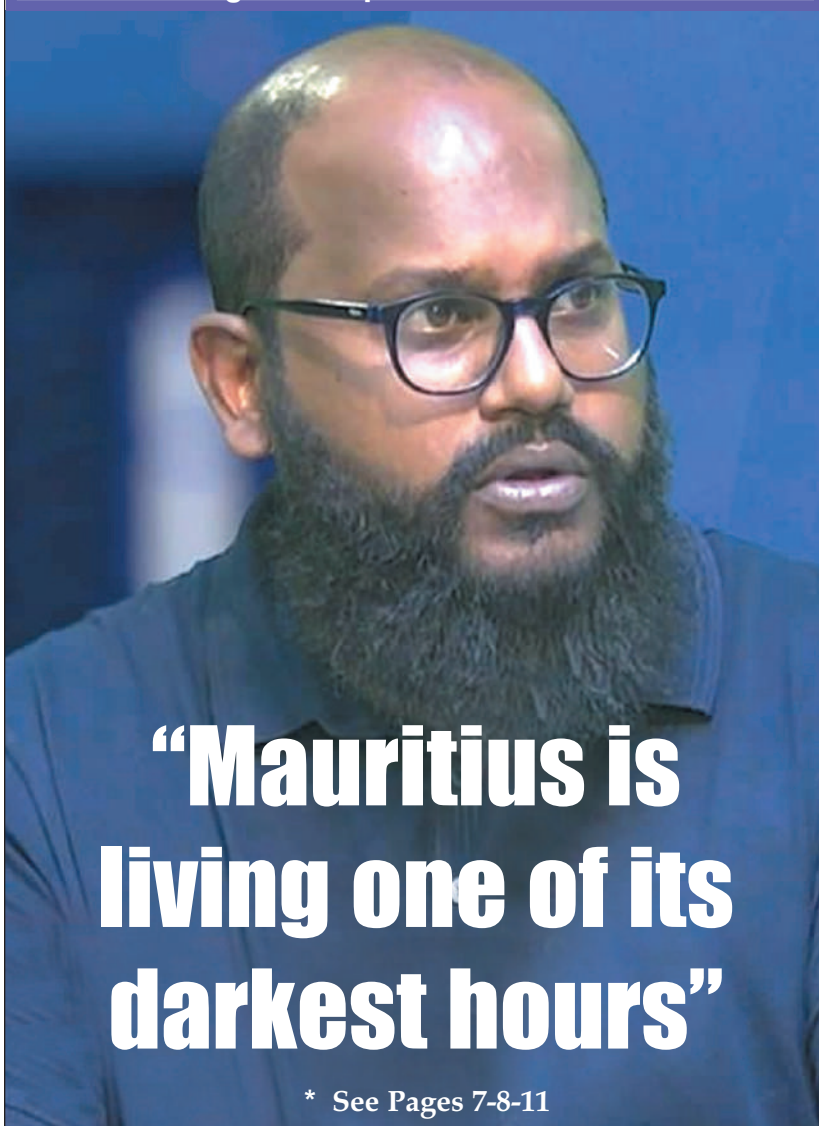


MAURITIUS TIMES

• "You will never do anything in this world without courage. It is the greatest quality of the mind next to honour." -- Aristotle

Interview: Kugan Parapen - Resistans ek Alternativ



"Mauritius is living one of its darkest hours"

* See Pages 7-8-11



Some legislatures have held governments to account during Covid-19. But not all

By Nic Cheeseman, Professor of Democracy & Rebecca Gordon, Research Fellow in Leadership for Inclusive and Democratic Politics, University of Birmingham

* See Page 2

The End of History - and of Truth



Greta Thunberg's Deleted Toolkit On Farmers' Protests

Now we are living in the throes of the end of truth - the mundane, worldly variety of course, not the Absolute Truth - and in its place there is the rise of global propaganda

Dr R Neerunjun Gopee * See Page 3



Money printing is not generating a lot of growth

"The asset liability management of its balance sheet in any rising inflation scenario would require an amendment to the Bank of Mauritius Act in order to allow the central bank to go into negative equity territory so that it can credibly focus on fighting inflation. Those who think otherwise have simply not done the math..."

By Sameer Sharma * See Page 4

For a Common Minimum Programme

In one of our past general elections, unseating the then PM Anerood Jugnauth became the refrain during the campaign – ‘*Bisin deboulonne li*’. The campaign was successful, and SAJ lost the election. People felt that a large gust of fresh air had blown over the country and swept away the no longer desired occupants of Government House. The victors duly formed the government and for quite some time this air of freshness hung around.

The things started to fall apart. Thanks Chinua Achebe.

Disaffection set in, and the regime that had promised ‘to do things differently’ fell into the same ways as the one they had ousted. And this pattern, alas, repeated again.

The current regime, after a relatively good start at the beginning of its mandate – in particular with regard to the Covid pandemic, which was fairly promptly brought under control, got mired in a series of alleged irregularities in procurement which has led to the current convulsions the country is practically reeling under. This has had the effect of exposing a number of weaknesses and failures in the functioning of key institutions, perceived to be caving in to political pressure.

As the situation in the country began to deteriorate rapidly, the main opposition parties came together to try and put pressure on the government, both inside and outside Parliament, to get answers and force it to mend its ways. Nothing doing.

Our interviewee this week, Kugan Parapen, in answer to a question has this to say: ‘Lest we forget, the opposition mainstream parties were already part of a common platform in the aftermath of the last general elections. Not on an ideological or social basis by the way, but merely an electoral one. An increasing section of the population have become disillusioned with these mainstream parties as they have failed to revitalise themselves and have lost their credibility with important sections of their traditional vote-bank.’

The Avengers are purporting to eventually become a political force. It is too early to know whether this project will

materialize, and until then it is only the mainstream parties on which the population can look to.

This therefore places on them a great responsibility, of getting away forever with *bonnet blanc, blanc bonnet*, and truly be at the service of the people and the country. This can only happen if they come up with a real programme – at least initially, a minimum programme that cannot and would not be contested by any of the eventual allies – with the foundational thrust being: good governance, transparency, meritocracy, and accountability.

The common minimum programme, which would entail a major review of a number of constitutional provisions, must include, amongst others:

- Limit of two terms for the Prime Minister;
- Settling on a minimum electoral reform programme with particular emphasis on political financing and electoral supervision;
- Establishing a Constitutional Court;
- Putting an end to the ‘festivals de la terre’;
- Ensuring the autonomy of institutions;
- Introduction of ‘Right to Information’ legislation.

Unless there is movement along these lines, it will be back to square one all over again, and this is not something that can launch the country into the kind of future that its people deserve, especially those who have been destituted by the pandemic, and the future generations who have nowhere else to turn or to migrate. Most countries have literally closed their doors, as they themselves are battling to survive economically.

It remains to be seen whether and how that grouping – as it is do far – will deliver. But they have four years to work it out. Or less, if they feel they can put enough pressure to force an early election.

Either way, there is urgency, and they have to plan and proceed accordingly.

The Conversation

Some legislatures have held governments to account during Covid-19. But not all

The coronavirus pandemic has gone hand-in-hand with considerable democratic backsliding. According to a new study, democratic freedoms were undermined in 83 countries from March to September 2020. This should concern all of us. Oversight and accountability during the Covid-19 pandemic are essential for both the public and democratic health of a nation.

We set out to explore the role that legislatures played in responding to Covid-19. In particular, we looked at how they scrutinised governments’ actions.

Legislatures are central to modern democratic politics. But they are often bypassed during moments of crisis as presidents and prime ministers prioritise a rapid response. This is true for both established democracies and new democracies in which political institutions are still strengthening.

Covid-19 has raised particular challenges for legislatures. For example, social distancing requirements have made it harder for them to sit as usual. On the other hand, the longevity of the crisis has created more time for legislative scrutiny.

To investigate, a group of researchers developed the “Legislative Responses to COVID-19 Tracker”. We also conducted case studies on the legislatures’ response in Brazil, Nepal and Ukraine.

The tracker monitored legislative responses to COVID-19 for 65 countries along three key indicators:

- whether the legislature sat;
- whether there was legislative oversight of the initial response from 1 March to 1 May 2020; and
- whether legislatures had opportunities for ongoing oversight from 1 April to 1 September 2020.

The report shows that, between 1 March and 1 June 2020, the innovative use of technology played a key role in enabling 52% of legislatures to sit regularly, and 35% to sit irregularly.

However, almost a third of legislatures



Photo - mediadefence.org

had no direct oversight over the government’s initial response from 1 March to 1 May 2020. This is important, because effective legislative scrutiny helped to constrain unnecessarily heavy-handed approaches in some cases. In others it prompted the government to take action where it had been slow to respond.

Legislative responses

There are two different – though not mutually exclusive – explanations for the differences in the extent of legislative oversight. One is the pre-existing strength of democratic institutions. The other is the disruptive impact of the pandemic in low technology legislatures.

In most cases, lower scores on our tracker reflected lower legislative effectiveness scores prior to the pandemic. One example of this was in Algeria.

Similarly, countries with higher tracker scores generally featured higher levels of scrutiny pre-pandemic, such as Belgium and Botswana.

But this was not always the case. Despite low parliamentary effectiveness scores pre-pandemic, the Democratic Republic of Congo’s legislature voted on multiple extensions of the state of emergency and set up a Covid-19 commission. This created opportunities to monitor the government’s response.

Nic Cheeseman, Professor of Democracy & Rebecca Gordon, Research Fellow in Leadership for Inclusive and Democratic Politics, University of Birmingham

Cont. on page 11

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Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

The End of History – and of Truth

Now we are living in the throes of the end of truth – the mundane, worldly variety of course, not the Absolute Truth – and in its place there is the rise of global propaganda

If we go by Francis Fukuyama's thesis which was also the title of his book (1992), it's the end of history. According to Wikipedia, the end of history means liberal democracy is the final form of government for all nations. There can be no progression from liberal democracy to an alternative system, since it has repeatedly been proven to be a fundamentally better system (ethically, politically, economically) than any of the alternatives.

Now we are living in the throes of the **end of truth** – the mundane, worldly variety of course, not the Absolute Truth – and in its place there is the **rise of global propaganda**.

One of the highlights of the thesis is pessimism about humanity's future, which is warranted because of humanity's inability to control technology. This is already happening in Artificial Intelligence (AI), where the neural networks on which it is based have in a number of applications developed a degree of autonomy that was unexpected of the system. This has led to speculations about whether AI, that is robots and machines will take over the world, something which late physicist Stephen Hawking apprehended.

In the film 'Planet of the Apes', apes were the controllers of humans. But apes have their emotions, and could therefore exert bias and prejudice. Perhaps it may not be a bad thing if someday machines were to take over. At least they will not be imbued with desires and emotions, and whatever decisions they take and actions that follow therefrom would be neutral. Nobody, individual or entity, would have to complain about unfairness.

Vastly more dangerous than the inability to control technology, however, is using it for perverted purposes. For this, you have to have a perverted mind, which means a sick mind basically. One that refuses to consider all aspects and dimensions of any given issue, weigh the pros and cons, and then emit an opinion – if that is required at all. It is a mind driven by a one-sided ideology, which may be couched in the most high-sounding and impressive language, which will usually come from an intelligent mind.

“Intelligent minds can be the most perverted ones, driven by equally twisted ideologies. That's what propaganda is all about. It is aided nowadays by the very same rise in technology that Fukuyama warned about, that allowed the worldwide dissemination of all kinds of information. In fact, I wonder whether we should not in fact discard such terms as the overload of information, or information war, and simply call it global competitive propaganda...”



Intelligent minds can be the most perverted ones, driven by equally twisted ideologies.

That's what propaganda is all about. It is aided nowadays by the very same rise in technology that Fukuyama warned about, that has allowed the worldwide dissemination of all kinds of information. In fact, I wonder whether we should not discard such terms as the overload of information, or information war, and simply call it **global competitive propaganda**.

In the history of the world before modern technology took control of our lives, propaganda was restricted to individual countries or a few countries vying with each other, like communist versus capitalist that raged on with the rise of the Soviet Union.

Now propaganda can take its origin from anywhere and can be thrust on any country in a bid to destabilize it. First, let's take a look at features of propaganda from an online source:

Broadly, propaganda refers to dissemination of information—facts, arguments, rumours, half-truths, or lies - to influence public opinion. More specifically:

- Propaganda is the more or less systematic effort to **manipulate** other people's beliefs, attitudes, or actions by means of symbols (words, gestures, banners, monuments, music, clothing, insignia, hairstyles, designs on coins and postage stamps, and so forth).
- Deliberateness and a relatively heavy emphasis on manipulation distinguish propaganda from the free and easy exchange of ideas.
- Propagandists have a specified goal or set of goals.
- To achieve these, they deliberately select facts, arguments, and displays of symbols and present them in ways they think will have the most effect.
- To maximize effect, they may omit or distort pertinent facts or simply lie, and they may try to divert the attention of the reactors (the people they are trying to sway) from everything but their own propaganda.

Propaganda is like a virus that has infected the mind, and there is no antibiotic against it. And countering is setting oneself against occult forces that present a goodie-goodie façade, and at global level, push frontliners who

have a certain appeal. The appealing factor may be entirely made-up – after all this is propaganda – but it attracts nevertheless.

Currently in our country, the general perception is that in a number of cases that are claiming national attention, the greatest victim is truth. Everyone is asking whether it will ever be known. Only the future will tell.

On the global stage, a propaganda war has been unleashed on India, riding on the wave of a protest by farmers which is entirely an internal matter of India. But all manner of global dumbos have pitched in, without having an iota of understanding of the complex issues that concern the agriculture sector in that vast country of a 1.3 billion. Frogs that live in the well are having the pretension of showing whales how to survive in the ocean.

