

# MAURITIUS TIMES

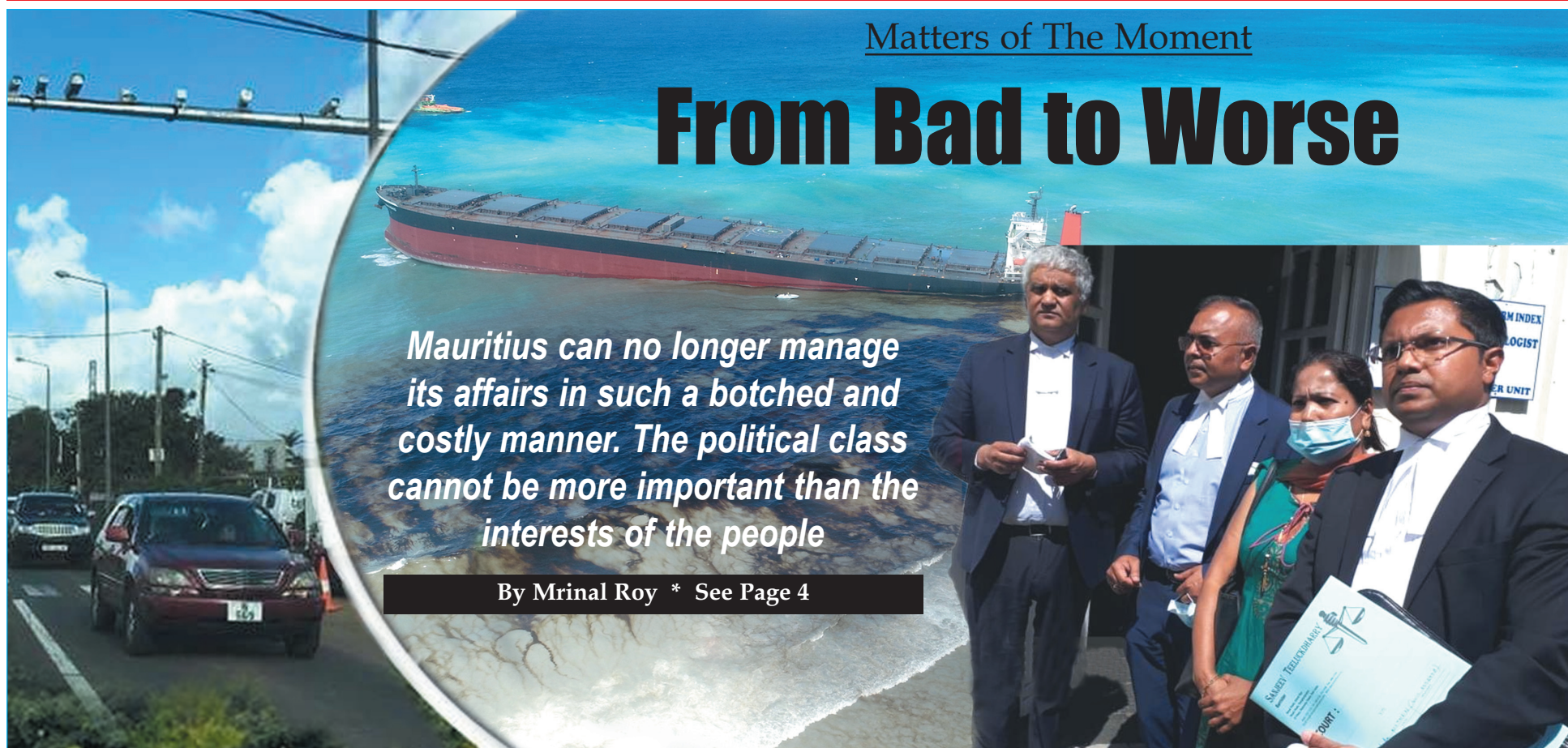
• "The best of all gifts around any Christmas tree: the presence of a happy family all wrapped up in each other". -- Anne Holm

Matters of The Moment

## From Bad to Worse

*Mauritius can no longer manage its affairs in such a botched and costly manner. The political class cannot be more important than the interests of the people*

By Mrinal Roy \* See Page 4



### A Conversation with Uncle Claus



**"Your hope is that the judiciary flings the beast against the hard wall. That's your last call..."**

By TP Saran \* See 7-8

## From Stress to Strain



**There can be no denying from anybody that 2020 has indeed been a stressful year because of Covid-19 and how it has made many aspects of our lives topsy-turvy**

By Dr R Neerunjun Gopee \* See Page 3

**We call it friendship!**

By Dr Rajagopal Soondron \* See Page 9



## Under God and The Law

**T**welve months back, we expressed the hope that 2020 could be made to be the start of a transformative process, to be triggered by the new team that had taken over from the preceding ageing leadership.

The previous decade had been marked by many an upheaval both locally and abroad. It began in the midst of a global financial crisis and subsequent international recession dating from the late 2000s. The impact has been such that to date the global economy is still not out of the woods. Inevitably, the Mauritian economy has not been spared either, and the country was facing new challenges, on other fronts too as problems continued 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.

Most economists would argue that the country has the potential not only to overcome them but to do even better if the appropriate conditions are set in place by the government, whose basic role is to bring about the conducive conditions and provide the opportunities that people can avail of to ameliorate their standard of living. They had pinned their hope on the Pravind Jugnauth-led government to change course and reverse the trend that has marred the proper running of the country's institutions.

But that was soon dashed in the wake of the appointments in different institutions of the country and which continue to this day. The same pattern is seen, despite the electoral assurances given from one election to another, for remedial changes and doing things differently. The renewed pledges for transparency, meritocracy and competence soon gave way to the old habits of appointing relatives, political sponsors and agents and such others. The government has forged ahead regardless of protests from civil society, the press and opposition parties.

The same attitude seems to have become the trademark of the present government, like its predecessor. If on the whole it was seen to have efficiently managed the Covid-19 pandemic, when seen from a medical perspective (though an earlier lockdown would have spared us from the

advent of Patient Zero), what followed when it came to the procurement of drugs, medical equipments, etc., revealed another story. The same story has been replayed in the series of scandals that have rocked the government since with its handling of the Wakashio oil spill, the St Louis Redevelopment Project, the disbursement of public funds by the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd, the dysfunctions in the National Assembly, the never-ending inquiries of its anti-corruption commission, etc. The government presses on regardless of protests and calls for transparency in the functioning of the country's institutions.

We will not prejudge nor speculate on the outcome of the judicial inquiry investigating into the death in mysterious circumstances of the former MSM activist Soopramanien Kistnen, which seems to be connected with the emergency procurements of medical equipments and drugs, or the investigations of the police into the cases of what appears to be serial suicides, etc. The Commissioner of Police has made known his determination to go to the bottom of these cases. He is a good man and a competent soldier, and we trust he'll do what is required to reassure the population that law and order will be abided by one and all – as Me Antoine Domingue SC would put it: '*Même le roi est 'sub Deo et lege': « under God and the law ».*'

The Director of Public Prosecutions and the Judiciary have more than once stepped in to uphold the Constitution and safeguard the country. That's how it should be. When institutions fail to live up to their mission either because political powers have scorched them or because their top brass do not possess the moral fibre needed to execute their functions to the highest ethical standards and norms and to deliver in the larger national interest, it is the country that fails – as we have pointed out earlier. Having or not having efficiently functioning institutions can make the difference between a country which achieves and where citizens feel totally safe and one which fails on both counts.

With the right decisions to course correct, this can still happen – provided, though, there is the political will. Can the people expect it to manifest as a new year ushers in?

### The Conversation

## The Power of Science in a Tumultuous Year

*The top scientific breakthrough for 2020 was understanding SARS-CoV-2 and how it causes COVID-19 - and then developing multiple vaccines*

**S**ARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes the respiratory illness COVID-19, has killed approximately 2.2% of those worldwide who are known to have contracted it. But the situation could be a lot worse without modern medicine and science.

The last such global scourge was the influenza pandemic of 1918, which is estimated to have killed 50 million people at a time when there was no internet or easy access to long-distance telephones to disseminate information. Science was limited, which made it difficult to identify the cause and initiate vaccine development. The world is 100% more prepared for the current pandemic than it was 100 years ago. However, it has still affected our lives profoundly.

I am a physician scientist who specializes in the study of viruses and runs a microbiology laboratory that tests for SARS-CoV-2 infections. I've seen first-hand patients with severe COVID-19 illness and have dedicated myself to developing diagnostics for this disease. It's a remarkable testament to science that a novel disease-causing virus has been discovered, the genetic material completely decoded, new therapies created to fight it and multiple safe and effective vaccines developed all within the span of a year – an accomplishment that the journal Science has pegged the breakthrough of 2020.

Most vaccines take 10-15 years to develop. Until now the fastest vaccine developed was against the mumps virus, which took four years. Now, in the midst of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, one vaccine is already authorized for use in the US, with a second close behind. Other vaccines have already been rolled out in countries across the globe.

### Science fast-tracked

This pandemic put science front



Many people wear homemade masks to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus. How well those masks work depends on what they're made of, and how well they fit.

Photo - TI-JA/E+/GETTY IMAGES

and center. One of the most significant scientific advances in the past 15 years has been the ability to read the genetic instructions – or genome – that encode viruses. The process of sequencing the genome of a virus is called next generation sequencing, and it has revolutionized science by allowing researchers to rapidly decode the genome of a virus or bacterium, quickly and cost-effectively. This strategy was used to determine the sequence of SARS-CoV-2 early in January 2020 before epidemiologists even recognized that it had already spread around the world. Obtaining the sequence allowed for the rapid development of diagnostics for SARS-CoV-2 and to figure out who was infected and how the virus might spread.

SARS-CoV coronavirus was responsible for an outbreak that spanned 2002-2004, but was not particularly contagious and was limited mostly to Southeast Asia.

SARS-CoV-2 has evolved two separate qualities that allow it to spread more easily. First, it has an enormous potential for triggering asymptomatic infections, in which the virus infects carriers who don't experience symptoms and may never know they are infected and transmitting the virus to others.

David Pride  
University of California San Diego

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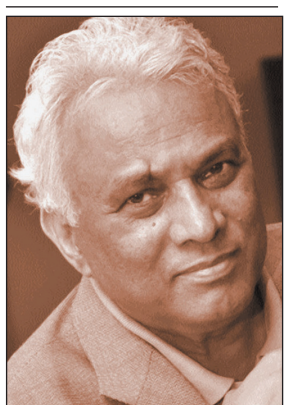
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Mrinal Roy

# From Bad to Worse

*Mauritius can no longer manage its affairs in such a botched and costly manner. The political class cannot be more important than the interests of the people*

**T**he world has lived through an *annus horribilis* in 2020 owing to the Covid-19 pandemic and its dire socio-economic fallouts and heavy death toll. In Mauritius, the situation has been worsened by the Wakashio ecological catastrophe and its disastrous aftermath on the livelihoods of people and the marine and coastal environment in the affected regions.

However, what is equally of grave concern to the people of the country is the plummeting standard of governance, the increasing number of alleged wrongdoings by Ministers, MPs and the government coterie over time and the appalling state of democracy in the country. This deplorable state of affairs is aeons distanced from the lofty ideals, ethos and commitment of service to the people which underpinned the unswerving battle of the stalwarts who as from 1937 mobilized the downtrodden workers of the sugar industry and the people at large to fight for their fundamental rights and the freedom of the country from colonial rule and the yoke of exploitation to usher a better socio-economic and political order.

## Seminal promises

The seminal promises made during the battle for independence to put the people and their continuous well-being at the centre of government actions have been repeatedly thwarted by successive governments after independence. Far too often in the chequered history of the country since independence, the interests of the people have been subordinated to the parochial interests of the political class and their endless permutation of political alliances to keep or wrest power.

Is it not high time to teach the history of Mauritius in schools based on objective research instead of selective narratives spun by pliant court scribes? This will provide potent role models to the young and inspire them with the struggle, fortitude and resilience of their forebears as well as the founding ethos and values which drove the battle for freedom and the unalienable rights of the people.

