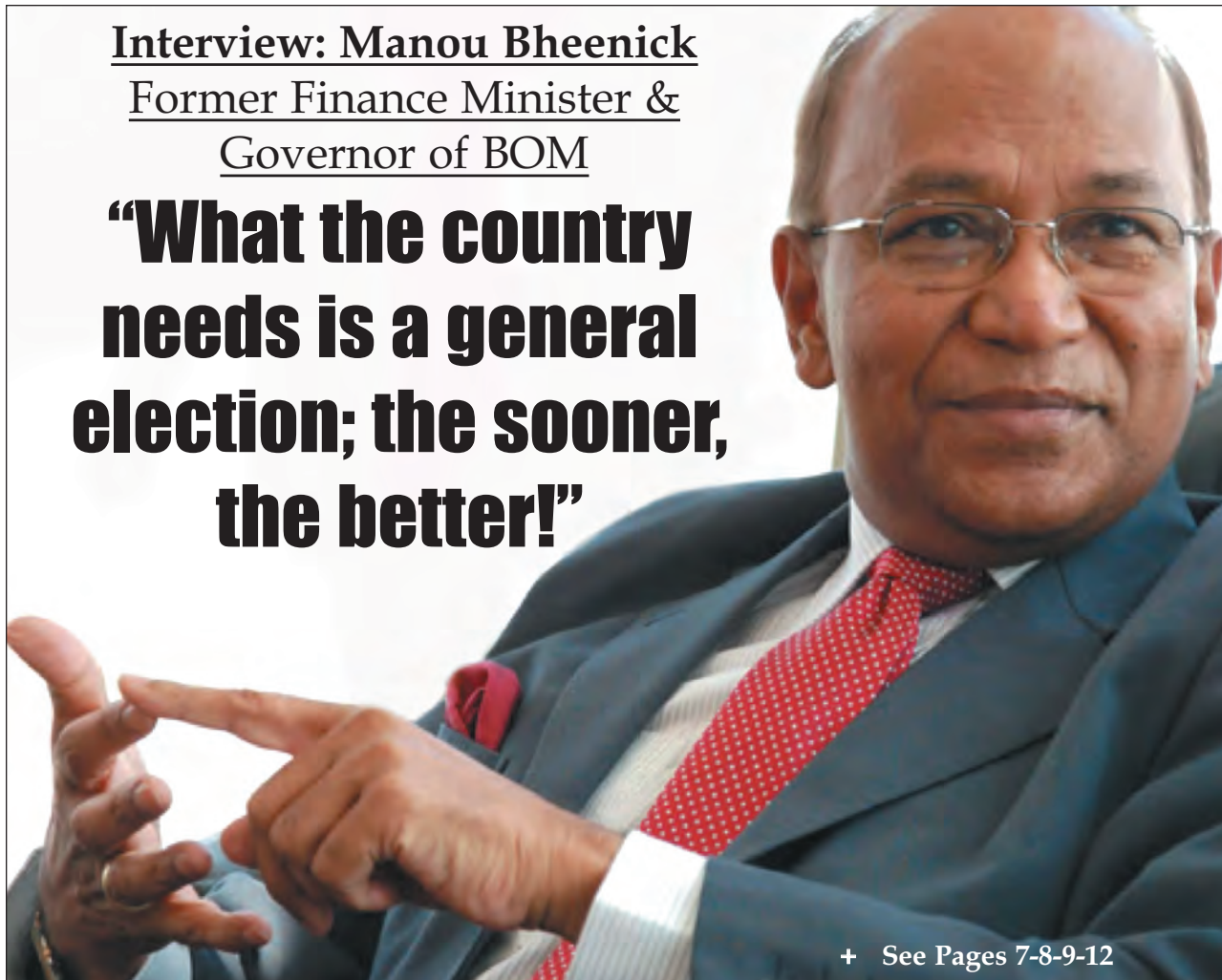


MAURITIUS **TIMES**

• "The world is in greater peril from those who tolerate or encourage evil than from those who actually commit it." -- Albert Einstein

Interview: Manou Bheenick
Former Finance Minister &
Governor of BOM

**"What the country
needs is a general
election; the sooner,
the better!"**



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Celebration of Colourful Diversity

Dr R Neerunjun Gopee + See Page 3



A Sobering Look at the Events of January 6, 2021

By Anil Madan + See Page 18



A Year of Reckoning

Par Nita Chicooree-Mercier + See Page 10

Steering the Country towards Normality



Being Covid-safe cannot be an alibi for procrastination. This is not the time to continue to bask in the glory of being Covid- safe. This is the time for urgent and carefully planned action

By Mrinal Roy + See Page 4

Double Standards

Donald Trump, who stands accused of inciting a deadly insurrection at the US Capitol on 6 January, has this week become the first president in US history to be impeached twice. The House of Representatives accused Mr Trump of encouraging violence with his false claims of election fraud. He now faces trial in the upper chamber, the Senate, which can vote to bar him from ever holding public office again. That trial however will likely not be completed before Trump's term of office comes to an end on Jan. 20, and the point has been debated in the US about whether a president can be impeached after he has left office and what purpose it would serve at all.

One commentator, Hugh Hewitt, writing in *The Washington Post*, described the entire exercise as 'pointless revenge'. 'It isn't principled, it isn't concerned with justice and it isn't concerned with the future,' he stated. To which Michael Blake, Professor of Philosophy, Public Policy and Governance, University of Washington, who writes about the moral justifications of social and legal institutions, argues that there may be good moral reason for this impeachment: 'The move to impeach President Trump is an indication that there is a need to mark out, through a definitive statement, what no president ought to do. It will also set the moral limits of the presidency – and, thereby, send a message to future presidents who might be tempted to follow in President Trump's footsteps.'

That the insurrection happened at the US Capitol, the seat of American democracy and usually referred to as the 'citadel of democracy', shocked the whole world, but the second impeachment of Donald Trump has come to demonstrate that the system in the US works, and that it would be wrong to compare the insurrection at the US Capitol to similar events that occasionally happen in other countries.

Our own system provides that nobody is above the law but that people are presumed to be innocent unless proven guilty. Our Constitution provides for safeguards with regard to the protection of the individual's rights and avenues for redress, but even the best constitutional safeguards are not always enough. What is equally important are the individuals who occupy constitutionally protected positions and their own view of the responsibilities of their office, their integrity and their commitment to uphold the Constitution and serve the best interests of the people and the country. Be it the police and its CCID, ICTA, IBA or any other relevant entity in a given context, one would expect them to act with the same sense of fairness and alacrity whether the complainant happens to be a Minister or the

average citizen. But that does not appear to be the case at all times.

For example, we still do not know what the Independent Broadcasting Authority, as the regulator for all radio stations has done following the stand taken by the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC) before the last general elections with regard to the MBC when it declared that the public broadcasting station might have breached the law. Yet the IBA Board went on recently to take action against Top FM, perceived to be anti-government. There are so many other instances where the authorities have been seen to be pursuing a policy of double standards. The police has in the recent past acted within hours of complaints made by members of the ruling party regarding posts on social media, but no such alacrity has been seen when the President of the Labour Party gave a statement to the police about the alleged criminal defamation by the MBC.

The same scenario of perceived double standards had been seen to be playing out in the case of Soopramanien Kistnen, the MSM activist who has been found dead at Telfair, Moka. There are also instances of ministers and parliamentarians who have had to step down following allegations of corruption or misdemeanour, as well as the forced exit of Mrs Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, briefly the President in this regime's first mandate.

That is why the impeachment of President Trump and the Senate trial that is to follow is of interest for us, in that the outcome can act as a guide to our legal brains and/or legislators as to what constitutional changes or reforms need to be brought about to detract future occupiers of constitutional positions or of public office representing the people from behaviours and actions that go against the national interest and the dignity expected by virtue of being in such positions.

Besides the process of the impeachment and what is to follow, there is also the issue of being eligible for public office in future that has been evoked, and surely is equally relevant for our country too. On the other hand, one must also question whether such destitute individuals should continue to benefit by the perks that follow them out of office, as these have a bearing on the taxpayers who have to pay the price for such largesses.

As many other observers have pointed out in the past, there is definitely a need to revisit our Constitution in light of the many incidents concerning public personalities in official positions that have taken place and for which there are no provisions in the present Constitution. We shall be watching events unfold in the US with great interest.

The Conversation

Civil unrest is today's major national security threat

National security must be redefined to reflect new sources of security threats of the type that occurred at the US Capitol

The end of the Cold War marked the beginning of an era of major shifts in the nature of security threats. Internal conflicts and civil unrest of the type we saw in the recent raid on the United States Capitol by Donald Trump supporters have replaced external military aggression as the major source of threat to human lives and state stability.



Civil unrest of the type we saw in the recent raid on the US Capitol by Donald Trump supporters have replaced external military aggression as the major source of threat to human lives. Photo - dailystar.com

Non-traditional threats such as transnational crime, cyber-attacks, bioterrorism, infectious diseases, pandemics and climate change are now recognized as posing serious risks to the peace, security and stability of nations.

Nonetheless, this shift isn't reflected in the national security strategies of most countries as they continue to remain fixated on addressing traditional threats through military might.

Low priority

An analysis of the national security strategies of G20 countries, for example, shows that non-traditional security threats like pandemics, cyber-attacks and climate change are either absent from their lists of potential threats or assigned a low priority. The 2017 National Security Strategy in the US, for instance, lists "inter-state strategic competition" as the primary national security concern.

Likewise, the entire focus of China's defence considerations, according to its most recent defence white paper, is its rapid economic growth, technological advancements with respect to weapons systems and the shifting international geo-political landscape.

And although Russia's security policy includes political, economic and societal stability, in practice it is overwhelmingly focused on military means to ensure national security.

Shortcomings

This approach has serious shortcomings that are laid bare by the ongoing pandemic and other recent developments, including the violent attack on the US Capitol and incidents of police brutality that resulted in widespread Black Lives Matter protests last year.

These major events are a stark reminder of the changing nature of threats. They indicate that first and foremost, many sources of human and state insecurity are internal and are often linked to systemic inequities and social injustice.

Sadia Mariam Malik, Assistant Professor,
Department of Economics, York University, Canada

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

mtimes@intnet.mu

www.mauritiustimes.com

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Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

Celebration of Colourful Diversity



“The traditions of Hindus originated in India in hoary times. Being an agrarian society, they therefore observed festivals in all seasons, offering prayers to their deities, seeking blessings and celebrating in a unique way in recognition of their connectedness to the five elements of the creation, namely fire, space, air, earth and water that make up the universe of which the Earth is a part. This is the dimension of the sacredness of Nature with its invisible and invincible forces...”

As I write today (Jan 14th), the dawn has lit up bright with the most welcome arrival of the sun in our Curepian skies, lifting the dullness and darkness that have hovered over our town, accompanied by recurrent spells of rain which were at times very heavy. Two days ago, Tuesday, was pure misery by this measure! Tropical depression Danilo was showering its wet blessings on us as it left Rodrigues and continued its course in our direction, skirting the island in the north at about 65 km on Monday afternoon.

There was a little respite in the rain, and we were looking forward, after these several days of oppressive humidity and heat with the intermittent rainfalls, to an opening up the next day. It was only on Wednesday afternoon that Danilo's tail-end left for good to be replaced by a sunny warmth that had housewives rushing to get their accumulated washings of towels and clothings be spun in the machine. I know for a fact that many a machine did more than double duty! That's the kind of little talk that oils the cogs of the wheels of my seenager life. Seenager? – well, I believe that this is the new term that is being used to define the category of senior citizens who are – or try to be – as active as teenagers. Like taking morning walks in good, gossip company at Trou-O-Cerfs.

And just as well that today too, most aptly it is a bright and dry morning, for today in the Hindu calendar is the festival of Makar Sankranti. It marks the start of 'Uttarayana', that is, movement of the Sun from tropic of Cancer to tropic of Capricorn (actually, it is only apparent movement – because it is the Earth which revolves around the Sun), a transition that lasts around six months.

The traditions of Hindus originated in India in hoary times. Being an agrarian society, they therefore observed festivals in all seasons, offering prayers to their deities, seeking blessings and celebrating in a unique way in recognition of their connectedness to the five elements of the creation, namely fire, space, air, earth and water that

make up the universe of which the Earth is a part. This is the dimension of the sacredness of Nature with its invisible and invincible forces, which makes them look upon the Earth as the 'Mother' who nourishes all of us.

It is the same connectedness or communion that has been lamented as having been lost on us and that has led to the emergence of the Covid-19 virus, for humanity has predominantly blindly followed into the dominion road. Nature's bounty was for us to exploit, and we have been doing so almost recklessly, and hence the reality of climate change which is reckoned to be our greatest existential threat.

We thought that we were gaining the battle, and that at the start of 2021 we would at long last leave behind us the imprisoning and traumatizing days of the past year as the pandemic was being brought under control. Not so soon, said the new variant of Covid-19, whose more rapid transmission has to date made it spread to 50 countries – and counting. And countries that had once damped down their first surges are now prey to such wildfire spread of the virus that even stricter lockdowns are being imposed, with heavy penalties for any defaulters so grave is the situation. The latest is China, which has locked down 22 million people who are being tracked with a QR code. A friend from Saskatchewan in Canada sent me a post this morning to the effect that it is the province that has the highest active case-rate of Covid-19 in the country.

Someday when it is all over – years

down the line – there will be a lot of explanation to be done about what I call the asymmetric pattern of attacks by this invisible creature with seemingly emergent and elusive properties. For example, there is as yet no cogent explanation of why the numbers of daily cases and deaths are falling so dramatically in India, to below 20,000 and 500 per day respectively, with its 1.3 billion people most of whom live in very crowded conditions. The most inexplicable is perhaps the low incidence in the slum of Dharavi in Mumbai, the largest in Asia no less, where reside nearly 750,000 people in cheek-by-jowl conditions. A few weeks ago it registered zero-case! Such mysteries will continue to baffle medicos and health experts for long.

