

# MAURITIUS TIMES

• *To do great things is difficult; but to command great things is more difficult. -Friedrich Nietzsche*

## Is politics a cancer to be eradicated?



*'We must declare total independence from the tyranny of politics before we are crushed under its weight.'*

Dr R Neerunjun Gopee \* See Page 3

## Boris Johnson may soon have the power to call elections whenever he wants...

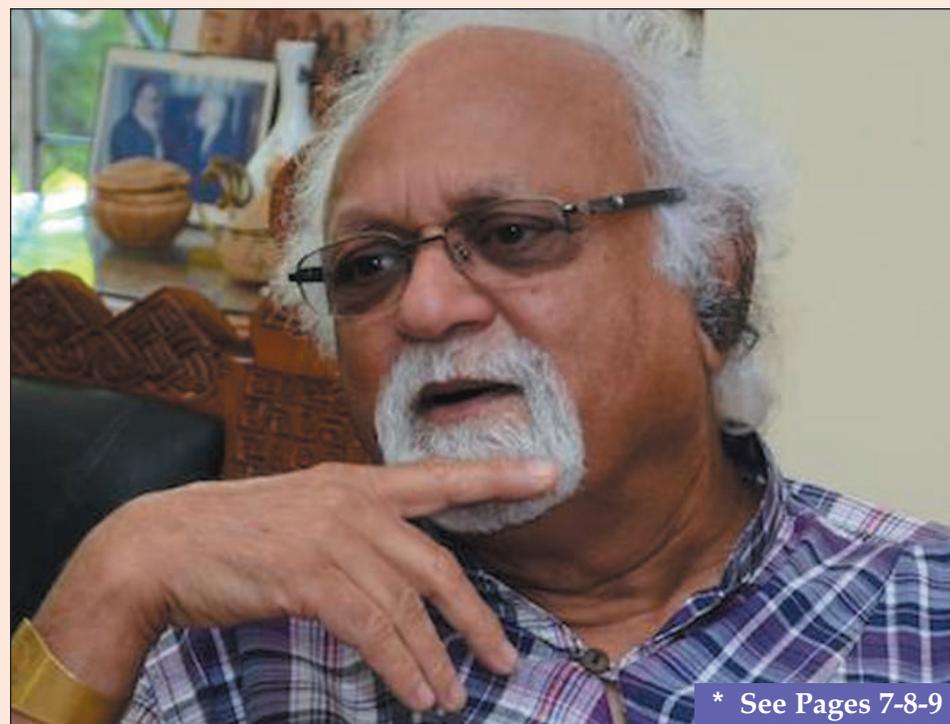


*If anything, the past few years have shown us why it should be difficult for a prime minister to call an election at will*

By John McGarry - Senior Lecturer in Law, Staffordshire University

📖 See Page 2

## Interview: Vijay Makhan - Former Secretary for Foreign Affairs



\* See Pages 7-8-9

## “Who are the so-called dinosaurs? Are they found only in the political field?”



## The China Conundrum for Biden

By Anil Madan \* See Page 4-11

## Weakening of the State

No country can function smoothly so as to serve the interests of its citizens if the State is weak. The strength of the State is premised essentially on 1. the robustness of the political system in place which, in a democracy, means a separation of the powers between the Judiciary, the Legislature and the Executive; 2. the pursuit of policies aligned to the key principles of social justice, namely Access to resources, Equity, Participation, Diversity, Human Rights; 3. Strict adherence to the rule of law; 4. the autonomous functioning of State institutions and holders of Constitutional posts.

If we were to conduct a tick-the-box exercise for the items included within such a framework starting from the time of our Independence, we will without surprise find that several of them will be marked with a query or a negative (instead of a tick) as we approach the turn of the last century and enter the 21st, with a growing preponderance of queries and negatives as we progress towards 2021. And given the many affairs that have been surfacing in relation to the Covid pandemic in 2020, that year may be particularly highlighted in such a reckoning.

By the by, creeping capitalism and liberalism in the political set-up proceeded unchecked, so that politicians as well as political parties became increasingly beholden to wealthy donors and private interest groups, who are known to pressure governments to tweak policies in their favour, or yield to conditions that go against the larger national interest. A good example of this would no doubt be found in the energy sector, when the production of electricity passed into the hands of the IPP though a *contrat en beton* which was all in favour of the IPPs to the detriment of the consumer who was made to bear the costs. The situation remains unchanged to this day.

But apart from giving in to the corporates when it comes to policy making, mismanagement of the country's affairs is an even greater sign of the weakness of the State because invariably it involves breaches of the law that are easier to uncover and more easily exposed – and therefore more visible as they are splashed in the media – than the subtle tweakings of policy. The irregularities in the emergency procurement process during the Covid pandemic constitute, alas, a departure and/or bypass of normal procedures which involved institutions of the State and actors that saw in this pandemic an opportunity for making money at the expense of the public exchequer. Resources that ought to have been utilized in the service of the people were massively diverted to private individuals. Nando Bodha's revelations have only added more fuel to the fire.

Such a lack of official oversight, coupled with the deficiencies in the investigative procedures whether it was the detective agencies or ICAC, have further undermined the authority of the State. As it is, the alleged failures of the government in the Wakashiso disaster had already undermined its position, providing space and justification for the first street protest that took place in Mahebourg. This was a direct challenge to the authority of the State. It goes without saying, therefore, that the accumulation of affairs being uncovered in association with deaths being linked to the business deals during emergency procurement as well as electoral funding were quickly seized as yet another opportunity to try and shake the regime further.

The basic problem in all this is the contradiction that the authorities are perceived as, knowingly or unknowingly, being in breach of the rules of law and procedure which they themselves enacted in the first place. They therefore have the primary responsibility of seeing to it that these rules are strictly followed by themselves to start with. It is this which would consolidate the authority and image of the State as a properly functioning one, and that would dissuade any potential defaulter from trying to perpetrate an unlawful act.

When the State fails to do so, the government of the day is ill-placed to seek accountability and transparency from the private sector, such as in the matter of disbursements made under the MIC framework, the terms and conditions of which to this day remain shrouded in opacity, and other stakeholders. The onus of addressing these lacunae is an uphill climb, but it is the only way for government to restore its credibility and the legitimacy of its authority.

### The Conversation

## Boris Johnson may soon have the power to call elections whenever he wants...

*If anything, the past few years have shown us why it should be difficult for a prime minister to call an election at will*

Legislation is currently making its way through the UK parliament to repeal the controversial fixed-term parliaments act, which sets the period between general elections at five years and limits the prime minister's power to trigger an election earlier.

An earlier election is possible if two thirds of MPs vote for it or if the government loses a vote of confidence among MPs.



Protestors speak out against the government's decision to prorogue parliament in 2019. Keith Morris /Alamy

The 2011 act was passed under the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government of 2010-2015. Its immediate aim was maintaining the coalition's stability but it also had a more principled long-term objective of ending the governing party's ability to call an election for its own advantage. Then deputy prime minister Nick Clegg said the act would "remove the right of a Prime Minister to seek the Dissolution of Parliament for pure political gain... for the first time... the timing of general elections will not be a plaything of governments".

Before the fixed-term parliaments act, prime ministers could set the date of the next general election as long as it was within five years of the last. This gave the incumbent government a political advantage. The prime minister could call a general election timed to take advantage of favourable opinion polls, or may even delay an election as long as possible in the hope that unfavourable polls may improve.

By the 2019 election, both main parties were pledging to get rid of the system brought in by the coalition. The Conservative government claimed the act had "led to paralysis at a time the country needed decisive action". This referred to Boris Johnson's failure to secure enough support from MPs to hold an early election on three occasions in 2019.

It's questionable, though, whether this failure provides adequate grounds for repeal. The act merely fulfilled its purpose in 2019. It prevented Johnson from calling an election simply for political advantage. Any paralysis was as much due to a minority government lacking sufficient support for its Brexit plans as it was the 2011 act.

It should also be noted that an early election was eventually held in 2019, despite the fixed-term parliaments act. Johnson could not convince enough MPs to support an early election but he was able to secure

enough votes to pass temporary legislation that would allow him to bypass the fixed-term parliaments act.

So, the story of 2019 is one of the fixed terms system working. It blocked the prime minister's dissolution power while allowing early elections when there was sufficient support among MPs or parliament as a whole.

### A key clause

Now, should the proposed changes go ahead, the prime minister will once again have the power to hold an election at will.

There is also a proposed clause protecting the prime minister's power from legal challenge. Such clauses – known as ouster clauses – attempt to freeze the courts out of a particular matter. In this instance, the clause would prevent the courts hearing a claim that the power of dissolution has been exercised unlawfully. Courts are, however, adept at side-stepping ouster clauses leading to tension between the courts, parliament and government.

It's reported that this attempt to oust the courts is a response to the Supreme Court's ruling that the government acted unlawfully in 2019 when it tried to prorogue parliament for several weeks. Yet, that attempted prorogation, and the judgment that it was unlawful, is clear evidence of the important role courts play.

It's widely believed that the real but unacknowledged reason for trying to prorogue parliament for so long in 2019 was to avoid parliamentary scrutiny at a crucial stage in the UK's exit from the EU.

**John McGarry**  
Senior Lecturer in Law, Staffordshire University

Cont. on page 5

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Doojesh Ramlallah, Sultana Kurmally and Kersley Ramsamy

Pearl House 4th Floor Room 406 - Sir Virgil Naz Street, Port Louis

Tel: 5-29 29301 Tel/Fax: 212 1313



mtimes@intnet.mu

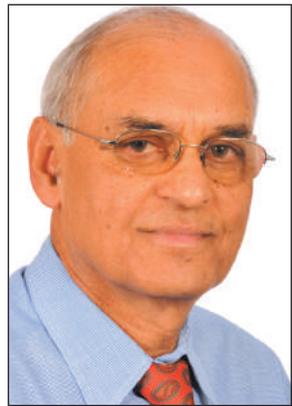


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# Is politics a cancer to be eradicated?



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

So seemed to think Paul Kindlon, in an article in *The Duran* of November 9, 2018. The title of his article was categorical and set the tone for its unforgiving contents: **'Politics: The Cancer that must be Eradicated once and for all'**.

His starting point was the 2016 election of Donald Trump as president, which 'set off a tidal wave of anger and resentment that has divided America into two bitterly opposed camps. Those on the left consider Trump to be the embodiment of evil whereas many on the right see him as a "disrupter" and champion of the common man.'

Whatever be the merits or demerits of Trump is for the American voters to pronounce upon. They have already given a hint in the election of last November, replacing him with a Democrat. But indications are that he is far from being a spent force, and in fact is due to address a rally in Florida in the coming days. However, it is a fact that the deep polarizations, differences, divisions and inequalities that had existed in American society from its very beginnings, according to their own analysts, not only 'continued unabated' during his mandate, but worsened as the country struggled to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic.

As 'the political divide in America now is characterized by revenge-minded Democrats who are determined to remove Trump from office and those who will fight to prevent this from happening', the result was that 'the country will be mired in a lengthy political power struggle while important issues affecting the lives of millions will be neglected.'

As is known, he was not removed but went on to complete his term of office, Black Lives Matter and similar other movements notwithstanding. Which gives us matter for reflection, what with our own local versions, BLD and BZTD. Whether early elections can be forced on the polity is therefore a question that will have no easy answer...

In the meantime, the country will have to make do with the kind of scenario described by the award-winning Canadian

*'We must declare total independence from the tyranny of politics before we are crushed under its weight.'*



**“Whatever be the merits or demerits of Trump is for the American voters to pronounce upon. They have already given a hint in the election of last November, replacing him with a Democrat. But indications are that he is far from being a spent force, and in fact is due to address a rally in Florida in the coming days. However, it is a fact that the deep polarizations, differences, divisions and inequalities that had existed in American society from its very beginnings, according to their own analysts, not only 'continued unabated' during his mandate, but worsened...”**

journalist Andrew Nikiforuk, as quoted by Paul Kindlon:

'Across the Western world, political parties have turned parliaments into digital circuses, provoking waves of contempt among ordinary people...by actively preventing party members from speaking for truth or justice, modern political parties cultivate mendacity the way cell phones archive selfies. Party politics demand that politicians must, on a daily basis, lie to the party, lie to the public and lie to themselves.'

These words capture the contours of a template of political cacophony that will surely ring many a bell, as they resonate with what has been witnessed in several countries, not sparing even our tiny island - where the echo chambers are becoming louder by the day.

The follow-up comment to that observation is that: 'This is a damning indictment of politics not just political parties. And it should be clear to any clear-thinking citizen that the time has come to abandon this morally bankrupt system that has mismanaged our affairs through influence peddling and legal bribery innocuously labeled "campaign contributions".' There have been endless discussions about the modalities of political financing, with no definitive conclusion: if ever there will be one, the cynic might be tempted to observe.

The author continues: 'If a team of scientific crisis management experts were assembled to assess the cause of this problem they would surely arrive at the conclusion that it is "politics" pure and simple. The solution, therefore, would be the abolition of all political parties.' (italics added)

And apparently, 'this is *actually not a new idea*. The French philosopher Simone Weil made this suggestion more than seventy years ago.' (italics added) Looking back over that period will surely make us realise that this is perhaps wishful thinking, as political parties are still thriving. We humans seem to obey an unwritten convention - rule, law or whatever - that 'two is not company but politics.' Could it that peace in a twosome is monotonous and the excitement of sparring is needed to keep the set lively??

What appears as this 'radical proposal - of abolition of all political parties -- has been resurrected and supported' by the same award-winning Canadian journalist Andrew Nikiforuk and his colleague Weil.

But 'Weil and Nikiforuk are not anarchists and they are not proposing some form of extreme libertarianism requiring the dismantlement of government. Governing should be left to capable

**“We must declare total independence from the tyranny of politics before we are crushed under its weight.' This sounds like a tall order, when we look at the history of the world and how politics is so ingrained as a system of ruling countries. Even the idea of professional administrators and managers, or of technocrats, taking over may have its limits, though it has not been tested yet... Which leaves us therefore to fall back on politics and political systems, the least worse of which is supposed to be democracy, whose flaws we have been witnessing live all over the place as it were, and we too here being entrapped in this infamous game...”**

administrators and professional managers who are not beholden to wealthy donors or special interest groups. Rather than being "elected" they should be hired, paid a decent salary and evaluated for performance by a non-partisan committee of informed citizens.