**“What is the role of government when a distressed widow is seeking answers and justice on the suspect death of her husband in order to obtain emotional closure? Is it not to ensure that the failings exposed are urgently remedied so that her anguish is allayed and that those responsible are swiftly nabbed and brought to book? Instead, government Ministers held a press conference to give a political spin to the case...”**



**“The Wakashio shipwreck on our reefs and the resulting oil spill and extensive ecological and economic damage caused have exposed the failings of the authorities responsible to monitor and prevent such damaging intrusion into our waters as well as the lack of preparedness to cope with the wide spectrum of consequences of the oil spill. Have the lessons of the Wakashio ecological catastrophe been learnt? Has the government now put in place a tested protocol and the professional cadres required to ensure that Mauritius is securely protected against such mishaps in future?”**

## Disquieting signs

The signs are disquieting. There is widely decried opacity surrounding the conditions public funds amounting to billions of Rupees are for example advanced by the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd (MIC) to distressed companies to bail them out or government procurement tenders and costly projects such as Safe City. Despite benefitting from a colossal Education budget of Rs 15 billion, the percentage of students leaving the reformed education system in place with the required qualifications and skills to man new high value added sectors in manufacturing and the services sector necessary to boost the prospects of the country is lamentably low.

In a true democracy, a rigorous oversight over the judicious use of public funds, independent institutions headed by competent professionals and an able and credible parliamentary opposition act as necessary checks and balances and a bulwark against excesses of those in power. The recent spate of questionable expulsions of opposition MPs and the leader of the opposition from the National Assembly with the complicit support of government MPs is a red line which distinguishes a banana republic from a true democracy.

Democracy cannot therefore mean a misuse of majority rule. An elected majority does not mean a mandate to flout and undermine the fundamental principles, rules and ethos of democracy. It is certainly not a licence for high-handedness and hegemony over government institutions, regulatory bodies, the government Establishment or parliamentary democracy. In essence, a true democracy cannot be unchecked majoritarianism.

The separation of powers into three individual branches of government, namely the executive branch, the legislative branch and the judicial branch is one of the cardinal cornerstones of vibrant democracies. The object is to provide for checks and balances and prevent the concentration of power which spawns highhandedness. A country cannot function efficiently and in a transparent mode without robust checks and balances.

## Trappings of a banana republic

Mauritius holds the unique notoriety of having its prime time news on national TV and radio broadcasting

services daily monopolized by large extracts of speeches of primarily the PM as well as Ministers. This is singularly galling as the same speeches are repeatedly broadcast during news time *ad nauseam*. This is a blatant misuse of the National TV and Radio at public expense. No citizen of any country wants to be daily afflicted with such longwinded and patently partisan speeches during news time.

This is in sharp contrast with the tenor and template of prime time news on the major news channels of the world which focus primarily on reporting and analysing the major news events of the day in the world and not kowtow to those in power. No wonder, more and more people are switching off and no longer watching local news on national TV which is a shame as they become dependent on the media to keep tabs on local news and events.

## The role of government

Whenever things go wrong, it is the responsibility of government to draw lessons from its blunders and remedy them forthwith so that they do not recur in future. For example, there have been so many murders and crimes committed in many instances on women since 2001 including an Irish tourist on honeymoon in the country which have remained unresolved amidst allegations that the scene of crime and vital forensic evidence have not been properly secured despite the setting up of a Scene of Crime Office (SOCO). This reflects badly on the country.

In the light of this poor record, have the authorities codified, in line with best practices prevailing in the top investigating agencies of the world, a rigorous protocol to secure the scene of crime and forensic evidence as well as rigidly monitor investigative procedures to ensure that crimes are promptly resolved and the culprits brought to justice?

The judicial inquiry into the suspect death of a political activist recently has shown that the authorities have not taken the remedial actions necessary in the wake of past blunders to benchmark investigative procedures on best practice norms.

\* Cont. on page 11



# Israel's parliament dissolves, triggering fourth election in 2 years

**I**srael's parliament dissolved on Wednesday after Prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's fractured ruling coalition failed to pass a budget, triggering a fourth election in two years and renewing an unprecedented political crisis.

The coalition led by Netanyahu and his former election rival, Defence Minister Benny Gantz, had been inching towards collapse for weeks, undermined by mutual acrimony and mistrust, reports Agence-France Press.

The dissolution of parliament, the Knesset, could see elections held as early as March 23, likely forcing Netanyahu to seek re-election while the coronavirus pandemic is still raging and as his long-awaited corruption trial intensifies.

The coalition headed by Netanyahu's right-wing Likud and Gantz's centrist Blue and White party had until midnight to pass a 2020 budget.

Failure to do so legally forces parliament's dissolution, Knesset spokesman Uri Michael told AFP on Tuesday.

The deadline's expiration marks the end of a troubled political marriage between Netanyahu and Gantz, who faced off in three incon-



The coalition led by Netanyahu had been inching towards collapse for weeks.  
Photo - www.dw.com

clusive elections in April and September of 2019 and again in March.

## Budget battle

They agreed to form a so-called unity government in April.

Gantz has said he never trusted Netanyahu, but wanted to spare Israelis a fourth election, especially as the pandemic was gathering pace.

The three-year coalition deal had stipulated that Netanyahu serves as premier for 18 months, with Gantz taking over in November 2021.

Gantz demanded the govern-

ment pass a budget covering both 2020 and 2021, arguing Israel, and the coalition, needed stability.

But Netanyahu refused to endorse a 2021 budget.

That, his critics said, was a political tactic to keep the coalition unstable, making it easier for him to sink the government before he had to yield power to Gantz.

"The reason we're heading to an election is because Netanyahu refused to pass a budget as required by law and honour political agreements so that he can remain in power for the duration of his trial," said Yohanan Plesner, the head of the Israel Democracy Institute think-tank.

Late Sunday, Blue and White said it had an agreement with Likud on a bill to buy more time to pass the budget.

But the Knesset rejected that bill on Tuesday, following yet another round of bitter back-and-forth between Netanyahu and Gantz.

Lawmakers from Likud and Blue and White both voted against the coalition proposal.

Gantz, currently in precautionary coronavirus quarantine, was unable to vote.

# Trump vetoes US defense bill, calls it "Gift" to Russia, China

**U**S President Donald Trump vetoed a broad defense funding bill sent to him by Congress Wednesday, complaining that it helps Russia and China and objecting to provisions to rename military bases.

The bipartisan bill was passed by high enough margins in both chambers of Congress for lawmakers to -- in theory -- override the president's rejection.



Donald Trump Vetoes Sweeping US Defense Bill.  
Photo - i1.wp.com/www.opindia.com

The veto of the \$740 billion measure to fund the military for fiscal 2021 came a day after the US leader, with less than one month left in office, threw a separate \$900 billion Covid-19 relief bill and overall funding for the government into question.

Trump criticized the annual National Defense Authorization Act for not responding to his demand to end liability protections for social media companies, known as Section 230 - an issue with no relationship to the US Defense Department, reports Agence-France Press.

He also objected to a provision in the NDAA to rename military bases bearing the names of generals from the secessionist, slavery-supporting South in the 19th century US civil war.

And he objected to a provision which could impede his decision to sharply cut US troop levels in Germany, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

The NDAA "fails to include critical national security measures, includes provisions that fail to respect our veterans and our military's history, and contradicts efforts by my Administration to put America first in our national security and foreign policy actions," Trump said in a statement.

Without the changes to Section 230, Trump said, the NDAA "is a 'gift' to China and Russia."

## 'Recklessness'

The Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi slammed Trump's veto as "an act of recklessness that harms our troops, endangers our security & undermines the will of Congress."

Both the House and the Senate set aside time next week to vote to override the veto -- which would be the first such rebuff from Congress in his nearly four years in office.

But with the omnibus funding bill, including general government finance and Covid relief, still up in the air, it was not clear whether Trump was leveraging both for concessions.

"I will not approve this bill, which would put the interests of the Washington, DC establishment over those of the American people," Trump said.

See more on page 6

# Covid-19 immunity lasts at least 8 months, hope for longevity of vaccines: Study

**P**eople who have recovered from the novel coronavirus infection have immune memory to protect against reinfection for at least eight months, according to a new study which provides strong evidence for the likelihood that Covid-19 vaccines will work for long periods.

While earlier studies have shown that antibodies against the coronavirus wane after the first few months of infection, raising concerns that people may lose immunity quickly, the new research, published in the journal Science Immunology, puts these concerns to rest, reports Press Trust of India.

According to the scientists, including those from Monash University in Australia, specific cells within the immune system called memory B cells, "remembers" infection by the virus, and if re-exposed to the virus, triggers a protective immune response through rapid



COVID-19 immunity lasts. Photo - Getty Images

production of protective antibodies.

In the study, the researchers recruited a cohort of 25 Covid-19 patients and took 36 blood samples from them from Day 4 post infection to Day 242 post infection. The scientists found that antibodies against the virus started to drop off after 20 days post infection.

However, they said all patients continued to have memory B cells that recognised one of two components of the virus -- the spike protein

which helps the virus enter host cells, and the nucleocapsid proteins.

Based on their analysis, the researchers said these virus-specific memory B cells were stably present as far as eight months after infection.

The scientists believe the findings give hope to the efficacy of any vaccine against the virus, and also explains why there have been very few examples of genuine reinfection across the millions of those who have tested positive for the virus globally.

"These results are important because they show, definitively, that patients infected with the Covid-19 virus do in fact retain immunity against the virus and the disease," said study co-author Menno van Zelm, from the Monash University Department of Immunology and Pathology.



## California Secretary of state Alex Padilla to replace Kamala Harris in US Senate



Alex Padilla will be the first Latino to represent California in the nation's upper house. Photo - c.ndtvmg.com

**A**lex Padilla was named Tuesday as Vice President-elect Kamala Harris' replacement in the US Senate, becoming the first Latino to represent California in the nation's upper house.

Padilla, the son of Mexican immigrants who became California's first Latino secretary of state in 2015, was selected by Governor Gavin Newsom to represent a state that is around 40 percent Hispanic, reports Agence-France Press.

In a statement, Padilla pledged to "work each and every day to honor that trust and deliver for all Californians."

Padilla's appointment as the Golden State's junior senator ends months of intense lobbying among Californian Democrats for the coveted position, which Harris will vacate before next month's

inauguration.

Padilla -- who oversaw California's massive vote-by-mail operation in November's general election -- is a long-standing ally of Newsom and had been seen as a frontrunner for the seat, with strong support from Latino groups.

The son of a cook and a house cleaner who grew up in a gang violence-afflicted neighborhood of Los Angeles, Padilla -- who is 47 -- briefly worked as an engineer writing software for satellites, before entering politics at a time of intense anti-immigrant rhetoric in California.

California's other US Senate seat has been occupied since 1992 by Dianne Feinstein, for whom Padilla once worked as a junior assistant.

## Pakistan government grants permission for construction of Hindu temple in Islamabad

**P**akistan government has granted permission for the construction of a Hindu temple in Islamabad, nearly six months after the work at the site was stopped apparently because of the pressure from the radical Islamic groups.

The Capital Development Authority (CDA) issued a notification in Lahore on Monday, giving permission for the construction of the boundary wall for cremation ground for the Hindu community in sector H-9/2, Islamabad, reports M Zulqernain of Indiatoday.com.

Earlier, some hardline clerics had warned the government not to allow the construction of the temple in Islamabad.

The CDA in July stopped construction of the boundary wall on the plot meant for the temple, citing legal reasons.

Religious Affairs Minister Pir Noorul Haq Qadri had forwarded the matter to the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) - Pakistan's state-run council of clerics - for its advice along with a summary for grant of Rs 100 million to the Prime minister for construction of the building.

In October, the council, which advises the government on religious issues, said that there are no constitutional or Sharia restrictions on the construction of a temple in Islamabad or any other part of the country.

The decision, signed by 14 CII members, added that Hindus, like all other religious groups in the country, have the constitutional right to a place for last rites according to their faith.

Lal Chand Malhi, a minority lawmaker from the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

(PTI), in a statement thanked Prime minister Imran Khan, CII chief Dr Qiba Ayaz and others for granting permission to build the boundary wall.

He said that the minorities in the country enjoy equal rights as promised by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah while lauding the CII for clearing the way for the construction of a temple, a crematorium and community hall in Islamabad.



thedispatch.blob.core.windows.net

As per plans, the Krishna temple will come up in a 20,000 sq ft plot in the capital's H-9 administrative division.

Hindus form the biggest minority community in Pakistan.