Perhaps this relatively better situation in India is what will allow the celebration there

“We thought that we were gaining the battle, and that at the start of 2021 we would at long last leave behind us the imprisoning and traumatizing days of the past year as the pandemic was being brought under control. Not so soon, said the new variant of Covid-19, whose more rapid transmission has to date made it spread to 50 countries – and counting. And countries that had once damped down their first surges are now prey to such wildfire spread of the virus that even stricter lockdowns are being imposed...”

of Makar Sankranti a little more freely, as also the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar towards which people have started to travel already.

Protection will no doubt come from the special prayers which are devotionally offered to Sun Deity today for His goodwill on humanity. The Sun being in the centre of the solar system is the main source of light and energy to the whole universe – bringing warmth and light to the world that allow people, plants and animals to exist and thrive. Without the Sun the whole creation will disappear. The 'Atharva Veda' and the 'Markandey Purana' sing the glory of the Sun as the cause of Creation, Sustenance and Dissolution of the universe.

During worship of the Sun as Deity, prayers are addressed to Him as Brilliant, Nourisher, Light of the world, King of Constellations and Sustainer along with hundreds of other names qualifying His goodwill and grace.

All these properties of the Sun identified and glorified by our Vedic rishis or seers are perfectly in accord with what science (specifically physics, astronomy, cosmology) continues to uncover, such that there is a convergence between the two disciplines of science and spirituality. This only confirms that, at the end of the day, the quest of both disciplines is a search for that Great Truth which is reflected in all that exists, including us human beings. The rishis used the term Brahman for it, for Western philosophers it is Ultimate Reality, and for the Abrahamic religions it is God.

All perfectly compatible with the Vedic vision expressed in the saying: *Ekam Sat Vipra Bahuda Vadanti* – Truth is One, Sages Call It by Various Names. This is another expression of what Dr Sarvapelli Radhakrishnan, in his later years President-Philosopher of India, wrote in his book *The Hindu View of Life* – to wit that Hindus prefer a colourful diversity to a dull uniformity: of thought and ideas, of practices and customs.

And Makar Sankranti illustrates this superbly, for this great festival is celebrated throughout India under different local names such as *Pongal* (boiling) in Tamil Nadu, *Pedha Panduga* (big festival) in Andhra Pradesh, *Lohri* (loh: light or warmth of fire and *revri*: crisp toffee like dessert made from *gur*, spices and sesame) in Punjab, *Maghi* in Haryana and Himachal, *Uttarayan* in Gujarat and Rajasthan, *Magh* or *Bhogali Bihu* in Assam, *Shishur* (winter) *Sankraat* in Kashmir valley, and in Kerala it is known as *Makara Vilakku*. It is also celebrated in Laos as *Pi Ma Lao*, in Thailand it is *Songkran*, whereas in Myanmar it is *Thingyan*. In Nepal, it is known as *Maghe Sankranti* and in Cambodia *Moha Sangkran*.

As for me, time now to have my *khichree*, the yummy dal and rice meal laced with ghee that is our local tradition on the day of Makar Sankranti.

Makar Sankranti Abhinandan to all!

Steering the Country towards Normality



Mrinal Roy

2020 was a difficult and trying year owing to the coronavirus. A new year is always a harbinger of hope and the promise of a new dawn. The approval and green light given by internationally recognized regulatory authorities in the world and the World Health Organization for the emergency use of a range of effective vaccines against Covid-19 have heightened hopes across the world. Vaccines provide a key pathway towards normality.

The Covid-19 pandemic however remains unabated.

New and more infectious strains of Covid-19 were detected in the United Kingdom in November and in South Africa in December 2020. These new strains have spread to a large number of countries in Europe and across the world through cross border travel. As a consequence, more than 40 countries in Europe and in the world have closed their borders with the UK to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 variant to their countries. Borders have also been closed to travellers from or transiting through South Africa. On 10 January 2021, Japan's Health Ministry announced that another variant of the Covid-19 has been detected in the country.

Viruses constantly mutate. It is therefore not surprising that since its emergence in China in late 2019, Covid-19 has gone through multiple minor variations as well as several major mutations. Experts say that these new variants are more contagious but not more deadly.

Vast vaccination campaigns

Amidst new spikes of coronavirus infection and extension of lockdowns across Europe in UK, Germany, France and Ireland, etc., countries across the world have started vast campaigns to vaccinate their population with vaccines validated and approved by vaccine regulatory bodies such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) in the UK, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) in the

Being Covid-safe cannot be an alibi for procrastination. This is not the time to continue to bask in the glory of being Covid- safe. This is the time for urgent and carefully planned action



Florida has vaccinated 40,037 people for the coronavirus - Photo tampabay.com

"Amidst new spikes of coronavirus infection and extension of lockdowns across Europe in UK, Germany, France and Ireland, etc., countries across the world have started vast campaigns to vaccinate their population with vaccines validated and approved by vaccine regulatory bodies such as the Food and Drug Administration in the US, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency in the UK, the European Medicines Agency in the European Union, the Drugs Controller General of India and the regulating authorities in their countries..."

European Union, the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) and the regulating authorities in their countries.

The United Kingdom thus became the first country to approve the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use and the first country to start its vaccination programme against Covid-19. In a new milestone in the global battle against Covid-19, Margaret Keenan, a 90-year-old grandmother became the first person to be vaccinated with the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine on 8 December.

Apart from the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, the approved Covid-19 vaccines for emergency use by the relevant regulatory authorities include the Oxford-AstraZeneca

vaccine, the Moderna vaccine, the Russian Sputnik V, the Chinese Sinopharm. The Drugs Controller General of India has approved the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine and Covaxin the Indian vaccine developed by Bharat Biotech for emergency use in the country. The vaccines are reported to be effective against the various new strains of Covid-19.

40 countries and counting

Vaccination campaigns have therefore been rolled out with some glitches in countries across the world. After Britain, more than 40 countries have already started vaccinating their population. Israel is leading the world in terms of its vaccination rate, with nearly 20% of its population having already received the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine. The other countries leading the rate of vaccination include the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, United Kingdom, United States, Denmark and Iceland.

On 16 January 2021, India kick-starts the world's biggest vaccination drive aiming to vaccinate 300 million people in the first half of 2021. The first persons to be vaccinated will be some 30 million healthcare and front-line workers who will get the Covid-19 vaccines for free. The second stage will include the vaccination of some 270 million elderly people above 50 years of age and those vulnerable below 50 of age with comorbidities or with high risk of infection. An App has been devised to register, identify and monitor the health of beneficiaries of Covid-19 vaccines, be alert to any related health problems and ensuring that each person receives the prescribed two doses of vaccine. Every vaccinated person is made to wait for half an hour at vaccination centres to check for any adverse reactions.

Key role

India, which is the biggest vaccine producer in the world, is expected to play a key role in supplying vaccines to the world. Its largest vaccine manufacturer, the Serum Institute of India (SII) is already producing between 60 and 70 million doses of the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca vaccine a month. This vaccine is to be sold at INR Rs 200 (MRU Rs 108) per dose. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that India would be a major Covid-19 vaccine supplier to the world in coming months.

Several countries, including Brazil, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, Bangladesh and South Africa, have already made official requests to receive vaccines from India. According to media reports, South Africa has ordered 1.5 million vaccine doses from the Serum Institute. Similarly Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro has urgently requested 2 million doses for his country. India will have to balance its huge local requirements for its vaccination programme with the international demand for affordable Covid-19 vaccines.

We are in this battle together

At a time when we need world solidarity and cooperation to vaccinate and protect some 7.8 billion people in the world against Covid-19 through a global vaccination programme to stop the pandemic, the vaccination data show that rich and middle-income countries have secured almost all the available vaccine supply to date.

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"We need to overhaul and recast a faltering economic model which plumbs the prospects of the country. The urgent vaccination of the population will give us a competitive edge and open up new market opportunities for the country..."

Trump impeached for 'inciting' US Capitol riot in historic second charge

Donald Trump has become the first president in US history to be impeached twice, after being charged with "incitement of insurrection" over last week's deadly storming of Congress. The House of Representatives accused Mr Trump of encouraging violence with his false claims of election fraud. He now faces trial in the upper chamber, the Senate, but not before he leaves office next Wednesday. Senators can vote to bar him from ever holding public office again.

In his first live speech since inciting a mob that overran the US Capitol Building in Washington last week - resulting in the deaths of five people - Donald Trump finally called the supporters involved a "mob" and warned Democrats not to remove him from office in his final days. The outgoing president was vehement that the plans of Democrats to have him removed and replaced by vice president Mike Pence - either through the 25th Amendment or impeachment - would only inflame tensions.

"It's causing tremendous anger and division and pain far greater than most people will ever understand, which is very dangerous for the USA, especially at this very tender time," Mr Trump said on Tuesday during a visit to his still under-construction US-Mexico border wall in Alamo, Texas.

Mr Trump called on his followers to remain peaceful, without mentioning his impeachment. "Violence and vandalism have no place in our country... No true supporter of mine would ever endorse political violence," he said, striking a sombre and conciliatory tone.



The FBI has warned of possible armed protests planned for Washington DC and all 50 US state capitals in the days before Joe Biden, a Democrat, is inaugurated as the new US president.

What was Trump charged with?

Impeachment charges are political, not criminal. The president was accused by the House of inciting the storming of the Capitol - the seat of the US Congress - with a speech on 6 January to supporters outside the White House.

He urged them to "peacefully and patriotically" make their voices heard, but also to "fight like hell" against an

election that he falsely told them had been stolen.

The article of impeachment stated that Mr Trump "repeatedly issued false statements asserting that the presidential election results were fraudulent and should not be accepted".

It says he then repeated these claims and "wilfully made statements to the crowd that encouraged and foreseeably resulted in lawless action at the Capitol", leading to the violence and loss of life.

"President Trump gravely endangered the security of the United States and its institutions of government, threatened the integrity of the democratic system, interfered with the peaceful transition of power, and imperilled a coequal branch of government."

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'Accelerate India's rise with action on several fronts,' notes a declassified US strategy for Indo-Pacific

A secret US strategy for the Indo-Pacific framed in 2018 noted India as "preeminent in South Asia" and a country taking on "the leading role in maintaining Indian Ocean security," reports *Hindustan Times*.

The document says that the US will take action on several fronts, including diplomatic, military and intelligence, to "accelerate India's rise and capacity to serve as a net provider of security and Major Defense Partner."

According to the document, "the US will build a stronger foundation for defense cooperation and interoperability; expand our defense trade and ability to transfer defense technology to enhance India's status as a Major Defense Partner; increase our cooperation on shared regional security concerns and encourage India's engagement beyond the Indian Ocean Region".

Measures outlined in the document to strengthen India's capacities also include US's support to India's bid for membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group which was blocked by China.

On the other hand, the document sees



China as a strategic competitor to the US. The 10-page strategy was declassified by the Trump administration's National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien on 5 January.

Just as envisaged in the document, the Indo-US ties have reached unprecedented levels. India has signed three out of four foundational defence agreements including the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), the General Security of Military Information Agreement, and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA).

Both India and US are also planning for formalization of Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad, a group of four democracies namely India, Australia, Japan and the USA.

Brexit is "pretty much unworkable" for UK supermarkets

The Brexit trade agreement is "pretty much unworkable" for UK supermarkets, British MPs have been told, as problems mount in the nation's food supply chains and gaps appear in fresh produce aisles. Boris Johnson's Christmas Eve deal with the EU gave retailers and suppliers just hours to prepare for the final set of rules that were made public on 31 December. That has left supermarkets scrambling to deal with mountains of "impenetrable" administration.

In some cases the time taken to complete paperwork on a lorry load of goods bound for the EU has increased from three hours to five days, the House of Commons Brexit committee heard. Andrew Opie, director of the British Retail Consortium, was scathing of the government's last-minute delivery of the deal, which he said had resulted in shortages on supermarket shelves in Northern Ireland.

Shoppers have been faced with gaps on supermarket shelves as retailers and suppliers grapple with Brexit red tape and staff absences due to Covid-19. Fresh fruit and vegetable items have been listed as



out of stock on some supermarket websites while shoppers have posted images on social media of empty shelves in a number of stores.

The government has told consumers to expect more disruption as routes into and out of the UK become busier over the coming days after the quieter new year period which has already been marred by border delays and confusion over new trading rules. Online supermarket Ocado became the first big retailer to warn of shortages of some products this week. It emailed customers to tell them that there may be "an increase of missing items and substitutions over the next few weeks".

* More on Page 6



There are currently about 6000 people on the UK transplant waiting list. Photo - europeandataportal.eu

Patients missing out on potentially life-saving organ transplant surgery in UK

Patients are missing out on potentially life-saving organ transplant surgery because hospital intensive care beds are filled by coronavirus patients. Major organ transplant centres in London, as well as the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham and Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge, have been forced to close their doors to transplant cases because of a lack of beds, the increased risk to patients, and the need to redeploy doctors and nurses to the coronavirus front line, reports The Independent.

Hospitals across England had more than 32,600 Covid-19 patients on Wednesday, with NHS bosses warning that the numbers could continue to rise in some areas until the end of the month. A record 1,564 deaths linked to the coronavirus were reported on Wednesday and 47,525 new infections. The impact on organ transplant services follows hundreds of urgent cancer operations being delayed in London and across the country, as NHS trusts run out of spare beds to treat non-Covid patients. Most routine operations have also been stopped in the hardest-hit areas.

Why Nepal is seeking restoration of monarchy and to be a Hindu state again

Like King Gyanendra, Nepal's Prime Minister Khagda Prasad Sharma Oli also is fast losing the respect and support of Nepal's long suffering masses. And this is triggering a demand for the restoration of the country's status as a Hindu nation ruled by a monarchy.

