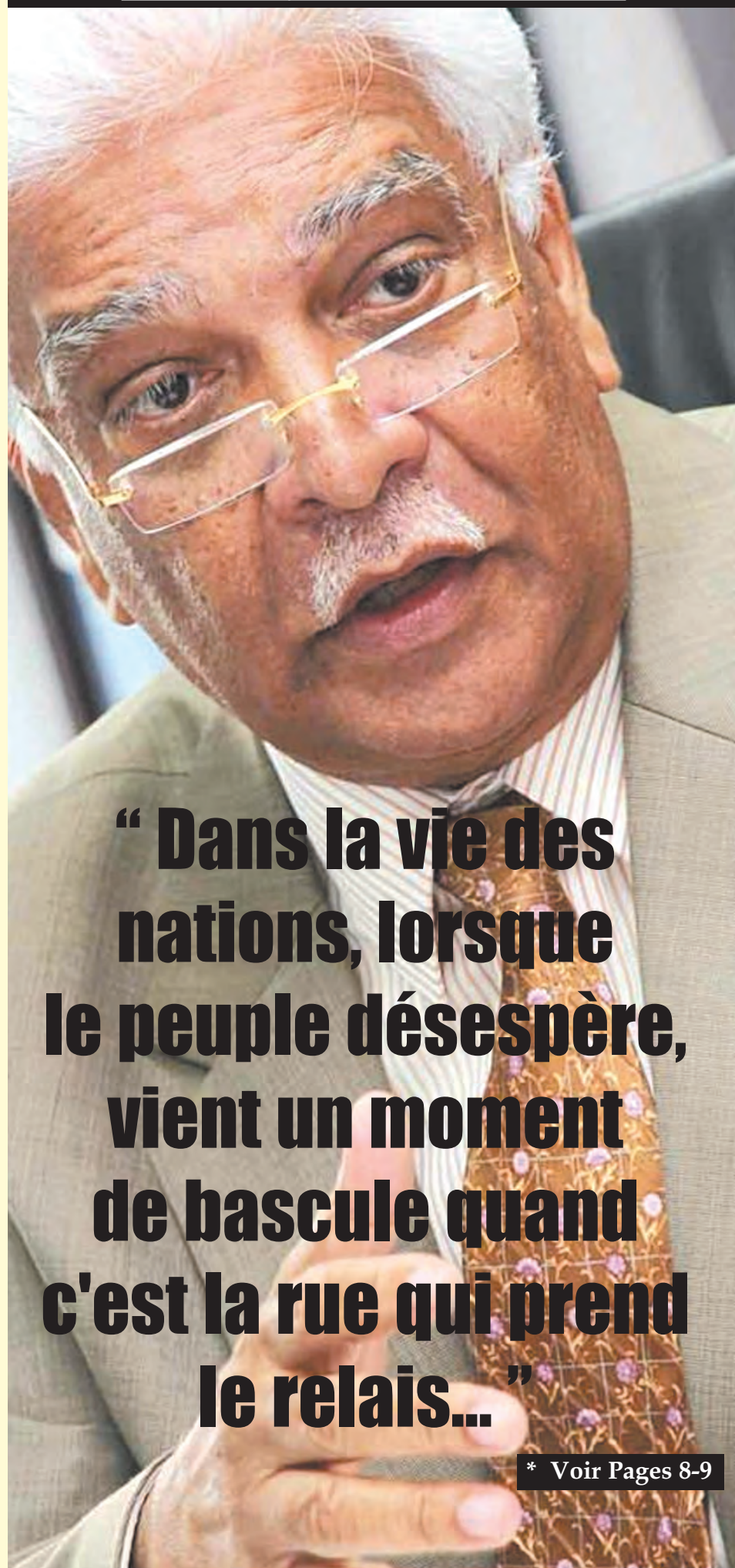


# MAURITIUS TIMES

• "I would rather lose and feel like a winner than cheat and feel like a loser." -- Looney Toons

Interview : Jean-Claude de l'Estrac



**“ Dans la vie des nations, lorsque le peuple désespère, vient un moment de bascule quand c'est la rue qui prend le relais... ”**

\* Voir Pages 8-9

## Desperate Shenanigans



*It is more and more evident that owing principally to poor governance, policy failure and ineptitude to address and resolve the core problems of people and the country that there is a growing disconnect between the people and the political leadership*

By Mrinal Roy \* See Page 4

## Are we living in an age of absurdities?



*Many a conspiracy theory is fabricated on the basis of fake news, and is then exploited to push a given agenda or prejudice to the detriment of social peace and harmony*

Dr R Neerunjun Gopee \* See Page 3

## Une question de principe

Par Nita Chicooree-Mercier \* See Page 18



## Fixing Democracy's Dysfunctions

**F**or better or for worse, democracy has been canvassed by a majority of countries and the UN as the preferred political system for any country. And that includes countries whose political analysts, lay observers, NGOs other interested parties – in fact, practically everybody – have been severely critical of the dysfunctions and lacunae in their own version of democracy. It will be recalled that Winston Churchill, who was the UK's Prime Minister during the Second World War, is often quoted as saying that democracy is the least bad of the systems of government that we have. He should know – that there is an undercurrent of bad in a democracy – because it was during his watch that took place the Bengal famine that killed nearly 2 million. Because their produce and rations were diverted to feed British troops fighting World War II.

That also – stealing their due from a people at the cost of their lives – was democracy, Churchill version.

A couple of years into Trump's mandate beginning 2016, articles started appearing in the American media about the failures of democracy in the US. Some headlines went as far as to say the democracy is broken in America. As evidence were cited, amongst others, nepotism and cronyism in appointments to positions at the White House, interference in and pressuring of institutions such as the CIA and the CDC (Centres for Disease Control), bias in nominations to the Supreme Court, heavy-handedness in taking policy decisions without prior consultations or discussions in Congress.

Basically it boiled down to a weakening of institutions by targeting key people, forcing the most vulnerable ones out, resulting in suits and countersuits. Not only did all this sour the working atmosphere – if one can call it so – but it exposed the polity as one being at the mercy of a whimsical leader. There was uncertainty and unpredictability, and even reversal of decisions taken earlier.

If there is one redeeming factor that stood out, it was no doubt the presence of

a no-nonsense Speaker in the House of Representatives, and the civility with which business was conducted there. This did not prevent fierce adversarial debating and taking of positions on either side of the House. It also meant that several Republicans took positions that were contrary to their Leader's, President Trump, and that was part of the democratic game.

This stand came to a peak after the attack on Capitol Hill, called the citadel of American democracy, after incitation by Trump of his supporters who invaded (some armed to the teeth) the sacrosanct precincts of the House, and created mayhem, assaulting wildly, shouting and going on rampage.

*Du jamais vu* in America which never hesitates to vaunt the merits of democracy, and hauls up countries it thinks fall short of the required criteria.

Coming as it did but a few days before one of the most awaited events in America's national calendar - the installation of a new President -, it was deemed a step too far in the attempt to derail America and its institutions. A floundering leader – despite some positives such as countering the Chinese behemoth, brokering the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and a few Arab countries, making NATO partners pay their dues to continue benefiting from the American umbrella – tried a desperate, desperado-type last-ditch effort to save himself.

In vain. Even some of his party members voted to impeach him, a vote won by a large majority.

Whether that has fixed democracy's dysfunctions in America or not is another call. But at least a beginning has been made to stop the slide, and by no less than the members of the House across partisan lines.

It is an option that our own parliamentarians could perhaps start working on, instead of acquiescing to every dysfunction that 2020 has been witness to. Therein lies our hope, albeit a forlorn one.

## The Conversation

### From Biden's giant Bible to Christian flags waved by rioters, 'Religion' means different things to different people and different eras

*From the oath-taking on the Bible during the presidential swearing-in ceremony to the 'awe' and 'restraint' of the early Christian world, the meaning of 'religion' has gone through a long journey*

**T**he Bible featured prominently in the inauguration. In fact, three were used in the swearing-in ceremonies – Kamala Harris used both Thurgood Marshall's and one belonging to a friend; Joseph Biden used a 128-year-old family Bible.

About two weeks earlier, on Jan. 6, rioters who stormed the U.S. Capitol also held Bibles as a nod to the apparent religious motivations for their actions. The mob took with them flags saturated with Christian nationalist ideology, such as banners with "Jesus Saves" written on them accompanied by chants that "Christ is king, Trump is president."

These and other religious symbols, used both in the service of the presidential transfer of power and also violent protests, demonstrate how deeply religion can motivate people in society and influence their actions politically.

Yet the way people think about religion these days, often as a set of beliefs, has evolved across time and cultures.

#### Religion in ancient Near East

As a scholar of the Bible and the ancient Near East, I study the role of religion in history and how this term originated and came to be understood over the centuries.

For most cultures in the ancient world, such as Egypt, Assyria and Babylon, until the second century BC, there was no word for "religion" as a singular, abstract concept.

While these cultures had rituals and rites for worshiping gods and goddesses, there was not a singular word in these languages that refers to "religion" in the modern sense. For example, the Assyrians had a unique blend of religious devotion to their chief god Assur and a belief in a divine mandate to spread their empire, but they did not have one word to cover all such practices and beliefs.

The same is true for the Old Testament, written in Hebrew and Aramaic from approximately the ninth century BC to the second century BC. There is no



Jill Biden holds the Bible as Joe Biden is sworn in as the 46th president of the United States on Jan. 20, 2021. Saul Loeb/Pool Photo via AP

word that can really be translated as "religion" in the modern sense in the Old Testament, even if there were religious concepts, such as prayers and acts of piety toward the god of Israel.

The evidence from the ancient Near East and the Old Testament points to a complex set of practices that defy a singular notion of religion, such as a creed of faith or spirituality in distinction from other realms of society such as politics or economics.

#### Early Christianity

A similar complexity appears in the history of early Christianity in how religion functioned, both in terms of rituals and in the use of the Latin term it derives from.

The word "religion" in English originates from the Latin "religio." One of its earliest appearances is in works such as the plays of second-century BC writer Plautus.

According to the classicist Niall Slater, the word defies "a theologically rigorous definition" in Plautus. It means something like "awe" in one passage, as well as reserve, in the often ironic sense of characters who find themselves in situations in which they display restraints from certain impulses. For example, in one scene in Plautus' "Asinaria," a woman is bound by a contract from following other male lovers, including gods, a restraint called "religiosa."

Samuel L. Boyd,  
Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and  
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\* Cont. on page 10

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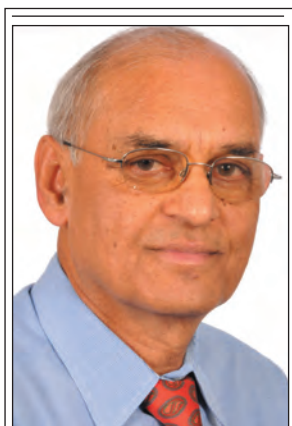
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# Are we living in an age of absurdities?



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

*Many a conspiracy theory is fabricated on the basis of fake news, and is then exploited to push a given agenda or prejudice to the detriment of social peace and harmony*

I have on a few occasions cited these words of Albert Jacquard, who was a famous French geneticist, 'Les effets pervers de la science'. They were actually the title of an article that he wrote in *Le Monde Diplomatique* in which he cautioned humanity about the negative fallouts that could result from scientific discoveries and

their applications developed by technology. Perhaps the most dramatic example is the nuclear bomb, but there are others that are more common and more manageable, such as the side effects of me-dications like antibiotics.

What this illustrates is that whatever the advance that is made by science, at the end of the day it is what use of it that we as human beings choose to make (nuclear bombs or electricity from nuclear power) that determines its impact(s) on our lives, on society. There are voluminous write-ups on the subject, but bottom line is: what choice of action we make, which automatically implies what guides our choice?

“There are much better things to do in life than to waste time on absurdities and inanities. On the other hand, it is also our responsibility to counter them and neutralise their harm potential. We may be living in an age of absurdities, of fake news. But we don't have to be so stupid as to be the *moutons de Panurge* – blind followers – of the malevolent manipulators who want to entrap us in their perfidious designs. Let us use our intelligence and logic to thwart their endeavours at creating havoc...”

A current major concern globally is Artificial Intelligence: it can be a force for good (medical diagnostics, identifying Covid hotspots) or bad (intrusion into personal privacy, data).

Even more fundamentally, therefore, is that, 'At the end of the day, it always boils down to human behaviour. We are the ones who create our own mess'. Or mess up others' lives.

The overarching phenomenon of the past decade has been the explosion of social media that has resulted from developments overlayed on the internet, among others in IT, graphics, computational and battery power, miniaturization of components, and of course AI. The outcome is the unending posts that we receive on our addictive mobile phone – now that's a perversion! -- 24/7, that can be very well described as falling into the categories suggested by the title of a famous movie (if my memory serves me right): 'The good, the bad, and the ugly'. To which we may add a fourth one: the absurd.

It is a fact that there are a lot of absurdities and obscenities circulating on social media, and that more often than not go viral. Evil is sensational, and spreads; the good goes mostly unnoticed.

It is instructive to note how the Oxford English

Dictionary defines absurd: 1. wildly unreasonable, illogical or inappropriate. 2. (of a person) unreasonable or inappropriate in manner. 3. (of a thing) ludicrous, incongruous. And that exactly fits the definition of fake news, an absurdity which can be pernicious and dangerous. For as French thinker Voltaire is cited as saying: 'Those who can make you believe absurdities, can make you commit atrocities'.

Words that are most apt for our times that are being subjected to a proliferation of fake news, whereby local becomes global and vice-versa, leading to victimisation, arrests, persecutions, violence – in brief, atrocities that are perpetrated when made-up incidents and events are taken as being true and are hurriedly interpreted without a proper understanding and appreciation of the real context(s). Many a conspiracy theory is fabricated on the basis of fake news, and is then exploited to push a given agenda or prejudice to the detriment of social peace and harmony, not to speak of the immense harm that can be done to individuals and institutions.