If we fail to take this step then we are doomed to repeat the same mistakes of the past - suffering from a deeply flawed system that only produces corruption, conflict and economic woe.

We must declare total independence from the tyranny of politics before we are crushed under its weight.'

This sounds like a tall order, when we look at the history of the world and how politics is so ingrained as a system of ruling countries. Even the idea of professional administrators and managers, or of technocrats, taking over may have its limits, though it has not been tested yet, and given the tussle for power among those keen on wielding it, this possibility may perhaps never materialize. Which leaves us therefore to fall back on politics and political systems, the least worse of which is supposed to be democracy, whose flaws we have been witnessing live all over the place as it were, and we too here being entrapped in this infamous game.

Mark Twain once said that 'the more I learn about people, the more I like my dog.' There must be some way to paraphrase this to suit the political context. I leave it to the imagination of the reader.

# The China Conundrum for Biden



Anil Madan

If one were to make a list of the greatest challenges facing President Biden, surely China would be in the top three, if not at the very top.

Dealing with China is no easy task because, as Secretary of State Anthony Blinken mentioned the other day, America's relationship with China involves adversarial aspects, competitive ones, and cooperative ones involving mutual interest. Frequently, the right response in any of these aspects can complicate the other aspects of the relationship and a delicate rebalancing and tempering of how we deal with China is necessary.

Secretary Blinken allowed that President Trump was right to take a tougher approach to China. But, he added, the way Trump went about it, in his judgment, was wrong across the board.

This must have delighted Yang Jiechi, the chief foreign policy advisor to President Xi Jinping who told Blinken in a recent call that the US must "correct recent mistakes, and work with China to promote the healthy and stable development of China-US relations by upholding the spirit of non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation." So Blinken effectively began his term as Secretary of State by declaring that the previous administration was "wrong across the board" in a tacit endorsement of China's complaint. Certainly, Blinken did say that the US has to engage China from a position of strength. But make no mistake, Yang's words mean that America should engage with China on China's terms.

How the US navigates the shoals of this relationship will have profound consequences not only for the US but for many other countries that look to the US for leadership and support. India, Japan, Australia, Bhutan, Nepal, virtually every African country, and all nations in the Pacific Ocean are affected.

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President Richard Nixon toasts with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in February 1972 in Beijing  
Photo - cdn.cnn.com

## Existential threat

Almost a half-century has lapsed since President Nixon embarked on a trip to mainland China, the first publicized outreach to the Communist nation from the US. which had been content, up to that point, to act as if China did not exist. In economic and military terms, perhaps China did not have a sufficient footprint in the 1970s to worry Western nations. Certainly, anyone suggesting that China presented an existential threat to any country other than Taiwan, would have been dismissed as an alarmist. Indeed, China's military skirmishes of the 1960s with India had not produced any large-scale conquest and its struggling economy was inconsequential against the combined force of the American, British and European economies.

Winston Lord, a member of the National Security Council's planning staff who accompanied Nixon on that historic 1972 trip, had previously been to China together with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to lay the groundwork for Nixon's visit. Lord recounts that the Chinese were anxious to make it appear that it was Nixon who wanted to visit China and the Chinese were gracious enough to invite him. Eventually, Kissinger and the Chinese agreed to a statement that went along the lines of "Knowing of President Nixon's interest in visiting China..." the Chinese government had invited him.

It is not unusual to see the Chinese engaged in what they consider "face-saving" diplo speak over the most trivial matters to the point of being childish about it. It is also a fair observation that President Nixon's overture to China was infused with a bit of American naïveté -- after all, wasn't allowing China to engage more freely with the world an act of America's generosity? America was going to "admit" China into the world community. In fact, well before that trip to China in 1972, Nixon went so far as to state after his election in 1968: "There is no place on this small planet for a billion of its potentially most able people to live in angry isolation." Some have even referred to these somewhat delusional thoughts as emanating from a certain presumptuousness about America's role in the world. If the nations of the world, large and small, were tectonic plates, America could cause tremors that would shift them as it desired.

As laughable and naive as the expectation was that an act of imagined American largesse would erase the anger of the Chinese at their isolation, who would have thought that not quite fifty years later, China would be openly

drawing red lines and threatening war over them? Who would have thought that China would be seen as an existential threat by many nations including America itself? The tectonic plates have indeed shifted, temblors have been felt and earthquakes are in the offing.

Hark back to just ten days after the presidential election in the US when Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared: "Taiwan has not been a part of China." Pompeo went on to parse the American position as merely being an acknowledgment of China's position that Taiwan is a part of China, rather than an explicit recognition of the validity of China's claim. Pompeo also underscored that the US is "bound by law to provide Taiwan with the means to defend itself."

As might be expected, this outraged the Chinese Communist Party. But what was surprising was that even as

spokespersons for the CCP have become quite a bit more belligerent in their outrage, they had not totally abandoned diplo speak. Wang Wenbin, a foreign ministry spokesman repeated words that might as well be a coda to the Chinese national anthem: "Taiwan is an inalienable part of China." But he went on to say that Pompeo was further damaging Sino-US ties. China has imposed sanctions on US companies that are selling weapons to Taiwan and has repeatedly flown its fighter jets near Taiwan and particularly when US officials visited the Taiwanese capital.

Taiwan does not, of course, consider itself a part of the People's Republic of China, declared a Taiwan foreign ministry spokesperson, and added: "Taiwan is a sovereign, independent country."

One has to acknowledge that the US has walked a fine line in seemingly accepting a one-China policy while nurturing Taiwan's hopes for an eventual recognition of its independent national status.

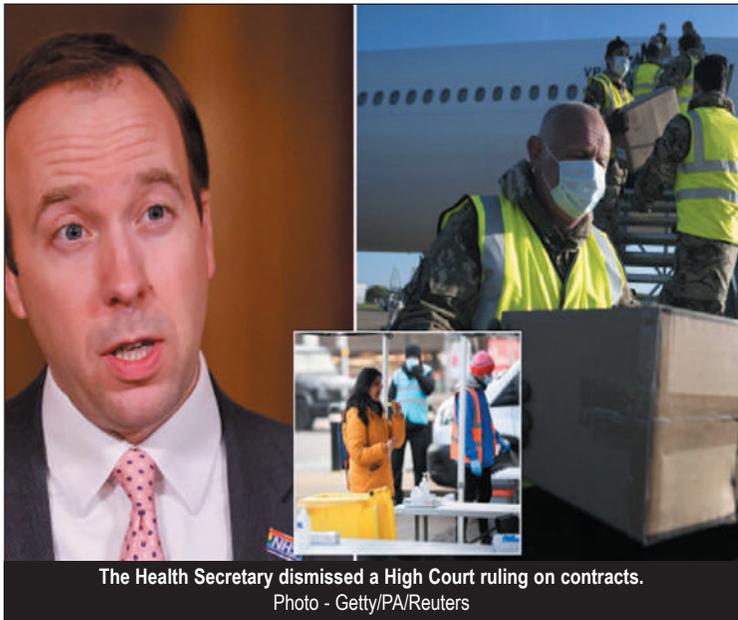
As 2020 came to a close, Japan's State Minister of Defense Nakayama declared: "There's a red line in Asia - China and Taiwan. How will Joe Biden in the White House react in any case if China crosses this red line?" He added: "The United States is the leader of the democratic countries. I have a strong feeling to say: America, be strong." Japan also maintains a one-China policy. Minister Nakayama also called for a clear statement by Biden of where the US stands on its next leg of its China policy so that Japan could prepare its own response accordingly.

The Chinese rejoinder to all statements of this type is to issue a passive-aggressive declaration that outsiders should not interfere in its *internal* affairs. "Taiwan is China's internal affair. We firmly oppose interference in China's internal affairs by any country or anyone by any means." Of course, we have heard similar statements over the years from China whenever it seeks to deflect criticism of its military, humanitarian, trade, or other predatory practices.

## Passive-aggressive approach

China's passive-aggressive approach has now tilted more to the aggressive side. Earlier this month, China warned Taiwan that "independence means war" and justified having sent multiple fighter jets and bombers into Taiwan's ADIZ as a "response to provocation and foreign interference."

➡ Cont. on page 11



The Health Secretary dismissed a High Court ruling on contracts.  
Photo - Getty/PA/Reuters

## Procurements scandal in UK

A British company run by the former landlord of Matt Hancock's local pub that won a contract to produce Covid-19 test vials for the NHS is under investigation by the UK's medical regulator. Hinpack, which is owned by Alex Bourne, an acquaintance of the health secretary, switched from making food cartons to plastic tubes and secured a lucrative contract with the health service last spring as the government rushed to hand out contracts during the first wave of the pandemic.

Graeme Tunbridge, director of devices at the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, said: "We are currently investigating the allegations about Hinpack and will take appropriate action as necessary. We take all reports of non-compliance very seriously. Patient safety is our top priority. As this is an ongoing investigation we are unable to disclose further information at this time."

\* \* \*

British families will be reunited at the end of March - in time for Easter - and allowed to meet up in each other's gardens after key tests for the current danger posed by the coronavirus pandemic were met. Outdoor sports facilities, including tennis and basketball courts, will also reopen on 29 March and organised sports, such as grassroots football, will resume.

The moves will follow the start of the lifting of the lockdown in England on 8 March when, as expected, all schools will reopen in a controversial "big bang" approach. From that date, people will also be allowed to sit down for a drink or picnic with one other person, instead of just meeting them for exercise, reports The Independent.

## UN Security Council to meet on global warming impact on world peace

The UN Security Council will hold a summit of world leaders Tuesday to debate climate change's implications for world peace, an issue on which its 15 members have divergent opinions.

The session, called by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and conducted by video-conference, comes just days after the United States under President Joe Biden formally rejoined the Paris climate change accord.

Johnson, whose country now holds the Security Council's rotating presidency, will address the forum, as will US climate czar John Kerry, French President Emmanuel Macron, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and the prime ministers of Ireland, Vietnam, Norway and other countries, reports AFP.

The meeting will serve as a test for US-China relations, one UN ambassador said on condition of anonymity, alluding to one of the few issues where the two big powers might agree. But this is not a given.

"We should watch how the Chinese position themselves with the Americans," this ambassador said.

Traditionally, the ambassador said, "you know that the Russians and the Chinese will immediately say (climate change has) 'nothing to do' with the council's issues."

Today, however, "the Chinese are more liable to be slightly open to that discussion," which "leaves the Russians pretty much on their own."

Russia does not see climate change as a broad issue for the Security Council to address. Moscow prefers dealing with climate questions on a case-by-case basis, diplomats told AFP.

Tuesday's meeting "will be



An irrigation ditch in Skoura, Morocco in an area threatened by desertification, seen on January 27, 2020. Photo - www.channelnewsasia.com

focused on the security aspects of climate change," a second ambassador said, also on condition of anonymity.

Some non-permanent members of the council including Kenya and Niger have clearly expressed their concerns about climate change's impact on national security.

Others do not want to "turn the Security Council into another organ which is looking just at the issues more broadly around finance, adaptation, mitigation and negotiations," the second ambassador said.

### Implications for conflict

"Both China and Russia, but not only them, are reluctant to have the Security Council discuss climate change and its implications," said a third ambassador, who ruled out the possibility of the council adopting a joint statement at this point.

"China and Russia think that it can become intrusive, that it is not about peace and security," this ambassador said.

"They don't want the Security Council to do decision-making about economic choices. Even they understand that climate

change has implications for conflict drivers."

"Desertification, population movements and competition for access to resources" are linked to global warming, said another diplomat.

This is important for Tunisia, Norway and Ireland. The latter two have been on the council since January.

In the Lake Chad region of central Africa, the problem is not something to be left "for tomorrow. It already existed yesterday," an ambassador from Africa said.

He said the issues of access to water and production of animal feed can trigger violence between different communities and lead to idle, disaffected youths being recruited by jihadist groups.

The arrival of the Biden administration with its pledge to make global warming a top priority -- in contrast with Donald Trump, who regularly questioned the science behind climate change -- should change the Security Council's dynamics on this issue, diplomats said.

\* Contd on page 6

### The Conversation

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☛ Cont. from page 2

That is, the government's willingness to ignore constitutional, political and legal restraints for short-term political gain does not demonstrate the problem of courts ruling on the legality of government actions. It instead shows the necessity of the courts as a safeguard against abuse of governmental power.

Of course, the legal challenge in 2019 was not in response to an election being called. But the judgment in that case illustrated the courts' willingness to intervene to

keep the government in check. This explains the ouster clause -- it's an attempt to give the prime minister as much freedom as possible to call an election without interference by the courts.

The ouster clause is also part of a worrying pattern by the present government to insulate itself from political, media and judicial scrutiny. It has recently even launched a review of judicial review, the process by which the courts ensure that governmental power is exercised lawfully.

There should, then, be serious doubts about reinstating

the prime minister's dissolution power. The current government's willingness to act in ways unprecedented in modern times for short-term gain suggests it is not a good idea. For mature democracies, it's surely preferable for elections to be at set intervals with early elections permitted if directly elected MPs, rather than the indirectly elected prime minister, decide.

**John McGarry**

Senior Lecturer in Law,  
Staffordshire University

# Rare Amazonian cactus flowers for first time in UK

A rare Amazonian cactus called the moonflower has bloomed for what botanists believe is the first time in the UK.

Experts at Cambridge University's Botanic Garden kept a night watch throughout the week so that they did not miss the flowering of *Selenicereus wittii* - an event which usually begins at sunset and is over by sunrise.

The moonflower actually bloomed earlier on Saturday afternoon at around 3pm, and the garden said it was 28cm (11 inches) long.

The coveted flower produces a sweet-smelling scent that turns "rancid" after just two hours, as the plant begins to die. The plant is only found on the high waterline of the floodplain rainforests of the Amazon basin, reports Molly Blackall.

A post on the garden's Instagram feed said: "Oh it's been worth the wait, what a beauty! Our moonflower has opened & the smell is divine - similar to gardenia & jasmine atm & it'll change (we think) into rotten veg smelling later."

The plant spirals around tree trunks, and the coveted flower is about 3.6 metres in the air. This plant is believed to be the



The rare Amazonian cactus in bloom at Cambridge University's Botanic Garden. Photo - The Guardian

only specimen in the UK, and worldwide it is listed in only 13 botanic gardens.

Alex Summers, glasshouse supervisor at the botanic garden, said he was "excited" to share the blooming of the cactus, which was streamed live online.