Palace intrigues following the royal massacre at Kathmandu's Narayanhiti royal palace in June 2001, coupled with the messy reign of the deeply unpopular and authoritarian King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, led to Nepal's monarchy being abolished in May 2008, reports Jaideep Mazumdar of Swaraj.

Now, history seems to be repeating itself in the Himalayan country with the Nepalese losing faith in the democratic process. This has triggered support for restoration of the monarchy and, more important, the country's status as a 'Hindu nation'.

Political observers in Nepal were taken by surprise at the massive turnout in a rally organised by the pro-monarchist and Hindu nationalist Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) in Kathmandu on Monday (January 11) on the occasion of the 299th birth anniversary of King Prithvi Narayan Shah.

Prithvi Narayan Shah is considered to be the founder of Nepal and is widely looked upon as the 'Father of the Nation'. An ardent Hindu nationalist, he proclaimed the kingdom of Nepal as the Asli Hindustan (the true land of Hindus) since North India was then under Mughal rule.

The RPP, which has demanded that Prithvi Diwas be declared as 'National Unity Day', says that the spontaneous and massive turnout at Monday's rally was an indication that



Prithvi Jayanti celebrations in Nepal. Photo - images.assettype.com

people of Nepal want their 'Hindu king' to return.

The day also saw a spate of articles in the nation's leading newspaper eulogising Shah (e.g this and this) and decrying attempts made in the recent past by the country's communists to underplay his legacy. This is why the statement by Nepal's tourism minister Bhanubhakta Dhakal (a communist) terming King Prithvi Narayan Shah as the "revered guardian of Nepalis" assumes a lot of significance.

Dhakal's statement is considered an acknowledgement of the prevailing sentiments of the people of Nepal who are fed up with the political parties, the country's President and other democratic institutions.

"Nepalis have started comparing the present chaotic and inept rule to the reign of the monarchs. The politicians belonging to the communist parties and the Nepali Congress have badly let down the people of this

country," RPP leader S K Rana told Swarajya from Kathmandu.

Another factor that is fuelling the demand for a return to the olden days is the virtual carte blanche given by the country's communists rulers to Christian missionaries to lure poor and gullible folks, especially in the rural and semi-urban areas, to convert.

"Large scale conversions to Christianity are going on. The (Christian) missionaries are enticing people through the lure of material gains, free education and medical treatment etc despite the existence of an anti-conversion law that is not being enforced," said Rana. He added: "If this (the aggressive evangelism of Christian missionaries) is allowed to continue unabated, Nepal will soon become a Christian-majority nation. Hindus are thus feeling threatened and want reversal of the measures taken in 2015 to declare Nepal a secular state."

'We cannot tolerate this arrogance': Uganda cracks down on social media

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni in an address has announced a crackdown on social media giants like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and other platforms over reported electoral interference which has included blocking pro-government accounts.

This crackdown reportedly involves blocking social media platforms ahead of the national polls, reports Swarajya.

President Museveni alleged that Facebook reportedly blocked accounts favouring the ruling NRM ahead of the polls, while adding that if it wants to operate in Uganda it should be used equitably.

"Uganda is ours, not anybody's... no way anybody can come and play



Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni. Photo - images.assettype.com

around with our country to decide who is good and bad, we cannot accept that," said President Museveni.

"We cannot tolerate this arrogance of anybody coming to decide for us, who is good and who is bad, that we cannot accept," he added.

Earlier Twitter had cried foul over this decision, while confirming that it had indeed suspended a number of accounts "targeting the Ugandan elections", in close coordination with its "peers".

Twitter was called out for its hypocrisy by many who pointed out its permanent ban of US President Donald Trump and a virtually unilateral crackdown on conservative voices.

Compiled by Doojesh Ramlallah

Manou Bheenick - Former Finance Minister & Governor of BOM

“What the country needs is a general election; the sooner, the better!”



Former Minister of Finance and Governor of the Bank of Mauritius Bheenick gives us a blow-by-blow account of the happenings on the Covid front, the dysfunctions of the economy which he thinks will continue to plummet, the need for a credible alternative with a dedicated leader who will perhaps revive a ‘Mauritian exceptionalism’. Tall order, but this is the only way out...

rollout and widespread inoculation — justified as it probably is, raises legitimate safety and efficacy concerns and risks igniting fears that may reduce vaccine take-up.

The long list of restrictions accompanying the first vaccines, and the unprecedented immunity from prosecution extended by the UK government to the vaccine producer, are far from reassuring. To say nothing of vaccine-sceptics, arguing that there are suitable public domain therapies available, that Covid-19 has a mortality rate of 0.05 percent or some similar insignificant incidence.

Venerable high-street retail giants downed shutters, possibly never to open again. Shopping malls have gone bust.

As populations across the world developed ways to cope with the Covid sanitary regimen, including social distancing and lockdowns, online marketing, remote working, e-distribution, telemedicine and similar contactless channels — which, barring some exceptions, were earlier struggling to get much of a toehold — suddenly developed traction as they ramped up their act and emerged as major players in their respective areas.

Mauritius Times: With a number of Covid vaccines in the pipeline and mass vaccination likely to start shortly, we should be out of the woods soon once the world economy gets back on its feet. Would you nevertheless be still worried about our economy?

Oh, how I wish I could've subscribed to such a rosy view of how things will pan out from here onwards! Unfortunately, the reality is likely to be quite different, definitely more nuanced, certainly more protracted, and quite possibly much more complicated than we can even imagine at this stage.

And this, on both the sanitary and economic fronts.

First, the sanitary question.

Of course, we have every reason to be happy that — despite the insidious and ill-inspired Trumpian sabotage of global trading/exchange/security arrangements, including targeted attacks on specific international institutions — our global governance system showed remarkable resilience in not only warding off these attacks from its biggest player but also in rising to the challenge in what is an historically unpre-

cedented manner.

Yes, the first vaccine is here and being rolled out. Other vaccines are following hard on its heels. The speed with which they have moved from the laboratory stage to regulatory approval is simply mind-boggling. Bravo, we've saved the world, we've saved humanity! But, pray tell me, why haven't we shown similar celerity with age-old diseases plaguing livelihoods in poorer countries such as malaria, to name only one? Could it be that we value human lives differently, depending on ethnicity, geography, relative wealth and power?

In the same line of thought, does not access to vaccines, and their affordability, risk tearing the world apart between rich countries and poor ones? India, not the richest of countries, has just launched the biggest global immunisation campaign ever as it simultaneously announced its readiness to supply its vaccines to its South Asian neighbours. Can we expect a similar response from the richer countries?

And, overshadowing all this, the vaccine story isn't straightforward either. Fast-tracking the entire process — from development/ testing/ regulatory approvals to actual

“One of the many lessons we can draw from the previous general election is that we have been in too much of a hurry to write off the old guard. Our political and social stability is paying the price, as is our economy which has nose-dived since. There is a need for continuity to repair the damage suffered and rebuild confidence. If we love our country, we should not give in again to the siren calls of untried and untested political adventurers...”

And the virus is mutating and striking back with a more virulent variant forcing several European countries, starting with the UK, into another round of lockdown, raising fears of continued vaccine efficacy and reinfection risks. No, we haven't seen the last of Covid-19 yet.

*** What about the economic fallout? Will it long outlive the health crisis?**

I'm coming to that. Let's take a cursory look at the economic landscape.

The pre-Covid global economy has been brought crashing down. International trade has been decimated. Global supply chains, which were at the heart of our production/ transformation/transportation/assembly/ warehousing/distribution/consumption model — in which our economy had found its niche — suffered a near-total disruption. Some major sectors of activity, e.g. international travel/tourism/conventions/hospitality, and the satellite activities gravitating around them, came to a complete standstill. Major airlines have gone belly-up, to say nothing of the minnow that was Air Mauritius.

Given the sheer extent of the economic disruption which Covid has brought in its wake, it would be extremely foolhardy to expect that all this will completely blow over in, say, six months, when the storm clouds overhanging the global economy will have lifted, the sky will be blue, and the global economy will just snap back like an overstretched elastic band to where it was before, and we'll be well on our way to economic heaven in a Mauritius choc-a-bloc with tourists, a hive of activity in the offshore service sector, EPZ factories running machines red-hot to cope with brimming order books, with jobs galore and rising incomes...

Just try to visualise such an outcome here in Mauritius — and, additionally, pencil in the approximate contours of the rest of the world that would be necessary to generate such a felicitous outcome for our fellow-citizens, and that too within such a short timeframe — and you will realise how implausible such a scenario is!

“There can be no leader without followers. The real test will come at the polls when the party-political leader who can rally most followers, also known as voters, will emerge as the country's leader. And we hope and pray that the alliance-in-the-making will make the right choice of leader to lead it into battle...”

☞ Cont. on page 8

'You cannot spin your way out of the mess you've landed the country in.

Flogging a dead horse doesn't bring it back to life'

● Cont. from page 7

Recent economic history doesn't lend much support for such quick snapbacks. On many reckonings, the world hadn't yet fully recovered from the 2007/08 financial crisis before being hit, ten years later, by Covid-19.

but twice – that it holds some secret esoteric key to economic success, complete with magic wand, gold investment... abra-cadabra!

It seems to believe it could suspend the laws of economics. It spent on consumption,

office towers in town. It's not yet clear whether these were "assisted suicides" or deaths of despair.

No, this is clearly not a government with the mettle to embrace the deep restructuring and thorough-going reform called for by the

qualify for the sick bay at the IMF.

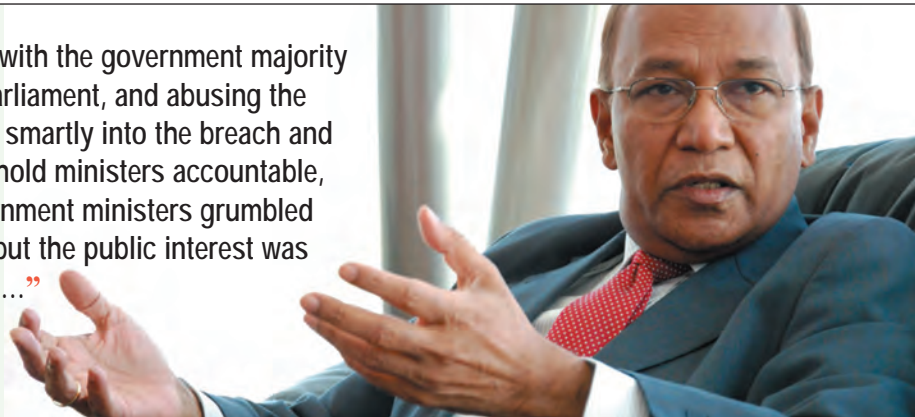
*** If the financial situation is therefore as bad as you are saying and there is no indication as to when the uncertainties that have hit the global economy will go away, it's not going to be plain sailing for the Finance minister for the next few years or whoever takes over under a new dispensation, isn't it?**

Forget any notion of plain sailing! That is simply not on the cards for *any country* at this juncture. When your roof is leaking, as a good *paterfamilias* you would use any spell of clement weather to fix it, wouldn't you? Think of the benign conditions during 2015-2019.

If, when the leaks multiply and the structure starts wobbling, you still prefer to spend your entire family savings, the legacy of previous generations, and whatever you can borrow from your friends, on unproductive and poor investments, conspicuous consumption, and a lavish lifestyle, while showering your supporters with gifts *à gogo*, etc, you should be the last person to envisage a plain-sailing future when the storm is upon you and, additionally, your roof risks blowing away, shouldn't you?

Stop bamboozling the people with the current numbing narrative which is piped round the clock on the various channels of the state-owned broadcaster, turned régime propagandists to make a Goebbels proud: *Trust us! We have everything in hand! Big Brother is riding to our rescue! Trust us! We*

“When France was in a comparable fix, with the government majority steamrolling the opposition in parliament, and abusing the system, it was the Judiciary that stepped smartly into the breach and remedied the conjunctural weakness to hold ministers accountable, actually sending some to prison! Government ministers grumbled about the *judiciarisation de l'Exécutif*, but the public interest was admirably served...”



More arguably, the Great Depression of the 1930s — actually tracing its origins to much earlier with the Treaty of Versailles which marked the end of World War I — was not finally licked until after the Korean War in the early 1950s and the subsequent commodities boom.

If we see these two crises as constituting a spectrum, I would be inclined to place the Covid crisis, in view of its multi-dimensional nature, as closer to the Great Depression. This is not to say that we'll require three decades for the global economy to recover — after all, the vaccine was developed within a year, piggybacking on an attack of *vaccine nationalism*! But it argues very strongly against banking on a quick recovery.

I would therefore urge my fellow-compatriots to be on their best behaviour as global citizens and pray earnestly for an early global recovery while maintaining our economy in full readiness to catch the rising tide which will surely follow in its wake. But, do remember, a rising tide lifts *all* boats, not just ours — and, most definitely, *not* ours if in the meantime we have negligently allowed our frail craft to fall in the wrong hands, spring a few leaks, go off-course, and head for the rocks, with the captain asleep at the wheel!

*** In these circumstances, the temptation for any government that is facing the heat from all sides would be to shun drastic but necessary economic measures and instead stick to populist economics. Do you see that happening here?**

This temptation would, of course, be quite understandable for a government like ours which believes — and which has led its fawning electorate to buy this crap, not once

with little regard for production. It jacked up expenditure but neglected to mobilise the required revenues. It mistook lumpy prestige projects for productive investment. White elephants, once rare, have sprung up on the skyline on its watch.

Before Covid-19 struck, the sheer bankruptcy of such clueless financial and economic management must have become apparent even to the most obtuse managers. The first overt sign was the raid the government perpetrated on central bank reserves. It did this under a blue sky when a more prudent and sustainable fiscal stance would have been the more mature and responsible option. This daylight robbery served to paper over the cracks in government finances.

When, soon after, Covid struck, and the economy hiccupped and stumbled, it was obvious to one and all that we were swimming naked. More raids on the central bank followed... This time, though, the Covid emergency provides some justification for such resort.