The conspiracy theory whereby the US elections were rigged in November last, persistently believed in despite accumulating evidence to the contrary, is what resulted in the insurrection on Capitol Hill in Washington, and led to the loss of five innocent lives. Hence the heavy militarized presence for the inauguration of the incoming President Joe Biden, and thankfully there have been no riots by adversaries as had been feared.

As laymen we must beware of taking at face value posts that raise doubts or suspicions in our minds as to their veracity, since spreading them can lead to unintended consequences. In the absence of means to probe further we can only take a call on the basis of our commonsense, reason, knowledge and experience. The onus of responsibility to clarify matters lies heavily on those whom society entrusts to uncover the facts, investigating journalists and institutions that have the duty of applying the highest ethical norms and standards in the pursuit of their assigned roles, at the same time respecting the dignity of individuals who may be implicated in any given case.

The overload of circulating information, especially of the viral sort, poses the risk of conflating fake with fact, and imposes an even greater need for carefully separating the wheat from the chaff in the quest to establish the truth.

Currently some absurdities going round about anti-Covid vaccines, for example, are giving rise to 'vaccine



hesitancy' in the populations where vaccine rollouts have been initiated, such as the US and India, meaning that people are not coming forth to get immunized in the numbers expected and planned for. Batches of vaccines have thus had to be disposed off - a clear loss at a time of such urgency and financial constraint. We are concerned here with a matter of life and death, and we can judge for ourselves how serious the consequence can be at both the individual and the collective, populations levels if we do not listen to or seek the correct information being dispensed by experts in the field.

“Words that are most apt for our times that are being subjected to a proliferation of fake news, whereby local becomes global and vice-versa, leading to victimisation, arrests, persecutions, violence – in brief, atrocities that are perpetrated when made-up incidents and events are taken as being true and are hurriedly interpreted without a proper understanding and appreciation of the real context(s). Many a conspiracy theory is fabricated on the basis of fake news, and is then exploited to push a given agenda or prejudice to the detriment of social peace and harmony, not to speak of the immense harm that can be done to individuals and institutions...”

There are much better things to do in life than to waste time on absurdities and inanities. On the other hand, it is also our responsibility to counter them and neutralise their harm potential. We may be living in an age of absurdities, of fake news. But we don't have to be so stupid as to be the *moutons de Panurge* – blind followers – of the malevolent manipulators who want to entrap us in their perfidious designs. Let us use our intelligence and logic to thwart their endeavours at creating havoc.

Time to end on a lighter note, admittedly a social media post: Today it's the 21st day of the 21st year of the 21st century, 21-21-21 – let us celebrate! Why not...





Mrinal Roy

# Desperate Shenanigans

*It is more and more evident that owing principally to poor governance, policy failure and ineptitude to address and resolve the core problems of people and the country that there is a growing disconnect between the people and the political leadership*

**T**he shocking images of the wanton attack of a mob of supporters of US President Donald Trump on the Capitol, the seat of the United States Congress, on 6 January

2021 sent shock waves across the democratic world. The insurrection defiled the Capitol and caused five deaths. This assault on a key symbol of American democracy showed yet again that democracy is fragile and cannot be taken for granted. It has to be robustly defended by the people whenever it is under threat.

Too often, politicians are ready to bend democratic rules to promote their own interests. In a surrealistic scenario, the crowd of Trump supporters massed in Washington were, according to videos shown on TV channels, incited to storm the Capitol to disrupt the sitting of Congress tasked to formally certify the electoral votes obtained by each candidate at the US presidential elections and officially confirm the election of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris as President and Vice-President elect.

## People's will

These desperate shenanigans to overturn the outcome of the presidential elections backfired. For the second time, President Trump was impeached by the US Senate and the House of Representatives for inciting the Capitol riots on 6 January. Donald Trump whose mandate has ended now awaits trial. Despite attempts by pro-Trump rioters to negate the poll verdict of the people, American democracy and the sovereign will of the people have prevailed. The caucus of US democrats across the political divide weaned on the ethos, principles and values of the US Constitution and American democracy stood together as one to scuttle such decried gambits.

In vibrant democracies, politicians are prepared to put themselves on the line to save or uphold democracy.

On 20 January Joe Biden was therefore sworn in as the 46th President of the United States and Kamala Harris has become the first woman to take the vice presidential oath of office. Her African American and Asian American roots are also a strong signal of unity and inclusiveness in a country which remains deeply divided.

For the first time since 1869, Donald Trump the outgoing President chose not to attend President Biden's swearing in ceremony in the teeth of long established bipartisan traditions for winners and losers to be present at this key event of American democracy. Those who lose democratically accept the polls verdict. In contrast, three past presidents and outgoing vice-president Mike Pence were present for the presidential inauguration.

Democracy is also the right to express one's opinion. It does not mean that we should be enemies with those that have a different view. We should respect each other's opinion.

## High alert

Security alerts had forced the authorities to convert the area around the Capitol where the presidential inauguration took place into a high security fortress protected by more than 25,000 uniformed National Guards, law enforcement, military and intelligence personnel. The ca-



In Peru, the political elite's lack of accountability made it necessary for the streets to rise.

Photo - Reuters

“The disquieting events in the United States, a bastion of democracy in the world, the ‘Gilets Jaunes’ movement in France still fighting for social and ecological justice and the growing popularity of various anti-establishment parties and movements in many countries in Europe as they challenge or wrest power from traditional parties reflect the ire and exasperation of the people... It is more and more evident that owing principally to poor governance, policy failure and ineptitude to address and resolve the core problems of people that there is a growing disconnect between the people and the political leadership of traditional parties and the political class...”

pitals of the various states in the US were also on high alert. This is an unacceptable situation in a democracy.

Presidential inaugurations are joyful and popular events which celebrate US democracy. Thousands of people gather around the Capitol to jubilantly participate in this high moment in US democracy where politicians and the people reboot with and reiterate their commitment to the founding principles and ethos of American democracy to ensure that it remains a model to the world. The swearing in ceremony is watched by millions of Americans across the political spectrum and people all over the world. However, owing to the Covid-19 pandemic and security concerns, the inaugural ceremony this year had to do away with the presence of cheering crowds and the fanfare of past US presidential inaugurations.

## Unproven claims

The attack on the Capitol was the culmination of persistent allegations by Donald Trump and some Republicans that the outcome of the presidential elections was marred by widespread voter fraud despite the fact that the US Attorney General William Barr and officials in each of the 50 states found no evidence of widespread fraud or irregularities in the election. On the contrary, Federal agencies overseeing election security said it was the most secure in American history.

Donald Trump and his allies however continued to spin conspiracy theories and unproven claims of electoral fraud by filing dozens of legal challenges in several states

which were all subsequently withdrawn or dismissed by various courts. Despite the patent evidence that the US presidential elections were secure and fair, Trump supporters mobilized in Washington and the capitals of various states in the US continued to be harangued to believe that Donald Trump's reelection had been thwarted by electoral fraud.

Donald Trump's populist policies and slogans of 'Make America Great Again' and 'America First' appeal to a large proportion of Americans. Despite his defeat, he obtained 74.2 million against 62.9 million votes obtained when he was elected President in 2016. However, at the November 2020 presidential elections, the voters chose to elect Joe Biden as President. Owing to a much higher voter turnout, Joe Biden obtained 81.2 million votes as well as a large majority of the electoral votes.

During Donald Trump's post election rallies, the tally of 74.2 million votes obtained by him was brandished to showcase the extent and might of his electoral support. The loyal support of diehard supporters cannot be leveraged and misused to rock the foundations of democracy to settle trumped up political grievances. The damage has unfortunately been done. There are as a result of the Trump rhetoric of electoral fraud a large number of Americans who still believe in the myth of stolen elections. This will take time to die.

## Unifying the nation

This is an explosive situation which if not quickly doused could ignite into open conflict. If not defused through policies of reconciliation and unity, President Donald Trump's influence could continue to shadow Washington.

President Joe Biden now has the challenging task of unifying a deeply divided nation and initiating policies in a Covid-19 pandemic afflicted country which above all resolve the basic concerns of people, namely Covid-19 and the vaccination of the population, employment, healthcare, education, equal opportunities and inequality, etc. His priorities include post pandemic economic recovery, climate change, unity of the nation, social justice and equity as well as restoring America's leadership in the world and mending Washington's ties with its allies, etc.



# Requiem for a Lightweight - The End of Trump



Anil Madan

**D**onald Trump liked to throw his weight around. Like most clumsy heavyweights, he took wild swings and sometimes landed. But his punches, even when successful, were mostly flails. *Crooked Hillary, Lyin' Ted, Low Energy Jeb, Sleepy Joe* - those are just some of the punches he threw. The truth is that like most bullies, Donald Trump was a heavyweight in girth only. He couldn't take a punch. He was a lightweight. So tonight, it would be appropriate to perform a Requiem Mass for him -- assuming that anyone has the patience to sing for the salvation of the dead Trump soul.

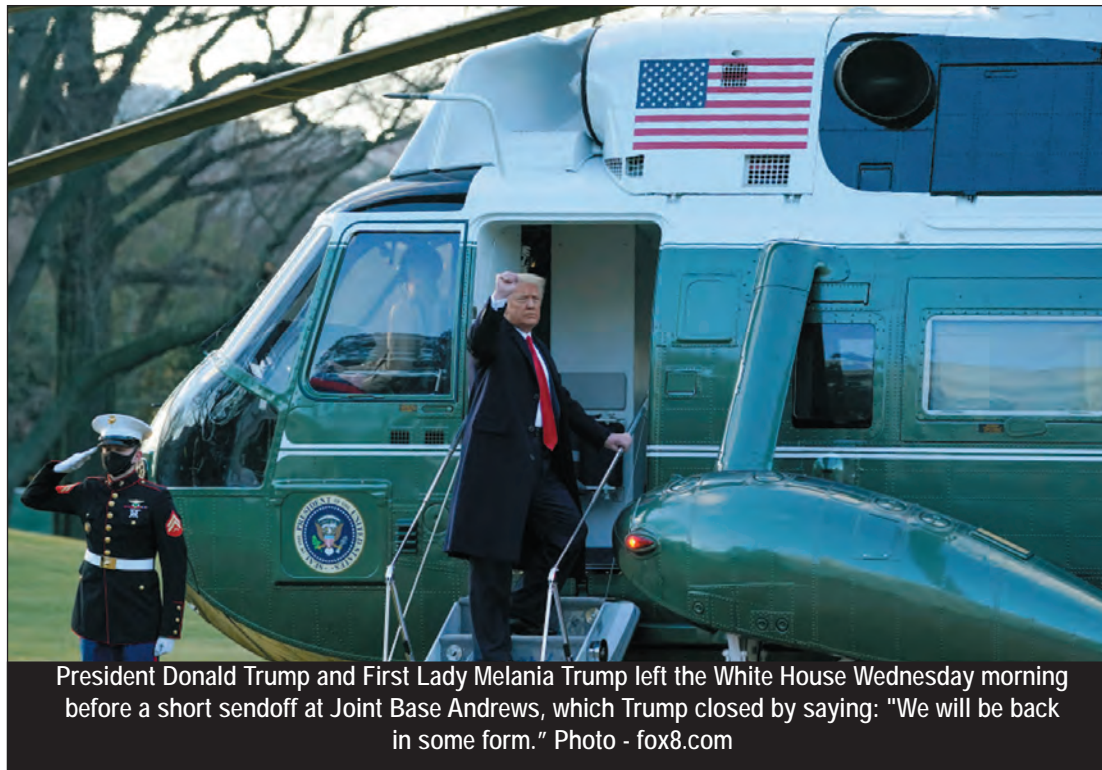
When a real punch was delivered, when the American people rose and said "Enough!!" he couldn't take it. His knees buckled, he grabbed for the ropes but he found no support. He flailed and in the end, grabbed just enough rope to hang himself.

So it was on the morning of January 20th, 2021, Donald Trump, disgraced, denounced, disowned by the nation, boarded his final Air Force One flight, a journey to ignominy. He left, ungracious, uncouth, unwanted.

Yet, as we do a postmortem, we have to acknowledge that there were some accomplishments. Let us start with his oft-repeated claims to having created the best economy ever. It was not the best ever, not by many measures. True, his initial tax cuts and deregulation initiatives, as derided as they were by the Democrats and anyone who cared about those left behind, delivered a stock market surge. But ultimately, it was not Trump but an accommodating Fed that channeled more and more money into stocks. The Fed itself, was aided by the marvel of American technology and the maturing of e-commerce and web-based solutions that changed the shape of the American economy. Add to that the impetus provided by emerging technologies, whether in robotics, biotech, or artificial intelligence, and you get the idea that it was not Trump but American innovation that created the boom.

## The Trump wall

Trump's signature promise in the campaign of 2016 was to build a wall along the Mexican border. The truth is that Mexico did not pay for the wall. Accounts vary, but one review claimed that as of October 2020, only 15 miles of new barrier where none had existed had been built, 350 miles of replacement or secondary barrier had been built, 221 miles of new and primary replacement barrier were under construction, and 157 miles were in pre-construction planning. Of course, President Biden



President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump left the White House Wednesday morning before a short sendoff at Joint Base Andrews, which Trump closed by saying: "We will be back in some form." Photo - fox8.com

intends to stop construction of the Trump wall.

What can be said of Trump is that he succeeded in building walls between Americans, between his supporters and the rest of America, between criminals and the prisons they should have been sent to, and between an America full of decent people and an America filled with hatemongers. And he built walls between America and her allies.