"It's very rare to have this plant in our collection and we believe this is the first

time the moonflower has flowered in the UK," he said.

"I noticed the flattened stems, or pads, which swirl around the trunk of our water chestnut had sent out a flowerbud in late November - which was a lucky spot as it's almost 12ft up in the air and could have so easily been missed."

He said it had only recently "increased radically in size", indicating that flowering was imminent.

He added that he loved the story of how British botanical artist Margaret Mee brought the plant to the attention of a wider audience.

She first saw the moonflower in 1964 but had to wait until 1988 to see one in flower.

Her painting of it is held by Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, south-west London. Summers said the cactus is expected to flower most years from now on.

Thousands of people around the world have been tuning in to a live stream of the rare cactus this week. The plant had been expected to bloom at about 9pm.

There has been some confusion over the rarity of the flower, with members of the public reportedly claiming to have their own versions of the plant and sending photos to the botanic gardens.

The team at CUBG published an article clarifying that "moonflower" was a name used for many different species of plant.

## Inside the grounds of Europe's biggest Hindu temple, volunteers debunk myths and administer coronavirus vaccines

Hasmita Patel shuffles quickly between vaccination pods, stopping to peer inside each cubicle and greet her staff.

"You OK?" she asks one of nurses, "I'm just checking."

This public vaccination clinic is Patel's passion project, set up inside a school on the grounds of London's Neasden Temple, the largest Hindu place of worship in Europe, reports Salma Abdelaziz of CNN.

"Because I go to the temple it has a special meaning for me," Patel, a local healthcare manager, said. "It's about bringing the clinic out to the community and serving the community that I belong to."

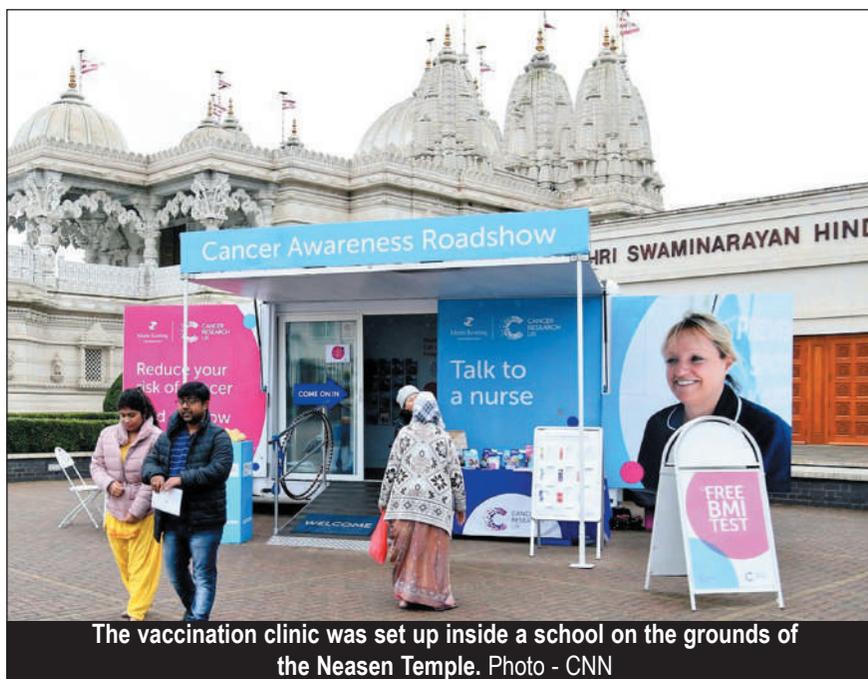
The 60-year-old mother of two belongs to the Hindu community in the borough of Brent, northwest London. While this was one of the UK neighborhoods hardest hit by Covid-19, one senior Brent council official acknowledged back in September that authorities "didn't engage effectively" with Black, Asian and other minority groups in the early stages of the pandemic, adding that many local residents felt "disempowered" and marginalized.

Brent had the highest overall age-standardized Covid-19 mortality of any local authority in England and Wales from March 1 through June 30, 2020, according to the UK's Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Widespread poverty and intergenerational housing are two factors that contributed to the rapid spread of the virus through the community, according to Brent Council's Poverty Commission.

Patel says as a frontline medical worker she has seen systemic inequalities continue to play out during the UK's vaccine roll-out.

"When somebody is concerned, it's really important you speak to them in their own language because that's their comfort zone," Patel explained. "Especially in the older populations, so when they come here, we have volunteers who are also able to translate."



The vaccination clinic was set up inside a school on the grounds of the Neasden Temple. Photo - CNN

Patients arrive by appointment and, after a pump of hand sanitizer and a quick check-in process, they are ushered into one of the 12 vaccination pods erected in the school's drama room.

Some 35 volunteers, many of them members of the temple, support the bustling operation, often switching between multiple languages to address their mostly elderly arrivals.

"It's very empowering, especially because we're giving back to our local community. Not just members of the temple, but members of the local area," one of the volunteers told us, "It gives a real sense of community spirit, trying to help other people."

Inside every pod there is a story - a Hindu worshiper and mailman eager to get vaccinated for his daily runs, an Iraqi woman in need of an Arabic translator to relay her medical history, a couple keen to get vaccinated so they can visit their children in Los Angeles.

Under England's months-long lockdown these are rare moments of human interaction and reunion.

"It is quite emotional seeing the temple and seeing all the community people here, as well, from the Temple," Ranjana Patel said after getting her vaccination, "When I saw Hasmita I was very, very excited to see her!"

Socio-economic deprivation and entrenched health inequalities are partly to blame for the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on ethnic minority communities, but a local

government report also acknowledged critical mistakes in outreach and messaging at the start of the pandemic.

Now as vaccinations are rolled out at breakneck speed across the UK, studies show that minority groups have higher vaccine hesitancy and lower trust in public institutions, a potent combination that could cost precious lives.

That's why choosing home turf, the iconic Neasden Temple, holds deep meaning for some of London's hard-hit Hindu families. Similar vaccination sites have popped up in mosques and other places of worship in the nationwide effort to immunize the population.

Vijay Makhan – Former Secretary for Foreign Affairs

# “Who are the so-called dinosaurs? Are they found only in the political field?”

**I**n light of the signing this week during the visit of Dr S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India, of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) between Mauritius and India, Vijay Makhan, former Secretary for Foreign Affairs gives his views on the implications for both our relations with India and China – which outpaced India in signing an equivalent agreement earlier – as well as for the business sector. He expects the latter to get out of their comfort zone and rise to the opportunities that the CECPA will unleash. He also comments on the local political scene, feeling that Mauritians will tend to stick to the traditional parties to the detriment of the new formations that are sprouting.

**Mauritius Times: The Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) between Mauritius and India has been signed this week during the visit of Dr S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India. We have had earlier this year the Mauritius-China Free Trade Agreement. Such trade agreements can be significant to our economy if Mauritius business can tap to the maximum the potential of the access to and opportunities in the respective markets. What does past experience tell us about Mauritius’ performance in that regard?**

**Vijay Makhan:** I have had the opportunity of underlining the paradox of the trade system within the context of overall international relations in the past, especially with the advent of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) way back in 1995.

The Organisation was reputedly expected to create an international rules-based environment where each member state would have a voice and a vote, and the international trading system would be regulated by consensual agreement reached by all participating members. Yet, since then, the world has witnessed a number of trade agreements, bilateral as well as multilateral, between countries and regions. The number of such agreements has grown exponentially while the WTO has failed to move ahead, and if at all, at a snail's pace. The Doha Round of negotiations which was launched with great expectations and meant to wrap up conclusively within three years, with Development at its core, is still struggling

decades later!

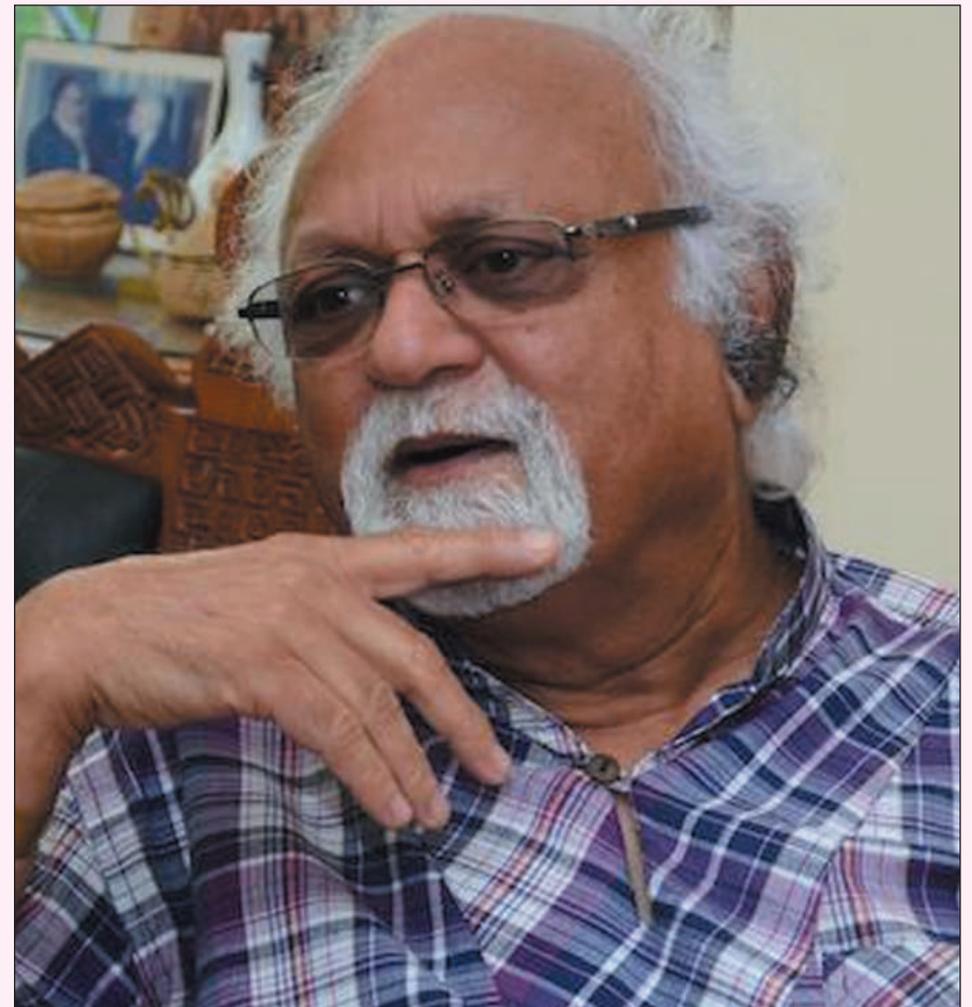
The CECPA finally signed during the Indian External Affairs Minister's visit here must equally be seen contextually, as indeed should the Mauritius-China FTA.

It is true that it is for governments to facilitate market access wherever opportunities and advantages present themselves, but it is for the businesses to tap into these and derive the benefits that potentially exist. It is up to them now. Past experience does show that we have been rather slow in the uptake. Our business sector has so far been more conservative in its approach, and is rather timid to wet their shirts and exploit the new avenues thus provided.

Some of these agreements that we enter into cover so many openings, but they are hardly ever ventured into. We are content to stay within the comfort zone of known experience.

**\* You must have been in office at the Ministry of External Affairs when negotiations started on the Mauritius-India CECPA. Why has it taken so long to finalise in spite of the “special” nature of the ties between our two countries? Do you have the feeling that its resolution was somehow tied up with the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)?**

I was Secretary for Foreign Affairs when the CECPA negotiations were launched (2004). CECPA had both a political and an economic motivation. However, very shortly after the process had started, the talks stalled and stayed in



**“Mauritius has a policy of ‘Friends to All’. It has no other option when you consider size, population, geography and remoteness from major markets. We have to play it as openly as possible. Both India and China are close to us. We need to ensure that in the rivalry that underpins their relationship, we are not caught in between, one way or the other. We simply cannot afford it...”**

abeyance for a number of years.

I left in 2005 and we are now in 2021...

The DTAA has since been modified with the results that we know and under circumstances not as flattering as those from our side, who renegotiated and signed it, would have us believe. Indeed, the consequences are there for all to see. Mauritius has lost its prime position in the field of Foreign Direct Investment to India much to the glee of our competitors and segments of the specialised media which had made it their mission to have the DTAA renegotiated under new terms.

So, yes unless the contrary is proven, the DTAA issue, according to me, was the reason for the standstill in the conclusion of the CECPA, despite the assurances at the highest level that nothing would be done that would jeopardise the economy

of Mauritius.

**\* It could be argued that the “special relationship” between Mauritius and India cannot however escape inevitable adjustments that would result from the new role and ambitions which India is setting for itself in the new emerging world order, and in particular in this part of the world. History as well as affective and cultural affinities may henceforth have less weight in that relationship. What do you think?**

We have always held very enviable relations with India and indeed our two countries are very close from different perspectives, not least the affinities you mention.

**“There is no perceptible vacuum yet in the political arena. The people are used to the traditional parties that they have grown up with. It is true that some of those who have been with the parties in good times and against all odds for ages should gradually make space for new blood. And, that has nothing to do with age. Such stalwarts can still contribute to the advancement of their respective parties in other capacities...”**

**\* Cont. on page 8**

# Electoral Petitions: 'The law may be an ass but neither the judges nor the people are fools'

\* Cont. from page 7

But the geopolitics of the world has undergone tremendous change and we would be naive here not to recognise that and adjust our own approach to international relations.

International relations and diplomatic practice are never static. There is always a dynamism that propels them and we need to adjust accordingly. Again, as I often repeat, there is no permanent friendship at that level, but rather permanent interests. India, being an emerging country to be reckoned with, while not belittling its long-established friendship with Mauritius, adjusts its policies in accordance with the exigencies of the moment and its own medium- and long-term objectives and interest. One cannot hold that against them.