But there's no justification to be found there for the quantum explosion of public procurement corruption, given such a terrific boost by the enabling environment of Covid-related emergency procurement. This made it to the law books without the barest minimum transparency and reporting safeguards that could have been expected. Hardware dealers turned into medical suppliers overnight!

An even bigger public procurement scandal had earlier led to the dismissal of the Deputy Prime Minister. Public officers involved in emergency procurement were soon jumping off cliffs on the coast and from

disastrous situation to which it has led the country by its curious economic management and policy stance which, to me, is strongly reminiscent of early *Peronism*, with strong overtones of Pinochet.

*** What's curious about the government's economic management?**

I say "curious" because I cannot find a better way to qualify this government's strange blend of ill-inspired, institution-corroding, short-sighted, self-serving policies and practices, allied with a very timorous approach to anything that may have a negative fallout on its popularity rating.

“Our first generation of political leaders, forged in the crucible of the struggle for independence, had a much better understanding of the psyche of the *nation en devenir*: they understood that, for democracy to work in our plural country, it required a supreme form of political generosity: *political inclusiveness*. This was the recognition by the winners, the “ins” of the rights of the “outs”...”

That said, I hasten to add that I don't see populism continuing, either, as the kitty is bare and unable to support the continuation of populist policies. The more likely outcome is that we'll soon be calling in the receivers, unless the government is cornered into recognizing its inability to hang on, throws in the towel, and calls an early election.

The receivers for countries are not the big-name accounting firms and, for us here, not the well-known corporate undertakers who seem to have landed all such commissions in the country since the regime change of 2014. The receivers I'm referring to is the International Monetary Fund. We have now become a suitable case for treatment and

know what we're doing! Bright days are just round the corner... You cannot spin your way out of the mess you've landed the country in. Flogging a dead horse doesn't bring it back to life.

We should begin to prepare our people for the worst. We've been doing it so well for years when faced with a menacing tropical cyclone heading our way.

I see severe economic dislocation ahead as the global economy attempts a post-Covid reset, and brings some system change to the architecture of global business and the piping underlying it.

☞ Cont. on page 9

'With the gathering storm, we should, by now, have hoisted up a Class IV Warning flag on Government House'

● Cont. from page 8

None of that will be plain-sailing. I fear we are in for a very bumpy ride ahead. And this, irrespective of who actually has his hands on the tiller.

Going into this crisis, our generation has been particularly unlucky. We have suffered the double-misfortune of experiencing the biggest global crisis since World War II, and we have done so under the worst possible circumstances imaginable --- saddled, as we already were, with the most undemocratic, most befuddled, and most economically illiterate government that ever-occupied Government House in Mauritius.

With the gathering storm — an economic one, certainly, but also a social and political one, with the latter dangerously amplified by the regime for base party-political purposes — we should, by now, have hoisted up a Class IV Warning flag on Government House.

*** Regime change hasn't always proved to be a good idea, isn't it?**

Indeed, but in the present circumstances a safe pair of hands can make all the difference in handling the socio-political crisis which is in the offing. The ominous portents are around us.

Starting with the relatively benign, racist jokes have become standard fare in staff canteens or festive gatherings in top ten companies with, regrettably, little diversity in their workplace or boardroom. Ethnic slurs and racial abuse flare up on social media, spreading venom, with increasing frequency. We are seeing lynch squads taking the law unto their own hands and going on the rampage in broad daylight to tackle flagrant transgressors.

The law and order system, seemingly oblivious to the danger, fails to make much of a dent on the widening ethnic divide.

Yes, we badly need change. Yes, we need a safe pair of hands.

*** If you think the economy might get worse the longer this government remains in power, it might nevertheless be too early to suggest that its days are numbered. That would be wishful thinking because it still commands a comfortable parliamentary majority, doesn't it?**

Every single day that this regime stays in power is a day too many! A born-and-bred democrat would have seen the writing on the wall and given the country what it needs to reset it on a new trajectory, under new management, to give it the social peace, the harmony, and the serenity required to engineer and implement a new strategy for our economic salvation in the post-Covid world.

What the country needs is a general election; the sooner, the better!

The Opposition plays a crucial role in the proper functioning of any Westminster-style democracy, with a first-past-the-post system of electing parliamentarians as we do. Other types of democracies have their own safeguards. Irrespective of opposition numbers, our unicameral system is critically dependent on Speaker impartiality, as there is no other avenue for *legislative* redress against the excesses of the government side other than the problematic recourse to our slow-moving and apparently overloaded court system.

It is certainly not the first time that a government com-



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“I see severe economic dislocation ahead as the global economy attempts a post-Covid reset, and brings some system change to the architecture of global business and the piping underlying it. None of that will be plain-sailing. I fear we are in for a very bumpy ride ahead. And this, irrespective of who actually has his hands on the tiller...”

mands such a large majority in our country. We've known more overwhelming ones before. Remember the 60- 0 of 1982, the 57- 3 of 1991, and the 60-0 of 1995. Do you recall any previous instance of such Speaker partisanship and Opposition harassment as what has emerged as the norm since 2015?

The democratic credentials of those who are now calling the shots, and producing such sorry outcomes, are nothing to write home about. Others, individuals and institutions, also share some of the responsibility for pushing us on this downward slide.

The various electoral petitions, questioning the very legitimacy of the regime and alleging electoral fraud, are now, one year later, still wending their way through the judicial maze, making many of us wish for a Constitutional Court whose need had never been felt in the preceding half a century.

By way of comparison, when France was in a comparable fix, with the government majority steamrolling the opposition in parliament, and abusing the system, it was the Judiciary that stepped smartly into the breach and remedied

the conjunctural weakness to hold ministers accountable, actually sending some to prison! Government ministers grumbled about the *judiciarisation de l'Exécutif*, but the public interest was admirably served. Judicial activism has also occasionally filled a legislative vacuum in other countries, including the largest democracy of all, India.

*** Why is it that a system that worked so well, for so long, has now failed so miserably?**

I venture to suggest that the answer lies in the quality of the human resources in play.

Our first generation of political leaders, forged in the crucible of the struggle for independence, had a much better understanding of the psyche of the *nation en devenir*: they understood that, for democracy to work in our plural country, it required a supreme form of political generosity: *political inclusiveness*. This was the recognition by the winners, the “ins” of the rights of the “outs”.

To me, this was the unwritten clause in our Constitution. And all our travails since 2015 trace their origin to the new brigade, hungering for power and unencumbered by any deep democratic convictions, openly flouting the essence of political inclusiveness while paying lip-service to its compulsory outward form as defined in the legislation.

*** Fine, but the question that usually came up in the daily chatter of many Mauritians for a long time had been: 'What's the alternative?' Now it would seem people have moved on to asking: 'Who will lead that alternative?' Crucial question, isn't it?**

Indeed, it is! But we have a more fundamental question that has now sprung to the forefront. It underlines the pertinence of the other questions and gives them added urgency. And that is the question provoked by the massive deployment of army *materiel*, tanks, armoured vehicles, riot police, rooftop snipers, etc — the likes of which has *never* been seen since the pre-independence riots of the mid-1960s — and the brutal treatment of some unarmed citizens questioning this military restraint on their freedom of movement.

Many questions, actually. Was this quasi-military mobilisation and show of military might — with additional hardware and equipment on standby, ready to intervene, parked less than a kilometre away — was all this just protection for a minister on his way to court?

Or was it actually to intimidate the judiciary itself by not only surrounding the courthouse but also, apparently, stuffing the courtroom with plainclothes police to keep press and public out?

Or was it in fact a trial run of how to intimidate and muzzle a peaceful people in a disguised attempt to put the lid on the incipient revolt rumbling across the country? A psychological war-game against the population, perhaps? Could it have been a Machiavellian attempt to provoke the people...?

We begin to have real fears for our democracy.

What's the alternative? Who will lead it? Very important questions, no doubt, but the first one is easily answered for any right-thinking individual: Anybody else but the current gang!

This gang has

- (1) played hard and fast with our democracy, and yet to answer allegations of votes buying and electoral fraud,
- (2) practised an extreme form of nepotism,

☞ Cont. on page 12



Nita Chicooree-Mercier

A glimpse of beauty, offered by sunset colours of bright orange infiltrated by greyish clouds that hung above the wide expanse of light blue sky meeting at the horizon of the vast ocean far away from the lagoon, offers fleeting moments of bliss that linger for a while. They chase away mundane worries over the calamities left in the trail of a pandemic that overpowered big and small nations across the globe.

The survival instinct of countries overweighed lofty values of solidarity as frontiers were closed one by one to keep the deadly virus at bay. Every country was left to fend for itself and protect its population, first. The tacit slogan was 'Our Lives Matter'. Just like in a plane where you are recommended to wear your oxygen mask first, and help your neighbour afterwards. European Union showed signs of disunion; the first overwhelming flow of infected patients that was highly mediated was in Italy, a country that looked totally isolated in its fight to grapple with the disastrous situation. Medical equipment ordered from China was diverted to Poland. The Americans flew to China with loads of money to pay cash for equipment ordered by France. India halted exportation of hydroxychloroquine in anticipation of its use for her huge population, and re-started exporting it much later at the request of President Trump. 'We First' is simply human.

Globalisation in its finest garb came back at the centre of the world stage in the race for Covid vaccines. Researchers from different countries worked hard in laboratories to come up with a solution to stop the propagation of the virus. Specialists of Turkish origin found a vaccine in Germany; Indians contributed to the new vaccine in Australia, and many are actively participating in deep research and innovation in US and UK labs; so are medics from Eastern Europe in other countries. Contrary to crazy conspiracy theories confusing minds on social media whereby scheming multinational companies are working behind the scene to eliminate vulnerable populations and the 'useless class' worldwide anticipated by Artificial Intelligence, governments are caring for the elderly first, and taking care to save lives as much as they can.

The Paradox of Covid-safe

Mauritius is one of the rare countries

A Year of Reckoning

There is a pool of talents and brains in Mauritius which can be put to right contribution to straighten up things as soon as the first signs of recovery of the global economy appear



“Are the authorities being overprotective to the point of stifling the sector? The nightmare of contact tracing and quarantine certainly puts off any wish to open hotels to foreign visitors. Still, there can be an agreement with a few countries for visitors to be submitted to tests after three days' stay in hotels. The on-going recourse to test results after five minutes recently put in place in India may be practical...”

that enjoys the luxury of being Covid-safe, where the public can move around freely without being subjected to curfews and other restrictions. Congratulations to all the government, medical teams and a public broadly endowed with a sense of discipline, who contributed to make it a reality. The lifestyle of a big chunk of the population, limited socializing, and a rather dull social life in some parts of the island helped to avoid large gatherings, big partying and so on. In other countries individualism, the me-first mindset, rather than a genuine spirit of freedom, drives folks to gather in huge numbers, bypass rules aimed at containing propagation, thus displaying a lack of collective responsibility.

Paradoxically, not much economic benefit in key sectors is being drawn from the privileged Covid-safe status. Public health has topped the rank of priorities. Declining number of orders from hard-hit key markets imposes a low level of production in factories. Signs of global recession due to the trade war between China and the US were aired worldwide by the end of 2018, much before the outbreak of the epidemic in China. The tourism sector

in Mauritius hardly kept afloat during the last quarter of 2018.

Are the authorities being overprotective to the point of stifling the sector? The nightmare of contact tracing and quarantine certainly puts off any wish to open hotels to foreign visitors. Still, there can be an agreement with a few countries for visitors to be submitted to tests after three days' stay in hotels. The on-going recourse to test results after five minutes recently put in place in India may be practical. It is a matter of responsibility and trust between visitors and the authorities that the latter refrain from assuming in case the situation spirals out of control. Hotels can be partly filled with moneyed upper-middle class from Europe, Asia and prosperous Saudis and Emiratis. An overall bleak picture of the situation prevailing in all social

classes is far from reflecting reality.

Is it also a wake-up call to reckon that the number of hotels has blown out of proportion for decades? A total loss of coastal lands and investments.

However, the handling of the pandemic by the medical team and their frequent statements on television sounded reassuring to the public at the beginning, but there has been a propensity to instill fear in the population, which is totally unnecessary. A typical patronizing attitude which has long characterized ruler-public relations, what the French call 'infantilisation' of adults - which is a widespread attitude amid employees in the public sector. The sooner political authorities get rid of this habit the better for all of us. Adults do not need to be treated like children.

What next?

Several complaints are laid at the door of the government: mismanagement of Air Mauritius, SBM, CEB, boycott of the press, a policy of retaliation, and so on. The onus is on the public to see which is which, and how other democracies actually work, and assess where a small island democracy can draw the line in light of local and geopolitical pressure, and the mood and preferences of the public.

The wrong people appointed in key posts is certainly harmful to good governance. Nomination of people close to party colours is common practice in democracies; President Trump wasted no time in appointing a Republican-leaning Supreme Court judge before November elections. On the very day of the swearing-in ceremony of the Joe Biden, many high-ranking public officials and ambassadors will start packing up and leave office. Deserving high-profile personali-

ties in Mauritius are likely to avoid working with politicians if they care for total integrity and personal freedom in policy-making. So instead of seeing the best of what the education system has produced, the public witnesses a parade of less able appointees in key posts.

2020 jolted the public into an awareness of the country's economic vulnerability and fragility. Unnecessary consumption is re-assessed, local food products are given due attention. Unlike India which has embraced the idea of *atmanirbhar*, self-reliance in investing in high technology, Mauritius is aware of the necessity of self-sufficiency in agriculture and food produces to start with. There is a pool of talents and brains in Mauritius which can be put to right contribution to straighten up things as soon as the first signs of recovery of the global economy appear, and with enough ambition to bring brighter colours back.

We look forward for a better year for all our compatriots.

