

MAURITIUS TIMES

• "This struggle may be a moral one or a physical one. Or both. But it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without demand. It never did and it will never do." -- Frederick Douglass (1818-1895)

Interview : Jocelyn Chan Low

“La contestation est en marche”

‘En tant que ministre de l'Intérieur, Pravind Jugnauth aurait dû crever l'abcès dès le départ’

* Voir Pages 8-9-12



Populism and Its Alternative



Once in power, populist governments, after a brief honeymoon with the people, have had to resort to totalitarianism to remain in power

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System Lockdown

Around this time last year, the whole world received a shock in the form of an unfurling epidemic originating from Wuhan in China, what has since come to be known as the Covid-19 pandemic. The Covid-19 is a deadly virus, having killed nearly two and a quarter million people worldwide to date out of the 103 million affected. With the new more contagious variants which have already spread to more than 60 countries, these numbers are likely to shoot up.

The other aspect of Covid-19 is the mystery about its exact origins, an accusing finger being pointed at China by several countries which have forced the WHO to send a delegation to Wuhan to address this issue. It is currently on site and the whole world is in expectation of the answer to the mystery of origins.

In Mauritius, in addition to that shock – the Covid pandemic – we have been subjected to other shocks as the year 2020 rolled out. The first one was the shipwreck of the Wakashio oil tanker off Mahebourg; the next one was our country being put of the FATF black list by the European Union; the third one the revelation that obscure companies and entities which had nothing to do with medical supplies being heavily involved at equally heavy cost to our national treasury in the emergency procurement of medical and health equipment needed for the pandemic; and the last one the series of deaths which information filtering out has shown to be related to the emergency procurement process, and to the electoral expenses in the No. 8 constituency during the general election of November 2019 allegedly in excess of the amount permitted by the law.

When the public started to ask answers about the Wakashio incident, there was a muted official response. After some time, this resulted in a massive street protest on the pattern of the Black Lives Matter or BLM movement that had shortly before occurred in the US. And to date, the country is no wiser about what went wrong to cause the shipwreck. Will the current officially commissioned enquiry under way provide the answer? We will have to wait.

In parallel, soon the few seemingly isolated deaths began to fall into a pattern more suggestive of murder than suicide. The breaking point was the discovery in a sugarcane field in Moka of the burnt corpse of Soopramanien Kistnen, an MSM agent of the Minister Yoginaden Swamy-naden.

More such deaths have taken place since, and the crime branch of the Police has been under fire for what is perceived as either stalling or not properly investigating these deaths, but perhaps more damning, being in a hurry to announce them as suicide cases.

The investigations carried out by the team of lawyers calling themselves the Avengers, who have taken up the case of the widow of the victim, have uncovered incriminating evidence against such hasty conclusions. In a meeting at La Louise in Quatre Bornes during the weekend they have made a series a 22 revelations each one more damnable than the other, and have said that they will come up with more in due course.

On the other hand, on the official side, there is a worrying paucity of information. Little or none is forthcoming from the Police, which is allegedly not conducting the enquiries that are mandated, such as the one requisitioned by the Electoral Commission about the excessive electoral expenses. As a result the DPP's office cannot press charges in case breach of the law is suspected.

Exasperated, the public can only conclude that the system is locked. This seriously affects further the credibility of Mauritius as a jurisdiction, tarnishing its image at a time when we need to pull out all socks to garner our dwindling financial resources with the economic battering we are reeling under from the Covid pandemic.

The other dimension to this disturbing evolving situation is the political one. The Avengers have allied with political groupings to give additional credibility to their fight for justice for the dead victims, of whom the Kanakiah case appears to be the next one emerging as a priority. But as well, they announce thereby their objective of leveraging this battle as one that will directly challenge the legitimacy of the current regime.

This is no doubt a serious contention. In the political life cycle of Mauritius, a new formation has appeared at approximately every 40 years. Can this new grouping constitute such a development? This remains to be seen. But the pressing business is to solve the mystery of these 'suicide-murders' – another parallel with the Covid pandemic whose origins are yet to be definitively established. Will the system be unlocked to provide the clues?

The Conversation

Social bubbles always burst — from Covid-19 to the past 10,000 years

Our lives consist of a complex and dense web of interactions that ultimately make physical and social distancing attempts impossible. And this has always been the case in human society

When Covid-19 first hit, many of us quickly created social bubbles to provide some sense of normalcy in the months ahead. My provincial health agency urged us on, suggesting everyone identify a few people "you can hug and touch" while keeping the rest of the world at bay.



Our social lives are complicated and interdependent — social bubbles and physical distancing are difficult to sustain. Photo – Shutterstock

The dream was that we could somehow teleport ourselves back to some fictive, long-ago era of independent households. Yet as I sealed up my first bubble, it was already failing because of the dense web of interactions that sustain urban life. Our plumber came to fix the sink; we needed groceries; there were close meet-ups at the park. And that was just us.

When our bubbles burst amid a second virus surge, I shouldn't have been surprised. Social bubbles never last long: We have tried and failed for more than 10,000 years.

As an archaeologist interested in how people lived through humanity's great challenges, I have written a book on how we muddled our way from Pleistocene hunting and gathering to today's capitalist economy. After reading thousands of pages of scholarship on past societies, I'd like to say that we repeatedly rose to the occasion by innovating a new kind of government or changing the way we made things. Sometimes this happened, but most of the time we carried on in the same way, hoping our problems would just go away.

Looking backwards

Living in an era when disruption is widely celebrated, it can be easy to forget that for millennia, we have leaned on tradition to guide our lives. Trying circumstances led us to rely on what and who we knew best, often drawing a line between insiders who could be trusted and outsiders who could not. Creating a social bubble has always been a seductive solution to the problem of social change.

The problem is that the desire to turn inward when times get tough runs counter to the long-term trend towards larger, more heterogeneous, societies. Almost 130 years ago, French sociologist Émile Durkheim noted that modern life was built on interdependence and specialization. Having more people together in one place has inherent scalar effects that lead to both conflict and innovation.

A page from Toronto's history

A great example of the futility of bubbling comes from where I live. The transition to village life in the Toronto area began around 1000 AD.

Justin Jennings, Associate Professor, Anthropology, University of Toronto

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Sada Reddi

Populism and Its Alternative

Once in power, populist governments, after a brief honeymoon with the people, have had to resort to totalitarianism to remain in power

Reviewing the last few years one cannot fail to notice that populism is on the rise in many countries. We have seen a number of governments coming to power as a result of populist forces securing enough votes to put their leaders into government posts. In Mauritius the general elections of 2014 which swept the *Alliance Lepep* to power is partly the result of a similar trend in world politics. Similar stories are being heard in many countries including the US, France, India, South America and Central Europe where elections results have been shaped by the rise of populist forces. However, embracing populism appears to be an ephemeral phenomenon, for the very electorate which put governments in power become quickly disillusioned and seek to reverse the situation at the first opportunity. There are thus worldwide efforts to fight populism and to restore the liberal and socialist forces as an alternative agenda.

Several reasons have been put forward to explain the rise of populist governments, from Trump's to Macron's. In the case of France, Emmanuel Macron was elected to contain the populist forces of the far-right. In many countries the electorate had become disillusioned with mainstream politics and parties. The problems confronting society have become more complex and people tend to look for simple solutions; moreover they seem to believe that the mainstream press and the elite - whether political, administrative or economic - have become too aloof and cut off from ground realities while wealth inequality has been widening.

On the other hand populist parties have emerged and staked a claim to represent the people; their rhetoric offered simple and simplistic solutions to problems which are complex and demand creative solutions. Populists do not adhere to any political ideal and have crafted policies drawn from the right and the left and pose themselves as the saviour of the people. With the spread of the internet, political debate has been submerged by rhetoric; the extensive use of the social media by various groups and parties is marked by gossip, fake news and post-truth. Such rhetoric appeals to both the lowest common denominator in the populace and to a middle-class worried about its declining living standard. But once in power, populist governments, after a brief honeymoon with the people, have had to resort to totalitarianism to remain in power. Again the people soon became disillusioned with their populist governments and they have expressed their discontent in various ways.



“Mauritian society is a very heterogeneous society with different social and economic groups jostling in their scramble for scarce resources. Consequently there has developed a strong perception that a zero-sum game operates every time that one group benefits from government policies whether in the economic field, in employment, education, health or culture. In a representative democracy, those who feel relatively deprived, ignored or not represented are bound to be frustrated...”

In the US the government under Trump had resorted to a policy of brazen nationalism and isolationism to remain in power. The French who have a tradition of street protests and the barricades have for months since November 2018 taken to the streets and remain dissatisfied even with the abolition of the hike in petrol prices - in fact the French malaise is much deeper than what appears on the surface. The Mauritian electorate, lacking both the French tradition of the barricades or the internal democracy of British party politics, is left with no choice than to put up with the regime in the hope of delivering its verdict at the next general elections and charting a new course for the future.

It should not have come as a surprise, even without hindsight, that populist governments and populist policies are bound to fail. They lack vision, competence, experience, and their approach to governance is cosmetic. The leaders are groomed to appear handsome, youthful,

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serious and their ignorance is paraded arrogantly as wisdom. Failing to transform the economy for the betterment of the people and alienating one group after another, they rely on image transformation and even that too is a failure for the cracks are too visible to remain unnoticed.

As we have seen, populist governments have only proposed simple and simplistic solutions to difficult and sometimes intractable problems which have to be tackled with a lot of competence, experience, negotiating skills and resources. The death warrant signed for the Double Taxation Agreement with India is a glaring example of the incompetence of our own brand of populists which made us the laughing stock of Indian civil servants. In fact fools rushed in where angels fear to tread. On the other hand, road accidents, traffic problems, crimes and a number of issues have enabled the public to evaluate the competence and planning skills of the decision makers.

Given the toxic legacy of populism of these last few years, it is imperative that political parties on the left do not dish out the same rhetoric and policies. Left and centre-left parties have to go back to their ideological roots and provide an alternative to populist policies. An alternative framework must have a radical and transformative agenda based on the undying values of democratic equality, inclusiveness and social justice. These values have been upheld and pursued consistently, since the first liberal elections of 1948 in Mauritius, for the creation of a society fair towards all.

Admittedly there have been compromises at all times born out of necessity and pragmatism but the end in view has never changed. In fact social, political and economic reforms have always been incremental and implemented within the overarching framework of a Welfare State even when the timing of some of the measures implemented have been leveraged for tactical purposes to serve electoral needs. One must acknowledge that there is a big ideological difference between increasing old-age pensions for electoral gains and providing old-age pensions as a right within the principle of universalism and increasing such pensions to improve and maintain the standard of living of the aged.

Mauritian society is a very heterogeneous society with different social and economic groups jostling in their scramble for scarce resources. Consequently there has developed a strong perception that a zero-sum game operates every time that one group benefits from government policies whether in the economic field, in employment, education, health or culture. In a representative democracy, those who feel relatively deprived, ignored or not represented are bound to be frustrated.

A political party which had been at the helm of public affairs for more than half a century need not necessarily be told or reminded what should be its vision of the future. But the people expect that its policies and programmes, while taking into account the populist forces in society, should aim to benefit all sections of the population and not one particular class, family or group. These policies and programmes must be anchored in an ideological paradigm of social justice, national solidarity and a realistic vision of the future.



Anil Madan

Social Media - A Threat to Privacy and Democracy?

Imagine if anyone could discover your mobile phone number simply by looking it up in a list of numbers aggregated by the service provider of your mobile service and worse yet, imagine if other people could listen in on your "private" conversations with your family members, friends, even your doctor.

And imagine if businesses were able to advertise to those who had telephone numbers because your service provider let them do so for a fee? Well, it was not so long ago, that a list of telephone numbers was readily available. It was called a Telephone Book or Directory. And Telephone Books had ads in them; in fact, telephone service providers even made a list of businesses providing all sorts of services and charged the businesses for the privilege of being listed. That was called the Yellow Pages.

Oh, and I forgot to mention there was a time when party lines were common. Neighbours could listen in on your conversations and so could the Operator of the telephone company.

We weren't too upset about that or concerned about privacy, were we?

“Social media platforms have demonstrated the power of rapid and widespread communication and the attendant possibilities for swaying opinions and attitudes. With greater power comes greater responsibility. We are seeing very tentative moves in the direction of exercising responsibility...”

Remember the election of 2016 when Donald Trump won, and the Democrats began to scream "Russian collusion?" The utterly false charge was advanced that the Trump campaign colluded with Russia to win the election. Did you notice that before the 2020 election, the Democrats were still making charges of Russian interference, ostensibly on behalf of Trump while the Republicans half-heartedly made charges of Chinese or Iranian interference on behalf of Biden? Have you noted that since the election no one is talking about Russian collusion or Russian interference except in abstract terms? Certainly, the Democrats don't want to promote the idea that Joe Biden's success was due to foreign interference in the US election.

Trump and the Republicans claim that the election was somehow stolen, but we are not hearing claims of Chinese or Iranian interference. The problem here is one of proving not only the fact of interference, but that it made a difference.

It has become fashionable to talk of social media sites as a threat to privacy and indeed, a threat to democracy. And there is a growing clamour for social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter to moderate (meaning police) the content on their sites. There were cheers in some quarters when Trump was shut off by



People check their phones while waiting in line at a polling location in Austin, Texas, on October 13, 2020. Photo - Getty/Sergio Flores

Twitter and then Facebook because Trump persisted in posting false claims that he had won the election and that the election had been stolen. All of these claims were without supporting evidence.

Yet, the de-platforming of users, particularly of a President, raises serious questions not just about the power that private companies can wield, but in the balance, of how much misconduct is acceptable from political leaders before they are shut down and shut out.

Concerns about privacy abound, but why should this be so? No one is forced to create an account on Facebook or Twitter and to voluntarily enter information that one certainly has the right to keep to oneself, whether it is one's birthday or, which hotel one is staying at or a myriad of likes and dislikes.

