

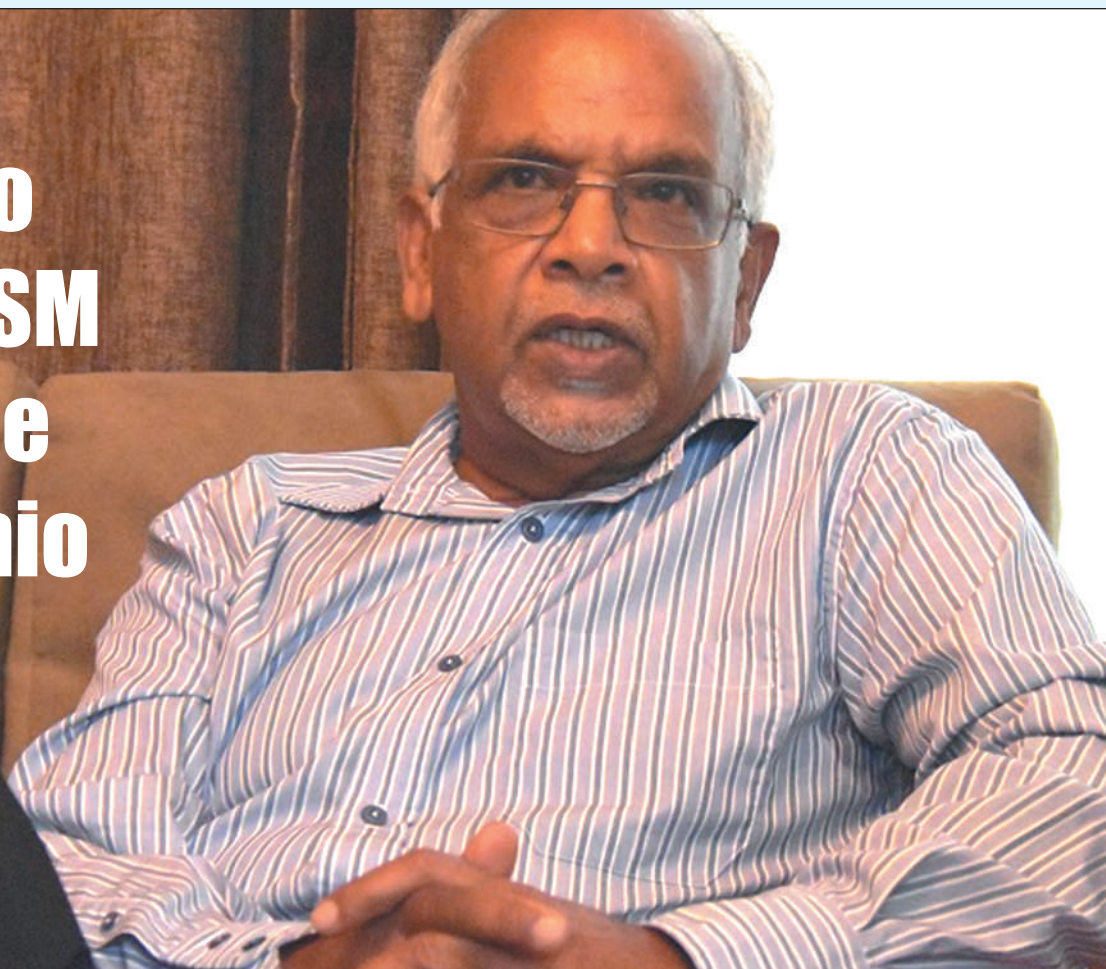
MAURITIUS TIMES

• One of the tests of leadership is the ability to recognize a problem before it becomes an emergency. -Arnold Glasow

Interview: Dharam Gokhool

“It is premature to suggest that the MSM will meet the same fate as the Wakashio shipwreck”

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Clamour for a New Beginning



The people and the country need a competent and credible alternative new team to challenge the established order. There is no place in politics for the dilettante bent on assuring a cushy career in politics

By Mrinal Roy * See Page 3

Quelques vérités bonnes à dire



Doit-on s'attendre à voir apparaître aux élections de 2024 une formation politique ayant pour sigle BLD ou BZTD avec pour chef de file un des agitateurs du moment ? Et avec quel programme ?

Par Jean-Max Baya * Voir Page 4

Why the British abandoned impeachment - and what the US Congress might do next

By Eliga Gould, Professor of History, University of New Hampshire

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The Third Force

The idea of 'third force' in the local political landscape has surfaced a number of times at the approach of general elections that have been held in the past couple of decades, although it would be difficult to say exactly when. Nevertheless, it has been articulated quite loudly, more so nearer the date of elections. We are in principle over three years away from a next general election, and the surprise is that talk of the third force is already in the air.

Perhaps it has to do with the debate about the search for alternative leaderships in the traditional political parties, through a process of internal democratization rather than through the dynastic route or being left to the prerogative of the existing leader. But it may also have gained enhanced traction with the success of the protest movements triggered by government failures, inactions, and misgovernance and that have made as their battle cry nothing less than that the 'government must go'.

In response, government has said a firm no: it is here to stay and complete its mandate.

This therefore gives the diverse opposing groupings that have made up the crowds at these street protests, as well as the political parties belonging to the opposition, the space or opportunity to come up with a challenger strong enough or with sufficient credibility to take on the outgoing party at the next election.

Viewed from this angle, the options that seem to emerge are limited to a few scenarios. The first one is that, riding on the wave of popularity as civic activists with a potential to mobilize huge crowds, one or other of the leaders, such as Bruneau Laurette, decides to form a political party which may well be a front for the powerful interests whence he is receiving his backing, which remain unknown to the wide public so far. The issue here is whether being a civic activist, however successful is qualification enough to rally the broad range of competencies that are needed to coalesce into a nation-wide party that will take the country forward.

The other scenario that naturally comes to mind is that the major parties -- MMM, Labour Party, PMSD -- will not accept to fade away,

and reinvent themselves, though how is a big interrogation mark. More specifically, Bérenger and Duval are likely to see in Bruneau Laurette a challenger who will cull from the same electoral base from where they draw much of their strength. In that sense LP may have less of an issue because from the beginning it has presented itself as the national party under whose umbrella all colours of the Mauritian rainbow have their place, though the leadership issue is also as big a concern here as in the other parties.

The next possibility is of course that Rama Valayden and his Avengers formally begin to set up a new political party with an altogether different orientation and ideology than what the existing parties have offered so far. While it is true that they are showing great zeal and competence in exposing the government's failings and weaknesses, from there to formulating and proposing an alternative that will be accepted as widely as possible is still a long way off. Nando Bodha, who has recently resigned from the MSM and his ministerial post, has also made known his intention to launch a political party. He is reported to be working on its political manifesto, and it would seem that he would be positioning himself as the challenger of the current Prime Minister - no less.

On the other hand, another call that has often been made is that parties and their leaders must make way for younger blood that would infuse new ideas and smarter ways of doing things. Unfortunately, the shenanigans of some of the young parliamentarians that were inducted have put paid to this thesis, and in fact they have done a disservice to their own segment of potential candidates who could perhaps be genuinely inclined to contribute to make the country better.

When all of this is put together, we may well end up with a plethora of parties whose effect will be to disperse votes, and thus do the game of an outgoing regime. But that does not mean that a third force is not needed. Only that the one that emerges must reckon with the political realities, and the challenge that a strong incumbent represents -- but most of all be sufficiently credible to inspire trust and rally nation-wide support.

The Conversation

Why the British abandoned impeachment In the early 19th century, the British found a more effective way to handle a bad leader

Impeachment was developed in medieval England as a way to discipline the king's ministers and other high officials. The framers of the US Constitution took that idea and applied it to presidents, judges and other federal leaders.

That tool was in use, and in question, during the second impeachment trial of Donald Trump. Republicans raised questions about both the constitutionality and the overall purpose of impeachment proceedings against a person who no longer holds office.

Democrats responded that the framers expected impeachment to be available as a way to deliver consequences to a former official, and that refusing to convict Trump could open the door to future presidential abuses of power.

An impeachment case that was active in Britain while the framers were writing the Constitution in Philadelphia helped inform the new American government structure. But the outcome of that case -- and that of another impeachment trial a decade later -- signaled the end of impeachment's usefulness in Britain, though the British system of government offered another way to hold officials accountable.

Impeachment in Britain

During the 17th century, the English Parliament used impeachment repeatedly against the royal favourites of King Charles I. One, Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, went to the gallows in 1641 for subverting the laws and attempting to raise an Irish army to subdue the king's opponents in England. Although kings couldn't be impeached, Parliament eventually tried King Charles I for treason too, sentencing him to death by public beheading on Jan. 30, 1649.

A century later, impeachment no longer carried a risk of execution, but in 1786 the House of Commons launched what would become the



The UK prime minister's 'question time' is one key method by which the government's leader can be held to account by other lawmakers. UK Parliament via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY

most famous -- and longest -- impeachment trial in British history.

The lower house of Parliament, the House of Commons, impeached Warren Hastings, who had retired as governor-general of British India and was back in England, for corruption and mismanagement. That action provides a direct answer to one current legal question: The charges were based on what Hastings had done in India, making clear that a former official could be impeached and tried, even though he was no longer in office.

Future US president John Adams, who was in London at the time, predicted in a letter to fellow founder John Jay that although Hastings deserved to be convicted, the proceedings would likely end with his acquittal. Nevertheless, Adams and Jay were among those who supported the new US Constitution, whose drafters in 1787 included impeachment, even though that method of accountability was close to disappearing from Britain.

Nearing the end of its usefulness

The trial of Hastings, in Parliament's upper house, the House of Lords, didn't actually begin until 1788, and took seven years to conclude.

Eliga Gould

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Mauritius Times

Founder/Editor: Beekrumsing Ramlallah - Aug 1954-Sept 2000

Editor-in-chief: M. Ramlallah / Senior Editor: Dr RN Gopee

This epaper has been produced with the assistance of

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Mrinal Roy

One of the determinant qualities of a President, Prime Minister or political leader is sound judgement. History is littered with examples of forced resignations and convictions owing to errors of judgement by political leaders. In 1963, Harold Macmillan, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom resigned after the Profumo scandal. In 1974 Richard Nixon had to resign as President of the United States in the wake of the Watergate scandal and impeachment hearings. Francois Fillon who had served as Prime Minister of France from 2007 to 2012 under President Nicolas Sarkozy was convicted of fraud and misuse of funds in a case of 'emplois fictifs' and sentenced to five years in prison in 2020. He has appealed against the sentence.

The sound judgment and mettle of a President, Prime Minister or political leader are gauged by the transparent, prompt and competent manner he deals with crises and serious allegations levelled against Ministers and the government. It is therefore disconcerting that despite having the counsel and 'advice' of a cohort of highly paid advisers at public expense, government and the Prime Minister have patently mishandled the rising outcry regarding grave allegations of wrongdoing surrounding emergency government procurement tenders to meet Covid-19 requirements and the purported links with the suspect deaths of a political activist and persons involved in the tender process.

If, as vehemently claimed, government has nothing to hide, why was the Minister of Commerce not asked to step down to enable a thorough investigation of the allegations levelled against emergency procurement tenders organized and allocated under his watch? In previous cases involving allegations of wrongdoing by Ministers, they were asked to step down. The latest example of this is the alleged case of corruption and bribery in the Rs 4.3 billion CEB Saint Louis Power Plant Redevelopment Project contract when the Minister of Public Utilities was revoked as Minister.

Double standards

Why was this cardinal rule of good governance not applied in this case at a time when the people expected swift and decisive confidence building actions by government to quell the wildest speculations aired on social media and allay the apprehensions of the people? Such double standards and procrastination have triggered

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The people and the country need a competent and credible alternative new team to challenge the established order. There is no place in politics for the dilettante bent on assuring a cushy career in politics



“People are riled by the opacity surrounding the management and allocation of scarce state lands. They are appalled by the scale of unabated drug trafficking in the country epitomized, despite the government rhetoric, by Mauritius being ranked as the first among the countries of Southern Africa in terms of consumption of synthetic drugs and among the top three countries amongst the 53 African countries. The order of unusable ventilators has exposed the lack of commercial savviness and necessary precautions required in the case of orders of costly equipment...”

legitimate interrogations. Is there more to it than meets the eye?

This patent dilly-dallying has dented the standing of government in the eyes of the multitude. What the people are clamouring for is a thorough, competent and swift investigation to get to the bottom of the serious allegations made in respect of the modus operandi of government emergency procurement tenders and provide answers and justice to distressed widows seeking the truth on the suspect deaths of their husbands so that they can obtain emotional closure.

The reaction of the Prime Minister to the recent protest march of thousands of citizens in Port-Louis is yet another example of the dubious advice and misguided strategies concocted by the cohort of advisors. Unsubstantiated scaremongering about insidious forces bent on endangering peace, create communal division and mayhem in the country to wrest power cut no ice. Without validated proof, people are not taken in by such contrived shenanigans.

Up in arms

Government cannot bury its head in the sand. The blatant reality is that despite government being in power for slightly more than a year, people are already up in arms against so many aspects of its plummeting standard of governance.

Nepotism and rampant cronyism, lack of transparency and accountability of government spending, government procurement tenders and costly projects such as Safe City or the conditions under which 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 are some of decried hallmarks of its poor governance.