A number of articles have been published in the Indian media, for example, 'Explained: Mystery of Greta Thunberg's Deleted Toolkit on Farmers' Protests and Invisible Hands of Digital Propaganda' by R. Jagannathan who may be responded to by anyone interested at: R Jagannathan (newsletters@swarajyamag.com).

Another one is: 'Insightful newsletter of Drishtikone: Issue #238 - Internet as Human Right'.

It starts as follows: 'A man was walking on the road. He saw this sexy woman walking on the other side. Taken over by his desires, he rushed to her and asked. "Will you sleep with me for a million dollars?" The woman coyly replied "Absolutely!"

He then immediately said "How about for \$10?" This enraged the woman. "What the heck do you think I am? A PROSTITUTE?"

"That I have already established, Ma'am," he replied. "Now I am negotiating your price."

He then goes on:

'The soul of the moral paragons are on sale. Mia Khalifa needs money. Greta Thunberg needs money. So does Rihanna. Someone pays. All of them don't need to take their clothes off like Mia used to. They are ready to prostitute their morality. That should work.'

He then refers to the 'global twitter storm' that has followed:

'Yesterday, Rihanna, Greta Thunberg, and Mia Khalifa tweeted in solidarity with the Indian farmers.

'Thunberg went a little further. She shared the "toolkit" that had been shared with her by her sponsoring.'

The contents of the toolkit are all about how to ignite the whole world against India, with suggestions for a 'first wave'. The farmers' protest is a mere excuse.

The author continues: 'Greta and her oh-so-high morality are basically on sale in the market. As is the case with Rihanna and Mia Khalifa. Someone paid for these women's morality. And out came the outrage. Now, what is interesting is that those who accessed the Google Docs link that Thunberg shared, they found one Nikita Jacob editing it. This lady has since deleted her Twitter account!'

And then he asks: 'But is it just a one-off conspiracy against India?'

It's a new World War. And it will be as equally destructive, there, here and everywhere. We had better open our eyes and ears, because it's a very uncertain and a very dangerous future that is looming on the horizon. One of lies and propaganda, because truth lies buried. Deliberately.

Money printing is not generating a lot of growth

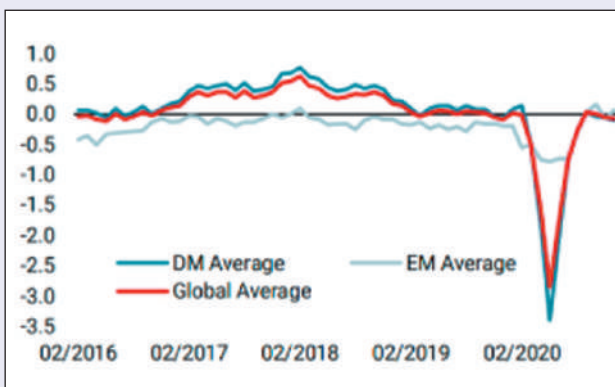
It does not yet seem that policy makers have engaged in meaningful introspection about why their policies are not working as the benefit of printing money is fast eroding



Sameer Sharma

As we look forward to 2021 and to the prospect of vaccines allowing us to get our lives back in order, from an economic standpoint at least, the world economy has recovered well and the Covid impact is looking shallower than what was initially thought. When applying non-linear machine learning ensemble models to a combination of both higher frequency economic data and alternative economic data across regions as showcased in Figure 1, global economic activity has largely recovered mainly led by East Asia and the United States. While a mild dip is likely during the first quarter of 2021 given the partial curfews and partial lockdowns in some regions, global economic growth is on pace to exceed 5% next year and has already mostly recovered to previous levels of economic activity.

Figure 1: Index of Economic Activity



Source: Bloomberg, World Bank Open Data and Various Open Source Indicators- Author estimates (PCA + XGBoost Regressor)

As global economic slack slowly begins to recede in the context of ultra loose monetary policies and given the recovery, global inflation indicators have begun to rise. A simple de-noising of various forward-looking market pricing of inflation in the United States and in Europe indicates that inflation risks are once again rising.

While global inflation is likely to be at least 1% to 1.5% higher over the coming five years when compared to the



“The asset liability management of its balance sheet in any rising inflation scenario would require an amendment to the Bank of Mauritius Act in order to allow the central bank to go into negative equity territory so that it can credibly focus on fighting inflation. Those who think otherwise have simply not done the math...”

previous five-year average, shorter term inflation risks should not be dismissed especially as we head closer to 2022.

The post-Covid world (if the vaccines work as advertised and are distributed efficiently) will be one where previous secular trends such as digitalization (e-commerce, Artificial Intelligence, robots), inequality, de-globalization, and a focus on economic sustainability (think ESG) will accelerate. This will be a tougher world where offshore tax jurisdictions will increasingly be targeted by the usual tax authorities and where those who compete and innovate will succeed while the rest will not find it as easy as before. When we think about Mauritius, the solutions for the necessary transformational structural reforms are many and overdue, but the political willingness to engage in such reforms is sadly lacking because of what this could do to the system that got politicians elected in the first place.

The system of patronage will not take this economy to the next level

Before Mauritius can engage in meaningful structural reforms, it must decentralise economic policy taking away from the office of the Prime Minister, and it must revive technocracy and choose meritocracy over loyalty and idol worship of the Prime Minister. To be fair, the system has always been this way because the political system was designed that way at varying degrees, but this system of nominating loyalists irrespective of competence and who are then more than happy to worship and allow their institutions to be remote-controlled from elsewhere has not and will not work anymore.

Slogans that Mauritius was a “high-income economy” may work with too many on the island, but whether you look at the quality of human capital, the lack of productivity and innovation, the depth of the capital markets, the dependence on financial flows and tourist receipts which helped keep skeletons under the carpet, rising debt, subdued private investment especially when excluding bricks and mortar related investments, an increasingly unsustainable tax system given the rising cost of the welfare

state, demographic trends and stagnating pre-Covid economic growth, the true picture is much more complicated.

Sure, the system of patronage may win elections but it will not take this economy to the next level. You need independent and competent technocrats in key institutions of this country who act independently but are accountable. You need smart people who can take decisions rather than waiting on orders from elsewhere. Mauritians of course also get the system and the politicians they deserve. Politicians love to be worshipped as demigods on the tiny island nation, but too many like to engage in the worshipping too.

Over the past 40 years, all of us who have lived and worked in Mauritius have been tempted to go on the “if we cannot beat them, let us join them” route and too many have done so. Those who do not play such games typically stagnate or leave the country. Mauritius is a small country with a small reservoir of competent technocrats, and the more it closes the inner circle of those who make decisions, the worse it will be and has been.

A lot can be said about some in the private sector too, of course. This notion that we need diversified “Jack of all trades, master of none” businesses despite poor free cash flow levels and ROCE (Return on Capital Employed) versus WACC (Weighted Average Cost of Capital) metrics, a passive shareholder base, the lack of competitiveness, insular thinking by some captains -- “*quand la construction va, tout va*” approach -- and a saturated and small market are all factors which explain why the government has had to step in with massive debt and grant funded public investments which have not always had strong multiplier effects on the economy pre-Covid.

“Before Mauritius can engage in meaningful structural reforms, it must decentralise economic policy taking away from the office of the Prime Minister, and it must revive technocracy and choose meritocracy over loyalty and idol worship of the Prime Minister. To be fair, the system has always been this way because the political system was designed that way at varying degrees, but this system of nominating loyalists irrespective of competence and who are then more than happy to worship and allow their institutions to be remote-controlled from elsewhere has not and will not work anymore...”

Right now, the Bank of Mauritius has provided regulatory forbearance which has pushed the credit risk can down the road a bit further, but the rising number of Zombie companies post-Covid will have longer term implications on private sector investments, job creation and potential output. You can play with rules and make things look better than they are on paper, but reality bites all the same.

* Cont. on page 5

Money printing is not generating a lot of growth



“Mauritius is already lagging. The Bank of Mauritius is printing large sums of money, but the pre-Covid structural ills, the blacklisting and the closed borders mean that all this printing is having little effect so far. I supported and pushed for unconventional monetary policies way back in February 2020 and still do but mainly when it is driven towards the credit channel (not like what is being done with the Mauritius Investment Corporation of course – a good idea gone bad by not having the right people at the right places as usual)...”

* Cont. from page 4

The benefit of printing money is fast eroding

Whatever I have said so far can be seen in the data too. Mauritius is already lagging. The Bank of Mauritius is printing large sums of money, but the pre-Covid structural ills, the blacklisting and the closed borders mean that all this printing is having little effect so far. I supported and pushed for unconventional monetary policies way back in February 2020 and still do but mainly when it is driven towards the credit channel (not like what is being done with the Mauritius Investment Corporation of course – a good idea gone bad by not having the right people at the right places as usual).

Very few in Mauritius understand how complicated it

will be for the central bank to efficiently manage its balance sheet and be a credible inflation fighter in the coming years. The asset liability management of its balance sheet in any rising inflation scenario would require an amendment to the Bank of Mauritius Act in order to allow the central bank to go into negative equity territory so that it can credibly focus on fighting inflation. Those who think otherwise have simply not done the math.

Mauritius, unlike the rest of the world, is still struggling. Tax revenues give us a good sense of what is happening to corporates and to the consumers, and this metric is quite correlated to local growth. It is not rising!

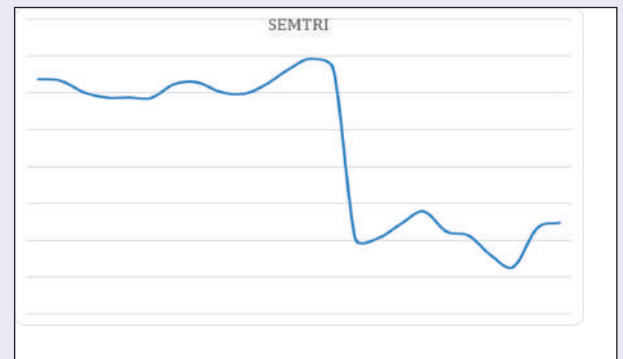
The two largest conglomerates, namely IBL and CIEL, are diversified across multiple sectors of the economy, and their quarterly revenue trends also offer us some insights about the pace of any economic recovery

(note that GDP numbers in Mauritius lag and are still stuck at second quarter of 2020 – you can all guess why it takes us longer than the rest).

With tourism earnings not expected to recover in December 2020 and with a weakened Mauritian consumer (as showcased by tax revenues), one should not expect any meaningful recovery in those top line numbers soon. More generally, the Mauritian stock market is in the last decile of the worst performing stock markets in the world in 2020. The graph of the local market (Figure 2) reflects the state of challenged corporate balance sheets and revenue declines and seems to be one more higher frequency indicator which points to the still MIA recovery. The stock market is certainly an imperfect indicator but it is well aligned to other indicators too (in a country where sadly high frequency data is still not plentiful in 2020 given

the politics around it).

Figure 2: A tough year for local equity investors

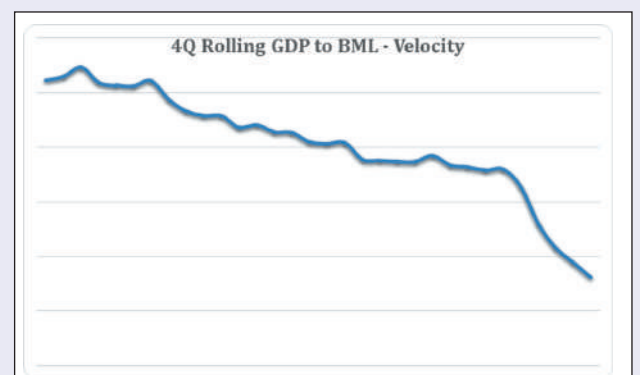


Source: Bloomberg

From Figure 3, we can see that the velocity of money (the same trend is observed if you use base money versus M3) decline has accelerated in recent quarters. We can print but it is not generating a lot of growth because of our structural ills pre-Covid, the blacklist and the closed borders. The only positive from this picture is that given low global inflation over the past decade (imported inflation pressure was low), high growth in both base money and M3 did not lead to higher domestic sourced inflationary pressures since the economy tended to operate below capacity/potential. The significant slack still found in the Mauritian economy today means that shorter term domestic sources of inflationary pressure are unlikely to play the spoil sport despite all the money printing, but if we start getting more inflation from abroad or even if we begin to get a more meaningful recovery after the opening of borders in the coming 2 to 3 years, then the chart below will put the Bank of Mauritius in quite a conundrum.

A country can print all the money it wants for a time but if it cannot increase its capacity to produce more goods and services with it, then it will turn against the country. How long can Mauritius keep on printing money, pretend that it has near zero fiscal deficits given monetization and not see growth pick up? It has been nine months since Mauritius emerged from a successful lockdown, and Figure 1 has shown that the world is already moving on, but it does not yet seem clear to this author at least that policy makers have engaged in meaningful introspection about why their policies are not working as the benefit of printing money is fast eroding.

Figure 3: More money is not creating more units of output



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1956-2020

Britain risks becoming a “melting pot” for mutations

Controls are being stepped up in parts of the UK hit by new strains of Covid-19, as scientists warned Britain risks becoming a “melting pot” for mutations believed to strengthen the virus's resistance to vaccines. The cases in Liverpool and the Bristol area were made public as door-to-door testing began in eight other postcode areas to stem the spread of the South African coronavirus variant, reports The Independent.

Eleven cases in and around Bristol have been identified as the variant that originally emerged in Kent, with the addition of the E484K mutation found in the South African strain. And a cluster of 32 cases in Liverpool showed the same mutation but relate to the original strain of coronavirus that arrived in the UK around a year ago.