"We have been in too much of a hurry to write off the old guard"

● Cont. from page 9

- (3) disembowelled regulatory bodies across all sectors,
- (4) hollowed out parastatal bodies,
- (5) parasitized state-owned enterprises,
- (6) battered on questionable public procurement practices, including Covid-19 emergency procurement mechanisms,
- (7) stifled parliamentary debate,
- (8) undermined the freedom of the press and persecuted a private broadcaster

...and the list goes on and on. With such an eloquent *palmarès*, they richly deserve the Order of the Boot!

An electoral system that produces such results obviously needs deep reform, as indeed does the Constitution itself with many of its glaring weaknesses actually revealed by the unprincipled actions of the current gang!

Our Constitution resisted change because it proved difficult to rally a sufficient majority behind any proposed changes, with some clauses further entrenched by requiring a three-quarters majority for any amendment. Change is now long overdue.

*** The question of leadership remains unanswered to this day, even within the so-called 'l'Entente'. That needs to be addressed – the sooner, the better, isn't it?**

We need a leader who can inspire and lead the burgeoning common front of all opposition parties, lead it to victory, and commit with nothing less than a missionary zeal to a program of strong political and economic reforms. He must be supported by a like-minded team of competent individuals, with complementary skills and high integrity,



"I cannot find a better way to qualify this government's strange blend of ill-inspired, institution-corroding, short-sighted, self-serving policies and practices, allied with a very timorous approach to anything that may have a negative fallout on its popularity rating. That said, I hasten to add that I don't see populism continuing, either, as the kitty is bare and unable to support the continuation of populist policies..."

and willing to put country above self.

They must all share the same sense of mission to remedy the weaknesses in the political framework — including the Constitution, the judiciary, and the police — and to carry through the economic and social reforms necessary to build the new post-Covid economy.

They must not shy away from the substantial re-engineering that is required to bring our approach in so many areas up to best practice, and set our country back on the road to social peace and economic prosperity.

The time has come to reinvent the Mauritian *exceptionalism* that was once our trademark but fell victim to exceptional mismanagement, and has now become a fast-fading memory.

One of the many lessons we can draw from the previous general election is that we have been in too much of a hurry to write off the old guard. Our political and social stability is paying the price, as is our economy which has nose-dived since. There is a need for continuity to repair the damage suffered and rebuild confidence. If we love our country, we should not give in again to the siren calls of untried and untested political adventurers.

The old guard is admittedly showing signs of wear and tear. But there's life in the

old dog yet, as one would say. If they could only rejuvenate their team, restructure their parties, don the new garb of nation-savers, and reinvent themselves, they could well provide the providential safe pair of hands we are searching for. Especially, if they give an advance indication of their intention to step down within a given timeframe and put in place full handover arrangements.

"Given the sheer extent of the economic disruption which Covid has brought in its wake, it would be extremely foolhardy to expect that all this will completely blow over in, say, six months, when the storm clouds overhanging the global economy will have lifted, the sky will be blue, and the global economy will just snap back like an overstretched elastic band to where it was before, and we'll be well on our way to economic heaven..."



Let me end with a quick recap of recent Malaysian political experience, which has interesting parallels with our present situation. A 93-year old Tun Dr Mahathir came out of his 15-year retirement, to fight and win an election, standing with former rivals and a rejuvenated team against his own former party, when his country was engulfed in a monumental financial and political scandal involving the Prime Minister himself with, *inter alia*, a film-financing scam, a murder,

unexplained wealth, etc.

Dr M was reinstalled as Prime Minister of Malaysia to provide the missing *gravitas* and stability, and bring the outgoing Prime Minister, Najib Razak, to justice. Najib — who happens to be the son of the first Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Abdul Razak — has been sentenced to 12 years' jail in the first of many corruption trials in which he's embroiled. Razak's wife is facing a string of corruption trials as well.

All this to say that our venerable politicians have a role to play to steer us out of the current mess to safer ground. Which one will lead? The answer can only be provided by the leadership contestants themselves, no doubt still jockeying for position with their party-political machines, or we'd have gleaned some indications already.

There can be no leader without followers. The real test will come at the polls when the party-political leader who can rally most followers, also known as voters, will emerge as the country's leader. And we hope and pray that the alliance-in-the-making will make the right choice of leader to lead it into battle, and that an enlightened, now hopefully much wiser, electorate will rally behind him. Or her.

Civil unrest is today's major national security threat

* Cont. from page 2

Secondly, in an era of social media, social and political divisions can be exploited by foreign adversaries to spread disinformation and destabilize nations. What's more, in an era of increased global connectivity, many threats to security, such as infectious diseases and climate change, know no borders. That means the fate of humanity is interconnected in many ways.

All of this suggests that countries around the world need globalism more than nationalism, and investment in human development more than in arms, to achieve national security.

Redefining national security

The pandemic and other major events that have occurred in recent months also suggest it's time to redefine the notion of security in broader terms. The concept of

human security proposed by the United Nations in 1994 can serve as a useful guide in broadening the notion of security. The UN's multidimensional and people-centred concept of security underscores the structural causes of inequity and human insecurity around the world, and emphasizes collective action to address common threats.

It also draws attention to the fact that the risks to human well-being and security are present everywhere — in rich and poor nations — and at all times. Human security does not aim to replace the traditional concept of security, but simply widens it by including traditional as well as non-traditional threats.

Threats to security are interconnected, so security cannot be pursued effectively in silos. Health insecurity, for instance, may lead to economic insecurity — as exemplified by the ongoing pandemic —



and community inequities in the form of racism may lead to domestic violent conflicts.

Integrated, holistic

National security must therefore be conceived and practised in an integrated and holistic manner by addressing all sources of threats — both internal and external — posed to human and national security.

It entails maintaining a balance between investment in military and investment in strengthening domestic law and order and bolstering cyber-security by tackling online sources of disinformation that foreign adversaries can exploit.

It also involves boosting investment in public health and education, providing universal health coverage and eradicating poverty and social exclusion. Finally, national security also requires comprehensive action against global security threats like pandemics and climate change through collective action, multilateralism and global solidarity.

The world is at a critical juncture today. It's time to redefine security in a more profound way for a better, safer and more secure world.

Sadia Mariam Malik, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, York University, Canada

Steering the Country towards Normality

Cont. from page 4

The world must remember that we are in this battle together. We cannot restore pre-Covid-19 normality if large sections of the population are not vaccinated or a number of countries are unable to vaccinate their population. A divide between those who are vaccinated and those who are not is not a sustainable option for the future. More than ever before in its chequered history, the world needs to show solidarity to ensure that the whole world population is vaccinated. This will take time but it has to be done in a planned and coordinated manner with everybody on board in order to stem the Covid-19 pandemic for the benefit of all mankind.

Imperative to act now

Is the Government and Mauritius slow in getting out of the starting gate? Is the Government distracted by the scandals plaguing its governance and lacking focus? Being Covid-safe cannot be an alibi for procrastination. This is not the time to continue to bask in the glory of being Covid-safe. This is the

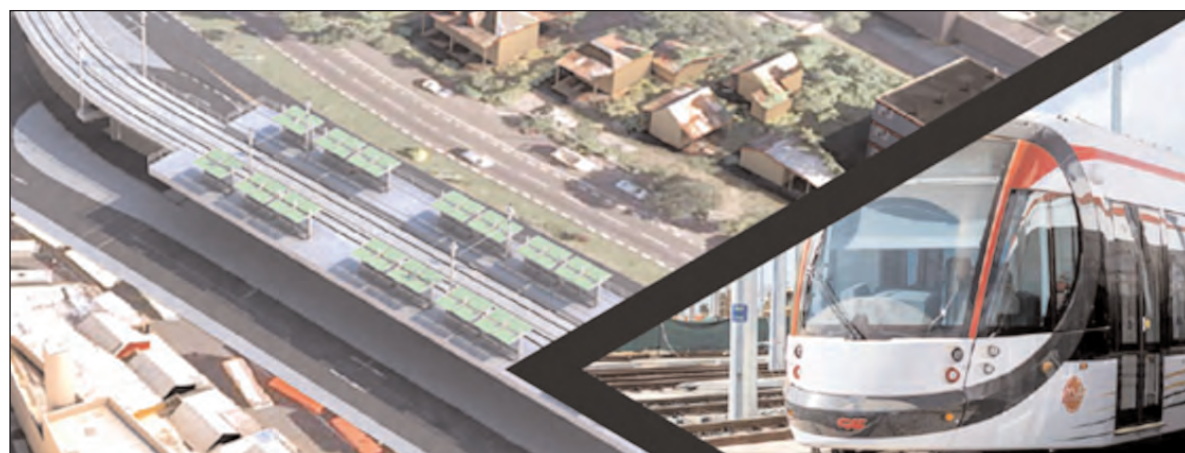
are required per person. We must remember that the development and production of vaccines is also a commercial venture. We need to see through the marketing hype and contrived narratives.

The plan must also take on board the health profile of the population and the risks related to chronic health problems and allergies.

The second condition is that the countries which are our main sources of tourists and trading partners have also embarked on a vaccination programme for their population which comprises the two doses required. Normality in our main markets means a boost in demand for our exports through e-commerce. It is only when these two key conditions are fulfilled that our borders can be progressively opened to Covid-19 vaccinated travellers having an officially validated international vaccination certificate.

Getting our act together

Mauritius therefore needs to urgently get its act together. Government must realize that the urgent



"Mauritius needs to urgently get its act together. Government must realize that the urgent vaccination of the population is a priority. It is an essential step towards rebooting the economy and triggering the socio-economic recovery of the country. Any further dragging of feet in organizing and kick starting the campaign to vaccinate the people adds to the tremendous costs already borne by the country. It is irresponsible and condemnable to delay this necessary step towards normality any further..."

time for urgent and carefully planned action. We need to move forward.

The country faces daunting socio economic challenges relating to the dire fallouts of the Covid-19 pandemic in a context of growing indebtedness, stressed public finances and worsening economic fundamentals. Vaccines are a passport towards normality. Delaying the vaccination programme stalls progress towards normality. We need to act now.

The two conditions necessary to chart a pathway towards normality are firstly the urgent vaccination of the whole population according to a well-thought-out vaccination plan. This *inter alia* means making a judicious choice of vaccine after a careful assessment of the cost, storage conditions, effectiveness, availability and any side-effects of each available vaccine, especially as two vaccine doses

vaccination of the population is a priority. It is an essential step towards rebooting the economy and triggering the socio-economic recovery of the country. Any further dragging of feet in organizing and kick starting the campaign to vaccinate the people adds to the tremendous costs already borne by the country. It is irresponsible and condemnable to delay this necessary step towards normality any further. This is not the time for lame excuses to justify such dilly-dallying.

We also need to overhaul and recast a faltering economic model which plumbs the prospects of the country. The urgent vaccination of the population will also give us a competitive edge and open up new market opportunities for the country. We therefore need to decide and take urgent action now to steer the country towards normality.

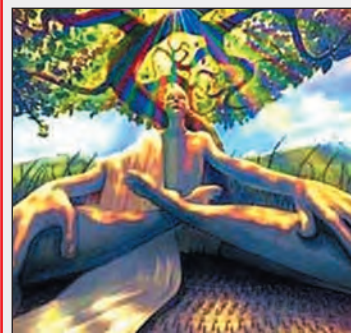
Mrinal Roy

Tree of Knowledge

We Are All Connected

Madisyn Taylor

Being aware of the connection between all things can help you in terms of the broader effect you may be creating.



There are times when we may feel disconnected from the world. Our actions can seem like they are of no major consequence, and we may feel like we exist in our own vacuum. Yet, the truth is that our simplest thought or action -- the decisions we make each day, and how we see and relate to the world -- can be incredibly significant and have a profound impact on the lives of those around us, as well as the world at large. The earth and everything on it is bound by an invisible connection between people, animals, plants, the air, the water, and the soil. Insignificant actions on your part, whether positive or negative, can have an impact on people and the environment that seem entirely separate from your personal realm of existence. Staying conscious of the intercon-

tion between all things can help you think of your choices and your life in terms of the broader effect you may be creating.

Think of buying a wooden stool. The wood was once part of a tree which is part of a forest. A person was paid to fell the tree, another to cut the wood, and yet another to build the stool. Their income may have had a positive effect on their families, just as the loss of the tree may have had a negative impact on the forest or the animals that made that tree their home. An encouraging word to a young child about their special talent can influence this person to develop their gift so that one day their inventions can change the lives of millions. A poem written "merely" to express oneself can make a stranger reading it online from thousands of miles away feel less alone because there is someone else out there who feels exactly the way they do.

Staying conscious of your connection to all things can help you think of your choices in terms of their impact. We are powerful enough that what we do and say can reverberate through the lives of people we may never meet. Understanding that you are intimately connected with all things and understanding your power to affect our world can be the first step on the road to living more consciously.

VAISHNAVA SEVA SOCIETY (VSS)

(REGD. No. 6157)

Terre Rouge / Verdun Motorway, Khoyratt
Tel: + (230) 5867-2108 E-mail: dkdsvss@gmail.com

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Members of the VSS are kindly requested to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which will be held on Sunday, January 31, 2021 at 13:30 at the seat of the Society.

AGENDA:

Reading and approval of Minutes of Proceedings of last AGM.
President's and Treasurer's Report.
Approval of estimates for expenditure 2020-2021.
Temple Construction.

Office Bearers for 2021-2023 & AOB

NB: Lack of quorum, the AGM will be automatically postponed for Sunday, February 14, 2021 at the same place and time with the same agenda.

Dipta Krishna Das
(Secretary)

15/01/2021

Laughter Therapy for Man & Wife

While getting married, most of the guys say to girl's parents, "I will keep your daughter happy for the rest of her life."

Have you ever heard a girl saying something like this to the boy's parents like, "I will keep your son happy for the rest of his life..."?

Nooo.... because women don't tell lies!

* * *

A small argument between a couple turns violent.

Husband says: Don't let the animal in me come out!

Wife replies: Who's afraid of a mouse??

* * *

If wife wants husband's attention, she just has to look sad and uncomfortable.

If husband wants wife's attention, he just has to look comfortable and happy.