People are also riled by the opacity surrounding the

management and allocation of scarce state lands. They are appalled by the scale of unabated drug trafficking in the country epitomized, despite the government rhetoric, by Mauritius being ranked as the first among the countries of Southern Africa in terms of consumption of synthetic drugs and among the top three countries amongst the 53 African countries. The order of unusable ventilators has exposed the lack of commercial savviness and necessary precautions required in the case of orders of costly equipment. The list is damning and long.

Ultimate judge

Such appalling and wasteful governance is anathema to the people. A growing majority of people strongly condemn government and are furious as they did not sign up for such a decried and costly brand of governance at the time of the last general elections. People also deplore such poor governance as it undermines the future of the young and their children.

MPs must realize that Vox Populi is Vox Dei. The people remain at all times the ultimate judge of those entrusted to ably and ethically run the affairs of the country. Their go-vernance therefore remains under the constant scrutiny of the people. Government must therefore necessarily take on board the tenor of valid protests by the people. Not to do so is to face a backlash and reap the whirlwind. A handful of MPs cannot lord it over the will of the people which at all times remains paramount in a democracy.

No to dinosaurs

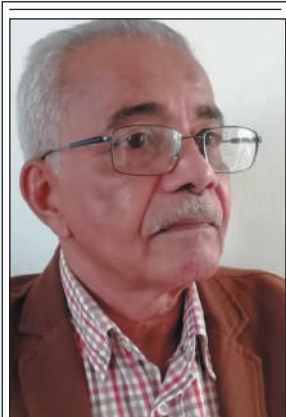
The protest marches of citizens are certainly not a proxy battle for the opposition parties or a comeback bandwagon for their leaders who have been repeatedly rejected by the people at the last two general elections. During the protests, citizens from all walks of life have clearly dissociated themselves from political dynasties and ageing political leaders uncharitably labelled as 'dinosaurs'. These cannot be party to the establishment of a new beginning for the country. They must realize that their presence undermines the prospects of ushering fundamental changes in political culture and standard of ethics among a new political class for the good of people and country.

A majority of people therefore want to cut loose from a crippling political system which aided and abetted by a subservient political class has pandered to the interests of political leaders rather than those of people and the country. For this reason, large swathes of the silent majority thus preferred not to participate in the march called by the opposition parties.

A new beginning

Mauritius therefore stands at a critical juncture of its political history. The country has touched rock bottom in terms of appalling standard of governance. More than ever before, we need to make judicious choices to chart the way forward for a far better Mauritius.

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Jean-Max Baya

Il y avait dans la manifestation de samedi dernier, à Port-Louis, quelque chose de surréaliste. Des hommes politiques, et non des moindres puisqu'il s'agit des principaux dirigeants de l'opposition parlementaire, écoutaient, impassibles, et lisaient sur des pancartes des slogans exhortant, en des termes virulents, leur retrait de la scène politique.

Au surréalisme s'ajoutait le grotesque: Anil Gayan s'affichant ostensiblement aux côtés des manifestants après les frasques de son amie à la direction du *Cardiac Centre*, alors qu'il était ministre de la Santé. Et, pince sans rire, il justifie sa présence dans une déclaration de presse alors qu'une des raisons de la colère des manifestants est justement l'abus de pouvoir par des ministres et leur entourage...

Dans le charivari socio-politique qui agite notre pays depuis les dernières élections générales, on aura tout vu et tout entendu. De l'étendue tentaculaire de la corruption aux nominations, les unes plus scandaleuses que les autres, en passant par l'affairisme d'Etat et le dysfonctionnement de plusieurs institutions, plus rien n'arrête la descente aux enfers du pays. Sur ce dernier point, le *cover-up* éhonté de l'enquête policière dans la mort de Soopramanien Kistnen est venu confirmer, si besoin était, l'ampleur de la gangrène qui ronge le système administratif du pays. Jamais l'île Maurice n'a atteint un tel degré de dégénérescence! Encore heureux que le judiciaire ait été épargné, malgré la tentative de mettre sous bol le bureau du Directeur des Poursuites Publiques.

La perte de confiance des Mauriciens dans leurs dirigeants est le résultat d'une accumulation de facteurs auxquels la presse n'est sans doute pas étrangère pour

« Il est connu qu'à chaque scrutin électoral, les Mauriciens découvrent, au moment de l'enregistrement des partis politiques, des regroupements de candidats aux noms les plus farfelus. Doit-on s'attendre à voir apparaître aux élections de 2024 une formation politique ayant pour sigle BLD ou BZTD avec pour chef de file un des agitateurs du moment ? Et avec quel programme ?... »

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d'être enfin considéré, à tout le moins d'être perçu, comme un grand avocat et un leader politique charismatique adulé par le peuple.

Pour gratifiant que soit la création de mouvements citoyens, il importe de connaître la finalité de leur action. Les manifestations de rue ont certes leur raison d'être puisqu'il s'agit du meilleur, sinon du seul moyen, dont dispose un peuple pour maintenir la pression sur ceux qui tiennent les rênes du pouvoir, mais de là, à croire que cela permettra de faire partir le Gouvernement, c'est se mettre le doigt dans l'œil jusqu'au coude. Comparer la situation mauricienne au «Printemps arabe» sert à épater la galerie et prête à faire sourire. A Maurice, la rue n'a jamais pu faire partir un gouvernement. D'autres s'y sont essayé avant les 'Avengers' et consorts sans jamais y parvenir.

avoir systématiquement voué aux gémonies l'ensemble de la classe politique, au gré d'éditoriaux moralisateurs, sans prendre la peine de séparer l'ivraie du bon grain. Cette stigmatisation quasi permanente des hommes politiques des partis dits *mainstream* s'est traduite par un dangereux amalgame quant à la motivation de ceux qui s'y sont engagés avec pour résultat une désaffection de l'électorat pour la chose politique et un taux élevé d'abstention aux différents scrutins organisés depuis ces dernières années. La réticence de certains à participer à la marche de samedi dernier en raison de la présence des leaders des partis dits *mainstream* va dans ce sens. C'est ainsi que l'on fait le lit des démagogues de tout poil et que s'installe la chienlit.

Cette perte de confiance a amené nombre de nos compatriotes à s'identifier avec complaisance et à suivre aveuglément un nouveau messie, un homme qui, il y a encore peu, était tout à fait inconnu au bataillon et dont la sincérité d'action reste à prouver. Par ailleurs, la montée en popularité des 'Avengers', pour salubre que puisse être leur action, s'inscrit également dans cette démarche d'inconfiance dans l'ensemble de la classe politique. A cet égard, l'empressement de certains à s'agglutiner autour des 'Avengers' suscite bien des interrogations quant à la motivation des uns et des autres.

La main sur le cœur

La pudeur n'étant pas chose courante en politique, il n'est guère étonnant que Roshi Badhain, ancien ministre d'Anerood Jugnauth, et Sanjeev Teeluckdhar, ancien *Deputy Speaker* de Pravind Jugnauth, tentent d'exploiter les *Kistnen Papers* à des fins politiques. Il y a fort à parier qu'ils sont prêts à jurer, la main sur le cœur, qu'ils n'ont pas dépassé la limite autorisée des dépenses électorales de Rs 250 000 lors de leur participation aux élections générales de 2014.

Quant à Rama Valayden, qui s'est habilement forgé une réputation de défenseur de la veuve et de l'orphelin, il est sans doute en train de réaliser son rêve de pouvoir marcher sur les pas de son idole, Gaëtan Duval, et

« Seules les urnes et la croix de l'électeur permettent de remplacer un gouvernement. Les retentissants 60-0 de 1982 et de 1995 sont là pour nous le rappeler. D'ailleurs, le très sérieux journal britannique *The Times* barrait sa une avec ce titre '*Mauritius: The Ballot Paper Revolution*' au lendemain des élections du 11 juin 1982, comme pour confirmer combien la tradition d'élections démocratiques est profondément ancrée dans les mœurs mauriciennes... »

On se souvient de la capacité du justicier Harish Boodhoo à réunir, à lui seul, plus de 30,000 personnes à Rose Hill vers la fin des années '70 et de la formidable force de frappe du MMM à cette époque. Cela n'empêcha pas le gouvernement de Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam de résister contre vents et marées et de tenir jusqu'à la prochaine échéance électorale.

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A majority of Britons aren't satisfied with how Brexit turned out

A majority of Britons are not satisfied with the post-Brexit trade agreement that Boris Johnson secured with the European Union, according to a survey that provides the first detailed insight into the nation's attitude towards the deal since it took effect.



Rotting fish, lost business and piles of red tape. The reality of Brexit hits Britain. Photo - CNN

The report, published by the British Foreign Policy Group, an independent think tank advocating for a stronger UK global presence, shows that under a quarter of those surveyed believe the Prime Minister's deal is "the best framework for our relationship with the EU moving forward."

The question of what it should be replaced with, however, reveals that nearly five years since the UK decided to leave the European Union, the nation is still bitterly divided on what role Britain should have in Europe.

While 27% of respondents wanted a much closer relationship with a view to rejoining and 22% want a closer relationship but to remain outside the bloc, 12% want to move further away from Europe. Of the 24% of respondents who approved of the deal, they did so with an important caveat that it was the best deal for the "foreseeable future". Some 15% of respondents said they didn't know.

The survey, conducted in the week after the deal came into effect on January 1, is the first major temperature check on what Brits think of the reality of Brexit.

British sentiment towards Europe remains difficult to unpick. Broadly, attitudes have softened in the past 12 months. While only a minority wish to rejoin the bloc, a majority of respondents said they viewed the European Union as a more important international partner for the UK than the United States.

And while many younger, metropolitan voters are more pro-European than older voters, the report notes that more than a quarter of respondents who voted to leave the EU describe themselves as "European."

The survey, which was conducted on behalf of BFGP by pollster Opinium, asked 2,002 British citizens questions ranging from what they thought of Johnson's Brexit deal to how much they really cared about the so-called "special relationship" with the United States.



Mauritius was the second top source of FDI into India in 2019-20. Photo - DNA

The Indian Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved signing of a comprehensive economic cooperation agreement, a kind of a free trade pact, between India and Mauritius which is aimed at liberalising norms to boost two-way commerce.

The Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the signing of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) between India and Mauritius, an official statement said.

The pact would cover 310 export items for India, including foodstuff and beverages, agricultural products, textile and textile articles, base metals, electricals and electronic items, plastics and chemicals, wood and its articles.

Mauritius would benefit from preferential market access into India for 615 products, including frozen fish, speciality sugar, biscuits, fresh fruits, juices, mineral water, beer, alcoholic drinks, soaps, bags, medical and surgical equip-

ment, and apparel.

In such an agreement, two trading partners cut or eliminate duties on a host of products besides liberalising norms to promote services trade.

A mutually convenient date would be finalised for signing of the agreement, after which it will be implemented. It would be India's first such trade pact with an African nation.

The pact would cover trade in goods, rules of origin, trade in services, Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, dispute settlement, movement of natural persons, telecom, financial services, customs procedures and cooperation in other areas.

The bilateral trade between the countries has been dipped to USD 690 million in 2019-20 from USD 1.2 billion in 2018-19. While India's exports in 2019-20 aggregated at USD 662 million, the imports stood at USD 27.89 million.

India exports petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, cereals, cotton and electrical machinery, apparel and clothing accessories to Mauritius. Mauritius exports to India iron and steel, pearls, precious/semi-precious stones and optical, photographic and precision instruments.

Mauritius was the second top source of foreign direct investment (FDI) into India in 2019-20. India received USD 8.24 billion foreign inflows from that country in the last fiscal.

Japan's ruling party says women can join key meetings — as silent observers

When the leaders of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party meet, there are no women at the table. But the male-dominated elected body has a proposal to change that — by allowing five female lawmakers to sit in silence and watch the men work, reports The Washington Post.

Toshihiro Nikai, 82, the party's secretary general, told reporters Tuesday that the idea was to allow the party's female members a chance to "look" at the top decision-making process, Reuters reported. They would then be able to submit comments following the meetings. He did not say if any women had been consulted in devising the plan.

Japanese opposition politicians and social media users were quick to condemn the idea as part of the problem it would seek to address, not a solution.

Nikai made the proposal in the wake of another high-profile sexism row. Earlier this month, Yoshiro Mori, 83, then the head of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic organizing committee, resigned over comments he made demeaning women.

Japan has the largest gender gap among advanced economies recorded in the World Economic Forum's gender parity assessment, ranking 121st out of 153 coun-



Japanese Olympics Minister Seiko Hashimoto surrounded by reporters in Tokyo on Feb. 17. Photo - ABC News

tries. Men continue to dominate the top spots across politics, sports and in other sectors, with only 5.2 percent of executive roles at Japanese companies held by women as of 2019.

Japan's former prime minister Shinzo Abe had set a goal of increasing the proportion of women leaders in government ministries and agencies, as well as private firms, by 30 percent by 2020. However, last June the government acknowledged the target was "impossible" and suggested 2030 instead.

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Prince Philip admitted to hospital as a "precautionary measure"

The Duke of Edinburgh has been admitted to hospital as a "precautionary measure" on the advice of his doctor after feeling unwell, Buckingham Palace has said. Prince Philip was taken to the King Edward VII's Hospital in London on Tuesday evening, reports The Independent.