**“The truth is that like most bullies, Donald Trump was a heavyweight in girth only. He couldn't take a punch. He was a lightweight... When a real punch was delivered, when the American people rose and said "Enough!!" he couldn't take it. His knees buckled, he grabbed for the ropes but he found no support. He flailed and in the end, grabbed just enough rope to hang himself...”**

Before he boarded his last flight, Trump declared that the economy he built was about “America First,” that he had restored the principle that a nation exists to serve its citizens, and that his agenda was not about right or left, about Republican or Democrat, but was about the good of the whole nation. Here was his belated realization of what he should have done as President. As an apologia, with the red carpet being rolled up after his last steps to the plane, it was a little late.

We must acknowledge the strides made in getting rapprochement between Israel and several Sunni Arab states. There is the promise of a broader and long-lasting peace in the region. Yet, one has to acknowledge that it is really the emergence of Iran as a malevolent presence in the region that has driven the Israelis and Arab states to find common ground. Nevertheless, this remains a feather in Trump's cap.

Trump's push for deregulation at home has been as destructive as it has been deplorable. On Trump's final full day in office, a federal appeals court threw out his administration's Affordable Clean Energy (ACE) rule for power plant emissions. The court saw through the fraudulent plan which by the Agency's own analysis would reduce emissions by only one percent by 2030 in contrast

to the 30% reduction mandated by the Obama administration's plan that Trump sought to replace. This type of dishonesty was a characteristic of the administration of a President who repeatedly showed that truth was of no consequence in his world.

President Biden has signed the nation back onto the Paris Climate Accords. One can debate whether the pace of cuts under those accords is wise. But there is little doubt that regardless of the cause of climate upheaval, we need to address issues of mitigation and adaptation wisely.

The reframing of NAFTA into the USMCA is another achievement for which Trump deserves credit. But that is more than offset by the loss of opportunity and initiative from giving up on the Trans Pacific Partnership. That failure worked to China's benefit.

## Trump's approach to foreign policy

And that brings us to the broad scope of Trump's approach to foreign policy. Contrary to his self-aggrandizing and touting proclamations, he accomplished nothing. China promised, but did not deliver on promises to purchase more American goods. Manufacturing has not been returned to the US. China thumbs its nose at America and the world when it comes to abuses in Hong Kong and against the Uighurs. The South China Sea is all but ceded to Chinese control and India is threatened by an ever more aggressive Chinese Communist Party. The US is vulnerable and ill-positioned to do anything about Chinese aggression against Taiwan.

Trump repeatedly boasted of imposing tariffs on China forgetting that it is Americans who pay the price.

North Korea threatens to deploy ever more destructive missiles and dismisses the very idea of any agreement with the US. So much for Trump's claim that he and Kim Jong Nuke fell in love. Such claims were characteristic of a buffoonish President.

We cannot leave mention of China without addressing the topic of the Covid-19 virus and pandemic. The simple fact is that for all his bluster, Trump has not been able to hold China to account. Perhaps there is no way to do that. But Trump's pretending that he was somehow doing so is another mark of how much of a lightweight he has been on the international stage.

Whether it is his seeming butt-sniffing of Putin or the disdain with which Kim Jong Un announces new missile initiatives, or Erdogan's increasing aggressiveness, or the Taliban's dismissive approach to “peace” initiatives, Trump showed over and over again, that he was in over his head, out of his depth, and an embarrassment to this nation.

With respect to the pandemic, Trump deserves marginal credit for that aspect of Operation Warp Speed that provided funds for pre-ordering vaccines so that the risk was reduced for manufacturers in advance of successful clinical proof. Nor can anyone seriously entertain the idea that a total ignoramus on scientific matters such as Trump had anything to do with the success of actually creating the vaccines. In the end, Trump botched the distribution of vaccines too. Vaccines are in short supply and Americans are tragically not being protected. Unless something is done, the pace set by Trump will take us about ten years to vaccinate the nation.



# Joe Biden has a bust of Cesar Chavez behind his desk in the Oval Office

Here's another sign of how different the vibe is in Washington - a bust of a beloved Mexican American figure placed strategically close to the fresh work-from-home space of the new president.

President Biden's transition team selected a bronze bust of iconic civil rights leader Cesar Chavez to place in the most visible position behind his Resolute Desk in the Oval Office, another sign of the tectonic shift occurring in the White House since the departure of Donald Trump.

The 22-inch sculpture is by artist Paul A. Suarez and had been on display at the Visitor Center of the Cesar E. Chavez National Monument in Keene, Calif., in the Tehachapi mountains of Kern County. The Biden-Harris transition office requested the



On his first day as President, Joe Biden honors beloved Mexican American figure Cesar Chavez in the Oval Office. Photo - www.latimes.com

lending of the sculpture, the Chavez monument announced on Wednesday. The bust is placed amid Biden family photos, and should be in view for tens of millions of people each time Biden addresses the country from the center of power in the U.S. executive branch.

Paul F. Chavez, middle son of the activist and president of the Cesar Chavez Foundation, praised the move in a statement, reports Daniel Hernandez of Latimes.com.

Cesar Chavez and co-organizer Dolores Huerta founded the United Farm Workers, originating the term "Si se puede" ("Yes we can") and paving the way for labor organizing for generations to come. Chavez died in 1993.

## Dubai didn't close its borders over holidays: Now the party haven faces its biggest Covid-19 surge yet



Tourists party on a yacht in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on Tuesday Jan.12, 2021. With peak tourism in full swing, coronavirus infections are surging to unprecedented heights. Photo - AP

Since becoming one of the world's first destinations to open up for tourism, Dubai has promoted itself as the ideal pandemic vacation spot. It cannot afford otherwise, analysts say, as the virus shakes the foundations of the city-state's economy.

With its cavernous malls, frenetic construction and legions of foreign workers, Dubai was built on the promise of globalization, drawing largely from the aviation, hospitality and retail sectors - all hard hit by the virus.

Now reality is catching up to the big-dreaming emirate. With peak tourism season in full swing, coronavirus infections are surging to unprecedented heights. Daily case counts have nearly tripled in the past month, forcing Britain to slam shut its travel corridor with Dubai last week. But in the face of a growing economic crisis, the city won't lock down, reports Isabel Debre of Associated Press.

While most countries banned tourists from the U.K. over fears of the fast-spreading virus variant found there, Dubai, home to some 240,000 British expats, kept its doors open for the holidays. Emirates flew five daily flights to London's Heathrow Airport.

Within days, the new virus strain had

arrived in the emirates, but that didn't stop reality TV and soccer stars from fleeing Britain's lockdown and wintry weather for Dubai's bars and beaches - without taking a coronavirus test before boarding. Scenes of pre-pandemic revelry were splattered across British tabloids.

Dubai was glad for the influx. Hotel occupancy rates surged to 71% in December, according to data provider STR. The London-Dubai air route ranked busiest in the world over the first week of January, said OAG, an aviation data analysis firm.

"People have had enough of this pandemic already," said Iris Sabellano from Dubai's Al Arabi Travel Agency, adding that many of her clients have been forced to quarantine after testing positive for the virus on arrival or before departure. Travellers coming from a select list of countries don't need to get tests before their trips but all must at Dubai's airport.

"With vaccines coming out, they feel it's not the end of the world, they're not going to die," she said.

For those who do die of Covid-19, long-haul airline Emirates offers to pay \$1,800 to help cover funeral costs.

As the outbreak worsens, it seems the stampede will slow. Israeli tourists, who were coming in the tens of thousands following a normalization deal between the countries, have vanished due to new quarantine rules. A decision to suspend visa waivers for Israelis to the UAE until July took effect Monday. Britain's move to mandate a 10-day quarantine for those returning from Dubai threatens to clobber what's left of the tourism sector.

## Kamala Harris becomes first woman Vice President of US

Kamala Devi Harris, a former California senator, has become the first woman vice president of the United States. The 56-year-old leader, who is of Indian and Jamaican descent, was sworn in by US Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor.

She is also the first Black woman and the first woman of South Asian descent to become US vice president, reports Vaibhav Tiwari of NDTV.

Kamala Harris' election to the second most important post in the US administration is being seen as a milestone as far as gender and racial equality is concerned.

Shortly before her historic oath as US Vice President, Kamala Harris posted a moving video tribute to her Indian mother and all the "women who came before me".

The video, a montage of all the women



Kamala Harris shares pics with mom. Photo - Indian Express

who influenced Kamala Harris, played along with her words from her first speech after winning the election in November.

"I'm here today because of the women who came before me. And to the woman most responsible for my presence here today - my mother, Shyamala Gopalan Harris, who is always in our hearts," Kamala Harris says as snapshots of her family and her campaign flit across the screen.

## China to test Lunar New Year travelers for COVID-19



COVID-19 outbreak in Beijing, China. Photo - news.yahoo.com

China plans to impose strict Covid testing requirements during the Lunar New Year holiday season, when tens of millions of people are expected to travel, as it battles the worst wave of new infections since March 2020.

The commercial hub of Shanghai reported its first locally transmitted cases in two months on Thursday, underscoring

the growing risk of the virus spreading elsewhere.

Millions of people in the province of Hebei surrounding Beijing and the northeastern provinces of Jilin and Heilongjiang have been put into lockdown in recent weeks, reports Reuters.

Authorities are asking people to stay home during the February holiday season in their effort to prevent another debilitating outbreak.

New curbs are also being adopted by local governments in areas that have not yet suffered major outbreaks, including one southwestern city that has barred entry to overseas foreigners.

\* More on Page 7





## Qatar calls for Gulf Nations to begin talks with Iran

**Q**atar has called for Gulf Arab countries to hold talks with Iran, the foreign minister said in an interview aired Tuesday, after Doha reconciled with its neighbours following a rift.

Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, who has previously called for dialogue with Iran, told Bloomberg TV he was "hopeful that this would happen and we still believe this should happen".

"This is also a desire that's shared by other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries," he said.

It comes weeks after GCC hawks Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE re-established ties with Qatar after breaking them off in June 2017 partly over allegations that Qatar was too close to Iran. Doha denied the accusations, reports AFP.

Qatar and Iran share one of the world's largest gas fields and Doha maintains cordial relations with Tehran.

Doha is a close ally of Washington and has previously mediated between the US and Iran suggesting that Sheikh Mohammed's intervention could be timed as a signal to the incoming administration of President-elect Joe Biden. Biden is due to take office on Wednesday.

Tehran's arch-rival Riyadh, the dominant Gulf Arab power, has not publicly indicated any willingness to engage with Iran.

Instead Saudi Arabia insisted that this month's rapprochement with Qatar meant the Gulf family would be better able to combat "the threats posed by the Iranian regime's nuclear and ballistic missile programme".

"Qatar will facilitate negotiations, if asked by stakeholders, and will support whoever is chosen to do so," added Sheikh Mohammed.

## Joe Biden: "There's no time to start like today"

**J**oe Biden has signed his first slate of executive orders as US President after being inaugurated on Wednesday, erasing core aspects of Donald Trump's legacy on the coronavirus pandemic, immigration, climate change and more with the simple stroke of a pen.

Following an afternoon of ceremonies that included a virtual parade through Washington, DC, and the laying of a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia, the new administration immediately got to work at around 17.15 local time, rolling out 15 executive orders and two other action items.

"There's no time to start like today," the 46th President said from the Oval Office's Resolute Desk, reports The Independent.

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In one of his final acts as President, Mr Trump granted a slew of last-minute pardons and commutations to allies of himself and his family, most notably to his former chief strategist, Steve Bannon.

Mr Trump has also pardoned Elliott Broidy, a former Republican fundraiser who pleaded guilty in October to a charge that he illegally lobbied the President to drop an investigation into a Malaysian embezzlement scandal and former Detroit mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, who was serving a 28-year prison term on corruption charges.

Rappers Lil Wayne and Kodak Black, who were prosecuted on federal weapons offences, were also granted clemency.

\*\*\*

EU customers are cancelling orders from the UK because of a mass of red tape, UK manufacturers have said, as anger builds over a lack of government Brexit support and antiquated customs systems. While problems have been most acute for perishable goods like meat and seafood, manufacturers are now also reporting cancelled orders and some haulage firms are refusing to move goods, reports The Independent.

Close to 30 per cent of small British firms have stopped shipping goods to the EU amid widespread confusion about customs forms and extra costs, according to accountants UHY Hacker Young. "Particular challenges are now very evident around just how hard it is to get anything out of and into the country," said Ben Fletcher, executive director of policy for manufacturers trade body Make UK.

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The team behind the Oxford vaccine is preparing to design new versions of its jab in response to the different coronavirus variants that have emerged in the UK and elsewhere.

Scientists at the university are currently assessing the ability of their vaccine to provide protection against the British and South African variants, which were detected late last year, with the results of this analysis set to be released within the first half of next month.

However, the Oxford team is adopting an "at-risk" approach and intends to begin synthesising new versions of the vaccine without waiting to find out if they will be needed, with professor Sarah Gilbert - one of the lead scientists - "actively working on this".

\*\*\*

UK deaths from coronavirus hit a grim record on Tuesday, with daily fatalities reaching a high of 1,610 as a



government scientific adviser warned that it could be weeks before significant reductions are seen.

The highest daily toll of the pandemic brought the total official figure for deaths above 90,000. But a separate measure of death certificates that mentioned Covid-19 put the total at 108,000. Antibody data suggested that one in eight people in England had been infected with coronavirus at some point in the pandemic up to December, in what one expert described as "one of the worst coronavirus problems in the world".

Boris Johnson told his cabinet that while infection rates were declining, the UK remains in a "very serious" situation, with the swift rollout of vaccines the key to reducing pressure on the NHS and reopening society, reports The Independent.