* * *

A Philosopher husband said: Every wife is a 'Mistress' of her husband...

"Miss" for first year & "Stress" for rest of the life...

* * *

Do you remember the tingling feeling when you took



the decision to get married?

That was common sense leaving your body.

* * *

Son: Dad, I got selected for a role in a play for annual day!

Dad: What role are you playing?

Son: A husband!

Dad: Stupid, ask for a role with dialogues!

* * *

Man outside phone booth: "Excuse me, you are holding the phone since 29 minutes and you haven't spoken a word."

Man inside: "I am talking to my wife!"

* * *

A very intelligent girl was asked the meaning of marriage.

She said: "Sacrificing the admiration of hundred guys, to face the criticism of one idiot."

* * *

Position of a husband is just like split unit air conditioner, no matter how loud he is outdoor, he is designed to remain silent indoor!

* * *

Husband to wife: You should learn to embrace your mistakes...

She hugged him immediately.

This is called "self assessment"

Long ago, a Prime Minister of a country visited a kindergarten and asked the staff: How much is the budget for a child's food per month?

They told him: \$400.

He told them: This is too much... better reduce it to 300 dollars!

Then he visited a prison and asked the officials: How much is the prisoner's food budget per month?

They said: \$400.

He told them: This is too little... better increase it to 1000 dollars!

An accompanying Minister curiously asked him: Why did you reduce the food of kindergarten children and increase the prisoners' food?

He said: Do you think that after leaving the government we will go to kindergarten?

The Parable of the Coffee Bottle

A young couple had neighbours who were senior citizens, the husband around 80 years old, and the wife about 5 years younger.

The young couple were very fond of the elderly couple and made it a point to visit them and have coffee with them every Sunday.

They observed that the old lady would bring the coffee bottle to her husband to be opened, every time.

The thoughtful young man gifted the lady a gadget, without her husband's knowledge, to easily open the bottle, and showed her how to use it.

On their next visit, the old lady once again brought the bottle for her husband to open! The young couple was amazed! Had she forgotten about the gadget?

When the opportunity arose to be alone with the old lady, they quizzed

her about this. Her reply made them speechless...

She said: "Oh, I can open the bottle myself, even without your gadget! But I get him to open it so he feels he is still stronger than I am and thus the man of our home... that he remains useful to me as always; that I still depend on him; that togetherness is the main ingredient of any marriage... We don't have many more years of life in us, and togetherness is of utmost importance..."

Moral: Never underestimate the wisdom of the elderly. Our parents/grandparents may not be bringing in money any longer, but their guidance alone is priceless. You may have a fruitless tree in your garden, but at least it gives you shade. You will not cut it off now, will you? Looking after the elderly and infirm should be looked upon as a "blessing".

Life's LESSONS

Don't wait for the parrot to die

The story is told of a woman who bought a parrot to keep her company, but she returned it the next day.

"This bird doesn't talk," she told the owner.

"Does he have a mirror in his cage?" he asked. "Parrots love mirrors. They see their reflection and start a conversation."

The woman bought a mirror and left. The next day she returned; the bird still wasn't talking.

"How about a ladder... Parrots love ladders. A happy parrot is a talkative parrot."

The woman bought a ladder and left. But the next day, she was back.

"Does your parrot have a swing? No. Well, that's the problem. Once he starts swinging, he'll talk up a storm."

The woman reluctantly bought a swing and left. When she walked into the store the next day, her countenance had changed.

The parrot died, she said

The pet store owner was shocked.

"I'm so sorry. Tell me, did he ever say anything?" he asked.

"Yes, right before he died," the woman replied. "In a weak voice, he asked me, 'Don't

they sell any food at that pet store?'"

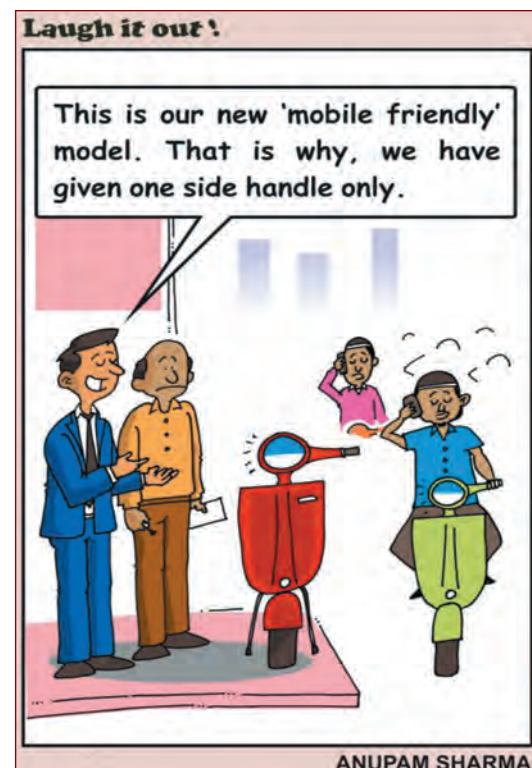
* * *

Sometimes we forget what's really important in life. We get so caught up in things that are good while neglecting the things that are truly necessary.

This is the beginning of another new year. Take a moment to do a "priority check", and strive for what is most important for you.

Things that are necessary, set them up as your priorities and make your resolutions for the new year.

Don't wait for the parrot to die!



ANUPAM SHARMA

To have a long life, the 10 years from 70 to 79 years are crucial!

Israeli scholars have found that there are around two health problems per month for people between the ages of 70 and 79. Surprisingly, the health status of the elderly aged 80-89 is as stable as the 60-69 age group!

70-79 years is a dangerous period. During this period, various organs decline rapidly. It is a frequent period of various geriatric diseases, and it is often prone to hyperlipidemia, arteriosclerosis, hypertension, and diabetes.

After entering the age of 80, these diseases will decline, and the mental and physical health may return to the level of the 60-69 years old group!

Thus, the age of 70 to 79 years old is called the "dangerous age group". As people grow older many people want to have a good healthy life. They realise that "Health is Wealth".

The 10-year health care of 70 to 79 years old is crucial.

Here are some simple steps called "Doing ten ones every day"

This will help you to navigate more smoothly through the "dangerous age group" stage of your life.

When the elderly are 70 to 79 years old, they may wish to do these "ten ones" every day. Here are the 10 tips:

1. A pot of water

Water is "the best and cheapest health drink".

You must drink a glass of water three times each day:

First cup: After getting out of bed, you can drink a glass of water on an empty stomach.

Because of our invisible sweating and urine secretion during sleep, we lose a lot of water. Even if we don't feel thirsty after getting up, the body liquids will still be thick due to lack of water. Therefore, after getting out of bed, you must slowly add water as soon as possible.

Second cup: A glass of water after exercise.

The right amount of exercise is one of the cornerstones of longevity, especially for the elderly, and more attention should be paid to effective and reasonable exercise. However, after exercise, special attention should be paid to replenishing water. During exercise, sweat takes away electrolytes and consumes more energy. If you don't pay attention, it is prone to hypoglycaemia after exercise, and even cause syncope. Therefore, after the exercise, it is recommended that the old people drink water to which a small pinch of salt and sugar can be added and dissolved if you wish.

Third cup: a glass of water before going to bed.

When people are asleep, sweat glands are still draining water. When the body's water is reduced too much, the blood viscosity is increased. A cup of water before going to bed can effectively reduce the blood viscosity and may even slow down the appearance of ageing. Helps against angina, myocardial infarction and other diseases.

2. A bowl of porridge

If you feel sick, drink a bowl of porridge! Wang Shixiong, a famous medical scientist in the Qing Dynasty, called porridge "the first complement of the world" in his book.



China Daily Online published a 14-year study conducted by Harvard University on 100,000 people. It found that a bowl of about 28 grams of whole grain cereal porridge per day can reduce mortality by 9% and reduce the chance of getting cardiovascular diseases.

Each volunteer was in good physical condition when he participated in the study in 1984, but in the 2010 feedback survey, more than 26,000 volunteers had passed away.

It was found that those volunteers who regularly ate whole grains such as porridge, brown rice, corn and buckwheat seem to have avoided most diseases, especially heart diseases.

3. A cup of milk

Milk is known as "white blood" and it is so to the human body. Its nutritional value is well known with a lot of calcium, fat and proteins.

4. An egg

Eggs can be said to be the most suitable food for human consumption. The body's absorption rate of egg protein can be as high as 98%.

5. An apple

Modern research believes that apples have the effects of lowering cholesterol, losing weight, preventing cancer, preventing ageing, enhancing memory, and making the skin smooth and soft.

The health benefits of different coloured apples are different:

Red apples have the effect of lowering blood lipids and softening blood vessels

Green apple has the effect of nourishing liver and detoxifying, and can fight depression, so it is more suitable for young people to eat.

Yellow apples have a good effect on protecting vision.

6. An onion

The onion has a very high nutritional value and has

many functions, including helping to lower blood sugar, lowering cholesterol, preventing cancer, protecting cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases, and also anti-bacteria, preventing colds, and supplementing calcium and bones. Eat onions at least three or four times a week.

7. A piece of fish

Chinese nutritionists have warned that eating "four legs" is worse than eating "two legs", eating "two legs" is worse than eating "no legs."

"Four legs" mainly refers to pigs, cattle, and mutton. Eating too much of these meats is not conducive to weight loss and lowering blood fat;

"Two legs" mainly refers to poultry such as chicken, duck, goose, etc., which are good meat foods;

"No legs" mainly refers to fish and various vegetables. The protein contained in fish is easily digested and absorbed. The amount of unsaturated fatty acids in the fat, especially polyunsaturated fatty acids, is relatively good for the body.

8. Gentle walking

This has a magical anti-ageing effect. When adults walk (about 1 kilometre or less) regularly for more than 12 weeks, they will achieve the effect of correct posture and waist circumference, and the body becomes strong and not easily tired.

In addition, walking exercise is also beneficial to treat headache, back pain, shoulder pain, etc., and can promote sleep.

Experts believe that a 30-minute walk a day can get rid of the danger of "adult disease". People who take 10,000 steps a day will have a lower chance of developing cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease.

9. A hobby

Having a hobby, whether it is raising flowers, raising birds, collecting stamps, fishing, or painting, singing, playing chess, and travelling, can help the elderly to maintain extensive contact with society and nature. This broadens the horizons of interest of the elderly.

10. Good mood

Old people should maintain good emotions as these are extremely important to their health. Common chronic diseases which affect the elderly are closely related to the negative emotions of the elderly.

Many patients with coronary heart disease have angina and myocardial infarction due to stimulation of adverse emotions, resulting in sudden death.

"Bad" temper leads to high blood pressure. In prolonged and severe cases, this can cause stroke, heart failure, sudden death, etc.

Negative emotions such as anger, anxiety, and grief can cause blood sugar levels to rise, causing metabolic disorders in the body.

This shows how important it is to have a good mood!

Physical ageing is a natural phenomenon, and it is the most sensible choice to fully devote yourself to life and to live the best every day!

Here are all the Bollywood movies to watch out for in 2021

From family dramas to thrillers, biographies, and more, YS Weekender lists upcoming Bollywood movies you should not miss out in 2021



Despite a challenging year, movie theatres have now opened up for moviegoers and how! Earlier last month, movie and entertainment ticket booking platform BookMyShow reported that once cinema theatres reopened, it sold 700,000 tickets between October 16 and December 18. And Bollywood is set with a list of movies to be released this year. Whether we finally get to visit the theatres or wait for the digital screening, these films are something to watch out for.

Ramprasad Ki Tehrvi

Think Naseeruddin Shah, Vinay Pathak, Konkona Sen Sharma, and Parambrata Chattopadhyay - art cinema world's dream cast, right?

Family-drama *Ramprasad Ki Tehrvi* is Seema Pahwa's directorial debut. The story revolves around a particular Bhargava family coming together for 13 days to perform the last rites and rituals of the head of the family - Ramprasad Bhargava.

After premiering at the Mumbai Film Festival in October 2019, the film released theatrically on January 1.

Tribhanga

This is the story of three women from the same family but belonging to different generations, starring Tanvi Azmi, Kajol and India's new favourite, Mithila Palkar.

Directed by Renuka Shahane, *Tribhanga* is the story of a woman and her love-hate relationship with her mother.

The film is set to be released on January 15 on Netflix.

Sardar Udham Singh

After stealing hearts with his performance in *Uri: The Surgical Strike* and bagging the National Film Award, actor Vicky Kaushal is set to play freedom fighter Udham Singh

in this upcoming movie. British actress Banita Sandhu stars opposite Kaushal in the film.

The upcoming biographical is directed by Shoojit Sircar and was earlier set to premier on Gandhi Jayanthi last year. The film is now set to release on January 15.

Atrangi Re

After *Raanjhanaa*, Anand L Rai and Dhanush are coming together for a romantic drama starring the latter, Akshay Kumar, and Sara Ali Khan in a double-role.

Produced by T-Series, Colour Yellow Productions, and Cape of Good Films, the film's music has been composed by AR Rahman. Interestingly, this is Rahman's second collaboration with Rai (after *Raanjhanaa*).

The film is set to be released on February 14.

Bell Bottom

Thriller-spy films have become Bollywood's favourite genre over the last couple of years. After *Baby*, Akshay Kumar is back with another spy-thriller *Bell Bottom*. Directed by Ranjit M Tewari, the movie also stars Vaani Kapoor, Lara Dutta, and Huma Qureshi in prominent roles.

Bell Bottom is the first Bollywood film to resume shooting, which started amid the pandemic. The story is based on true events in the 1980s. The film is scheduled for release on April 2.