In a statement, the palace said: "His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh was admitted to the King Edward VII Hospital in London, on Tuesday evening. The Duke's admission is a precautionary measure, on the advice of His Royal Highness's doctor, after feeling unwell. The Duke is expected to remain in hospital for a few days of observation and rest."

Lockdown restrictions should not be lifted until it is clear that the NHS will be able to cope with a rise in Covid cases, hospital leaders have warned Boris Johnson. The health service has been overwhelmed with coronavirus patients in the second wave, with more than one-third of all those admitted to hospital arriving on



The Duke is expected to remain in hospital for a few days of observation. Photo - Variety

wards in January alone.

Now, as the British PM prepares to unveil his roadmap out of lockdown, NHS Providers, which represents hospital trusts in England, has given Mr Johnson the criteria that health leaders believe must be met before any restrictions can be relaxed. They include making sure that cases are at

a level where the NHS can treat all the patients it needs to and having a "robust, effective" strategy to identify and control outbreaks of Covid variants.

The daughter of the ruler of Dubai says she is being held "hostage" in a villa in the UAE capital, two years after her attempted

escape from the wealthy emirate was foiled by her father. Princess Latifa bint Mohammed Al Maktoum - whose father, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, is also vice president of the UAE - was attempting to flee Dubai in a yacht in February 2018, when Emirati authorities intercepted the boat in the Indian Ocean.

Almost a year later, a statement was released via state news agency Wam saying Latifa "was at home and living with her family in Dubai", alongside pictures of her with the former UN high commissioner for human rights, Mary Robinson. However, the BBC's Panorama has obtained video clips that claim to be from Latifa in which she says she is imprisoned. Panorama says it has now "independently verified" the details of where Latifa was being held when she sent the videos. They say she was being guarded by around 30 police, working on rotation, inside and outside the villa, which has its "windows barred shut". It is not known if she is still there. "I'm a hostage, I'm not free. I am prisoned in this jail. My life is not in my hands," she says in the clips.

\$59 million Hong Kong flat sale sets new Asia record



A penthouse in Hong Kong's affluent Mid-Levels neighbourhood set a new benchmark for price per square foot at \$17,500. Photo - AFP

Hong Kong may be in its worst recession in years but its luxury property market is still thriving after a five-bedroom apartment broke records with its \$59 million price tag.

While there have been more expensive properties sold in Hong Kong, the 3,378-square-foot penthouse in the affluent Mid-Levels neighbourhood set a new benchmark for price per square foot at \$17,500.

The HK\$459.4 million sale, reported by local media on Wednesday and recorded in the development's register of transactions, illustrates the stark inequality in Hong Kong.

Recent political instability

coupled with the coronavirus has hammered the economy, which contracted a record of 6.1 percent last year. Unemployment is currently at 6.6 percent, the highest in 16 years.

But bellwether luxury property sales suggest the super rich are weathering the storm just fine.

The price paid by the unidentified buyer for the property at 21 Borrett Road -- a newly built luxury apartment tower -- beat the previous price per square foot record set in 2017.

And it comes a week after a consortium set a new record when it paid \$935.2 million -- or \$6,450 per square foot -- for a piece of land on The Peak, the

mountain that dominates Hong Kong Island and remains the city's most exclusive neighbourhood.

Hong Kong is a city of stark contrasts -- where impoverished elderly people can be seen collecting cardboard to recycle on streets filled with supercars and luxury goods stores.

The cramped financial hub regularly tops various rankings of cities with the least affordable housing in the world, with even the cheapest apartments far out of reach for most workers.

Successive governments have failed to tackle inequality or the yawning shortage of housing, something that helped fuel huge democracy protests in recent years.

A 2019 report by real estate firm CBRE ranked Hong Kong as the most expensive city for residential property, with an average price of \$2,091 per square foot.

It listed the average property price in Hong Kong as \$1.2 million -- far above second-placed Singapore at \$874,372.

According to Knight Frank's global wealth report, the number of billionaires in Hong Kong grew from 40 in 2013 to 71 in 2019, giving the city one of the highest ratios of billionaires per capita in the world.

Sri Lanka saves last legume from expressway axe

Sri Lankan authorities Wednesday agreed to save the world's only known wild specimen of a species of tree that was due to be chopped to clear the way for a four-lane expressway.

The Sri Lanka Legume (*Crudia zeylanica*) -- a flowering tree from the legume family whose pods are not known to be eaten by humans -- was first classified in 1868 and last found in 1911.

In 2012 it was declared extinct until the surprise discovery in 2019 of a lone tree near Colombo.

But the eight-metre (26-foot) plant was set to be felled this month to allow the construction of a motorway, sparking uproar from environmentalists as well as politicians and the country's influential Buddhist clergy, reports AFP.

On Wednesday, Wildlife and Forest Conservation Minister C. B. Rathnayake said construction workers were told to spare the plant.

"The tree will not be cut and



In 2012 the species was declared extinct until the surprise discovery in 2019 of a lone tree near Colombo. Photo - AFP

the work will go ahead by passing it by," Rathnayake told reporters in Colombo.

Giving a major boost to efforts to save the plant, a group of Buddhist monks last week "ordained" it, tying a saffron robe around the trunk and declaring it a "sin" to cut it down.

Buddhism enjoys widespread respect in the island nation of 21 million people, where it is the majority religion.

A top forestry expert welcomed the government decision and said the case underscored the need for proper environmental impact assessments before undertaking major construction.

Compiled by Doojesh Ramlallah

"It is premature to suggest that the MSM will meet the same fate as the Wakashio shipwreck"

Dharam Gokhool, academician and former Minister of Education, shares his views on the rapidly changing situation in the country in the wake of the popular protests that have been organised, especially the latest one in Port Louis which has sent a clear signal about the population's discontent with the government of the day. He makes a distinction between civic activism and political engagement, in a way calling upon the actors involved to decide for themselves which side they approach can be most effective in bringing about the kind of changes that are required to make a better society. In this perspective, the traditional parties also have to rethink their role. Read on:



Mauritius Times: What are your lingering thoughts on the 13th February "Marche Citoyenne" in the capital city, Port Louis?

Dharam Gokhool: The 13th February "Marche Citoyenne" represents yet another phase of public demonstration of the swelling discontent within the Mauritian society. It symbolises the omissions and commissions of the present Government as far as the deplorable state of the management of the public affairs is concerned since the general elections of November 2019 and its aftermath.

The twin themes that drove the electoral campaign of the MSM and its allies, namely, "Operation Nettoyage" (getting rid of societal scourges: *pourritir* -- like corruption, nepotism, favouritism and lack of transparency) and "Développement" (a bigger national cake and bigger share for every citizen) metamorphosed into the exact opposite of what had been promised, causing tremendous disappointment among the electorate.

With the onset of Covid-19, the situation in the country became complicated, with lockdown and confinement being imposed, the chaotic management of the distribution of basic necessities to the public and the introduction of measures restricting freedom of movement.

The Wakashio oil spill tragedy and the

delay in taking prompt action by Government to prevent the ecological disaster, the failure of our coastal surveillance system, the sunk Tug Sir Gaetan Duval and the associated loss of lives, the recent revelations by the Avengers group of Lawyers of alleged murders, including that of a prominent MSM agent, the Constituency Clerk scandal and the Kistnen Papers in relation to possible malpractices during the 2019 general elections: all have, in one way or another, fuelled the anger and frustration within a wide spectrum of the Mauritian society.

On 29th August 2020, a massive anti-Government citizen gathering of some 150,000 Mauritians was staged in Port Louis. It set in motion a new form of citizen street protest that we have never seen for decades, reminding Government that the public will not condone violations of good governance, and unethical political conduct. True it is that the 13th February "Marche Citoyenne" involved the opposition parties alongside civil society organisations, but overall the bottom line remained very much same: 'This Government must go.'

*** Did you however get that uncanny feeling that we are in for bad times politically and on the social front as well, in view of the intense and perhaps nasty battles that will be waged in the months ahead?**

"In the year of the Metal Ox, the message of the professional astrologer, Susan Levitt, could not be clearer: "Success will come to those who work hard. Really hard. It's hard work, duty and discipline." I am not suggesting that Labour and MMM should consult a political astrologer to know more about their future; they have to become the architects of their own future..."

This Government is only just over a year old and on paper it has more than three years to complete its mandate. However, outwardly Government seems to be confident of its comfortable parliamentary majority although it won with a score of only 37% of the votes cast. Since its coming to power, and taking into consideration its overall track record, seriously marred by alleged cases of blatant nepotism, corruption and political interferences in the running of public institutions and with an economy seriously paralysed by the Covid-19, Government cannot afford to bury its head in the sand for too long. It will have to reckon with the political, economic and social ground realities which are likely to evolve in favour of the Opposition forces.

The 37% support is likely to dwindle while the 63% is likely to rise, although it may be too early to predict in precise terms whether the net political support will go to the Opposition.

We may be in for a stretched period of political volatility unless some unforeseen developments tilt the political clock either way. Otherwise, since we are in the domain of politics and since politics is about power and where there is power, there is bound to be struggle for power. A struggle not necessarily between Government and Opposition forces but also within Government and Opposition

forces. Too early to predict the political configuration for an eventual political showdown.

And since we are in Mauritius with a complex matrix of ideological and communal/ethnic/religious affiliations among the electorate, the forthcoming electoral battles are likely to be nasty but also epic.

*** The MSM-led government will clearly hang on, as expressed by the PM himself recently - 'We shall not retreat' --, as long as its parliamentary majority allows it to do so and assuming that it succeeds in overcoming the legal challenges from the 'Avengers' lawyer-politicians and the electoral petitions lodged by opposition politicians. It might also be too early to conclude that its days are numbered since most of the other half of the population chose to stay away from the 13th Feb rally. What do you think?**

It must be reckoned that even if the 29th August 2020 and the 13th February 2021 gatherings were impressive and the common underlying unifying theme revolved around sanctioning the Government for its numerous failings, nonetheless the representativeness of the crowd was more pronounced towards the urban and southern regions whereas the presence of the predominantly northern belt, which plays a determining role, within our present electoral boundaries configuration, in the formation of governments, was not very remarkable. They have opted to observe rather than participate in these events.

This chunk of the electorate is known to *make* and *unmake* governments; it is less vocal, takes more time in weighing the odds and often, if not always, backs the winning side.

However, since November 2019, the Government seems to be losing its grip over this electorate as its popularity has been seriously battered by a string of decisions and actions, as I mentioned earlier, which are contrary to its engagements.

The revelations of the Avengers, in particular the brutal murder of the MSM activist, allegedly by people connected to the MSM fraternity, have had a traumatic effect on the public at large, but in particular within the electorate of the northern belt.

*** Contd on page 8**

'Labour and MMM need not consult a political astrologer to know more about their future; they have to become the architects of their own future'

* Contd from page 7

Ex-Minister Bodha's resignation and his statements, making oblique reference to the possible involvement of those familiar with the corridors of power in the elimination of the MSM activist, are likely to provoke further "social distancing" from the MSM.

The MSM is manoeuvring in troubled waters, but it is premature to suggest that it will meet the same fate as that of the sunk tug Sir Gaetan Duval or the Wakashio shipwreck.

*** In fact the view has been expressed that the country is moving dangerously close to being split into two distinct politico-ethnic blocs. Do you find this happening, or has it indeed been the case most of the time?**

For the last 52 years, both our Constitution and our electoral system have conditioned our political system and our national psyche. Political parties have all preached *Unity, Unity in Diversity* but in practice, more than ideology, *ethnicity and identity* have always taken precedence. In the process, we have often had to bow to the imperatives of communalism, casteism and clannism at the expense of competence and meritocracy, compounded by the legacy of history and sociology.

In the process, unity has remained more of a convenient slogan than a living, breathing daily reality. Paradoxically, we are more Mauritian outside Mauritius than at home. Why? Because, overseas we have to forge our own destinies on the basis of our merits.

After 52 years of Independence and after 28 years of acceding to the status of a Republic, can we afford to repeat the past, in the face of numerous challenges confronting the future of our society?

The danger of the emergence of politico-ethnic blocs is there, but we also have the opportunity of defining a *new political agenda* which will unleash the energy, potential and creativity of the Mauritian genius. This is the real challenge in order to avoid being a prisoner of the past. In any case, as it has been mentioned somewhere: *The past is just a lesson, not a life sentence.*

*** On the other hand, one has to concede that credit for the success of the 13th Feb rally should go mostly to the build-up of public opinion against the doings/misdoings of the current government on different counts by the 'Avengers'. They are the ones who are taking the initiative and setting the agenda - not the Opposition, isn't it?**

We have to admit that both Government and Opposition (parliamentary) have been losing touch with the daily predicament of the common citizen and the working class. Even the youth have distanced themselves from the "traditional" or "established" political parties. Overall, the number of people who do not want to identify with political parties has been on the increase.

The *Kolektif Konversation Solider* (initiated by Rezistans ek Alternativ), the Bruneau Laurette *Linion Sitwayin* have been instrumental in connecting and mobilising civil society. The 29th August 2020 gathering in Port Louis is very much their initiative. The Avengers, through their initiative in taking the defence of Widow Kistnen, have provided traction to the revival of the citizen interest in matters of public interest.