## India to begin commercial export of vaccines as from today

*Indian manufactured vaccines will be sent to two Indian Ocean island nations - Mauritius and Seychelles besides Myanmar*

**A**fter sending shipments of vaccines to fight covid-19 to India's immediate neighbours, New Delhi will begin commercial export of vaccines on Friday with the first two batches being despatched on a commercial basis going to Morocco and Brazil.

On Friday, Today Indian manufactured vaccines will be sent to two Indian Ocean island nations - Mauritius and Seychelles besides Myanmar. These as with other neighbours like Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka are under a grant or as gifts by from government of India.

Consignments for Brazil and Morocco

will also be despatched on Friday, a person familiar with the matter said adding that the shipments would include two million doses of vaccines each to the two countries. The supplies to these two countries will be on a commercial basis, the person cited above said.

The flight for Brazil is expected to leave at 0415 hours on Friday morning while the second to Morocco is to leave at 8 am.

The person did not say whether these vaccines were the Pune based Serum Institute of India manufactured Covishield vaccine developed by Oxford and

AstraZeneca or the indigenously developed Covaxin manufactured by Bharat Biotech.

Bharat Biotech has also signed an agreement with authorities in Philippines for the necessary clearances, according to a Reuters report. This is a preliminary step ahead of starting commercial sales, a second person said.

Supplies to South Africa and Saudi Arabia too could be despatched soon, the second person said.

India began supplying vaccines to neighbouring countries on Wednesday

with the despatch of vaccines to Bhutan and Maldives. The supplies to these two countries were on a grant basis or gifted by New Delhi. On Thursday, vaccines from New Delhi were sent to Nepal and Bangladesh.

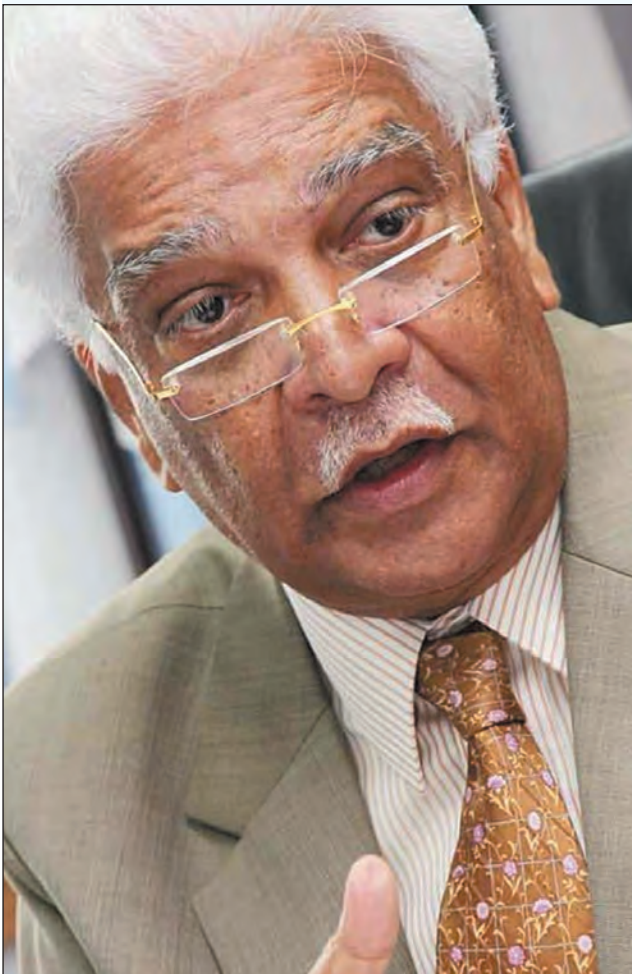
The shipments to neighbouring countries cements India's position as the first responder in times of crises as well as its primacy in South Asia. Shipments to countries beyond underlines India's reputation as the "pharmacy to the world."

Compiled by Doojesh Ramlallah



Jean-Claude de l'Estrac

# “Dans la vie des nations, lorsque le peuple désespère, vient un moment de bascule quand c'est la rue qui prend le relais...”



**Mauritius Times :** Le climat économique dans le pays était déjà déprimant depuis l'année dernière et même bien avant. Il paraît que dans le domaine social, ce n'est pas mieux non plus depuis ces quelques temps avec l'actualité de plus en plus dominée par des cas de crimes, de suicides, d'agression, etc., les allégations de corruption impliquant des hommes au pouvoir et leurs proches. Quel est le 'mood' dans le pays présentement, selon vous?

**Jean-Claude de l'Estrac :** C'est la déprime comme vous le dites! Le pays va mal pour les raisons que vous évoquez, mais peut-être plus encore par l'absence d'une alternative politique. S'il est vrai qu'il existe aujourd'hui une claire majorité de la population extrêmement critique de ce Gouvernement - ce dont je ne suis pas certain -, elle désespère néanmoins de ne pas trouver, en face, une opposition politique crédible menée par un leader incontestable capable de tenir la dragée haute à un Pravind Jugnauth aujourd'hui puissant.

Pourquoi je dis qu'il n'est pas certain qu'une nette majorité des électeurs se trouvent dans le camp de l'oppo-

**Q**uel est le 'mood' dans le pays présentement ? Et quel est le sentiment des Mauriciens sur la détérioration du climat économique et social avec l'actualité de plus en plus dominée par des cas de crimes, de suicides, d'agression, etc., mais aussi sur le plan politique? Le pays va mal, nous dit Jean-Claude de l'Estrac dans l'interview qui suit, pour ces diverses raisons mais peut-être plus encore par l'absence d'une alternative politique. 'S'il est vrai qu'il existe aujourd'hui une claire majorité de la population extrêmement critique de ce Gouvernement - ce dont je ne suis pas certain -, elle désespère néanmoins de ne pas trouver, en face, une opposition politique crédible menée par un leader incontestable...' nous déclare-t-il.

sition? C'est que la polarisation ethno-politique est plus vive que jamais. La donne ne changera que lorsqu'un challenger de calibre, émergera, probablement venu du Parti Travailleiste, mais soutenu par les autres forces de l'opposition.

Il faut comprendre, une fois pour toutes, que nous avons un système faussement parlementaire. Il est quasi présidentiel, c'est le Premier ministre qui détient tous les pouvoirs. L'opposition est condamnée à en tenir compte, et à présenter à la nation, son «contre Premier ministre-Président». En attendant, toutes ses agitations ne mènent à rien.

“L'honneur de Ramgoolam, ce serait de créer les conditions d'un retour au pouvoir du PTr en s'effaçant personnellement; et Bérenger, faisant de même au MMM...”

**\* C'est assez incroyable que la question d'alternative se soit posée depuis un certain temps alors que le Gouvernement n'est qu'au tout début de son mandat – sa majorité parlementaire devrait lui permettre de tenir le coup jusqu'à 2024. Qu'en pensez-vous?**

Mais il tiendra le coup sauf circonstances exceptionnelles, et je ne vois pas ce qu'elles pourraient être. Le risque, néanmoins, c'est la détérioration continue du climat social et le chômage grandissant, aggravé par le comportement autocratique de Jugnauth et ses menaces inconvenantes.

Je pense que Jugnauth et ses conseillers ont une lecture binaire du pays. Au fait, ils considèrent qu'il existe deux pays ; ils n'en n'ont cure de l'électorat critique qui demande de la transparence dans la gestion des affaires de l'Etat. Ils s'occupent de choyer l'autre pays, acquis à sa cause et qui n'a pas les mêmes attentes.

**\* Mais faute d'un sondage crédible, on ne sait pas si c'est plutôt l'élite du pays qui est à la recherche d'une alternative. Pensez-vous que c'est aussi un sentiment qui est partagé à la base?**

Je viens de vous le dire, il faut rester circonspect.

Les réseaux sociaux et les médias ne reflètent qu'un courant de l'électorat. Que ce courant, alimenté par toutes les « fautes » du Gouvernement, gagne en puissance ne fait pas de doute. Mais, paradoxalement, plus ce courant

manifeste sa force, plus il mobilise son vis-à-vis.

Je le répète: l'opposition ne modifiera ce rapport de force malsain que s'il présente au pays un candidat au poste de Premier ministre qui ne fera pas regretter Pravind Jugnauth. Et je n'imagine pas un homme d'affaires venu de nulle part...

Rappelez-vous: le MMM des années 80 gagne les élections lorsque Anerood Jugnauth émerge comme le «Premier ministre du changement» face à Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. L'histoire se répètera.

**\* Quelle opinion faites-vous de ce regroupement des partis de l'opposition – le PTr, le MMM et le PMSD - connu à ce stade comme 'L'Entente', mais qui n'arrive pas à s'entendre sur les prochaines élections municipales et sur la question de leadership de ce regroupement?**

C'est tout le sujet, et la vraie raison de leurs difficultés réside dans l'incapacité à régler cette question de leadership, largement bloquée par la posture de l'ancien Premier ministre.

Navin Ramgoolam n'accepte pas encore de céder le leadership alors que ses partenaires de l'Entente sont convaincus qu'il est aujourd'hui une force du passé. C'est le dilemme que l'opposition doit régler, et le plus tôt le mieux pour elle.

“Tout n'est pas perdu. Nous restons une démocratie vivante. Toutes les affaires dont on parle sont connues du grand public parce que nous avons une presse écrite libre. Les critiques les plus acerbes contre le Premier ministre et ses ministres sont publiées. Des accusations d'une extrême gravité sont proférées parfois sans preuve. Mais c'est ainsi dans une démocratie...”

**\* Au fait, on sait que Navin Ramgoolam ne s'intéressera à une 'Entente' PTr-MMM-PMSD que s'il la dirige. Toutefois, un fait intéressant à noter, c'est l'intérêt que porte le MSM, en particulier les Jugnauth, pour que Ramgoolam soit à tout prix le leader de cette 'Entente'. Ramgoolam devrait se réjouir de ce soutien inespéré des Jugnauth, non?**

C'est un baiser de Judas.

☞ Suite en page 9

“Personne ne comprend ce qui empêche le Premier ministre de convoquer Sawmynaden, de lui demander de se retirer le temps d'éclaircir toutes les zones d'ombres qui l'entoure. S'il ne le fait pas, le problème n'est plus Sawmynaden, c'est Jugnauth lui-même qui pose problème...”



# 'Le MMM des années 80 gagne les élections lorsque Jugnauth émerge comme le "PM du changement" face à SSR. L'histoire se répètera'

☞ Suite de la page 8

Les Jugnauth rêvent d'avoir Ramgoolam en face d'eux aux prochaines élections parce qu'ils estiment qu'il est le maillon faible de l'alliance de l'opposition.

Objectivement, eu égard à ses défaites successives, Ramgoolam est aujourd'hui, personnellement très affaibli. Mais son parti peut rapidement reprendre des couleurs.

L'honneur de Ramgoolam, ce serait de créer les conditions d'un retour au pouvoir de son parti en s'effaçant personnellement ; et Béranger, faisant de même au MMM, voilà le MSM privé de ses épouvantails préférés!

\* Tout cela fait que 'L'Entente PTr-MMM-PMSD' aura donc un long chemin à parcourir avant qu'elle puisse obtenir



“Je pense que Jugnauth et ses conseillers ont une lecture binaire du pays. Au fait, ils considèrent qu'il existe deux pays ; ils n'en n'ont cure de l'électorat critique qui demande de la transparence dans la gestion des affaires de l'Etat. Ils s'occupent de choyer l'autre pays, acquis à sa cause et qui n'a pas les mêmes attentes...”

le soutien populaire. Est-il difficile à ce stade de prévoir jusqu'où elle ira ?

Difficile à dire, compte tenu des incertitudes sur la question de leadership. Sur papier, elle devrait être boostée par un bon résultat aux élections municipales.

Mais, là encore, je crains l'effet boomerang. Si l'alliance apparaît comme une puissante force urbaine, l'électorat rural se rebiffera, manipulé par les stratégies ethno-électorales.

\* En attendant, la pression s'accroît sur le Gouvernement, mais ses dirigeants projettent l'impression d'être impassibles alors même que l'enquête judiciaire dans l'affaire Sopramanien Kistnen et ce qui ressort des interrogatoires de divers témoins ainsi que dans l'autre affaire de 'Constituency Clerk' lèvent le voile sur des pratiques inadmissibles. Quelle lecture faites-vous de cette situation qui se corse de plus en plus pour le Gouvernement ?

C'est la bouteille à encre. Anerood Jugnauth n'a pas tort de nous rappeler qu'il faut attendre la fin d'une enquête avant de condamner qui que ce soit. C'est sage. Et puis, je n'aime pas cette justice de théâtre.

Mais le hic, ce n'est pas ce que fait le Gouvernement, sauf quand il s'agit des «dimounn» du Premier ministre. Tout le mal vient de là : une politique de deux poids deux mesures et une absence de transparence.

Il est imaginable que dans une affaire aussi simple que celle d'une Constituency Clerk, le ministre Sawmynaden n'a pas été capable d'offrir une explication au pays.

\* Les avocats de Mme Kistnen ont ouvertement parlé d'une «mafia» qui serait responsable du meurtre de l'ancien activiste du MSM, Soopramanien Kistnen, et concernant les autres décès qui ont suivi, il y aurait, selon eux, un lien avec les *procurements* lors de la pandémie en 2020. Qu'en pensez-vous ?

Je suis désespéré. J'ai beaucoup de mal à admettre que nos dirigeants pourraient être trempés dans des affaires aussi sordides. Mais la défiance à l'égard des gouvernants est telle dans le pays, aujourd'hui, que beaucoup de Mauriciens pensent que nos dirigeants sont des mafieux.

Je ne le crois pas, mais ils s'adonnent à un affairisme débridé, ils pratiquent un clientélisme outrancier, ils refusent la transparence, ils sont entourés de corrompus et de corrupteurs. Ils auront beaucoup de mal à redorer leur blason.