According to official estimates, 75 lakh Hindus live in Pakistan. However, according to the community, over 90 lakh Hindus are living in the country.

The majority of Pakistan's Hindu population is settled in Sindh province where they share culture, traditions and language with Muslim residents.

## Indian national in UAE is now highest Guinness World Records holder in GCC

**A**n Indian national living in the UAE has earned the unique distinction of holding the highest number of Guinness World Records not only in the UAE but the entire Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

According to a report in Gulf Today, Ramkumar Sarangapani has set himself a target of breaking over 100 records in his lifetime, reports Indiatoday.com.

"Currently, he is also the highest record holder as an Indian citizen - numbering 17 so far, ahead of even the master cricketer, Sachin Tendulkar at the moment," the report claims.

When it comes to record holders in the UAE, Ramkumar has reportedly broken all records in Dubai, with most of them related to the UAE in some way or other.

The report claims that that Ramkumar has created several "larger-than-life world records".

"He attempted a marathon record-breaking session on Guinness World Records Day on November 18, where he



Ramkumar Sarangapani with his citations.  
Photo - akm-img-a-in.tosshub.com

broke six world records in a matter of just 7 hours and 50 minutes," the report said.

Some of the records that he holds include: Largest Desk Calendar (UAE Calendar), Most pages in a photograph flip book (Showing Dubai skyline in 24 hours), Largest Banknotes mosaic (I LOVE UAE), Longest line of plastic cards (UAE Flag), among others.

"Having lived in Dubai for 17 years, the emirate is as much my favourite home as Chennai in India, and I love working on themes that speak of 'largest' and the 'longest' simply because it connects with Dubai, a city dotted with unique and massive structures," Ramkumar was quoted as saying by Gulf Today.

According to the report, Ramkumar started his quest to break records after a casual conversation with a friend who claimed that world records are meant for "super humans only".

"I decided to set the record straight - so to speak - and prove that a common man has just as much an opportunity to earn such titles," he told Gulf Today.



## A Conversation with Uncle Claus

# “Your hope is that the judiciary flings the beast against the hard wall. That’s your last call...”



Once again this year we have contacted our chubby friend Uncle Claus who has not been deterred by Mr Covid-19 to go on his Christmas peregrinations. In fact, as he tells us, he felt that ours is a safe destination! Coming from him, this is indeed a compliment. But mind you, he’s a sharp and smart grandpa – as he calls himself – and the happenings on the local scene haven’t escaped his sparkling eyes. He comes to cheer us up with his expansive love for all, but given what we have been going through recently, he had no choice but to make his magic wand a bit stiffer when applied to those who are messing up as he says. And he promises to come again in 2021 – for men may come and men may go, but he will go on beyond them...

TP Saran

**\* Miracle of miracles, here you are again, my dear Uncle. So glad to see you back after these past depressing months!**

Well, I’m sure glad to be here too! You guys have done rather well in keeping the bug at bay haven’t you? Not quite Taiwan, which has just recorded one case of local transmission of Covid-19 after being free of it for so long. But as I was going around from on high in the skies I could see you people going about without the kind of fear that has grounded so many countries up north, which have been battling with wave after wave of the pande-mic.

So I told myself that down here is the place to be for

some sun and shine! Pity though that others are not as lucky as me – I have my sledge, they have to depend on airline passenger flights which have been stopped again!

**\* Please don’t get me wrong. But I thought they would cancel Christmas this year and did not expect you down here. You must have heard what Boris was saying to the Britons last Saturday about the latest havoc there...**

Yes, I did, and his folks are not at all pleased, all Christmas plans having had to be effectively cancelled. But what can the poor guy do? He’s got a double whammy: negotiating the Brexit conundrum with the EU and

dealing with the serious threat posed by the newly recognised mutant coronavirus: and here there’s no question of a Brexit-like no-deal, which is looking more and more likely. But that does not seem to be ruffling Boris, for I must say he’s pretty cool during his press conferences.

Anyway, not his fault that the corona has decided to morph isn’t it? Well, that’s what these invisible denizens of planet Earth keep doing all the time, nothing unusual for them. After all, if you deprive them of their normal habitat, then try to get at them with your vaccines or medicines they will do anything to get you too, normal isn’t it? They also want to have a life, too bad it’s by taking a ride inside your lungs!

So yea, Christmas is practically cancelled there. That is really hard on English folks, for whom Christmas is the most awaited moment in the calendar. Even Boris must be feeling bad, but he has no choice. Let’s hope that at least their turkey is Covid-free!

**\* Hopefully, though, they will be able celebrate their Xmas to some degree?**

Yes, I learnt that across parts of England, the mixing of households in Christmas “bubbles” will be restricted to just a single day on 25 December itself...

B.1.1.7 – that’s the code for the mutant – *oblige!*

**“I genuinely hope I am very wrong, because I always come to bring good news and goodies for my kids. By the way when I say kids I do not mean only the youngsters, I mean everybody, ‘cos who doesn’t like a present? Even the big guys do!! Expensive ones like Gucci and Rolex that I cannot afford...”**

Seeing as I am here, thought I’ll show off a bit of my French... What to do, something’s better than nothing isn’t it, since there seems to be no other way to prevent the transmission of the disease from getting out of control. Too bad for grandparents in particular, most of whom are in assisted care homes anyway. Their grandchildren will sure miss them lots. Pray for better luck next year.

**\* Shows how much we value personal contacts isn’t it?**

Indeed, what an irony that at a time when you really want to hug your loved ones and there’s so much expectation of catching up on the human warmth we have missed since the year’s beginning, we have had to be to be telling each other let’s not stay in touch in the literal sense

There’s real pandemic fatigue out there, that’s why I say you people are really much luckier here that families and friends will be able to be together, share meals, enjoy banter and make a lot of happy noise that has been absent for all these months!

☞ Cont. on page 8

**“Indeed the winds brought into my ken the juicy news of the goings-on down here.**

**Like I said, I give you good marks for keeping the disease under control, but you did mess up in the nitty-gritty, didn’t you? I mean, why did you guys have to spoil your record by not following the proper procedures for sourcing your needed supplies of masks, medicines, ventilators and other paraphernalia?”**



# "Don't forget that what goes round comes round. The wheel of fortune keeps turning... What goes up must come down"

☞ Cont. from page 7

Why, I spied on some dinner-do's in hotels on the coast, and who would say there's Covid here! Still, that's my advice, you have to be careful.

**\* Not to sound disrespectful, but you travel all over the world during the course of one night. I mean, in the context of a global pandemic, doesn't that sound like the makings of a massive super-spreader event?**

Ah, but you forget my friend. Haven't I told you umpteen times before that I am a made-up fellow, what you would nowadays call virtual? Mind you, not fake – like fake news – but kind of real-unreal. Somewhat like corona itself, which needs humans to thrive and spread – unlike me since I am not one though I may look like one. *Ergo*, I cannot be a spreader let alone a super-spreader!

**\* Now I understand why you are not wearing a mask!**

You're crazy! With my flowing beard where would I have found a size that fits assuming I had to wear one! My trade-mark is laughter and cheer – I cannot afford to disappoint my faithful children by covering my face, you must agree! Poor little fellows, must bring the big smiles on their faces again.

**\* As you said yourself, we have been safe enough here as far as the pandemic goes, but I am sure you must be keeping a tab on what's been going on, as you do anyway for all places you visit. So what have you been seeing and hearing?**

You bet I have! Lots! You people have been keeping – or been kept! – quite busy I must say! Literally – with Covid-related side businesses generating much interest eh? Even if I don't want to poke my nose into other's affairs, can I escape being bombarded by the overload of information that spreads at the speed of light all over the world in these days of the internet and the worldwide web, not to mention the ever present 24/7 social media buzzes and posts that spring from all over, hydra-headed?

And indeed the winds brought into my ken the juicy news of the goings-on down here. Like I said, I give you good marks for keeping the disease under control, but you did mess up in the nitty-gritty, didn't you? I mean, why did you guys have to spoil your record by not following the proper procedures for sourcing your needed supplies of masks, medicines, ventilators and other paraphernalia? And the mind-boggling costs for, among others, ventilators that are not working from obscure companies that had nothing to do with medical supplies ever from what I gather.

That, I must say, is a sure goof-up that cannot be accepted anywhere in the world that I know of. Even when it is a matter of emergency – 'cos everything has a limit. Remember Abe Lincoln's 'You can fool some of the people all the time,...' ? I'll leave the pleasure of completing the rest to those who ought to have known better. Maybe they'll learn a lesson that is badly needed.

**\* But it's got worse, and nastier, by the day. Surely you know about the latest and hottest news that has been in the forefront of the public domain?**

Indeed I do, if it's all over the place... how can I miss that! I am sure you are referring to what is being described as the dark series of serial suicides! Of people jumping off cliffs, hanging themselves from trees, of the



**“If it's all over the place... how can I miss that! I am sure you are referring to what is being described as the dark series of serial suicides! Of people jumping off cliffs, hanging themselves from trees, of the young lady found dead in her apartment, or the body lying burnt in a sugarcane field which is the discovery that has triggered the series. At least in the latter case it has been more or less established in court that this was not suicide...”**

**“You seem to have a vibrant civil society, many voices and opinions are heard. You have some very smart lawyers who have taken the bull by its horns. Your hope is that the judiciary gets onto the tail and flings the beast against the hard wall. The judiciary is your last call...”**

young lady found dead in her apartment, or the body lying burnt in a sugarcane field which is the discovery that has triggered the series.

At least in the latter case it has been more or less established in court that this was not suicide but most likely murder. If this same conclusion is reached as regards the other cases too as the investigations and legal proceedings continue, then I am indeed very, very afraid for your country and people.

**\* How do you mean Uncle, you're giving me the jitters now.**

I genuinely hope I am very wrong, because I always come to bring good news and goodies for my kids. By the way when I say kids I do not mean only the youngsters, I

mean everybody, 'cos who doesn't like a present? Even the big guys do!! Expensive ones like Gucci and Rolex that I cannot afford.

I have been around for a couple of hundred years, grandpa to all who live today. It is my nature to love all, big and small, and to spread love. That's my job. I do not expect anything in return, I am only here to give gifts and go back with my big bag empty – except for all the love that I receive. Imagine how much that has added up to all these years. And that is why I am a jolly fellow, without any baggage.

**\* Uncle, this is going over my head. What are you getting at?**

Let me be blunt, since I am grandpa: it's like, we'll do whatever we like with your money. That was initially. Now it's like, with your body, too. Got me?

**\* But why?**

Heard this sometime from one of your wiser police guys, who belonged to another era: 'The lust for money is the bane of humankind'.

Mammon rules. There is a complete breakdown of the moral order. It's grab, grab, grab. Any means will do. That is the state of affairs, because of the state of mind of those who couldn't care less for the people, though they loudly shout that's what they do!

Sometimes I begin to believe what I hear, that, for example, democracy is a system which allows the electorate to choose its dictators. And you are not unique. Look at what is happening in so many countries around the world and you will see that the observation is quite pertinent. It's circles within circles of the privileged, the blue-eyed, those with occult connections. It's better not to get trapped into such vortices which can lead to deadly consequences.

Greed over need is the ruling impulse today. Mahatma Gandhi was right.

**\* Where will all this lead to Uncle? Is our future doomed?**

Well, you seem to have a vibrant civil society, many voices and opinions are heard. You have some very smart lawyers who have taken the bull by its horns. Your hope is that the judiciary gets on to the tail and flings the beast against the hard wall. The judiciary is your last call.

Don't forget that what goes round comes round. The wheel of fortune keeps turning. The law of nature says that what goes up must come down.

**\* And what about the coronavirus then? By the way, did you manage to bring us some vaccines?**

Sorry, I am not a magician! But you will surely get your own in due course, and from what the guys who are in the thick of the fight are saying the vaccine will help countries to see an end to their miseries. But billions of doses of vaccines will be needed, and that's where the catch is. So how long for normal or near normal to return is your guess as well as mine. What is certain is that I'll be back again next year same time, whatever the bug does.

For now, lemme go complete my round of the imaginary chimneys!

**\* OK Uncle, been nice seeing you cheery as always. Have a good sledge ride back to the melting snows! And merry Christmas too!**

Sure, you too and thanks. See you Christmas 2021!