What I am suggesting is that when we think of social media platforms, we may just be focusing on things that do not represent the real problem and mostly, do not matter.

The issue is not so much privacy as the feeling that somehow, one's "space" in the sense of dignity, is being invaded when a social media platform "sells" information about oneself to sellers and marketing companies. Yet, such selling is done anonymously. There is little value in the identity of any single person other than to scammers. Marketers are after a larger aggregate market. And if one, as a user of such platforms, is inundated with ads for particular services and goods, it is because an algorithm identifies one as "potentially interested" in such services and goods, hence a potential customer. But nothing compels us to buy a product that is advertised and if we do purchase it, presumably it is because we WANT to.

No one seems to be upset that when watching say, a football game, or the Olympics on TV, one is inundated by ads that are aimed at the demographic of likely viewers. Ah, but they don't know that you are watching,

goes the refrain.

The more serious problems with social media come in many shapes and dimensions. An enormous amount of time is wasted by people in posting and reading vacuous nonsense. That time would be better spent reading a book or writing a letter. But then, we live in a different age.

This, of course, is the most persuasive argument that social media doesn't really matter. There are simply too many posts in any given day on both Facebook and Twitter, with enough diversity of views, to make any real difference. No one person can read all of them. But that too masks the problem that people read what they WANT to read and the algorithms of social media sites direct and amplify this type of confirmation bias.

To be sure, there are problems of cyberbullying and the mere existence of social media platforms extends the impact to a wider audience. But that is not so much a problem with social media as it is a problem with monitoring the conduct of adolescents.

The concerns about freedom of speech, the spread and amplification of disinformation and conspiracy theories, and the enabling of violent cults and other groups are far more serious issues.

In the US it is fashionable to declare this country as a bastion of free speech protected by the Constitution. Yet, people seldom stop to point out that the First Amendment to the US Constitution is directed to the enactment of laws by Congress that may abridge freedom of speech and related freedoms: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

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Social Media - A Threat to Privacy and Democracy?

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This prohibition is now interpreted as extending to the legislatures of the states by virtue of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution.

The language of the First Amendment is absolute and has frequently been interpreted by the Supreme Court to be absolute in its prohibitions regarding abridgement of the freedoms protected by the government.

Contrast this with the Constitution of India which declares: All citizens shall have the right... to freedom of speech and expression, but goes on to add the caveat that nothing in the clause declaring that right shall affect the operation of any existing law, or prevent the State from making any law, in so far as such law imposes reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right conferred... in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.

When it comes to freedom of speech and expression, the Indian Constitution may actually afford broader protection when it comes to social media platforms than does the US Constitution because the Indian Constitution is not directed solely at abridgement by the government. The US prohibitions simply do not apply to private companies; the Indian cognate has broader language in expressing an absolute right to freedom of speech and expression. The tradeoff is that in India, the right is subject to governmental interests, but not subject to private interests. The Indian government may have greater leverage when it comes

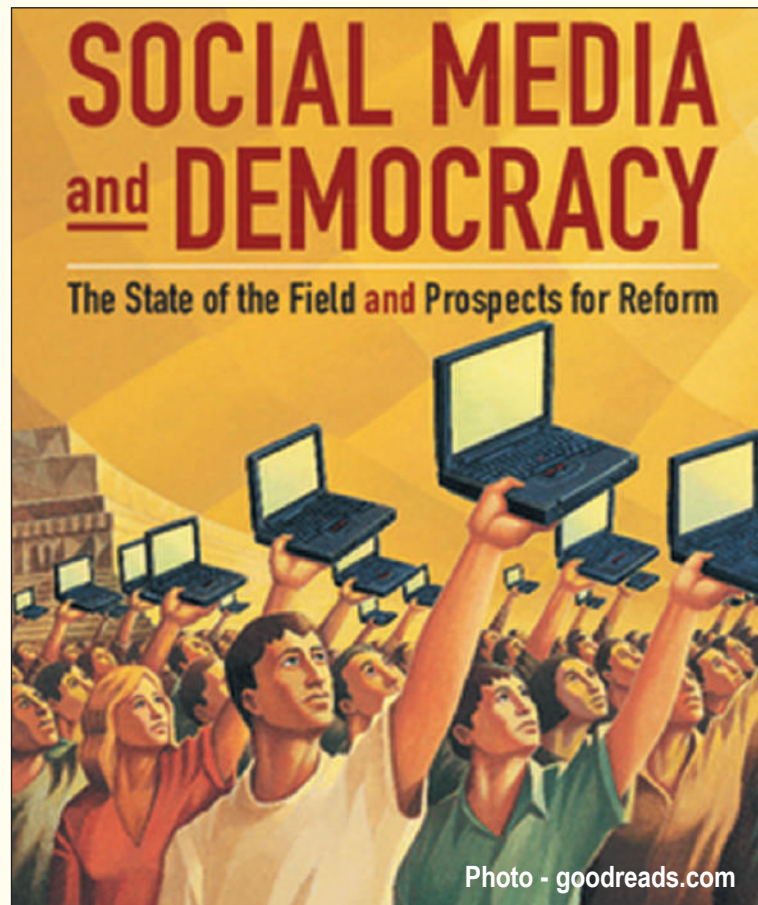


Photo - goodreads.com

to regulating private companies notwithstanding their cries that it is interfering with free speech.

The long and short of this is that the world's largest platforms are US based for now. Therefore, Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp are well within their rights to bar users who violate their rules.

Herein lies a problem. Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act declares that these Internet-based user platforms are not to be treated as publishers. This has the effect of immunizing them from libel suits. But since the companies have taken it upon themselves to be monitors of what is posted on their platforms, they may well be subject to liability for misfeasance in performance of that function.

As we are coming to learn,

“One’s “space” in the sense of dignity, is being invaded when a social media platform “sells” information about oneself to sellers and marketing companies. Yet, such selling is done anonymously. There is little value in the identity of any single person other than to scammers. Marketers are after a larger aggregate market. And if one, as a user of such platforms, is inundated with ads for particular services and goods, it is because an algorithm identifies one as “potentially interested” in such services and goods...”

social media sites facilitate the spread and amplification of disinformation and conspiracy theories. This is simply a function of confirmation bias. But social media companies bear a huge responsibility here because their algorithms serve to increase and concentrate the aggregated information to those most likely to be susceptible to it. This is the information analog of the advertising side, i.e., identifying those most susceptible to reception of the information or advertising at issue.

One has to acknowledge that it is difficult to monitor and police the spread of disinformation and conspiracy theories. Yet, it is an imperative. Social media platforms owe this as an obligation to society at large. When people post baseless claims that discourage the wearing of masks during a pandemic, or worse, anti-vaccination falsehoods, it is not unreasonable for society to expect that social media platforms will take action.

Of course, this requires an enlightened view of long-term self-interest on the part of companies that own such platforms. The pursuit of profit does always yield to long-term wisdom. Part of that wisdom may lie in encouraging users to report

posts containing falsehoods and disinformation.

In the same way, social media platforms often serve as a convenient conduit for information fed to violent cults and conspiracy theorists. The danger here is that social media platforms will be used as the logistical communications means to promote and effect violence. The question here is whether control of such functions is up to the platform or up to Intelligence and security agencies of the government. I suggest that this is a joint responsibility.

Perhaps, Section 230 needs to be reconsidered. Immunity for social media companies that provide intelligence about dangerous activities and incitement may be a worthwhile addition to the protections afforded such platforms. Of course, this should be joined with severe penalties for failure to report.

Finally, the question is what impact do these platforms have on democracy? The evidence is mixed at best. As we can see, in China, Russia, Turkey, Pakistan, and perhaps even India, there is very little impact in terms of upending government initiatives and abuses.

In the US, rather than upholding democracy, these platforms served to cause a near insurrection as the wildfire spread of falsehoods, conspiracy theories, and calls to action served to catalyze an insurrection at the Temple of Democracy, the Capitol of the United States.

Hark back to the US presidential election of 2016. Despite claims that Russian propaganda influenced the outcome of that election, the truth is that no proof whatever has been offered that

actions by Russia or any other foreign power actually made a difference. That election was decided by some 80,000 votes spread over counties in three swing states. American candidates spend millions of dollars on ads and strategic campaigning. It is difficult to believe that the Russians were sophisticated enough to get voters to affect the election in Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Ohio with 80,000 strategically placed votes.

Nor should we be too ready to accept that somehow social media companies were responsible for the huge voter turnout in the 2020 presidential election. That voter turnout was probably more a function of greater voter attention to the election in view of the pandemic that limited engagement in social activities or attendance at sports venues, or tourist destinations. And it may well have been grassroots organizing and initiatives to get voters out that worked. If social media platforms are actually encouraging voter turnout, that should be viewed as a positive development.

This does not mean that vigilance against falsehoods and disinformation should be allowed to slip or that falsehoods and abuse should be tolerated.

Social media platforms have demonstrated the power of rapid and widespread communication and the attendant possibilities for swaying opinions and attitudes. With greater power comes greater responsibility. We are seeing very tentative moves in the direction of exercising responsibility.

Much remains to be done.

*Cheerz...
Bwana*

SCHOOL OF NURSING EMPLOYEES UNION CENTRAL NURSING SCHOOL CANDOS

All members of the School of Nursing Employees Union are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting which will be held on **Thursday 25th February 2021 at 1 pm** at Federation of Civil Service Unions at Royal Road Coromandel

AGENDA

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Reading and approval of last AGM minutes | 2. President's Report |
| 3. Treasure's Report | 4. Change of Name |
| 5. AOB | |

In case enough member do not show off to make a quorum, the meeting will be postponed to **Tuesday 16th March 2021** at the same time and place and with same agenda.

*Mrs Bactora
Secretary*

29th January 2020

UAE to offer citizenship to 'talented' foreigners

The UAE says it will grant citizenship to foreign residents for the first time, providing they add value to the Gulf state. UAE Vice-President and Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum said those eligible would include investors, specialised talents, doctors, engineers and artists. They and their families would be able to hold dual nationality, he said. It is unlikely that any low-income workers will meet the strict criteria.

Sheikh Mohammed said the aim was to attract those who could "contribute to our development journey". There is no application procedure; instead individuals would be nominated for citizenship by UAE royals or officials, he said. The UAE cabinet would then decide whether or not to approve them.



Photo - EPA

The move comes amid the coronavirus pandemic and a period of low oil prices, which have prompted tens of thousands of foreigners to leave the country. The new system would allow specialised experts and foreign investors to establish deeper roots in the country, according to Abu Dhabi-based newspaper *The National*.

The rise of the Gulf state as a financial and tourism centre has depended on expatriates, the BBC's Arab affairs editor Sebastian Usher says. They make up the majority of the resident population and more than 90% of the workforce.

Foreign workers usually have renewable visas that are valid for several years and are linked to employment. Low-income labourers have also played a key role in building the economy, providing manpower for the construction, hospitality, retail and travel sectors, with their earnings often helping to support families back home. Many of them have spent years in the country, but have no formal route to citizenship or permanent residency, and no access to social welfare benefits.

While low-income workers remain overlooked, the UAE has begun offering longer stays for certain categories of investor, student and professional.

In 2019 Sheikh Mohammed launched a "golden card" visa system offering 10-year residency to various professionals including doctors and scientists, plus high-achieving school students, as well as their families. Last year eligibility was extended to a wider array of people.

To be considered for the new citizenship scheme, investors would have to own property in the UAE, doctors would need to be specialised in areas seeing high demand, inventors would need to have had a patent approved by the UAE and creative people would need to be pioneers in their fields, according to a list published by the Wam news agency.

It was not immediately clear if new passport holders would be eligible for the UAE's public welfare system. The country spends billions of dollars on free education, healthcare, housing loans and grants for its estimated 1.4 million citizens.

Citizenship is not usually offered to foreigners in Gulf countries. It was usually only offered to the wives of Emirati men and the children of Emirati fathers. The children of Emirati mothers who are married to foreigners do not automatically get citizenship but must instead apply for it, a process that can take years.



A doctor stands in a makeshift ward at an emergency Covid-19 care center set up in the Shehnai Banquet Hall at the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Hospital Annexe in New Delhi. Photo - Bloomberg

India going to come out of pandemic as one of the global winners: Danish envoy

Denmark Sunday said India is going to come out of the coronavirus pandemic as one of the "global winners", and it was looking forward to majorly expand bilateral cooperation in areas of clean energy, water and food processing under a green strategic partnership.

Ambassador of Denmark Freddy Svane said several leading Danish companies were interested in investing in areas like renewable energy, environment, shipping and innovation in India.

Foreign ministers of the two countries are working on an ambitious action plan comprising specific targets to achieve the goals broadly mentioned in the "India-

Denmark Green Strategic Partnership", Mr Svane told news agency PTI.

"It is a partnership of the new age as it is really focusing on a green transition," Mr Svane said.

The Danish ambassador said the two countries are also working on another track called "advanced plan" focusing on the expansion of cooperation with specific targets in areas of water, energy and financing of projects to be implemented under the green partnership.

He said Denmark is looking at offering its expertise to India in preserving as well as ensuring judicious use of water besides boosting cooperation in the production

of offshore and onshore wind energy.

On post-Covid recovery, Denmark was confident that India was going to come out stronger from the pandemic.

"I think India is going to come out of the pandemic as one of the global winners. The number of Covid-19 cases in India has gone down drastically while in Europe, we have a spike," Mr Svane said.

"I am pretty sure that India will be able to sustain the actual development and that will help the country in the long-run. India needs to stand on its own feet; needs to pursue its own interest," the envoy added.

He said a strong pro-active India is in the interest of the world.

Asked whether he was confident of India's post-Covid economic recovery, Mr Svane said he was "pretty optimistic".

