soleil Levant
19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor
20.08 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Serial: Seal Team
21.15 Film: Runaway
22.45 Tel: Totalement Diva

08.00 Film: Parvarish
12.03 / 19.54 - Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam
12.26 / 20.11 - Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
12.47 / 20.32 Radha Krishna
13.09 / 21.09 - Bin Kuch Kahe
13.31 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek
13.56 / 21.46 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai
14.20 / 21.59 - Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ke
14.36 / 22.25 - Ikyawann
15.20 Film: Mere Baap Pehle Aap
Starring: Akshaye Khanna, Genelia D'Souza, Paresh Rawal, Om Puri
18.30 Kundali Bhagya
18.52 Piya Albela

Jeudi 12 Nov - 15.20

Stars: Akshaye Khanna, Genelia D'Souza, Paresh Rawal, Om Puri



Jeudi 12 Nov - 20.15

Stars: Emraan Hashmi, Shreya Dhanwanthary, Snigdha Deep Chatterji



With Kamala Harris, Americans yet again have trouble understanding what multiracial means

While the debates about Kamala Harris' multiraciality may seem new, they are similar to the commentary other high-profile mixed-race people in the US have received about their racial identities.



AN AMERICAN KAMALA

Anyone confused about Kamala Harris' multiraciality may recall that the U.S. is a nation that was not built by a single ethnic or racial group. Photo - Indian Express

News that Sen. Kamala Harris was Joe Biden's choice for the 2020 Democratic vice presidential nominee drove speculation and argumentation about her identity. The big question appeared to be, "Is Kamala Harris truly African American?"

There were numerous articles and opinion pieces about whether Harris can legitimately claim to be African American; the authenticity of her Black identity if she has an Indian mother; what it means for her to be biracial; and other articles opining and speculating about her racial, ethnic and even national identity.

Harris, the daughter of immigrant parents from Jamaica and India, identifies as Black/African American while also embracing her Indian heritage. Yet the questions in social media and news outlets swirling around her identities demonstrate a continued misunderstanding of race and mixed-race people.

Where do loyalties lie?

While the debates about Harris' racial identities may seem new given the recent media attention focused on her, they are similar to the commentary other high-profile mixed-race people have received.

When I did research for my chapter on Tiger Woods in my book "Racial Ambiguity in Asian American Culture," I found much criticism of Woods' calling himself "Cablinasian" (a word Woods made up as a teen to account for his Caucasian, Black, American Indian and Asian heritages) and for not solely identifying as Black. Several articles expressed confusion about his multiraciality - the uncertainty over the most accurate racial category to fit him into.

The discussions of Woods mirror the critiques of Harris.

The competing interpretations of Harris' identity, like with Woods, seem to be a function of her multiple, intersecting identities (including race, class and gender) as well as

the public's deep discomfort with people who don't fit into fixed boxes.

For example, some people want to disavow Harris' Blackness because of her multiple ethnic and racial affiliations. Others claim her as Jamaican or Indian, which serves as evidence of her success as a member of an ethnic group or which celebrates a shared cultural connection with her.

Some see her Jamaican and Indian ethnicities as diminishing her claim to a Black American experience, unlike those who are known as "ADOS," or American Descendants of Slavery. Because Harris' ancestors do not include those who were enslaved in the U.S., ADOS's concern is that neither she nor her family can know the deep historical pain of U.S. anti-Black racism.

Embedded in this concern are echoes of the questions Black Americans face who have passed, who chose whiteness to escape slavery or the Jim Crow South or those who choose multiraciality to flee the social stigma of Blackness. Questioning Harris' bona fides to being a Black American is questioning where her loyalties lie.

'100% Black and 100% Japanese'

There are political reasons why some may want to discredit Harris' claims to Blackness, believing that saying she's not truly Black means she shouldn't be relatable to Black voters.