Laal Singh Chaddha

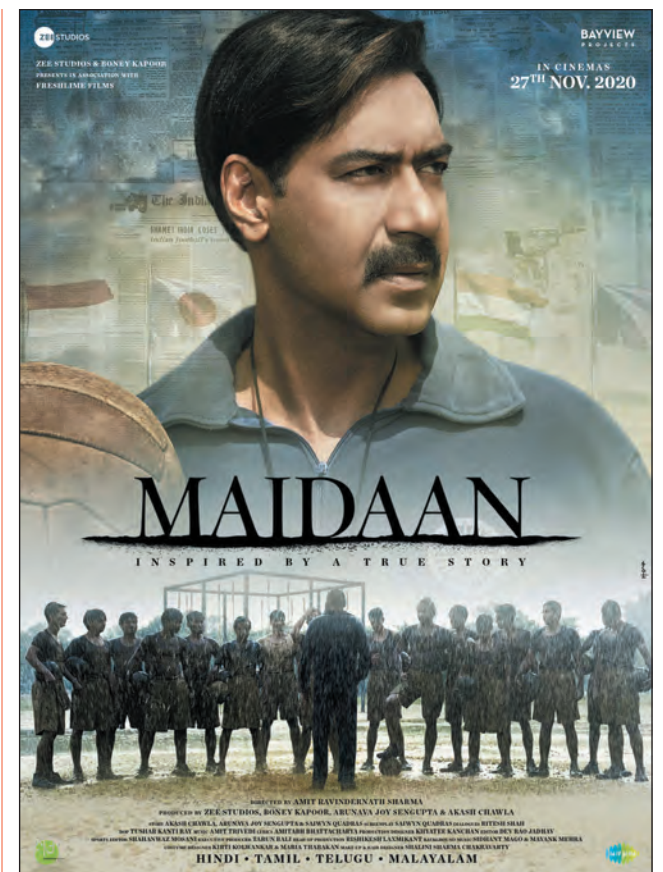
Perfectionist Aamir Khan either aces it or doesn't do it at all. After 2016's *Dangal*, the actor is back with a comedy-drama *Laal Singh Chaddha*. Produced by his in-house production company and Viacom 18 Studios, it is an adaptation of the American film *Forrest Gump*.

The film also stars Kareena Kapoor, debutant actor Vijay Sethupathi, and Mona Singh. Set to be shot in more than 100 locations, it was initially scheduled for release for Christmas in 2020. The revised release date is now set for October 2021.

83

The much-awaited film on India's first victory at the Cricket World Cup of 1983 stars Ranveer Singh as Kapil Dev. The film was scheduled to be released in 2020 but was delayed due to the pandemic. Deepika Padukone plays on-screen wife Romi Bhatia.

Directed by Kabir Khan, the film is set to be released in March. Co-distributor Reliance Entertainment is yet to



confirm the date of release.

Maidaan

2021 seems to be a year of biographies. Upcoming sports film *Maidaan* is based on the life of India's celebrated football coach Syed Abdul Rahim (also known as the Architect of Indian football), played by Ajay Devgn.

Directed by Amit Sharma, the film also stars Priyamani and Ansuman Bhagat. The film is set to be released on October 15.

Dhamaka

Usually known as Bollywood's chocolate-boy for his rom-com roles, actor Kartik Aaryan is set to break stereotypes with his upcoming film *Dhamaka*. The actor plays journalist Arjun Pathak, in what is said to be a remake of 2013 South-Korean action-crime movie *The Terror Live*.

The release date is yet to be confirmed.

Golmaal 5

Rohit Shetty and Ajay Devgn are back again with another instalment in the *Golmaal* franchise. The comedy films series has made us laugh out loud since 2006 and there has been no stopping since then.

While the release date is not confirmed yet, the film promises as much laughter as the last one.



Kundali Bhagya's Anjum Fakhri aka Srishti spreads a message on body positivity

Kundali Bhagya actress Anjum Fakhri's latest pictures on the Instagram are just stunning. And it's just not how good the dress looks on her, but the way she has captioned it. It spreads a message on body positivity, reports Times of India.

Posing in a shimmery long dress, Anjum proudly flaunts her belly fat. Not everyone has the courage to flaunt a body-hugging outfit and is often insecure about how they look. But Anjum shatters their thoughts by encouraging all to be comfortable in their own skin.

The actress wrote, "Quarantine weight gain can't look more snack-seeuurrr than this... Loving that



belly fat..." With a sleek side-swept hair and a big grin in that shimmery outfit, Anjum looks wow. More power to her.

The actress plays the role Srishti, Shraddha Arya aka Preeti's sister in *Kundali Bhagya*. Just like on-screen, off-screen these two share a crackling bond. She also shares a great bond with Abhishek Kapur, who plays the role of Sameer in the show.

The current track of *Kundali Bhagya* is about Akshay and Kritika's wedding.

While Anjum has been a part of *Kundali Bhagya* since its inception in 2017, the actress was seen in a brief cameo in *Naagin 5*.

Anita Hassanandani: 'I'm super excited, can't wait for the baby to pop'



Anita Hassanandani is excited and dealing with a bunch of emotions as she awaits the arrival of her first child. She speaks about how she feels, how husband Rohit Reddy is being a wonderful support and more. The actress shares, "I'm in my last trimester so yes, the due date is soon. I'm super excited, nervous, stressed, too many mixed emotions, but really excited and looking forward to the new phase in my life. Can't wait for the baby to pop."

Rohit has been pampering me and reading up on taking care of the baby

The actress recently has posted an adorable series of photos on Instagram which flaunt her baby bump and has

dad-to-be Rohit, in the pictures, reports Times of India. She says he's been prepping for the baby as well. "Rohit is very excited as well. He has been reading a lot, he's figuring stuff out. He's doing all the right things, pampering me, ordering food for me," she laughs, adding, "More so, actually he's learning things online without me even bringing it up, like he's learning how to wrap the baby and what to do if the baby needs to burp, so he's doing his bit and I think he's going to be a great father. Rohit and me have also learnt about stem cell banking and have agreed to go ahead with it as it can take of the baby's health in the future. I'm glad we're doing this for our child."

Appartement à louer - long terme



Appartement meublé de 3 c.a.c, climatisé, cuisine équipée, piscine et parking, sécurité (24/24) à Trou aux Biches - Complexe Fleury sur Mer
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To Rent

Fully furnished and air conditioned 3-bedroom apartment at Fleury sur Mer Complex, Trou aux Biches for long-term. Parking and 24 hour security, swimming pool
Tel: 57809413 - 57530881

Cinema Sirsa - Castel

New Tamil Movie: 'MASTER'

Featuring Vijay and Vijay Sethupathi



Friday 15 to Wednesday 20 January
13:00 & 19:30

YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

If you live as a couple, beware of an extra-marital adventure which you'd have to regret! Your career life will be on the upswing. The family atmosphere will ease off suddenly because you'll be ready to admit that you aren't always right.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 7, 9, 14, 20, 33

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

Amorous happiness will be at your arm's reach and you'll only have to take it. Tensions in your household because of divergent views on many subjects, but everything will finally turn out well. The coming week will be favourable to finances as far as savings are concerned.

Lucky Numbers: 15, 17, 20, 30, 36, 40

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

If you show yourself tolerant and receptive, the current tension within your family will quickly disappear. Some dark clouds in your amorous sky are possible, but they'll make you better appreciate the happy days that are already in the offing.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 9, 12, 17, 27, 30

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

Be patient: you should soon have the possibility to exercise your career in a more satisfying way. Being loved and pampered, you'll bloom as a flower; think of giving as much as you receive, otherwise troubles will

arise; remain very watchful.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 17, 20, 33, 25, 30

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

Your sentimental life will be highlighted again as you'll know how to be tolerant, and attentive. In your work, you may get to grips with jamming and hitches of all kinds; instead of getting all worked up, make a pause in order to examine the situation.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 4, 7, 26, 27, 30

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

Blindly follow your intuition, which will be excellent, practically infallible. Try to moderate your bossiness toward your children, otherwise communication will be blocked. Surprising events in your love life; they won't be all bad.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 19, 20, 21, 30, 36

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

Happy sentimental relationships: you'll strengthen the ties of complicity with the beloved one. If you're a confirmed single, your opinion on marriage may very well change this time. An unfavourable week for lawsuits: it will be better to envisage amicable arrangements.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 14, 17, 22, 30, 31

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

In love, you won't hesitate to pay your spouse back in his/her own coin; beware, this could turn out very badly! Family problems will increase, and there will need much courage to solve them. Don't feel sorry for yourself: your

lot is not as deplorable as you imagine it.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 7, 11, 15, 33, 36

Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

You'll try your best to maintain a climate of harmony and complicity with those whom you love. If you've made a promise to your beloved one, you'll have to keep it at all costs. Think of discovering and developing your hidden talents.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 15, 18, 20, 33, 36

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

You can carry out delicate moves well and promote your various important projects. You'll decide this time to tackle certain family problems. In love, try not to be too reserved, otherwise your partner may be misled into believing that he/she is not loved.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 7, 13, 18, 20, 33

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

Delays and hitches in more than one field; don't lose patience: things will straighten themselves out rather rapidly. This week can be marked with an emotional outburst which you won't forget readily. Be more attentive to your close ones and try to anticipate their desires.

Lucky Numbers: 17, 20, 29, 31, 32, 36

Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

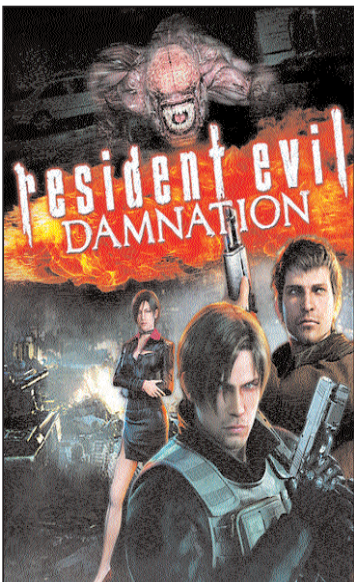
Accept the precious advice from your family's circle instead of being obstinate. It'll be the moment to go discovering, to widen your horizons; you must follow up your new friendly relationships, which are going to enrich you intellectually.