**“The political debate is being skewed by the upsurge in the call to rid the country of ‘dinosaurs’. But who are the so-called dinosaurs? Are they found only in the political field? Would you qualify those who have been around for decades in certain institutions like trade unions as dinosaurs? Would those captains of industry who have been around leading their enterprises be qualified as dinosaurs?”**

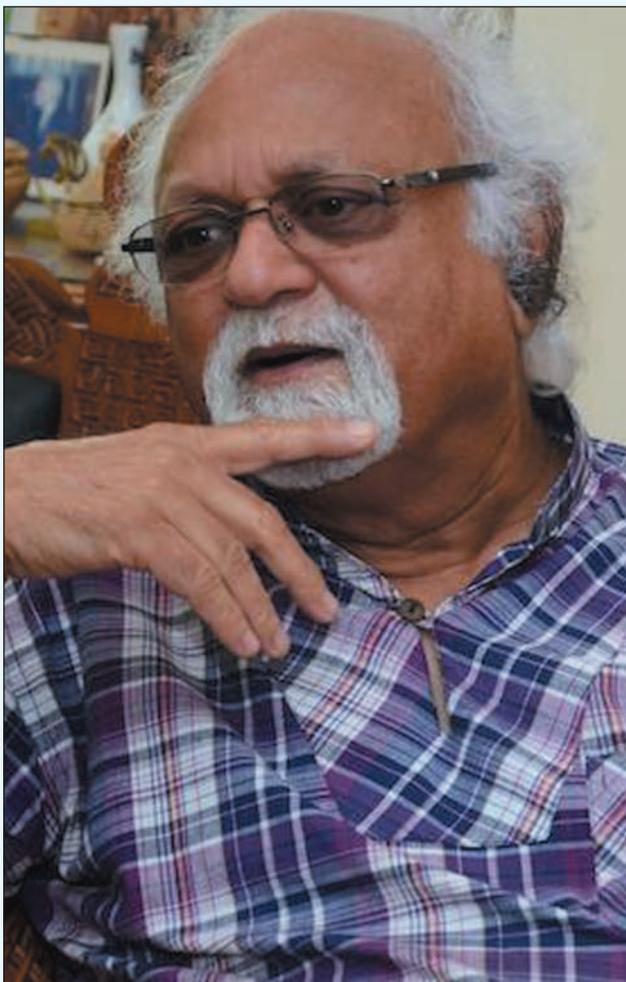
\* As regards the Mauritius-China FTA, which came into effect since 1 January and will allow Mauritius to gain access to its equally huge market, it's Beijing's first with any African country. Foreign observers who keep a tab on developments in the region have intimated that with this FTA Beijing is set “to get a strategic foothold in Mauritius, which traditionally has enjoyed close economic, military and cultural links with India”. How does competition in that regard benefit the long-term interests of Mauritius?

It may be perceived that, in that respect, that is, in regard to the Mauritius-China FTA, India may have lost the edge in terms of timing. There must be some regret somewhere that the CECPA was not finalised earlier than and ahead of the Mauritius-China FTA. But I don't think that it will change the *status quo* in so far as our relations with these two emerging giants are concerned.

Again, at the risk of repeating myself, Mauritius has a policy of 'Friends to All'. It has no other option when you consider size, population, geography and remoteness from major markets. We have to play it as openly as possible. Both India and China are close to us. We need to ensure that in the rivalry that underpins their relationship, we are not caught in between, one way or the other. We simply cannot afford it.

But of course, on major issues of importance and significance on the world scene, we will need to take position in our larger interests, fully aware of all the consequences of our actions.

As regards the strategic foothold that you mention, Mauritius has always, since independence and through successive governments, played its cards face up and I don't think this strategy will or should change. Indeed, it's not in our interest to indulge in secretive or backdoor diplomacy.



**“The Biden administration has yet to pronounce itself clearly on the Chagos issue, and I do hope that we are doing everything that we should to reassure them as to our intentions. We need in that perspective to use all possible avenues open to us including soliciting the assistance of common friends in that endeavour. I do hope that this matter has been given prime of place on the agenda of discussions with Minister Jayshankar...”**

**“We have always held very enviable relations with India and indeed our two countries are very close from different perspectives... But the geopolitics of the world has undergone tremendous change and we would be naive here not to recognise that and adjust our own approach to international relations. International relations and diplomatic practice are never static...”**

**\* So much time and energy are lost in petty political squabbles here that one wonders if the political leadership is alive to the threats and opportunities present or may be derived from the competition for a strategic foothold in the region involving countries with which Mauritius has had friendly relations and historical ties. What's your take on that?**

You are quite right. As I mentioned earlier, we have been following the same pattern in our dealings and, as

it appears, we are happy to allow matters to run their own seemingly natural course. Our country has been politicised to extremes and everything that is done or undertaken is politically motivated. By this, I mean on the local political scoreboard and not necessarily in the larger interest of the country. So, we are happy to let matters run on beaten tracks.

There are a few issues of national concern which should transcend party political perspectives and considerations and which require a commonality of purpose. Yet, our political leadership is hell-bent in going at cross purposes, instead of putting up a common front. The Government is not interested in what others outside of it may think or contribute to the advancement of the country regarding those issues. And that is very unfortunate and regrettable. Previous governments have, on occasion, also played very egoistically, though maybe to a lesser extent.

It has come to my attention that the government has even interfered in the manner of functioning of diplomats accredited here. Should that ever, it is highly condemnable, both for the government and the diplomatic representation which may have succumbed to the desiderata of the powers that be. Who, where and how a diplomatic agent accredited here meets falls very much within the purview of his/her attributes unless of course such meetings are subversive elements and may disrupt social harmony or undermine the security of the country.

**\* On the other hand, the British have dug their heels in the sand as regards the Chagos Archipelago despite the pronouncements of the UN, the International Court of Justice, etc. That was to be expected, and so would the continuity of American interest prevail under Joe Biden. We seem to be in for the long haul, right? Or would you have an alternative option in mind?**

On this score, the British government is clearly on the wrong side of the equation. And the mantra that they keep on repeating - to the effect that they have always held sovereignty over the Chagos but that they would revert/return/cede sovereignty to Mauritius when the archipelago is no longer required for the defence of the West - has been blown to pieces by the UN, the International Court of Justice, etc.

It is in our interest to constantly refer to the issue in all possible ways even if we have to undress the UK's double standards on that score. This episode of the dismemberment of the territory of Mauritius prior to independence in contravention of U.N. resolutions and the dislodgement of our citizens of Chagossian origin is a bleak and shameful one in the history of the UK. It has the opportunity to make honourable amends, but it is hell-bent on its ego trip and continues to act in defiance of international law, which it is duty-bound to uphold considering its position on the international scene and its permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

The Biden administration has yet to pronounce itself clearly on the Chagos issue, and I do hope that we are doing everything that we should to reassure them as to our intentions. We need in that perspective to use all possible avenues open to us including soliciting the assistance of common friends in that endeavour.

\* Cont. on page 9

# 'Both India and China are close to us.

## We need to ensure that in the rivalry that underpins their relationship, we are not caught in between'

\* Cont. from page 8

I do hope that this matter has been given prime of place on the agenda of discussions with Minister Jayshankar, who himself has been a career diplomat and knows the intricacies of the issue.

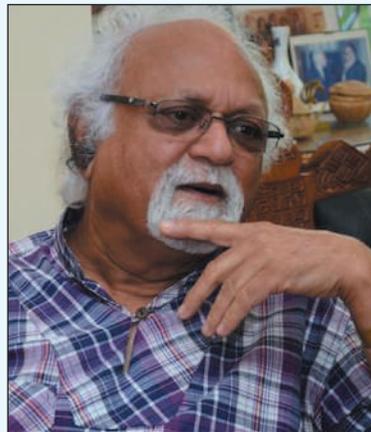
We also need to act in concert with other groups that have a keen interest in this matter including the UK All Party Parliamentary Group on the Chagos at the House of Commons which has a very proactive approach to this whole matter. I understand that shortly the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons will be reviewing and debating the whole issue of the UK policy regarding the Chagos. I do hope we seize this opportunity to enlist a hearing at the appropriate level.

We should not give up on trying to open a dialogue with the UK with a view to upholding the findings and conclusions of the various Courts and the General Assembly of the United Nations. After all, we are both members of the Commonwealth, for whatever that is worth.

**\* It would appear we are also in for the long haul on the local political front – at least for another three years, unless the Supreme Court changes the equation with its rulings in relation to the electoral petitions. How do you see things evolving on the political front in the months ahead?**

It is true that the government of the day has the numbers in Parliament and despite the numerous scandals that besiege it, all the elected members of the majority, Best Losers included, have pledged their unflinching support to the Prime Minister following the resignations of Sawmynaden and Bodha, albeit for different reasons.

We are now well into the second year since the elections were held. Electoral petitions have been dutifully lodged in the Supreme Court, and these have been dragging on beyond reasonable time on account of the delaying tactics and other subterfuges used. Recounts have been asked for, yet matters are being stretched *ad infinitum*. But all these fall within the parameters of the law and there is nothing



**“Electoral petitions have been dutifully lodged in the Supreme Court, and these have been dragging on beyond reasonable time on account of the delaying tactics and other subterfuges used. Recounts have been asked for, yet matters are being stretched *ad infinitum*. But all these fall within the parameters of the law and there is nothing one can do about it and the judges have to allow all avenues provided for by the law to be exploited...”**

one can do about it and the judges have to allow all avenues provided for by the law to be exploited.

As they say, the law may be an ass but neither the judges nor the people are fools. Let's see how the cookies finally crumble.

**\* There's already, as the French would say, 'riffifi' in the so-called "Entente LP-MMM-PMSD" following the remarks of one relatively obscure Labour MP, who might have voiced out the current views of the Labour leadership itself about the political weight of the LP and its capacity to go it alone and win the next municipal elections. If that is so, why would the Labour Party want to finish off the 'Entente'?**

Frankly speaking, I am at a loss to understand the posture of the Labour Party with respect to the view expressed by the MP in question. As we speak, I have not heard the MP being rebuked and called to order. So is the view expressed the line of thought within the Party? No wonder, people are simply fed up with the way the mainstream parties behave.

The time has come for all to let go of their ego and agree on what's best for the country and our people. We are losing so much time in quibbles that people will soon give up on the political leadership. I think it is also high time for some to realise that their active shelf life has expired. That they may still be useful is in no doubt, but in other capacities. As is said, while the going is good, the good should get going. For the Entente to work,

**“We are losing so much time in quibbles that people will soon give up on the political leadership. I think it is also high time for some to realise that their active shelf life has expired. That they may still be useful is in no doubt, but in other capacities. As is said, while the going is good, the good should get going...”**

the parties involved would be well-inspired to elaborate the alternative programme they want to propose to the people and not be solely concerned with riding the country of the present regime.

Having said that, I think the political debate is being skewed by the upsurge in the call to rid the country of "dinosaurs". But who are the so-called dinosaurs? Are they found only in the political field? Would you qualify those who have been around for decades in certain institutions

**“It is for governments to facilitate market access wherever opportunities and advantages present themselves, but it is for the businesses to tap into these and derive the benefits that potentially exist. It is up to them now. Past experience does show that we have been rather slow in the uptake. Our business sector has so far been more conservative in its approach, and is rather timid to wet their shirts and exploit the new avenues thus provided...”**



like trade unions as dinosaurs? Would those captains of industry who have been around leading their enterprises be qualified as dinosaurs?

Would you get rid of all the parliamentarians who have been around for a few terms to make room for some of the so-called new blood who, at every given opportunity, especially in the majority, open their mouths to either sing the praise of their leader or blabber nonsense, or come up with new mathematical formulae to explain the unexplainable? That debate is sterile and will lead us nowhere.

**\* What you are saying is that the so-called "traditional" parties remain our best bet in spite of their ageing "dinosaurs"?**

What I am saying is that there is no perceptible vacuum yet in the political arena. The people are used to the traditional parties that they have grown up with. It is true that some of those who have been with the parties in good times and against all odds for ages should gradually make space for new blood. And, that has nothing to do with age. Such stalwarts can still contribute to the advancement of their respective parties in other capacities while ensuring that the new elements are properly coached, advised and groomed.

No one is indispensable, but one doesn't change one's parents simply because they have aged, no?

**\* What do you make of the recent enthusiasm of so many of our politicians or erstwhile politicians to launch a political party of their own? There's the Alan Ganoo-Tania Diolle combine, which attracted a good crowd last Sunday; Rama Valayden and Nando Bodha will also have their parties soon. All this is happening despite the fact that the elections may not be held anytime soon...**

Most will end up as a flash in the pan... Our political history since independence has witnessed the birth and demise of many such groupings. At best, they will become appendices to the mainstream parties if they do survive and are not subsumed.

Let's face it, people are generally self-motivated... and will always turn up to be seen by those who wield temporary power at the point in time, much to the satisfaction of the launchers of these parties whose ego is massaged in the process. The real gauge lies with spontaneity as the recent citizen marches demonstrated. There was no 'rent a crowd' phenomenon, if you know what I mean.

From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

4<sup>th</sup> Year No 158

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 16 August 1957

● *Life is a campaign, not a battle, and it has its defeats as well as its victories.* -- Donn Piatt

# Red-Whiskered Bulbuls and The Governor



Peter Ibbotson

The contents of various issues of the Government Gazette provide striking contrasts. Take numbers 23 and 33 of 1957, for example.

In number 33, dated July 20, we find the usual string of Sales by Levy. Three people had not paid their sewerage rate, one person had not paid for drainage installations, and one person had paid neither sewerage rate nor for drainage installations.

Now let us look at number 23, dated June 1. The legal supplement contains a proclamation made by the Governor under the Game Ordinance, section 29 (1). The Governor has in this proclamation prohibited the shooting, killing, capturing in any place, purchase, sale or exposure for sale of all wild birds except 10 species that are listed. What are these 10 birds that can be captured, shot, killed, sold or offered for sale? They are the Ring-necked Parakeet, the Schlug-Schlug, the Red-whiskered Bulbul, the House Sparrow, the Partridge, the Quail, the Barred Ground Dove, the Wild guinea Fowl, the Wild Duck and the White-Faced Duck.

Such tenderness towards wild birds! It compares with the tenderness towards the Central Market pigeons shown by the cereal retailers, who several times a day throw rice, maize and lentils for these birds. The birds are happy and carefree; perhaps it was the birds that the cinema newsreel commentator had in mind when he said, last September, that Mauritius was a happy and carefree island. But while the birds are protected and fed, what of the human inhabitants of the country? Their fate is told in the Gazette Notice of Sales by Levy; in the Notices of Bankruptcy; and in the columns of the daily press.