Now that the Avengers are envisaging to be politically active, it goes to their credit that they are working on their manifesto.

These developments could very well instigate the



“The ground realities of the Mauritian political landscape cannot be cast aside in the boardrooms of political parties. It is also true that any flavour of "shepherding" or "patronisation" (extra help being extended to someone incapable of proving her/his mettle) may backfire. Let greatness be earned. Let people prove worthy of the position they will occupy and the functions they will exercise...”

Opposition parties to revisit their strategies and propose new initiatives in line with the changing aspirations of society.

*** It was to be expected that Rama Valayden would leverage the public approval rating of the 'Avengers' for a political comeback. In fact, he has already announced the creation of a political party soon. Isn't there going to be too much of a crowd in the opposition ranks and that could eventually lead to voter dispersion?**

Multiplicity of political parties will inevitably lead to a dispersion of votes in the Opposition ranks. This is where those in the opposition (both *established* and *emerging*)

“Let us not be in a denial mode. Let politicians, in particular, not be in a denial mode. There are fundamental shifts in values that are reshaping societal expectations and behaviours. The internet has created greater visibility and the need for accountability from public figures on a wide spectrum of issues...”

must carefully weigh the implications of a two-, three- or four-cornered fight within our given electoral system.

One does not need to be a rocket scientist to figure out, given the prevailing electoral system and its inherent loopholes, who are the people who will best exploit them and with what possible outcomes.

However, if Rama Valayden's party is being launched for the long haul, with a national outreach involving *all* components of the electorate and not just for the sake of the next general elections, it may be an attractive move.

*** There's another build-up that's being done in a sustained manner since the Wakashio episode - and that can be seen in the media and on social platforms: the projection of Bruneau Laurette as the new leader. Jocelyn Gregoire appears to be past history for the spin-doctors, and so it would also seem as regards Paul Berenger, who may not appear to be convincing to them anymore. What's your take on that?**

Bruneau Laurette has been able to create an aura of a committed civil society campaigner. Campaigning on social and environmental/ecological issues which is now a global trend. In a context of a huge backlog of problems affecting a large chunk of the Mauritian society, being a civic activist provides more freedom of action and greater outreach to take the political class to task.

Take the example of Ralph Nader, the US Consumer advocate for consumer protection, environmentalism and government reforms, also the recipient of the 2017 Gandhi Peace Award, Yousafai Malala, the activist for female education and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate and Greta Thunberg, the Swedish environmental activist who has gained world fame and who has challenged world leaders to take action to stop climate change.

Civic activism can be a pathway to the corridors of political power. But in the Mauritian context, with the prevailing general disillusionment with the political class, Laurette will have to tread carefully if he wants to sustain the credibility he has earned so far. There is a real risk of being swept away by a wave of acrimony that often accompanies any change of trajectory from the social to the political domain. Being a social activist is not the same as being a candidate for a political position.

It is for Laurette to decide where he wants to carve a leadership position -- in the broader society or within a political party framework.

* Contd on page 9

'Are all politicians power seekers and of a corrupt breed? This is a dangerous narrative'



* Contd from page 8

*** Much is being made these days about what is perceived as the loss of credibility that affecting the Labour Party and the MMM - the two main parties that have dominated our politics for a long time. Do you think that's indeed the case and does it have to do mostly with the leadership of these two parties, especially in the context of the "présidentialisation" of Mauritian politics?**

Let us not be in a denial mode. Let politicians, in particular, not be in a denial mode. There are fundamental shifts in values that are reshaping societal expectations and behaviours. The internet has created greater visibility and the need for accountability from public figures on a wide spectrum of issues.

Politics and politicians are having a very bad press. There is indeed an erosion of political credibility. We are in the thick of a major crisis of political culture. Why?

Paul Berenger coined the term "*dérive pouvoiriste*" which is often fuelled by the oil of corruption. Cardinal Piat has stated that corruption is the new virus of our society.

But are all politicians power seekers and of a corrupt breed? This is a dangerous narrative which will discourage many who may wish to come forward to serve our society.

It is our model of Government that makes of a Prime Minister a constitutional monarch with quasi-absolute power, together with the risks of the abuse of such power by the holder of the prime ministerial position.

The leaders of the two main political parties are aspiring prime ministerial candidates. Is it not incumbent upon them and their parties to come forward with proposals and undertakings about the *democratisation of the "présidentialisation"* of Mauritian politics instead of focusing upon the "distribution" of constitutional positions?

Are our current political leaders prepared for a serious introspection or will they carry on with business as usual?

This is an opportunity for them to walk into posterity by leaving behind a legacy of governance based on a profoundly democratic ethos and a new political

"Civic activism can be a pathway to the corridors of political power. But in the Mauritian context, with the prevailing general disillusionment with the political class, Laurette will have to tread carefully if he wants to sustain the credibility he has earned so far. There is a real risk of being swept away by a wave of acrimony that often accompanies any change of trajectory from the social to the political domain..."

"Are all politicians power seekers and of a corrupt breed? This is a dangerous narrative which will discourage many who may wish to come forward to serve our society. It is our model of Government that makes of a Prime Minister a constitutional monarch with quasi-absolute power, together with the risks of the abuse of such power by the holder of the prime ministerial position..."

mindset for the new generation of politicians.

*** It has come out lately that a new figure, who comes with apparently ample resources to finance an electoral campaign coupled with the so-called "correct profile", is being shepherded to eventually take over the leadership of the Labour Party. If that's not a red herring, do you see Labourites going along with that?**

New blood is always welcome, and in the new political environment where there are legitimate public expectations that our existing political parties must review their "modus operandi" in order to reposition themselves and take on board the values that are shaping the contours of the 21st century as well as the aspirations of the upcoming generation.

It is true that the ground realities of the Mauritian political landscape cannot be cast aside in the boardrooms of political parties where political strategies are being crafted for winning forthcoming electoral battles. It is also true that any flavour of "shepherding" or "patronisation" (extra help being extended to someone

incapable of proving her/his mettle) may backfire.

The strategist may derive useful inspiration from this popular Shakespearean quotation:

Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them.

Let greatness be earned. Let people prove worthy of the position they will occupy and the functions they will exercise. The moment of truth is often when the rubber meets the road.

*** To go back to the credibility deficit issue, the fact that the Labour Party and the MMM have been reduced to become dependent on the Bruneau Laurette-led 'Linion Sitwayin' to rally a massive crowd says much about the state both parties find themselves in today. Do you think however that there is still a future for these two parties?**

Let us not jump to conclusions too quickly. But let us admit that they both have a *credibility deficit* which is providing space for new players like the Rama Valayden's "*troisième force*" and others.

Both Labour and MMM are collaborating with Bruneau Laurette-led 'Linion Sitwayin'. I took note of Bruneau Laurette's latest statement to a newspaper and I quote:

"Nous ne sommes pas en mesure de prendre une position politiquement."

But should this come to materialise, it may well add winds to the sails of both Labour and MMM, of course subject to other conditions and issues being thrashed out within the Opposition front.

In the worst-case scenario, both Labour and MMM have always been able to mobilise their hard core of supporters, which is not insignificant in the current political configuration.

The biggest challenge for both Labour and MMM, either going alone or together, is how to convince the electorate, in particular the voters of the northern belt, that the MSM promised them an air-ticket but has now embarked them on a ship, or rather on a boat sailing in troubled waters.

In this Chinese Zodiac Year, which is the year of the Metal Ox, the message of the professional astrologer, Susan Levitt, could not be clearer:

"Success will come to those who work hard. Really hard. It's hard work, duty and discipline."

I am not suggesting that Labour and MMM should consult a political astrologer to know more about their future; they have to become the architects of their own future.

It's not just Trump - presidents and politicians have long shredded etiquette

'Mind your manners' isn't just something your mother told you. Manners - and civility - are an essential component of how things get done in government



Maurizio Valsania
Professor of American History,
Università di Torino

Donald Trump has achieved something unique: He is the first and only president to face not one but two impeachments. But even though the U.S. Senate is still expected to exonerate him from charges that he incited the deadly Capitol insurrection, Americans already know that he won't go down in history as a model of civility.

Examples of his bad manners abounded from day one of his presidency. When he gave his inaugural speech, Trump in 2017 craftily avoided any nod to his defeated opponent, Hillary Clinton, or to the other half of the electorate.

Then he started embarrassing foreign leaders during official trips. "Time after time, diplomatic niceties fell by the wayside as the president contradicted and undermined his hosts," the Associated Press reported in mid-2019.

After the 2020 election, Trump did not congratulate President-elect Joe Biden - and did not attend the inaugural ceremony in January.

As the nation celebrates Presidents Day, it's good to remember, however, that Trump is not alone in his transgressions of civility. In reality, the shredding of etiquette by presidents, other politicians and public officials has long been a feature of American politics. Ungraciousness is bipartisan: The public has not forgotten House Speaker Nancy Pelosi literally shredding, in full public view, the text of President Trump's State of the Union speech.

Ripping off the toupee

American politicians have long treated one another with disrespect. Trump shunning the president-elect may seem extreme today, but in 1801, at the presidential inauguration ceremony of Thomas Jefferson, the outgoing president, John Adams, was nowhere to be seen - he was



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi tears up what appeared to be a copy of President Donald Trump's State of the Union speech on Feb. 4, 2020. Xinhua/Liu Jie via Getty Images

not even invited. For his part, Adams had appointed to high office several anti-Jeffersonian men. And he had done that just before leaving office.

Jefferson, in turn, did not attend the funeral of George Washington on Dec. 18, 1799, and in 1829 John Quincy Adams - another one-term-only president, like his father - stayed clear of Andrew Jackson's inauguration.

In the years before the Civil War, breaches in etiquette took a dramatic turn. On May 22, 1856, U.S. Rep. Preston Brooks of South Carolina, a Democrat, beat Republican Sen. Charles Sumner with a walking cane. The scene took place on the floor of the U.S. Senate. Brooks was "outraged" by an anti-slavery speech Sumner had given a few days earlier. He stopped short of killing his enemy only because the cane unexpectedly broke.

The floor of the U.S. House of Representatives held ominous scenes as well. On Feb. 6, 1858, at nearly 2 a.m., as members were discussing the admission of the Kansas Territory into the Union, South Carolina Democrat Laurence Keitt

and Pennsylvania Republican Galusha Grow exchanged volleys of insults, arguing over whether Kansas would be a free or a slave state.

They switched to blows. More than 30 representatives jumped into the fight, leading to a brawl. The situation defused after Wisconsin Republicans John Potter and Cadwallader Washburn ripped the toupee from the head of William Barksdale, a Democrat from Mississippi.

Founders knew incivility's risk

No matter the occasional jeers and laughs; when political leaders treat each other with disrespect, the nation suffers.

Civility is neither frivolous nor a matter of private behavior only. As economist Friedrich Hayek said, civility is a "method of collaboration which requires agreement only on means and not on ends." The lack of civility, obviously, decreases the chances of finding solutions to urgent common problems.

The founders, perhaps better than any other generation, were acutely aware of the political risk of incivility. Washington,

Adams, Jefferson and the others knew history by heart. They looked back at the tyrants and all the reckless commanders of the past, like Attila or Caligula. They knew that brash leaders such as these could, in the words of Thomas Jefferson, burst asunder "all the ligaments of duty & affection."

And they looked forward, with anxiety, to the moment when a new barbarism would come back in full swing. Ominous signs were already looming. On May 30, 1806, Andrew Jackson killed Charles Dickinson, an attorney who had accused him, of all things, of cheating on a horse race bet. This event did not put a stop to Jackson's career. He was a brawler and a committed duelist. He snapped easily and showed no respect for his opponents. But "Old Hickory," as he was known, kept gaining national notoriety.

President Jackson is Trump's favourite leader - although the two have very little in common. Just like Trump, however, Jackson represents a straightforward, low-brow style of unapologetic and ungraceful leadership. Jackson bore exactly those personal attributes which left the founders aghast: "His passions are terrible," Thomas Jefferson said about Jackson in a 1824 interview.

The founders were passing through the short-lived age of refinement, politeness and civilization. From the 1750s to the early 1800s, American leaders set for themselves an ambitious goal. They wanted to trigger an anthropological revolution and promote a new type of individual - polite, civilized, kind and collaborative.

A modern nation, for them, relied on politicians who talked a certain way (with a lower voice), dressed a certain way (with less aristocratic pomp) and were able to forestall any boorish posturing.

In this respect, history has proven the founders' expectations misplaced. These men, slave owners though they were, valued civility as at once liberating for the subject and an effective strategy of survival for the community at large. But "the free cultivation of Letters," as George Washington hoped, "the unbounded extension of Commerce, the progressive refinement of Manners, the growing liberality of sentiment," did not come about.

Joe Biden, now president, will not reverse the course of history. He cannot restore an age of refinement and politeness. He is not the vaccine. But in the eyes of many, he can be at least an antidote against Trump's lack of grace.

Clamour for a New Beginning

* Cont. from page 3

We cannot compose with the same political leaders and political class which have failed the countries over the past decades. The country needs a new beginning. The proposal to get civil society and the opposition parties together to define a new *projet de société* for the country is therefore a non-starter.