"India has already proved its capabilities and capacities. India really built not only the present by effectively handling the situation (following the pandemic), it also looked at the future. Built some fantastic systems," he added.

He also mentioned how India reached out to several countries and supplied medicines initially, and is sending coronavirus vaccines now to help them deal with the pandemic.

"India will develop whatever happens. India has now really, I think, realised that we should not just keep ourselves for ourselves, it is not India for India but it is India for the world," he said.

Anti-racism movement Black Lives Matter proposed for Nobel Peace Prize



A Black Lives Matter protestor sits outside the US Capitol security perimeter. Photo - AFP

Black Lives Matter, a movement which became a rallying cry after the killing by US police of an unarmed black man, has been proposed for the Nobel Peace Prize, a Norwegian MP said Saturday.

Founded in the United States in 2013, the movement received an impetus in May after George Floyd died. A white policeman had knelt on Floyd's neck for eight minutes ignoring Floyd's pleas that he couldn't breathe.

The incident fuelled protests in the United States

that sped across the world.

"This movement has become one of the strongest global movements for working with racial injustice," Petter Eide, a socialist lawmaker who proposed BLM for the Peace Prize, told AFP.

"They have also been spread to many, many countries, building up... awareness on the importance of fighting racial injustice," he said.

Tens of thousands of people, including MPs and ministers from all countries, former Nobel laureates and distinguished academics, can propose candidates for the various Nobel prizes.

Several other names have been mooted for the Peace Prize including controversial Wikileaks founder and whistleblower Julian Assange, former US president Donald Trump, media rights group RSF and a trio of Belarusian opposition leaders led by Svetlana Tikhanovskaya.

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UK opens visa scheme for Hong Kong residents to become citizens



orissapost.com

Residents of Hong Kong can apply, starting on Sunday, for a new visa offering them an opportunity to become British citizens as the United Kingdom opens its doors to those wanting to escape China's crackdown on dissent in the semi-autonomous city.

From Sunday afternoon, anyone with a British National Overseas (BNO) passport and their dependents will be able to apply online for a visa allowing them to live and work in the UK. After five years, they can then apply for citizenship.

The visa scheme is a response to Beijing's decision last year to impose a sweeping national security law on Hong Kong, a former British colony, to snuff out huge and sometimes violent pro-democracy protests.

The UK said the law - which punishes subversion, collusion, terrorism and collusion with foreign forces - breaches the terms of agreements under which Hong Kong was handed back to China in 1997. London has argued it has a moral duty to the people of Hong Kong.

"We have honoured our profound ties of history and friendship with the people of Hong Kong, and we have stood up for freedom and autonomy," Prime Minister Boris Johnson said of the scheme this week.

China has reacted with fury to the visa offer. On Friday, it announced BNO passports would no longer be recognised as a legitimate travel or ID document. The move was largely symbolic as Hong Kongers tend to use

their own passports or ID cards to leave the city. But Beijing said it was prepared to take "further measures", raising fears authorities might try to stop residents of Hong Kong from leaving for the UK.

The UK predicted up to 154,000 Hong Kongers could arrive during the next year and as many as 322,000 across five years, bringing an estimated "net benefit" of up to 2.9 billion pounds (\$4bn).

Earlier, the British government said some 7,000 Hong Kong people with BNO status have arrived in the UK since July. They moved under a separate Leave Outside the Rules system, and will also be able to apply for the pathway-to-citizenship visas.

The UK introduced BNO passports in the 1980s for people who were a "British dependent territories citizen by connection with Hong Kong".

Many residents of the city at the time wanted the UK to grant them full citizenship but China was opposed to the move. The BNO was a compromise, allowing Hong Kong people born before 1997 the right to stay in the UK for six months at a time, but with no working or settling rights.

Now, it has become one of the few ways out for Hong Kong people hoping to start a new life overseas as authorities conduct mass arrests against democracy supporters and move to purge the restless city of dissenting views.

'Lifeboat'

Under the visa scheme, those hoping to move have to show they have enough funds to sustain both themselves and their dependents for at least six months.

Hong Kongers already in the UK who are involved in helping others relocate say many of the early applicants tend to be educated middle-class people, often with young families, who have enough liquidity to finance their move.

"Most people we spoke with are families with primary school or nursery age kids," Nic, an activist with a group called Lion Rock Hill UK, told the AFP news agency, asking for anonymity.

Myanmar military seizes power in coup

Civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi detained with other members of her party

The military of Myanmar overthrew the country's fragile democratic government in a coup d'état on Monday, arresting civilian leaders, shutting off the internet and cutting off flights.

The coup returns the country to full military rule after a short span of quasi-democracy that began in 2011, when the military, which had been in power since 1962, implemented parliamentary elections, reports NY Times.

What led to the military coup in Myanmar?

Parliament was scheduled this week to hold its first session since the country's Nov. 8 elections, in which the National League for Democracy, the country's leading civilian party, won 83 percent of the body's available seats.

The new Parliament was expected to endorse the election results and approve the next government.

The possibility of the coup emerged in recent days. The military, which had tried in the country's Supreme Court to argue that the election results were fraudulent, threatened to "take action" and surrounded the houses of Parliament with soldiers.

How was the coup carried out?

The military on Monday detained the leaders of the governing N.L.D. party and Myanmar's civilian leadership, including Ms Aung San Suu Kyi and President U Win Myint, along with cabinet ministers, the chief ministers of several regions, opposition politicians, writers and activists.

The coup was effectively announced on the military-owned Myawaddy TV station when a news presenter cited the 2008 constitution, which allows the military to declare a national emergency. The state of emergency, he said, would remain in place for one year. The military quickly seized control of the country's infrastructure, suspending most television broadcasts and cancelling all domestic and international flights, according to reports.

Telephone and internet access was suspended in major cities. The stock market and commercial banks were closed, and long lines were seen outside A.T.M.s in some places. In Yangon, the country's largest city and former capital, residents ran to markets to stock up on food and other supplies.

Russia detains over 4400 at protests against jailing of Kremlin critic

Police detained more than 4400 people across Russia and blocked off the centre of Moscow on Sunday in a massive clampdown on protests demanding the release of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.

Thousands of protesters defied government warnings to rally from Vladivostok to Saint Petersburg in a second weekend of mass demonstrations over the arrest of President Vladimir Putin's most prominent opponent, reports AFP.

Navalny was detained at a Moscow airport in mid-January after flying back to Russia from Germany where he was recovering from an August poisoning he blames on the Kremlin.

The 44-year-old anti-corruption campaigner is being held in a Moscow detention centre and faces years of potential jail time in several different criminal cases, despite calls from Western governments for his release.

In moves not seen in years in Moscow, authorities locked down the centre of the capital Sunday, with hundreds of police lining the streets, central Metro stations closed and the movements of pedestrians restricted.

Protesters who had hoped to gather outside the headquarters of the FSB security service were instead



A man shouts in front of law enforcement officers during a rally in support Alexei Navalny.

scattered to various parts of the city as organisers made last-minute changes in locations.

Independent monitor OVD-Info said at least 4,407 people had been detained across the country, after reporting more than 4,000 detentions during similar protests on January 23.

It said at least 1,365 were detained in Moscow and 962 in Saint Petersburg, as well as 82 journalists across the country.

Protesters chanted "Freedom!" and "Putin is a thief!"

as they marched through Moscow, braving bitter cold and snow.

Several hundred protesters eventually gathered outside the Matrosskaya Tishina prison where Navalny is being held. Dozens were detained outside the complex.

"It's almost embarrassing that the state is so afraid of us," 31-year-old protester Elisaveta Dementieva told AFP at the Moscow demonstration.

Golden toilet brushes

Many protesters carried gold-painted toilet brushes in reference to a video released by Navalny's team alleging that Putin had been gifted a \$1.35 billion property on the Black Sea coast, which among other luxurious goods featured toilet brushes costing 700 euros (\$840) apiece.

As night fell in Moscow protesters began to head home, with some wondering whether the demonstration would have any impact.

"It's true we are asking ourselves if these protests will really do any good," said Nadia, a 21-year-old student. "It will take more for Navalny to be freed. And even more for Russia to be free."

Compiled by Doojesh Ramlallah

Jocelyn Chan Low



«La contestation est en marche»

'Rama Valayden et ses amis sont en passe de prendre le flambeau face à une opposition traditionnelle qui semble faire du réchauffé et du surplace...'

Comme plusieurs autres pays du monde, la République de Maurice est secouée par des affaires sordides. En l'absence de mesures prises par les autorités pour retrouver rapidement les coupables, l'on soupçonne certains dans le monde politique et leurs proches de s'adonner à des actions malhonnêtes et immorales. Les institutions sont aussi critiquées pour leur lenteur, voire leur inefficacité. Dans ce sillage, Jocelyn Chan Low, historien, nous livre ses impressions sur le rôle des 'Avengers' dans le paysage politique mauricien.

Mauritius Times: Ce sont les 'Avengers' qui, dans les circonstances très particulières présentement, ont potentiellement la capacité de rassembler une grande foule avec les promesses de révélations sur l'affaire Kistnen et les 'Kistnen Papers', et aussi sur la mort de Pravin Kanakiah dans des circonstances suspectes, entre autres – des révélations susceptibles de 'choquer l'imagination des Mauriciens' selon Rama Valayden. Ont-ils réussi leur pari, selon vous?

Jocelyn Chanlow: J'étais présent au meeting des 'Avengers' à la Louise dimanche dernier, et je peux vous affirmer qu'il y avait une très grosse foule très enthousiaste de jeunes et de moins jeunes.

Bien sûr, ce n'était pas la foule de la marche citoyenne du 29 août 2020 à Port Louis suivant l'affaire du Wakashio, mais les organisateurs ont largement tenu leur pari. Certes, ils ont fait monter la mayonnaise depuis quelques temps en annonçant des révélations chocs (et il y en a eu des révélations!), et ils ont aussi eu le soutien d'autres groupes comme des syndicats et *Rezistans ek Alternativ*, mais pour un premier rassemblement, le succès était définitivement au rendez-vous.

* Autant qu'on se pose des questions sur ce qui est perçu comme l'absence d'actions concrètes de la part du CCID et de l'ICAC en vue de démêler ces affaires et d'établir les responsabilités criminelles individuelles, autant faut-il reconnaître que ces deux institutions sont devenues ces temps-ci les meilleurs agents politiques des 'Avengers', mais aussi de l'opposition elle-même. Intéressant, n'est-ce pas?

Personnellement, je pense que le Premier ministre a commis une gaffe monumentale, en tout cas un énorme faux pas politique, en défendant publiquement son colistier et ministre Yogida Sawmynaden. Autant qu'il a été au rendez-vous dans l'affaire Saint Louis en faisant partir son Vice-Premier ministre Ivan Collendavelloo, autant il a complètement raté le coche cette fois-ci.

Si un ministre est mis en cause – avec certaines 'preuves' à l'appui comme dans le cas allégué d'emploi fictif de Madame Simla Kistnen comme 'Constituency Clerk', il n'y a rien de mal qu'il «step down» pour défendre son honneur et réintègre le Cabinet une fois blanchi.

« L'obstacle majeur viendra sans doute au niveau du choix de la personnalité à être présentée comme le Premier ministre alternatif ainsi que ceux devant occuper les postes constitutionnels-clés. Et c'est là qu'on verra qui seront ceux qui mettront l'intérêt du pays au-dessus de leur égo ou de leur intérêts personnels... »

De plus, il y en a eu plusieurs cas dans le passé. Mais cet entêtement à garder son ministre au sein du Gouvernement et le silence assourdissant de ce dernier face aux allégations sont en train de susciter définitivement un malaise grandissant au sein de la population, et une suspicion et un manque de confiance vis-à-vis des autorités et des institutions telles que la Police et l'ICAC.

« Il ne faut surtout pas sous-estimer son adversaire, en particulier, s'il est au pouvoir et arrive à noyauter des institutions-clés de l'Etat. En outre, c'est la dispersion des votes de l'opposition dans une lutte à trois qui a mené à la victoire du MSM et de ses alliés. Finalement, ces derniers n'ont récolté que 37% des voix exprimées aux élections générales de décembre 2019... »

En tant que ministre de l'Intérieur, Pravind Jugnauth aurait dû crever l'abcès dès le départ.

* On prétend que ce qui retient le Premier ministre, ce sont les 'Kistnen Papers'...

Difficile à dire car, à travers les journaux, on n'a que quelques éléments de ces fameux 'Kistnen Papers', dont les originaux, selon les 'Avengers', se trouvent désormais de toute manière au Bureau du DPP.

Aucun ministre ne doit exercer un quelconque chantage sur le Premier ministre. A la moindre tentative, il doit être bouté hors du Cabinet des ministres. Aucun Premier ministre qui respecte sa fonction ne peut tolérer cela.

* Avez-vous l'impression qu'il existe présentement deux centres de pouvoir – peut-être concurrents -- au sein de la force policière, ce qui explique la perception de l'aggravation de l'insécurité dans le pays?

En fait, cette perception ne date pas d'aujourd'hui. Il y a effectivement plusieurs centres de pouvoir ou de prises de

décision au sein de la force policière et le Commissaire de Police, depuis quelque temps, n'est plus le seul maître à bord. Il y a aussi cette perception que cela est dû à des interventions 'occultes' venant notamment des politiques.

En fait, il existe un grand nombre d'institutions qui sont totalement gangrenées par l'ingérence politique qui est exercée à travers certains protégés. On l'avait vu à Air Mauritius, et on peut constater aujourd'hui les dégâts que cela a occasionnés. De ce fait, je ne serais point étonné qu'il existe effectivement deux centres de pouvoir, et ce, depuis longtemps, au sein de la force policière.