\* A l'heure où nous parlons, le mi-



“Il est imaginable que dans une affaire aussi simple que celle d'une Constituency Clerk, le ministre Sawmynaden n'a pas été capable d'offrir une explication au pays...”

nistre Yogida Sawmynaden est toujours en poste, ce qui signifie qu'il bénéficie toujours du soutien du Premier ministre. D'ailleurs, l'ancien ministre-mentor a été repêché pour nous rappeler la présomption d'innocence à laquelle le ministre Sawmynaden a droit... alors qu'Ivan Collendavelloo fut lâché pour bien moins que cela. Qu'est ce qui va se passer dans les prochains jours, selon vous ?

C'est ça ! Deux poids deux mesures. A moins qu'il s'agisse de deux compères...

\* Ramgoolam, qui a aussi parlé d'une «mafia» qui dirigerait le pays, a déclaré lors d'une conférence de presse récemment que « les jours de l'actuel gouvernement sont comptés » et qu'il est « impossible qu'il aille plus loin ». Est-ce envisageable alors que le Gouvernement, fort de sa majorité parlementaire, tienne le coup, que Sawmynaden tombe ou soit lâché ?

Je ne crois absolument pas que les jours du Gouvernement sont comptés. Sa majorité parlementaire paraît inébranlable. Il n'y a pas un soupçon de contestation en son sein.

Mais le Premier ministre, dans son pro-

pre intérêt, devrait être plus attentif à ce qui se dit dans le pays. Le moins qu'il devrait faire, c'est de répliquer la même démarche qu'il a eu avec Ivan Collendavelloo, suite à une accusation non-prouvée alors que Collendavelloo était son adjoint, un ministre

“Nous avons un système faussement parlementaire. Il est quasi présidentiel, c'est le Premier ministre qui détient tous les pouvoirs. L'opposition est condamnée à en tenir compte, et à présenter à la nation, son «contre Premier ministre-Président». En attendant, toutes ses agitations ne mènent à rien...”

de poids, un allié électoral.

Personne ne comprend ce qui empêche le Premier ministre de convoquer Sawmynaden, de lui demander de se retirer le temps d'éclaircir toutes les zones d'ombres qui l'entoure. S'il ne le fait pas, le problème n'est plus Sawmynaden, c'est Jugnauth lui-même qui pose problème.

\* D'aucuns pensent toutefois que c'est le judiciaire seul qui, en fin de compte, sera en mesure d'éclaircir la situation – avec les décisions qu'il sera éventuellement appelé à prendre par rapport aux pétitions électorales et d'autres affaires qui pourraient être logées dans les mois à venir. Votre opinion ?

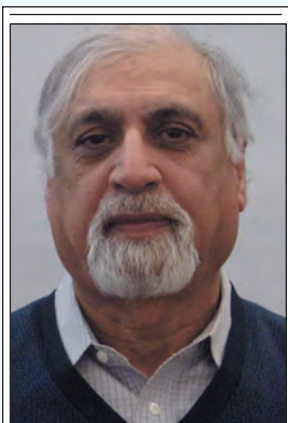
Tout n'est pas perdu. Nous restons une démocratie vivante. Toutes les affaires dont on parle sont connues du grand public parce que nous avons une presse écrite libre. Les critiques les plus acerbes contre le Premier ministre et ses ministres sont publiées. Des accusations d'une extrême gravité sont proférées parfois sans preuve. Mais c'est ainsi dans une démocratie.

C'est Mitterrand, je crois, qui disait que la liberté de la presse présente des inconvénients mais moins que l'absence de liberté. Nous avons la liberté d'expression, du moins partiellement, parce que la télévision, media de masse, est toujours verrouillée par l'Etat. Nous avons un judiciaire perçu comme indépendant. La preuve, c'est le nombre d'affaires instruites par les opposants.

Mais, parfois, dans la vie des nations, lorsque le peuple désespère, vient un moment de bascule quand c'est la rue qui prend le relais...



# Norms are essential in politics



Lutchmiparsad  
Hazareesingh

**T**here is no doubt that the US has just gone through one of its most tumultuous times as a result of Trump's presidency. For many outside the US, his tenure was symptomatic of a hypocritical United States, preaching one thing overseas while doing exactly the opposite at home. Glossed over is the fact that Trump's presidency as exemplar of bad governance was not an exception but the rule in most countries that like to call themselves democratic.

As many observers have pointed out, despite his abominable record, Trump came amazingly close to being re-elected. In 2016, a swing of 77,000 votes could have put Hillary Clinton in the White House. This time, a swing of 45,000 votes

could have kept Trump in the White House.

Having averted a catastrophe, the US is slowly beginning to realize that there is such a thing as normalcy. And this normalcy is not only because a President Biden will observe all the laws. It is also because he is bringing back what are best viewed as soft laws, namely norms and traditions that have stood the test of time.

**// Trump is leaving Washington in ignominy not only for himself but his entire family. That's the revenge of democracy that he never contemplated. Politicians rarely do..."**

Politics in a democratic country is a very difficult proposition. Those who are in power are under constant attack and those who are not are constantly attacking. It is not unusual that this leads to retaliation. In functioning democracies, customs and traditions have evolved to mediate these interactions, creating a lane for meaningful deliberations, and compromises for the good of the country.

The famously hyper-critical duo of Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill didn't shy away from going after each other in public but yet found ways to collaborate on legislation that moved the country forward. The same was true of Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich. But scandals and investigations, and the lust for power, have a way of breaking the fabric of the mediating strands holding the collaborating lane together. Over time, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party have each accused each other of violating one norm or the other leading to a downward spiral of death, which culminated in the election of the most incompetent and most destructive candidate in many, many years.

This should be a warning to politicians the world over, one that they will most likely not heed, but which should be obvious: Democracy is not a one-day thing where people vote, results are announced and everyone goes their merry way. Democracy is a system that works only when there is a modicum of honour, of respect for traditions and of one's opponents, and where there is a constant effort on everyone's part to stick to rules.

Trump, with all his millions, and all his moneyed friends, is leaving Washington in ignominy not only for himself but his entire family. That's the revenge of democracy that he never contemplated. Politicians rarely do.



## 'Religion' means different things to different people and different eras

\* Cont. from page 2

In the classical age, religion could possibly imply "scruples," as evident in the writings of Plautus and certainly a few decades later in the writings of playwright Publius Terentius Afer.

By the first century BC, the word began to be associated with devotion to the divine realm. As seen in the writings of the orator and politician Cicero, one conception of the Latin religio that became frequent in Roman texts was the specific rituals and rites that were a part of worship of the gods and goddesses.

According to the classicist Clifford Ando and scholar of religion Brent Nongbri, for Cicero each ritual could be a religio, and, at the same time, when Romans performed all such rituals they could together be referred to as a "single, Roman, religio."

However, Roman thinkers did not use this term for Christianity in its earliest phases. In the second century AD, Roman writers such as Pliny, Tacitus and Suetonius labeled Christianity not a religio but rather a superstitio, or a "superstition," a term usually applied to non-Roman, foreign practices.

Eventually Galen, a physician and philosopher who died in AD 210 in Rome, would call Christianity a "philosophical school," elevating the status of the movement.

Early Christians who wrote in Latin, beginning with Tertullian in the second century AD, often used the word religio to refer to their own rituals and rites, though other uses appeared as well, which were inherited from the variety of definitions employed by earlier Latin writers.

The ancient Latin translations of the New Testament, which was originally written in Greek, use religio when rendering passages such as James 1:26-27, which described true religion as care for orphans and widows and keeping oneself unstained from worldly pollu-

tion, or sin.

### Modern-day interpretation

So how did the modern interpretation of religion come about?

If, according to 19th-century German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach, humans are prone to imagining God in their own image, then according to the scholar of religion Brent Nongbri people are often tempted to do the same with our understanding of the word "religion."

As Nongbri observes, people need to be aware that when they encounter the word "religion" in English translations of ancient sources, it is not the same as spirituality or belief in the sense of an abstract set of convictions.

Often religion is thought of as referring to some inner disposition or abstract belief, such as privately held convictions about salvation separate from politics. The 17th-century thinker John Locke argued this point in his book, "A Letter Concerning Toleration."

Yet, as Nongbri argues, the concept of religion as an activity distinct from others, such as "politics, economics, and science," is a recent and modern contrast, alien to ancient societies. In ancient societies, religion was part of every facet of life because gods and goddesses were involved in every facet of life.

Indeed, the inner, spiritual and privatized nature of what many think of as religion is more a reflection of modern Protestant Christian developments and has little to do with the origins of the term.

**Samuel L. Boyd,**  
Assistant Professor of Religious Studies  
and Jewish Studies,  
University of Colorado Boulder



# Your Covid-19 vaccine questions answered by an expert

*'Vaccine is an added tool to our prevention tool box. We still need to mask, wash hands and socially distance'*



**Dr Teena Chopra, M.D.**  
Professor of Medicine, Division  
of Infectious Diseases  
Wayne State University  
School of Medicine

## \* How effective are the vaccines?

Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are 95% efficacious. Efficacy is a term that means how many cases of infections of a disease are prevented in the clinical trial. We have yet to find out if the vaccine helps in preventing disease transmission.

## \* Should I be concerned about the speed with which these vaccines were developed and approved?

Even though the vaccines were developed and approved very quickly, we need to know that the mRNA technology used for the two vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) has taken years of research and development. Also, we need to realize that the FDA and the pharmaceutical companies have not cut any corners to develop Covid-19 vaccines. The process of reviewing the safety and efficacy of the vaccine trials has been the same as with previous vaccines. The only difference is the process, which this time was concurrent rather than one after the other. For example, Phase 1 and 2 trials have been conducted concurrent to Phase 3 trials, which sped up the process. This was possible because of an abundance of financial resources allocated to the Covid-19 vaccine development.

## \* Will a vaccine solve everything?

A vaccine is not the answer but vaccination is! Vaccination acceptance by the community will help us achieve herd immunity or community immunity. However, it is too early to predict what percentage of the community has to be vaccinated before we can say herd immunity is achieved. It is advisable to achieve herd immunity through vaccination. This number is close to 80%, which will help slow transmission and gradually end the pandemic. We need to wait to evaluate if Covid vaccines prevent disease transmission, how long the immunity lasts and which type of people it will not work on before we can know that number.

## \* Do both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two injections?

Yes, both vaccines are a two-shot series. The second dose of the Pfizer

As the Pfizer vaccine against Covid-19 begins to be administered, many of us have questions about the vaccine, its efficacy and what it means for how we continue to react to the pandemic. Dr Teena Chopra, M.D., who has become one of the key sources of Covid-19 information for Detroit and the US during the pandemic, and also served on the Wayne State University Presidential Coronavirus Committee, assisting with preparations and response related to the virus, answers some of those questions.



Covid-19 vaccine being administered. Photo Getty Images

vaccine is given after three weeks and the second dose of the Moderna vaccine should be administered after four weeks.

## \* Why is a second injection necessary?

The second dose is very important as it boosts the immune response. If people don't receive the second dose, the vaccine won't be effective.

## \* How long after the injection do the vaccine's properties take effect in me?

Based on trials, the best protection will come seven days after the second dose, but there will be some level of protection about 12 days after the first injection.

## \* Can someone get Covid-19 from the vaccine itself?

None of the Covid-19 vaccines in development contain the complete SARS-CoV-2 virus, so it is impossible for them to cause Covid-19.

## \* After I'm vaccinated, can I still catch the virus?

No. The vaccine is very effective. There may be some people who get the vaccine but still may not be protected against infection. But we may not know who those people are. Hence it is even more important that we vaccinate as many people as possible to build up herd immunity.

## \* After I'm vaccinated, can I be immune but still pass the virus to someone else?

We don't know the answer to this question yet. We need to wait for additional studies to answer that.

## \* How long will the vaccine last? Will I need boosters?

We don't know that yet but based on the antibody response seen in the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, which are both mRNA vaccines, it appears that it is unlikely we will need it every year. We need the flu vaccine every year because flu viruses change at a rapid rate. On the other hand, coronaviruses do change, but not with the same speed as flu viruses. We may need boosters, but they may not be annual.

## \* What are some of the possible side effects after the injection? What should I watch for if I don't have any allergies?

All vaccines can have some reactions and, rarely, side effects. Reactions include soreness redness and swelling at the site of the injection. Other reactions that were

reported by some people who received Covid-19 vaccines during trials were fever, headache, nausea, muscle aches - all of which have been previously reported with other vaccines.

These are not really side effects but reactions, which mean that the vaccine is doing what it is supposed to do - induce an immune response in our body. So, while these reactions may make you feel uncomfortable or even miserable for a couple of days, the good news is that your immune system is working.

Based on the Pfizer vaccine trials, 11% of younger people (12-15 years) were likely to report a fever as compared to only 1% of older adults (>= 55 years), which again points to the fact that as we get older our immune system responds less efficiently to threats.

## \* Once I receive a vaccine, can I stop wearing a mask and practicing social distancing?

No, not at all. Vaccine is an added tool to our prevention tool box. We still need to mask, wash hands and socially distance. Remember, we still don't know if vaccinated individuals can transmit the disease. It's possible that when vaccinated individuals are exposed to the virus, it replicates within them and doesn't cause the disease, but they can still spread to others.

## \* Is the vaccine safe for my child?

The current vaccines were not tested and are not indicated for children. Trials in children are now beginning. Pfizer has begun testing in children 12 and older, and Moderna recently announced plans to test its vaccine in 3000 teens. Hopefully, by the end of 2021, we will have a vaccine for children.