Lucky Numbers: 15, 17, 22, 33, 36, 38

CINE 12

Vendredi 15 Janvier - 21.15

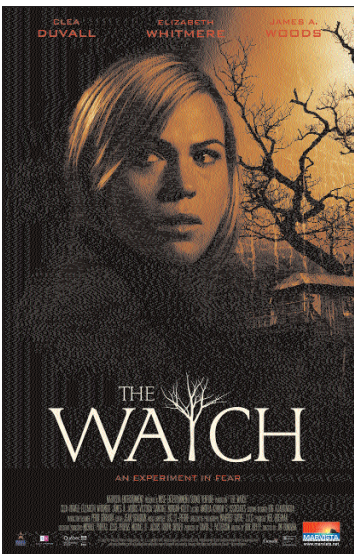
Resident Evil: Damnation

Avec: Dave Wittenberg, Matthew Mercer,
Courtenay Taylor

CINE 12

Samedi 5 sept - 21.15

The Watch

avec: Clea DuVall, Elizabeth
Whitmire, James A. Woods

MBC 1

Dimanche 17 Janvier - 21.10



vendredi 15 janvier	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
	07.05 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 09.45 Local: Memwar Dan Ros 10.30 Local: Arts.21 11.00 Doc: A Question Of Science 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.55 Mag: Urban Gardens 14.00 Doc: World Stamps 14.30 D.Anime: Twirlywoos 15.15 D.Anime: The Hive 15.23 D.Anime: Mega Man: Fully... 16.11 D.Anime: La Famille... 16.33 D.Anime: Little Spirou 17.20 Serial: Heidi, Bienvenida 17.50 Mag: Origami 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.00 Local: MBC Talent Show 21.10 Serial: When Calls The Heart 23.00 Le Journal	10.00 Serial: Ki Jaana Mein Kaun 11.05 Serial: Zun Mureed 12.04 Film: Aai Tuzya Charni Majha 14.21 DDI Magazine 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.29 Serial: Honaar Soon Mee 15.52 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 16.15 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 16.40 Serial: Tu Ishq Hai 16.49 Serial: Achra Ke Moti 17.20 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.41 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: Urdu Programme 22.05 DDI Live	06.00 Mag: Eco India 06.39 Mag: Carnet De Sante 07.00 Mag: Border Crossing 07.27 Mag: Tomorrow Today 07.53 Doc: Raymond Loewy... 08.45 Doc: 360 GEO 10.20 Doc: Lethal Exports 11.31 Mag: Shift 11.59 Mag: Border Crossing 12.25 Mag: Urban Gardens 12.33 Mag: Tomorrow Today 12.59 Doc: Raymond Loewy... 14.45 Doc: Pablo Escobar??s 15.25 Doc: Lethal Exports 16.11 Mag: Eco India 16.59 Mag: Border Crossing 17.25 Mag: Tomorrow Today 18.00 Doc: Antarctica 18.43 Mag: Arts And Culture 19.00 Open Univ: Student Support 19.26 Mag: Urban Gardens	01.30 Film: Ice Soldiers 02.49 Serial: Counterpart 03.53 Film: Brush With Danger 05.17 Tele: Muneca Brava 05.58 Serial: Beauty And The Beast 06.38 Film: The Water Horse 09.00 Serial: Mission: Impossible 09.48 Tele: Soleil Levant 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.00 Serial: S.W.A.T. 12.00 Film: Brush With Danger 13.36 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: The Water Horse 16.37 Serial: Mission: Impossible 17.30 Serial: Beauty And The Beast 18.05 Tele: Soleil Levant 19.10 Tele: Dulce Amor 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: Heroes Reborn 21.15 Film: Resident Evil 22.55 Tele: Muneca Brava	08.00 Kuchh Meetha Ho Jaye 12.05 / 19.54 - Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam 12.30/ 20.11 - Radha Krishna 12.52 / 20.32 Sanjivani 13.14 / 21.09 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.36 / 21.24 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.53 / 21.46 - Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki 14.17 / 21.59 - Ikyawann 14.43 / 22.25 - Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 15.00 Film: Satrangee Parachute Starring: Rajpal Yadav, Sanjay Mishra, Zakir Hussain, Lilliput, RupaliGanguly 18.00 Live: Samacher 18.30 Kumkum Bhagya
samedi 16 janvier	06.00 D.Anime: Sindbad And The... 07.12 D.Anime: Trollhunters 08.23 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Local: People 12.30 Local: Gwar Dantan 14.10 Mag: Sur Mesure 14.30 D.Anime: Twirlywoos 14.50 D.Anime: Petit Creux 14.55 D.Anime: Dee Dee The Little.. 15.06 D.Anime: The Hive 15.22 D.Anime: La Ligue Des Super 15.46 D.Anime: Martin Morning 16.05 D.Anime: Les Triples 16.24 D.Anime: Wishfart 17.20 Serial: Oh Yuck 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.35 Entertain: Nach Baliye 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.00 Prod: Lottotech 21.10 Film: Patsy & Loreta 23.00 Le Journal	07.00 Film: Samrat Chandragupt 10.00 Bade Acchelagte Hai 12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhya Bhare 12.24 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 12.50 Serial: High School 13.12 Annakodiyum Ainthus Pengalum 13.35 Serial: Anu Pallavi 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.20 Film: Padman Starring: Akshay Kumar, Radhika Apte, Sonam Kapoor 17.37 Mag: DDI Magazine 19.00 Zournal Kreol 20.05 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha 20.31 Serial: Bitti Business Wali 21.00 Film: Agneepath Starring - Hritik Roshan, Priyanka Chopra, Rishi Kapoor 23.43 DDI Live	06.00 Doc: Antarctica 06.42 Mag: Arts And Culture 06.55 Mag: Global 3000 07.30 Mag: Euromaxx 07.59 Doc: Wildlife Heroes 08.48 Doc: Abderrahmane Sissako 09.40 Doc: Nollywood 11.00 Doc: Antarctica 11.50 Mag: Arts And Culture 12.01 Mag: Global 3000 12.35 Mag: Euromaxx 15.31 Doc: Like, Date, Delete 16.29 Student Support Prog... 19.00 Mag: Vue D'en Haut 19.30 Mag: Check In 20.05 Doc: Taste Hunters 21.00 Local: News (English) 21.10 Doc: Destination 21.23 Doc: Stunt Warriors 22.15 Doc: Onibo 22.57 Doc: The Mennonites 23.39 Doc: Amazing Gardens	01.34 Film: Resident Evil: Damnation 03.34 Serial: Brooklyn Nine Nine 03.54 Film: The Quiet Hour 05.16 Tele: Esmeraldas 06.04 Serial: Heroes Reborn 06.46 Film: Brush With Danger 08.30 Serial: L.A.'s Finest 09.18 Serial: Shades Of Blue 09.59 Serial: Unforgotten 10.41 Film: I Think My Babysitter's 12.04 Mag: Zoom In 13.00 Tele: Amanda 14.58 Mag: Zoom In 15.05 Serial: Counterpart 17.11 Serial: Heroes Reborn 17.53 Film: A Gift Horse 19.23 Mag: Close Up 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Series: Heroes Reborn 21.15 Film: The Watch 23.05 Tele: Dulce Amor	04.05 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum 04.26 Radha Krishna 04.51 Zindagi Ki Mehek 05.08 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 05.30 Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki 05.49 Ikyawann 06.11 Bin Kuch Kahe 06.33 Kundali Bhagya 06.54 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka 07.16 Mere Angne Mein 08.00 Zindagi Ki Mehek 10.44 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai 13.36 Sanjivani 16.00 Pavitra Rishta 18.30 Film: Judwaa 2 Starring Varun Dhawan, Jacqueline Fernandez, Taapsee Pannu 20.49 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 21.31 Serial: Naagin 22.16 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek
dimanche 17 janvier	06.00 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà... 06.23 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill 08.19 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 09.30 Serial: Lucas Etc. 09.45 Serial: Magic Mania 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Local: Mon Jardin Ma Maison 15.00 D.Anime: The Hive 15.20 D.Anime: La Ligue Des Super 15.45 D.Anime: Martin Morning 15.57 D.Anime: Les Triples 16.23 D.Anime: Wishfart 16.34 D.Anime: Little Spirou 16.41 D.Anime: Petit Creux 16.54 D.Anime: Voltron, Le... 17.20 Serial: Oh Yuck 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Local: Yeh Shaam Mastani 19.30 Le Journal 20.00 Prod: La Meteo 21.10 Film: The Legend Of Zorro	07.00 Film: Mike Starring: Siddharth Jichkar, Leonard Naidu 09.17 DDI Magazine 10.00 Local Production: MBC 11.00 Serial: Oru Kai Osai 11.22 Serial: Santoshi Maa 12.00 Film: Jeans Starring - Prashant, Rai, Nassar 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.20 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 15.43 Eka Lagnachi Teesri Gosht 16.06 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 17.00 Serial: Mahakali 18.30 Local: Tipa Tipa Nu Avance 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Serial: Maharakshak 20.44 Serial: Naagin 21.27 Serial: CID 22.24 Serial: Piya Rangrez	06.00 Doc: Amazing Gardens 06.26 Doc: Zenith 06.52 Mag: Vue D'en Haut 07.15 Mag: Check In 08.36 Doc: Destination 09.42 Doc: Onibo 11.10 Doc: Amazing Gardens 12.30 Mag: Check In 16.21 Doc: Amazing Gardens 17.44 Doc: Destination 18.00 Doc: Tendance XXI 18.30 Doc: Builders Of The Future 19.00 Doc: Garden Party 19.31 Doc: Superfoods 19.30 Mag: Future Mag 21.00 Doc: News (English) 21.10 Doc: Destination 22.58 Doc: Lead In The Blood 23.41 Mag: Tendance XXI 00.32 Doc: Garden Party 01.00 Doc: Comme Une Envie...	01.02 Film: The Watch 02.52 Serial: Hawaii Five 5-0 03.33 A Date With Miss Fortune 05.11 Tele: Esmeraldas 05.53 Serial: Heroes Reborn 06.40 Film: The Watch 08.30 Serial: L.A.'s Finest 09.13 Film: Victor Et Le Manoir aux 10.44 Film: A Gift Horse 12.15 Serial: Hawaii Five 5-0 13.03 Tele: Amanda 15.05 Serial: Counterpart 16.53 Serial: S.W.A.T 17.36 Serial: Heroes Reborn 18.18 Serial: Hawaii Five - 0 18.59 Serial: Macgyver 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: Falling Water 21.15 Film: Armed Response 22.45 Tele: Dulce Amor	00.40 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 02.06 Sanjivani 03.53 Pavitra Rishta 05.16 Film: Judwaa 2 08.06 Motu Patlu 08.11 Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki 09.54 Jaana Na Dil Se Door 11.40 Piya Albela 13.27 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum 15.30 Bin Kuch Kahe 17.30 Punar Vivaah 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Film: Hai Apna Dil Toh Awara Starring: Sahil Anand, Divya Chouksey, Sareh Far 20.30 Nach Baliye 21.17 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 23.56 Piya Albela

MBC 2

Samedi 16 Janvier - Stars: Hritik Roshan, Priyanka
21.00 Chopra, Rishi Kapoor

BTV

Samedi 16 Janvier - Stars: Varun Dhawan, Jacqueline
18.30 Fernandez, Taapsee Pannu

A Sobering Look at the Events of January 6, 2021



Anil Madan

One week after the rioting mob breached the sanctity of the Capitol complex, the U.S. House of Representatives voted on an article of impeachment charging Donald Trump with incitement of insurrection.

Trump, asserts that his remarks were "totally appropriate" and despite condemnation from some Republican legislators, shows no contrition or remorse. He has some who make excuses for him. Alan Dershowitz, Professor Emeritus of Harvard Law School declares his readiness to defend Trump and proffers the defense that Trump's remarks were protected speech under the First Amendment. But that is sophistry. There is simply no excuse for what Trump did on January 6th or indeed, over the two months after the election leading to that fateful day. Inciting a mob to pressure the Vice President to take steps that are unlawful and unconstitutional is not free speech protected by the First Amendment. Not by a long shot.

Let us step back and set the table. Donald Trump lost the election and lost it handily despite the fact that he garnered 11 million more votes in 2020 than he had in 2016. The problem, of course, was that Joe Biden got almost 15.5 million more votes than Hillary Clinton had in 2020 and his net gain over Trump was more than double Hillary Clinton's popular vote margin.

But Trump refused to accept the result of an election that Christopher Krebs, Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) of the Department of Homeland Security called "the most secure in American history." Trump was blind to the truth. Krebs' report underscored the integrity of the election: "There is no evidence that any voting system deleted or lost votes, changed votes, or was in any way compromised." Trump not only rejected the truth, he dismissed Krebs and continued to assail the election results with false claims of fraud and attempts to browbeat state officials, judges, even the Supreme Court and his Vice President.

Trump simply would not accept his defeat. To this day, he has not had the grace to concede and congratulate Biden. He has stooped so low as to say he will not attend Biden's inauguration. That is, of

Surely, a coup de Trump would have failed. But would it?



Attack on the Capitol. Photo - aljazeera.com

course, just fine with Biden and with most sensible Americans as well.

We pause here to note that, of course, a losing candidate has the right to request a recount under applicable rules and to challenge election results in court. Donald Trump's campaign exercised those rights and, as well third parties claiming to be aggrieved, also sought relief in the courts. Of the 62 lawsuits filed by Trump and others challenging the election results, 61 were outright losses for Trump and his cohorts. The sole semi-victory was a ruling by a Pennsylvania judge that voters had three days after the election to provide proper ID and "cure" their ballots but that did not change Trump's loss in that state.

The appropriate authorities in every state duly certified the results of the election as required by law. Joe Biden had won the presidency. This was not good enough for Trump. Falsehoods and baseless accusations continued to pour out of his mouth -- an unending cascade of mendacity, denial and delusion.

Ceremonial Role

Finally, we come to January 6th, the day on which the Electoral College votes were to be opened and tabulated before a joint session of the House and Senate. Vice President Pence in his capacity as the President of the Senate has the largely ceremonial role of opening the certificates of the votes and handing them to the tellers appointed by the House and Senate.

By the terms of a federal law any controversy about the appointment of electors is to be determined under state law and once such a determination has been made at least six days before the electors are to meet and cast their votes (December 14, 2020 in this case) that determination is conclusive.

Donald Trump saw no impediment to ignoring federal law and the Constitution. He insisted that Vice President Pence could simply disregard federal law and the conclusive certifications and reject the duly appointed electors. The plan was to enlist Pence in either remanding the matter to the state legislatures so that they would appoint Republican electors favourable to

Trump or create a situation where neither Biden nor Trump had enough electors to be declared President and thus throw the matter to the House of Representatives where each state gets one vote and with a majority of states being controlled by Republicans, Trump would be declared President.

To belabour the point which must be made, all of this was, of course, unlawful, a disregard of the actual result of the election, anti-Democratic, and wholly un-American, not to mention distasteful and despicable.

Coup de Trump

Pence had solicited opinions from his counsel and scholars and been advised that he did not have the power to do what Trump was demanding. In a meeting with Trump, Pence told him that he would not acquiesce to his (unlawful) demands. Knowing that Pence would not be dishonest enough to capitulate, Trump played one last card. He had invited his supporters to come to Washington on January 6 and promised that it would be "wild". He then exhorted his supporters to march to the Capitol and demand that Pence "do the right thing". He exhorted them to be strong and not to be weak.

We don't have to parse his speech to debate whether Trump was inciting the mob to violence. It is sufficient that he enlisted their support in an unlawful enterprise to pressure Pence to ignore the Electoral College votes and overturn the conclusive result of the election.

The rest is history. We all saw what the mob did when it breached the Capitol complex.

We came close, very close to a disaster. No, we didn't necessarily get to a coup d'état that would have kept him on as President although some troublesome questions about that remain. What we came close to was a situation in which leading legislators could have been killed. There were calls to hang Mike Pence and calls to execute Pelosi, Schumer, McConnell, and others perceived as not friendly to Trump. Some of the rioters were armed. One had zip ties to take Democratic lawmakers into custody. Some

displayed nooses to be used to hang Pence and others.

Imagine a scenario in which the mob had actually hanged the four leaders mentioned and killed other Democratic legislators. With Trump still President and Commander in Chief, how would the chiefs of staff of the armed forces have acted? One would like to think that neither they, nor the Secret Service would have stood by Trump and that he would have been charged and arrested.

Surely, a coup de Trump would have failed. But would it?

Message to the Joint Force

In this context, another document is worth considering. On January 12, the Joint Chiefs of Staff released a 'Message to the Joint Force' denouncing the assault of January 6 on the Capitol, and makes three declarations worth quoting in full:

"We witnessed actions inside the Capitol building that were inconsistent with the rule of law. The rights of freedom of speech and assembly do not give anyone the right to resort to violence, sedition and insurrection.

"As Service Members, we must embody the values and ideals of the Nation. We support and defend the Constitution. Any act to disrupt the Constitutional process is not only against our traditions, values, and oath; it is against the law."

"As we have done throughout our history, the U.S. military will obey lawful orders from civilian leadership, support civil authorities to protect lives and property, ensure public safety in accordance with the law, and remain fully committed to protecting and defending the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic."

"On January 20, 2021, in accordance with the Constitution, confirmed by the states and the courts, and certified by Congress, President-elect Biden will be inaugurated and will become our 46th Commander in Chief."

It is extraordinary that such a memo should have been written and needed to be written. Aside from a clear rebuke of Trump's incitement, and a declaration that they will not stand by him after Biden is sworn in as the next President, they clearly state that they will obey only "lawful" orders from civilian leadership.

The events of January 6 and the available evidence show that we came much closer than we think to having utter chaos and disruption. It appears that at the highest levels, responsible people anticipated a problem but were woefully unprepared to the point of negligence.

Let us hope that this sort of thing is never, ever repeated.

Cheerz...

Bwana