* Suite en page 9

* Suite de la page 8

* Quant aux 'Avengers' eux-mêmes, des voix se sont élevées dans le milieu du barreau contre l'amalgame que font les 'Avengers' dans leur rôle de légistes et l'ambition qu'ils se donnent sur le plan politique. Il paraît que Rama Valayden et ses amis n'en ont cure de ces commentaires, et ils paraissent déterminés à poursuivre dans cette voie. Que cherchent-ils réellement?

D'abord, à ceux qui s'élèvent contre le soi-disant amalgame que font les Avengers dans leur rôle de légistes et leur ambition politique, je leur dirais tout simplement de se référer à la carrière de ce grand avocat que fut feu Sir Gaëtan Duval...

Il y a effectivement au sein de cette équipe des politiciens chevronnés, à l'instar de Shakeel Mohamed, de Roshi Bhadain et de Rama Valayden, des ex-députés et/ou ministres. Politiquement, ils sont tous à divers degrés dans l'opposition. Mais je crois fermement en leur sincérité quand ils disent qu'ils se battent pour faire éclater la vérité sur des cas où planent de forts soupçons de 'cover-up'. Parce qu'il y a effectivement une forte perception de mainmise du pouvoir sur des institutions-clés dans le pays, à l'exception du judiciaire.

« La contestation est en marche, et il semblerait que Rama Valayden et ses amis, ainsi que Bruneau Laurette et *Rezistans ek Alternativ* sont en passe de prendre le flambeau face à une opposition traditionnelle qui n'arrive toujours pas à trancher sur des sujets essentiels à son devenir, et qui semble faire du réchauffé et du surplace... »

Cela dit, Rama Valayden a toujours été une valeur sûre de la politique mauricienne. Il a toujours été un avant-gardiste et un ardent défenseur des droits humains. Aujourd'hui, de par son charisme, il nous rappelle dans une certaine mesure son mentor, feu Sir Gaëtan Duval. Il pourrait peut-être créer une nouvelle force politique qui finirait par secouer les partis politiques traditionnels de l'opposition de leur léthargie.

Ce qui est certain, c'est que leurs discours et celui de Roshi Bhadain contre le système en place ont beaucoup de résonance au sein de la population, notamment chez les jeunes.

La contestation est en marche, et il semblerait que Rama Valayden et ses amis, ainsi que Bruneau Laurette et *Rezistans ek Alternativ* sont en passe de prendre le flambeau face à une opposition traditionnelle qui n'arrive toujours pas à trancher sur des sujets essentiels à son devenir, et qui semble faire du réchauffé et du surplace...

* Pensez-vous réellement que les 'Avengers' ont potentiellement la capacité de supplanter des partis comme le PTr ou le MMM sur le plan politique – s'ils parviennent à s'entendre sur la question de leadership de leur mouvement -, ou vont-ils se retrouver en fin de compte à négocier un deal «digne et sincère» auprès de l'Entente PTr-MMM-PMSD?

Face à la force de frappe de la machinerie électorale du MSM et de ses alliés qui vont utiliser tous les leviers du pouvoir pour gagner les prochaines élections générales, il n'y a pas d'autre alternative qu'un Front Uni de toutes les oppositions. Il est évident que ce ne sera pas facile à mettre en œuvre car, au sein de ce front, il y aura aussi la question du rapport de force entre les diverses composantes.

Cela dit, il faut tout d'abord qu'il y ait un accord sur le programme minimal à mettre en œuvre en cas de victoire.



En tant que ministre de l'Intérieur, Pravin Jugnauth aurait dû crever l'abcès dès le départ

Et il y a déjà un très large consensus aujourd'hui au sein de la population qu'il faut revoir toute la Constitution et le mode de gouvernance du pays et de la nécessité d'*empower* le citoyen face au pouvoir public.

Pour mener ces transformations, l'opposition doit impérativement remporter une majorité de trois quarts de sièges au Parlement. C'est pour cela qu'il est impératif de mettre les problèmes d'égo de côté et être pragmatique. Si Roshi Bhadain a pu intégrer l'entente des partis de l'opposition, pourquoi pas Rama Valayden et ses amis ainsi que Bruno Laurette et *Rezistans ek Alternativ*?

Tous, ils proclament haut et fort qu'il faut sauver le pays. S'ils veulent vraiment réussir, la solution, c'est de mettre leur énergie et leurs ressources en commun et éviter de diviser le *protest vote*, ce qui donnerait un avantage certain au MSM et à ses alliés.

* En passant, vous aurez noté qu'on parle déjà de 'L'Entente PTr-MMM-PMSD' comme si c'est déjà chose faite. Cela reste à voir, mais là également se poserait

« Il y a effectivement plusieurs centres de pouvoir ou de prises de décision au sein de la force policière et le Commissaire de Police, depuis quelque temps, n'est plus le seul maître à bord. Il y a aussi cette perception que cela est dû à des interventions 'occultes' venant notamment des politiques... »

la question de leadership, n'est-ce pas?

Encore une fois, il faut être réaliste et pragmatique. Nous sommes en 2021 et, pour beaucoup de Mauriciens, certains politiciens ont fait leur temps. Ils ont eu leur moment de gloire mais il faut qu'ils '*take a backseat*' et agissent comme des 'mentors' pour la génération montante.

Quant au leadership du Front uni de l'opposition, il faudrait mettre toutes les chances de son côté. Il ne faudrait surtout pas présenter quelqu'un qui risque de faire éloigner une bonne partie de l'électorat parce qu'il a subi malheureusement une campagne infectée de *character assassination*, par exemple.

D'ailleurs, il existe aujourd'hui des outils scientifiques tels que les sondages pour évaluer le potentiel et les chances des uns et des autres... Si l'opposition veut remporter les prochaines élections générales, il lui faudra agir en conséquence.

* Pour revenir aux 'Avengers', il est à noter également que Roshi Bhadain a pris soin de ne pas se perdre dans la mouvance politique de Valayden et consorts. Il a été admis, paraît-il, (avec ou sans son 'Reform Party') dans l'Entente PTr-MMM-PMSD pour le besoin des prochaines élections municipales. Un pas a été franchi, mais faut-il de tout ce monde-là pour combattre le régime en place?

En politique, il ne faut surtout pas sous-estimer son adversaire, en particulier, s'il est au pouvoir et arrive à nayouter des institutions-clés de l'Etat.

* Suite en page 12

From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

4th Year No 157

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 9 August 1957

● *Public opinion is the mixed result of the intellect of the community acting upon general feeling. – Hazlitt*

Electricity From The Wind



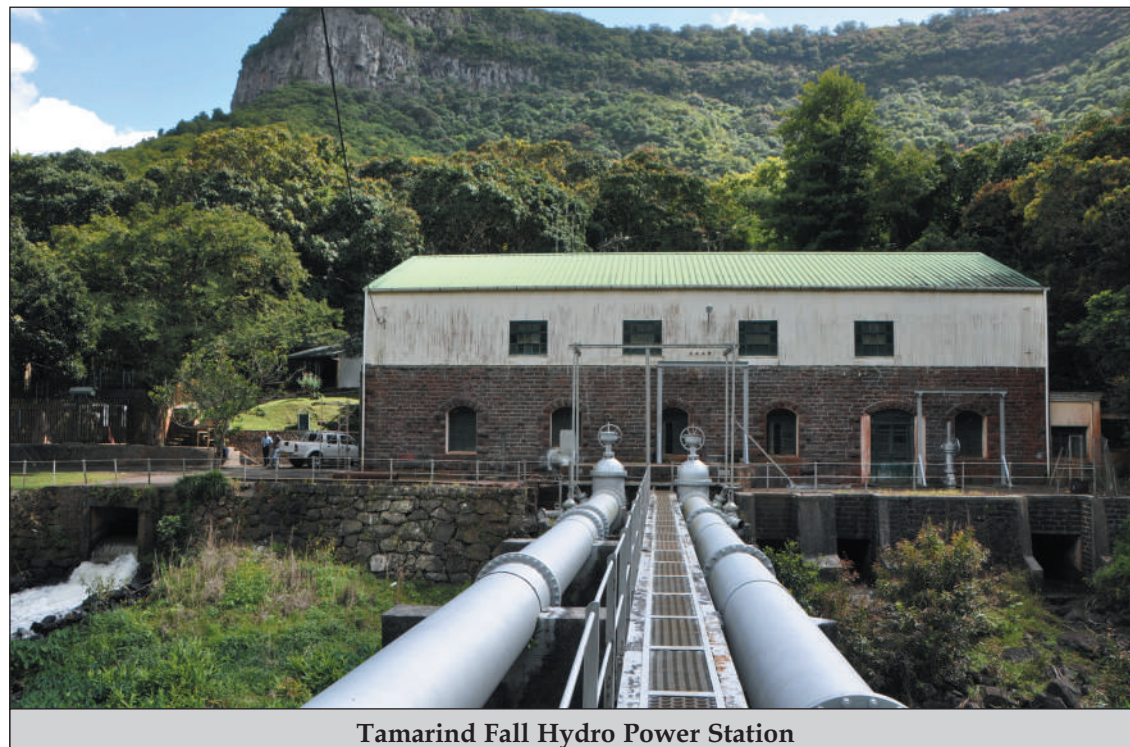
Peter Ibbotson

According to Mr Profumo when he answered a question in the House of Commons from James Johnson recently, the development of a cement industry in Mauritius is hampered by a lack of local fuel supply.

To increase the supply of electricity, the Central Electricity Board is undertaking a big programme of development which the P.R.O. detailed in a recent communiqué. Extensive works have been authorised in various parts of the island. The Eau Bleue scheme is due to come into commission at the end of 1958. The La Ferme and Tamarind schemes are due to be in commission by the end of 1958 or the beginning of 1959. When these three schemes are fully operating, a further 20 million units will be available. Two further schemes are under active consideration, one to be begun in 1959 or 1960, and the other two years later. Both new works will give employment to a large number of men and will add between 15 and 20 million units per year to the island's electricity supply.

All these schemes, the three under construction and the two under consideration, are hydro-electric. All rely on making full use of the island's water supplies. Yet agriculturists are not all satisfied that the construction of these hydro-electric works is in the best interest of the island's agriculture. Some critics allege that diverting water to reservoirs will leave less available for irrigation and may harm the basic industry – agriculture.

However, the experts of the C.E.B. can no doubt allay the fears of the agricultural jeremiahs. When the new schemes are in operation, however, will there be enough electricity regularly available for a cement factory - should one be established? Will the completion of the three schemes at Eau Bleue, La Ferme and Tamarind River give



Tamarind Fall Hydro Power Station

enough power for a cement works, or must we also await the completion of the two major schemes now under consideration before there will be enough power for a factory which will make enough cement from coral sand, clay and bagasse ash to cut the import of cement from abroad?

Meanwhile, the C.E.B. says, the diesel power station at Port Louis must remain in use to augment the supply at peak load hours and to ensure supply during drought periods.

Has, however, the C.E.B. given any consideration to alternative means of electricity generation? Hydro-electric schemes are not the only means available in Mauritius to generate electricity; and it would be interesting to know if consideration has been given to other means.

What, is a natural question, are these other means? They are all natural means; the winds, solar radiation, and the energy from the tides. All can be harnessed to provide electricity; and while perhaps they would be unsuitable to rely on entirely, they could provide a useful auxiliary means of producing electricity, to supplement the supply from the hydro-electric schemes in the same way that the diesel power station now augments the regular supply.

Mauritius is fortunate in having a long period of steady winds throughout winter. The South-East Trade Winds blow steadily, at moderate strength, all the winter through. Moderate strength is a speed of some 13 to 18 miles per hour. Sometimes their speed rises to strong, that is to about

25 to 31 miles per hour; occasionally they reach gale force, 39 to 46 miles per hour, steadily from one direction in winter. In summer, the direction changes, but the speed is still fairly constant and reliable.

This wind can be utilised, I suggest, to generate an auxiliary supply of electricity. Not a huge supply, I emphasise, but a supply sufficient to add appreciably to the hydro-electric power now (or soon to be) available.

Algeria provides an example of a country where the wind is harnessed to provide extra electricity. The nationalised electricity supply company of Algeria, *Electricité et Gaz d'Algérie*, has for eight years been investigating the possibility of wind-generated electricity and wind-mill is presently being built to provide tests. It is on a windy hill near the sea, about six miles from Algiers, 860 feet (about 263 metres) high. This experimental windmill has a maximum output of 200,000 units per year. i.e. a capacity of 100 kilowatts; not a large output, but large enough to serve as a guide to the possibility of building more and larger windmills to generate more power.

This maximum output is achieved at a windspeed of 30 miles per hour; at higher windspeeds the blades of the windmill automatically change pitch so that the same output is reached. At lower speeds, less power is generated.

The experimental windmill follows the principles of Mr Andreau of Paris. Any wind-driven generator must have a rotor, driven by the wind, whose rotation is trans-

mitted to an electric generator. Andreau's windmill has two blades to its rotor. These blades are hollow and open at their tips. The rotor hub and the two supporting it are also hollow. The wind causes the rotor to rotate, air is flung out from the open tips of the two rotor blades, and suction is thus created. A huge volume of air is drawn up the hollow tower (at 30 miles per hour windspeed, the volume is actually 58,500 cubic feet or 1,656 metres per minute) and through a vertically-shafted axial-flow turbine near the bottom. The turbine drives an AC generator carried below it on the same shaft. It is a three-phase alternator, of the synchronous induction type, generating power (in the particular windmill at Algiers) at 415 volts.

The power generated by the windmill will be fed into the country's supply, since the experimental windmill has been sited near a high tension line carrying 10,000 volts. The windmill is 100 feet (30 ½ metres) high. The rotor blades are 40 feet (12 metres) long and weigh 1,600 pounds (725 kg) each. They can be oriented to follow changes in wind direction. Since the control gear and generating plant are at ground level, maintenance is easy, and fluctuations in wind speed are damped out by the very flexible drive through a long column of air.