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# Desperate Shenanigans

\* Cont. from page 4

The disquieting events in the United States, a bastion of democracy in the world, the "Gilets Jaunes" movement in France still fighting for social and ecological justice and the growing popularity of various anti-establishment parties and movements in many countries in Europe as they challenge or wrest power from traditional parties reflect the ire and exasperation of the people at the incapacity of the traditional ruling parties to satisfactorily respond to their social, economic, ecological and existential needs.



Photo - aljazeera

“President Joe Biden now has the challenging task of unifying a deeply divided nation and initiating policies in a Covid-19 pandemic afflicted country which above all resolve the basic concerns of people, namely Covid-19 and the vaccination of the population, employment, healthcare, education, equal opportunities and inequality, etc. His priorities include post pandemic economic recovery, climate change, unity of the nation, social justice and equity as well as restoring America's leadership in the world and mending Washington's ties with its allies...”

It is more and more evident that owing principally to poor governance, policy failure and ineptitude to address and resolve the core problems of people and the country that there is a growing disconnect between the people and the political leadership of traditional parties and the political class.

## Desperate stratagems

The current situation in Mauritius is a case in point. The traditional political parties are simply out of their depths to tackle the daunting challenges faced by the country. Furthermore, far too many things are amiss in the country. Governance is plummeting. There is a growing array of scandals and allegations of corruption and other wrongdoings involving Ministers. Nepotism, cronyism and the appointment of the coterie at the head of key state institutions, state companies or as ambassadors by government has spawned

incompetence and costly blunders such as the billions of Rupees of losses incurred on risky and unsecured loans advanced by the State Bank to foreign companies which necessitated substantial impairment provisions.

People are also up in arms at the lack of transparency and accountability of government spending, government procurement tenders and costly projects such as Safe City whose cameras are unable to provide such key deliverables as vital visual evidence to elucidate current criminal cases in a context of rising criminality and unabated drug trafficking in the country. They also question the opacity surrounding the conditions public funds amounting to billions of Rupees are, for example, advanced by the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd (MIC) to distressed companies to bail them out. Although supermarkets are perpetually having sales promotion, prices continue to escalate under the nose of consumer protection authorities. The list is damning and long

Against such a backdrop of ineptitude and opacity, how can government and its institutions competently manage the daunting challenges faced by the country resulting from the dire health and socio-economic fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic in a context of growing indebtedness, stressed public finances and worsening economic fundamentals? This is an untenable situation.

In the midst of all this mess, desperate shenanigans were also shamefully used recently in a clumsily choreographed spin doctoring exercise aired on national TV to basically extol the performance of government and prop up its image in the midst of the current turmoil and rising clamour against its governance. Is government feeling the heat? It was flabbergasting to witness to what lengths government is prepared to go to save the day against rising odds.

Mrinal Roy



Photo - Gettyimages

# Requiem for a Lightweight - The End of Trump

\* Cont. from page 5

Trump also likes to brag about the energy independence of America. The truth is that the boom started under President Obama. Trump was merely the beneficiary of a roaring energy sector. And now things are changing. It remains to be seen if the American energy story can be sustained and with oil prices having cratered, just how much of the US petroleum industry will survive, remains to be seen.

## An economy in shambles

And that brings us to the economy and the stock market. The sad truth is that much of the economy is in shambles due to the pandemic. This is not Trump's fault but he never quite understood that what he saw as his greatest triumph, the economy -- even though he had little to do with it -- would turn sour if it were not tended to with care. Yet, the stock market continues to soar, at least insofar as the major indices are concerned. Again, none of this is due to Trump but rather, due to the maturing and flourishing of e-commerce and web-based solutions, the Internet economy. And that will only continue to grow. Business leaders foresaw this long before Trump was on the scene and exploited it, even as he focused on dinosaurs such as the coal industry.

Trump has even had the temerity to claim that his administration created choice and transparency in healthcare. This is comical coming from an administration that botched the greatest healthcare challenge in 100 years when the pandemic hit. Donald Trump was personally responsible for many cases of surging Covid-19 infections as he disdained the wearing of masks and common-sense social distancing. An irresponsible refusal to heed the advice of scientists, a know-it-all attitude, and politicization at a childish level marked this ignoramus President's approach to the welfare of this nation.

There is one claim that resounds with

Trump's supporters and that is his nomination of three Supreme Court Justices and the confirmation of some 300 federal judges. The truth is that credit, if "credit" is the right word, goes to Mitch McConnell. Trump was a conduit. He happened to be President when the vacancies arose. And in the case of one Supreme Court seat and hundreds of federal judgeships, it was McConnell who preserved the openings by refusing to entertain nominations from President Obama. It should also be noted that Trump did not do the hard work of selecting the judges. That was left to the Federalist Society. In effect, Trump was maneuvered into his choices and he didn't even know it.

Finally, we come to immigration. Trump was right about the need to curtail illegal immigration. The problem is that as with almost every other matter, he simply had no sense of how to execute policy. So it was that the need to curb illegal immigration and the need to manage and administer legal immigration were thrown into the same pot and disjointed policies emerged. The danger is, of course, that Trump's bungling is likely to cause Biden to bend too far in the other direction and the dawning of a sensible and consistently enforced American immigration policy has been pushed back.

Contrary to his claims, Trump did not rebuild the US military. True, he may have spent more money, but the US remains vulnerable, undermanned and unable to maintain a presence overseas. Perhaps the last is a good thing. But the downside is that Trump's policies have only enhanced China's aggressive posture around the world.

America is well rid of this lightweight of a President who did more harm to this nation in four short years than our foes have done in 244.

America must now ensure that Trumpism dies with Trump's exit from the stage.

Cheerz...  
Bwana



Golden Words

1. If you want to change the world, do it when you are a bachelor. After marriage, you can't even change a TV channel.
2. Listening to wife is like reading the terms and conditions of website. You understand nothing, still you agree...
3. Chess is the only game in the world, which reflects the status of the husband. The poor King can take only one step at a time... while the mighty Queen can do whatever she likes.
4. All men are brave. Horror movies don't scare them. But 5 missed calls from wife surely does...

\*\*\*

Chicken vocabulary

1. What do you call the chicken's father: Chicken kabaap.
2. What do you call the chicken's mother: Chicken kima.
3. What do you call a chicken taking a shower: Chicken Shawama.
4. What do you call a chicken working in a night club: Chicken Strip.
5. What do you call a chicken working in the farm: Chicken Plough.
6. What do you call a black chicken: Chicken Kaliya.
7. What do you call a chicken from Maritzburg: Chicken Burger.
8. What do you call chicken you can paste on bread: Butter Chicken.
9. What do you call a chicken in trouble: Chicken Soup.
10. What do you call a terribly angry Indian chick: Chicken Tikka.

\*\*\*

Aryabhata

One day Aryabhata, the first of the major mathematician-astronomers from the classical age of Indian mathematics and Indian astronomy, sat at home and started counting the friends who are not afraid of their



wives.

That's how he invented "zero" (0).

Years later Ramanujam started counting the number of people who are afraid of their wives.

That's how "infinity" was invented.

\*\*\*

Corona beer

If they put the vaccine in beer and opened up the pubs, the whole country would be vaccinated by next Thursday.

Just trying to help.

A concerned citizen

\*\*\*

The intense rivalry between Gladstone, the PM of UK, and Opposition leader Disraeli went like this.

When a news person asked Gladstone the difference between misfortune and calamity, he said: 'If Disraeli was to fall into the Thames river, that would be a misfortune. And if somebody was to fish him out, then that would be a calamity.'

\*\*\*

Life after death

**Boss to an employee:** Do you believe in life after death?

**Employee:** Certainly not, there's no proof of it.

**Boss:** Well, there is now. After you left early yesterday to go to your uncle's funeral, he came here looking for you!

\*\*\*

Chinese detective

A guy suspected that his wife was cheating on him, so he hired a Chinese detective... the cheapest one he could find.



This is the report of the detective:

Most honorable sir,

You leave house. I watch house.

He come house. I watch.

He and she leave house. I follow.

He and she go hotel.

I climb tree. I look window.

He kiss she. She kiss he.

He strip she. She strip he.

He play with she. She play with he.

I play with me. I fall off tree.

I no see.

Your obedient servant

XYZ

Life's LESSONS

To hell with Churchill!

Winston Churchill said: "I took the taxi one day and went to the BBC office for an interview... and when I arrived I asked the driver to wait for me for forty minutes until I got back! But the driver apologized and said: 'I can't because I have to go home to listen to Winston Churchill's speech.'

Churchill says he was amazed and delighted with this man's desire to listen to his conversation! So he took ten pounds and gave to the taxi driver without telling the driver who he was.

When the driver collected the money he said: "I'll wait hours until you come back, sir! And let Churchill go to hell!

Principles have been modified against money. Nations were sold for money. Honour was sold for money. Brothers were sold for money. Families were split for the money. Friends have been separated for the money. People were killed for the money!

Who gave so much power to money and made people their slaves?

So be careful about money...

\*\*\*

Why we need to eat using hands rather than spoon

Eating is supposed to be a sensory experience and it is said to evoke emotion and passion. According to the Vedas, hands are the most precious organs of action. The scriptures reveal how every finger is an extension of the five elements. Through the thumb comes space, with the

forefinger comes air, the middle finger is fire, the ring finger is water and the little finger represents earth.

Hence, eating with one's fingers stimulates these five elements and helps in bringing forth digestive juices in the stomach.

The nerve endings on our fingertips are known to stimulate digestion. Feeling your food becomes a way of signalling the stomach that you are about to eat. You become more conscious of the taste, textures and aromas.

About Intelligence and Wisdom

1. Intelligence leads to arguments. Wisdom leads to settlements.
2. Intelligence is power of will. Wisdom is power over will.
3. Intelligence is heat, it burns. Wisdom is warmth, it comforts.
4. Intelligence is pursuit of knowledge, it tires the seeker. Wisdom is pursuit of truth, it inspires the seeker.
5. Intelligence is holding on. Wisdom is letting go.
6. Intelligence leads you. Wisdom

guides you.

7. An intelligent man thinks he knows everything. A wise man knows that there is still something to learn.
8. An intelligent man always tries to prove his point. A wise man knows there really is no point.
9. An intelligent man freely gives unsolicited advice. A wise man keeps his counsel until all options are considered.
10. An intelligent man understands what is being said. A wise man understands what is left unsaid.

11. An intelligent man speaks when he has to say something. A wise man speaks when he has something to say.
12. An intelligent man sees everything as relative. A wise man sees everything as related.
13. An intelligent man tries to control the mass flow. A wise man navigates the mass flow.
14. An intelligent man preaches. A wise man reaches out.

Intelligence is good but wisdom achieves better results.



## Becoming a better you

## Have you Lost your Sense of Urgency?



— Benjamin Hardy, PhD

**I**t is very easy to get distracted. It's easy to lose momentum. It's easy to procrastinate and push-off your greatest desires or priorities. It's easy to lose that sense of urgency toward your time and purpose.

You don't have a sense of urgency toward your time and purpose when:

- You're not clear on what you want
- You don't believe you can control the outcome or timeline
- You don't know if you can succeed
- You don't believe it's extremely important and timely

If you understood the value and importance of your goals, you'd have extreme urgency. We don't have all the time in the world. Time ticks on. But not only that, there are consequences.

For example, I have 6 kids. If I don't have urgency toward helping them grow and develop as people, they will be grown before I know it. But, they will not be who they could have been.

### Two forms of urgency you must master

There are two forms of urgency you must master:

- Urgency toward your day
- Urgency toward your desired future self

**Urgency toward your day** means you get up and get going. You aren't dragging through your day. Instead, you're aggressively getting what you need to get done.

Again, I have 6 kids. My wife is

home schooling them. If I have urgency toward my work, I'll get up early and get it done so I can get home and help my wife. If I don't have urgency, I'll drag through my day and avoid getting home. And because I've been distracted and dragging, I'll show up that same way at home. I won't be engaged. I'll probably be staring at my cellphone.

If you have urgency toward your day, you'll be present and engaged where it matters most. You'll see value and importance not only on your time, but on the consequences that come from how you spend your time.

**Urgency toward your desired future self** means you're clear on your big picture goals. These goals could be 2-5 years out. Maybe they are 10 years out. Sometimes it can be hard to have urgency toward long-term goals, like retiring or publishing a book, etc.

But what would happen if you did have urgency? What would happen if you got laser-focused on your major goals, and removed all distractions?

There's an important quote you must understand from Robert Brault: "We are kept from our goal not by obstacles but by a clear path to a lesser goal."

You're not kept from your goals and dreams by the obstacles stopping you. Instead, you're stopped by "clear paths" to "lesser goals."

Those "lesser goals" are usually distractions. Going on Facebook. Checking your email. Watching YouTube videos. Relationships that aren't serving you. Hobbies that are merely an escape from what matters

most.

Whatever "lesser goals" you're actively allowing into your life, they are stopping you from having a sense of urgency toward your future self.

### What would happen if you had urgency?

What would happen in your life if you had urgency toward your goals? What if you were hell-bent on getting where you wanted to go?

- What would you have to get rid of?
- What "lesser goals" would you have to drop?
- What habits would you need to change?

Changing your life is hard, yes. But living life, in general, is hard.

Whatever life you choose for yourself will be filled with challenges. But discipline weighs ounces and regret weighs tons.

If you're not actively using your time in the most valued ways, then you're going to have regrets. In 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People', Stephen Covey talked about having a "personal bank account," which you deposit into and draw from.

Having a personal bank account means you trust yourself. It means you believe in yourself. It means you have character.

Having a personal bank account is worth far more than having millions of dollars. If you have a personal bank account, and if you do what you believe, then you can have anything you want.

### Commit to your future self

*"You pile up enough tomorrows, and you'll find you are left with nothing but a lot of empty yesterdays."*  
— Meredith Willson

Right now, you have a choice.