Virologist Julian Tang, of the University of Leicester, said E484K was thought to be “the main mutation impacting on vaccine efficacy”, adding that its emergence in different strains of the disease was “worrying”. Failure to control the circulation of the virus could lead to the UK becoming a “melting pot” for new mutations, he warned.

The Oxford coronavirus vaccine offers 76 per cent protection for up to 12 weeks after the administration of a first dose, new analysis suggests. Researchers at Oxford University said their vaccine may also reduce transmission of the virus by 67 per cent.

The vaccine's effectiveness in preventing Covid-19 disease rises to 82.4 per cent once a second dose is administered after three months, according to a pre-print



Coronavirus mutation ‘of most concern’ has occurred spontaneously in UK variant. Photo Daily Star

paper released on Tuesday. Oxford's scientists said the findings, which are currently under review by *The Lancet*, supported the UK government's decision to extend the interval between the first and second doses, having faced widespread criticism over the policy.

NHS workers surrounded by coughing patients are at a greater risk of contracting Covid than first thought, a study has suggested. The research found that coughing generated at least 10 times more infectious “aerosol” particles than speaking or breathing, reports The Independent. Throughout the health service's pandemic response, intensive care units have been deemed a particular hazard area to healthcare workers due to concerns that some treatments, including continuous positive airway pressure, or

CPAP, may increase the risk of the virus spreading.

Aerosols are believed to be a significant route of transmission for the virus and may remain in the air for hours after leaving a person's body - creating a risk to anyone in the same area without proper protection. The level of risk has seen PPE prioritised for those dealing with aerosol generating procedures - with guidance telling workers to wear FFP3 respirator masks instead of the fluid repellent surgical mask provided in more typical care settings.

Reactions to Myanmar's military coup have poured in from concerned world leaders after raids in the southeast Asian country on Monday saw members of its ruling National League for Democracy taken from their homes and detained.

Joe Biden's administration led the charge in condemning the scenes of violence - some of which were filmed and released on social media, showing politicians arrested in the middle of the night - threatening to take action against those responsible. “The United States is alarmed by reports that the

Burmese military has taken steps to undermine the country's democratic transition, including the arrest of state counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and other civilian officials,” White House press secretary Jen Psaki said, noting Mr Biden had been briefed on the situation.

Popular US congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has revealed she is a survivor of sexual assault - and denounced Republicans and those telling her and others to “move on” from the 6 January storming of the US Capitol. The Democrat likened the aftermath of the assault to how some people were now telling her not to become fixated on the events of 6 January, when hundreds of supporters of Donald Trump stormed the federal legislature building in Washington, DC, as a joint session of Congress affirmed the votes for Mr Biden's election victory.

“We cannot move on without accountability. We cannot heal without accountability. All these people telling us to move on are doing so at their own convenience,” she said. “These are the tactics that abusers use, the folks who are saying, ‘We should move on,’ ‘we shouldn't have accountability,’ etc, are saying: ‘Can you just forget about this so we can do it again?’”

US extends nuclear treaty with Russia for five years

US President Joe Biden's administration Wednesday extended the New START nuclear treaty with Russia by five years, saying it hoped to prevent an arms race despite rising tensions with Moscow, including over its imprisonment of opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

One day before the treaty was set to expire, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the United States was extending New START by the maximum allowed time of five years.

“President Biden pledged to keep the American people safe from nuclear threats by restoring US leadership on arms control and nonproliferation,” Blinken said in a statement.

“The United States is committed to effective arms control that enhances stability, transparency and predictability while reducing the risks of costly, dangerous arms races.”

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed off on legislation extending the accord on Friday, meaning that the treaty -- signed by then-president Barack Obama in 2010 -- will run until February 5, 2026.



US, Russia extend nuclear treaty for 5 more years. Photo - Helsinki Times

As the last remaining arms reduction pact between the former Cold War rivals, New START caps to 1,550 the number of nuclear warheads that can be deployed by Moscow and Washington.

Former president Donald Trump's administration tore up previous agreements with Moscow and unsuccessfully sought to expand New START to cover China, whose nuclear program is rapidly growing but remains a fraction of the Russian and

US arsenals.

Late-term talks broke down as the Trump administration insisted on tougher verification and said the treaty should do more to address so-called tactical weapons -- the type that Russia could use in hot spots near its borders, a more likely scenario than a long-range attack on the United States.

Blinken said that the United States would use the coming five years to pursue diplomacy that addresses

“all” of Russia's nuclear weapons and to “reduce the dangers from China's modern and growing nuclear arsenal.”

Pressure over Navalny

The Biden administration had already made clear it would extend the treaty but that it would also press Russia on other areas -- the mirror opposite approach of Trump, who controversially voiced admiration for Putin.

Blinken on Tuesday demanded that Russia free Navalny “immediately and unconditionally” after Putin's most vocal critic was handed a prison term.

Russian authorities have rounded up more than 10,000 people who came to the streets in support of Navalny, who returned to Russia after what doctors said was a poisoning and proceeded to reveal alleged corruption by Putin.

Biden has also ordered US intelligence to investigate Russian meddling in US elections, Moscow's alleged bounties on US troops in Afghanistan and its purported involvement in the massive SolarWinds hack.

Blinken said that even while engaging Russia on arms control, “we remain clear-eyed about the challenges that Russia poses to the United States and the world.”

* More on Page 7

Myanmar orders Facebook blocked as protests emerge after coup



People wave a National League for Democracy (NLD) party flag and light up their mobile phones after calls for protest went out on social media in Yangon on February 3, 2021, as Myanmar's ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi was formally charged on Wednesday two days after she was detained in a military coup. Photo - msn.com

Myanmar's military-run government has ordered internet providers to temporarily block access to Facebook amid growing protests days after seizing power from its civilian leadership, according to a spokeswoman for the company.

Facebook Inc. is aware the social media platform "is currently disrupted for some people," the spokeswoman said. Reuters reported that Myanmar's Ministry of Communications and Information posted a letter saying access to Facebook and its services will be unavailable until Feb. 7 in order to maintain "stability" in the country.

"We urge authorities to restore connectivity so that people in Myanmar can communicate with their families and friends and access important information," the Facebook spokeswoman said in a statement, reports Bloomberg.

The move comes after residents in Yangon on Wednesday night protested for a second straight evening, singing songs, banging on pots and honking car horns in protest of the military coup. Earlier yesterday, authorities filed criminal charges against former leader Aung San Suu Kyi for possessing illegally imported walkie-talkies, an apparent violation of an import-export law. She faces as many as three years in prison if convicted.

Suu Kyi has called on supporters to resist Myanmar's generals, who seized power on Monday after claiming without presenting evidence that her landslide victory in November's election was tainted with fraud. The military has pledged to hold elections after a yearlong state of emergency.

Biden should follow Senate lead on canceling 2022 China Olympics

During the 2020 presidential campaign, Joe Biden pledged to put human rights at the forefront of his foreign policy. Then-President Donald Trump, Biden claimed, had befriended dictators to the detriment of sacred American values.

If the new president were honest about that commitment, he would associate his words with action. For a start, Biden should endorse the resolution newly introduced by Republican Sens. Rick Scott of Florida and Todd Young of Indiana to strip China of the 2022 winter Olympic Games. Biden should then call on Senate Democrats to offer their own support of that resolution, writes Tom Rogan of Washington Examiner.

It really should be a no-brainer.

Documenting the Chinese Communist Party's extraordinary disregard - indeed, active disdain - for human rights, the resolution makes a clear assertion. Namely, that "unless [China] demonstrates significant progress in securing fundamental human rights, including the freedoms of religion, speech, movement, association, and assembly, the International Olympic Committee should rebid the 2022 Winter Olympics to be hosted by a country that recognizes and respects human rights."

The International Olympic Committee might be a gleeful supplicant of Beijing, but the moral cause behind the Senate's action is undeniable. It was again emphasized on Wednesday, with new BBC reporting on the evil China has imposed on its Uighur citizens in Xinjiang province. Interviewing credible witnesses and victims previously incarcerated in China's vast network of concentration camps, the BBC documents how guards sold women into sexual slavery. This is just the latest dystopian tale from Xi Jinping's Uighur ethnocide. In his obsessive quest to purge Uighur culture and individuality, Xi has had these innocent people forcibly



Beijing Winter Games bring skiing fever in China.
Photo - lh3.googleusercontent.com

sterilized, used for slave labor, and simply killed.

The Senate resolution recognizes that this Uighur tragedy is just one element of the tapestry of terror that defines Xi's China.

In Hong Kong, Xi is shredding China's treaty commitments and ending human freedom. In the South China Sea and along the Mekong River, Xi denies borders while pummeling, and sometimes killing, impoverished fishermen. Around the world, Xi is destroying wildlife habitats as far away as the Galapagos Islands and constructing bridges and buildings that then collapse. When it comes to Africa, Xi depletes fishing stocks, bribes corrupt politicians, and tolerates Communist Party racism. In mainland China, Xi claims to foster creative thinking but silences his best and brightest for being too creative or simply too funny. That this evil is supported by American public affairs firms and enabled by the European Union is an indictment of the West. We should stop listening to Yang Jiechi's lies and start defending our values and interests.

Still, at least some have the resolution to take action against this great nemesis. The Olympics are supposed to celebrate the intersection of human skill, courage, and community. Except for its skill at stealing and subjugating, Communist China is the antithesis of those values. It must be stripped of the 2022 Olympics. It's time for Biden to lead.

Brazil aims to buy 30 million COVID-19 vaccine doses from Russia, India

The Brazilian government announced Wednesday it was negotiating the purchase of 30 million coronavirus vaccine doses from Russia and India, after regulators made it easier for the treatments to win emergency-use authorizations.

Until now, only the AstraZeneca/Oxford shot and China's CoronaVac have been permitted in Brazil, the second-hardest-hit country after the US, with more than 226,000 deaths from Covid-19.

Brazil's health surveillance agency said it would no longer require final Phase 3 trials to be carried out in Brazil, clearing the way for the emergency authorization of the vaccinations.



Brazil began vaccinations January 17, starting with medical workers

The health ministry said it is meeting from representatives from Russia and India on Friday to finalize details of a deal, which would see some 18 million doses delivered this month, and 12 million more in March.

The move comes after The Lancet medical journal this week published results showing Sputnik V -- named after the Soviet-era satellite -- to be safe and 91.6 percent effective, allaying concerns over transparency.

Brazil began vaccinations January 17, starting with medical workers, the indigenous population and the elderly.

With 212 million inhabitants, Brazil has suffered an average of 1,062 deaths and 50,000 cases per day in the past week.

Compiled by Doojesh Ramlallah

Kugan Parapen – Resistans ek Alternativ

“Mauritius is living one of its darkest hours”



Our interviewee this week Kugan Parapen is an economist who is also a member of *Resistans ek Alternativ*. He comments on the event which has been dominating the news for some time now, namely the struggle being led by the group of lawyers calling themselves the ‘Avengers’ to connect the dots linking a series of deaths they suspect were murders rather than suicides and the decisions taken by the authorities in handling the Covid pandemic. He is worried about the social situation and fears for the economy as well.

Mauritius Times: Another round of “revelations” has been made last Sunday by the ‘Avengers’ lawyer-politicians in relation to the disturbing and never-heard-of things happening in the country these last months. What’s your take on that?

Kugan Parapen: While it would be unwise to be gullible and believe all the rumours doing the rounds, I believe there is more than enough evidence out there in the public to say that our beloved country is living one of its darkest hours.

Many will say that we shall allow institutions to work in all independence and thus allow the law to take its course for justice to prevail, but we have been here before, haven’t we? It is an open secret that the rule of law in our motherland can be asymmetrical. Some abide by the law while others are above it, or at least believe they can do so.

The Kistnen saga epitomises the entrenched rot of our democracy. This stench is now out in the open for all to smell. But it could have been so different.

Were it not for some courageous journalists and lawyers, the murder would have been disguised as a suicide. We can like or dislike the individuals who came forward to fight for the truth to come out as regards the Kistnen case. Their detractors say that some of them are attention seekers while others only want to create chaos in the country. While there may be some element of truth in there, I do believe they deserve our support. For they are fighting a greater evil...

It would not be totally unreasonable to think that the same people who are behind the assassination of Kistnen are the ones who do not want the truth to emerge and are thus going to all sorts of length to ensure that the independence of our institutions is compromised in a manner rarely witnessed before. That’s at least the perception that is coming out. And this leaves one to ponder about the reach of the tentacles of evil in this country...

*** There may be lots of theories, allegations and other speculations, but the**

truth however is we do not have the answers to what’s really happening. And there’s the risk that it can grow tiring at some point in time. What do you think?

I beg to disagree. We do not have definitive answers to what has really happened, but don’t we have answers to what is really happening? That is two completely different tomes, although we can argue that it makes for a great sequel.

“The population is baffled by the lack of sanctions against those who did try to mask the murder case as a suicide in the first instance. Why has the Minister of Home Affairs not intervened to assure the population that those guilty of hiding the truth would be punished? Why has the Prime Minister not expressed his frustration and anger at the disappearance of CCTV footage?”

Don’t we know that the murder was originally masked as a suicide? Don’t we know that one police officer did say under oath that no proper enquiry was carried out due to the implication of a political VVIP? Don’t we know that in La Louise, one of the busiest urban intersections on the island, the images from CCTV have evaporated? Don’t we know that the Kistnen papers reveal that the alleged expenses of some politicians from Constituency 8 were significantly above the permissible threshold? Don’t we know that a sitting Minister is yet to be sum-

moned by either the police or the ICAC despite assurances to the contrary given in court by a senior police officer? Don’t we know of the media treatment given by the MBC to this particular saga?