An unmarried mother tries to dispose of her baby by getting rid of it down a sewer. Even the London *Times* carried a short news item about that; unfortunately, it classed Port Louis as a "foreign" city. Another woman, whose public assistance had been stopped, tried to drown herself after leaving her baby on the table of a P.A.D. (Public Assistance Department) official. Recently there was the man who interrupted the proceedings of the Legislative Council by declaring from the public gallery that his wife and children were starving. Even more recently there was the demonstration at Government House by unemployed workers.

We read of the fate of many persons in road accidents.

In one recent issue of *Advance* there were listed three accidents: a lorry-driver was killed and two of his passengers injured when the lorry collided with a car; a Sino-Mauritian was run down and killed; a pedestrian was knocked down by a bus and had to be taken to hospital. Regularly, too, the papers publish the list of notifications of infectious illnesses and diseases; typical are the Health Department bulletins for the weeks ending June 8 and May 18. The latter: two cases of typhoid fever, two of



Photo - vintagemauritius.org

diphtheria, and nine of tuberculosis (three fatal). The former: one case of typhoid, one of diphtheria, and four of TB; in the week, four people died of TB.

The attitude of many road users when an accident occurs is shown by a report in *Le Cernéen* of July 19 headlined: *'Une voiture renverse un motocycliste et ne s'arrête pas. Grièvement blessé, says the paper, le motocycliste est en traitement à l'Hôpital Civil'*.

The people suffer. They have no work. The Public Assistance Department is callous, parsimonious. Road accidents multiply and the police appear powerless to stop them. Disease is rampant and poverty stalks Mauritius. To tourists, and to visitors such as Michael Malim (Island of the Swan), Mauritius is a filao-fringed paradise; but to the unfortunates who have to exist on miserable wages or begrudged doles from the P.A.D., it is a filao-fringed hell on earth.

Yet while the people suffer, the birds (except Schlug-Schlugs, Red-Whiskered Bulbuls, and the other eight) are happy. Not for them any fear of sudden death, or capture or lack of protection. They are taken care of; they are protected by law.

They need protection. The new Ministers have a hard task ahead of them to provide that protection. A start has been made; the approximately 10,500 Government employees paid under "Other charges" have had their wages increased. An extra 30 cents a day for artisans, 25 cents for semi-skilled workers, and 20 cents for unskilled workers will be given. Modest though these increases may be, they are none the less an indication that the new Executive Council has the welfare of the ordinary people at heart. The decision to increase the low-paid underprivileged workers' wages was taken on July 26, only three weeks after the Ministers had assumed office. The decision is to be backdated to the date of ministerial responsibility: July 1.

If this increase can be granted by Ministers, why could it not have been granted under the previous Crown Colony regime? As *Advance* asked in connexion with an analogous though not exactly similar case: *'Pourquoi ce qui était d'abord impossible est devenu possible après?'*

Now that the Ministers have shown themselves so interested in the lot of the common people, it is to be hoped that they will actively interest themselves in the shocking treatment meted out to many paupers who

apply to the P.A.D. for assistance. Perhaps the rates of outdoor relief will be increased? Perhaps the rates of old age pension will be increased? Perhaps, too, the efficiency of the Police will be reviewed, so that the number of road casualties will begin to fall, and the number of drivers who knock someone down and drive on without stopping will be reduced to nil.

While the Ministers are at work, one hopes that they will be able to do something to allay the disquiet felt by some Civil Servants about gross or minor injustice or personal favour made to protect and favour

some *filis à papa*. The appointment (after examination in the case of the under-forties) of First and Second Grade Clerks to the rank of Executive Officer has caused many heart-burnings among Civil Servants especially in view of the strange fact that many First Grade Clerks have different dates for their appointment to the grade of Executive Officer for purposes of seniority and purposes of salary. And some Second Grade Clerks who were acting as Executive Officers have been appointed Executive Officers from varying dates after 1 April 1951, only being granted acting allowances for the time they were acting as Executive Officers before the dates of their promotion to Executive Officer rank.

Mr Ramage's terms of reference precluded him from considering anything other than adjustment of salaries. He could not deal with redress of grievances or anomalies. A new salaries commissioner has been appointed, Mr Howes. Will he be able to consider matters other than salary revision? A number of Civil Servants, who are labouring under grievances, hope that he will. The working party appointed to review the structure, operation and system of the Public Service appears, by ITS terms of reference, to be precluded from considering these Civil Servant's complaints; so that, while no one wishes public servants to be always running to political heads of departments for a redress of their grievances, it appears that in this instance it will have to be the Ministers who consider the matter and settle the Civil Servant's problems.

The Executive Council has its hands full with many matters concerning the prosperity of Mauritius as a whole, and the welfare of its inhabitants as individuals. These matters will take time to deal with. But in raising the wages of the 10,500 odd Government employees, the Executive has given an earnest of its intention to help those who cannot help themselves. Carried further, that intention will earn for the members of the Executive (and six of them are Labour Ministers, it must not be forgotten – a majority, that is) the blessings of the People of Mauritius.

Meanwhile the blessings of the birds of Mauritius are reserved for the Governor whose proclamation has protected them. Except, of course, the Ring-Necked Parakeets, Red-whiskered Bulbuls and Schlug-Schlug who apparently, like the people, need no protection.

# The China Conundrum for Biden

← Cont. from page 4

Yang Jiechi elaborated on just what China seeks. Aside from the obligatory admonition that the US must stop meddling in China's internal affairs, he added: "We expect the United States to honour its commitment under the three Sino-US Joint Communiqués. We ask the US to strictly abide by the One China principle, and respect China's position and concerns on the Taiwan question."

- "The United States should stop interference in the affairs of Hong Kong, Tibet, and Xinjiang."
- "These matter to China's sovereignty and territorial integrity."
- "The US must stop attempts to hold back China's development by meddling in China's internal affairs."

But then, he added ominously, that interference from the US in Hong Kong, Tibet, and Xinjiang affairs were a "red line that must not be crossed".

It is not so long ago that President Obama declared a "red line" that wasn't when he warned Syria about chemical weapons.

What is interesting here is that Yang did not include Taiwan in the issues that constitute a red line. All of this brings to a head how the Biden administration should go about structuring its China policy.

In today's piece, we have room for an overview and in future writings, will have an opportunity to explore policy choices in more detail.

Breaking the US-China relationship by reference to its adversarial, competitive, and cooperative aspects is certainly reasonable. For one thing, it gets us away from the Trump approach which focused almost entirely on the trade imbalance in favour of China and helps to focus our attention on the fact that this is a multidimensional issue with strategic, economic, cultural, social, humanitarian, security, and even existential overtones. The implications for emergence from the coronavirus pandemic, dealing with climate change, and geopolitical security are immense.

It is easy to say that the relationship has to be based on mutual respect. Clearly, neither side respects the other in the sense that respect means admiration. China seems to approach *respect* as meaning how much deference the US should show to China's worldview, feelings and wishes.

## Responsible super power

It is also clear that for the US-China relationship to be constructive, there has to be trust between the two. Of course, trust is all but missing from this relationship. Solving the problem of channelling China's behaviour to the point of having a responsible and dependable partner working cooperatively with the US and other nations to address common problems and advance the welfare of all people in the world would be much easier if the US were not so dependent on China for manufactured goods. American companies and American financial firms are deeply entrenched in China. Apple, a major American company gets a sizable portion of its production from China.

So long as the US and American business interests are unwilling to give up their cozy dependence on China and its cheap labour, China has far greater leverage in the overall relationship than does the US. This is, of course, short-sighted thinking on the American side. We



Photo - media.breitbart.com

have seen how China has grown at America's expense when both countries should have grown while mutually embracing fairness in trade and development not only for both their economies, but for the rest of the world.

China saw that it could get away with its abuses in Tibet. Certainly, the US was not about to engage militarily with China over Tibet but its response has ranged from non-existent to ineffective. China throws one of its diplo speak childish tantrums when the Dalai Lama visits the US or any other country and even if he visits certain regions of India - a country that hosts him in exile. In the past, China even deigned to warn the US not to support any separatist activities in advance of a visit by the Taiwanese president. Now, China has disregarded its accord with Britain on the guarantees it made to maintain Hong Kong's democratic setup and thumbs its nose at Britain and the US.

There is, however, a glimmer of hope. One of Yang

“Almost a half-century has lapsed since President Nixon embarked on a trip to mainland China, the first publicized outreach to the Communist nation from the US which had been content, up to that point, to act as if China did not exist. In economic and military terms, perhaps China did not have a sufficient footprint in the 1970s to worry Western nations. Certainly, anyone suggesting that China presented an existential threat to any country other than Taiwan, would have been dismissed as an alarmist...”

Jiechi's statements was: "Each side should focus on taking care of its own domestic affairs. China will firmly continue down the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics and no one can stop the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." Socialism with Chinese characteristics obviously means a repressive society within China. This includes Hong Kong but it doesn't have to include China. The US is hardly in a position to change China's path to socialism or its "Chinese characteristics" whatever that means other than a repressive society.

The US would do well to concede the point but at a cost to China. The continuation of US imports of Chinese produced goods depends on leaving Taiwan alone. After all, Taiwan is a major customer of US products including military supplies.

The problems of intellectual property theft and abuse of China's neighbours including Nepal, Bhutan and India are serious American concerns.

Undoubtedly, there will come a time when China will claim that its incursions into Bhutan, Nepal, even India, are "internal" matters. And what if Sri Lanka or Kenya should default on the "loans" extended by China for infrastructure projects? What is a Sri Lankan or Kenyan court should rule that such loans are unconscionable and involve unenforceable penalty clauses? Would that too be an "internal" Chinese matter?

There is much room to build a constructive relationship with China. The US will undoubtedly be the driver on the world stage of the nature of that relationship. The first task is to set the ground rules, something that has been missing to this point.

Cheer...  
Bwana

# How to protect children online without using tough rules and reprimands

*Cultivating 'cyber-wisdom' could help children make smarter decisions online*

**E**stablished the same year Facebook was founded (2004), Safer Internet Day has become a fixture in schools, teaching children how to safely navigate an increasingly complex online world. With much of the world in some form of lockdown, this year's Safer Internet Day will be different. Parents must take it upon themselves to guide their children to wiser internet behaviour.

This is no easy task. As Rooha Foroohar argues in her book 'Don't Be Evil', big tech firms such as Facebook have "lost their soul" since they rose to prominence a decade ago. Parents agree. A recent poll found that three-quarters of parents of children aged 13-17 think that social media companies put profit ahead of promoting social good.

And while the internet - now more than ever - is our children's portal out into the wider world, the list of risks, such as cyberbullying, misrepresentation, inappropriate content, online abuse and grooming, is long and growing.

The way to help children stay vigilant against these risks, despite their using social media and internet technologies for many hours a day, is through helping them develop what I call cyber-wisdom. It involves cultivating confidence in your children in how to make smart choices at important moments online - without strict discipline or overbearing supervision.

## Practical advice

Parenting in the digital age is challenging. Several years ago, I completed a PhD on the influence of the internet on children, and I continue researching in this field to this day. Yet when my daughter got her first smartphone last year, I felt as though I knew nothing. What I knew felt overly theoretical, when what I needed was practical advice and simple guidance. My journey to show how theory and research could inform simple parenting tips is the basis of my latest book, Thrive.

Given the challenges of researching the effects of the internet on children's lives and wellbeing, I turned to moral theory. What does it take for kids to do the right thing online? I, and others, have found that rules are pretty much absent online - and, even when they are present, young people find ways to get around them. Likewise, young people find it hard to think about the consequences of their online interactions. So instead of carrot-and-stick parenting, try to cultivate cyber-wisdom to help children make better judgements about how to stay safe online.

Cyber-wisdom is the ability to do the right thing, at the right time, when no one



It's our responsibility as parents to be explicit, conscious and reflective in how we choose to usher our children onto the right path - both online and offline. Photo - childinthecity.org

is watching. A survey by Yonder Consulting with parents shows that wisdom is the virtue that parents are most keen for their children to show online, with 56% of parents choosing this as one of their two virtues when presented with a list of eight.

## Five tips to cultivate cyber-wisdom

To encourage children to behave wisely online, I suggest parents follow the **React** model when introducing children to the internet.

**R stands for ground rules.** These include rules about when children can access the internet and for what purpose. Establishing rules about from the outset is recommended by child health experts, but you should aim to remove the rules as your children learn to self-police.

**E stands for exemplar.** Good behaviour is more likely to be observed and copied rather than taught. What we do matters because it shapes what our children do. We must model the character and wisdom that we hope our children will develop. Once you've created that exemplar, you'll be able to grant your children greater freedom to experiment online themselves.

**A stands for the role of adviser.** An adviser is a form of teacher, but one that is a co-constructor and partner in learning - rather than dictating lessons. Reduce your role as a rule-maker and become more of a coach, mentor and supporter. Our children, in their experimentation, might not get everything right, which means we must find ways that help them learn from their online actions.

**C stands for character.** We need to

critical judgements and choose the right character quality to show at the right time.

**T stands for thrive.** If we can successfully make and enforce ground rules, be an exemplar, be an adviser, and be a character champion, then we will help our children thrive online, making the most of our generation's greatest tool.

In many ways, the internet has been the unsung hero of the Covid-19 pandemic. It's helped teachers and parents to provide an education for their children, even when they've been forced to learn remotely. At the same time, it's impossible to ignore the internet's darker side.

On Safer Internet Day, it's our responsibility as parents to be explicit, conscious and reflective in how we choose to usher our children onto the right path - both online and offline. And that starts with cultivating cyber-wisdom - carefully building trust and responsibility rather than placing the emphasis on rules and expecting our children to follow them.

**Tom Harrison**

Reader, School of Education,  
University of Birmingham

## Force Vive Gorah Issac Annual General Meeting

Members of the Force Vive Gorah Issac (Reg. No. 11546) are informed that the Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held on Thursday 11th March 2021 at their seat at 15 Gorah Issac St. Port Louis as from 10.00 am.

### Agenda:

1. Reading and approval of minutes of last AGM.

2. President's report.
3. Treasurer's report.
4. Budget estimates for 2021
5. AOB.

NB: In case there is no quorum, the AGM will be adjourned for 21st March 2021 at the same venue, time and agenda.

**Iqbal Damoo**  
Secretary





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1956-2020



## Retired Husband

After I retired, my wife insisted that I accompany her on her trips to Wal-Mart.