You can continue letting your time pass by. You can continue withdrawing from your personal bank account, getting yourself deeper and deeper into debt of character and purpose.

Or, you can develop a sense of urgency. You can get clear on what you value. You can get clear on what matters most to you. And you can begin living your life like you really believe it. You can become who you really want to be.

Get urgent about your time.

Use it well.

Get urgent about your desired future self. Become that person and create that life as soon as possible. Don't delay!

## Thoughts to Live by

## The Meaning of True Happiness discovered

**W**hen billionaire Femi Otedola in a telephone interview, was asked by the radio presenter, "Sir what can you remember made you a happiest man in life?"

Femi said: I have gone through four stages of happiness in life and finally I understood the meaning of true happiness.

The first stage was to accumulate wealth and means. But at this stage I did not get the happiness I wanted.

Then came the second stage of collecting valuables and items. But I realized that the effect of this thing is also temporary and the lustre of valuable things does not last long.



Femi Otedola

Then came the third stage of getting big projects. That was when I was holding 95% of diesel supply in Nigeria and Africa. I was also the largest vessel owner in Africa and Asia. But even here I did not get the happiness I had imagined.

The fourth stage was the time a friend of mine asked me to buy wheelchair for some disabled children. Just about 200 kids.

At the friend's request, I immediately bought the wheelchairs.

But the friend insisted that I go with him and hand over the wheelchairs to the children. I got ready and went with him.

There I gave these wheel chairs to these children with my own hands. I saw the strange glow of happiness on the faces of these children. I saw them all sitting on the wheelchairs, moving around and having fun. It was as if they had arrived at a picnic spot where they are sharing a jackpot.

I felt REAL joy inside me. When I decided to leave, one of the kids grabbed my legs. I tried to free my legs gently but the child stared at my face and held my legs tightly.

I bent down and asked the child: 'Do you need something else?'

The answer this child gave me not only made me happy but also changed my attitude to life completely.

This child said: 'I want to remember your face so that when I meet you in heaven, I will be able to recognize you and thank you once again.'

**What would you be remembered for after you leave that office or place? Will anyone want to see your face again where it all matters?**



# Varun Dhawan, Natasha Dalal getting married this month: reports

*The Bollywood actor and his long-time girlfriend are reportedly marrying outside Mumbai*

**I**t looks like Bollywood is set for another pandemic wedding with news reports claiming that Varun Dhawan and fiancée Natasha Dalal are set to tie the knot this month. According to a report by entertainment portal Pinkvilla, the couple will be getting married in Alibaug, a coastal town outside Mumbai where Shah Rukh Khan also owns a home, reports Bindu Rai of Gulf News.

Details of the wedding are very hush-hush, but a source claimed 200 people have been locked in for the guest list and a five-star hotel has also been booked for the occasion.

Childhood sweethearts Dalal and Dhawan have known each other since sixth grade. While there has been plenty of talk about their marriage, with Thailand also mentioned as a possible venue, the actor did confirm he was ready to settle down, and soon.

In a recent interview with *Filmfare* magazine, the actor



spoke about getting hitched, saying: "Everyone is talking about this [marriage] for the last two years. There is nothing concrete right now. There is so much uncertainty in the world right now, but if things settle down, then maybe this year. I mean... I am planning for it definitely soon. But let there be more certainty."

There has been no official announcement on their part, but in a chat with Kareena Kapoor for her radio show, Dhawan did not make a denial when actress referred to Dalal as his fiancée.

Talking about his wedding plans on the show, Dhawan said he "felt like getting married" after he saw his brother Rohit Dhawan and sister-in-law. "See, marriage, coming into this time period when you have been with someone for so long... I felt like getting married after I saw my brother and my Bhabhi [sister in law]. When I saw my niece Niara, I was like, 'This is good'," he said on the show.

## A Look at the top 5 fresh Pairs of 2021



**2. Tiger Shroff-Tara Sutaria:** Tara was a strong contender for the heroine's post in *Heropanti* in 2014. But Kriti Sanon beat her to it, for whatever reason. Finally, she gets together with Tiger for the sequel to *Heropanti*. Director Ahmed Khan says the chemistry between the two would be something to watch, though being an action film Tara may not have that much to do.

**3. Ranbir Kapoor-Alia Bhatt:** Ah, the real-life *jodi* spilling their mutual affection on to the screen could be just what the audience needs. On the other hand, real-life *jodis* often make boring viewing, used as the viewers are to seeing them together all the time. Who knows, more than Ranbir-Alia, its Amitabh-Alia and Amitabh-Ranbir's togetherness that would interest the audience in Ayan Mukerjee's *Brahmastra*.



**4. Akshay Kumar-Manushi Chhillar:** Miss World plays the mythical Sanjukta who will be whisked off her feet from her *swayamvar* by her on-screen Prithviraj Chauhan in Dr Chandra Prakash Dwivedi's *Prithviraj Chauhan*. The director tells me the pair looks heavenly on screen. In recent years Akshay has not found a steady co-star. The wait may finally end with this one.

**5. Salman Khan-Pooja Hegde:** Pooja Hegde is a huge star in Telugu cinema. Pairing up with Salman in *Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali* could be the best thing to happen to Pooja's career in Bollywood. It will also give the audience a fresh co-star for Bhai to romance reverentially from afar.



**T**he box office is always hungry for fresh *jodis*. Trade experts say a new screen pairing ensures a certain level of audience interest from the outset. Check out these dewdrop duos ready to drop into our lives in 2021.

**1. Akshay Kumar-Sara Ali Khan:** Now that was unexpected. Trust Aanand L Rai to do the thinkable. In *Atrangi Re* he has not only cast Akshay Kumar with his colleague Saif's daughter Sara, but also both of them with Aanand's favourite actor Dhanush for the first time. Sara plays a rustic woman from Bihar who shares an unusual bonding with her two co-stars. With Akshay anything is possible.

## Deepika Padukone recounts how she fell in love with Ranveer Singh

She says: 'Many times my trust was broken'



**D**eepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh's love story is one for the ages, and not only in Bollywood. But do you know how they fell in love? Recounting how she initially had multiple reservations including trust issues, in an earlier interview, Deepika Padukone had told *Filmfare*, "It was not about him. It was about whether I was ready to commit to a relationship. Because I'd been in several relationships before and many times my trust was broken. When I met Ranveer, I was exhausted."

When this relationship, which I was in, ended in 2012... I was like I'm done. I wanted to try out this concept of casual dating. I just did not want to be answerable to anyone. When Ranveer and I met in 2012, I told him, 'I realise there's a connection between us. I really like you but I want to keep it open. I don't want to commit. If I get attracted to different people, I'm going to do my thing,' Deepika Padukone had added.

Echoing her sentiment, Ranveer Singh, too, had told *Filmfare* in an earlier interview, "There was a phase in my life where I was only in no-strings-attached relationships. I'd cut off any string that I'd see. But yeah, you change and evolve as a person. You crave something more substantial. Now I can't even think of such relationships. My biological clock is ticking. I want to become a family man. I love kids."



After a successful career on television, Shashank Vyas now wants to focus on doing films



After a successful career on television, Shashank Vyas now wants to focus on doing films and web shows. Known for shows such as *Balika Vadhu*, *Jaana Na Dil Se Door* and *Roop*, he is looking forward to the release of his debut film and he confessed he was somewhere feeling "stagnant" working on the small screen, reports Shreya Mukherjee of Hindustan Times.

"The moment you get comfortable somewhere, you know you aren't growing

anymore. That what happening with me on TV. Also, not every time you can do everything in one medium," he says.

His film, *Laila Manju*, where the actor plays the lead, is directed by Prem Soni of *Me and Mrs Khanna* (2009) fame. "It's a comedy with a message. For the first time I discovered a comic streak in me. Earlier I thought I could only do serious and romantic roles. When you experiment, you discover new things," he adds.

"At the end, your work should speak. See what *Laxmii* did for Sharad Kelkar even though it released on OTT(content delivered on internet)," he continues, "While the big screen has its charm, web has been winning hearts even in smaller towns."

Having said that, the actor admits having reservations against certain narratives. "On TV, people know me in a certain way and I'd be new to web and film audience. But I can't do these dark web shows high on cusswords, sexuality and murder. I don't think they have a good impact on society. There should be a balance," he reasons.

Will this shift mean he'd put TV on the back-burner? Vyas says, "I can never say no to TV. It has given me so much. I'll definitely take up a good offer," he says, adding "I'm not running after money. For me, my creative urge needs to be satisfied. I have no shame in asking for work. I've already reached out to directors whose work I enjoy."

Shweta Tiwari's daughter Palak is now gearing up for her first film 'Rosie'



Shweta Tiwari and Palak Tiwari are considered to be one of the best mother-daughter duos in the television industry. Like her mother, Palak Tiwari is also popular and enjoys a huge fan following. She is also gearing up for her first film debut and has even shared the first poster of it. Palak Tiwari's pictures always garner a lot of praise, and this time again, the gorgeous diva has created a buzz on the internet, reports Pinkvilla.

Palak Tiwari is badly missing her school days and to relive those days she shared a set of pictures where we can see

her wearing neon coloured sweater with a short black skirt. Palak has complemented the look with stocking and a black sling bag. She is happily posed and captioned it as, "When u miss school just wear school skirts." Palak has opted for dewy makeup and left her hair open. She finished the look with a nude coloured lipstick. The whole get-up of her looks very apt.

Coming back to the work front, Palak will be seen in a film titled *Rosie*. She will be essaying the lead role and is believed to be India's first horror-thriller film.

The film story is based around BPOs in Gurugram. Palak Tiwari is Shweta Tiwari and Raja Chaudhary's daughter. They divorced a long time back and went their separate ways.

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YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

The extreme intensity of your amorous desires might be of harm to you. Concern yourself with your small health problems, otherwise they may worsen. You'll gather big successes in friendly and mundane gatherings; however, beware of jealousy of which you might be the target.

**Lucky Numbers:** 10, 15, 18, 20, 33, 36

**Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19**

In your work, don't try to get ahead of schedule; patience will pay. Erect an impenetrable barrier between your career life and your private life. Closely control the studies of your children; given them advice and support their efforts.

**Lucky Numbers:** 6, 9, 15, 21, 23, 30

**Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18**

This time you'll get straight to the goal without letting yourself be hindered by doubts or hesitations. Your intuition will be just and your dreams very instructive. Your love affairs will be favoured; a very nice conquest is probable.

**Lucky Numbers:** 15, 17, 20, 23, 26, 30

**Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20**

Your family relationships may have hitches; it will be necessary to put oil in the clockwork. This time your self-confidence will be the only guaranty of your success. Your society life will be very active, for your greatest

pleasure and advantage.

**Lucky Numbers:** 2, 4, 8, 15, 17, 30

**Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19**

Profit by the charms of your present life instead of regretting those of the past. Disturbances in your household: the good understanding to which you aspire will seem inaccessible to you; don't lose heart: everything will turn out well.

**Lucky Numbers:** 16, 21, 27, 30, 33, 36

**Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20**

You'll have an opportunity to establish relationships with highly placed persons. A very good week to envisage new investment modes or to think of the best way to deal with a litigious matter; you'll succeed in balancing your budget.

**Lucky Numbers:** 3, 4, 8, 17, 24, 36

**Gemini: May 21 - June 20**

In your work, it will be the moment to propose your ideas, to negotiate. You'd be wrong to disdain small daily happy events, for it's their sum total that actually constitutes happiness. The financial field will be very much favoured.

**Lucky Numbers:** 7, 13, 22, 23, 26, 33

**Cancer: June 21 - July 22**

Even though you're disillusioned, this time you'll give love the first place in your life. There'll be charming encounters or a spectacular improvement of your existing love relationships. Be doubly careful if you're predisposed

to cardio-vascular troubles.

**Lucky Numbers:** 18, 20, 23, 27, 29, 30

**Leo: July 23 - Aug 22**

You should be careful in your engagements and honour them once they are taken. The circumstances will impose a renovation in your work and a change in your ingrained habits; adapt yourself without bad grace.

**Lucky Numbers:** 1, 3, 17, 19, 20, 30

**Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22**

You'll have the possibility to achieve a feat and to win a great professional victory. You'll have to choose between two solutions in a family issue; opt for the more reasonable one: it's the better one but that will demand more sacrifices.

**Lucky Numbers:** 5, 7, 18, 30, 31, 36,

**Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22**

Your relationships with certain of your business contacts will be tense because of thorny money problems. Drop certain obligations which you accepted only by lack of firmness.

**Lucky Numbers:** 3, 10, 12, 16, 20, 40

**Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov**

Give friendship a better place in your life. Good work, perseverance, and useful supports will be the keys to your success. Increased financial potentialities: cleverness in transactions, luck in gambles. Do exercise so as to have a better blood circulation. All contracts will be favoured.