It is akin to putting different pieces of a jigsaw puzzle together. Some pieces might still be missing, but we do have a broad idea of what the puzzle should look like when completed. The Kistnen case will not be forgotten anytime soon, irrespective of whether the whole truth is uncovered or not. This particular case will be remembered for generations. As of now, the full ramifications of this scandal are yet to be ascertained. This could unravel very quickly.

*** The governing alliance has had very little or almost nothing to say on the allegations levelled by the Avengers and in media articles – in fact it has remained silent most of the time. We have instead seen the Prime Minister inaugurating by-passes and involved in other activities. What would this suggest to you?**

The government seems intent on giving the impression that it is ‘business as usual’. Is it a diversion strategy? Some members of the government even went as far as describing the Avengers and some sections of the media as rumour mongers and belittling the population as ‘*dimoun ki kontan ekut palab*’. However, to the discerning eyes, the government has distanced itself from the press. Most of their interventions are protocolary speeches. Very few dare to answer the questions of the press and when they do, it is often in a sarcastic manner. Some have even feigned ignorance. A few are nowhere to be seen nor heard.

We get the impression that the gap between the government and the population has never been any wider. In the Kistnen saga, we are dealing with the murder of at least one human being. Not any human being but one of the most prominent agents of this government. This

cannot be taken lightly under any circumstances.

The population is baffled by the lack of sanctions against those who did try to mask the murder case as a suicide in the first instance. Why has the Minister of Home Affairs not intervened to assure the population that those guilty of hiding the truth would be punished? Why has the Prime Minister not expressed his frustration and anger at the disappearance of CCTV footage? It did cost a hand and a leg after all.

*** Cont. on page 9**

“We can like or dislike the individuals who came forward to fight for the truth to come out as regards the Kistnen case. Their detractors say that some of them are attention seekers while others only want to create chaos in the country. While there may be some element of truth in there, I do believe they deserve our support. For they are fighting a greater evil...”

'Now is not the time for MPs to be sitting on the fence.'

One needs to choose on which side of history one wants to be'

* Cont. from page 8

Such silence has profound implications in the psyche of the population. It raises legitimate questions. At the Avengers meeting in La Louise, Valayden brandished said emails from Kistnen's inbox and levied some extremely serious accusations against the government. Kistnen is said to have conspired with members of government to rig public tenders at different ministries, including the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Education. The same Kistnen was given the contract to erect a fence at Pomponette to ward off locals from their public beach. Could it be that numerous influential politicians are involved in serious malpractice and that if the truth were to emerge, they would get into serious trouble? Or is it mere 'palab'?

“The latest official figures point towards a contraction of above 15% in economic activity for Mauritius in 2021. Economists expect the final figure could be even worse than the indicative one. This is by far the biggest recession we have experienced since the end of the 1970s. While many jobs have been supported by extraordinary fiscal and monetary measures, it would not be an exaggeration to say that we did hit rock bottom in 2020...”

* With trust deficit in the integrity of so many of our institutions probably at its lowest today, we might be getting into a dangerous situation for it could take only a spark to unsettle our social peace. Do you think Mauritians are sufficiently mature not to go in that direction?

The social fabric of Mauritius is strained at this moment in time. It is quite unfortunate that political considerations have played a major role in this state of affairs. Divide and rule has always been a classic political strategy for those who feel they are losing their grip on power. And we get the feeling that we might be edging ever closer to a point of no return. We must be however reminded that instability breeds instability. Mauritius has widely been regarded as one of Africa's successful democratic stories when it comes to respecting the democratic rules.

At this critical period, the onus must surely be on elected Members of Parliament to do the right thing and not on the population. Surely now is not the time for MPs to be sitting on the fence. Important decisions need to be taken. One needs to choose on which side of history one wants to be. In the life of any politician, there comes a time when one finds oneself at crossroads. At such times, I believe it right to appeal to the conscience and to follow what feels right. I do not believe all MPs to be mere 'chat-was'.

Should the onus fall on the population, we should also listen to our conscience. One should not let oneself be manipulated nor should one let oneself be frightened



away.

* Do you think that it might be a good thing in the present circumstances that the mainstream parties are coming together if only to help avert any social crisis – though admittedly that's not their agenda?

As you correctly mentioned, the agenda of the mainstream parties differ. Lest we forget, the opposition mainstream parties were already part of a common platform in the aftermath of the last general elections. Not on an ideo-logical or social basis by the way, but merely an electoral one. An increasing section of the population have become disillusioned with these mainstream parties as they have failed to revitalise themselves and have lost their credibi-lity with important sections of their traditional vote-bank.

Should a social crisis be on our hands, we should expect natural alliances to be formed. It is also perhaps worthwhile noting that certain political parties have fomented social unrest in a not-so-distant past. We should expect engaged citizens and social activists to come to the fore should the social situation deteriorate. But then again, political parties also have a role to play.

* Rishi Bhadain has been admitted to the 'Entente' of the LP-MMM-PMSD, and Rama Valayden might eventually leverage his current investigative-

lawyer initiatives to seek a honorable place on that same platform – unless he has some bigger ambition for himself. Do you think it would be worthwhile for other parties, like ReA and others to join in given the stakes involved?

The admission of Bhadain to the parliamentary opposition platform is an interesting evolution. It looks like a tactical opportunistic move from the existing members of the platform. The LP-MMM-PMSD platform has played second fiddle since the Kistnen saga came to the fore. And they probably view the addition of Bhadain to their 'entente' as the easiest way to bridge this gap. With respect to Bhadain, his undecidedness is testimony to his political dilemma. One day he wants to oust the 'dinosaurs' and the next he joins them. Has he succumbed to the adage, "if you cannot beat them, join them"?

You do mention the stakes involved. But then again, the 'stakes involved' are always put to the fore when the political cards are being reshuffled. It is in the same vein that the electorate voted for Jugnauth Sr. in 2014. Back then, the 'stakes involved' was to dethrone Ramgoolam. Now the 'stakes involved' is to get rid of Jugnauth Jr. Are we going to repeat the same mistake of creating another monster again? When do we learn?

That said, one should never say never in politics. We do recall the left and the centre-right joining forces in French politics to nullify the threat of the extreme right. But we do have a different electoral system in Mauritius. *Rezistans ek Alternativ* (ReA) has always wanted to be a progressive transformative force. It is quite refreshing to hear some members of the mainstream parties discuss the necessity of a systemic change for our democracy.

“The latest official figures point towards a contraction of above 15% in economic activity for Mauritius in 2021. Economists expect the final figure could be even worse than the indicative one. This is by far the biggest recession we have experienced since the end of the 1970s. While many jobs have been supported by extraordinary fiscal and monetary measures, it would not be an exaggeration to say that we did hit rock bottom in 2020...”

Could it be that the penny has finally dropped?

One thing is for certain though. All opposition parties have a common political objective! And that is to rid the country of the rot. *Napa soutir pouritir!* Will the ends justify the means? We shall see. In the meantime, Kolektif Konversasion Solider (KKS), of which ReA is a member, is holding its first gathering of 2021 on Saturday 6th February at Unity House in Beau Bassin. KKS is an open platform which aims to collectively decide the actions to be taken to make real progress in the Republic. I seize this opportunity to invite all concerned citizens to register themselves and attend this Saturday.

* Cont. on page 11

Covid-19 crisis has also brought an opportunity for the country to refocus attention on structural reforms, and build back a resilient economic system



Tahir Wahab



Photo - cica.net

For most governments across the world, Covid-19 had undoubtedly brought a dilemma: creating a balance between protecting lives and livelihoods. Luckily, with the availability of vaccines, there is now a glimmer of hope.

Covid-19 crisis has also brought an opportunity for the country to refocus attention on structural reforms, and build back a resilient economic system that will propel Mauritius towards new sectors in our economy which will create investments and jobs.

In the financial services sector, new technologies and disruptive innovations such as blockchain and Fintech (including artificial intelligence) represent potential openings for our knowledge economy. They can revolutionize the economy, and in addition help our existing pillars which are fading out, especially the textile and sugar sectors.

Moreover, technology and innovation have the potential to allow people to create wealth and boost growth, and be competitive, especially in the development of innovative SMEs.

On the other hand, food self-sufficiency is something we should ponder on. We should go beyond just planning for vegetable crops, and look to grow value-added products like organic farming which is becoming a new trend and which can be exported to the region and to Europe.

Moreover, ocean or blue economy which has stalled for years, should be given a push as it has huge potential in terms of income and employment.

People in the EPZ sector who are currently unemployed can be recycled to work in the transformation plant. Mauritius being surrounded by sea can be exploited to produce medicinal products from the sea, solar photovoltaics on the seas, wind turbines using waves to convert into electricity. It is indeed time to create new catalysts that will boost our economy.

The way forward

Ending the year 2020 with a contraction

of the economy of 14.2% (i.e. negative growth) is not that promising. Our economy was therefore partly under artificial respiration due to increase in inflation rates resulting in a general increase in price coupled with low spending capacity of the population.

Despite most sectors of the economy running since July 2020, business activities were not sufficient to cover their existing overheads due to decrease in demand. Covid-19 has been quite disastrous especially for the export sector due to low demand on the international market and lockdown in different countries. Consequently, some businesses had to shut down and even lay off people.

The New Economic Order will be a world of increased government intervention and fiscal policies in conjunction with monetary policy. Government should look at means and ways not to overburden offshore companies with additional taxes which are already experiencing financial distress due to the blacklisting of Mauritius. Otherwise, we might run the risk of damaging our financial services sector and hamper the jobs of almost 20,000 people employed directly and indirectly in the sector.

Moreover, with the general increase in prices due to inflation, there is an impact on demand for products generally.

In this perspective, Government income through tax collection will also decrease due to less consumption. To create a real boost in the economy, government should ponder on lowering the VAT rate which will in some way ease the lives of those who are in financial difficulty and, secondly, create aggregate demand in the medium-term for the local sector to flourish.

With a vaccine now available, we might see some improvements in the some sectors which were on the low side like travel, tourism and all tourism-related activities.

However, it will take several months before we can expect to return to pre-Covid-19 level.

On the other hand, in addition to ensuring a Covid-safe economy, Government should continue to provide further support to vulnerable sectors of the economy given the scale of the challenges including falling inflation and high unemployment rate.

Can we expect a pick-up in some sectors especially the financial services sector?

The financial services industry has proved itself time and time again, and more than ever during early 2021. Our financial system will therefore be under close scrutiny by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the OECD with regard to the five breaches which led us to be blacklisted.

Obviously, we cannot expect Mauritius to turn from black to white overnight. It will undoubtedly take several months or even years to be able to completely erase this black dot on our flagship financial services.

The financial sector contributes 12% of our GDP (gross domestic product) and having a qualified workforce, with advanced technologies, we will have to imperatively ensure that we move out of the blacklist.

The blacklist already indicates loss of capital to other offshore jurisdictions which are in direct competition with Mauritius such as Singapore, Seychelles and Ras Al Khaimah in Dubai.

Besides no new businesses, there are several other consequences such as increased due diligence and hesitation of the international banking and financial sector to deal with companies in Mauritius. This has been felt with the offshore and banking sector which are interlinked.

With regard to the tourism sector, an essential pillar of our economy, it'll take quite some time before things go back to a degree of normality.

Sometime within the next six to twelve months, the world will be split into two: those that have been vaccinated, and those who have not. From a travel perspective, it is clear that accessibility to international travel will largely depend on a person's vaccination status as the world rushes to halt the spread of Covid-19 through global mobility.

Most probably, an international certificate of vaccination will be mandatory and be part of the travel kit of passengers to enter certain countries.

When it comes to tourism, it is fair to say that free-flowing travel will resume between developed countries first; in fact, we are already seeing a spike in interest in travel within Europe. This means that poorer nations like Mauritius whose economy relies heavily on tourism are expected to experience a re-emergence of tourism later in 2021, keeping their borders restricted until the health crisis is under control.

On the contrary, for those countries relying heavily on tourism, we may also notice that they open their borders to vaccinated individuals, regardless of whether their own population has been inoculated yet.

Traveller confidence and trust building have become essential in the wake of Covid-19. Countries that are perceived to be safer, more responsive to the virus pandemic and managing it in a controlled, calm manner, are likely going to benefit from higher traveller visitation.

Tahir Wahab is a Fellow of the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants, Chartered Banker, and holds an MBA with Specialisation in Strategic Planning

Senior Citizens Association – Ward IV

2, Harris Street, Port Louis

Annual General Meeting

All members of Senior Citizens Association – Ward IV, Port Louis, are kindly requested to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Association which to be held on 17 February 2021 at Monseigneur Leen Hall at 16 00 hrs.

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Minutes of proceedings of last meeting
3. Matters arising
4. President's Report
5. Presentation and Adoption of Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Association for year 2019-2020.
6. Motions
7. Any other business.

Motions, if any, should be forwarded under registered cover, to the Secretary of the Association, one week prior to the holding of the AGM.

NOTE: Please wear a facemask. Thank you for your understanding.

Secretary

'The Kistnen case will not be forgotten anytime soon.'

Irrespective of whether the whole truth is uncovered or not'

* Cont. from page 9

* All the allegations and conspiracy theories levelled these past weeks have crowded out from official discourses and public debate the crucial issue of economic recovery. We are fortunate that the economy appears not to have hit rock bottom as economists were predicting last year in the wake of the Covid pandemic. Will things get better sooner than it was expected or are we still in for some bad times in the months ahead?

In so far as the economy is concerned, the latest official figures point towards a contraction of above 15% in economic activity for Mauritius in 2021. Economists expect the final figure could be even worse than the indicative one. This is by far the biggest recession we have experienced since the end of the 1970s. While many jobs have been supported by extraordinary fiscal and monetary measures, it would not be an exaggeration to say that we did hit rock bottom in 2020.