“History is littered with examples of forced resignations and convictions owing to errors of judgement by political leaders. In 1963, Harold Macmillan, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom resigned after the Profumo scandal. In 1974 Richard Nixon had to resign as President of the United States in the wake of the Watergate scandal and impeachment hearings. Francois Fillon who had served as Prime Minister of France from 2007 to 2012 under President Nicolas Sarkozy was convicted of fraud and misuse of funds in a case of ‘emplois fictifs’...”

The people hanker for a new beginning cut off from the culture of dynastic politics and the subservience of the political class to omnipotent leaders. Above all, the people and the country need a competent and credible alternative new team to challenge the established order. In the new political configuration of tomorrow, there is no place in politics for the dilettante bent on assuring a cushy career in politics through the perks and trappings of

power.

Instead, people want a new breed of young leaders chosen on the basis of their intellect, professional competence, track record, ethics and ethos of altruistic service to the people and willing to team up for a term of office to chart an innovative pathway towards inclusive prosperity and steer the country through the adverse fall-outs of the Covid-19 pandemic to realize our loftiest ambition as a nation. Commitment of service to the people, ethics and professional competence must be the drivers of their actions to establish a new and far better socio-economic order. All elected MPs must therefore first and foremost be vocal representatives of the people and citizens committed to uphold the people's and public interest at all times.

The onus is therefore squarely on the bright and talented young of the country to team up and take up the challenge of designing and shaping the vibrant and innovative Mauritius we want as a nation for the benefit of the multitude.

Mrinal Roy

Why the British abandoned impeachment – and what the US Congress might do next

* Cont. from page 2

The prosecution included Edmund Burke, one of the most gifted orators of the age. Eventually, though, the House of Lords proved Adams right, acquitting Hastings in 1795.

This stunning loss could have been the death knell for impeachment in Great Britain, but Hastings was not the last British political figure to be impeached. That dubious honour goes to Henry Dundas, Lord Melville, Scottish first lord of the admiralty, who was charged in 1806 with misappropriating public money. Dundas was widely assumed to be guilty, but, as with Hastings, the House of Lords voted to acquit.

These examples showed that impeachment, even when the accused government official had done the things that he was accused of doing, was a blunt, cumbersome weapon. With both Hastings and Dundas, the House of Commons was willing to act, but the House of Lords – which was (and is) not an elected body and therefore less responsive to popular opinion – refused to go along. As a tool for checking the actions of ministers and other political appointees, impeachment no longer worked, and it fell out of use.

A new method of accountability

The decline of impeachment in Britain coincided with the rise of another, more effective process by which high officials there could be held accountable.

British prime ministers answer to Parliament, doing so literally during the now-weekly question time in the House of Commons. Leaders who for whatever reason lose the support of a simple majority in the lower house, including through a vote of no confidence, can be forced to resign. The last time a British prime minister lost a vote of no confidence was in 1979, when the minority Labour government of James Callaghan was defeated.

The UK prime minister's 'question time' is one key method by which the government's leader can be held to account by other lawmakers. U.K. Parliament via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY

If a prime minister receives a vote of no confidence, there is an alternative to resignation: call an election for a new Parliament, which is what Callaghan did, and let the people decide whether the current government



If Rep. Jamie Raskin and the other House managers of the impeachment case don't prevail, that may not be the end of possible accountability for former President Donald Trump. Senate Television via AP

gets to stay or has to go. If the prime minister's party loses, he or she is generally out, and the leader of the party with the new majority takes over. In 1979, the defeat of Callaghan and the Labour Party paved the way for the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher, Britain's first female prime minister.

This provides an immediate course of action for those who oppose a British government for any reason, including allegations of official wrongdoing, and delivers a rapid decision.

In the United States, by contrast, a president can be accused of corruption or even sedition but face no real consequences, so long as one more than a third of the Senate declines to convict.

Now that Trump has been acquitted, then the Constitution's bulwark against presidential malfeasance could become yet another mechanism of minority government.

Another path

If impeachment is rendered useless in the US, as it was in Britain two centuries ago, the Constitution does offer another remedy: Section 3 of the 14th Amendment.

Originally intended to prevent former Confederates from returning to power after the Civil War, Section 3 bars people who have "engaged in insurrection or rebellion" against the US from serving in state or federal governments, including in Congress or as president or vice president.

The language in the amendment could justify barring Trump from future office – and the resolution to do so may require only a majority vote in both houses of Congress, though enforcement would likely also need a ruling from a judge.

Eliga Gould,
Professor of History,
University of New Hampshire



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MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY

17 February 2021

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Headaches: three tips from a neuroscientist on how to get rid of them

When headaches strike, many people reach for a painkiller. Probing the reasons behind the pain is often a better idea

Everyone experiences headaches. From dull throbbing dehydration headaches to incapacitating migraines, a sore head is an extremely common complaint. This is perhaps especially true at the moment. Covid-19 can cause them, as can sitting at desks for too long and not getting out of the house enough.

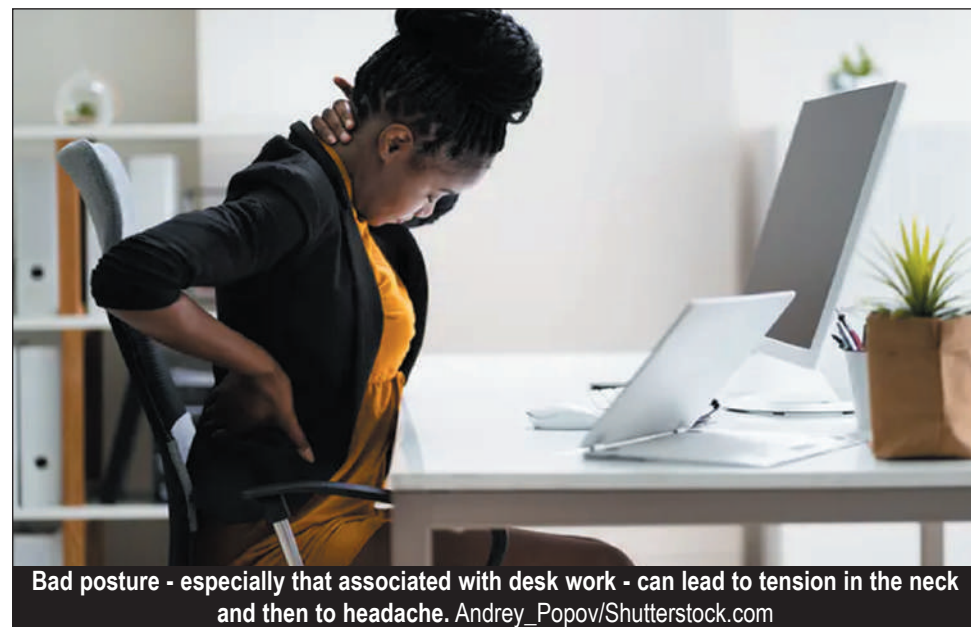
When headaches strike, many people's reaction is to reach for a painkiller. And these can do the job. But a better solution is often to probe the reasons behind the pain - especially if you get similar types of headaches a lot.

the sensory receptors will fire off signals to the brain, which we interpret as pain.

Headaches are an early warning system. The best way to counteract them is to work out what they are warning us about.

1. Think beyond your head

This means thinking beyond your head. Yes, headache pain is generated somewhere in our head and we feel it in our head and that is why it is called headache. But headache is so much more than that - which is why I'm fascinated by them, have studied them for the past 20 years and



Bad posture - especially that associated with desk work - can lead to tension in the neck and then to headache. Andrey_Popov/Shutterstock.com



Where you experience the pain can be some clue as to what type of headache you have. Africa Studio/Shutterstock

Even though they all entail pain, where the pain is can clue us into what type of headache we are experiencing. Pain in the face and forehead are markers of sinus-related headache whilst the sensation of a pneumatic drill somewhere in our cranium is often migraine.

But ultimately, all headaches are caused by vasodilation in the head - the widening of blood vessels near the brain. This stretches sensory receptors in the vessel wall and we feel that sensation as pain.

To understand why we need to think about the constraints the contents of our head are working under. Blood is toxic to brain tissue and so is kept separate through the blood-brain barrier. If a blood vessel leaks or breaks, this results in a haemorrhage and the death of the brain tissue the blood seeps into. So, if our blood vessels dilate beyond comfortable limits,

recently published a book on the subject.

It's a two-way street. The cause of our headache can sometimes come from our body or our behaviour. And of course headaches affect both our body and our behaviour. If we see headache as something isolated to our cranium then we will never truly understand its cause, our experience of it, or how we can best mitigate it.

Frequent migraine sufferers intimately understand this and often religiously track their food intake and their activities as well as the weather in order to work out what triggers them. But the normal headache sufferer is often less in tune with the causes of their pain.

Tension headache is a really good example of how this works. It feels like a tight band squeezing around your head with a tonne weight sitting on top for good measure. We are all aware of their occur-

rence at times of great emotional stress (lockdown homeschooling anyone?) but they can equally be caused by the stress we put on our body, with bad posture for example, or recovery from injury.

Both entail over-activity of the musculature around the head and neck, which sets up an inflammatory response involving prostaglandins and nitric oxide, both of which are chemicals that act to widen blood vessels. Inflammatory chemicals also directly activate the trigeminal nerve - the most complex of the cranial nerves and the one responsible for sensation and movement in the face.

Taking too many things on, rushing around trying to get things done in negative time, and trying to be all things to all people are common behavioural markers that will predict a tension headache. That and the actions we take when the pain begins.

2. Listen to the pain

If you have a pain in your leg, it might stop you from playing in that tennis match or turning up for five-a-side football. You know that if you play on it, you might do more damage and your recovery will take longer. But we don't tend to do that with headache. We take a painkiller or an anti-inflammatory and carry on as normal even though our pain receptors are screaming at us that there is something wrong.

Taking paracetamol or ibuprofen will act to avert the danger, reducing the inflammation, the dilation and the perception of pain, but the headache will reoccur unless we can address the cause. Sometimes it's obvious - if you have a sinus headache you're just going to have to wait for your sinuses to clear, so taking a painkiller or a decongestant may be a good approach - but sometimes our coping

strategy can make things worse.

We may decide a bottle of wine and a takeaway is just the kind of treat we need to relax and de-stress. But both lead to dehydration, another ubiquitous cause of headache. With your brain made of more than 70% water, if your kidneys need borrow some to dilute alcohol or salts and spices, it usually comes from this oasis. The brain loses water such that it literally shrinks in volume, tugging on the membranes covering the brain and triggering pain.

3. Use the brain's natural painkillers

So what else can we do? One way is to lean into the brain's natural painkiller system and to boost neurochemicals associated with happiness (such as serotonin and oxytocin) and reward (dopamine). Having a laugh at a comedy, enjoying a good friend's company or indulging in some intimacy with a partner will all boost these hormones to various degrees.

Each block pain signals coming from the body, not only helping you get a handle on your headache but also redressing the balance of neurochemicals that were the mechanism of your upset emotional state.

The knowledge that we can leverage our behaviour and our body to keep our brain's neurochemicals in balance gives us a way to break the headache cycle. So next time you have a headache for which the causes aren't glaringly obvious - you're not otherwise sick and you've been keeping hydrated - take a look at your life and see what you can change there. The pain, after all, is trying to tell you something.

Amanda Ellison,
Professor of Neuroscience,
Durham University



Puns that will make your day

John Travolta tested negative for coronavirus last night. Turns out it was just Saturday night fever.

The World Health Organization has announced that dogs cannot contract Covid-19. Dogs previously held in quarantine can now be released. To be clear, WHO let the dogs out.

I saw an advertisement for burial plots, and thought to myself that's the last thing I need.

Intelligence is like underwear. It is important that you have it, but not necessary that you show it off.

Relationships are a lot like algebra. Have you ever looked at your X and wondered Y?

A courtroom artist was arrested today for an unknown reason. Details are sketchy.

People are making end-of-the-world jokes like there's no tomorrow.

Whatever you do, always give 100% unless you're donating blood.

What do you call a sleepwalking nun? Roamin' Catholic.

What did Snow White say when she came out of the photo booth? Someday my prints will come.

Dad, are we pyromaniacs? Yes, we arson.

I've always had an irrational fear of speed bumps but I'm slowly getting over it.

What word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it? Short.

I've finally told my suitcases there will be no holiday this year. Now I'm dealing with the emotional baggage.

If you're not supposed to eat at night, why is there a light bulb in the refrigerator?

Don't let your worries get the best of you; remember, Moses started out as a basket case.



If I catch you, you're mine!

There is an overweight guy who is watching TV. A commercial comes on for a guaranteed weight loss of 10 pounds in a week. So, the guy, thinking what the hell, signs up for it.

Next morning an incredibly beautiful woman is standing at his door in nothing but a pair of running shoes and a sign about her neck that reads, "If you can catch me, you can have me."

As soon as he sees her, she takes off running. He tries to catch her, but is unable. This continues for a week, at the end of which, the man has lost 10 pounds. After this he tries the next weight loss plan, 15 pounds in a week.

The next morning an even more beautiful woman is standing at the door, in similar conditions. The same happens with her as the first woman, except he almost catches her. This continues for a week, at the end of which he, as suspected, weighs 15 pounds less.