**Lucky Numbers:** 17, 22, 24, 25, 31, 36



## CINE 12

Vendredi 22 Janvier - 21.15

## Alpha

Avec: Kodi Smit-McPhee, Johannes Haukur Johannesson, Marcin Kowalczyk



## CINE 12

Samedi 23 Janvier - 21.15

## Ladies In Black

Star: Julia Ormond, Angourie Rice, Rachael Taylor



## MBC 1

Dimanche 24 Janvier - 21.10



vendredi 22 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 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.50 Mag: Urban Gardens 13.55 Doc: World Stamps 14.30 D.Anime: Twirlywoos 15.14 D.Anime: The Hive 15.23 D.Anime: La Ligue Des... 16.11 D.Anime: La Famille... 16.20 D.Anime: Wishfart 17.20 Serial: Heidi, Bienvenida 17.50 Mag: Origami 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.20 Prod: Lottery Vert Draw 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: Junga Star: Vijay Sethupathi, Sayyeshaa, Madonna Sebastian, Suresh Chandra Menon 14.21 DDI Magazine 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.21 Serial: Honaar Soon Mee 15.44 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 16.07 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 16.40 Serial: Tu Ishq Hai 16.53 Serial: Achra Ke Moti 17.14 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.35 Serial: Chhanchhan 18.00 Serial: Bloody Romance 18.30 DDI Magazine 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Serial: Tawaan 20.44 Local: Anjuman	06.00 Mag: Eco India 06.41 Mag: Carnet De Sante 07.00 Mag: Cavadee 2021 07.55 Doc: Empires Of Silver 08.45 Doc: 360 GEO 09.49 Doc: Colonia Dignidad 10.31 Doc: Mega Yachts 11.39 Mag: Shift 11.55 Mag: Carnet De Sante 12.36 Mag: Urban Gardens 12.43 Mag: Tomorrow Today 13.12 Doc: Empires Of Silver 14.10 Doc: 360 GEO 15.44 Doc: Mega Yachts 16.30 Mag: Eco India 17.30 Mag: Border Crossing 17.59 Doc: Southern Japan By Rail 18.41 Mag: Urban Gardens 18.50 Talk On Thaipoosam 19.00 Open Univ: Student Support 19.30 Mag: Euromaxx	01.30 Film: The Misfits Club 03.14 Serial: S.W.A.T 03.55 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive... 05.17 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.05 Serial: Beauty And The Beast 06.45 Film: I Think My Babysitter's 09.00 Serial: Hawaii 5-0 09.45 Tele: Soleil Levant 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.00 Serial: S.W.A.T. 12.00 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive... 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: I Think My Babysitter's 16.40 Serial: Hawaii 5-0 17.20 Serial: Beauty And The Beast 18.05 Tele: Daneilla 19.10 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: Heroes Reborn 21.15 Film: Alpha 22.47 Tele: Muneca Brava	08.00 Film: Rajdhani Express 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 15.20 Film: Listen Amaya Starring: Farooq Shaikh, Deepti Naval, Swara Bhaskar 18.00 Live: Samacher 18.30 Kumkum Bhagya 18.51 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka
	06.00 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà 07.12 D.Anime: Trollhunters 08.23 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Daniella 14.55 D.Anime: Twirlywoos 15.06 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 15.18 D.Anime: Petit Creux 15.22 D.Anime: Dee Dee The Little.. 15.30 D.Anime: The Hive 15.46 D.Anime: La Ligue Des Super 16.10 D.Anime: Uma And Devan... 16.21 D.Anime: Invasion Story 16.33 D.Anime: La Famille Blaireau 16.57 D.Anime: Little Spirou 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: Ice Soldiers 23.00 Le Journal	07.00 Film: Gharonda 10.00 Bade Acchelagte Hai 12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhyia 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: Dil Kya Kare Starring: Ajay Devgan, Mahima Chaudhry, Kajol, Chandrachur Singh 17.53 Mag: DDI Magazine 19.00 Zournal Kreol 20.05 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha 20.31 Serial: Bitti Business Wali 21.00 Film: Darna Zaroori Hai Star: A. Bachchan, A. Rampal, A. Kapoor, M. Sherawat, S. Shetty, S. Kulkarni...	06.00 Doc: Southern Japan Rail 06.42 Mag: Arts And Culture 06.55 Local Prod: Cavadee 2021 07.55 Mag: Urban Gardens 07.59 Doc: Wildlife Heroes 08.55 Doc: Greetings From Planet 09.47 Doc: Fat, Fatter, Fattest 11.15 Doc: Southern Japan Rail 11.57 Mag: Arts And Culture 12.10 Mag: Global 3000 12.36 Mag: Urban Gardens 14.05 Doc: Greetings From Planet 16.08 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: Hugo Pratt, Trait Pour... 22.15 Doc: The Maras 23.00 The Science Of Avalanche 23.43 Doc: Amazing Gardens	01.28 Film: Alpha 03.00 Serial: Brooklyn Nine Nine 03.41 Film: 30 Days Of Night 05.09 Tele: Esmeraldas 05.52 Serial: Heroes Reborn 06.39 Film: Clarity 08.30 Serial: L.A.'s Finest 09.12 Serial: Shades Of Blue 09.54 Serial: Unforgotten 10.41 Film: Cop Dog 12.04 Mag: Zoom In 13.00 Tele: Amanda 14.45 Mag: Hollywood On Set 15.10 Serial: S.W.A.T 16.35 Mag: Hollywood On Set 17.00 Serial: Heroes Reborn 17.45 Film: Nessie & Me 19.20 Mag: Zoom In 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Series: Heroes Reborn 21.15 Film: Ladies In Black 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 10.00 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai 14.00 Sanjivani 16.00 Pavitra Rishta 18.30 Film: A Gentleman Star: Sidharth Malhotra, Jacqueline Fernandez, Darshan Kumar 20.35 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 21.17 Serial: Naagin 22.01 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek

## MBC 2

Samedi 23 Janvier - 21.00  
Stars: A. Bachchan, A. Rampal, A. Kapoor, M. Sherawat...Dimanche 24  
Janvier - 18.30

Stars: Kareena Kapoor, Sonam Kapoor, Neena Gupta





# Une question de principe



Nita Chicooree-Mercier

**E**tonnement et admiration, c'est ce que suscite la rigueur du Gouvernement mauricien en matière de santé publique dans la perspective de refermer les frontières si jamais un variant du virus mortifère s'aventure sur le territoire. Les mesures sans complaisance prises depuis neuf mois à Maurice sont bien perçues par ceux, à l'île sœur, qui déplorent le retard et le laxisme chez eux dans la mise en application d'une réglementation sanitaire l'an dernier dès la réouverture des frontières.

C'est surtout d'un pragmatisme très asiatique dont Maurice fait preuve, une évidence que les îles sœurs ont changé de parents au cours de leur histoire. Car avec une population malade, point d'économie, et point de survie tout court ; d'où une gestion verticale, des décisions prises d'en haut et l'adhésion du public en général.

Toutefois, cette rigueur est strictement liée à la survie économique en période de crise sanitaire, et est, hélas, nullement la norme en temps normal dans les hôpitaux publics. Exemple : officiellement, une opération pour un problème cardiovasculaire, comme toute autre opération, est gratuite. Mais il arrive souvent que le chirurgien convoque les patients à leur cabinet privé et exige un paiement, au minimum Rs 400,000, une fortune pour le commun du public, pour une opération qu'il effectuera, ensuite, à l'hôpital avec l'équipement médical fourni par les fonds publics. Sinon, point d'opération. Une corruption virale qu'aucun ministre de la Santé n'a pu stopper jusqu'à ce jour...

Finalement, la rigueur qui étonne à l'étranger, les Mauriciens auraient aimé la voir appliquer après chaque rapport d'Audit, dans la gestion des fonds, les dépenses publiques, les effectifs en trop grand nombre dans les bureaux de la fonction publique, l'attribution des marchés et des contrats, le train de vie des élus parlementaires avec voiture de luxe et chauffeur pour des trentenaires néophytes en politique, la nomination des gens compétents à la tête d'Air Mauritius et d'autres services.

Être rigoureux, c'est aussi être exigeant, cela s'entend si on s'appuie sur des principes. Et les principes, encore faut-il en avoir. S'ils ont existé à une époque, c'est à leur délitement que le

public assiste depuis des décennies.

Un public coopératif et 'obéissant' lorsqu'il s'agit des règles sanitaires imposées par les autorités ne signifie nullement un public infantilisé sommé à se taire en toutes circonstances. Si on doit faire la différence entre le tam-tam des manifestations orchestrées par des intérêts divers et obscurs, et une foule rassemblée pour réclamer justice dans une affaire criminelle, c'est bien celle dans l'affaire criminelle en cour.

Plus qu'un décès résultant d'une maladie, la mort infligée à quelqu'un dans un crime sordide plonge toute une famille dans une souffrance psychologique profonde. Il est malvenu d'infantiliser les manifestants en les traitant comme des enfants *mal élevés*. Si un groupe de personnes exige vérité et justice, c'est plutôt

**“ Plus qu'un décès résultant d'une maladie, la mort infligée à quelqu'un dans un crime sordide plonge toute une famille dans une souffrance psychologique profonde. Il est malvenu d'infantiliser les manifestants en les traitant comme des enfants mal élevés. Si un groupe de personnes exige vérité et justice, c'est plutôt un bon signe que le public manifeste un intérêt pour l'intransigeance sur certains principes. Il était temps... ”**

un bon signe que le public manifeste un intérêt pour l'intransigeance sur certains principes. Il était temps. Par ailleurs, on laisse à quelques ténors médiatisés le loisir de soigner l'image d'une judiciaire censée incarner toutes les vertus.

Serait-il trop demandé à la MBC de revoir les images avant de les passer? Et au Bar Council d'éduquer les avocats sur leur comportement et leur langage ? Dans sa démarche de démontrer l'impertinence des demandes de la femme de l'homme carbonisé, un homme de loi martèle, sûr de lui, qu'elle n'a aucun pouvoir d'atteindre son but. C'est faire preuve d'un manque de sensibilité vis-à-vis de la détresse d'une veuve qui a perdu son époux dans des circonstances atroces.

Une poursuite judiciaire et une défense à la Cour : ce n'est nullement un match

entre Liverpool et Arsenal, ou un match de boxe où on inflige un knock-out à l'adversaire. Les étudiants stagiaires en droit de l'UoM en ont donné un exemple affligeant, dans le passé, en ricanant de l'affaire Michäela Hart tant ils étaient obnubilés par les prestations de l'avocat qui était supposé les accompagner dans leur formation. Une habitude puérile consiste à tout réduire en deux camps, les gagnants et les perdants.

Par mimétisme et lâcheté, le Mauricien moyen se range, d'habitude, du côté des gagnants. Les études formelles apportent des outils dans l'apprentissage d'une profession, qui aboutissent à l'obtention d'un diplôme. Les bonnes manières et la sensibilité ne s'apprennent pas sur les bancs de l'université. C'est un ensemble de facteurs, le *upbringing*, l'éducation dispensée dans l'environnement familial, et le niveau de culture, entre autres, qui font que les gens sont *bien élevés* et civilisés dans leur comportement et leur manière de s'adresser aux autres. Le premier, l'éducation au sein de la famille, se soucie plus du statut social que de la qualité de l'être; tandis que le second, la culture, est à ranger en tête de liste des carences intellectuelles, artistiques et spirituelles dont souffre le public, y compris les gens 'éduqués'... Aucun ministre de la Culture n'a constaté l'ampleur des dégâts jusqu'à présent ?

Une dose de mauvaise foi risque d'accuser l'agence internationale Moody's d'être à la solde du Gouvernement dans sa prévision d'un taux de croissance de 7,8% en 2021 de Maurice dans la région subsaharienne. Une bonne nouvelle pour le pays. Et comment on y parviendra ? Un exercice de communication éclairerait les lanternes du public. Le traité de libre-échange avec la Chine, une croissance dans l'exportation du secteur manufacturier vers le vaste marché chinois, importation massive peu souhaitable, le développement du potentiel océanique, le tourisme dépendant du virus et variants, une quasi autosuffisance alimentaire dans le secteur agricole, énergie propre, etc.

Un peu oriental, mais surtout africain subsaharien et plus haut au nord, le rapport au pouvoir politique. Quelqu'un qui a occupé la plus haute fonction ne peut retourner à une vie normale, il quitte avec secrétaire privé et garde de corps. C'est une question d'honneur. Abandonner la politique, surtout avec pertes et fracas, équivaut à une perte d'honneur personnel et familial.

Voilà une idée qui est bien ancrée chez les 'élites' et le public également, ce qui permet de spéculer sur le retour éternel des uns et des autres dans l'arène politique. Un déterminisme, une apparente fatalité dont il serait salutaire pour le public de se défaire, de s'en émanciper à l'avenir.

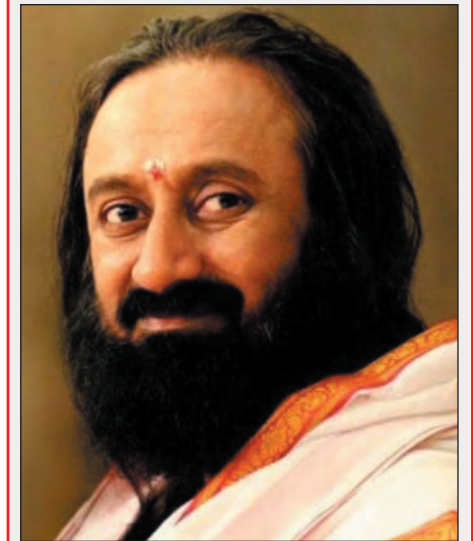
Une question de rigueur, de principe et d'exigence. C'est à souhaiter.

## Tree of Knowledge

Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar



## Who is your life partner?



Mom?

Dad?

Wife?

Son?

Husband?

Daughter?

Friends?

Not a all!!

Your real-life partner is your body.

Once your body stops responding no one is with you. You and your body stay together from birth till death. What you do to your body is your responsibility and that will come back to you. The more you care for your body, the more your body will care for you. What you eat, What you do for being fit, How you deal with stress, how much rest you give to it; will decide how your body going to respond.

Remember, Your body is the only permanent address where you live. Your body is your asset/liability, which no one else can share. your body is your responsibility. Because you are the real-life partner.

Be fit. Take care of your self. Money comes and goes. Relatives and Friends are not permanent.

Remember no one can help your body other than you.

Pranayama - for Lungs

Meditation - for Mind

Yoga - for Body

Walking - for Heart

Good food - for Intestines

Good thoughts - for Soul

Good Karma - for World