TP Saran





Dr Rajagopal Soondron

# We call it friendship!

A few of us senior citizens would sometimes squirm in our shoes, feeling small, when thinking of the odd things we had done or refused to do in our younger days. Fortunately, our biased mind readily downplays those unpleasant, highly embarrassing incidents while

always bringing into the limelight those few positive ones we have retained.

At high school we came face to face with William Wordsworth's expression "The child is the father of Man". We adolescents chuckled and giggled, surely a sign of our ignorance; we were no psychologist to tease out that idiom. But later, childhood psychology helping, we grown-ups were baffled by the complexity of an individual's character, behaviour and personality; and we realize that we now have some inkling of what our teachers wanted to convey.

## That friend

Of all the pals we have had many would be forgotten, even their names, while a few will remain bosom friends; but one or two will still stand out — because of certain incidents or happenings which would remain ever alive in our mind.

Six decades ago our primary school at Gustave Colin Street, Beau Bassin, (now known as Vele Govinden Govt School) was a well-known institution with a separate girl and boy sections, separated by a high stony wall with a small wooden door in the middle for staff use only. Maybe Victorian feelings were still running high in the British colonial educational system; when was that Berlin wall pulled down for good — I can't recollect, but I very well remember how we boys had some classes in the girl section.

There I met one of my classmates. Why did I take a liking to him is beyond me? But I clearly remember him as being taller; a fair young face with bright dark eyes and hair, well 'brilliantined' and groomed; always with a thin, straight, quiet, timid smile on his lips, and little other emotion being revealed. He had a soft, reserved, sad but high-pitched voice, giving me the impression that he was a loner.

School boys of those days would wear shorts, long trousers being unheard of. My friend was well dressed, sometimes in khaki shirt and shorts uniform. I was not that lucky to have had such attire at that time; may be that was why I looked up to him with some admiration; though his far-away gaze and timidity could have been the magnetic attraction. As both our surnames start with the letter S, it would have meant that we were grouped together on the same bench in class.

But come recreation time — that friend's demeanour became suddenly more focused, stirring something in my mind. Well, it was not what he did but rather his non-participation in our boyish recreation mischief that caught my attention. Looking back I only remember my friend in the school compound at recreation time, while failing to make the connection as to our class relationship of which I could recall nothing. He might have been transferred from another school.

**“What prompted me, a seven-year-old boy, to indulge in pitying others, to share bread and money with someone else? Is it possible that as a child I had been influenced by my maternal grandmother and aunties who I had so often heard, in the midst of the night in their cool thatched house, commiserating and dwelling on the ill-fate of some unfortunate poverty-stricken children? Maybe. Sometimes it is difficult to fathom the psychology of a child...”**



Everyday, during lunch time, all of us would rush for our bread and lunch; but he would just stand there in the middle of that school compound, with his right hand in his shorts pocket staring ahead and slowly rotating his head to gaze around. It was strange that I had rarely ever seen him eating lunch; he would just stand with his sad, compassionate, faint smile. This may have tickled my dormant curiosity, though. Most probably that scenario was repeated every day that we were classmates, I eating my bread while he having nothing to show for it.

It was the scene of that lonely classmate that struck a chord within me, pushing me to pity him. So finally, I caught myself sharing my

'Maison' bread and 'Blue Band' butter with him; he would slowly and timidly draw his hand out of his pocket and partake of the lunch — mechanically chewing it without much show of enthusiasm or sign of gratefulness. He should have become a very good friend of mine, because I not only shared bread, but soon was also prompted to part with two precious cents out of the five that my parents gave me on most of the school days: surely a sign that I was moved by my friend's plight.

In those days with five cents a student would rush and run — as soon as the 10.30 o'clock recreation bell would ring — to the old lady in the school compound who would be frying all sorts of sweetmeats and "merveille". Somehow or other I would gladly spend 3 cents and keep the other two for my friend S.

Years later I would learn that his father was a primary school teacher; this kept me wondering whether this would not have entitled my friend to be richer than me — son of a vegetable seller; so why did he not have lunch or pocket money at midday break — like all of us? That would remain a mystery to me.

After secondary studies he would join the police force. Though meeting him on rare occasions I have never requested him to clear that childhood mystery.

## Reminiscing

As for me, decades later, as I went through the rocky period of undergraduate life, when a lot of thinking and self-analysis had to be done, when the mind had to grapple with new and unstable thought processes and apprehensions associated with a totally new trend of professional life — I did make use of this childhood friendship to anchor myself to inner stability and self-confidence.

At night as I lay on my bed, full of self-doubt, and as deep black thoughts dug deeper onto unbeaten path, I would fall prey to my negative qualities. Then I would tell myself that I would stand to gain if I could pitch them against whatever internal positive assets I could show — thereby striking some semblance of internal peace. And then I would remember my friend — he was high on my list of positives; and I would reminisce of my habit of sharing whatever I had with him.

There comes a time in each young man's life, especially in the lonely dark room of a medical hostel in the early hours of the day, temporarily cut off from the morbid atmosphere of a hospital, when he has to count his chickens. So, whatever could have been the reason — I did chalk this decade-old childhood attitude under the feel-good column...

What prompted me, a seven-year-old boy, to indulge in pitying others, to share bread and money with someone else? Is it possible that as a child I had been influenced by my maternal grandmother and aunties who I had so often heard, in the midst of the night in their cool thatched house, commiserating and dwelling on the ill-fate of some unfortunate poverty-stricken children? Maybe. Sometimes it is difficult to fathom the psychology of a child and all those unseen forces that mould his psyche.

Could I be dreaming of all that? No. Recently I drew up the courage to face my friend with those school memories — and he readily acquiesced that he did benefit from our school friendship, for which he is grateful. And nowadays whenever he catches sight of me in the market place or on the road, he draws a smile from me — and pays me back more than expected: he would blurt out enthusiastically "S... you make my day whenever I see you... I feel so young, vivified and joyful."

I suppose deep in our psyche is buried the memory of that wonderful school recreation time of 60 years ago.

That's friendship — I suppose so.





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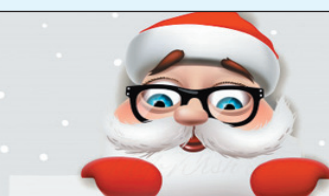
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\* Cont. from page 4

The many alleged shortcomings of the investigative agencies and failings of the costly Safe City project have yet again been embarrassingly exposed.

What is the role of government when a distressed widow is seeking answers and justice on the suspect death of her husband in order to obtain emotional closure? Is it not to ensure that the failings exposed are urgently remedied so that her anguish is allayed and that those responsible are swiftly nabbed and brought to book? Instead, government Ministers held a press conference to give a political spin to the case. This is not the time for spin doctoring but for government and the authorities to help a distraught widow find peace of mind.

This case has also brought to light the questionable cost effectiveness and many failings of the Rs 19 billion Safe City project championed by the government. A project which was touted as a high tech security system which would assure the safety of the people but also provide crucial visual evidence to nab criminals, drug traffickers and other offenders has failed to do so. It is flabbergasting that key visual evidence of the final leg of the journey of the dead activist is unavailable. This has obviously triggered the wildest conjectures. What is the point of investing in such a costly project if it is incapable of providing key visual evidence to help elucidate criminal cases, which is among its most important deliverables?

It is equally disconcerting that there are contradictions as to who stores the camera recordings of the Safe City project and for how long. Against such a backdrop, the people once again expect government who steered the very costly Safe City project to come forward with some plausible answers on the culpable absence of such crucial evidence and urgently take the corrective steps required to ensure that such ques-

## From Bad to Worse



“The Rs 19 billion Safe City project championed by the government, which was touted as a high tech security system which would assure the safety of the people but also provide crucial visual evidence to nab criminals, drug traffickers and other offenders, has failed to do so. It is flabbergasting that key visual evidence of the final leg of the journey of the dead activist is unavailable. This has obviously triggered the wildest conjectures. What is the point of investing in such a costly project if it is incapable of providing key visual evidence to help elucidate criminal cases?”

tionable setbacks do not recur in future.

### Changing tack

In the same vein, the Wakashio shipwreck on our reefs and the resulting oil spill and extensive ecological and economic damage caused have exposed the failings of the authorities responsible to monitor and prevent such damaging intrusion into our waters as well as the lack of preparedness to cope with the wide spectrum of consequences of the

oil spill. Have the lessons of the Wakashio ecological catastrophe been learnt? Has the government now put in place a tested protocol and the professional cadres required to ensure that Mauritius is securely protected against such mishaps in future? Have steps also been taken to beef up the real time satellite monitoring system of vessel traffic in our region and strengthen regional cooperation and resources in terms of equipment and expertise to swiftly deal with such disasters in future?

Likewise, there are so many examples in the country where those in power do not learn from their blunders nor take the corrective steps necessary to significantly improve governance and the decision making process of the government Establishment and its institutions. Despite being consistently rapped on the fingers by the SEBI or the EC or listed in Panama and other papers to no avail, it took the European Commission decision to include Mauritius in the revised list of high-risk countries with strategic deficiencies in their anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing frameworks to jolt the government to take urgent corrective steps to meet EC and Financial Action Task Force (FATF) norms.

The people cannot accept that the hardships of an *annus horribilis* are exacerbated through patent failings of governance and government institutions. 2021 will be as challenging. Mauritius can no longer manage its affairs in such a botched and costly manner. The political class cannot be more important than the interests of the people and the country. For the multitude who strongly believe that we can do far better as a nation, it is time to change tack and entrust the country to a new breed of talented and able young Mauritians more representative of the intellect, competence and professional expertise in our midst.

Mrinal Roy

## The Power of Science in a Tumultuous Year

Cont. from page 2

Second, it can spread via aerosolized particles. Most of these viruses spread via large respiratory droplets, which are visible and fall out of the air within three to six feet. But SARS-CoV-2 can also spread through airborne transmission via much smaller particles that remain in the air for several hours.

While in 1918 people went on blind faith that masking reduced transmission, this time around, science provided us with concrete answers. There have been several studies demonstrating the efficacy of masking. These types of studies inform the public that mask-wearing, social distancing, hand-washing and limiting crowd sizes decrease circulating virus and thus reduce hospitalizations and death. While they don't get much fanfare, these studies are among the most important discoveries in response to this pandemic.

### Science aids diagnostics

Many tests for the virus are performed using PCR, which is short for polymerase chain reaction. This method uses specialized proteins and virus-matching DNA sequences called primers to create more copies of the virus. These

additional copies allow PCR machines to detect the presence of the virus; doctors can then tell you if you are infected. Because of the availability of the virus's genome sequence, any researcher can design primers that match the virus to develop a diagnostic test.

Early on, the World Health Organization developed a PCR test to detect the virus and disseminated instructions on how to use it to researchers and physicians around the globe.

This was a remarkable achievement that allowed countries across the world to rapidly develop diagnostic tests using this template. This distribution changed the course of the pandemic in many countries.

### Treatments have lowered mortality rates

Treatments for infectious diseases often evolve over time. There is no vaccine yet for hepatitis C, but over recent years treatments have evolved from those that make you very ill to those that are highly efficacious with few side effects.

We are now seeing similar things in the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, just on an accelerated timeline. With the aid of clinical studies, we

now have treatments such as steroids, antiviral medications like Remdesivir and infusions of antibodies. Physicians also know how to alter a patient's position in ways that increase the chance of survival.

### Vaccine development could end pandemic

This pandemic could end if the virus swept through the population killing millions but leaving the survivors with natural immunity. More likely the virus will snuff itself out when most of the population has been vaccinated with a SARS-CoV-2 vaccine. That is especially true in parts of the world where frequent testing and public health strategies are difficult to implement.

It took many years to develop an influenza vaccine, with the first available in 1942. Other successes with smallpox and polio, and more recent ones like HPV and *Haemophilus influenzae* Type b, have provided blueprints for vaccine development.

Governments across the world have partnered with private companies to expedite the development of SARS-CoV-2 vaccines. This has led to multiple different companies developing their own different ver-



**Steroid medication dexamethasone is used to treat COVID-19. Rafael Henrique/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images**

sions of vaccines. Normally, these take years to develop; however, by leveraging recent successes and accumulated knowledge, the timeline was accelerated significantly. Normally, new vaccines go through phase 1 (safety), phase 2 (efficacy) and phase 3 (comparison) trials, but as demonstrated in the current trials, phases 2 and 3 can be combined for expediency. And large-scale manufacturing can begin when the vaccine is still in trials, potentially cutting years off the timeline.