Unfortunately, like most men, I found shopping boring and preferred to get in and get out. Equally unfortunate, my wife is like most women - she loves to browse and leaves me with endless time to myself.

Yesterday my dear wife received the following letter, from the local Wal-Mart:

**Dear Mrs Harris,**

Over the past six months, your husband has caused quite a commotion, in our store. We cannot tolerate this behaviour and have been forced to ban both of you from the store.

Our complaints against your husband, Mr Harris, are listed below and are documented by our video surveillance cameras:

1. June 15: He took 24 boxes of condoms and randomly put them in other people's carts when they weren't looking.
2. July 2: Set all the alarm clocks in 'Housewares' to go off at five-minute intervals.
3. July 7: He made a trail of tomato juice on the floor leading to the women's restroom.
4. August 15: Set up a tent in the camping department and told the children shoppers he'd invite them in if they would bring pillows and blankets from the bedding

## Smile of The day

Ed and his wife Norma go to the state fair every year. And every year Ed would say, "Norma, I'd like to ride in that helicopter."

Norma always replied, "I know Ed, but that helicopter ride is fifty bucks, And fifty bucks is fifty bucks!"

One year Ed and Norma went to the fair, and Ed said, "Norma, I'm 75 years old. If I don't ride that helicopter, I might never get another chance."

To this, Norma replied, "Ed, that helicopter ride is fifty bucks, and fifty bucks is fifty bucks."

The pilot overheard the couple and said, "Folks I'll make you a deal. I'll take the both of you for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and don't say a word, I won't charge you a penny! But if you say one word, it's fifty dollars."

Ed and Norma agreed and up they went. The pilot did all kinds of fancy manoeuvres, but not a word was heard. He did his daredevil tricks over and over again, but still not a word...

When they landed, the pilot turned to Ed and said, "By golly, I did everything I could to get you to yell out, but you didn't. I'm impressed!"

Ed replied, "Well, to tell you the truth, I almost said something when Norma fell out. But you know... Fifty bucks is fifty bucks!"

\*\*\*

Son: Papa, how you survived without 4G and 5G

during your time?

Father: During out time, there used to be 3G -- that is Mataji, Pitaji and Guruji. With one slap from them, our whole "network" got activated automatically...

\*\*\*

Teacher: What is the opposite of Valentine?

Student: Quarantine.

Teacher: How?

Student: Because in Valentine, two people sit very close to each other, and in Quarantine very far from each other.



department to which twenty children obliged.

5. September 4: Looked right into the security camera and used it as a mirror while he picked his nose.

6. September 10: While handling guns in the hunting department, he asked the clerk where the antidepressants were.

7. October 18: Hid in a clothing rack and, when people browsed through, yelled 'PICK ME! PICK ME!' 8. Took

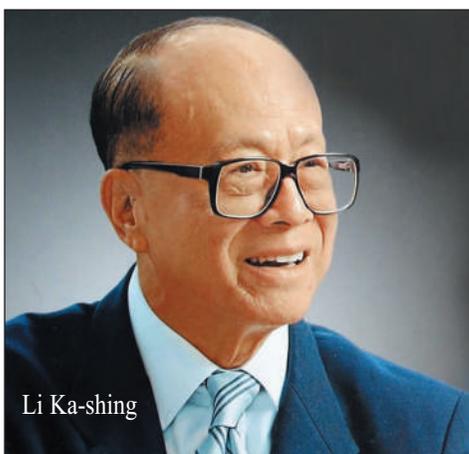
a box of condoms to the checkout clerk and asked where is the fitting room?

And last, but not least:

9. October 23: Went into a fitting room, shut the door, waited awhile; then yelled very loudly, 'Hey! There's no toilet paper in here.' One of the clerks passed out.

**Customer Manager, Wal-Mart**

## Life's LESSONS



Li Ka-shing

## A life span is too short

When Hong Kong's richest man, Li Ka-shing, was seriously ill, he wrote the "Sunset Ballad" on his bed! He regrets that many things are realized too late. He had been the richest man for many years. He was a workaholic, and a famous entre-

preneur. Only announced his retirement in 2018. After retirement, he began to enjoy life

1. We are born with nothing, no more and no less and finally to return to nothing. Be as natural, normal and at ease as possible.

2. Don't aspire to acquire surplus wealth at sunset years. Those who have such intention are rather confused or crazy. Just consider what belongs to you before and after death. One has to wake up and stop fooling ourselves.

3. Be contented. Have fun and enjoy the sunset years. Do not be exalted if you're rich neither too worried if poor. Take it along as naturally and savour the freedom.

4. Don't forcibly demand, neither compete. Life is like a dream or fleeting cloud or smoke. Look at the vast and empty sky and land, we are just a tiny speck drifting within.

5. The sun is empty so is the moon. River water forever flows eastward (in China). Farm and house too are empty, continually changing owners.

6. Love becomes naught, relationship too disappeared. Finally all will go to the crematorium. Even gold and silver, one does not grasp to take along after death.

7. Reputation, honours and profits

disappeared into sweet dreams once the eyes shut down for good. Whatever gains or losses dissipated, life is like a drama

8. No more minister status, no more the power that came with it. No one can remain in the ministry for life. Rich or poor, the final is void. That is nothingness when the curtain of life drops, be aware of that.

9. The four seasons will rotate, so will the high and low tides. Every family has certain difficult mantra to recite. Do not burden unnecessarily with worries.

10. Raising and educating children are a responsibility and duty. It is a blessing to be able to help. Children and grandchildren shall build their own future, do not be duty bound by them. It is far more a blessing to take good care of our own well-being during the sunset years.

11. Man hustle and bustle about earning a living like bees collecting honey. Just wonder the honey is made for whom, ever thought the life-long hard work will end up in naught. Be more liberal and accommodative, think rationally to avoid disputes.

12. From a distance hospitals are like heaven, curing so many patients. Viewing from close range hospitals are like banks raking in lot of cash. Getting inside the hospital is like getting into prison. It is far better to take preventive measure well in advance

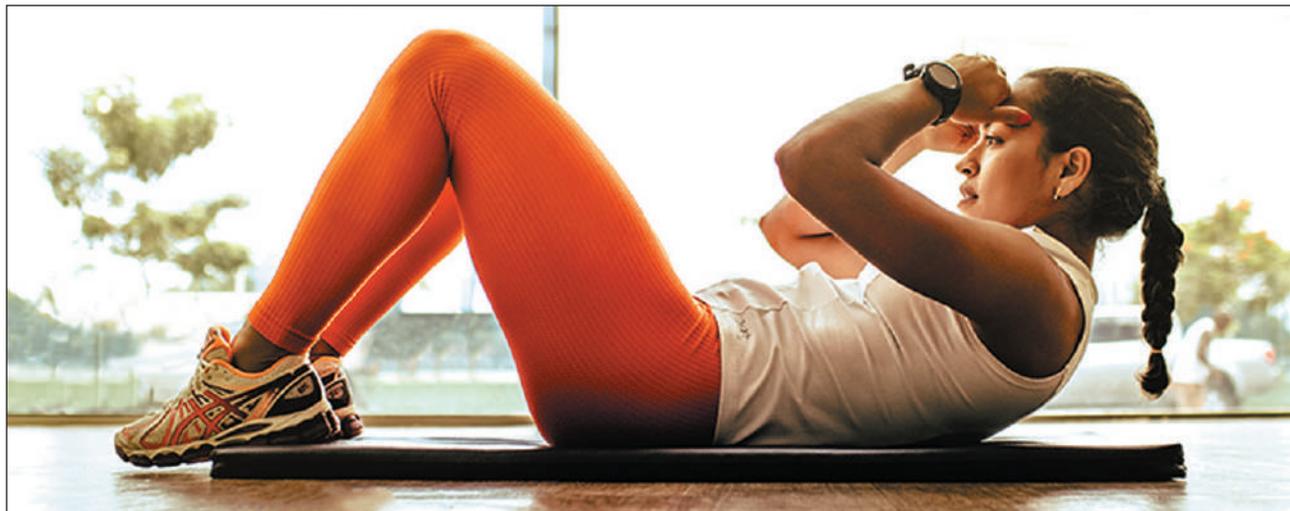
13. Health is an invisible asset, health enhancement is bank saving, contracting disease is bank loan and re-payment, serious illness can cause bankruptcy. These are earnest facts of life and to be regarded seriously. Do not let this happen, it will be too late to regret.

14. It is better to stand alone to enhance immunity rather than to lie down and be cheated. Love the family must start with loving own self. Loving own self is therefore a farsighted shot.

15. A life span is too short. Do not get bogged down with money worries. Tons of cash wouldn't buy a sun which doesn't set. Loads of silver and gold can't exchange for health. Life and death is fated and wealth too. If it has been fated that we will be wealthy, it will be. But if it's fated otherwise, it is pointless to crave for it. A point worth reiterating is that the children and grandchildren will and should carve out the path for their future; there is no need to slog like buffalo and horse for them. A life span is really too short, it is advisable to take life plainly and light-heartedly. Fame and gain are just like drifting cloud, extravagance and luxury are momentary exuberance, in rapid glimpses of fleeting time, hair will turn grey to white, churning all past events into smoke and cloud, what for let them linger in the heart, to pester and bugger us deeper into the bull's horn.



# Morning habits to help you lose weight



**W**eighing yourself first thing in the morning after you pee is more accurate than checking later in the day. What you eat and drink later on can change the results. That visual reminder of your weight each morning can help you stick to your healthy eating plan the rest of the day or week.

## Drink a glass (or 2) of water

One or two glasses of plain H<sub>2</sub>O before you eat breakfast may help you lose weight. Water has no calories, but it's satisfying and curbs your appetite, so you may not want to eat such a big breakfast afterward. It also stimulates your metabolism to help you burn calories.

## Work out before breakfast

Do some moderate exercise before you sit down to eat in the mornings. Working out on an empty stomach actually helps you get better results from exercise. Prebreakfast sweat sessions can help you burn more of your body's fat for fuel.

## Eat a high-protein breakfast

This nutrient may help you lose weight because it makes you feel fuller longer after you eat. It's also harder for your body to store it as excess fat. Another perk of protein: Your body uses more calories to break it down than it uses for carbs or fat. Go for protein-rich breakfasts, such as an egg and turkey sausage on whole wheat toast or a Greek yogurt smoothie with peanut butter and berries.

## Make a meal plan for the day

Every morning, write up a quick list of what you'll eat that day. Planning meals ahead of time can help you

choose lower-calorie foods. If you've already decided what to eat for your day's snacks and meals, you may be less likely to reach for high-calorie convenience foods like fast-food burgers or fries.

## Get some sun

Some sunlight on your skin can actually help you burn a little bit more body fat. Research shows that people who soak up a few rays in the morning tend to have a lower body-mass index (BMI), or a leaner, slimmer physique, than people who step out in the sun later in the day.

## Use measuring cups and spoons

It's easy to supersize portions that pack more calories than you need without even knowing it. Keep measuring cups and spoons where you typically dish out breakfast. Measure foods like cereal or milk before you place them in the bowl so you serve yourself the right amount.

## Practice mindfulness

Slow down and think about what you're eating. Appreciate the smell, look, and taste of even a simple breakfast. Don't watch TV or scroll through social media when you eat in the morning: just breathe, relax, and enjoy a peaceful meal. This practice could help you eat less and lose weight.

## Use a juice glass

Most standard drinking glasses are far larger than a serving of juice. That makes it easy to consume more than you should. And many fruit juices have as much sugar in them as a can of soda. But they also have lots of vitamins and minerals that are great for you as you start your day.

To pour a more sensible portion, use a small juice glass.

## Don't dress up your coffee

Do you have your dessert in your coffee cup each morning? Specialty coffees with lots of added sugar, cream, or flavored syrups can add up to more than 500 calories each. Use skim milk or sugar-free flavors instead. Or try green tea for a morning jolt. It has catechins, nutrients that may promote weight loss.

## Pack your lunch and snacks

Before you leave the house for the day, grab a sack and pack a healthy lunch and low-calorie snacks like fresh fruit or low-fat cheese. You'll be prepared to eat a sensible meal when hunger strikes later on, so you don't reach for junk food. Choose fiber-rich foods like whole-grain crackers to keep you feeling fuller longer.

## Change your commute

Long car rides every day can lead to weight gain. More time spent sitting behind the wheel cuts down how much you walk every day, so you burn fewer calories. Use traffic apps to find a shorter route. Try to park a few blocks away and walk the rest of the distance to your destination on nice days.

## Make a shopping list

In the morning, make a shopping list before you head to the supermarket or place your online grocery order. Stick to your list when you shop. You'll be more likely to buy items that fit your healthy meal plan and not grab junk food on impulse. Include precut fruits and veggies for healthy snacks or easy meal add-ons.

## Add hot sauce to your eggs

The heat in spicy chili peppers may help you lose weight. Regularly eating capsaicinoids, the hot chemical in chili peppers, can reduce body fat, curb your appetite, and even boost your metabolism, so you burn more fat all day. Spice up your morning omelet with diced hot peppers or add a dash or two of hot sauce.

## Get enough shut-eye

Too little sleep each night can fuel your appetite all day long, which can lead to weight gain. You may also be more likely to skip your workout if you're pooped. Make sure you're catching enough ZZZs every night. Stick to a regular bedtime, and find ways to control your stress so you can relax and snooze until it's time to get up.

WebMD

## Relationship

# Compliments men would love to hear more often

**C**ompliments can instantly brighten up someone's day even if they are going through something difficult. The power that lies within a few cheerful words is actually amazing! While women love to listen to compliments, they often forget to give some compliments to their partners. Inwardly, every man can accept the fact that they secretly love compliments. If you are struggling to find some common compliments, then worry no more. Here are a few common compliments to give your man today!

**"You look so handsome today! That shirt looks amazing on you."**

An appearance-specific compliment will always cheer your partner up. Especially if it is noticeable that he has put some extra effort into looking good that

day. Let them know if they look good, on dates, or even while hogging down food hungrily!

**"I love how you make me laugh."**

When you compliment on his personality and how he affects, your partner is bound to fall in love with you again. Men love it when you let them know that their qualities or traits really attract or make you feel better at times.

**"You can do this, I believe in you."**

Letting your man know that you believe in them can be one of the best things you can tell your partner. Your partner will thoroughly respect you for believing in them through difficult times. Your words of encouragement will definitely strike a chord in their heart.