Excited about this success, he decides to do the master program. Before he signs up, he is required to sign a waiver and is warned about the intensity of this plan. Still he signs up.

The next morning, waiting at the door, is a hulking 300

pound muscle man with nothing but a pair of running shoes, and showing signs of sexual arousal and a sign around his neck that says, "If I catch you, you're mine!" The man was supposed to lose 25 pounds in the week; he lost 34.

Q: What starts with E, ends with E, and has only 1 letter in it?

A: Envelope.

Happy Birthday!

During lunch at work, I ate 3 plates of beans (which I know I shouldn't). When I got home, my husband seemed excited to see me and exclaimed delightedly, "Darling, I have a surprise for dinner tonight." He then blindfolded me and led me to my chair at the dinner table. I took a seat and just as he was about to remove my blindfold, the telephone rang. He made me promise not to touch the blindfold until he returned and went to answer the call.

The beans I had consumed were still affecting me and the pressure was becoming unbearable, so while my husband was out of the room, I seized the opportunity, shifted my weight to one leg and let one go. It was not only loud, but it smelled like a fertilizer truck running over a skunk in front of a garbage dump!

I took my napkin from my lap and fanned the air around me vigorously. Then, shifting to the other leg, I ripped off three more. The stink was worse than cooked cabbage. Keeping my ears carefully tuned to the conversation in the other room, I went on releasing atomic bombs like this for another few minutes. The pleasure was indescribable!

Eventually the telephone farewells signalled the end of my freedom, so I quickly fanned the air a few more times with my napkin, placed it on my lap and folded my hands back on it feeling very relieved and pleased with myself.

My face must have been the picture of innocence when my husband returned, apologizing for taking so long. He asked me if I had peaked through the blindfold, and I assured him I had not. At this point, he removed the blindfold, and twelve dinner guests seated around the table, with their hands to their noses, chorused, "Happy Birthday!"

Life's LESSONS

Raise warriors, not parasites

They asked the founder of Dubai, Sheikh Rashid, about the future of his country, and he said: "My grandfather was on a camel, my father was on a camel, I'm in Mercedes, my son is on Land Rover, And my grandson is going to be from Land Rover, but my great grandson will be back on a camel..."

"Why is that so?"

"Tough times create strong men, strong men create easy times. Easy times create weak men, weak men create tough times."

"Many won't understand, but you have to raise warriors, not parasites..."

During one of his travels, Kalidasa felt very thirsty and looked around for water. He saw a woman drawing water from a well.

He went up to her and asked her for water. She agreed to give him water, but asked him, "Who are you? Introduce yourself."

Now Kalidasa thought that an ordinary village woman was not worthy of knowing who Kalidasa was. So, he said, "I am a traveller."

But his lady replied, "In this world there are only two travellers - the Sun and the Moon. Both rise and set everyday and keep travelling perpetually."

Then Kalidasa said, "Alright then, I am a guest." The lady promptly replied, "In this world there are only two guests - Youth and Wealth... both are temporary and hence can only be called as guests."

Intrigued Kalidasa said, "I am a tolerant person (*sahansheel vyakti*). Now

Life stories Who are you?

the lady replied, "In this world only two truly know the meaning of tolerance - Bhoomi (earth) and tree. How much ever you stamp the earth or throw stones at the tree (for the fruits), both continue to nurture us."

Now Kalidasa was completely perplexed. He said, "Fine. I am a stubborn person (*hatavaadi*). The lady smiled and said, "There are only two truly stubborn personalities - our nails and our hair. We keep cutting them non-stop, but they continue to grow."

Kalidasa had been patient so far, but now in anger he said, "I am a fool." Now the lady gave a wide smile and said, "There are only two kinds of fools in this

world - a king who rules without having any capability or knowledge & a minister who is a sycophant to such a king and lavishes praises on such a useless king."

Kalidasa realised that he had been outsmarted. He fell at the feet of the lady and when he touched her feet and then got up, whom did he see? Mata Saraswati - the Goddess of Learning and Wisdom. She said, "Kalidasa, you are wise. But only if you know yourself do you become a Manushya (human being). A person without any awareness of self has not reached the pinnacle of being a human."

The Guru who recounted this story in his pravachan said, "Children should become a *Manushya* & know themselves. More than teaching them how to earn more money and become rich, parents should teach them to become aware of themselves and become better human beings."

White rice or brown rice: Which is better for your health?



which leaves white rice with very few essential nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and particularly fibre as compared to brown rice.

100 gms brown rice contains 1.8 gms fibre comparatively white rice has only 0.4 gms of fibre.

White rice vs Brown Rice: Weight Control

When it comes to weight control brown rice takes the advantage as white rice has more calories and carbohydrates.

White rice vs Brown Rice: Health Risks

Brown rice has a lower glycemic index compared to white rice which

means people with metabolic syndrome or diabetes should avoid white rice as it will spike blood sugar levels. Research has proved that regularly eating whole grains such as brown rice have reduced risk of type 2 diabetes, cancer and heart diseases. Brown rice is rich in antioxidants. The higher the antioxidants, the lower the chances of chronic diseases.

Ironically, brown rice also has antinutrients such as phytic acid and phytates which may reduce your body to absorb nutrients such as iron and zinc. It may also contain a higher amount of arsenic which is a highly toxic chemical if consumed for a longer period can develop chances of chronic diseases. One can avoid this by consuming brown rice in moderation but for people who eat rice twice or more in a day, brown rice is not recommended.

Both Brown rice and white rice have their issues that can be avoided by consuming them in moderation and by practicing a varied diet.

Rice is a common food item in kitchens across the world. It is a staple diet in some parts of the world and with a wide variety of it easily available and a wide range of possible uses, it can be a tasty, nutritious, and versatile ingredient.

However, there has often been a debate around which is healthier option - white rice or brown rice?

So, in order to give us more insight into the nutritional value of the two types of rice and help us choose the healthier option, Ms. Ritu Khaneja, Dietitian & Therapeutic Nutritionist and Founder, Rightk-Calories, listed a few points. Take a look:

White rice vs Brown Rice: Nutritional value

Both of them contain carbohydrates with a small amount of protein and no fat.

The difference here is that brown rice is a whole grain. It contains all parts of grain including fibrous bran, the nutritious germ and the carb-rich endosperm whereas white rice is refined grain and only contains endosperm



Here's how eating habits could cause child obesity

A study led by a group of researchers at Baylor University revealed that market-gained nourishments other than traditional diet routine can prove to be a reason for obesity in children, whether they do physical activities or not.

"The importance of a poor diet versus low energy expenditure on the development of childhood obesity remains unclear," said Samuel Urlacher, assistant professor of anthropology at Baylor University, and lead author of the study.

"Using gold-standard measures of energy expenditure, we show that relatively lean, rural forager-horticulturalists children in the Amazon spend approximately the same total number of calories each day as their much fatter peri-urban counterparts and, notably, even the same number of calories each day as children living in the industrialized United States" he added.

"Variation in things like habitual physical activity and immune activity has no detectable impact on children's daily energy expenditure in our sample," he said.

"The initial result shows that Amazonian children who eat more high-calorie market foods -- but not those who spend fewer calories every day -- consistently have more body fat. Together, these findings support the view that change in diet is likely the dominant factor driving the global rise in childhood obesity, particularly in the context of rapid urbanisation and market integration in low- and middle-income countries," Urlacher said.

The global rate of overweight/obesity among school-age children and adolescents has increased from 4 per cent in 1975 to 18 per cent until 2016. Children who are overweight may have a shorter life expectancy and a greater lifetime risk of developing NCD, including Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Health benefits of hugging you should know about

Embracing someone close can lift the mood and make difficult times easier as hugs are known to have positive effects both on the body and the mind

Hugs are underrated but they have the power to make many people's day instantly better. Embracing someone close can lift the mood and make it easier to go through the difficult times in life. Hugs are known to have positive effects both on the body and the mind. It is therefore great that Hug Day is celebrated every year on February 12.

Hugs can be romantic, familial, friendly, and even perfunctory. Here are some incentives and positive effects on health brought about by hugs as reported by DNA:

Hugs can help with blood pressure: Apart from the medical ways of regulating blood pressure, hugs can help in lowering blood pressure too. A University of North Carolina study suggested that those people who got more hugs and higher levels of oxytocin hormone had better control over their blood pressure as compared to those who did not get enough hugs.

Hugs can improve your sleep: Many people deal with poor sleep quality nowadays. Sleep can become remarkably better with hugs. A study by the National Sleep Foundation (NSF) came out with a conclusion that



a few minutes of cuddling and contact with a partner before sleep can improve its quality.

Hugs to get better immunity: This may come out as a surprise but studies have shown that hugs can even boost immunity. A study in the Psychological Science suggested that hugs lower down the stress hormone cortisol, which increases the killer cells to counter bacteria and viruses.

Hugs can help with stress: Hugs can help in lowering stress as they release oxytocin causing the heart rate to slow down. Hugs can be a sure way to feel lighter and happier.

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Dia Mirza Wedding: Inside Photos From The Diva's Wedding



Dia Mirza on Tuesday posted snapshots from her wedding to Mumbai-based entrepreneur Vaibhav Rekhi. The couple had tied the knot on Monday, reports IANS.

"Love is a full-circle that we call home. And what a miracle it is to hear its knock, open the door and be found by it. Sharing this moment of completion and joy with you... my

extended family. May all puzzles find their missing pieces, may all hearts heal and may the miracle of love continue to unfold all around us," Dia wrote with the wedding photographs she posted on Instagram for her extended family.

In one of the photos, Dia and Vaibhav can be seen exchanging garlands, while in another photo,

they take 'pheras', in yet another photo, the bride and groom are seated in front of the holy fire while an elderly female priest recites mantras.

Dia chose a gorgeous red zari work saree, with red dupatta and traditional jewellery. She tied her hair in a bun, adorned with a gajra. Groom Vaibhav turned out in a white kurta churidar, white jacket and golden dupatta.

Industry colleagues and netizens showered love and wishes. Taapsee Pannu, Yami Gautam, Neha Dhupia, Malaika Arora, Esha Gupta, Lara Dutta Bhupathi, Salim Merchant were among Dia's B-Town colleagues who posted congratulatory messages for the newly-weds.

This is Dia's second marriage. She was married to filmmaker Saahil Sangha from 2014 to 2019.



through; not the overly done-up elaborate outfits we see nowadays.

Tell us something about the outfit and what went behind putting it all together

We wanted to make sure that the outfit represented the classic Indian bride. Given the simplicity of the wedding itself, our focus was to keep it simple and elegant.

Anything particular that Dia wanted at the wedding?

Given the times we are living in, the wedding was everything she wanted. It happened at home with her closest friends and family. And she made for a beautiful radiant bride.

Dia and Vaibhav didn't go for same-coloured outfits as is the trend these days...

Well, because we chose red for her, I felt all-white for him would be a nice contrast. Vaibhav is also a very simple person who wanted to keep things fuss-free. So, Raghuvendra Rathore made this custom outfit for him which we teamed with antique gold and emerald diamond buttons.

Have you met Vaibhav? What is he like?

Yes! Of course, I've met Vaibhav and he's a wonderful person.

How did Dia and Vaibhav meet?

They would like to keep some things private.

Dia Mirza's stylist Theia Tekchandaney The wedding was everything she wanted

On February 15, Dia Mirza tied the knot with businessman-beau Vaibhav Rekhi in a private ceremony. Ever since then, gorgeous pictures of the newlyweds have been flooding social media feeds. To find out what went behind such an Instagrammable wedding, Sneha

Biswas of ETimes reached out to Dia's stylist Theia Tekchandaney, who besides styling her for the big day, was also one of the guests at the wedding. Here's what she had to say:

What kind of look did Dia want for her wedding?

Dia has a very classic sensibility and we were sure that we wanted to go for a classic red look for the wedding. So, we chose a beautiful Benarasi saree from Raw Mango and Sanjay (Garg) customised a beautiful *odhani* with *chand tara* motifs for the *pheras*.

Is the look inspired by anyone?

I wouldn't say that the look is inspired by anyone in particular. However, it's inspired by a time where simple and elegant clothing let the beauty of the bride shine

Will Shah Rukh Khan's 'Pathan' bow out of 2021 release as Ranbir Kapoor, Ranveer Singh and Akshay Kumar line up their theatrical releases?

With theatres set to reopen again, Bollywood superstars are all getting in line for their big releases. On Wednesday evening the Akshay Kumar-led period film 'Prithviraj', Ranbir Kapoor-starrer 'Shamsher' and Ranveer Singh-starrer 'Jayeshbhai Jordaar' booked their slots at the box office.

While the Arjun Kapoor and Parineeti Chopra flick 'Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar' took the lead and lined up their release on March 19, Siddhant Chaturvedi followed close behind with 'Bunty Aur Babli 2' set for an April 23 release.

Director Karan Malhotra's much-awaited actioner 'Shamsher', starring Ranbir Kapoor, is set to release on June 25. Also featuring Vaani Kapoor and Sanjay Dutt, the film is reportedly set in the 1800s and chronicles the story of a dacoit tribe fighting for their right and independence from the British.

Next in line is Ranveer Singh's 'Jayeshbhai Jordaar' that has booked August 27 as its release date.