Technology is at the forefront of the development of these vaccines. Some of the coronavirus vaccines take advantage of mRNA technology, which essentially programs our cells to develop immune responses

against SARS-CoV-2.

Others use viruses as delivery mechanisms for SARS-CoV-2 proteins to which your body develops an immune response. Both types have thus far been shown to be effective, but long-term safety will remain controversial when vaccines are developed on such an expedited timeline.

### Lessons learned

This disease, which began in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, and was first diagnosed in either November or December of 2019, is the perfect illustration of just how rapidly viruses spread in a connected world. We got previews of what could happen from the recent outbreaks of Ebola and Zika virus, but the spread of SARS-CoV-2 has been on a different level. It has underscored that when we receive warnings about contagious viruses, rapid and decisive action must be taken in all parts of the world to reduce its spread.

Where there is more strict compliance with public health policies, there have been profound reductions in virus transmission.

While the research that has made all this possible might fly under the radar right now, history will record this time as one of the greatest periods for scientific advancements.



# This new year – rethinking gratitude



**Jeremy David Engels**  
Associate Prof of  
Communication Arts and  
Sciences, Pennsylvania State

**I**t's a new year, which means that it's also time to imagine new beginnings and better futures. It's time, in short, for New Year's resolutions.

Gratitude, in particular, has become a popular resolution. For many of us, living gratefully seems to promise more happiness in our lives.

But what if we've got gratitude all wrong?

I began writing my book "The Art of Gratitude" because I too believed that gratitude might offer an antidote to the anger, fear and resentment that characterize contemporary life. But as I read one self-help book about gratitude after another, it had the opposite effect on me. The more I read, the less grateful I felt.

I came to ask, does the problem lie in how gratitude tends to be defined?

## The debt of gratitude

Gratitude is often defined as a feeling of obligation and indebtedness toward those who give us a gift or help us out in some way. Consider how often many of us use the phrase, "I owe you a debt of gratitude," or "One good turn deserves another."

The debt of gratitude idea dates back to the foundations of Western culture, to Aristotle, Cicero and the New Testament.

According to a leading contemporary expert on gratitude, UC Davis psychology professor Robert Emmons, "To be grateful means to allow oneself to be placed in the position of recipient – to feel indebted and aware of one's dependence on others." Or, as Emmons argues elsewhere, gratitude is "an acknowledgement of debt," and ingratitude "the refusal to admit one's debt to others."

In this framework, people are debtors and the givers of debt. According to philosopher Shelly Kagan, "If someone does you a favor, you owe them something; you owe them a debt of gratitude." People judge the value of others based on what they can offer. Emmons writes:

*"Gratitude requires that a giver give not only a gift but also a gift dear to himself – a 'pearl of great price,' as it were. ... The*

## Why you might be getting gratitude all wrong



*degree to which we feel gratitude always hinges on this internal, secret assessment of cost: It is intrinsic to the emotion, and perfectly logical, that we don't feel all that grateful for gifts that we receive that cost little or nothing to the giver."*

In other words, gifts and kindnesses involve a calculation of "cost," which extends to repayment: Gifts are calculated gestures that must be repaid with an expression of thanks and, if possible, reciprocal gifts.

Thinking in such terms might encourage people to see their relationships in economic terms – as transactions to be judged by market criteria of gain and loss.

To that end, the Christian radio show host Nancy Leigh DeMoss advises keeping a gratitude journal just like a bank statement or a checkbook registry, as a place to manage gratitude debts.

*"I want to encourage you to think of gratitude as being a debt you owe, the same way you're called upon to pay your monthly bills."*

## The art of gratitude

Gratitude is about more than individual happiness. My happiness is bound with yours and with everyone else's.

Gratitude authors, who urge us to focus on the debts we owe to others, are reminding us of this fact. I, however, argue in "The Art of Gratitude" that the rhetoric of the debt of gratitude sets us down a dangerous road. The trouble is that the value of our relationships cannot be calculated with numbers on the page, and trying to do so might make us miss out on what is most important.

Take, for example, a recent gift I received – of a nice aluminum water bottle. A friend said that she saw it and thought of me. Of course, I thanked her. But rather than immediately calculate the cost of the gift and determine how I would repay her, I asked: "Why did you choose a water bottle?"

She told me where she grew up in the United States, she did not have access to clean water. I travel a lot, and she wanted me to take clean water with me wherever I went. Moreover, she hoped that it would help to cut down on plastic bottle waste, because, she said, we all share this planet.

I might have missed all of this had I only pondered on how best to repay it. Instead, this gift prompted a conversation that reminded me of our fundamental interconnectedness. My actions, she was saying, impacted her life, just as her actions impacted my own.

## This interconnected world

It is crucial to recognize that our daily practices of gratitude have broader social and political implications.

Say I feel gratitude for access to clean air in Central Pennsylvania. I feel this gratitude because I grew up with asthma, and I know how hard it can be to breathe polluted air. I need not feel indebted to anyone for this clean air. Clean air is not a gift. I am grateful because clean air is

necessary for life.

Same is true for clean water. There is currently, however, a potentially grave challenge to clean water in Centre County, Pennsylvania, where I live.

Looking through grateful eyes, attuned to the support necessary to live and thrive, I can recognize a threat to clean water as a personal threat. Though it is personal, it cannot be remedied alone. I must reach out to others who will also be affected, so that we can act together to manage it.

The takeaway of my book is that indebtedness is not the only way to relate. Examples like these prove that all of us are deeply dependent upon the material support of the earth, and that also speaks to our interconnectedness.

My resolution this year is therefore to practice the art of gratitude by imagining my life, and the world in which I live, as an opportunity, not a debt. I resolve to focus on what is necessary, and to work together with others to make it possible for all to live and to live well, because we live together. I hope that you will join me.



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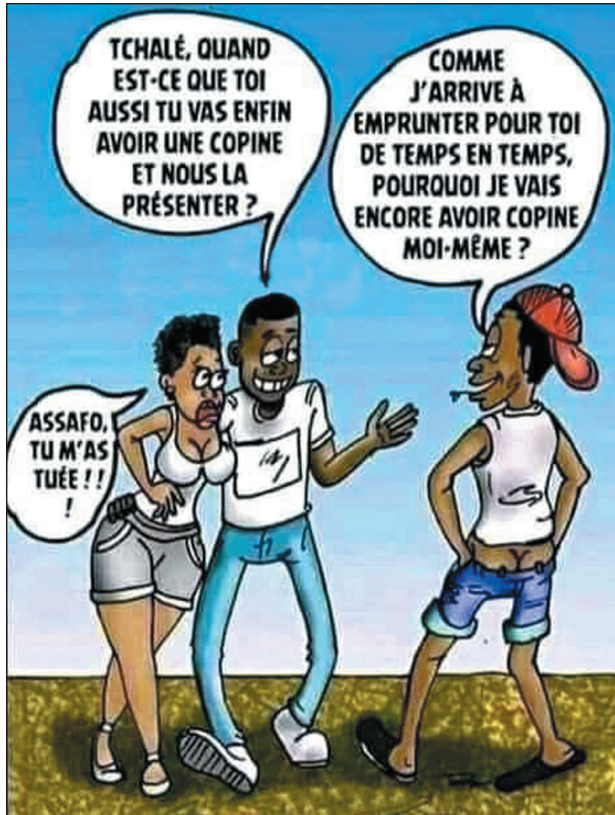
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# Lovers of Words

**L**exophile: (lovers of words) is a word used to describe those that have a love for words, such as "you can tune a piano, but you can't tuna fish", or "to write with a broken pencil is pointless."

A competition to see who can come up with the best lexphillies is held every year in an undisclosed location. This year's winning submission is posted at the very end.



- ... A thief who stole a calendar got twelve months.
- ... The batteries were given out free of charge.
- ... A dentist and a manicurist married. They fought tooth and nail.
- ... A will is a dead giveaway.
- ... With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress.
- ... A boiled egg is hard to beat.
- ... When you've seen one shopping center you've seen a mall.
- ... Police were called to a day care center where a three-year-old was resisting a rest.
- ... Did you hear about the fellow whose whole left side was cut off? He's all right now.
- ... A bicycle can't stand alone; it is two tired.
- ... When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.
- ... The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine is now fully recovered.
- ... He had a photographic memory which was never developed.
- ... When she saw her first strands of grey hair she thought she'd dye.
- ... Acupuncture is a jab well done. That's the point of it.
- ... Those who get too big for their pants will be exposed in the end.

**T**wo cannibals, a father and son, are walking down the street, when they notice a hot girl passing by.

The son says to the father, "Daddy, I'm hungry, let's eat that girl that just passed by."

The father replies, "I've got a better idea son, let's



## O Jesus, one more miracle!

**A**fter his holy trip to Jerusalem, Dorab Bawa was caught by customs for carrying liquor.

**Customs Officer:** "Sir, what is in the bag?"

**Dorab Bawa:** "Holy water from Jerusalem."

Customs (after smelling & tasting): "Don't lie, sir. It's whisky."

**Dorab Bawa:** "O Jesus, one more miracle!"

\*\*\*

Today is Dorab Bawa's girlfriend's birthday.

Dorab Bawa asked her, "Can I get you a diamond necklace, for your birthday?"

She said: "Nothing would please me more."

So, he got her Nothing.

Dorab Bawa will always be grateful to his English teacher.

\*\*\*

Last night Dorab Bawa was driving back home from a party. He was high and saw there was police checking. Was scared at that very moment but then immediately got down from the driver seat and sat in the back seat.

After few minutes the police officer came and asked Dorab Bawa to move his car ahead for alcohol test.

Dorab Bawa said: "My driver ran away seeing you."

The police officer replied: "Then you move your car ahead for the checking."

I said: "No sir, as a responsible citizen I should not drive drunk."

Officer looked at Dorab Bawa, got emotional and applauded him for his responsible behaviour.

He sent one constable to drive Dorab's car home.

\*\*\*

Doctor asked Dorab Bawa to cut down his drinking by three fourths!

Smart Dorab Bawa stopped adding soda.

\*\*\*

Dorab Bawa phones his doctor: Doctor, I have not gone out since the first lockdown started. Now I have important work in the market. What should I do?

Doctor: Don't worry. Just wear mask and hand gloves. It is sufficient. It will protect you from corona.

Dorab follows the doctor's advice and goes out.

To his horror, others were wearing pant and shirt as well!!

take this one home and eat your mother instead!"

\*\*\*

Q: How did Harry Potter get down the hill?

A: Walking... Jk, Rowling

## The Label

**C**onsciously avoid labelling others and ignore labels given by others.

During a prank, a student stuck a paper on his classmate's back that said 'I'm stupid'; he asked the rest of the class not to tell the boy.

Thus, the students began laughing throughout the day. Shortly afterwards, the mathematics class started and their professor wrote a difficult question on the board.

No one was able to answer it except the boy with the sticker. Amid the slight laughs, for he didn't know why, he walked towards the board and he solved it, the teacher asked the class to clap for him and removed the paper on his back.

He told him, 'It seems that you don't know about the paper on your back that one of your classmates stuck and the rest of them kept it a secret.'

Then the teacher faced the rest of the class and said, 'Before I give you a punishment, I will tell you 2 things:

'First, throughout your life, people will put labels on your back with many bad things written on it to stop your progress.

'If he had known about the paper, he would not have gotten up to answer the question.

'All you have to do in life is ignore the labels people give you and use every chance you have to progress, learn and improve yourself.

'The second is that, it is clear that he does not have any loyal friends among you all to tell him about removing the paper. It does not matter how many friends you have, it is the loyalty between you and your friends that matter.

'If you don't have friends who can defend you behind your back, who can watch over you, protect you and who genuinely care about you, you are better off alone.

'To the person placing the label, that word you said against the other person may cause lifetime damage to that person.

'Don't place tags on people that will destroy someone when it will not build you.'





## New year, new challenges

# What's Your Family's Mission Statement?



There is no adequate word to describe the life of a working parent. Busy doesn't cut it. The stay-home-and-work-while-teaching-your-children-and-feeding-everyone-multiple-meals-a-day Tilt-A-Whirl that resulted from the Covid-19 pandemic caused many of us to stop and reassess

Three common work practices can help us decide what to continue doing - and what to ditch.