**"I am proud of you for doing that. It takes gut."**

Your partner will be delighted to hear praises from you. If they have been working hard, or just did something really difficult, ensure that you are there with them at every point. Also, letting them know that they did a good job will encourage them.

**"This dish is just amazing, you aced your cooking skills!"**

Complimenting your man on his cooking skills will definitely earn you brownie points. Men love it when people praise their cooking skills, as they do put a lot of effort into perfecting their dishes, when-ever they raise the chef's hat. So, be sure to compliment your man every time he cooks a delicious meal.

# Sushant Singh Rajput wins Best Actor at Bollywood's Dadasaheb Phalke film awards

Rajput honoured in critics choice category, while Akshay Kumar, Deepika Padukone also won



The pandemic may have changed Bollywood entertainment as we know it, but that still didn't stop for the awards season to kick-off in tinsel town with the Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards hosted on February 20, honouring the best in film, television, music and web content.

## Sushant Singh Rajput

While the affair itself was low-key, some of the biggest names in the industry did win awards, with the most notable honour being bestowed upon the late Sushant Singh Rajput who won Best Actor Critics Choice for his outstanding contribution to Hindi cinema. Rajput reportedly died by suicide on June 14 in Mumbai last year.



## Akshay Kumar for 'Laxmii'

The Best Actor award was given to Akshay Kumar for 'Laxmii', last year's horror-comedy that was written and directed by Raghava Lawrence and released on web via Disney+ Hotstar. The film did not receive

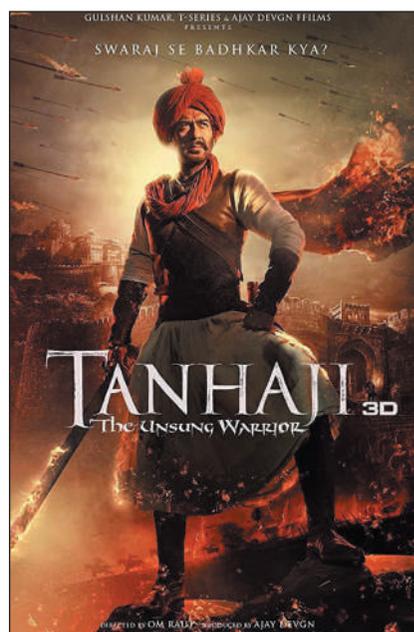
favourable reviews from critics.

## Deepika Padukone in 'Chhapaak'

The Best Actress award was bagged by Deepika Padukone for 'Chhapaak' where she plays an acid attack survivor. The film was based on the life of Laxmi Agarwal and was well received by critics.

## Kiara Advani

Kiara Advani, who was present at the ceremony, walked away with the award for Best Actress Critics for her role in the Netflix film 'Guilty', which she revealed on Instagram, was her first such honour.



## 'Tanhaji'

The Best Film honour went to Ajay Devgn-Saif Ali Khan starrer 'Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior'. The film also saw Kajol play Devgn's on-screen wife in the period film that was directed by debutante Om Raut.

## Anurag Basu

Meanwhile, filmmaker Anurag Basu was honoured as the Best Director for his black comedy, 'Ludo', currently streaming on Netflix. The movie features an ensemble cast, including Abhishek Bachchan, Rajkumar Rao, Aditya Roy Kapur, Sanya Malhotra and Fatima Sana Shaikh.

## Radhika Madan

Relative newcomer Radhika Madan won Best Actor in a Supporting Role award for her performance in Homi Adajani's 'Angrezi Medium', co-starring late Irrfan Khan.

## 'Chhapaak'

The Best Actor in a Supporting Role was given to 'Chhapaak' star Vikrant Massey.



## Kunal Kemmu

There were other big wins of the night as well with Kunal Kemmu winning Best Actor in a Comic Role for his turn in the comedy 'Lootcase'.

## Nora Fatehi

'Street Dancer 3D' actress Nora Fatehi was awarded the 'Performer of the Year' award, who looked stunning in a mint green sari.

## Sushmita Sen

Sushmita Sen predictably won the award for Best Actress in a web series female for her role in the Disney+ Hotstar show 'Aarya', which has won her numerous awards already.

## Bobby Deol with his mother

Bobby Deol is also facing a career renaissance on digital after winning Best Actor in a web series male for his role in 'Ashram', directed by Prakash Jha. The actor posted an image on Instagram with his mother, while he shared his happiness with his fans. "To be in this moment with my mother," he wrote.

## Pratik Gandhi in 'Scam 1992'

Director Hansal Mehta's show 'Scam 1992', starring Pratik Gandhi as the stockbroker Harshad Mehta, received the Best Series award on the night.

## Surbhi Chandna

Surbhi Chandna (pictured) and Dheeraj Dhoopar took home the Best Actor (female) and (male) awards for their work on the small screen. Dhoopar's 'Kundali Bhagya' won the Best Television Show honour.

## Priyanka Chopra on why she did not speak up about demeaning experiences in Bollywood: 'I had to work within the system'

Priyanka Chopra was left with a bitter taste in her mouth in the early days of her career when a director said that her 'panties should be seen' in a song to draw in the audience. Another director-producer advised her to get a 'boob job' and other cosmetic enhancements. While she wrote in her memoir, 'Unfinished', that she chose not to do these projects, it took her several years to speak about these experiences.

In an interview, Priyanka was asked about not falling prey to the insecurities that come with being a part of the entertainment industry. She admitted to being insecure, which is why she remained silent about it for such a long time.

Talking to Entertainment Tonight, Priyanka said, "I did because as much as I may have walked away from the project because of how he spoke about me or spoke to me... He didn't see me as an artist bringing something to the table, he saw me as an object for titillation. That's it. That's all I was there for. It makes you feel small. I didn't say anything about it because I had to work within the system. So I put my head down and I worked within the system."

"Why did I do that? Because I had insecurities. I was scared. I was trying to make a career at that point. I didn't want it to be taken away from me. Girls are told, 'You don't want to attract the wrong kind of attention. You don't want to be hard to work with. You gotta smile and everything is alright.' I did that for a really long time because I was insecure. It's okay to be insecure. No one is perfect. No one can live in black or white. Everyone lives in grey and that's okay," she added.

In 'Unfinished', Priyanka wrote about having an unpleasant meeting with the very first filmmaker she met after winning the Miss World crown in 2000. He asked her to 'twirl' for him and then suggested that she needed to get her proportions 'fixed' if she wanted to be an actor. "He stared at me long and hard, assessing me, and then suggested that I get a boob job, fix my jaw, and add a little more cushioning to my butt," she wrote.

The other incident took place on the sets of a film Priyanka had signed. She was supposed to shoot for a sensual song and the director, while giving the stylist a brief about her look, emphasised that 'chaddiyan dikhni chahiye (panties should be seen)'. She felt demeaned by his tone and quit the film the next day.

## Cinema Sirsa - Castel

### New Tamil Movie: 'Chakra'

Featuring Vijay and Vijay Sethupathi



Featuring Vishal, Shraddha Srinath and Regina Cassandra

Monday	22 Feb to Wednesday	24 Feb: 13:15 -- 20:15
Thursday	25 Feb:	13:15
Friday	26 & Saturday	27 Feb: 13:15 -- 20:15
Sunday	28 Feb:	13:15 -- 16:15
Monday	1 & Tuesday	2 March: 13:15 -- 20:15

Divyanka Tripathi-Vivek Dahiya:

# "Our baby will get confused because we both call each other 'Baby'!"

A conversation with the madly-in-love couple Divyanka Tripathi and Vivek Dahiya who are into the fourth year of their marriage, as reported by ETimes TV.

**There's a flipside to the Covid-lockdown if you think of the fact that people are sitting with each other all the time - and often, there are too many arguments that happen between people living under the same roof. Has that been the case with Vivek and you too?**

**Divyanka:** Actually, Vivek and I had discussed several aspects of marriage before we tied the knot. We knew a few big challenges would come along and we have taken this as one such. Yes, it is not easy to understand each other in the period before marriage but we managed to click and develop a bond. Coming to the lockdown, I think it hasn't been tough on us. That's largely because we have never done any division of labour. So, as I am talking to you, Vivek has made coffee for me. If he is busy, I will do whatever it takes to make him relaxed. It's sort of a given, *itni achchi understanding hai hum dono ke beech*.

**When and where did you first see Vivek? And what was your first impression about him?**

I had a fracture in the leg but I was shooting for 'Yeh Hai Mohabbatein' (produced by Ekta Kapoor) that day, when Vivek entered the set. My Creative Head told me that *ek bahut hi handsome ladke ko cast kiya hai* as a cop. He came across as quite a simple, dignified guy. I found him pretty handsome. I felt many girls would have a crush for him. But I didn't feel any sparks. *Pyaar baad mein hua*. I think we fell in love more after marriage.

**You had ups and downs in your personal life before Vivek came into your life. How much did he contribute in removing all those thoughts?**

Will it be enough if I say that I don't remember anything from my life before Vivek entered it? This is what he has given me. Our camaraderie is so strong that I can share anything with him.

**So, you are saying that Vivek erased all the bitter memories?**

Yes, absolutely.

**Are there minor fights off and on?**

Of course. Which relationship doesn't? *Lekin hum dono hi ek doosre ko mana sakte hai. Pehle toh manate hi nahi. lekin jab manate hain toh saamne wala jaldi pighal jata hai*.

Thinking of your first question, in fact, we addressed each other during the lockdown that we both need some personal time to ourselves. After that we started giving each other some space, almost as a rule. We do take time off from each other and it's a conscious, deliberate decision. During that time we tend to read a lot and Vivek indulges in some content creation. It's important not to talk to each other at times.

**Let me ask you bluntly. How much of faith you'll have in each other? Do you'll check each other's phone at times?**

Faith comes with time and experience. To be honest, I have checked his phone once or twice. And I was proved wrong. Vivek even knows about that. But today, I can surely say that we have overcome all that and have faith in each other that nobody can dilute. I think *hum sabke surroundings hi kuch aise hain* that there's no concept of space. Right from one's childhood, every parent wants to know everything about his child. But I am learning from him; he has studied abroad where giving space is regarded as something very important.



**If you could change one thing about him?**

His brutal honesty. Like he will tell me upfront if he doesn't like a certain outfit of mine. But we all know, it's not easy to hear the stark truth.

**And you change your outfit then?**

Yes, I do (laughs).

**What's that one thing he wants to change about you?**

That I get hurt easily; I am too sensitive.

**The most romantic getaway that Vivek and you had?**

Maldives always wins. The beaches are extremely exotic. Even our holiday in Italy for that matter.

**The time when you lied to him and got caught?**

The day I checked his phone and got caught. I don't know how but somehow, he came to know that I had checked his phone. My face is too transparent.

*Vivek joins here:*

**Divyanka:** Vivek, how did you get to know that I had checked your phone?

**Vivek:** Just like my father used to come to know that I'd taken out his car in his absence (laughs).

**Divyanka told us that her face is too transparent; it's a give-away. Is that true?**

**Vivek:** It's true. Knowing that I am marrying an actress, I felt that there might be times when I would have to dig out information on her which is not crystal clear, simply on my own as she might bluff. In most relationships, people are capable of concealing things from each other, howsoever small or big. But touchwood, *aaj tak aisa kuch nahi hua*.

**Divyanka:** I too can read him very well, but his face is not a give-away.

How much do you'll shop for each other?

**Vivek:** I shop for her and myself both, she doesn't shop for me.

**Divyanka:** I am not a very shopping person. Even

when we both go together, he quickly selects for me and it's all done rather quickly.

**Vivek:** I am like that guy in Dubai malls who accompanies you carrying the clothes you select and even helps you to select the correct outfit of correct size.

**Do you'll plan surprises for each other?**

**Vivek:** It's a good question. Divyanka, when did you last surprise me?

**Divyanka:** He doesn't allow me to. He is fond of being Sherlock Holmes. He is aware of whatever I plan for him. But yes, he does surprise me - the cutest was the one when we had a hotel stay on my birthday and he had a big bowl of chits and kept surprising me every one hour.

**The longest time you'll have stayed away from each other?**

**Divyanka:** When I was shooting for 'Yeh Hai Mohabbatein' in Australia.

**Vivek:** I was on the sets of 'Kavach' then. And yes, she managed to surprise me then. I was receiving a cake every one hour!

**The nicknames you'll have given each other?**

**Vivek:** Actually, we both call each other 'Baby' so much that our baby might get confused.

**Vivek, your first impression about Divyanka when you first saw her?**

**Vivek:** I don't form first impressions. But as I started working with her, I felt she's Tulsi 2.0. I can never forget the fact that 'Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi' (produced by Ekta) was followed by my family so religiously. There was such an amazing aura about Smriti Irani.

**Vivek, before you joined, Divyanka told us that you are brutally honest and she is too sensitive...**

**Vivek:** I am a typical *Jat* and at times I don't have filters, so yeah, I don't keep anything inside my heart. I don't indulge in any sugar-coating. In fact, Divyanka and I have had numerous discussions on this and she says it's not about sugar-coating but about respecting the other person's sentiments.