And rounding up the release calendar is Akshay Kumar with 'Prithviraj', a biopic on the 11th-century ruler Prithviraj Chauhan, which has booked a Diwali 2021



release. The film, directed by Chandraprakash Dwivedi, also stars Dutt and Sonu Sood and marks the acting debut of Miss World 2017 Manushi Chhillar.

Before this announcement, rumours ran wild that Shah Rukh Khan's upcoming action flick 'Pathan' was scheduled for a Diwali 2021 release. However, with Akshay taking up the spot, it is now being speculated that the film is likely to release in the first quarter of 2022

instead.

'Pathan' is one of the most awaited films, not only because it marks SRK's return to the big screen, but will also see him reunite with Deepika Padukone and will feature Salman Khan in an extended cameo. The film will also see John Abraham play the villain for the first time in an SRK film.

New
Serial

Siddhivinayak - A 'passionate hate story'



Bollywood is not just about the Brich and the famous, glitter or glam! 'Behind-the-scenes' run a parallel story that often doesn't meet the eye and unfolding one such tale is &TV's newest fiction offering *Siddhivinayak*. A passionate hate story, it is set against the backdrop of Bollywood starring an upcoming actor, Vinayak Kundra (Nitin Goswami), and a junior dancer, Siddhi Joshi (Neha Saxena). The only thing common between Siddhi and Vinayak is their mutual feeling of hatred. This hatred will give rise to rebels; this hatred will distance both Siddhi and Vinayak... but can hatred define the destiny of these two individuals?

Produced by Studio B & M, *Siddhivinayak* captures the essence of every emotion be it hatred, drama, power or love with an extremely impactful narrative. The hero of this story is the son of a famous Bollywood producer

and doesn't think twice before flaunting it - Vinayak, a.k.a Vin Kundra whilst the heroine is a junior dancer in a troupe that performs in films - Siddhi Joshi, a.k.a Siddhu. Working together is a part of their profession, but hating each other with a vengeance has become their passion! It is hatred that will get them closer to each other only to set them apart.

Speaking about the show, Rajesh Iyer, Business Head, &TV said, "Love stories have always excited Indian audiences. Given the demand for such narratives, we thought of presenting a contemporary amalgamation of Bollywood and romance to the viewers with our latest offering *Siddhivinayak*. Bollywood and the life of stars have always raised curiosity and the story of Siddhi and Vinayak, packed with passion, hate, drama and romance, will provide an exciting journey of a film star and his tryst with a junior dancer."

Commenting on portraying Vinayak's character, Nitin Goswami said, "Its intriguing to play the role of a superstar and live every man's dream through *Siddhivinayak*. The experience has been amazing so far. The way Vin balances his stardom and arrogance is something audiences will love to watch. *Siddhivinayak* is unlike anything I have ever seen on television and I am really excited to be a part of such an outstanding storyline."

Adding further, Neha Saxena essaying the role of Siddhi Joshi said, "Siddhi's character is that of an ideal daughter which every family desires. The fact that she is the bread earner of the family never stops her from chasing her dreams as a dancer. The strong narrative of the show adds to the character of Siddhi, and viewers at every step will come across an interesting character trait. I am coming back with a bang and hope the viewers will enjoy and support my new journey."

Siddhivinayak features a stellar line-up of artists who will be joining Nitin Goswami and Neha Saxena: Manish Khanna as Shankar Kundra (Vinayak's father), Utkarsha Naik as Manjari Kundra (Vinayak's mother), Anjali Gupta as Savita Joshi (Siddhi's mother), Prithvi Sankala as Aniket Joshi (Siddhi's father) and many more.

'Kundali Bhagya': Sanjay Gagnani makes a smashing comeback

Sanjay Gagnani, who is currently seen as Prithvi Malhotra in *Kundali Bhagya*, is making his smashing comeback on the show.

Zee TV's popular show *Kundali Bhagya* starring Shraddha Arya and Dheeraj Dhoopar in the lead roles is among the most loved shows. The show has always managed to keep the audience on the edge of their seats, thanks to its surprising twist and turns. In the show, apart from the main leads, the negative characters are equally loved by the audience especially, actor Sanjay Gagnani, who plays the role of Prithvi Malhotra on the show.

Sanjay, who left the daily soap after he was tested Covid-19 positive, is making a smash-



ing comeback with a revamped avatar. While everyone is eager to see a glimpse of his new look, Pinkvilla has exclusively got hands on the pictures of Sanjay from the sets. In the pictures, the actor can be seen wearing a royal red sherwani. With his hair-do on point, the actor looked dapper in the groom look. Well, going by the photos, it looks like Sanjay is shooting for a marriage sequence. He can also be seen

flaunting his radiant smile in the photos.

Meanwhile, talking about his comeback, Sanjay Gagnani shared, "Yes. All I can say is, Prithvi Malhotra, is returning with a totally revamped avatar, sleeker, stylish, and even deadlier when it comes to his evil motives and the three things that he would continue to cater to the audiences of *Kundali Bhagya* is, Entertainment, Entertainment, and Entertainment!"

The actor further said, "All I can say and reveal at the moment is, expect fireworks when PM returns because all the fans and viewers know that whenever PM enters a scenario, they can expect a lot of entertainment, twists, turns, masala, fun, negativity and unpredictability!"

YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

You'll be entitled to a series of small supports from destiny, which will make your life quite pleasant. At work, be ready to modify your ingrained practices so as to be more competitive. Take your distance with respect to some too invading relatives.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 14, 16, 23, 30, 34

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

Don't cling to your old habits, be willing to go forward. At work, your image will shine with all its glare. Be on the lookout for simple reunions, family activities, the company of good buddies or good neighbours.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 4, 19, 20, 36, 39

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

Love will generously smile to you. You'll also have a good chance to carry out some juicy investments. Your recent initiatives on the professional plane will be rewarded; all this should give you more self-confidence; but avoid being too proud of yourself.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 13, 14, 20, 26, 29

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

You won't be able to do everything at the same time; try to establish a better order your priorities. The stars will encourage you to be less demanding in your relationships; you'll know how to appreciate the qualities of your friends instead of focusing on their flaws.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 10, 15, 18, 20, 30

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

Beware of a brutal breaking off with your friends or close relatives! Risks of headaches, hepatic disorders or skin problems; avoid delicatessen, canned or salted foods. If you have money problems, you'll be able to get help from certain people in your surroundings.

Lucky Numbers: 20, 21, 30, 32, 36, 40

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

A very positive week if you have worked in the good direction; if not, you'll know problems which, however, can be solved by an energetic action. Your relations as a couple are likely to take a critical turning. Only make essential purchases, forget all the rest.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 18, 20, 24, 27, 30

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

If you stay idle, the blues will invade you. Spend more time reading good books. Your married life won't be totally at ease, but tolerance and comprehension will arrange many things. A person you trust will try to harm you.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 8, 11, 14, 16, 30

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

You cannot but bravely take on your family responsibilities. In your love life, you'll profit by the support of the Moon, which will bring you a solid moral and emotional support; the severe judgments of others will help you to overcome your own difficulties.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 12, 19, 20, 31, 36

Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

You'll be able to put yourself forward and collect true rewards for your merits. You'll have the embarrassment of choice of new amorous adventures. Without refusing all opportunities to go out, devote a little more time to your family.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 15, 25, 30, 31, 36

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

Relationships will be subject to disturbances; control your uttering. Friendship will prove to be precious to you. At work, you'll feel energetic, and no mountain is too high for you to climb.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 14, 16, 21, 23, 30

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

Some delays in your plans will disturb you; but above all don't get discouraged. Don't let your authority weigh too much on the members of your family for there'll be a risk of rebellion; try to show yourself tolerant without being too easy-going.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 9, 10, 17, 25, 30

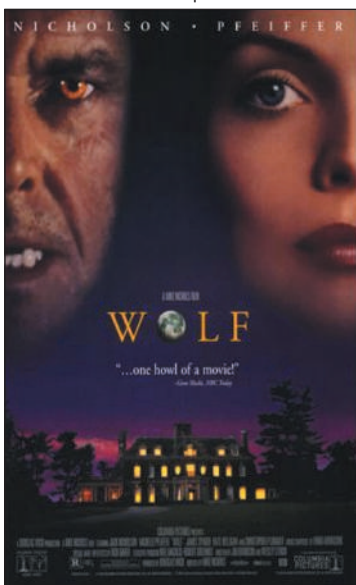
Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

Don't turn a deaf ear to a friend who calls out for help; your loyalty will quickly be rewarded. You'll suddenly have a marvellous flash which will enable you to find the solution of a thorny problem that blocked your love affairs.