The Algerian experiment is being watched with interest. Meanwhile it would be instructive to learn whether the C.E.B. has considered the possibility of wind-generated power as an auxiliary source. May we hear from Mr Borland?

Sanlam
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Legalize Cannabis

With king sugarcane no longer attractive, Mauritius can profitably divert to cultivating this plant and position itself as an exporter of its products

Dawood Auleear

Gandia is talk of the town, but this time as a respectable subject, courtesy of the United Nations that have given the green light for Cannabidiol (CBD) products to be used for medical purposes.

As a village boy, I used to watch the 'tilam' (homemade smoking pipe) stuffed with gandia leaves, crushed by fingers, and being lit and smoked during social gatherings. Old village folks had identified special places, such as in the shade of a tree or under shop verandas, to meet for a smoking session every day at a specific time. We would watch amazed at how the old people enjoyed their puffs, and one could notice how, with every puff, the cheeks of their toothless mouths would collapse and join together.

Cuktoo Nana (grandpa Cuktoo) who lived up to eighty years old, like most of his gandia club peers, and who, let's face it, had a tough life working in the sugarcane fields, would tell me that smoking gandia gave him a better appetite, or that he would find Nani (grandma) more attractive. He would add that he had a better and more peaceful sleep. Some 'pionniers' (Mauritian soldiers who came back home after serving in the British army in Egypt) would add their bit to the folklore. They and their colleagues in other sections of the army chose Cyprus to spend their (gandia-smoking) holidays, as fences around the houses there were made of gandia plants which also grew wild and were available for free.

Again, in the old days, cinegoers, especially in Port Louis, would recall that they became passive gandia smokers with the smokes coming from 'Troisième' which was the cheapest section for watching films. The audience there would have bought the leaves rolled in expired blue lottery tickets, for a 'fleur' (flower on a twenty-five-cent piece) or for a 'cerf' (a stag on a fifty-cent coin). They claimed that the gandia allowed them to appreciate the music and the film songs better. Compared to the violence caused by alcohol drinkers, for most of the time there are no reported cases of crimes committed by gandia smokers. Nor can one recall anyone dying from overdose of gandia as much as one hears of cases of deaths caused by abuse of alcohol or synthetic drugs.

Let's leave the folklore aside for a moment. Cannabis has been used for ages by humans for various reasons. There are two opposing schools of thought: one believes that cannabis is harmful to health, an opinion held by, among others, Big-Pharma supporters, and the other one that CBD products can treat 70 per cent of all human ailments. The latter want Big Pharma tamed to stop



Cannabis cultivation by Clever Leaves, the world's largest Colombian company of medical cannabis cultivation and extraction. Photo - healtheuropa.eu

them influencing political leaders from criminalizing the use of CBD products.

I am a big advocate of legalizing gandia for therapeutic purposes. As far as I know, it is generally harmless and non-addictive. I have witnessed sufferers finding solace or cure when treated with alternative medicine. Parkinson's patients have seen improvement in their condition after only two days' treatment. Go to Google and you will find out that there are 20 health benefits of cannabis that everyone should know: it relieves chronic pain, improves lung capacity, helps lose weight, regulates and prevents diabetes, fights cancer, helps treat depression, shows promise in autism treatment, regulates seizures, mends bones, helps with ADHD/ADD, treats glaucoma, alleviates anxiety, slows development of Alzheimer's disease, deals with pain linked to arthritis, helps with PTSD symptoms, helps provide relief to individuals with multiple sclerosis, reduces side effects linked to hepatitis C drugs and increases the effectiveness of its treatment, treats inflammatory bowel diseases, helps with tremors associated with Parkinson's disease and with alcoholism.

Modern medicine has invented only palliatives for the above-listed ailments and admitted that they have no treatment for some, such as PALMS... Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer.

Luckily interest in traditional medicine, practised for millennia in the world and still popular in Asia and Africa, is growing. Research institutes have increased in

number. Scientists more and more are pushing for molecules derived from plants to be used in medical production processes, thereby increasing efficacy of treatments. Advocates for the use of gandia have classified it into various varieties and extracted derivatives in various formulas for the appropriate illness.

Public pressure, especially after the famous incident at Heathrow airport, when a lady was barred entry to her own country with a medically prescribed CBD product, has increased with the result that those countries and governments opposing the use of gandia have finally given way and are allowing the use of the leaves for recreation purposes and treatment of diseases.

Doctors practising alternative medicine are reporting miraculous results in the treatment of PALMS and mental illnesses when they add CBD to their prescriptions. Many countries are competing to become big producers of this new source of wealth. Private companies are raising finance from money markets to develop gandia plantations for medical product development. With king sugarcane no longer attractive, Mauritius can profitably divert to cultivating this plant and position itself as an exporter of its products and derivatives.

But first humanity has to shake off the white coat syndrome and adapt to the new reality being ushered in by CBD. Novelty has always been opposed by human beings but I keep the pious hope that the positive benefits of the use of CBD will encourage universal acceptance in order to achieve a healthier world.

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'Nous sommes en 2021 et, pour beaucoup de Mauriciens, certains politiciens ont fait leur temps.'

Ils ont eu leur moment de gloire mais il faut qu'ils take a back seat'



* Suite de la page 9

En outre, c'est la dispersion des votes de l'opposition dans une lutte à trois qui a mené à la victoire du MSM et de ses alliés. Finalement, ces derniers n'ont récolté que 37% des voix exprimées aux élections générales de décembre 2019... 63% de ces voix étaient acquises à une opposition dispersée.

Evidemment, il y a des leçons à tirer de ces résultats...

* Il reste à voir si les 'Avengers' parviendront éventuellement à secouer le Gouvernement avec les 'Kistnen Papers'. Mais tout ce beau

monde sur la plateforme de L'Entente, réunissant les différentes forces de l'opposition, cela devrait réjouir le leader du MSM. 'The more the merrier,' doit-il se dire, en raison du risque de fragmentation de cette opposition. Qu'en pensez-vous?

Il aura tort de penser ainsi. Dans un grand nombre de pays, si au départ on a vu une fragmentation des forces de l'opposition - chacun tentant de consolider son *power base* -, au dernier moment, cette même opposition a dégagé une formule d'entente pour chasser le pouvoir en place...

Surtout qu'en ce moment, si on fait une analyse minutieuse des discours des uns et des autres, les différentes forces de l'opposition évitent plus ou moins de se tirer dessus. Au contraire, ils tentent déjà de trouver un terrain d'entente pour des actions communes...

* Mais il faut plus qu'un slogan, comme celui de Bruneau Laurette et de sa bande, pour chasser le régime en place du pouvoir. Il faut un pro-

« Je pense que le Premier ministre a commis une gaffe monumentale, en tout cas un énorme faux pas politique, en défendant publiquement son colistier et ministre Yogida Sawmynaden. Autant qu'il a été au rendez-vous dans l'affaire Saint Louis en faisant partir son Vice-Premier ministre Ivan Collendavelloo, autant il a complètement raté le coche cette fois-ci... »

gramme, un leadership et une équipe homogène et crédible. Il y a un long chemin à parcourir et des sacrifices à faire pour y arriver, n'est-ce pas? Vous voyez cela aboutir, vous?

Il y a encore du temps à parcourir avant les élections générales et, d'ici là, l'opposition aura tout le loisir de régler ses problèmes, qui sont loin d'être inso-

lubles, avec un peu de pragmatisme et de bonne volonté, de part et d'autre.

Quant au programme, il est évident aujourd'hui que la population s'attend à une véritable transformation du pays au niveau de la bonne gouvernance, de la méritocratie et du fonctionnement dans la transparence des institutions. Il y a aussi une véritable défiance vis-à-vis du personnel politique qui ne peut être résolue que par l'octroi de plus de pouvoir aux citoyens. Il faut passer d'une démocratie représentative à une forme de démocratie plus participative. Il y a aussi la nécessité de réinventer l'économie mauricienne pour un développement durable respectueux de l'environnement.

L'obstacle majeur viendra sans doute au niveau du choix de la personnalité à être présentée comme le Premier ministre alternatif ainsi que ceux devant occuper les postes constitutionnels-clés. Et c'est là qu'on verra qui seront ceux qui mettront l'intérêt du pays au-dessus de leur égo ou de leur intérêts personnels.

Social bubbles always burst — from Covid-19 to the past 10,000 years

Cont. from page 2

Before this time, the Iroquois families indigenous to this region were more mobile. They got together in larger groups for short periods of time, but they enjoyed considerable freedom in who they associated with and for how long.

In the 11th century, life changed as people became more reliant on corn and stayed in one place for more time. Over a few generations, the Iroquois replaced their smaller, more temporary houses with longhouses occupied year round.

Longhouses are bark-covered, pole-framed structures with a central row of hearths and communal storage at either end. The buildings were an architectural innovation, but one designed to minimize the changes associated with village life. Each hearth belonged to a nuclear family. The families, in principle,



were all closely related on the mother's side.

Iroquois settlements got bigger over the next few centuries. Their response to more people in one place was to make more

bubbles. Longhouses proliferated and grew in size — some would grow to over 100 meters in length. To avoid others, the Iroquois faced their longhouses in different directions and built privacy fences. Their actions

created tight-knit social units that nonetheless proved brittle amid the hustle and bustle of village life.

Bubbles broke down from the inside. Maybe two sisters did not get along, or refugees needed to be crammed inside. Men brought visitors through to smoke tobacco or sit in sweat lodges. The movement of people back and forth punctured the bubble, and a longhouse's layout was constantly in flux to keep everyone happy.

Bubbles could also break down from the outside. Co-ordination between longhouses was needed to rebuild a palisade or dispose garbage. A village needed to agree on a leader for battle and to negotiate field boundaries, in a dynamic similar to Wendat villages.

The clearest indicator that longhouse bubbles had burst

was the Feast of the Dead. By the beginning of the 14th century, the Iroquois routinely e-humed their dead when a village was moved and mixed the remains into a large pit. This reinternment was the culmination of a multi-day feast that celebrated lineage differences, then erased these differences by commingling ancestors. The emphasis of the event was therefore on the village, and later on village confederacies, rather than the longhouse lineages.

Back to Covid-19

The Iroquois are one example in a broad pattern of bubbling when villages, towns, and cities first formed.

Amid a second Covid-19 surge, it is tempting to try to shut out the world. It won't work. Ten thousand years of human history shows us that now is the time to experiment with new ways of pandemic living.

Justin Jennings,
Associate Professor, Anthropology,
University of Toronto

Hilarious laws which you have not studied in school



Law of equality: The time taken by the wife, when she says 'I'll get ready in 5 minutes...' is exactly equal to the time taken by husband when he says 'I'll call you in 5 minutes'!

Law of Queue: If you change queues, the one you have left will start to move faster than the one you were in.

Law of Telephone: When you dial a wrong number, you never get a busy tone.

Law of Mechanical Repair: After your hands become coated with grease, your nose will begin to itch.

Law of the Workshop: Any tool, when dropped, will roll to the least accessible corner.

Bath Theorem: When the body is immersed in water, the telephone rings.

Law of Encounters: The probability of meeting someone you know increases when you are with someone you don't want to be seen with.

Law of the Result: When you try

to prove to someone that a machine won't work, it will.

Law of Biomechanics: The severity of the itch is inversely proportional to the reach.

Theatre Rule: People with the seats at the farthest from the entry arrive last.

Law of Coffee: As soon as you sit down for a cup of hot coffee, your boss will ask you to do something which will last until the coffee is cold.

Law of Proposal: After you accept a proposal, you will get a better one...

Law of Getting Late: When you reach early for something, it will never start on time.

Law of Exam: If you didn't read a page which is of least importance, first question will be from that page only.

Son asking father: "What is the difference between rape, romance and marriage?"

Father replies, "Clothes my son, clothes. It's all about clothes."

Totally puzzled, son asks, "What?"

Father: "In rape, you tear the clothes. In romance, you remove the clothes. In marriage, you wash the clothes!"

I just heard an announcement on a loudspeaker outside my home saying,

"If you invest Rs 250 just once, you can sit and eat for the rest of your life."

I went out and saw the idiot; he was selling chairs.

There are three dolls in a man's life.

His daughter: Baby doll.

His girlfriend: Barbie doll.

His wife: Panadol.



This is why we love children

1. **Nudity:** I was driving with my three young children one warm summer evening when a woman in the convertible ahead of us stood up and waved. She was stark naked! As I was reeling from the shock, I heard my 5-year-old shout from the back seat, 'Mom, that lady isn't wearing a seat belt!'

2. **Ketchup:** A woman was trying hard to get the ketchup out of the jar. During her struggle the phone rang so she asked her 4-year-old daughter to answer the phone. 'Mommy can't come to the phone to talk to you right now. She's hitting the bottle.'

3. **More nudity:** A little boy got lost at the YMCA and found himself in the women's locker room. When he was spotted, the room burst into shrieks, with ladies grabbing towels and running for cover. The little boy watched in amazement and then asked, 'What's the matter, haven't you ever seen a little boy before?'

4. **Police:** While taking a routine vandalism report at an elementary school, I was interrupted by a little girl about 6 years old. Looking up and down at my uniform, she asked, 'Are you a cop?'

Yes,' I answered and continued writing the report.

'My mother said if I ever needed help I should ask the police. Is that right?'

'Yes, that's right,' I told her.

'Well, then,' she said as she extended her foot toward me, 'would you please tie my shoe?'

5. **Elderly:** While working for an organization that delivers lunches to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my 4-year-old daughter on my afternoon rounds. She was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers and wheelchairs. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered, 'The tooth fairy will never believe this!'

6. **Dress-up:** A little girl was watching her parents dress for a party. When she saw her dad donning his tuxedo, she warned, 'Daddy, you shouldn't wear that suit.'

'And why not, darling?'