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused many working families to stop and reassess their values. Three common work practices can help us decide what to continue doing - and what to ditch, as explained by Priscilla Claman in Harvard Business School Review

topics of interest and build out activities to explore further would increase the likelihood of individuals achieving their goals and serve the family mission.

**T=Time-Bound.** While family missions don't need to have an end date, SMART goals always do.

**Revisit your mission if you are thrown off course**

- **Have an overarching mission or purpose.**
- **Set practical, achievable goals that align with that mission.**
- **Revisit your mission when you're thrown off course.**

### Clarify your family mission

I know a family who has made a tradition of goal setting. Instead of New Year's resolutions, they go around the table early in the year, and each family member mentions something they want to accomplish in the next year. It could be something momentous, like finding a new job or something simple, like setting a number of books you'd like to read in a year.

These New Year's goals are actually a part of something bigger, an overarching family mission - like the mission statement many organizations have. This family's mission is achievement: to help every member learn to achieve their own goals and to support the goals of everyone else in the family.

Your family probably has an overarching family mission, even if you haven't thought about it or spoken about it in that way. Is there a phrase or family saying you use to describe your clan to others? Those are all clues to your family's purpose.

If you don't yet have words you use regularly, make up a phrase that fits your family mission. Ask your kids what they think. Make it short so it's easy to remember and repeat. You don't need to write it down somewhere, although you could post it on your family bulletin board, if you want. Thinking about it and repeating it will help your family move in the same direction. A family mission helps you focus on what is meaningful, set priorities, and drop items that don't fit from your individual and group to-do

lists.

My friend Christine's family mantra was "Education: It's the one thing that nobody can take away from you." Even though Christine's father died in an industrial accident when she was four, Christine's mother taught her children the family purpose, and Christine, her brothers, and sisters all graduated from high school and went on to trade school or college.

### Set short-term SMART goals

You probably use SMART goals at work to help create achievable targets. This is what SMART means in the working family context:

**S=Specific.** Instead of setting a goal with your 10-year-old to be "nicer" to your neighbor, set a goal with her to say, "Hi, Mr. Walker," when she sees him. That makes it clear to her what being nicer means to you.

**M=Measurable.** Setting a goal with your 12-year-old to learn how to do his own laundry is easy to track and evaluate. A leaning tower of hoodies or the aroma of dirty socks shoved under his bed will indicate his progress.

**A=Achievable.** If you set goals that feel too big or try to tackle too many goals at once, you'll grow discouraged and feel like a failure. To avoid that fate, check in with your family member before asking for their commitment: Is this something you can manage? How long do you think it will take you? It's an important life skill to estimate what you can do and by when. This applies to you, too. So ask yourself the same questions before you launch into a project. Speak up and offer alternatives if you aren't sure you can achieve a goal in the prescribed time.

**R=Relevant.** Your individual goals should fit with your family's mission. I know a family whose overarching mission is to make sure everyone learns to be independent. Instituting an hourly schedule with little flexibility would not fit this family's mission - or its individual goals. A home-schooling goal where family members identify

What about those well-planned goals that run into major obstacles? It's important to stop and think things through when you encounter a setback. Ask: Do we need to recommit to our mission or purpose? Do we need to change our goals? Set new ones? When new circumstances intrude, our expectations of what we can realistically accomplish may have to change, too.

Someone once told me, "You aren't really a manager until you've figured out what it is that you don't have to do and still be successful." These three techniques will help you redefine what life looks like after the pandemic as you decide what you can defer, delay, or dump. You'll still be busy. Working parents always are. But your priorities will be clear, which will reduce your stress and make you happier.

*Priscilla Claman is president of Career Strategies, Inc., a Boston-area firm offering career coaching to individuals and career management services to organizations*

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# 2020 in review: Top 10 Bollywood films of the year

*In a pandemic-fuelled year, movies were watched privately but strong storylines emerged*



2020 was a bizarre year for Bollywood. Most movies that made it to this list were watched privately due to the coronavirus outbreak and made the cut due to their novel narratives and superb acting. The pickings in terms of blockbuster movies were slim, but this year saw some interesting women-led films. Here are top 10 picks of 2020 films in Bollywood, as reported by Manjusha Radhakrishnan of Gulf News

## Thappad

'Thappad': What's in a slap? 'Thappad', a searing relationship drama, explores the murky topic with a deft hand. The intimate film explores the dynamics between a doting wife and her husband when they hit a rough patch and their awkward attempts to reconcile. Director Anubhav Sinha brings the best out of actress Taapsee Pannu, who shoulders this film with studied ease and grace. It is a deeply personal film, so if you decide to watch at least one Bollywood film that released in 2020, make sure it is this one. This film is all heart and human frailty. The best part? There are no winners or villains in this film, but a couple who understand that their relationship has gone south and that inevitable decay has already set in. It's a slap in the face of patriarchy.

## Gunjan Saxena

'Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl': Starring Janhvi Kapoor in the titular role, this is a stirring biopic about the triumphs and trials of Gunjan Saxena - India's first female combat pilot who emerged a trooper in the Kargil War after battling stereotypes and gender biases at her workplace. Kapoor as a spirited young girl yearning to be a pilot right from her childhood secures a smooth landing. But our favourite part was her dad, played by Pankaj Tripathi, her biggest cheerleader in life. Their warm bond and organic camaraderie will make you smile. It's one of those feel-good films that take you into a world where a fierce woman is fighting for her place on earth and in the skies.

## Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitare

'Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitare': If you are in the mood for a fun film with a pair of fierce ladies, then hit up director Alankrita Srivastava's comedy. Konkona Sen Sharma and Bhumi Pednekar play cousins who are refreshingly unsentimental and unapologetic about their desires and revel in making bewildering life choices. The template of a highly enjoyable drama.

## Jawaani Jaaneman

'Jawaani Jaaneman': Be sure to put a ring on this relationship comedy about a whacky dysfunctional family. Actor Saif Ali Khan excels in his role as a reluctant dad in 'Jawaani Jaaneman', but the real find in this film was the spunky star Alaya F, the daughter of Pooja Bedi who makes her acting debut with this fun, family adventure. Their warmth and camaraderie shone through as they discovered each other as parent and an almost-adult child. The affable leads had an easy chemistry between them. Plus, 'Jawaani Jaaneman', which treats youth as this elusive elixir, is an engaging relationship drama about dysfunctional families.

## Chhapaak

'Chhapaak': Director Meghna Gulzar's 'Chhapaak' - a haunting tale of acid attack survivor Malti played

brilliantly by Bollywood A-lister Deepika Padukone - operates at a visceral and an intellectual level. The drama dwells into the hate crime that's bestial and senseless on many levels. Even though the subject is grim, Padukone and Vikrant Massey (as a social activist) keep the tone hopeful. It explores how a man and his sister use a corrosive acid as a weapon of control and subjugation.

## Ludo

'Ludo': This witty star-studded film is a strong contender for this year's most audacious work. With its multiple storylines, mad-hatter characters and eccentric personalities, 'Ludo' has enough twists and turns to keep us all entertained. The movie featuring Aditya Roy Kapoor, Abhishek Bachchan, Sanya Malhotra, Fatima Sana Sheikh and the wonderfully versatile Pankaj Tripathi is a zany caper that hits the right notes. Director Anurag Basu - known for his maverick films - is on a roll here. While it's a tad lengthy, the jokes land and the crazy situations weirdly make sense.

## Kamyaab

'Kamyaab': This touching film is a nod to all those 'extras' in a movie set that are forgotten and remain on the sidelines for most of their careers. They are always in the shadows of a superstar, but these actors who do miniscule and insignificant roles in films are battling for their place in the sun. Hardik Mehta's bittersweet drama 'Kaamyaab' shines the spotlight on one such fading star Sudheer. It's a searing portrait of the indignities that these character actors face on a daily basis. Their line of work patronises and worships its top-bill superstars and success, but they still stick for the love for their craft.

## Angrezi Medium

'Angrezi Medium': This isn't a flawless daughter-dad drama, but it's late actor Irrfan Khan's final film before he succumbed to cancer and it's only fair that it features on this list. Khan plays a doting dad from a small Indian town who goes to bizarre lengths to enrol his daughter into a university in London. His incredible acting and his faulty English makes you forget the bloated narrative of the film, directed by Homi Adjanian. Like us, the director too seemed to be smitten by his lead actor and turns indulgent mid-way. But it's a pleasure to watch Khan i

## Bulbbul

'Bulbbul': This supernatural thriller set in 19th century Bengal is a fine example of an enchanting union between Indian folklore, mythology and fantasy. 'Bulbbul' draws you into the world of a child bride who's married to a much older man (Rahul Bose) and how her life is upended within the walls of a palatial manor. The film - fuelled by good performances and sumptuous cinematography - is the cinematic equivalent of your grandmother telling you scary folk tales in your childhood steeped in myth and legend. This film is superbly crafted and has a fierce, feisty leading lady. We were hooked from the word go.

## Suraj Pe Mangal Bhari

'Suraj Pe Mangal Bhari': This comedy, starring the talented trio Manoj Bajpayee, Fatima Sana Sheikh and Diljith Dosanjh, takes a swipe at the tradition of arranged marriages in India and a family's obsession with hunting for a 'cultured' and 'refined' bride for their eligible sons. It's comedy that makes you laugh at some of the archaic customs that some traditional Indians have embraced. But what makes this comedy tick is the engaging and endearing performances of the cast. Bajpayee as the wicked wedding detective/wrecker - who is a master of disguises and is on call to find out dirt about potential suitors in an arranged marriage set-up is a hoot, while Dosanjh is adorable as a good-hearted Punjabi. Their good-natured sparring and battle of wits and wits is fun to watch.

## YOUR STARS

### Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

In spite of all have confidence in your good star, you can also count on your friends. The amorous field will be very changing, fraught with unfaithfulness, quarrels, and jealousies. If you're of a certain age, beware of the mid-life crisis!

**Lucky Numbers: 8, 14, 20, 31, 36, 40**

### Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

You'll have to concentrate your efforts with a view to improving the state of your budget. In love, it will be better this time to show prudence, for treacheries and shams won't be rare. Risk of conflict with one of your neighbours; show diplomacy!

**Lucky Numbers: 5, 10, 11, 25, 30, 37**

### Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

Luck could knock at your door and give you an occasion to increase your budget. Real estate investments will be very much favoured. Here will come the perfect moment to engage your everlasting faith with a loved one, to get betrothed or married happily.

**Lucky Numbers: 9, 14, 16, 18, 30, 35**

### Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

Your contacts with your close relations will be disturbed. Try to stay away from meanness and pointless jealousies. If you love somebody yet still hesitate to engage yourself definitely, this time you'll be fixed on the true nature of your feelings.

**Lucky Numbers: 1, 9, 14, 18, 21, 30**

### Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

Your professional activity will be feverish, and it'll be necessary to coordinate things in the most logical possible way. The cosmic influxes could wake up an unusual ardour in you that'll make you fall in love too easily.

**Lucky Numbers: 18, 20, 29, 30, 31, 37**

### Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

You'll have considerable chances to improve your living conditions; but don't be too demanding. At work, beware of make-believe and pay attention to small details. You'll make new enthralling encounters.

**Lucky Numbers: 8, 12, 23, 29, 36, 40**

### Gemini: May 21 - June 20

By all means avoid overworking yourself. Some of your close relations will find you dogmatic, authoritative, and pedantic; there's nothing surprising about that because you'll be inclined to be very affirmative and to lavish your counsels without anyone asking for them.

**Lucky Numbers: 1, 8, 14, 15, 24, 30**

### Cancer: June 21 - July 22

Carefully avoid delicate subjects of conversation such as religion or politics, otherwise watch out for disputes! Very satisfactory health, but under the condition of being moderate in food. Changing your physical appearance may give you back your self-confidence.

**Lucky Numbers: 1, 17, 25, 30, 36, 39**

### Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

You'll put a final touch to a long-term work, or you'll see one of your most important ambitions achieved. The most difficult family problems will come to an end. You'll realize that the turn of events primarily depends on your state of mind.