The issue with economists from international and national institutions is that



“The LP-MMM-PMSD platform has played second fiddle since the Kistnen saga came to the fore. And they probably view the addition of Bhadain to their 'entente' as the easiest way to bridge this gap. With respect to Bhadain, his undecidedness is testimony to his political dilemma. One day he wants to oust the 'dinosaurs' and the next he joins them...”

they tend to be overly optimistic in the wake of a recession. We witnessed the same enthusiasm in the wake of the Financial Crisis in 2008. And eventually, reality did set in and these economists have had to continually lower their expectations. I get the impression that this will be a feature of 2021.

The economic situation will improve but not as much as some would have us believe. With respect to employment, there are probably thousands of jobs which will

be shed over the coming years. These are being artificially maintained through government legislation. Other countries have injected an unheard amount of liquidity to offset the slowdown in economic activity. In Mauritius, the relative injection of liquidity in the financial system relative to the economic hardship suffered has been more modest. We are likely to lag behind - we should be accustomed by now.

* The private sector has been saying that economic recovery hinges on the

reopening of our borders, whilst the Government is taking a bet on the Covid vaccine, which it believes will see us through the current crisis and back to the previous normal. Is it as simple as that?

The closure of our borders has hurt the economy hard. And the sooner we are able to open them without endangering our population, the better it is.

With respect to the vaccination programme, it should help accelerate the normalisation process, but we should not be too hasty to declare victory. A critical percentage of the population should be vaccinated before we contemplate lifting travel restrictions.

Believing that vaccination of the frontliners suffice to minimise risks would be counterproductive. Ideally, a phased reopening of the country would be preferable. The idea of going back to the previous normal is fallacious. We should brace ourselves for a new normal. The earlier the authorities realise that, the better it will be for our society.

Some legislatures have held governments to account during Covid-19. But not all

* Cont. from page 2

On the other hand, there were also cases where the pandemic significantly disrupted pre-existing practices because legislatures lacked the capacity to meet virtually, or were prohibited from doing so.

Nepal is one example. The country is usually rated as having mid-level legislative effectiveness. But a provision requiring legislators to meet in person meant that when the government did not recall parliament, virtual parliamentary sittings were impossible.

In these cases, social distancing requirements undermined the potential for oversight.

The type of legislation with which governments responded to the crisis was also important. Three main responses were possible:

- introducing new Covid-specific legislation;
- using existing legislation that addressed infectious diseases and pandemics; and
- using states of emergency.

The scope for legislative oversight



tended to be reduced where outdated legislation was used or states of emergency were introduced.

The importance of legislative leadership

Legislative committees emerged as an important mechanism of oversight.

In Brazil, the decree of public calamity required oversight committees to be formed. In Nepal and Ukraine it was easier to adapt committee meetings.

In Ukraine, amended legislation enabled virtual committee meetings. Given the difficulties of virtual meetings in Nepal, the smaller number of legislators within committees made it easier to avoid brea-

king quarantine restrictions and to maintain social distancing.

In Brazil, the committees established to monitor the Covid-19 response worked effectively to oversee executive actions on medicines and ventilators. They also played an important role in ensuring transparency of government information. For example, they set up a parallel system of counting cases of the disease and consequent deaths.

In cases where committee meetings – or plenary sessions – were reduced there were fewer routes to oversight. Time pressures and the need to make decisions quickly and via new digital processes also reduced space for oversight.

This had two important consequences, even where legislatures remained active. First, it concentrated opportunities for legislative leadership in the hands of party leaders. Second, it meant that legislatures heard evidence from, and engaged with, a narrower group of experts, advisers and concerned parties.

Fixing systemic problems

Challenges of oversight and inclusivity are not simply the product of the pandemic. Many reflect a deeper and pre-existing lack of accountability and inclusivity. Underlying institutional weaknesses need to be addressed.

There are four key areas we consider to be priorities. These are:

- the technological capacity of legislatures to meet remotely and inclusively;
- legislative regulations that allow parliaments to sit during crises;
- legislative committees' access to administrative support and technical expertise; and
- dedicated crisis committees with senior leadership and established rules and protocols that can become quickly operational.

All these require resources. It is therefore critical to keep funding legislative strengthening programmes. In the time of Covid-19, it will be tempting to switch money out of democracy and governance activities and into health budgets. But stronger legislatures will enable us to build back better after the pandemic.

Nic Cheeseman, Professor of Democracy & Rebecca Gordon, Research Fellow in Leadership for Inclusive and Democratic Politics, University of Birmingham

The surprising reason eating less meat is linked to a longer life: A smelly toxic gas

Hydrogen sulphide is a smelly, poisonous gas, but it plays an important role in aging and longevity



Rui Wang

Dean, Faculty of Science, York University, Canada

High-protein diets are having a moment. In any grocery store you can now buy a protein bowl, pick up a protein box of eggs and nuts for lunch, or snack on a protein bar.

But there's evidence that restricting which proteins you eat - particularly cutting back on meat - could be important for healthy aging. The surprising reason: it forces the tissues to make hydrogen sulphide (H₂S), a gas that's poisonous if inhaled

and smells like rotten eggs, but promotes health inside the body.

As a physiology researcher, I have long been interested in the strange role of H₂S in the body. This is not a gas anyone wants around. It stinks, is a component of flatulence, and its toxicity has been linked to at least one mass extinction.

And yet, the body naturally produces small amounts of it as a signalling molecule to act as a chemical messenger. Now, we are starting to understand the link between diet and H₂S production.

Diet restrictions that increase longevity

Less can be more when it comes to food. When scientists have put organisms on carefully balanced but restricted diets, these organisms have substantially increased healthy lifespans.

This holds true for yeasts, fruit flies, worms and monkeys. In mice, such diets reduce cancer risk, strengthen the immune system and improve cognitive function.

But because aging and longevity are complex processes, it has been difficult for researchers to pin down the mechanisms at work. Recent studies have shed new light, and it is apparent that H₂S plays a crucial role.

Studies since the 1990s have shown that reducing intake of certain sulphur-containing amino acids, the building blocks of proteins, can increase longevity in rats by around 30 per cent. More recently, a collaborative team involving me and led by scientists at Harvard, performed a series of animal studies in which we restricted the intake of two sulphur amino acids - cysteine and methionine - to study what effects this had.

It caused the animals to ramp up production of H₂S in their tissues, which triggered a cascade of beneficial effects. These included increased new blood vessel generation, which promotes cardiovascular health, and better resistance to oxidative stress in the liver, which is linked to liver disease.

But it remained to be seen whether similar effects would occur in humans. Earlier this year, a study using data from the 11,576 adults in NHANES III, the U.S. national nutrition survey, delivered evidence that they do. It found that reduced dietary intake of these sulphur amino acids is linked to lower cardiometabolic risk factors, including lower levels of cholesterol and glucose in the blood. Cardiometabolic risk factors are those linked to



Photo - res.cloudinary.com

heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

Eat less meat, live longer?

The upshot of this research is that there's good evidence that limiting intake of foods containing high levels of sulphur amino acids can reduce the risk of chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease, and promote healthy aging. In North America, most of us are a long way from achieving this. Because these sulphur amino acids are abundant in meat, dairy and eggs, which feature prominently in our shopping carts, we eat on average 2.5 times our daily requirement of them.

Red meat is particularly high in sulphur amino acids, but fish and poultry white meat also contain a lot (the dark meat has less). Switching to plant-based proteins would help reduce this intake.

Beans, lentils and legumes are good sources of protein that are also low in sulphur amino acids. But beware: soy protein, which is the basis of foods like tofu, is surprisingly high in sulphur amino acids. Meanwhile, vegetables like broccoli contain lots of sulphur but not in amino acid form.

One important caveat is that sulphur amino acids play vital roles in growth, so children should not adopt diets that are low in them.

Other roles for H₂S

It might seem odd that a toxic gas can help maintain health, but it may reflect the origins of life on early Earth when the atmosphere was much richer in sulphur gas than it is today. Indeed, we are starting to appreciate how fundamental H₂S signalling may be. For example, it has also been shown to reduce inflammation, opening the door to potential new treatments for arthritis or potential use as a painkiller.

The trick is delivering H₂S where it's needed - safely. Several pharmaceutical companies are working on compounds that bind it while in transit through the body, and release it in tiny doses in the tissues. In time, these could be used as preventive measures to support healthy

aging. This would be useful because the drawback of a low-sulphur amino acid diet is that humans are notoriously bad at sticking to such plans long-term.

In the lab, we can control experimental diets. In the real world, people snack or grab a burger when they don't want to cook. If delivery mechanisms can be made reliably and cheaply enough, it could be possible to gain the health effects of increased tissue H₂S without dictating what people eat.

Appartement à louer - long terme



Appartement meublé de 3 c.a.c, climatisé, cuisine équipée, piscine et parking, sécurité (24/24) à Trou aux Biches - Complexe Fleury sur Mer
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Fully furnished and air conditioned 3-bedroom apartment at Fleury sur Mer Complex, Trou aux Biches for long-term.
Parking and 24 hour security, swimming pool
Tel: 57809413 - 57530881



1. What's the difference between stress, tension and panic?

Stress is when wife is pregnant;

Tension is when girlfriend is pregnant;

Panic is when both are pregnant!

2. Grammar teacher: Do you know the importance of a period?

Kid: Yeah, once my sister said she has missed one, my mom fainted, dad got a heart attack & our driver ran away!

3. A young boy asks his Dad: "What is the difference between confident and confidential?"

Dad says: "You are my son, I'm confident about that. Your friend over there is also my son, that is confidential!"

4. A bookseller conducting a market survey asked a woman,

"Which book has helped you

most in your life?"

The woman replied, "My husband's cheque book!"

5. A prospective husband in a book store:

"Do you have a book called, 'Husband the Master of the House'?"

Sales Girl: "Sir, fiction and comics are on the 1st floor!"

6. Someone asked an old man:

"Even after 70 years, you still call your wife 'Darling, Honey, Love'. What's the secret?"

Old man: "I forgot her name and I'm scared to ask her!"

7. Wife: I wish I was a newspaper. So I'd be in your hands all day.

Husband: I too wish that you were a newspaper. So I could have a new one every day!

Could you get a divorce in heaven?

On their way to get married, a young Catholic couple is involved in a fatal car accident. The couple found themselves sitting outside the Pearly Gates waiting for St Peter to process them into Heaven. While waiting, they began to wonder: Could they possibly get married in Heaven?

When St Peter showed up, they asked him. St Peter said, "I don't know. This is the first time anyone has asked. Let me go find out," and he left. The couple sat and waited, and waited. Two months passed and the couple were still waiting. While waiting, they began to wonder what would happen if it didn't work out; could you get a divorce in heaven?

After yet another month, St Peter finally returned, looking somewhat bedraggled. "Yes," he informed the couple, "You can get married in Heaven."

"Great!" said the couple, "But we were just wondering, what if things don't work out? Could we also get a divorce in Heaven?"

St Peter, red-faced with anger, slammed his clipboard onto the ground. "What's wrong?" asked the frightened couple.

"Oh, come on!" St Peter shouted, "It took me three months to find a priest up here! Do you have any idea how long it'll take me to find a lawyer?"

There was an elderly couple who in their old age noticed that they were getting a lot more forgetful, so they decided to go to the doctor. The doctor told them that they should start writing things down so they don't forget.

They went home and the old lady told her husband to get her a bowl of ice cream. "You might want to write it down," she said.

The husband said, "No, I can remember that you want a bowl of ice cream." She then told her husband she wanted a bowl of ice cream with whipped cream.

"Write it down," she told him, and again he said, "No, no, I can remember: you want a bowl of ice cream with whipped cream."

Then the old lady said she wants a bowl of ice cream with whipped cream and a cherry on top.

"Write it down," she told her husband and again he said, "No, I got it. You want a bowl of ice cream with whipped cream and a cherry on top."

So he goes to get the ice cream and spends an unusually long time in the kitchen, over 30 minutes. He comes out to his wife and hands her a plate of eggs and bacon.

The old wife stares at the plate for a moment, then looks at her husband and asks, "Where's the toast?"

Quotable Quotes

Mathematics may not teach us how to add happiness or how to minus sadness... But it does teach us one important thing: every problem has a solution!

Don't downgrade your dream to match your reality, Upgrade your faith to match your destiny.

Extending one hand to help somebody has more value, than joining two hands for prayer.

A lamp doesn't speak; it introduces itself through its light.

Achievers never expose themselves but their achievements expose them.

There is nothing called darkness, it's just absence of light...

Similarly, there is nothing called a problem... It's just the absence of an idea to find a solution.

A big stone is broken by the last stroke. This doesn't mean that the first stroke was useless!

Success is a result of continuous efforts.



Thoughts to Live by

What is Luxury?

They made us believe that luxury was the rare, the expensive, the exclusive, everything that seemed unattainable...

Now we realize that luxury were those little things that we did not know how to value when we had them and now that they are gone, we miss them so much...

Luxury is being healthy. Luxury is not stepping into a hospital.

Luxury is being able to walk along the seashore. Luxury is going out on the streets and breathing without a mask.

Luxury is meeting with your whole family, with your friends.

Luxury are the looks. Smiles are luxury. Luxury are hugs and kisses.

Luxury is the privilege of loving and being alive.

All this is a luxury and we did not know...

Stay blessed. Stay grateful.

"Look for three things in a person - intelligence, energy, and integrity.

If they don't have the last one, don't even bother with the first who."

-- Warren Buffett

Life's LESSONS

Our journey together is so short!

A young lady sat in a bus. At the next stop a loud and grumpy old lady came and sat next to her. She squeezed into the seat and bumped her with her numerous bags.

The person sitting on the other side of the young lady got upset, asking her why she did not speak up and say something.

The young lady responded with a smile, "It is not necessary to be rude or argue over something so insignificant; the journey together is so short. Anyway, I'll get off at the next stop."