'You know that it always gives you a headache the next morning.'

7. **Death:** While walking along the sidewalk in front of his church, our minister heard the intoning of a prayer that nearly made his collar

wilt. Apparently, his 5-year-old son and his playmates had found a dead robin. Feeling that proper burial should be performed, they had secured a small box and cottonwool, then dug a hole and made ready for the disposal of the deceased.

The minister's son was chosen to say the appropriate prayers and with sonorous dignity intoned his version of what he thought his father always said: 'Glory be unto the Faaather, and unto the Sonnn, and into the hole he goooes.' (I want this line used at my funeral!)

8. **School:** A little girl had just finished her first week of school. 'I'm just wasting my time,' she said to her mother. 'I can't read, I can't write, and they won't let me talk!'

9. **Bible:** A little boy opened the big family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly something fell out of the Bible. He picked up the object and looked at it. What he saw was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages.

'Mama, look what I found,' the boy called out.

'What have you got there, dear?'

With astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered, 'I think it's Adam's underwear.'

Life's LESSONS

A beautiful Sufi story - The Sun and the Cave

One day the sun and a cave struck up a conversation. The sun had trouble understanding what "dark" meant and the cave didn't quite get the hang of "light and clear" so they decided to change places.

The cave went up to the sun and said, "Ah, I see, this is beyond wonderful. Now come down and see where I have been living."

The sun went down to the cave and said, "Gee, I don't see any difference."

When the sun went down, it took its light along and even the darkest corners were illuminated. That's why the sun couldn't see any difference.

I love one of the quotes from an old book that said: "The enlightened ones can never be sent to hell or pushed into darkness. They carry their heaven on their shoulders all the time."

We thought that heaven is a place where we are supposed to go, perhaps it was a state of mind we were supposed to achieve.

If you are full of darkness within, full of negativity, fear and doubt, you become a cave unknowingly. It's a hell within and no matter how much you accumulate, you still remain hollow.

If you are illuminated like the sun, then the darkness of the cave wouldn't matter. You could be in the worse of circumstances, but you'll still be able to find a blessing somewhere.

You'll be carrying your heaven with you.



Thoughts to Live by

Enrich the lives of others

There was a farmer who grew excellent quality corn. Every year he won the award for the best grown corn. One year a newspaper reporter interviewed him and learned something interesting about how he grew it. The reporter discovered that the farmer shared his seed corn with his neighbours. "How can you afford to share your best seed corn with your neighbours when they are entering corn in competition with yours each year?" the reporter asked.

"Why sir," said the farmer, "Didn't you know? The wind picks up pollen from the ripening corn and swirls it from field to field. If my neighbours grow inferior corn, cross-pollination will steadily degrade the quality of my corn. If I am to grow good corn, I must help my neighbours grow good corn."

So is with our lives...

Those who want to live meaningfully and well must help enrich the lives of others, for the value of a life is measured by the lives it touches. And those who choose to be happy must help others find happiness, for the welfare of each is bound up with the welfare of all...

Stress

Feeling overwhelmed? Here's how to get through the workday



-- Alice Boyes

When people feel overwhelming, difficult emotions, their instinct can be to spend all day browsing the internet or to drown themselves in work as a distraction. But, there are alternatives between these extremes that can help you feel better, bounce back faster, and regain your confidence.

Focus on a familiar activity

Find a task on your to-do list that's satisfying but so familiar that it's not taxing - for example, writing the newsletter you've been putting together every month for years. Then do it.

Why does this help? When we perform highly familiar tasks, it's almost as though muscle memory kicks in. All the steps are so practised that it's easy to get absorbed in them and to go with the flow. A task you can start and finish in one sitting will also give you a sense of accomplishment.

Tackle an unfamiliar task you've been avoiding

This tip seems contradictory to the previous one, but it works through a different mechanism. Let me explain.

Yesterday I got some bad news. I threw myself into writing a couple of blog posts, as per the last tip. But then I did a task of the "work - but not really work" variety that I'd been putting off. Specifically, I needed to reread my last book to make sure I wasn't accidentally repeating any points or examples in my upcoming one.

Tasks that don't seem to justify a place in your usual workday - but that you struggle to do in your time off - can be a perfect choice on a low-vibe day. Doing something you've been avoiding will help you feel like a competent human whose life is on track.

You might also try things you'd typically overthink - for example, reaching out to a person in your field whom you'd love to work with but don't know personally - or a task that's aspirational and creative. Why not put together a talk or an article about why a way of working that's standard in your industry is misguided, or make a prototype of that pet project you've had in mind? When people feel low, scared, or short on self-confidence, they tend to retreat. When you act as though you have confidence in your ideas and capacities, it provides an antidote to those feelings and can stop the negative spiral.

Do half your usual work

When you're down, being productive can help with mood and resilience. Even for clinically depressed people,

long leaves of absence from work are rarely recommended. But trying to perform to a high standard when you've taken an emotional hit can leave you so drained that you don't have the energy to process whatever is bothering you. You need some recovery to bounce back.

A good compromise is to do half (or two-thirds of) your usual work. A modest goal like this can prevent you from feeling overwhelmed and procrastinating. If you need to take a mental health day, take one and then resume, making use of the tips described here.

Connect with others

Loneliness increases stress and reduces productivity. So don't be scared to be vulnerable with

your coworkers; tell at least one person what you're going through. That will help them understand why you may be a bit less reliable or peppy than usual.

I've written before that our best sources of support

during difficult times often aren't the people with whom we're closest. Our loose connections sometimes really step up if given a chance. And even small gestures of support from those weak ties can feel extremely helpful, because they're often unexpected.

This also means you can avoid oversharing with your family and best friends, which is especially important if those people have a lot going on themselves. And it often results in the weaker relationship growing stronger.

Drop your fear of negative emotions

There's no need to worry that difficult emotions will destroy your productivity. In fact, work can be a refuge when you're in turmoil. I find that sad emotions enhance my creativity and productivity. Anger (especially at being underestimated) tends to make me feel more determined. Anxiety has a more mixed impact.

So although no one should act like a robot capable of soldiering on through any situation, don't assume that difficult emotions will negatively impact your work. The key is to use those feelings to propel you rather than try to sweep them under the rug.

Alice Boyes, PhD is a former clinical psychologist turned writer and is author of 'The Healthy Mind Toolkit' and 'The Anxiety Toolkit'.

The First Gentleman of Japan

A simple story on leadership - nothing more, nothing less



In his memoirs General Douglas MacArthur wrote about his first meeting with Emperor Hirohito after the end of the Second World War:

"Shortly after my arrival in Tokyo, I was urged by members of my staff to summon the Emperor to my headquarters as a show of power. I brushed the suggestions aside. To do so, I explained, would be to outrage the feelings of the Japanese people and make a martyr of the Emperor in their eyes.

"No, I shall wait and in time the Emperor will voluntarily come to see me. In this case, the patience of the East rather than the haste of the West will best serve our purpose.

"The Emperor did indeed shortly requested an interview. In cutaway, striped trousers, and top hat, riding in his Daimler with the imperial grand chamberlain facing him on the jump seat, Hirohito arrived at the embassy. I had, from the start of the occupation, directed that there should be no derogation in his treatment. Every honour due a sovereign was to be his.

"I met him cordially, and recalled that I had at one time been received by his father at the close of the Russo-Japanese War. He was nervous and the stress of

the past months showed plainly. I dismissed everyone but his own interpreter, and we sat down before an open fire at one end of the long reception hall.

"I offered him an American cigarette, which he took with thanks. I noticed how his hands shook as I lighted it for him. I tried to make it as easy for him as I could, but I knew how deep and dreadful must be his agony of humiliation. I had an uneasy feeling he might plead his own cause against indictment as a war criminal. There had been considerable outcry from some of the Allies, notably the Russians and the British, to include him in this category. Indeed, the initial list of those proposed by them was headed by the Emperor's name.

"Realising the tragic consequences that would follow such an unjust action, I had stoutly resisted such efforts. When Washington seemed to be veering toward the British point of view, I had advised that I would need at least one million reinforcements should such action be taken.

"I believed that if the Emperor were indicted, and perhaps hanged, as a war criminal, military government would have to be instituted throughout all Japan, and guerrilla warfare would probably break out. The Emperor's name had then been stricken from the list. But of all this he knew nothing.

"But, my fears were groundless. What he said was this: 'I come to you, General MacArthur, to offer myself to the judgment of the powers you represent as the one to bear sole responsibility for every political and military decision made and action taken by my people in the conduct of war'.

"A tremendous impression swept me. This courageous assumption of a responsibility implicit with death, a responsibility clearly belied by facts of which I was fully aware, moved me to the very marrow of my bones. He was an Emperor by inherent birth, but in that instant I knew I faced the First Gentleman of Japan in his own right."

Principle: A commander/head of government/ruler must take full responsibility for their decision whether they took that alone or consulted a thousand others to arrive at it. That is true leadership.

Bollywood Roundup

Priyanka Chopra launches haircare line 'Anomaly'a



Priyanka Chopra Jonas has announced her own haircare line called 'Anomaly'. The actress, who manages her time between Bollywood and Hollywood projects, made the announcement on Friday on Instagram, with a picture of a Beauty Inc magazine cover.

"This is ANOMALY. What a surreal moment to introduce you to the first brand I have ever created!!! For the last 18 months I have worked alongside my partners at Maesa toward the day when we could share our labour of love with the world, and I can't believe that time has finally arrived. I've tried a lot and learned a lot about haircare over the years...what gave me great hair days, what didn't, and everything in between...and I have infused that into a collection of products that gives your hair the TLC (tender loving care) it deserves. Our formulas are vegan and clean, with high performance ingredients, and our bottles are made from a 100% plastic trash from our oceans and landfills," she wrote as caption with the image.

The actress further announced that the haircare line will be available for all on January 31.

"Oh, and btw, it's \$5.99! We are democratizing sustainable beauty, because access to it should not cost us the Earth and should be available to all," she added.

Priyanka Chopra wants many kids with Nick Jonas

On the other hand, Priyanka says she wants many children with her pop star husband Nick Jonas.

"A cricket team!" the actress replied when asked about how many children she would like.

"I do want children, as many as I can have. A cricket team? I'm not so sure," she added.

The actress opened up about her hope for her future family in an interview with The Sunday Times, reports usmagazine.com.

Priyanka got married to Nick in India in December 2018, just five months after getting engaged.

She also opened up about whether their different cultural backgrounds or age difference comes in between their relationship.

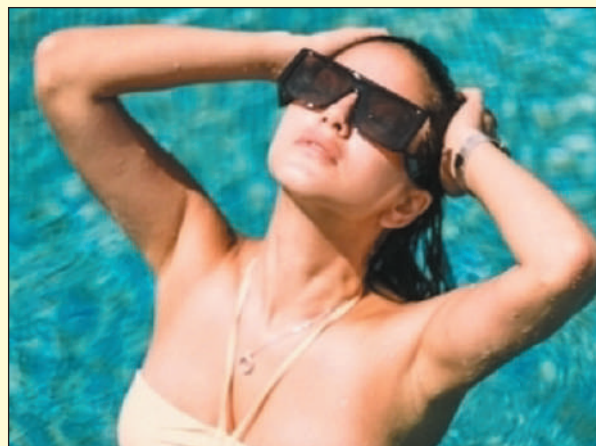
"Neither was a hurdle. Nick took to India like a fish to water. But just like a normal couple, you have to understand each other's habits and what each other's likes. So it's more of an adventure than trying to figure out hurdles. None of it was really that hard," she explained.

They discovered a new meaning of their relationship during the Covid pandemic.

"Quarantine gave us the ability to spend a lot of time together, which I'm really blessed by. Because with both of our careers it's hard to find that kind of time," she said.

Priyanka, 38, went on to praise her 28-year-old husband for supporting her.

"It's so comforting to find a person who is in your corner. Whatever I may be in my professional life or how the world perceives me, I'm just a girl trying to live her life in the best way possible, and I'm so grateful to have a partner in doing that," she shared.



Sunny Leone posts a nude-hued bikini pic from the pool

Sunny Leone on Friday set temperatures soaring with her new post on Instagram that she shared from the pool.

In the image, Sunny takes a dip in the pool dressed in a nude-coloured bikini. She completes her look with chunky black sunglasses.

Sunny posted two options of the same frame, on in natural tones and the other in black and white.

For the caption, she dropped a laughter and a beach emoji. The picture currently has over 650K likes on the photo sharing website.

The actress is currently shooting for the youth-based reality show in Splitsvilla in Kerala along with Rannvijay Singha.

Last month, she kickstarted the first schedule of her first fictional web show *Anamika* in the city. The series is a 'gun-fu' action thriller directed by Vikram Bhatt.

A while back, Sunny wrapped up *Koka Kola*, a horror-comedy.

Yami Gautam on 2 years of 'Uri': The film changed a lot of things for me

Uri: The Surgical Strike was released two years ago on this day and actress Yami Gautam went down memory lane to recall bringing alive her character of Pallavi Sharma, an undercover Intelligence Bureau agent.

"(It) Feels great looking back at Pallavi from 'Uri' today. It's been two years and for me it was this film that changed a lot of things, in me as an actor and how the audience and certain directors looked at me as an actor. (It's) Not just the physical transformation but also the strength that the character held and the versatility I got to portray. In that short span and knowing that it's going to be primarily about the operation, for me it was 'Uri' where it began all over once again for me - the kind of adulation I got from my first (Bollywood) film ('Vicky Donor' in 2012). So, (I am) forever in debt to Aditya, the audience, the Indian army and the entire team for making this film what it became," Tami said.

The Aditya Dhar directorial also starred Vicky Kaushal, Paresh Rawal, Kirti Kulhari and Mohit Raina in important roles.

Yami has lately been busy shooting for *Bhoot Police*. She will also be seen in the films *A Thursday* and *Dasvi*.