But the desire to see Harris as only Black or worry that she is not truly African American derives from the racist U.S. past of the one-drop rule of racial impurity, which sociologist F. James Wood has described as the idea that "a single drop of 'black blood' makes a person a black." That was an ideology from the majority of U.S. history - from its founding through to the Jim Crow era - when race was firmly believed to be a matter of blood.

Scientists for well over half a century have disproven any link between race and

genetics. Scholars have been writing and researching, for decades, about how race is a social construction rather than a biological absolute.

But in public discussion in the U.S., race is treated as an entity that can be measured and labelled. That is why people are questioning the validity of Harris' African American identity. They believe that her racial affiliation can somehow be quantified and weighed on a scale of authenticity.

Underlying these questions of authenticity are questions of legitimacy. Multiracial people are constantly confronted by those who question their whole selves and their choice to authentically identify with multiple races. For these critics, to qualify for membership in a race or ethnicity means one must be 100% of that group. Anything less means you cannot be a real member of any given culture, ethnicity or race.

Yet the reality and experiences of multiracial people's lives, like that of Harris, suggest that basic math cannot capture the realities of what it means to embody multiple races and ethnicities. As one subject of multiracial artist Kip Fulbeck's photo installation of mixed-race Asian Americans in The Hapa Project states, "I am 100% Black and 100% Japanese."

Evolution of racial categories

Racial identity is not only about external features (eye shape, hair texture, skin color) and ancestral lines. It is about the cultural and social habits and rituals that people participate in as they claim their affiliations with ethnic and racial groups.

The Indian food that Harris consumes speaks volumes about the ethnic influences she embraces, as does the Black sorority she pledged and the historically Black college she attended.

Anyone confused about Kamala Harris' multiraciality may recall that the U.S. is a nation that was not built by a single ethnic or racial group.

Indeed, U.S. land was taken from various Indigenous nations and built by the enslaved labor of people from multiple African nations and tribes for the benefit of others who hailed from a variety of European nations. And other immigrants from Latin America and the Pacific Rim settled in North America and made the U.S. their home.

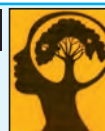
Harris, as the U.S.'s first multiracial, multiethnic female vice presidential candidate, reflects the evolution of racial categories, which coincides with an ever-evolving understanding of race and racism in the 21st century.

Jennifer Ho,

Professor, Asian American Studies,
University of Colorado Boulder

Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor



Finding Gifts in All

Before bed each night, take the time to review your day and review the gifts you received.

When we have good days, we often find ourselves going over the details later, enjoying them a second and third time as we feel the joy of our good fortune. When we have bad days, we may find ourselves poring over the details of our misfortunes. However, we can reframe those bad days by making it a daily practice to spend some time before going to bed each night to review the gifts we received that day. Regardless of our evaluation of the day -- good, bad, mediocre -- we can call forth the many blessings that were present. This practice transforms our consciousness as it reveals the fullness at the heart of our lives.

Some days it's easy to recount the gifts we've received; on other days, we have to look harder for the offerings of the day, but once we do, we will find there are always quite a few. We can keep it simple and be grateful for the fact that we have a roof over our head, nature, food, and our health. Once we have fully experienced these gifts, we can move outward to the gifts that may require a little more thought such as the gifts of forgiveness, tolerance and acceptance that we may have learned that day. We can also always be grateful for the people in our lives who support us, no matter how bad our day may have been.

Just reviewing the many positive offerings in our lives provides a context for our difficulties that puts them in proper perspective, but we can also make an effort to see the gifts even in adverse circumstances. This can be challenging and may require some practice before it feels authentic, but we have all had the experience of a disappointment or loss leading to a surprising gain. Just remembering this and trusting the give and take of life can help us to remember that sometimes the best gifts of all are the ones we don't recognize right away. In addition, the lessons we learn in the face of adversity are offerings in their own right, allowing us to count patience, wisdom, and fortitude alongside the other gifts of the day.