This response deserves to be written in golden letters:

"It is not necessary to argue over something so insignificant; our journey together is so short."

If each one of us realised that our time here is so short, why darken it with quarrels, fights, futile arguments, not forgiving one another, discontentment and a fault finding attitude; all these are a waste of time and energy.

Did someone break your heart? Be calm, the journey together is so short!

Did someone betray, bully, cheat or humiliate you? Be calm, forgive, the journey together is so short!

Whatever trouble or distress anyone brings us, let us remember that our journey together is so short.

No one knows the duration of this journey. No one knows when their stop will be. Our journey together is so short.

Let us cherish friends and family. Let us be respectful, kind and forgiving to one another. Let us be filled with gratitude and gladness.

If I have ever hurt you, I ask for your forgiveness. If you have ever hurt me, you already have my forgiveness.

After all, our journey together is so short!



Prediabetes: You Can Turn It Around

What is prediabetes? It's when your blood sugar is higher than normal, but not high enough to be called diabetes. You won't necessarily notice any symptoms -- you can have it and not know it. A simple blood test can tell you if you do. You're at risk if you're overweight, over 45, and you don't exercise. It makes you more likely to have type 2 diabetes and heart disease, but you can take steps to change that.

Lose weight

It doesn't have to be a lot. If you lose just 7% of your body weight, it can make a huge difference (that's only 14 pounds for a 200-pound person). The first step is to eat healthier food with fewer calories. Start by keeping track of your weight, eating habits, and physical activities.

Eat healthy

A good rule of thumb is to fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables (asparagus, Brussels sprouts, and carrots, among many others). One quarter should have starchy foods (like potatoes, corn, or peas). The remaining quarter should be protein -- chicken, fish, or beans are best. Be extra careful with carbs like baked goods or pasta -- they can raise your



blood sugar.

Exercise

You'll lose weight faster and feel better if you get out and burn more calories. You don't need to train for a marathon: A brisk 30-minute walk five times a week should do the trick. A workout buddy can sometimes help

you stick to a routine, so call a friend or join a gym and make some new ones. Aerobic exercise (walking, swimming, dancing) and strength training (weight lifting, pushups, pull-ups) are both good. A little of both is best.

Get Your ZZZs

The right amount of shut-eye helps keep your blood sugar at healthy levels. If you can't stay asleep, wake up too early, or get less than 5 hours a night, you're more likely to get diabetes. About 7 or 8 hours a night is ideal. For better sleep, don't have alcohol or caffeine late in the day, keep regular sleep hours, and stick to a calm, quiet bedtime routine.

Don't smoke

If you smoke, now's the time to quit. Smokers are 30% to 40% more likely to get type 2 diabetes than non-smokers. And if you get diabetes and still smoke, your symptoms may be worse and your blood sugar may be harder to control.

Medication

Certain drugs can help with blood sugar levels and obesity, as well as high cholesterol and high blood pressure. And you're more likely to have those if you have prediabetes. If you do, take your medication as prescribed -- it can improve your health and help you live longer.

Jennifer Robinson, MD

Myths and Facts about Psoriasis

Myth: Stress causes it

Stress doesn't give you psoriasis, but it can trigger a flare. Your body's immune response to stress is the same one that sets off psoriasis symptoms. And some studies say stress may even keep your medications from working as quickly as they should. Meditation, regular exercise, and other relaxation techniques may help keep your cool.

Fact: Talking is treatment

Having psoriasis can take a toll on your mental health. You may be tempted to withdraw from the social scene because of it. But talking about it with others -- especially those who also deal with the condition -- helps you feel less alone and provides support, even if that support is online.

Myth: Hot water heals

While there's nothing like a warm bath or shower to ease tension, dial back your water temps to deal with plaque problems. Skin dries out in hot water, which can up your itch factor. Try cool water, ice packs, and refrigerated lotions to help your skin chill out.

Fact: Vinegar soothes scalps

It's true: Apple cider vinegar can ease an itchy scalp. Splash it on right out of the bottle or mix it in a 1:1 ratio with water. Rinse completely afterward. Skip this home remedy if your scalp is cracked or bleeding. It could burn and irritate your skin.

Myth: Diet makes no difference

Got a sweet tooth? Too much refined sugar ramps up inflammation in your body and can cause or worsen a



flare. Same goes for fatty red meats, processed foods, and dairy. The omega-3 in fish oil, on the other hand, helps ease inflammation and calm psoriasis symptoms.

Fact: Heart disease risk goes up

Your chances of having a stroke, heart attack, high cholesterol, or an irregular heartbeat double when you have psoriasis. Make sure your weight stays in a healthy range to help offset these risks.

Myth: Avoid the sun at all costs

Actually, some sun is OK. It may even help your

plaques heal. Talk to your doctor before sunning yourself so you know how much time out of the shade is safe.

Fact: You should avoid alcohol

Heavy drinking, especially if you're a man, may keep your psoriasis treatment from working the way it should. Some psoriasis medications, such as methotrexate and acitretin, have dangerous side effects for women when mixed with alcohol.

Myth: Exercise makes it worse

The opposite is true. Studies show intense physical activity reduces outbreaks. It's good for your heart and mood, too.

Fact: Baths can be a balm

As long as the water isn't too hot and your soap is mild, a bath can be a big help for itchy, scaly skin. Add magnesium salts, bath oils, or colloidal oatmeal to ease your itch, and lock in moisture with a thick cream afterward.

Myth: It affects fertility

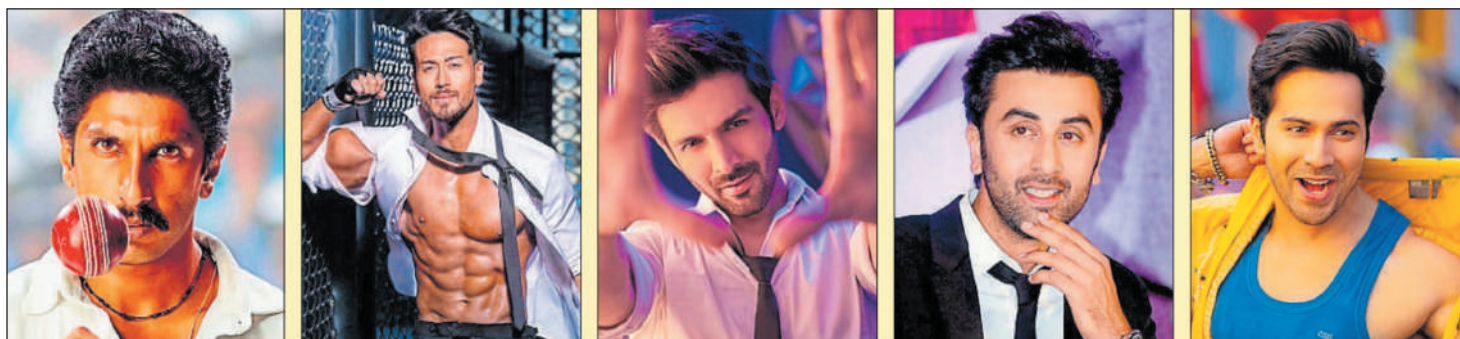
Women with psoriasis can have a healthy, normal pregnancy. You may find your symptoms get better during pregnancy, or they may get worse. It's different for every woman. If you're thinking of getting pregnant, check with your doctor about your treatments to make sure they're safe for the baby.

Fact: Herbs and spices can help

Some plant-based or natural ingredients work well enough that you can find them in ointments. Capsaicin, the spicy part of chili peppers, helps lower pain. Turmeric can work as an anti-inflammatory. Your doctor can prescribe a cream containing an herb called mahonia aquifolium as a treatment, too.

WebMD

Are young actors overthrowing Bollywood's Top Six?



Films have never been the same since 2020 for obvious reasons. The changes are not only wide-ranging but defining, chiefly because of the concurrent rise of the web originals.

And so it is assumed, presumed, predicted, and concluded that the reign of the top Six - Aamir, Salman, and Shah Rukh Khan, Akshay Kumar, Ajay Devgn, and Hrithik Roshan - is over and that young blood is set to take over.

After all, why should today's generation accept icons of their fathers' generations? They want stars they can relate to and identify with. But is such a breed ready to take over the mantle? Deccan Herald examines some names as possible successors.

Ranveer Singh

This actor broke the Rs 3 billion monopoly of Aamir and Salman with '*Padmaavat*'. His other "quantum hits" were not only Sanjay Leela Bhansali's two earlier films, '*Goliyon Ki Raasleela* -

RamLeela' and '*Bajirao Mastani*' but also '*Gully Boy*' and Rohit Shetty's '*Simmba*'. A huge fan base and a firm head on his shoulders that salutes the cream of Hindi cinema from the '70s to the '90s make Ranveer the best, if not the only, candidate as of now for future superstardom.

His films to come - '83' as Kapil Dev, '*Cirkus*' based on William Shakespeare's '*The Comedy of Errors*' and '*Jayeshbhai Jordaar*', are a good mix. And he is back as Simmba in a cameo in '*Sooryavanshi*'.

Tiger Shroff

Within certain parameters, Tiger is a star, because even his mediocre products ('*Baaghi 2*', '*Baaghi 3*') and '*War*' have enjoyed better first week collections than the lifetime collections of films of lesser names! Yes, he is exclusively slotted for now in the Biff! -Pow!-Bang! cadre. But then, so were many other big names from the past, like Ajay Devgn and Akshay Kumar. Next to Ranveer, and subject to his choices, Tiger is the best bet for a future superstar.

Ayushmann Khurrana

The dream six-hits-in-a-row record has been a shade diluted with the average hit '*Article 15*' and the disaster that was the OTT release '*Gulabo Sitabo*'. Ayushmann may be correct in his modest choices, but his audience, mostly, is modest too - like his next rom-com, '*Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui*'. But stardom is much more than just doing a different kind of cinema, even if successful. Remember Amol Palekar?

Kartik Aaryan

Kartik Aaryan is getting there, but slowly because of his erratic choices. His track-record shows anything but consistency, with a '*Love Aaj Kal*' coming after '*Pati Patni Aur Woh*' and '*Luka Chhupi*'. '*Bhool Bhulaiya 2*', however, looks promising again. As of now, he is hardly a big star or mega-revenue material and needs to work on his range.

Ranbir Kapoor

The ace up his sleeve is his monumental talent. Otherwise, his choices too tend

to go wrong. Ranbir Kapoor's '*Brahmastra*' and '*Shamsher*' seem to be getting stale now. However, maybe he is getting the act right finally with an actioner like '*Animal*'. After all, the South knows how to pull in the audience better than their Mumbai counterparts, right?

Varun Dhawan

Here was a star with great potential as seen from his early brushes with success. Of late, however, Varun Dhawan has been going woefully wrong. In any case, Varun never commanded the kind of fandom the Top Six have.

Shahid Kapoor

Obsessed with so-called "quality" cinema, Shahid Kapoor had a rude awakening when '*Padmaavat*' and '*Kabir Singh*' became mega-hits. Shahid is now doing another South remake, '*Jersey*' and a web series to satisfy his creative urges.

Rajkumar Rao, Vicky Kaushal, Vikrant Massey, and Ishaan Khatter are other names that are meant for niche projects. Sidharth Malhotra and Arjun Kapoor need a lot of luck and great judgment. Abhimanyu Dassani, Aayush Sharma, and Siddhant Chaturvedi do not even begin to count.

In 2021, therefore, we have to rely on the Big Six for the industry to survive. And web or no web, the grandeur of big-screen entertainment will continue to enmesh us in entertainment.

'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2' to 'Badhaai Do', 7 Bollywood sequels releasing in 2021

As many as 50 major Bollywood movies are slated to release this year like *Bell Bottom*, *Pathan*, '83, *Sooryavanshi*, *Laal Singh Chaddha* and more. Among these movies are many sequels to some of the most critically and commercially successful movies. Let's take a look at the Bollywood sequels that are expected to release in 2021, as reported by Rimi Chakraborty of gqindia.com

1. Badhaai Do

A spiritual successor to Ayushmann Khurrana's National Award-winning movie *Badhaai Ho*, Harshvardhan Kulkarni's *Badhaai Do* features Rajkumar Rao and Bhumi Pednekar in lead roles. While the first film revolved around a 25-year-old man trying to come to terms with his parents' pregnancy, this film promises to be just as quirky and fun but with a different storyline. According to *Hindustan Times*, Rajkumar Rao will be seen in the role of a cop, whereas Bhumi Pednekar will play a PT teacher whose dream is to play handball at a national level.

Rajkumar Rao will also be seen in *The White Tiger* featuring Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Adarsh Gourav.

2. Hungama 2

Directed by Priyadarshan, *Hungama 2* is a sequel to the 2003 comedy caper starring Paresh Rawal, Aftab Shivdasani, Rimi Sen and Akshaye Khanna. While Paresh Rawal will feature in this movie too, the other cast includes Shilpa Shetty Kundra, Meezaan Jaffrey and Pranitha Subhash in lead roles.

3. Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2

Priyadarshan's *Bhool Bhulaiyaa* featuring Akshay Kumar and Vidya Balan was and continues to be one of



the best horror comedies made in Bollywood, so the expectations are quite high from *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* which features Kartik Aaryan, Kiara Advani and Tabu in leading roles.

Apart from this, Kartik Aaryan will also feature in *Dostana 2* and a thriller drama titled *Dhamaka*.

4. Bunty aur Babli 2

After an action-packed performance in *Mardaani 2*, Rani Mukerji is all set to return to the big screen with the sequel of her 2005 blockbuster movie *Bunty Aur Babli* that also featured Abhishek Bachchan and Amitabh Bachchan in prominent roles.