Mouni Roy feels beautiful draped in saree

Mouni Roy loves wearing sarees and she says that she feels beautiful draped in the outfit. Her latest Instagram post bears testimony.

Mouni has posted two pictures on Instagram wearing a low-waist white saree paired with a multi-coloured blouse.

"I feel beautiful draped in a Saree," Mouni captioned the image.

She had earlier posted a bikini picture, with the caption outlining her weekend plans.

Mouni will next be seen in Ayan Mukerji's action fantasy drama *Brahmastra*, co-starring Amitabh Bachchan, Alia Bhatt, Ranbir Kapoor, and Telugu superstar Nagarjuna.

Sonakshi Sinha's formula to make Monday a fun day

Sonakshi Sinha came up with an innovative way to make Monday a fun day. The actress engaged in a game of charade with fans on social media.

Sonakshi took to her verified Instagram account to enact the name of a film and let netizens guess the right answer.

"It's Monday... lets make it fun!!! Join #SonasCharadesChallenge coz ive realized i need to up my charades skill and i am going to practice on you!!! Guess which MOVIE im acting out in the comments below. Will reply to as many correct ones and probably most of the innovative ones too," shared Sonakshi along with her video.

Commenting on her post, netizens identified the film as "Agneepath". The actress also replied to comments from her fans some of whom gave incorrect answers.

On the work front, Sonakshi will next be seen in "Bhuj: The Pride of India". The war action film, based on a true story, also stars Ajay Devgn, Sanjay Dutt, Ammy Virk, Nora Fatehi and Sharad Kelkar. It is set during the Indo-Pak war of 1971.



Adah Sharma feels her new music video 'Drunk n High' has repeat value



Actress Adah Sharma features in the new music video that she feels is just right to rock the party scene this year.

Titled "Drunk n High", the video released recently. The song is sung by Mellow D and Aastha Gill. Mellow D has written the lyrics and also composed the song with Akull.

"'Drunk n High' is the perfect party song. It's very catchy. The lyrics are fun and it definitely has repeat value," said Adah.

She also gushed about the artistes she has collaborated with on the song: "Mellow, Aastha and Akull have killed this one. I cannot wait to see some creative reels on this. My audience waits to see me do something different in each project, and they'll love the surprise in the end of this one."

The video directed by Robby Singh captures the two protagonists party-hopping from one hotspot to another, and includes scenic sun-downer locations on a yacht.

Sakshi Tanwar on shedding the Parvati image, and embracing parenthood



Ruling the television industry for over two decades, Sakshi Tanwar also forayed into web series and films at her own pace with no external pressure whatsoever. The actress, who was recently seen in the web show *The Final Call*, will soon be seen in the show *Karrle Tu Bhi Mohabbat* alongside Ram Kapoor. But Sakshi is not nervous, in fact, she calls this phase as exciting. In an exclusive chat with Pinkvilla, Sakshi opened up on shedding her quintessential *bahu* avatar, cut loose from television and embracing parenthood.

Despite working for 26 years in the industry, do you feel nervousness or jitters before starting a new project?

I will tell you where the nervousness comes from. It is when you start a new project because it is a new character and a

beginning. So over there no matter how many days and years I have shot, I am in my 26th year right now, still when I take up something new, I get nervous. I am nervous before every scene. But once I am out of the set on that day, then it is out of my mind. I take each scene at a time. After that nothing matters, whether you get praises or not, whether you are criticised or not, there is nothing you can do about it. That way, before the show goes on air there is a lot of excitement. But beyond that, nothing.

Did you see yourself play such different characters given that you have always been seen as Parvati even today?

(Laughs) I totally agree with you. Sometimes even I wonder 'have they really called me?' I think I was fortunate

that these roles chose me. I wouldn't say I chose them because given a choice, I would have said no to the best of roles that came my way. So, in a way, these roles waited for me and chose me. Also, I had a mountain of an image in front of me, the saree clad *bahu* Parvati, which is still fresh in people's mind. That is one of the reasons I took a lot of breaks in between my shows. After *Kahaani Ghar Ghar Kii*, I took a break of three years and then after *Bade Acche Lagte Ho*, I took a break of over two years, it works for me that people take time and miss me. I am never in a hurry.

What about people who miss seeing you on television?

I know because that's a constant thing I keep hearing from everyone. It is very difficult for me to explain it to them that television as a medium is very demanding and I have been in front of TV actively for around 18 years. I don't see myself making a commitment of shooting for 25-30 days for 12-13 hours in a month. I have done this enough. I think people have been considerate enough to understand. People are also now shifting to other mediums.

Did you ever watch TV yourself?

To tell you honestly, I have never watched television ever even earlier. In fact, the only time the TV sets were switched on in my house was when my parents were around. Otherwise for the longest time, I did not know that my TV is not working when my parents are not there. Anyway, even my phone usage is very limited, in fact, zero.

So, if you don't watch shows or TV, from where do you take reference for a particular character?

The script, the dialogues and you get the narration from the director and writers, and I think that tells you a lot about the character. I feel that when a character is built, it gets conceived through various different minds, I completely follow that. Then there is a director and it is important to follow their vision. For most of actors, our view is very limited, whereas it is very important to see the big picture which the directors usually do it.

You are not on social media. Does that ever make you feel like you are missing out on something?

I think social media consumes you. It takes you away from the reality. I don't have time to do regular things so where to find time for social media. I am always wondering how people have time to do all this. My friends call me 'pichda hua.' But then, there are times at my place where we are just relaxing doing nothing and I think that is very important. People are really missing out on that.

Lastly, you turned a proud parent to baby Ditya recently. How has parenthood been so far? Does it take away a lot from your time?

No no! Every parent has to go through it. Whether you are single or working, parenthood has its own challenges. Every parent has to go through it, no matter what, whether you have people to support you or not. Fortunately, I am not doing TV so I have a little time. I think since 2010, I have cut down on my number of working hours a lot anyway. I realised that I want to give only this much time to my work, so then it is not like work consumes me, it is a part of my life. I am balancing it well. Of course, there are sleepless nights, but it is getting very beautifully managed now.

Feel glad to be back to my fit self: Shrenu Parikh on her weight loss journey

After testing positive for covid-19 in July last year, actress Shrenu Parikh had gained weight. At that time, she had told Soumitra Das of TNN, "When you are on medication, resting continuously and eating a lot, you are bound to put on weight. However, it's important not to rush back to doing things when you have just recovered from Covid-19. I can lose weight anytime I want, but I won't get my health back. This has been a life-changing experience and I don't want the virus to have any long-term impact on my health."

Recently the actress shared, "I have lost a lot of weight in the last few months. Now, I have been getting great feedback on social media about my recent photos, and that makes me happy."

'Started working out regularly from September, feel happy with the results'

In the second half of August 2020, I started with yoga and basic workout sessions. In September, I travelled to Mumbai for an ad shoot and that is when I started working out regularly. I started with my online classes, which included high-intensity workout sessions including aerobics and Zumba. Working out for about an hour daily works fine for my body. I also try and go for an evening walk whenever I can. I also took a lot of care about my diet. While I just love sweets, I have really cut down on my



sugar intake. I think that has taken care of a lot of health issues and I also had immunity boosters. Today, I feel happy to be back to my fit self. I have never been a fan of the size zero figure and I have always been proud to be a curvy and cute-looking Gujarati girl.

'Felt anxious when my clothes did not fit me'

In our profession, you can't afford to put on weight. There was a time when my clothes, especially my jeans, did not fit me and I knew that I looked unfit. During that phase, I didn't like clicking my own photos. In fact, while I was doing a photo session with Shubham (her younger brother) during Raksha Bandhan last year, he told me, "You are not looking nice."

Even my friends would say, "This is not the Shrenu that we have known." Of course, they weren't trying to discourage me in any way and, as my well-wishers, they were just being honest with me. So it hit me that I needed to start working on my body again, but without exerting myself.

Initially, after recovering from Covid-19, I would run out of breath very quickly and so, it was important to gradually build stamina. I started with yoga and slowly, I started feeling much better. Today, I am in a pretty happy space. I wanted to look healthy and fit again, and I think I have managed to achieve that.

CINE 12

Mardi 2 fevrier - 21.10

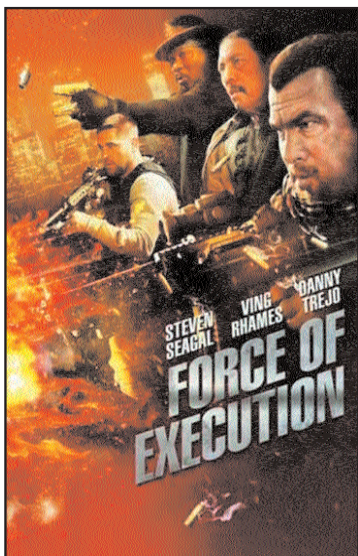
Beyond The Mask

avec: Andrew Cheney, John Rhys-Davies, Kara Killmer



mhc-1

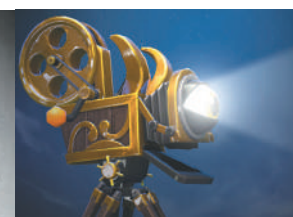
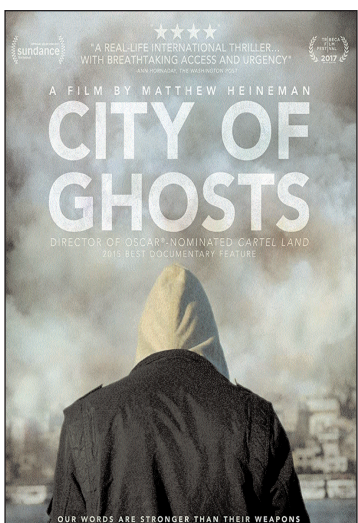
Mercredi 3 Fevrier - 21.10

Force Of Exection

CINE 12

Jeudi 4 Fevrier - 21.15

avec: Matt Dillon, James Caan, Natascha McElhone

**MBC 1**

07.10 Local: Sekirite La Route
10.15 Local: Fam Model
10.30 Mag: Euromaxx
11.00 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
12.50 Local: People
14.30 D.Animes: Polly Pocket
14.51 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie
14.53 D.Anime: Dee Dee The Little
15.34 D.Anime: Uma And Devan...
15.57 D.Anime: La Famille Blaireau
16.28 D.Anime: Little Spirou
16.35 D.Aimes: Teenie Weenie
17.20 Serial: Heidi, Bienvenida a...
17.50 Mag: Origami
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
21.10 Lake Placid Vs Anaconda
23.00 Le Journal

MBC 2

10.00 Serial: CID
10.44 Serial: Ye Vaada Raha
12.04 Film: Jhutha Sach
Starring: Dharmendra, Rekha, Amrish Puri
14.22 DDI Magazine
15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha
15.23 Serial: Honaar Soon Mee...
15.46 Serial: Mooga Manasulu
16.09 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal
16.29 Serial: Tu Ishq Hai
16.50 Serial: Achra Ke Moti
17.11 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
17.00 Serial: Bloody Romance
18.30 DDI Magazine
20.00 Local: Tamil Programme
20.30 Film: Ghar Ek Mandir
Starring: Shashi Kapoor, Mithun Chakraborty, anjeeta
23.06 DDI Live

MBC 3

06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa
06.39 Mag: World Stories
07.00 Mag: Voa Connect
07.25 Mag: In Good Shape
07.47 Doc: Voyage Aux Ameriques
09.20 Mag: Global 3000
10.54 Doc: Japan 2020
11.00 Mag: Eco@Africa
11.26 Mag: Arts And Culture
11.52 Mag: Voa Connected
12.28 Mag: In Good Shape
13.20 Doc: Invitation - Aux Voyage
14.46 Mag: Washington Forum
15.12 Doc: The Warsaw Ghetto
15.53 Doc: Japan 2020
16.40 Mag: World Stories
16.53 Mag: Voa Connected
18.30 Doc: Norwegian Riesling
19.00 Student Support Prog...
19.26 Mag: Urban Gardens
19.34 Mag: Made In Germany

Cine 12

01.24 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive...
03.35 Film: Mike Hammer...
05.07 Tele: Muneca Brava
06.31 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive...
09.00 Serial: The Magicians
09.48 Tele: Daniella
10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor
11.01 Serial: S.W.A.T
12.00 Film: Mike Hammer...
13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava
14.18 Mag: Hollywood Best Film
14.45 Film: Signed, Sealed, Belive...
16.44 Serial: The Magicians
17.24 Serial: Midnight, Texas
18.05 Tele: Daniella
19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Serial: The Bold Type
21.15 Film: Beyond The Mask
22.58 Tele: Muneca Brava
23.40 Serial: The Magicians

Bollywood TV

08.00 Film: 1942: A Love Story
12.04 / 19.54 -
Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam
12.26 / 20.11 -
Radha Krishna
12.50 / 20.32 Sanjivani
13.09 / 21.09 - Zindagi Ki Mehek
13.31 / 21.24 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai
13.31 / 21.46 -
Bade Acche Lagte Hai
13.53 / 21.59 -
Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki
14.15 / 22.25 -
Ikyawann
15.22 Film: Ranvir, The Marshsal
Starring: Rishy, Rati Agnihotri, Ramnita Chaudhry
18.00 Live: Samacher
18.30 Kundali Bhagya

mardi 2 fevrier

mercredi 3 fevrier

jeudi 4 fevrier

08.00 Local: Palette
08.30 Local: Rodrig Prog
09.00 Doc: Antarctica: Rodrig Prog
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
13.05 Local: Groov'in
14.00 Local: Priorite Sante
14.30 D.Anime: Polly Pocket
14.51 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie
14.53 D.Anime: Dee Dee The Little
15.34 D.Anime: Uma And Devan...
15.57 D.Anime: La Famille Blaireau
16.20 D.Anime: Yakari
16.28 D.Anime: Little Spirou
17.20 Serial: Heidi, Bienvenida...
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.00 Prod: Lottotech
20.20 Local Production
21.10 Film: Force Of Exection
23.00 Local: Le Journal