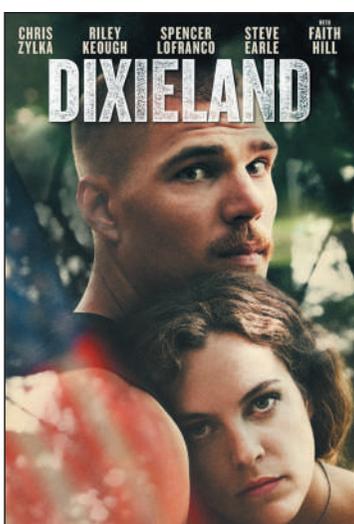
**CINE 12**  
Mardi 23 Fevrier - 21.10  
**Dylan Dog**  
avec: Bruce Greenwood, Leslie Hope, Arnold Vosloo



**CINE 12**  
Mercredi 24 Fevrier - 21.10  
**Guernica**



**CINE 12**  
Jeudi 25 Fevrier - 21.15  
avec: Chris Zylka, Riley Keough, Faith Hill

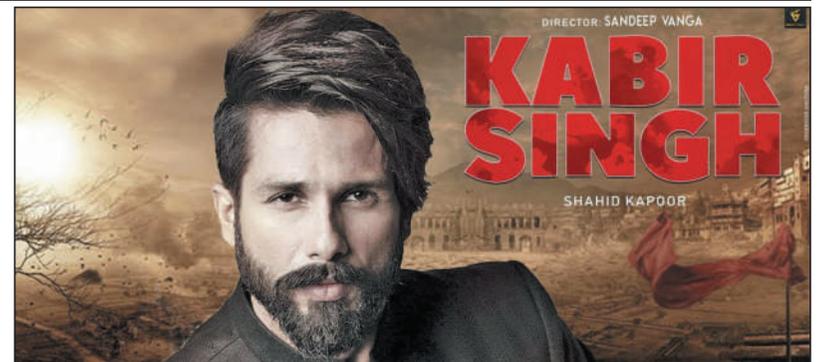


	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
<b>mardi 23 fevrier</b>	07.35 Local: Lavi Zoli An XXL 10.16 Local: Fam Model 10.30 Mag: Euromaxx 11.10 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 13.00 Local: Elle 14.30 D.Animes: Sissi 14.54 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 14.57 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 15.21 D.Anime: La Ligue Des Super 15.44 D.Anime: HTDT 16.34 D.Anime: Baby Boss 17.05 Mag: Mathematica 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 Film: Dylan Dog 23.10 Le Journal	10.00 Serial: CID 10.44 Serial: Ye Vaada Raha 12.04 Film: Swayamvar Starring: Shashi Kapoor, Sanjeev Kumar, Moushumi Chatterjee, Vidya Sinha 14.37 DDI Magazine 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.21 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.43 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 16.03 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 16.29 Serial: Tu Ishq Hai 16.50 Serial: Achra Ke Moti 17.11 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 18.00 Serial: Bloody Romance 18.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Local: Tamil Programme 20.30 Film: Anari Starring: Raj Kapoor, Nutan 23.07 DDI Live	06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa 06.39 Mag: World Stories 07.00 Mag: Voa Connect 07.51 Doc: In Good Shape 07.51 Doc: Amazing Gardens 09.42 Mag: Global 3000 10.34 Doc: The Black Tears Of... 11.19 Mag: Eco@Africa 11.45 Mag: Arts And Culture 12.11 Mag: Voa Connected 12.45 Mag: In Good Shape 13.11 Doc: Amazing Gardens 14.09 Doc: 360 GEO 15.27 Mag: Washington Forum 15.53 Doc: The Black Tears Of... 16.40 Mag: Eco@Africa 17.03 Mag: Arts And Culture 18.02 Mag: REV: The Global Auto... 19.00 Student Support Prog... 19.29 Mag: Urban Gardens 19.34 Mag: Made In Germany	01.02 Film: Hannibal 03.07 Serial: S.W.A.T 03.48 Film: They Came To Cordura 04.51 Tele: Muneca Brava 09.00 Serial: The Magicians 09.48 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: S.W.A.T 11.43 Film: They Came TO Cordura 13.46 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.18 Mag: Hollywood Best Film 14.45 Film: Signed, Sealed, Belive... 16.41 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: Shades Of Blue 21.15 Film: The Living And The Dead 22.45 Tele: Muneca Brava	08.00 Film: Kasam 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 - Naagin Season 3 14.34 / 22.25 - Ikyawann 15.41 Film: Krishan Avatar Starring: Mithun Chakraborty, Somy Ali, Hashmat Khan 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.52 Serial: Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka
<b>mercredi 24 fevrier</b>	07.55 Local: Palette 09.00 Doc: Solar Storms 09.50 Local: Arxiv 246 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.50 Prod Indepen: Met Seryer 14.30 D.Anime: Sissi 14.56 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 14.59 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 15.23 D.Anime: La Ligue Des... 15.47 D.Anime: HTDT 16.15 D.Anime: Trolls 16.38 D.Anime: Baby Boss 17.05 Mag: Mathematica 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 21.25 Film: Night Wolf 23.10 Local: Le Journal	10.00 Pyar Ka Dard Meetha... 11.17 Suhani Ek Ladhi 12.00 Film: Ijaazat Stars: Rekha, Naseeruddin Shah, Anuradha Patel 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.22 Aamhi Doghi 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: Kulvadh 18.00 Serial: Bloody Romance 18.30 Serial: DDI Magazine 19.00 Zournal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Programme In Marathi 20.34 Film: Thunder Of Gigantic Seprents Pierre Kirby, Edowan Bersmea, Danny Raisebeck	06.00 Rev: The Global Auto... 06.26 Doc: Too Good For The... 06.52 Mag: Check In 07.25 Mag: Made In Germany 07.53 Doc: Builders Of The Future 08.43 Doc: From War To Wisdom 10.44 Doc: Dark Eden 12.21 Mag: Check In 12.47 Mag: Urban Gardens 12.56 Mag: Made In Germany 13.22 Doc: Builders Of The Future 13.47 Doc: Olivia's Garden 14.15 Doc: From War To Wisdom 15.30 Local: Klip Seleksion 16.59 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto... 17.25 Doc: Too Good For The... 18.00 Mag: Motorweek 18.30 Mag: Vous Et Nous 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: Shades Of Blue 01.26 Film: The Living And The... 02.49 Serial: S.W.A.T 03.30 Film: United 05.13 Tele: Muneca Brava 05.55 Film: Shades Of Blue 09.00 Serial: The Magicians 09.44 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: S.W.A.T 11.55 Film: United 13.48 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: Miami Magma 16.40 Serial: The Magicians 17.25 Serial: Shades Of Blue 18.12 Tele: Daniella 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: 19-2 21.15 Film: Guernica 23.01 Tele: Muneca Brava 23.43 Serial: The Magicians	08.00 Film: Krishan Avatar 12.04 / 20.06 - Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam 12.22 / 20.26 - Radha Krishna 12.46 / 20.02 Sanjivani 13.10 / 20.46 Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.30 / 21.09 - Bade Acche Lagte 13.49 / 21.31 - Naagin Season 3 14.31 / 21.46 - Ikyawann 14.36 / 21.59 - Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 15.30 Film: Jeeva Starring: Sanjay Dutt, Mandakini 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kumkum Bhagya 18.51 Ek Rishta Saajhed Ka 19.13 Mere Angne Mein 19.35 Siddhi Vinayak
<b>jeudi 25 fevrier</b>	06.00 Local: Klip Seleksion 06.45 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: Sissi 14.55 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 14.57 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 15.22 D.Anime: La Ligue Des Super 15.45 D.Anime: HTDT 16.03 D.Anime: Robot Trains 16.13 D.Anime: Trolls 16.35 D.Anime: Baby Boss 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Jamai Raja 18.55 Local: Chaar Dham Tirth... 19.30 Le Journal 20.15 Film: Kabir Singh	10.00 Karm Phal Data Shani 12.05 Film: Fifty Fifty Starring: Rajesh Khanna, Tina Munim, Om Shivpuri 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.19 Aamhi Doghi 15.41 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 Pahuca Da Devi Maiya 19.00 Zournal Kreol 20.00 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 21.14 Film: Arena Starring: Samuel L. Jackson, Kellan Lutz, Johnny Messner 22.43 DDI Live	06.00 Mag: Motorweek 06.25 Mag: Vous Et Nous 07.19 Doc: Urban Gardens 08.24 Mag: Vue D'en Haut 10.09 Doc: The Loneliness Epide... 11.00 Mag: Motorweek 11.34 Mag: Vous Et Nous 12.30 Mag: Urban Gardens 14.51 Mag: Focus On Europe 16.17 Mag: Motorweek 18.00 Mag: Eco India 18.41 Mag: Carnet De Sante 19.00 Student Support Program... 20.05 Doc: Children In Art 21.00 Local: News (English) 21.10 Doc: La Turbulence Rodin 22.02 Doc: Gaming For Gold 22.44 Doc: The Memory Illusion 23.26 Mag: Eco India 00.05 Mag: Carnet De Sante 00.20 Mag: Border Crossing	01.38 Film: Guernica 03.24 Serial: S.W.A.T 04.01 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive... 05.25 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.07 Serial: 19-2 06.49 Film: Love: Space Time 09.00 Serial: The Magicians 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: S.W.A.T 12.00 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive... 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.38 Film: Love: Space Time 16.44 Serial: The Magicians 17.21 Serial: 19-2 18.05 Tele: Daniella 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.08 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: 19-2 21.15 Film: Dixieland 22.48 Tele: Muneca Brava 23.30 Serial: The Magicians	08.00 Film: Jeeva 12.05 / 19.54 - Sanjivani 12.23 / 20.11 - Radha Krishna 12.47 / 20.32 Agniphera 13.09 / 21.09 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.31 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.52 / 21.46 - Naagin 14.34 / 21.59 - Ikyawann 14.56 / 22.25 - Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 15.20 Film: Dacait Starring: Rakhee Gulzar, Sunny Deol, Meenakshi Sheshadri 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.51 Ek Rishta Saajhed Ka

**B TV** Jeudi 25 Fevrier - 15.30  
Star: Rakhee Gulzar, Sunny Deol, Meenakshi Sheshadri



**mbc-1** Jeudi 25 Fevrier - 20.25  
Stars: Shahid Kapoor, Kiara Advani, Nikita Dutta



# Australia, fighting Facebook, is the latest country to struggle against foreign influence on journalism

*The battle between media companies and foreign governments over who controls the news dates back some 150 years, to when European and US wire services dictated the world's headlines*



Vanessa Freije

Assistant Professor, Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington



S3studio / Getty Images

Facebook has barred Australians from finding or sharing news on its platform, in response to an Australian government proposal to require social media networks to pay journalism organizations for their content. The move is already reducing online readership of Australian news sites.

Similar to what happened when Facebook suspended Donald Trump's account in January, the fight with Australia is again raising debate around social media networks' enormous control over people's access to information. Australia's prime minister, Scott Morrison, says his country "will not be intimidated" by an American tech company.

My research in the history of international media politics has shown that a handful of rich countries have long exerted undue influence over how the rest of the world gets its news.

Facebook has 2.26 billion users, and most of them live outside of the United States, according to the company. India, Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico and the Philippines are home to the most Facebook users outside the U.S.

Facebook's share of the global social media market is staggering, but the company is not alone. Eight of the world's 11 most popular social media companies are based in the U.S.. These include YouTube and Tumblr, as well as Instagram, which is owned by Facebook.

The geographic concentration of information technology puts these billions of non-American social media users and their government officials in a subservient position.

The business decisions of Big Tech can effectively dictate free speech around the world.

## Imperial origins of international news

Reliance on foreign media has long

been a problem in the Global South - so-called developing countries with a shared history of colonial rule.

It began, in many ways, 150 years ago, with the development of wire services - the news wholesalers that send correspondents around the world to deliver stories via wire feed to subscribers. Each service chronicled news in its home country's respective colonies or spheres of influence, so Britain's Reuters would file stories from Bombay and Cape Town, for example, and France's Havas from Algiers.

The Associated Press, based in the U.S., became a force in the global news business in the early 20th century.

These companies cornered the global market for news production, generating most of the content that people worldwide read in the international section of any newspaper. This meant, for example, that a Bolivian reading about events in neighboring Peru would typically receive the news from a U.S. or French correspondent.

The news monopolies of former colonial powers continued into the 20th century. Some Latin American countries, such as Argentina and Mexico, developed their own strong newspapers that reported on local and national events, but they could not afford to send many correspondents abroad.

In the 1970s, North Atlantic wire services still provided as much as 75% of international news printed and broadcast in Latin America, according to my research.

## Cold War problems

Separately, many world leaders outside of the U.S. and Europe also worried that those foreign powers would intervene in their countries' domestic affairs by covertly using their countries' media.

That happened during the Cold War. In the lead-up to a 1954 CIA-supported coup

in Guatemala, the agency secretly used the Guatemalan radio waves and planted local news stories to convince the Guatemalan military and public that the overthrow of their democratically elected president was inevitable.

After Guatemala, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, many leaders in the "third world" - countries that aligned with neither the U.S. nor the Soviet Union - began creating news and radio services of their own.

Cuban leader Fidel Castro established a state-run international news service, Prensa Latina, to allow Latin Americans "to know the truth and not be victims of lies." He also created Radio Havana Cuba, which broadcast revolutionary programming across the Americas, including in the U.S. South. These were government agencies, not independent news organizations.

Global South leaders also wanted to shape the international portrayal of their countries. North Atlantic news services often depicted the third world as backward and chaotic, justifying the need for outside intervention.

This tendency was so common that it earned the moniker "coups and earthquakes" journalism.

## Taking control

Global South leaders also lacked full access to communications technology, especially satellites, which were controlled by the U.S. and Soviet-dominated organizations.

In the 1970s, Global South leaders took their concerns about information inequities to UNESCO, lobbying for binding United Nations regulations that would prohibit direct foreign broadcasts by satellite. It was a quixotic quest to persuade dominant powers to relinquish their control over communications technology, and they didn't get far.

But those decades-old proposals

recognized the imbalances in global information that remain in place today.

In recent decades, other countries have created their own news networks with the express aim of challenging biased representations of their regions.

One result is Al Jazeera, created in 1996 by the Qatari emir to challenge U.S. and British depictions of the Middle East.

Another is TeleSur, founded by Venezuela in partnership with other Latin American nations in 2005, which aims to counterbalance U.S. influence in the region. It was created after the 2002 coup attempt against Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez, which was supported by the U.S. government and powerful Venezuelan broadcasters.

## Why media matters

State-sponsored media outlets have faced accusations - some well-founded - of coverage biased in favor of their government sponsors. But their existence nonetheless underscores that it matters where media is produced, and by whom.

Research suggests this concern extends to social media. Facebook and Google, for example, produce algorithms and policies that reflect the ideas of their creators - who are primarily white, male and based in Silicon Valley, California.

One study found that this can result in racist or sexist search engine search results. A 2016 ProPublica investigation also discovered that Facebook allowed advertisers for housing to target users based on race, violating the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

All of this raises doubts about whether Facebook, or any international company, can make rules regulating speech that are equally appropriate in every country they operate in. Deep knowledge of national politics and culture is necessary to understand which accounts are dangerous enough to suspend, for example, and what comprises misinformation.

Facing such criticism, in 2020 Facebook assembled an independent oversight board, colloquially referred to as its Supreme Court. Comprising media and legal experts from all over the world, the board has a truly diverse membership. But its mandate is to uphold a "constitution" designed by the American company by evaluating a handful of appeals to Facebook's content removal decisions.

Facebook's current fight with Australia suggests that equitable control of international news remains very much a work in progress.