This romcom is being directed by Varun Sharma and will also feature Siddhant Chaturvedi, Saif Ali Khan and Sharwari Wagh in prominent roles.

5. Satyameva Jayate 2

John Abraham is all set to spring back in action with his upcoming movie *Satyameva Jayate 2*, directed by

Milap Zaveri. Sequel to the 2018 action crime movie, this film will also feature Divya Khosla Kumar, Manoj Bajpayee, Anup Soni and Harsh Chhaya among others.

The movie will see John Abraham's character Virendra 'Vir' Rathod fight injustice as he goes against those who misuse power. *Satyameva Jayate 2* is expected to release on May 12, 2021.

6. Dostana 2

The movie was expected to hit the theatres in 2020. However, due to the pandemic, it got postponed. Directed by Collin D'Cunha and produced by Karan Johar, *Dostana 2* will feature Kartik Aaryan, Janhvi Kapoor, Lakshya Lalwani and Abhishek Banerjee among others.

The first movie was a situational comedy about two men who pretend to be a gay couple and end up falling for the same woman, who moves in with them. This time, producer Karan Johar says the film will have an accurate, non-caricatured representation of sexuality. According to Indian Express, he further said "*It's talking about sexuality in a way that will not make you cringe while watching it.*"

7. Go Goa Gone 2

In early 2020, a sequel of the 2013 horror-comedy featuring Saif Ali Khan, Kunal Kemmu, Vir Das and Anand Tiwari, was announced. The first movie revolved around three men whose dreamy vacation in Goa turns into their biggest nightmare when they are attacked by zombies.

Saif Ali Khan played a Russian gangster turned zombie slayer who helped the guys escape. However, the sequel will not have any zombies. *Go Goa Gone 2* is expected to release in March 2021.

Meet the 8 highest paid TV actors

Their income per episode will make your eyeballs pop



Bollywood may be the largest film industry in the world, but the television industry isn't too far behind! Raking in high TRPs with the many dramas that release ever so frequently, the line is a fast-paced, well-paying, highly coveted space. For those who have wondered whether TV stars make enough money to pay all the bills, you'd be surprised to know that some of them earn enough to pay yours too!

Tracy Ann of idiva.com takes readers through the names of the highest paid actors from the Indian TV industry...

Kapil Sharma

Top name on the list of Highest Paid TV Actors goes to the comedy king, one of the most talented artists, Kapil Sharma who participated in many television shows viz, *Chhote Miyan*, *Laughter Knights*, *Comedy Circus*, *Comedy Ka Daily Soap* and rose to fame after becoming a host and co-producer of the show- '*Comedy Nights with Kapil*' now called as '*The Kapil Sharma Show*.' His fat pay cheque is estimated to be between Rs 6-8 Million. His film '*Kis Kis Ko Pyaar Karoon*' was a huge hit too.

Sunil Grover

The next big name on the list is Sunil Grover who has been seen in many shows, but he became a household name for his character '*Gutthi*' played on '*Comedy Nights with Kapil*' that garnered him immense popularity from audiences. He also appears in films and he receives Rs 1-1.2 M per day.

Mishal Raheja

Mishal Raheja was first spotted in the MTV Show - '*Pyar Vyar and All That*' in 2005 but he became a popular celebrity after '*Laagi Tujhse Lagan*' and '*Ishq Ka Rang Safed*' on Colors TV. Several times the actor was nominated and won the Most Prominent Actor Award for '*Laagi Tujhse Lagan*' and the Favorite Naya Sadasya Award For '*Kumkum Bhagya*.' He quotes anywhere between Rs 150,000 to 160,000 per episode. It is surely not shocking that he is popular as one of the highest paid TV actors per episode in India.

Divyanka Tripathi

The actor who took the 94th position on the Forbes list of Highest earning Indian Celebrities deserves a special spot on our list. Divyanka gained immense fame

and attention from the audiences for her shows '*Banoo Main Teri Dulhann*' and '*Yeh Hai Mohabbatein*.' This talented star receives Rs 100,000-150,000 per episode on the small screen.

Ronit Roy

Nothing to say about this actor, his name is enough. Fans call him Mr Bachchan on the small screen and he's received many awards at the Indian Telly awards and Screen Awards. He features in films too, and if rumours are anything to go by, Roy charges Rs 125,000 per day

Ram Kapoor

Ram Kapoor, the TV tycoon who played Ram Kapoor on TRP breaking show '*Bade Achhe Lagte Hain*' has won many awards for all the characters he plays on the small screen as well as on the big screen. His charisma wins him female attention in abundance. He charges Rs 125,000 -150,000 per day and by now, it doesn't come as a surprise.

Karan Patel

Karan Patel, the actor who debuted with the famous '*Kahaani Ghar Ghar Ki*' show, is very popular and admired amongst the youth for his latest television shows '*Yeh Hai Mohabbatein*' and '*Kasautii Zindagii Kay 2*.' A paparazzi favourite, Karan owns a humongous collection of awards viz, Gold Awards and Indian Telly Awards for the best actor in a leading role and quotes Rs 100,000-125,000 per day.

Sakshi Tanwar

One of the most renowned female actors on TV, Sakshi made her debut in 1998 but she became a prominent name in the entertainment industry from her show '*Kahaani Ghar Ghar Ki*' in 2000. The actor receives Rs 125,000 per episode for her work in the television industry.



YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

You'll find it difficult to strike a good balance between your career and your private life; show patience. A new outbreak of allergy or over-sensitiveness phenomena should be envisaged. Your existing projects will need a little more reflection in order to have a good chance of success.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 17, 20, 25, 30, 36

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

It will not be necessary to keep silent all the time, but to talk with reserve and circumspection. Nice real estate prospects: you'll buy or sell a property in the best possible conditions. Concerning love, don't surrender under the spell of fancy words, think well.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 8, 15, 19, 20, 21

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

Your love life won't be devoid of burning passion and will provide you with strong emotions. The coming week will be unstable financially and particularly unfavourable to important investments; don't trust the improvement which is looming as it will be only temporary.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 15, 20, 23, 26, 30

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

You'll need to take some rest if you want to recover all your efficiency. You'll probably find yourself before a delicate choice, for your situation entails money implications in love; you should show extreme caution.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 4, 9, 19, 20, 26

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

It won't be easy to reconcile your work and your family life, but you'll succeed in doing it. In love, you'll give free reins to your sensitiveness, and you won't be ashamed in the least to show that you're a romantic.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 7, 14, 15, 19, 30

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

Don't give yourself free reins on the moral plane, control your actions well. Be careful: you'll be tempted to take foolish risks which will expose you more to miscalculations than to abundant profits. Your relationships with your close ones will be difficult.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 9, 16, 17, 21, 32

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

If you're lonely, you'll feel like indulging in amorous adventures without restraint. Think of organizing your succession in the most advantageous way, even if this seems very premature to you. Sparkling life with your friends.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 4, 11, 15, 21, 33

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

Some family concerns without gravity. You should take better care of your aged parents. It's in the material field that bad surprises lie in wait for you if you aren't sufficiently vigilant; keep a watchful eye on your finances.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 15, 19, 23, 30, 31

Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

During this week you could meet the person of your dreams; and if you live as a couple, your relations will be unusually harmonious. For the sake of your good physical shape, cut down alcoholic or sweet drinks.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 8, 9, 10, 20, 33

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

Show extreme caution with your money, don't go on a spending spree. At work, there'll be a good opportunity for you if you want to consolidate your situation; it will be the moment to move towards specific realizations.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 15, 18, 36, 39, 40

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

You'll have the impression of being the target of general hostility; calm down your exacerbated self-pride, and everything will turn out better for you. A blessed week for lonely hearts because of the possibility of various sentimental encounters.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 4, 9, 15, 19, 30

Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

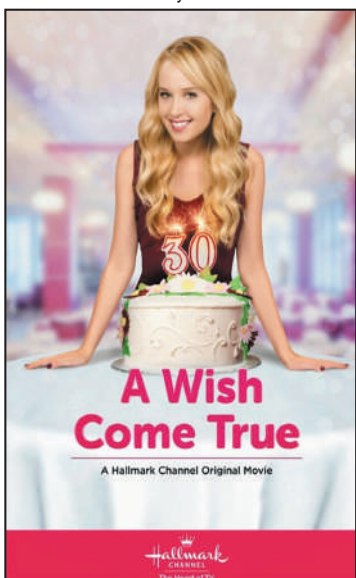
Your life as a couple will be harmonious. Don't be too generous, otherwise somebody will end up taking unfair advantage of your kindness. Take care of your friends. It will be the moment to ask yourself whether you dedicate enough time to physical exercises and body care.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 20, 21, 30, 35, 39

CINE 12

Vendredi 5 Fevrier - 21.15

A Wish Come True

Avec: Megan Park, Benjamin Hollingsworth,
Anthony Lemke

CINE 12

Samedi 6 Fevrier - 21.15

Dead On Arrival

Star: Scottie Thompson, Christa B. Allen,
D.B. Sweeney

mhc:1

Dimanche 7 Fevrier - 21.10



MBC 1

07.05 Local: Les Grandes Lignes
09.45 Local: Memwar Dan Ros
10.30 Local: Arts.21
11.00 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
12.50 Mag: Urban Gardens
13.55 Doc: World Stamps
14.30 D.Anime: Polly Pocket
15.12 D.Anime: La Ligue Des...
15.36 D.Anime: Uma And Devan...
15.47 D.Anime: HTDT - Humpty...
16.10 D.Anime: Yo Yo
17.20 Serial: Heidi, Bienvenida
17.50 Mag: Origami
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.20 Prod: Lottery Vert Draw
21.20 Serial: When Calls The Heart
23.00 Le Journal

MBC 2

10.00 Serial: Ki Jaana Mein Kaun
11.05 Serial: Zun Mureed
12.04 Film: Sankarabharanam
Star: Nikhil Siddharth, Nanditha Raj
14.25 DDI Magazine
15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha
15.21 Serial: Honaar Soon Mee
15.44 Serial: Mooga Manasulu
16.07 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal
16.28 Serial: Tu Ishq Hai
16.53 Serial: Achra Ke Moti
17.14 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
17.31 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
20.44 Local: Anjuman
21.10 Local: Urdu Programme -
Noor-E-Iman

MBC 3

06.00 Mag: Eco India
06.26 Mag: Carnet De Sante
07.00 Mag: Urban Gardens
07.43 Doc: Margherita S, La Fem...
08.36 Doc: 360 GEO
09.28 Doc: Germany??S
10.10 Doc: Looted Art In The Third
11.41 Mag: Border Crossing
12.07 Mag: Urban Gardens
12.43 Doc: Margherita S, La Fem...
13.36 Doc: 360 GEO
14.28 Doc: Germany??S
15.11 Doc: Looted Art In The Third
15.53 Doc: Japan 2020
16.30 Mag: Carnet De Sante
16.42 Mag: Border Crossing
17.53 Doc: Japon 2019
18.41 Prod Independent: MFDC I...
18.50 Talk On Thaipoosam
19.00 Open Univ: Student Support
19.22 Mag: Euromaxx

Cine 12

01.30 Film: Ingrid Goes West
03.10 Serial: S.W.A.T
03.55 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive...
05.17 Tele: Muneca Brava
05.54 Serial: French Series
06.36 Film: Adventures Of Dally...
09.00 Serial: The Magicians
09.45 Tele: Soleil Levant
10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor
11.00 Serial: S.W.A.T
12.00 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive...
13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava
14.38 Film: Adventures Of Dally...
16.40 Serial: The Magicians
17.20 Serial: French Series
18.05 Tele: Daneilla
19.10 Tele: Tanto Amor
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Serial: Heroes Reborn
21.15 Film: A Wish Come True
22.43 Tele: Muneca Brava

Bollywood TV

08.00 Film: Second Hand
Husband
12.05 / 19.54 -
Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam
12.30 / 20.11 -
Radha Krishna
12.52 / 20.32 Sanjivani
13.14 / 21.09 - Zindagi Ki Mehek
13.36 / 21.24 -
Bade Acche Lagte Hai
13.53 / 21.46 -
Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki
14.17 / 21.59 -
Ikyawann
14.43 / 22.25 -
Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
15.20 Film: Jeet
Starring: Sunny Deol, Salman
Khan, Karisma Kapoor
18.00 Live: Samacher
18.30 Kumkum Bhagya

vendredi 5 fevrier

samedi 6 fevrier

dimanche 7 fevrier

06.00 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà
07.12 D.Anime: Trollhunters
08.23 D.Anime: The Garfield Show
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Tele: Daniella
14.50 D.Anime: MFDC I Am Better..
15.00 D.Anime: Polly Pocket
15.22 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie
15.24 D.Anime: Dee Dee The Little..
15.35 D.Anime: The Minimighty Kid
15.43 D.Anime: La Ligue Des Super
16.07 D.Anime: Uma And Devan...
16.18 D.Anime: HTDT - Humpty...
16.29 D.Anime: La Famille Blaireau
16.41 D.Anime: Yo Yo
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: Blanche Neige Et Le...
23.25 Le Journal

07.00 Film: Jaani Dushman
Starring Sunil Dutt, Sanjeev
Kumar, Shatrughan Sinha
10.00 Bade Acchelagte Hai
12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhya Bhare
12.24 Serial: Mooga Manasulu
12.50 Serial: High School
13.12 Annakodiyum Ainthus
Pengalum
13.35 Serial: Anu Pallavi
15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha
15.20 Film: Dhadak
Starring: Ishaan Khattar,
Janhvi Kapoor, Ashutosh Rana
17.33 Mag: DDI Magazine
19.00 Journal Kreol
20.05 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki
Rahasya Gatha
20.31 Serial: Nach Baliye
22.00 DDI Live