10.00 Pyar Ka Dard Meetha...
11.17 Suhani Ek Ladhi
12.00 Film: Sitangar
Stars: Dharmendra, Rishi Kapoor, Parveen Babi, Poonam Dhillon
15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha
15.22 Honaar Soon Mee Hya...
15.44 Mooga Manasulu
16.10 Apoorva Raagangal
16.30 Serial: Tu Ishq Hai
16.53 Serial: Achra Ke Moti
17.12 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
17.33 Serial: Kulvadhu
18.00 Serial: Bloody Romance
18.30 Serial: DDI Magazine
19.30 DDI Magazine
20.00 Programme In Marathi
20.30 Film: Ganvesh
Starring: Kishore Kadam, Mukta Barve, smita Tambe

06.00 Rev: The Global Auto...
06.26 Doc: Deadly Bacteria
06.52 Mag: Check In
07.27 Mag: Made In Germany
07.53 Doc: Builders Of The Future
08.46 Doc: Agatha Christie Contre
10.53 Doc: Seeds Of Profit
11.37 Rev: The Global Auto...
12.03 Doc: Deadly Bacteria
12.29 Mag: Check In
12.55 Mag: Urban Gardens
13.30 Doc: Builders Of The Future
14.24 Doc: Agatha Christie Contre
15.21 Mag: Close Up
16.29 Doc: Seeds Of Profit
17.54 Doc: Japan 2020
18.00 Mag: Motorweek
18.30 Mag: Red Carpet
19.00 Student Support Prog...
19.26 Doc: Urban Gardens
20.05 Mag: Tendance XXI
20.31 Mag: Vue D'en Haut

00.20 Serial: The Bold Type
01.26 Film: Beyond The Mask
03.08 Serial: S.W.A.T
03.50 Film: From The Rough
05.23 Tele: Muneca Brava
06.45 Film: Beyond The Mask
09.00 Serial: The Magicians
09.48 Tele: Daniella
10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor
11.01 Serial: S.W.A.T
12.00 Film: From The Rough
13.33 Tele: Muneca Brava
14.45 Film: Beyond The Mask
16.40 Serial: The Magicians
17.21 Serial: Midnight, Texas
18.12 Tele: Daniella
19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Serial:
21.15 Film: Land Raiders
22.56 Tele: Muneca Brava
23.38 Serial: The Magicians

08.00 Film: Bajatey Raho
12.04 / 20.06 -
Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam
12.26 / 20.26 -
Radha Krishna
13.10 / 20.46 Zindagi Ki Mehek
13.30 / 21.09 -
Bade Acche Lagte
13.52 / 21.31 - Jai Kanhaiya Lal...
14.14 / 21.46 - Ikyawann
14.36 / 21.59 -
Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
14.59 / 22.25 - Bin Kucche Kahe
15.25 Film: Soldier
Starring: Raakhee, Bobby Deol, Pretty Zinta
18.00 Live: Samacher
18.30 Kumkum Bhagya
18.51 Ek Rishta Saajhed Ka
19.13 Mere Angne Mein
19.35 Yeh Pyaar Nahi Toh Kya...

06.00 Local: Klip Seleksion
06.42 Local: Sur Prise
09.00 Mag: Made In Germany
09.45 Local: Encounter
10.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
13.00 Local: RDV Muzikal
14.30 D.Anime: Polly Pocket
14.47 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie
14.49 D.Anime: Dee Dee The Little...
15.31 D.Anime: Uma And Devan...
15.42 D.Anime: Humpty Dumpty
15.53 D.Anime: La Famille Blaireau
16.05 D.Anime: Yo Yo
16.25 D.Anime: Little Spirou
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Jamai Raja
18.55 Local: Chaar Dham Tirth...
19.30 Le Journal
20.25 Film: Aarakshan

10.00 Karm Phal Data Shani
12.05 Film: Roti
Starring: Rajesh Khanna, Mumtaz
14.50 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha
15.21 Honaar Soon Mee Hya
Gharchi
15.42 Mooga Manasulu
16.06 Apoorva Raagangal
16.29 Serial: Tu Ishq Hai
16.51 Serial: Achra Ke Moti
17.13 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
18.00 Serial: Bloody Romance
18.30 Serial: Ghar Pahucha Da
Devi Maiya
19.00 Zournal Kreol
20.00 Local: Les Grandes Lignes
21.00 Film: City Of Ghosts
Starring: Matt Dillon, James Caan, Natascha McElhone
23.06 DDI Live

06.00 Mag: Motorweek
06.25 Mag: Vous Et Nous
07.19 Doc: Urban Gardens
08.09 Mag: Vue D'en Haut
09.56 Doc: The Value Of Biodiver...
10.25 Mag: Motorweek
11.20 Mag: Arts.21
12.10 Mag: Tendance XXI
14.51 Mag: Motorweek
16.08 Doc: Garden Party
18.00 Mag: Eco India
18.44 Prod Indepen: MFDC 1 Am...
19.21 Mag: Tomorrow Today
19.52 Doc: Margherita S, La...
20.45 Prod Indepen: MFDC 1 Am...
21.10 Doc: 360 Geo
22.02 Doc: Germany??S
22.44 Doc: Looted Art In The Third
23.26 Mag: Eco India
23.52 Mag: Carnet De Sante
00.05 Mag: Border Crossing

01.28 Film: Cassidy Red
02.59 Serial: S.W.A.T
03.40 Film: UFO/OVNI
05.05 Tele: Muneca Brava
06.00 Serial:
06.29 Film: Land Raiders
09.00 Serial: The Magicians
10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor
11.01 Serial: S.W.A.T
12.00 Film: UFO/OVNI
13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava
14.32 Film: Land Raiders
16.44 Serial: The Magicians
17.21 Serial:
18.05 Tele: Daniella
19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor
20.08 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Serial:
21.15 Film: Ingrid Goes West
22.57 Tele: Muneca Brava
23.39 Serial: The Magicians

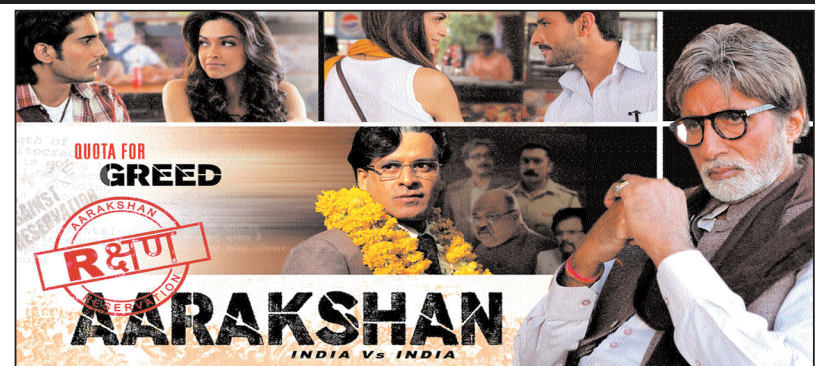
08.00 Film: Soldier
12.05 / 19.54 -
Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam
12.26 / 20.11 -
Radha Krishna
12.47 / 20.32 Sanjivani
13.09 / 21.09 -
Zindagi Ki Mehek
13.31 / 21.24 -
Bade Acche Lagte Hai
13.56 / 21.46 -
Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki
14.14 / 21.59 - Ikyawann
14.36 / 22.25 -
Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
15.20 Film: Second Hand Husband
Starring: Gippy Grewal, Tina Ahuja, Dharmendra, Ravi Kishan
18.30 Kundali Bhagya
18.53 Ek Rishta Saajhed Ka



Jeudi 4 Fevrier - 15.20
Gippy Grewal, Tina Ahuja, Dharmendra, Ravi Kishan



Jeudi 4 Fevrier - 20.25
Stars: Amitabh Bachchan, Saif Ali Khan and Manoj Bajpai



Conspiracy theories: why are they thriving in the pandemic?

If conspiracy theories are going mainstream, we have to start mainstreaming a response



A crowd protests lockdown rules in Edinburgh. PA



Rod Dacombe

Director of the Centre for British Politics and Government, King's College London

We've all seen them. Those posts shared by friends of friends on Facebook, that jaw-dropping tweet you can scarcely believe was not immediately deleted. Alongside social distancing and Zoom meetings, it seems that one inescapable symptom of the pandemic is the proliferation of conspiracy theories on social media.

Conspiracy theories are distinct from other forms of misinformation and falsehood. They are particular ways in which we make sense of the complex and sometimes disturbing world around us. They have also long been seen as a particularly political phenomenon. The American historian Richard Hofstadter famously referred to such ideas as underpinning a "paranoid style" of political thinking, replete with "heated exaggeration, suspiciousness, and conspiratorial fantasy".

A more recent understanding of their importance can be found in the work of the political theorist Alfred Moore, who suggests they are means of "explaining events

or phenomena in a way that is unwarranted, implausible, or even dangerous, invoking ever and deeper conspiracies and discounting all contradictory evidence".

In my work, I argue that over recent years we have seen the emergence of distinct forms of conspiracy theory, driven by structural changes in the way we communicate about politics. In order to understand the phenomenon, we need to think of conspiracy theories as part of a significant shift in the ways political participation happens in contemporary democracies.

Filling a void

There are a number of reasons why we are seeing conspiracy theories take hold in this way, and these have implications for our response to the pandemic which cannot be ignored.

It is well established that conspiracy theories are more prevalent in times of crisis. Research shows us that the popularity of these ideas is not constant, and peaks during cataclysmic events and social upheaval. Conspiracy theories were prominent during previous pandemics, including the Black Death, the "Russian flu" of the late 19th century and the 1918 flu pandemic.

However, in contrast to past crises, recent conspiracy theories have been driven by the rapid change in how we communicate with each other. Of particular importance is the emergence of social media sites, which enable the rapid spread of information

based on (superficially, at least) plausible information produced by what appear to be reliable sources. This context matters, in part because it allows a great degree of individual agency in the dissemination of conspiracy theories.

Fundamentally, conspiracy theories of this kind are powerful because they are participatory. They engage people directly in the development and amplification of political ideas, however outlandish they might seem. In an environment when trust and confidence in political institutions are declining and engagement in democracy is highly unequal, this form of participation provides an easily-accessible and engaging alternative to mainstream forms of political participation.

There is an adage amongst online conspiracy theorists - do your own research. This encourages those involved to seek out validation of their ideas from sources which refute the "official" narrative. Engaging in contemporary conspiracy theories therefore has a game-like quality. People are encouraged to "discover" information promoted through their online networks rather than passively accept data and facts produced by established sources. Research tells us that any evidence presented to the contrary, no matter how compelling, is unlikely to be accepted, and indeed, might even be taken as evidence in favour of the conspiracy theory. More importantly, following these beliefs necessarily means adopting a distrustful orientation

towards public institutions and scientific evidence.

Facing facts

There is clear potential for conspiracy theories of this kind to undermine efforts to stop the spread of COVID and damage trust in vaccines. False arguments against vaccines are presented as an "alternative narrative" of equal status to scientific evidence. Attempts to expose the frailties of such a position are held to be evidence of vested interests on the part of state agencies and pharmaceutical companies.

Throughout, the participatory, gamified nature of the generation and spread of these ideas allows people to find a degree of stability in a confusing and unsettling time. Surely, part of the appeal that there is a "plandemic" is that there is, actually, a plan governing our lives rather than uncertainty at every turn.

The dangers of such conspiracy theories for public health and our ability to navigate a path away from the current pandemic are real. In such an environment, it can be hard to know fact from fiction, with expertise and established sources of information refuted and rejected through social media. That we have not seen a coherent and credible response to this issue is therefore deeply worrying.

Numerous steps might be taken to address the problem. Rethinking the regulation of social media and removing the most prolific "super-spreader" social media accounts (including those of celebrities and public figures) has obvious potential. A senior figure in government might also be appointed to lead on addressing misinformation. However, any intervention needs to be rooted in an understanding of the shifting context of political participation.

Of course, there are difficult questions over how we ensure that we address these forms of conspiracy theory in a way that doesn't restrict the legitimate questioning of authority that is essential in any democracy. But it is imperative that as a society we recognise, and respond to, the sudden growth in conspiracy theories of this kind.

Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor



Going Deep

To reach the depth we wish to access, we must dive below layers to the deepest parts of ourselves.

There are times when life urges us to seek more. Small changes to our comfort zone may fail to alleviate any sense of stagnancy or frustration, and we may need to examine our lives and ourselves more deeply to find the right place to start. Everything we need for success and joy lies within. But so often, life's debris accumulates, building layers around our core that make it difficult to access the truth that resides within. To reach the depth we wish to access, we must dive below these layers to the deepest parts of ourselves.

The first layer can be found in our minds. Our to-do lists and busywork are usually less important than we think, so we must look past them to examine the thoughts that matter most to us. The next layer can be found in our hearts, where past hurts and disappointments can sometimes cover up our vulnerabilities, as well as the truth of who and what really stirs the love within us. We can choose to go even deeper -- to our center. If we can go beyond anything that has affected us to the point that it blocks us at the gut level, we can reconnect with our power, our raw instincts, our organic yeses. Here, at the core, lies our truth. Our core is our foundation that supports us and what we'd like to build our authentic life upon.

When we examine ourselves to these depths, we are able to find what we wish to bring to the surface and what we wish to let go. When we remember what lies beneath our layers, we can look at what was floating on the surface, causing blocks and pains, and understand the purpose that they served. Oftentimes, it is the built-up debris that causes us to go deeper, so we can search for the truth. Go deep, live life from your truth within, and watch your innate beauty manifest outward.