**Lucky Numbers: 9, 10, 14, 16, 20, 30**

### Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

The sentimental field will give you many satisfactions and will make you feel secure. Blue chip investments will be favoured by the stars. Risks of temporary conflict in your friendship relations.

**Lucky Numbers: 17, 20, 21, 30, 36, 38**

### Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

This time don't hesitate to take risks and speculate: Luck's going to support you in an insolent way, enabling you to increase your profits substantially. Be careful of your skin-deep sensitivity, which will make you react in an instinctive and thoughtless manner.

**Lucky Numbers: 2, 4, 7, 9, 17, 37**

### Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

In love, your desires will be on the point of being fulfilled and your hopes of being crowned with success. Take up a food diet before it's too late. Your relationships with your close ones will prove rather difficult; beware of your brutal frankness.

**Lucky Numbers: 3, 9, 14, 16, 18, 20**



# From reel to real! 21 Television couples who fell in love on sets

Here's a look at some popular television couples whose onscreen chemistry spilt over into reality and they fell in love on sets as reported by Mid-Day



## Kinshuk Vaidya-Shivya Pathania

Kinshuk Vaidya and TV actress Shivya Pathania met on the sets of *Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka* and have been dating for three years now. Kinshuk Vaidya has known actress Shivya Pathania for the last five years. "She has grown to become my closest and dearest friend in this industry. We first met at the audition of a show and then eventually became co-actors," said Kinshuk.

Kinshuk and Shivya are even ready to take the plunge soon! Talking about their marriage plans he had told media in 2019 that since both of them are busy with their hectic shooting schedules, they have not thought about any specific year to get hitched, but eventually, they are planning to get married.

## Barkha Bisht-Indraneil Sengupta

They weren't the best of friends when they acted together in *Pyaar Ke Do Naam...* However, by the time the show ended, they were very much in love. The couple tied the knot in 2008 after a two-year courtship and are parents to their daughter Meera.

## Gurmeet Choudhary-Debina Bonnerjee

The pair essayed the role of Ram and Sita in the modern version of *Ramayan*. They were even seen together in the reality show *Pati, Patni Aur Woh*. It was here that Gurmeet proposed Debina. The couple married in 2011.

## Shakti Arora-Neha Saxena

Shakti Arora, popular for appearing on the show *Meri Aashiqui Tumse Hi*, tied the knot with long-time girlfriend, Neha Saxena in an intimate ceremony in April 2018. The couple met on the sets of Star Plus show *Tere Liye* in 2010 and love blossomed soon!

## Hiten Tejawani-Gauri Pradhan

Viewers loved them as a pair in *Kyuki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi* and *Kutumb*.

While playing the role of reel life couple, they eventually fell in love. They married in 2004. Hiten had been married once before, but his marriage lasted only a year.



## Ram Kapoor-Gautami Gadgil

The couple played the role of husband and wife in *Ghar Ek Mandir* and are now happily married in real life too. They got married on Valentine's Day in 2003 and have two children, daughter Sia and son Aks.

## Ishita Dutta-Vatsal Sheth

*Drishyam* actress Ishita Dutta, who is former actress Tanushree Dutta's younger sister, tied the knot with her long-time boyfriend and actor Vatsal Sheth on November 2017 in Mumbai in a hush-hush ceremony. The two met and fell in love on the sets of TV show *Baazigar*.

## Shweta Kawatra-Manav Gohil

This *jodi* acted together in *Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki* and during the course of the show, they fell for each other. The couple married in 2004 and became parents in 2011.

## Gurdeep Kohli-Arjun Punj

They acted together in *Sanjeevani*, and soon became close friends. Their friendship turned into love and marriage was the

next step for the young couple. They married in 2006. They have a daughter named Meher Punj.

## Vivian Dsena-Vahbbiz Dorabjee

Vivian Dsena met Vahbbiz Dorabjee on the sets of *Pyaar Kii Ye Ek Kahaani*. They fell in love and got married in 2013 after two years of courtship. But the couple went through a rough patch in their marriage and are now divorced.

## Apoorva Agnihotri-Shilpa Saklani

They met on the sets of the popular Sony soap *Jassi Jaissi Koi Nahin*. They hit it off well and started dating soon and got married a few months into their courtship in 2005.

## Mohsin Khan-Shivangi Joshi

*Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai* co-stars Mohsin Khan and Shivangi Joshi always maintained that there is nothing brewing between them. However, Shivangi is often spotted with Mohsin after work hours. In fact, the actress spent 2017's New Year's Eve with Mohsin and his family.

## Rithvik Dhanjani-Asha Negi

The couple, who began dating while shooting for Ekta Kapoor's serial *Pavitra Rishta*, has been hounded by marriage questions by media and fans for some time now. However, in May 2020, Asha confirmed that the duo has parted ways now. The couple dated for seven years.

## Upen Patel-Karishma Tanna

They met on the sets of reality TV show *Bigg Boss 8*. The two sprung a surprise and got engaged on the sets of *Nach Baliye 7*, the couple's second reality show together, in 2015. However, they broke up soon after.



## Gautam Rode-Pankhuri Awasthy

They first met on the sets of their show *Suryaputra Karn*. Gautam Rode, best known for TV show *Saraswatichandra*, got engaged to Pankhuri who has been featured in *Kya Qusoor Hai Amala Ka?* in 2017. On February 2018, the duo got married in an intimate wedding ceremony attended by family and friends.



## Juhi Parmar-Sachin Shroff

Juhi met Sachin for the first time during a pilot shoot for a show that never went on air. However, the duo struck a healthy friendship on the sets. After a courtship of five months, they got married in 2009. They have a daughter too. However, the couple's marriage hit a rock and have now separated.

## TV SERIAL



## Kahan Hum Kahan Tum

**Friday 25 Dec:** Sonakshi feels helpless when Nishi tries to frame Naren's suicide attempt on her. Later, a distressed Veena asks the police to interrogate Sonakshi.

**Monday 28 Dec:** Nishi gets irked when Rohit supports Sonakshi. Later, Veena falls prey to Nishi's manipulation when she provokes her against Sonakshi.

**Tuesday 29 Dec:** Rohit vents his anger out on Sonakshi after learning about the prenup. While Nishi relishes the success of her plan, Sonakshi receives an alarming news.

**Wednesday 30 Dec:** Sonakshi's life is in peril during a heated argument with Rohit. Devastated, she puts forth a condition when he demands a divorce.

**Thursday 31 Dec:** Rohit surprises Sonakshi by attending a party in her honour. She is stunned when the police show her a shocking video regarding Naren's murder.





Samedi 25 Dec - 21.15

**Love Over Distance**

Avec: Peter Bolhuis, Katja Herbers, Leny Breederveld



Samedi 26 Dec - 21.15

**The Magical Christmas Shoes**

Starring: Erin Karpluk, Damon Runyan, Genelle Williams



Dimanche 27 Dec - 21.20

**MBC 1**

vendredi 25 decembre

07.00 Film: Kung Fu Panda Holiday  
08.37 D.Anime: Astrology  
09.11 Film: Pixi Post And The Gift  
10.42 D.Anime: Astrology  
11.10 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour  
12.55 Doc: Foodland  
14.00 Local: Retrovizer  
14.30 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie  
14.31 D.Anime: Robot Trains  
15.08 D.Anime: Rev & Roll  
15.41 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie  
17.11 D.Anime: Astrology  
17.45 Serial: Backstage  
17.45 Doc: Foodland  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.15 Local: Sur Un Air De Noel  
20.30 Christmas Message  
22.00 Film: Love Over Distance

**MBC 2**

10.00 Serial: Ki Jaana Mein Kanu  
11.04 Serial: Zun Mureed  
12.00 Film: The Wishing Tree  
13.40 DDI Magazine  
15.00 Mag: Comedy Classes  
15.21 Serial: Honaar Soon Mee  
15.43 Serial: Mooga Manasulu  
16.07 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal  
16.28 Serial: Tu Ishq Hai  
16.49 Serial: Achra Ke Moti  
17.11 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala  
17.35 Serial: Chhanchhan  
18.00 Serial: Bloody Romance  
18.30 DDI Magazine  
19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol  
19.30 DDI Magazine  
20.00 Serial: Tawaan  
20.44 Local: Anjuman  
21.11 Local: Noor-E-Iman  
22.06 DDI Live

**MBC 3**

06.00 Mag: Eco India  
06.39 Mag: Border Crossing  
07.05 Mag: Tomorrow Today  
07.31 Doc: Taste Hunters  
08.26 Doc: 360 GEO  
09.19 Doc: The Tattooed Lady  
09.45 Doc: Silent Night  
10.27 Doc: Soul Ladies  
11.39 Doc: Foodland  
11.55 Local: Christmas Carols  
13.55 Local: Arsv MBC: Enn Nwel Larkansyel  
15.25 Doc: Foodland - Christmas and New Year Feasts  
15.39 Local - Songs For The Season  
17.41 Mag: Euromaxx  
18.07 Mag: Arts.21  
18.33 Doc: Northern Lights  
19.45 Doc: Foodland  
20.03 Mag: Sur Measure

**Cine 12**

01.32 Film: It's Christmas Eve  
02.55 Serial: Counterpart  
03.46 Film: La Fille Du Pere Noel  
05.17 Tele: Totalement Diva  
06.11 Serial: Beauty And The...  
06.51 Film: It's Christmas Eve  
09.00 Serial: Mission: Impossible  
09.48 Tele: Soleil Levant  
10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor  
11.00 Serial: Counterpart  
12.00 Film: La Fille Du Pere Noel  
13.30 Tele: Totalement Diva  
14.46 Film: It's Christmas Eve  
16.38 Serial: Mission: Impossible  
17.28 Serial: Beauty And The...  
18.05 Tele: Soleil Levant  
19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor  
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir  
20.30 Serial: The Night Shift  
21.15 Film: Les Souliers De Noelle

**Bollywood TV**

08.00 Film: Chaar Din Ki Chandni  
12.05/20.05 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum  
12.30/ 20.11 - Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala  
12.47 / 20.32 Radha Krishna  
13.10 / 21.09 - Sanjivani  
13.36 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek  
13.53 / 21.46 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
14.17 / 21.59 - Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki  
14.37 / 22.25 - Ikyhawann  
15.20 Kundali Bhagya  
15.41 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka  
16.02 Mere Angne Mein  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum  
19.08 Radha Krishna  
19.32 Sanjivani  
20.10 Film: Sniff

samedi 26 decembre

06.00 D.Anime: Sindbad And The 7  
06.26 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie  
08.00 Film: The Christmas Letter  
09.52 Serial: Lucas Etc  
10.00 Au Pays Des Merveilles  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.25 Local: Sur Un Air De Noel  
13.00 Local: Fooland  
13.30 Local: MBC Talent Show  
14.25 D. Anime: Sur Un Air De Noel  
14.57 D.Anime: The Garfield Show  
15.10 D.Anime: Tempete De Boule..  
15.32 D.Anime: The Hive  
16.00 Film: Elf Day  
17.15 Serial: Oh Yuck!  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Entertain: Nach Baliye  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.15 Prod: Lottotech  
20.30 NRJ Music Awards 2020  
23.00 Le Journal

07.00 Film: Mard  
Starring Mithun Chakraborty, Ravali, Kader Khan  
09.00 DDI Magazine  
10.00 Bade Acchelagte Hai  
12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhyia Bhare  
12.35 Serial: Mooga Manasulu  
12.49 Serial: High School  
13.16 Annakodiyum Ainthus Pengalum  
13.34 Serial: Anu Pallavi  
15.20 Film: Heyy Baby  
Starring Akshay Kumar, Vidya Balan, Fardeen Khan, Ritesh Deshmukh  
17.38 Mag: DDI Magazine  
19.00 Zournal Kreol  
20.05 Serial: Bitti Business Wali  
21.00 Film: Raw  
Starring - John Abraham, Mouni Roy, Jackie Shroff, Sikandar Kher  
23.30 DDI Live