Lucky Numbers: 15, 22, 23, 27, 30, 36

CINE 12

Vendredi 19 Fevrier - 21.15

WolfAvec: Jack Nicholson, Michelle Pfeiffer,
James Spader**CINE 12**

Samedi 20 Fevrier - 21.15

Don't Think TwiceStar: Jake Gyllenhaal, Rebecca Ferguson,
Ryan Reynolds**mbc 1**

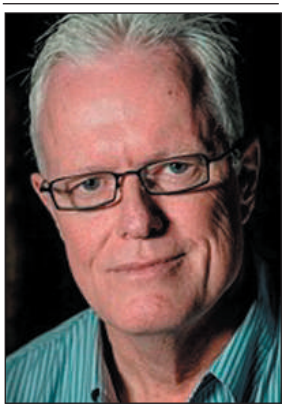
Dimanche 21 Fevrier - 21.10



	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
vendredi 19 fevrier	07.05 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 09.45 Local: Memwar Dan Ros 10.30 Local: Arts.21 11.10 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.55 Mag: Urban Gardens 13.55 Local: Generations J 14.30 D.Anime: Polly Pocket 15.07 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 15.19 D.Anime: The Minimighty... 15.51 D.Anime: HTDT - Humpty... 16.02 D.Anime: Yakari 17.20 Serial: Heidi, Bienvenida 17.45 Mag: Origami 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.20 Prod: Lottery Vert Draw 21.25 Serial: When Calls The Heart 23.00 Le Journal	10.00 Serial: Ki Jaana Mein Kaun 11.05 Serial: Zun Mureed 12.04 Film: Boyz 2 Star: Om Ahire, Kishori Ambiyee, Parth Bhalerao 14.13 DDI Magazine 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.25 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.47 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 16.07 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 16.34 Serial: Tu Ishq Hai 16.56 Serial: Achra Ke Moti 17.15 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.36 Serial: Chhanchhan 18.00 Serial: Bloody Romance 18.30 DDI Magazine 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Serial: Band Khirkiyan 20.42 Local: Anjuman 21.10 Local: Urdu Programme	06.00 Mag: Eco India 06.26 Mag: Shift 06.38 Mag: Carnet De Sante 07.53 Doc: Soul Of The Icepack 08.46 Doc: La Turbulence Rodin 09.41 Doc: 360 GEO 10.33 Doc: What If Earth Were... 12.12 Mag: Border Crossing 12.41 Mag: Urban Gardens 12.46 Mag: Tomorrow Today 14.05 Doc: La Turbulence Robin 15.00 Doc: 360 GEO 15.52 Doc: What If Earth Were... 16.38 Mag: Eco India 17.04 Mag: Shift 17.16 Mag: Carnet De Sante 17.31 Mag: Border Crossing 18.00 Doc: Child Trafficking 18.42 Mag: Arts And Culture 19.00 Open Univ: Student Support 19.26 Mag: Urban Gardens	01.30 Film: Kill Kane 02.42 Serial: S.W.A.T 03.22 Film: A Ghost Story 04.54 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.02 Serial: 19-2 06.44 Film: Dam Sharks 09.00 Serial: The Magicians 09.45 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.00 Serial: S.W.A.T 12.00 Film: Dam Sharks 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: Dam Sharks 16.40 Serial: The Magicians 17.20 Serial: 19-2 18.05 Tele: Daneilla 19.10 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: Powers 21.15 Film: Wolf 23.20 Tele: Muneca Brava	08.00 Film: Aatank Hi Aatank 12.05 / 19.54 - Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam 12.30/ 20.11 - Radha Krishna 12.52 / 20.32 Sanjivani 13.07 / 21.09 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.27 / 21.24 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.49 / 21.46 - Naagin S3 14.31 / 21.59 - Ikyawann 14.52 / 22.25 - Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 15.13 Film: Barsaat Starring: Bobby Deol, Twinkle Khanna 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali 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 12.30 Tele: Daniella 14.50 D.Anime: MFDC I Am Better.. 15.00 D.Anime: Polly Pocket 15.24 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 15.48 D.Anime: The Minimighty... 15.56 D.Anime: La Ligue Des Super 16.20 D.Anime: HTDT 16.31 D.Anime: Yakari 16.43 D.Anime: Little Spirou 16.50 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 16.52 D.Anime: Robot Trains 17.21 Serial: Oh Yuck 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Entertainment: Dance 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.00 Prod: Lottotech 21.10 Film: United 23.00 Le Journal	07.00 Film: Ab Tak Chhappan Starring Nana Patekar, Mohan Agashe, Revathi 08.53 Mag: DDI Magazine 10.00 Bade Acchelagte Hai 12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhya Bhare 12.31 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 12.50 Serial: High School 13.17 Annakodiyum Ainthus Pengalum 13.41 Serial: Anu Pallavi 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.20 Film: Behen Hogi Teri Starring: Rajkummar Rao, Shruti Haasan, Gautam Gulati 17.21 Mag: DDI Magazine 19.00 Zournal Kreol 20.05 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha 20.31 Serial: Bitti Business 21.00 Film: Prasathanam 22.00 DDI Live	06.00 Doc: Child Trafficking 06.42 Mag: Arts And Culture 06.55 Mag: Global 3000 07.47 Mag: Urban Gardens 07.55 Doc: Wildlife Heroes 08.47 Doc: Black Is The Colour 09.39 Doc: America's New Gurus 11.07 Doc: Child Trafficking 11.49 Mag: Arts And Culture 12.10 Mag: Global 3000 12.28 Mag: Euromaxx 13.53 Doc: Black Is The Colour 16.13 Mag: Arts And Culture 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: Delacroix From Paris... 22.16 Doc: Blood Coal 23.58 Doc: Never Enough 23.40 Doc: Amazing Gardens	01.28 Film: Wolf 03.30 Serial: Dynasty 2 04.09 Film: Dominion 05.33 Tele: Esmeraldas 06.13 Serial: Powers 06.55 Film: For The Love Of George 08.30 Serial: Midnight, Texas 09.12 Serial: Shades Of Blue 09.54 Serial: Unforgotten 10.41 Film: Clarity 12.26 Serial: Dynasty 2 13.06 Serial: S.W.A.T 15.09 Tele: Amanda 15.53 Tele: Muneca Brava 15.55 Serial: S.W.A.T 17.00 Serial: Powers 17.45 Film: Super Eruption 19.34 Mag: Hollywood Best Film 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Series: Powers 21.15 Film: Don't Think Twice 22.45 Tele: Dulce Amor	04.05 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum 04.26 Radha Krishna 05.10 Zindagi Ki Mehek 05.30 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 05.52 Ikyawann 06.12 Bin Kuch Kahe 06.33 Kundali Bhagya 06.56 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka 07.42 Mere Angne Mein 08.00 Zindagi Ki Mehek 09.40 Motu Patlu 10.00 Siddhi Vinayak 12.00 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 14.00 Sanjivani 16.19 Pavitra Rishta 18.30 Film: Ready Star: Salman Khan, Asin Thottumkal, Paresh Rawal, Mahesh Manjrekar 20.48 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 21.33 Serial: Naagin 22.18 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek
	06.00 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà... 06.23 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 08.10 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 09.30 Serial: Lucas Etc. 09.45 Serial: Magic Mania 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Tele: Daniella 15.25 D.Anime: Polly Pocket 15.46 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 15.48 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 16.12 Anime: The Minimighty Kids 16.20 D.Anime: La Ligue Des Super 16.44 D.Anime: HTDT 16.56 D.Anime: Yakari 17.08 D.Anime: Little Spirou 17.37 Serial: Oh Yuck 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Local: Sri Devi? The Ultimate 19.30 Le Journal 20.00 Prod: La Meteo 21.10 Film: Life	07.00 Film: Veer Ghatotkach Starring: Bharat Kesri, Chandgiram, Mahipal 09.02 DDI Magazine 10.00 Local Production 11.00 Serial: Oru Ka Osai 11.22 Serial: Santoshi Maa 12.00 Film: Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweetie Starring - Kartik Aaryan, Nushrat Bharucha, Sunny Singh Nijjar 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.20 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 15.43 Eka Lagnachi Teesri Gosht 16.06 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 17.00 Serial: Mahakali 18.30 Local: Tipa Tipa Nu Avance 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Serial: Maharakshak 20.31 Serial: CID	06.00 Doc: Amazing Gardens 06.26 Doc: Zenith 06.52 Mag: Vue D'en Haut 07.45 Doc: Taste Hunters 08.37 Doc: Destination Week-End 09.44 Doc: Blood Coal 11.11 Doc: Amazing Gardens 12.28 Mag: Check In 16.23 Doc: Amazing Gardens 17.40 Doc: Set One: Heavy Load 18.30 Doc: Builders Of The Future 18.50 Doc: Garden Party 19.31 Mag: Future Mag 20.05 Doc: Comme Une Envie De... 21.00 Doc: News (English) 21.10 Doc: Destination 21.23 Doc: The Real Dr. Strangel... 22.19 Doc: Istanbul Quake... 23.01 Doc: Doc: The Red Children 23.44 Mag: Tendence XXI 00.10 Doc: Builders Of The Future	03.00 Serial: Hawaai Five-0 03.42 Film: The Pirate 05.24 Tele: Esmeraldas 06.05 Serial: Powers 06.47 Film: A Ghost Story 08.30 Serial: Midnight, Texas 09.13 Film: United 10.41 Film: Super Euption 12.16 Serial: Hawaii Five 5-0 13.03 Serial: S.W.A.T 14.26 Mag: Hollywood Best Film 15.05 Tele: Amanda 15.49 Tele: Muneca Brava 17.00 Serial: Power 17.45 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 18.30 Serial: Macgyver 19.34 Mag: Hollywood Best Film 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: Falling Water 21.15 Film: The Fate Of The Furious	00.40 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 02.25 Sanjivani 04.06 Pavitra Rishta 05.33 Film: Ready Salman Khan, Asin Thottumkal, Paresh Rawal, Mahesh Manjrekar 08.01 Motu Patlu 08.11 Karn Sangini 10.04 Jaana Na Dil Se Door 11.44 Piya Albela 13.27 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum 15.11 Bin Kuch Kahe 17.06 Punar Vivaah 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Film: Blackmail Starring: Irrfan Khan, Kirti Kulhari, Arunoday Singh 20.42 Motu Patlu 21.39 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 23.30 Piya Albela
	06.00 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà... 06.23 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 08.10 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 09.30 Serial: Lucas Etc. 09.45 Serial: Magic Mania 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Tele: Daniella 15.25 D.Anime: Polly Pocket 15.46 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 15.48 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 16.12 Anime: The Minimighty Kids 16.20 D.Anime: La Ligue Des Super 16.44 D.Anime: HTDT 16.56 D.Anime: Yakari 17.08 D.Anime: Little Spirou 17.37 Serial: Oh Yuck 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Local: Sri Devi? The Ultimate 19.30 Le Journal 20.00 Prod: La Meteo 21.10 Film: Life	07.00 Film: Veer Ghatotkach Starring: Bharat Kesri, Chandgiram, Mahipal 09.02 DDI Magazine 10.00 Local Production 11.00 Serial: Oru Ka Osai 11.22 Serial: Santoshi Maa 12.00 Film: Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweetie Starring - Kartik Aaryan, Nushrat Bharucha, Sunny Singh Nijjar 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.20 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 15.43 Eka Lagnachi Teesri Gosht 16.06 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 17.00 Serial: Mahakali 18.30 Local: Tipa Tipa Nu Avance 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Serial: Maharakshak 20.31 Serial: CID	06.00 Doc: Amazing Gardens 06.26 Doc: Zenith 06.52 Mag: Vue D'en Haut 07.45 Doc: Taste Hunters 08.37 Doc: Destination Week-End 09.44 Doc: Blood Coal 11.11 Doc: Amazing Gardens 12.28 Mag: Check In 16.23 Doc: Amazing Gardens 17.40 Doc: Set One: Heavy Load 18.30 Doc: Builders Of The Future 18.50 Doc: Garden Party 19.31 Mag: Future Mag 20.05 Doc: Comme Une Envie De... 21.00 Doc: News (English) 21.10 Doc: Destination 21.23 Doc: The Real Dr. Strangel... 22.19 Doc: Istanbul Quake... 23.01 Doc: Doc: The Red Children 23.44 Mag: Tendence XXI 00.10 Doc: Builders Of The Future	03.00 Serial: Hawaai Five-0 03.42 Film: The Pirate 05.24 Tele: Esmeraldas 06.05 Serial: Powers 06.47 Film: A Ghost Story 08.30 Serial: Midnight, Texas 09.13 Film: United 10.41 Film: Super Euption 12.16 Serial: Hawaii Five 5-0 13.03 Serial: S.W.A.T 14.26 Mag: Hollywood Best Film 15.05 Tele: Amanda 15.49 Tele: Muneca Brava 17.00 Serial: Power 17.45 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 18.30 Serial: Macgyver 19.34 Mag: Hollywood Best Film 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: Falling Water 21.15 Film: The Fate Of The Furious	00.40 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 02.25 Sanjivani 04.06 Pavitra Rishta 05.33 Film: Ready Salman Khan, Asin Thottumkal, Paresh Rawal, Mahesh Manjrekar 08.01 Motu Patlu 08.11 Karn Sangini 10.04 Jaana Na Dil Se Door 11.44 Piya Albela 13.27 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum 15.11 Bin Kuch Kahe 17.06 Punar Vivaah 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Film: Blackmail Starring: Irrfan Khan, Kirti Kulhari, Arunoday Singh 20.42 Motu Patlu 21.39 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 23.30 Piya Albela

Feel like breaking up with Facebook? Maybe it's time for a social media spring clean

If you're fed up with Facebook, there are many options to step away, from taking a deactivation break, to a digital spring clean of how the platform accesses your data, to a full divorce



David Tuffley
Senior Lecturer in Applied
Ethics & CyberSecurity,
Griffith University

In denying news content to its Australian users, Facebook is arguably overplaying its hand, behaving as a big company that thinks it can intimidate governments. If it keeps doing this, it will ultimately lose customers, and that's the last thing Facebook wants.

Perhaps you're already considering breaking up with Facebook, whether in reaction to the news ban, or out of a broader unease about its business model, which profiles its users with the goal of earning revenue from targeted advertising.

If so, the good news is it's definitely possible to delete Facebook. Or, if you're not ready to go the whole hog, you can certainly minimise your footprint on the platform.

From Facebook's arrival page, there's a drop-down menu in the top right corner (marked with a downward arrow icon). Click on this icon, then hit Settings & Privacy> Settings> Your Facebook Information> Deactivation or Deletion.

If you deactivate your account it goes dormant but all the data are still there. This is a good option if you want to just take a break, or if you're the kind of person who fancies a "detox" from Facebook and is back on it two weeks later.

Selecting "delete" from the same menu is a stronger option. If you do this, Facebook says it will delete your account, but it's a little bit unclear about what happens to the data. This means we can't say definitively that all data gets deleted, never to be seen again.

In the European Union, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) includes gi-



Photo - fix.com

ving users the "right to be forgotten" from the internet, so no one can dig up awkward information about what you did 20 years ago. This extends to EU citizens living in Australia.

Australia's Privacy Act guarantees a person's right to request their records and to request corrections to inaccurate records. It also guarantees protection against unwarranted invasion of their privacy resulting from the collection, maintenance, use and disclosure of their personal information.

What if you have a change of heart after deleting your Facebook? Data is always recoverable if you really want it, although it would be very difficult.

Good housekeeping

There is a third way: a "social media spring clean", which goes a step further than the standard "cull" of Facebook friends. It involves rebooting your entire Facebook presence by replacing your existing account with a new one that connects only with your most trusted friends.

First, decide which of your friends you want to stay in touch with, and then tell them you're replacing your old account and to expect a new friend request from you soon.

Then set up a new account, with the settings set to the privacy level you are comfortable with, and your connections limited to just a few trusted people.

The whole purpose of Facebook — in Facebook's view,

at least — is to collect enough demographic data about users so they can use clever AI to target advertising. It's awesome how good they're getting at that, and the more data they get, the better they get.

Their whole modus operandi is to keep you on the platform for as long as possible so they have more chances to show you advertising. That's the whole reason they want you there.

By just hanging onto your closest friends, and starting with a clean slate, it's possible to slim this enterprise down.

Keeping prying eyes away

Via your settings, you can also ask Facebook to show you which third-party apps are currently using data from your Facebook account. Some people have dozens or more of these, and all of

them are potentially accessing your data to profile you. I'm personally not comfortable with that, and I have very few third-party apps looking at my data.

If you see Facebook posts containing phrases such as "if you want to know who's been looking at your profile, click here", some of these are little more than Trojan horses for data harvesting.

It goes even further than that: your friends' settings can also allow third-party apps to gain access to your personal data. This kind of practice sits in a grey area in terms of ethical informed consent.

You might be very careful about what apps you use, but some of your friends might be more reckless. If you're doing a social media spring clean, it's probably wise not to re-friend that

old work colleague who always posts personality quizzes with titles like "which household appliance are you?"

Life after Facebook?

There's no shortage of other platforms that people can use. Popular alternatives include LinkedIn, Twitter, Reddit, Parler and MeWe. Bear in mind that Facebook also owns WhatsApp and Instagram. There has been talk recently about data being shared across all Facebook-owned platforms.

Over time, Facebook accounts accumulate more and more dross, and it's all data for the platform's algorithms. Facebook wants you to build up hundreds and hundreds of friends, and it's all grist to their mill.

It's good to do a periodic spring clean of all your social media accounts - not just Facebook. Take out contacts who are no longer relevant, or who you can't remember how you ever came to be friends with them.

If you want to take it to the next level, deactivate your Facebook account and take a break. Or delete it and set up a new account with only the friends you really want.

The ultimate is to simply take the entire account — and the probably gigabytes of data Facebook has accumulated on you — and cast it into oblivion.





Protecting lives, ensuring happiness

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