06.00 Doc: Coding Art
06.42 Mag: Arts And Culture
06.55 Mag: Global 3000
07.21 Mag: Urban Gardens
07.55 Doc: Wildlife Heroes
08.47 Doc: Gutenberg, L'Aventure
09.39 Doc: On Route 7 Into The...
11.07 Doc: Coding Art
11.49 Mag: Arts And Culture
12.10 Mag: Global 3000
12.28 Mag: Euromaxx
13.49 Doc: Gutenberg, L'Aventure..
16.08 Doc: Coding Art
19.00 Mag: Vue D'en Haut
19.22 Mag: Check In
19.53 Doc: Taste Hunters
21.00 Local: News (English)
21.10 Doc: Destination
21.37 Doc: Quand Le Thon Nous...
22.29 Doc: Can Electric Cars Save
23.12 Doc: Sos Amazon
23.54 Doc: Amazing Gardens

01.28 Film: A Wish Come True
02.48 Serial: Brooklyn Nine Nine
03.30 Film: Force Of Execution
05.09 Tele: Esmeraldas
05.47 Serial: Heroes Reborn
06.39 Film: The Pirate
08.30 Serial: Midnight, Texas
09.12 Serial: Shades Of Blue
09.54 Serial: Unforgotten
10.41 Film: A Wish Cme True
12.15 Serial: Brooklyn Nine Nine
13.00 Serial: S.W.A.T
14.21 Tele: Amanda
15.10 Tele: Muneca Brava
15.55 Serial: S.W.A.T
17.00 Serial: Heroes Reborn
17.45 Film: A Doggone Adventure
19.17 Mag: Ultimate Countdown
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Series: Heroes Reborn
21.15 Film: Dead On Arrival
22.52 Tele: Dulce Amor

04.05 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum
04.26 Radha Krishna
04.51 Zindagi Ki Mehek
05.08 Bade Acche Lagte Hai
05.30 Naagin Season 3
06.13 Ikyawann
06.35 Bin Kuch Kahe
06.33 Kundali Bhagya
06.54 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka
07.42 Mere Angne Mein
08.19 Zindagi Ki Mehek
10.19 Yeh Pyaar Nahi Toh Kya...
12.19 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai
14.19 Sanjivani
16.19 Pavitra Rishta
18.49 Film: Hum Tum Aur Ghost
Star: Arshad Warsi, Dia
Mirza, Boman Irani
20.48 Serial: Siya Ke Ram
21.33 Serial: Naagin
22.14 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek
23.54 Mere Angne Mein

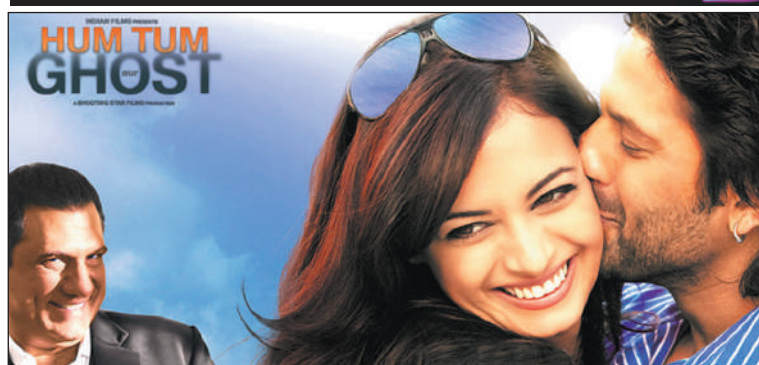
06.00 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà...
06.23 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie
08.19 D.Anime: The Garfield Show
09.30 Serial: Lucas Etc.
09.45 Serial: Magic Mania
12.00 Le Journal
12.30 Tele: Daniella
15.00 D.Anime: Polly Pocket
15.21 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie
15.35 D.Anime: The Minimighty Kid
15.43 Anime: La Ligue Des Super
16.16 D.Anime: HTDT - Humpty...
16.29 D.Anime: La Famille Blaireau
16.41 D.Anime: Yo Yo
16.48 D.Anime Yakari
17.23 Serial: Oh Yuck
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Local: Yeh Shaam Mastani
19.30 Le Journal
20.00 Prod: La Meteo
21.10 Film: Ratter

07.00 Film: NH-8 Road To
Nidhivan
Starring: Auroshikha Dey,
Ravneet Kaur, Satyakaam
Anand
09.02 DDI Magazine
10.00 Local Production
11.00 Serial: Oru Kai Osai
11.22 Serial: Santoshi Maa
12.00 Film: Maine Pyaar Kyun Kiya?
Starring - Salman Khan,
Sushmita Sen, Katrina Kaif
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
09.57 Doc: Can Electric Cars...
11.23 Doc: Amazing Gardens
12.45 Mag: Check In
16.54 Doc: Amazing Gardens
17.51 Mag: Tendance XXI
18.21 Doc: Builders Of the Future
18.50 Doc: Garden Party
19.20 Mag: Future Mag
19.53 Doc: Comme Une Envie De...
20.45 Prod Independent: MFDC I...
21.00 Doc: News (English)
21.10 Doc: Destination
22.58 Doc: Deadly Greed
23.41 Mag: Tendance XXI
00.32 Doc: Garden Party
00.06 Doc: Builders Of The Future

00.31 Film: Dead On Arrival
02.08 Serial: Hawaai Five-0
02.49 Film: Blanche Neige Et Le...
04.51 Tele: Esmeraldas
05.33 Serial: Heroes Reborn
06.15 Film: Clarity
08.30 Serial: Midnight, Texas
09.13 Film: Storm Et La Lettre de...
10.52 Film: A Doggone Adventure
12.16 Serial: Hawaii Five 5-0
13.03 Tele: Amanda
14.21 Tele: Muneca Brava
15.05 Serial: S.W.A.T
17.00 Serial: Heroes Reborn
17.45 Serial: Hawaii Five-0
18.30 Serial: Macgyver
19.18 Mag: Ultimate Countdown
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Serial: Falling Water
21.15 Film: Finding Altamira
22.52 Tele: Dulce Amor

00.40 Yeh Pyaar Nahi Toh Kya...
02.25 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
04.20 Sanjivani
06.06 Pavitra Rishta
08.06 Motu Patlu
08.11 Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki
10.04 Jaana Na Dil Se Door
11.40 Piya Albela
13.27 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum
15.11 Bin Kuch Kahe
17.30 Punar Vivaah
18.00 Samachar
18.30 Film: Dosti Friends
Forever
Starring: Bobby Deol,
Akshay Kumar, Lara
Dutta, Kareena Kapoor
20.30 Nach Baliye
21.17 Bade Acche Lagte Hai
23.15 Piya Albela

Samedi 6 Fevrier
- 18.30Stars: Arshad Warsi, Dia Mirza,
Boman IraniDimanche 7 Fevrier
- 18.30Stars: Bobby Deol, Akshay Kumar,
Lara Dutta, Kareena Kapoor

How Bezos and Amazon changed the world

Jeff Bezos announced he's stepping down as CEO, almost 27 years after he founded the company as an online bookstore



Venkatesh Shankar
Coleman Chair Professor
of Marketing
Texas A&M University

Amazon announced Jeff Bezos is stepping down as CEO almost 27 years after he founded the company to sell books to customers over dial-up modems.

Amazon wasn't the first bookstore to sell online, but it wanted to be "Earth's biggest." When it first launched, a bell would ring in the company's Seattle headquarters every time an order was placed. Within weeks, the bell was ringing so frequently employees had to turn it off.

But Bezos - who will remain at the company - set his sights on making it an "everything store." After achieving dominance in retail, the company would go on to become a sprawling and powerful global conglomerate in numerous lines of business.

Today, Amazon is the third-most valuable U.S. company - behind Apple and Microsoft - with a market capitalization of around US\$1.7 trillion, greater than the gross domestic product of all but a dozen or so countries.

Here's how Bezos reshaped retailing.

Redefining retail

Amazon - named after the world's largest river - continually took shopping convenience to newer levels.

Before Amazon's founding on July 5, 1994, shoppers had to travel to stores to discover and buy things. Shopping used to be hard work - wandering down multiple aisles in search of a desired item, dealing with crying and nagging kids, and waiting in long checkout lines. Today, stores try to reach out to shoppers anywhere, anytime and through multiple channels and devices.

After first experiencing two-day free shipping from Amazon's Prime membership program, shoppers started expecting no less from every online retailer. An estimated 142 million shoppers in the U.S. have Amazon Prime.

The company made shopping more



Jeff Bezos holds the first book Amazon ever sold, 'Fluid Concepts and Creative Analogies' by Douglas Hofstadter, in 2005. AP Photo/Ted S. Warren

convenient through features like one-click ordering; personalized recommendations; package pickup at Amazon hubs and lockers; ordering products with the single touch of a Dash button; and in-home delivery with Amazon Key.

Shoppers can also search for and order items through a simple voice command to an Echo or by clicking an Instagram or Pinterest image. Amazon even has a cashier-less "Go" store in Seattle.

Amazon has also been a factor in the rising closures of brick-and-mortar stores that can't keep pace with the changes in retail. Even before the pandemic, stores were closing at a phenomenal rate, with analysts predicting a coming "retail apocalypse." Amazon benefited enormously last year as much of the U.S. went into lockdown and more consumers preferred ordering goods online rather than risking their health by going to physical stores.

Amazon's share price has almost doubled since the lockdown began in March 2020, even as over 11,000 retail stores closed their doors.

A major employer

Amazon's impact extends to other industries, including smart consumer devices like Alexa, cloud services like Amazon Web Services and technology products like drones.

Such is Amazon's impact that industry players and observers use the term "Amazoned" to describe their business model and operations being disrupted by Amazon.

Today, Amazon is the second-largest U.S.-based publicly listed employer and the fifth biggest in the world. It employs 1.2 million people, having hired 427,000

during the pandemic. No wonder Amazon created such a buzz in 2018 when it held a competition to select a location for its second headquarters. It eventually picked Arlington, Virginia.

Amazon's work culture is intense. It has a reputation as a cutthroat environment with a high employee burnout rate. It is automating as many jobs as possible, mostly in warehousing.

At the same time, after criticism from policymakers, Amazon stepped up in 2018 and raised the minimum wage for its U.S. employees to \$15 per hour.

Faced with growing criticisms about the mounting impact of Amazon's boxes and other packaging material on the environment, Amazon has also pledged to disclose more information about its environmental impact.

The next generation

What's in store for Amazon as Bezos steps down from his CEO role later this year?

Bezos, who will stay on as Amazon's executive chairman, has previously said his focus is on preventing Amazon from dying. As he noted at a 2018 all-hands meeting, "Amazon is not too big to fail."

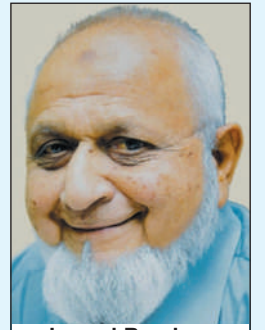
As a professor of marketing who has conducted research on online retailing and analyzed hundreds of cases, I believe that Amazon's future - and humanity's - is inextricably linked to the rise of artificial intelligence. Starting with Alexa, the company's virtual assistant, Amazon is betting on AI.

In fact, Amazon is testing anticipatory shipping, a practice in which it anticipates what shoppers need and mails the items before shoppers order them. Shoppers can keep the items they like and return those they don't want at no charge. It is also betting on cashier-free stores and AI-powered home robots.

Amazon's future success will depend on how the incoming CEO - current head of cloud computing Andy Jassy - navigates these new technologies while pushing the company into more industries, such as health care and financial services.

His challenge is to keep Bezos' legacy and Amazon's disruptive culture alive.

In Memory of Our Teacher and Mentor, Ismael Rander



Ismael Rander

The year was 1969, Junior Scholarship class at Labourdonnais Primary School. More than 50 years later, hundreds of us still remember and talk about "Monsieur Rander" - a man who truly shaped our young lives for the best.

In our class, names that may still be familiar today: Babooram, Betsy, Boolell, Bundhun, Cheung, Chinapen, Dabeesingh, Gayan, Goraya, Khemraz, Ng Ping Chung, Oree, Ponambalum, Panray, Prosper, Ramlallah, Sakurdeep, Servansingh, Sohun, Toorawa, Tsang Kwai Kew, Woomed... All of us in that class were from Ward IV, and many of us were also there because he had the reputation of being one of the best Junior Scholarship teachers around.

Ismael Rander was totally dedicated to the well-being of all his students, regardless of community, religion, rich or poor - all were equal in his "fatherly" eyes. He was disciplined, strict and driven by his quest to enhance the thinking skills of his young students with a view to getting us, through the then 'La Petite Bourse', into as good a high school as his coaching could accomplish.

Mondays, just like every other weekday, started at 7 am sharp in a small room of the Tagore Club, next to Labourdonnais Primary Government School. We would all be there early, waiting for Mr Rander to show up on his Mini Honda. Formal classes followed at 9 am in our regular school classroom and at 5 pm we would all be back to the Tagore Club for more coaching till 6.30 pm. With the Junior Scholarship exam approaching, Mr Rander would spend most of his Saturdays with all of us at the Muslim Girls College next to the St Louis Cathedral, Port Louis. On Friday afternoons, he would leave us with enough homework for a couple of hours before proceeding for his prayers. Strange as it may sound, we quietly went about with the business at hand as if he were still around. Mistakes, if any, would be made once but never repeated!

Mr Rander will be missed by all of us. He will be remembered for his dedication to our well-being and progress. We extend our deepest condolences and share the deep sorrow of his family.

On behalf of so many of his grateful and respectful students.

Satyajit Boolell, Patrice Chinapen, Sunil Dabeesingh, Sunil Panray, Baboo Servansingh, Désiré Tsang Kwai Kew