06.00 Mag: Global 3000  
06.26 Doc: Foodland  
07.21 Mag: Arts And Culture  
08.35 Doc: Shanghai  
09.04 Doc: High-Speed Internet  
09.47 Doc: Sos Amazon  
10.29 Doc: On Route 7 Into The...  
11.12 Doc: Onibo  
12.10 Other: 43rd International...  
14.13 Doc: Northern Lights  
15.10 Mag: Global 3000  
15.45 Mag: Euromaxx  
16.36 Doc: High-Speed Internet  
19.08 Mag: Check In - The Travel...  
19.34 Doc: Foodland  
21.00 Local: News (English)  
21.10 Doc: Destination  
22.15 Doc: Scent Of Freedom  
22.57 Doc: Amazing Gardens  
23.23 Mag: Shift  
23.35 Mag: Vue D'en Haut  
00.00 Mag: Check In

01.38 Film: Les Souliers De Noel  
03.15 Serial: Brooklyn Nine Nine  
04.03 Film: Kill Kane  
05.14 Tele: Esmeraldas  
06.04 Serial: The Night Shift  
06.39 Film: Christmas Jars  
08.30 Serial: The Quest  
09.14 Serial: Shades Of Blue  
09.56 Serial: Unforgotten  
10.45 Film: La Fille Du Pere Noel  
12.56 Serial: Brooklyn Nine Nine  
13.37 Tele: Amanda  
14.21Tele: Premiere Dame  
15.05 Serial: Counterpart  
17.00 Serial: The Night Shift  
17.45 Film: Trollie  
19.35 Mag: Hollywood On Set  
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir  
20.30 Serial: The Night Shift  
21.15 Film: The Magical Christmas Shoes

04.05 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum  
04.26 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala  
04.48 Radha Krishna  
05.09 Zindagi Ki Mehek  
05.31 Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
06.15 Ikyawann  
06.38 Kundali Bhagya  
06.59 Ek Rishta Saajhed Ka  
07.22 Mere Angne Mein  
08.00 Zindagi Ki Mehek  
10.12 Yeh Pyaar Nahi Toh Kya...  
12.00 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein  
14.00 Sanjivani  
16.00 Pavitra Rishta  
18.30 Film: Dil Dhadakne Do  
Starring: Anil Kapoor, Shefali Shah, Priyanka Chopra  
20.17 Serial: Siya Ke Ram  
21.59 Serial: Naagin  
22.42 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek  
00.37 Serial: Mere Angne Mein

dimanche 27 decembre

06.00 D.Anime: Sindbad And The 7  
06.35 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill  
07.56 D.Anime: The Minimighty Kid  
08.02 D.Anime: The Garfield Show  
08.35 Film: ELF Day  
09.45 Local: Zafan Nou Zil  
10.30 Serial: Mustangs FC  
11.00 Local: Nu Rasinn  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.30 MBC Production  
13.00 Local: Elle - No 126  
14.30 D.Anime: Twirlywoos  
15.17 D.Anime: The Hive  
17.20 Serial: Oh Yuck!  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Local: Yeh Shaam Mastani  
19.30 Le Journal  
20.15 Local: Info 7 Sur 7  
21.20 Film: A Christmas Star  
Stars: Robert James-Collier, Suranne Jones, Bronagh Waugh

07.00 Film: Usne Kaha Tha  
Starring: Sunil Dutt, Nanda  
09.15 Mag: DDI Magazine  
10.00 Local Production  
11.00 Serial: Oru Kai Osai  
11.23 Serial: Santoshi Maa  
12.28 Film: Gold  
Starring - Akshay Kumar, Mouni Roy, Kunal Kapoor  
15.00 Mag: Comedy Classes  
15.21 Serial: Mooga Manasulu  
15.44 Eka Lagnachi Teesri Gosht  
16.06 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal  
17.00 Serial: Mahakali  
17.48 Serial: Kisna  
18.30 Local: Tipa Tipa Nu Avance  
19.00 Zournal Kreol  
19.30 DDI Magazine  
20.05 Serial: Maharakshak: Devi  
20.50 Serial: Naagin  
21.34 Serial: CID

06.00 Doc: Amazing Gardens  
06.51 Mag: Vue D'en Haut  
07.16 Mag: Check In  
07.45 Doc: Les Dessins De Christian Dior  
08.50 Doc: Stunt Warriors  
09.47 Doc: Scent Of Freedom  
10.29 Doc: Dream Job Or Rip-Off?  
11.00 Doc: Amazing Gardens  
12.05 Doc: Les Dessins De Chris..  
13.52 Doc: Stunt Warriors  
14.47 Doc: Scent Of Freedom  
15.29 Doc: Dream Job Or Rip-Off  
16.04 Doc: Amazing Gardens  
17.06 Mag: Check In  
19.36 Doc: Foodland  
21.00 Local: News (English)  
21.10 Doc: Destination  
22.15 Doc: The Secret Of Mona...  
22.57 Doc: Tendence XXI  
23.48 Doc: The Daughter Of...

01.08 Mag: Close Up  
01.34 Film: The Magical  
03.41 Film: The Evil Within  
05.20 Tele: Esmeraldas  
06.04 Serial: The Night Shift  
06.46 Film: The Magical Christmas Shoes  
08.30 Serial: The Quest  
09.18 Film: Christmas Jars  
11.10 Film: Trollie  
12.36 Serial: Hawaii-0  
13.16 Tele: Amanda  
14.00 Doc: 80's Blockbusters  
15.58 Serial: Counterpart  
17.45 Serial: The Night Shift  
18.32 Serial: Macgyver  
19.14 Serial: Hawaii Five-0  
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir  
20.30 Serial: The Good Doctor  
21.15 Film: Terminator 3  
23.00 Tele: Dulce Amor

00.35 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein  
02.16 Sanjivani  
04.03 Pavitra Rishta  
05.09 Film: Dil Dhadakne Do  
Starring: Anil Kapoor, Shefali Shah, Priyanka Chopra  
08.00 Serial: Motu Patlu  
08.11 Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki  
09.52 Jaana Na Dil Se Door  
11.36 Piya Albela  
13.23 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum  
15.09 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala  
17.00 Punar Vivaah  
18.00 Samachar  
18.30 Film: Ok Jaanu  
Starring: Aditya Roy Kapur, Shraddha Kapo  
20.40 Nach Baliye  
21.17 Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
23.07 Piya Albela

**MBC 2**

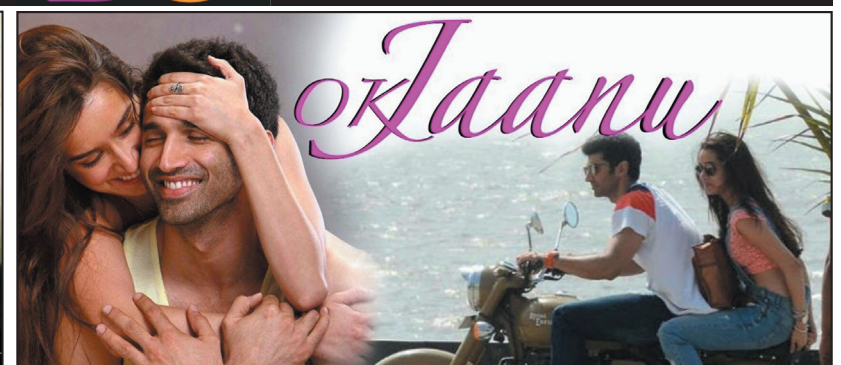
Samedi 26 Dec - 21.00

Stars: John Abraham, Mouni Roy, Jackie Shroff, Sikandar Kher



Dimanche 27 Dec - 18.30

Stars: Aditya Roy Kapur, Shraddha Kapo





# How can we actually create happy societies?

*By exclusively focusing on the things we think will make us happy, we blind ourselves to the other things in life that matter*



**Sam Wren-Lewis**  
University of Nottingham

**I**magine two different societies. In the first, people tend to be stressed, tense, irritable, distracted and self-absorbed. In the second, people tend to be at ease, untroubled, quick to laugh, expansive and self-assured.

The difference between these two imagined scenarios is vast. You're not only more likely to be happier in the second scenario - you're also more likely to be safer, healthier and have better relationships. The difference between a happy and an unhappy society is not trivial. We know that happiness matters beyond our desire to feel good.

So how can we create a happy society? The Buddhist nation of Bhutan was the first society to determine policy based on the happiness of its citizens, with the king of Bhutan famously claiming in 1972 that Gross National Happiness (GNH) was a more important measure of progress than Gross National Product (GNP).

Many other countries have since followed suit - looking to move "beyond GDP" as a measure of national progress. For instance, the UK developed a national well-being programme in 2010 and has since measured the nation's well-being across ten domains, not too dissimilar to Bhutan's approach. More recently, New Zealand introduced its first "well-being budget", with a focus on improving the well-being of the country's most vulnerable people.

Such initiatives tend to broadly agree over the conditions required for a happy society. According to the World Happiness Report, there are six key ingredients for national happiness: income, healthy life expectancy, social support, freedom, trust and generosity. Scandinavian countries - which typically top the global happiness rankings (Finland is currently first) - tend to do well on all these measures. In contrast, war-torn nations such as South Sudan, Central African Republic and Afghanistan tend to do badly. So does happiness rely on these six key ingredients?

## The what, not the how

I don't think so. This approach is, ultimately, too simple - even potentially harmful. The problem is that it focuses on what happiness is, not how to achieve it.



Clearly, things such as a good life expectancy, social support and trust are good for us. But how we come to that conclusion may matter more than the conclusion itself.

For instance, how do we know that we are measuring what is most important? The world happiness rankings largely rely on measures of life satisfaction. But it is far from obvious that such measures can account for important differences in emotional well-being.

Alternatively, perhaps we could ask people what they think matters. The development of the UK's national well-being programme took this approach, undertaking qualitative research to develop their ten domains of happiness. But this approach is also problematic. How do we know which of the ten domains are most important? The most important ingredients for one community may not be the same for another. Asking people is a good idea. But we can't just do it once and then assume the job is done.

Don't get me wrong - I believe these kinds of initiatives are an improvement on more narrow ways of measuring national progress, such as an exclusive focus on income and GDP. But that doesn't mean we should ignore their faults.

There are parallels here with the pursuit of happiness on an individual level. We typically go about our lives with a list of things in our head which we think will make us happy - if only we get that promotion, have a loving relationship, and so on. Achieving these things can certainly

improve our lives - and may even make us happier.

But we are fooling ourselves if we think they will make us happy in a lasting sense. Life is too complicated for that. We are vulnerable, insecure creatures and will inevitably experience disappointment, loss and suffering. By exclusively focusing on the things we think will make us happy, we blind ourselves to the other things in life that matter.

## Happiness 101

Psychologists are beginning to focus their attention not just on the ingredients of individual happiness, but also on the capacities people need to be happy within inevitably insecure and fragile circumstances.

For instance, the so-called "second wave" of positive psychology is as interested in the benefits of negative emotions as positive ones. The mindfulness revolution, meanwhile, urges people to go beyond their notions of good and bad and instead learn how to accept things as they are. These approaches are less concerned with what conditions make people happy and more interested in how people can pursue happiness within conditions of insecurity and uncertainty.

The more we focus on our list of desired things, the more we fail to see what really matters. When we are certain of the things that make us happy, and urgently try to achieve them, we fail to appreciate the value of the things we already have and the multiple unknown opportunities we have yet to discover. When things inevitably go wrong in our lives, we blame others or ourselves instead of learning from what happened.

Psychologists are beginning to understand the limits of this. Happy individuals tend to have humility as well as certainty; curiosity as well as urgency; and compassion as well as blame.

We can apply these same lessons on a national scale. Creating a happier society requires not just promoting what matters, but also promoting the capacities for discovering what matters.

We know this on an institutional level. In edu-

cation, we know that it is important to promote curiosity and a love of learning as well as good exam results. In academia, we know that, although we can discover important scientific truths, almost all of our current scientific theories might be surpassed by other theories and we should remain open minded. We know that the appeal and relevance of religious institutions depends on balancing dogmatic teachings with mystery and curiosity - order and faith on the one hand, openness and flexibility on the other.

Creating a happy society does not just depend on creating the right conditions. It also depends on creating the right institutions and processes for discovering those conditions. The irony is that members of the happy society described at the beginning of this article - who tend to be at ease, untroubled, quick to laugh, expansive and self-assured - are probably less focused on what makes them happy and more focused on exploring what really matters - with humility, curiosity and compassion.

To actually create a happy society, we need measures and institutions that do much the same.

*Sam Wren-Lewis is the author of 'The Happiness Problem: Expecting Better in an Uncertain World'*

**jetha tulsidas**

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