

MAURITIUS TIMES

● "Ultimately, the greatest lesson that COVID-19 can teach humanity is that we are all in this together." -- Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw



Interview: Milan Meetarbhan

"People do matter. How competent they are or how mafia-like they are will impact on the future..."

... but we should gather support around an ambitious common project"

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Second lockdown: Discipline and Responsibility



Self-protection equals protection for all. The logic is so utterly simple: if we are not infected, we cannot infect others

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'Let's hope that like most epidemics the virus eventually becomes less deadly!'

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Can vaccinated people still spread the coronavirus?

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New Challenges

In different contributions to this paper by different writers as well as in interviews, namely by Rama Sithanen who has studied the dynamics of political competition and power in several deeply divided societies, it was brought home the conclusion that the average Mauritian's electoral preferences go mostly towards candidates from their own community. This pattern of communally-based electoral preferences has remained a constant prior to and even after 50 years of Independence and nation-building efforts despite the chest-thumping hypes on Mauritianism. There is no indication that in the foreseeable future there'll be any departure from this pattern, and we may well have to live with it for more decades to come.

Notwithstanding that constant, Mauritius has made steady progress resulting in the improvement of the well-being of the population across the board, though we have to reckon with some pockets of poverty in some regions and affecting different ethnic communities – not only one in particular. Mature, pragmatic political leadership led to the turnaround of our social and economic landscape in the wake of Independence. There was the ably negotiated Sugar Protocol, an outcome of the political foresight of SSR which saved the day for Mauritius for more than four decades. Moreover, a diversification programme added new pillars to sustain economic growth. It was made successful thanks to the acumen and drive of local entrepreneurs and those from Hong Kong who set up industries here at a time when their island's status was about to undergo a sea-change, and which helped to create the conditions for the EPZ to thrive and provide employment to thousands.

In later years, the ICT and financial sector took off with strong capacity built to handle the new demands of the market, and all of the above was supported by a dynamic and forward looking Civil Service which had, even before Independence, been at the forefront of and led the way to economic and social development. There were other factors that allowed the country to take off - some intangibles as well, a major one being the culture of tolerance which made living together a daily reality that is justifiably a hallmark of Mauritian

society. We can add to this list the rule of law, a genuine respect of institutions, the far-sighted investment in public health and education, etc.

There is a new environment today, as we have to deal with globalization and therefore face competition on a global scale. We are confronted with the geopolitics of the Indian Ocean: the rules of the game may be changing as even traditional friends may have other interests to defend. All of which call for a rethink of the strategies that will see the country move forward on a developmental model that is both sustainable and equitable.

While civil society can contribute to the country's advancement by flagging issues of concern to the citizenry and provide the space through media and other forums for vigorous discussions on them, in our democratic set-up it is the political leaders who are entrusted to listen to all stakeholders and to come up with policies that translate into actionable measures serving the national interest. The burden of responsibility to build on existing strengths, especially those of an institutional nature, and make the country progress further falls squarely on the shoulders of the political leaders who have been elected and mandated for the purpose by the electorate.

If these leaders are engaged in endless conflicts within their parties and among themselves, clearly their energies will be consumed with resolving these rather than be directed towards cooperating with each other to meet the new challenges that both the internal environment (Covid-19 for example with its system wide impacts) and the rapidly changing external interplay of forces between the global powers are imposing upon us. The hiccups of the last few years have not only scarred the country locally but tarnished its image as well, making it even more vulnerable from the investment point of view.

Unless there is political stability, there will be no economic or social stability, which is the sine qua non condition for development and progress. Which is to say that the powers that be had better sort themselves out and start to act more responsibly for their own sake and that of the country they take a pledge to serve.

The Conversation

Can vaccinated people still spread the coronavirus?

You've been vaccinated; can you now safely see your friends and family? New research hints that vaccinated people may be less likely to transmit the coronavirus, but they are not 100% in the clear



Vaccines prevent disease, not infection

1. Does vaccination completely prevent infection?

The short answer is no. You can still get infected after you've been vaccinated. But your chances of getting seriously ill are almost zero.

Many people think vaccines work like a shield, blocking a virus from infecting cells altogether. But in most cases, a person who gets vaccinated is protected from disease, not necessarily infection.

Every person's immune system is a little different, so when a vaccine is 95% effective, that just means 95% of people who receive the vaccine – but who would have gotten ill if exposed to the virus before – won't get sick. These people could be completely protected from infection, or they could be getting infected but remain asymptomatic because their immune system eliminates the virus very quickly. The remaining 5% of vaccinated people – if exposed to the virus – could become infected and get sick, but are extremely unlikely to be hospitalized.

Vaccination doesn't 100% prevent you from getting infected, but in all cases it gives your immune system a huge leg up on the coronavirus. Whatever your outcome – whether complete protection from infection or some level of disease – you will be better off after encountering the virus than if you hadn't been vaccinated.

2. Does infection always mean transmission?

Transmission happens when enough viral particles from an infected person get into the body of an uninfected person. In theory, anyone infected with the coronavirus could potentially transmit it. But a vaccine will reduce the chance of this happening.

In general, if vaccination doesn't completely prevent infection, it will significantly reduce the amount of virus coming out of your nose and mouth – a process called shedding – and shorten the time that you shed the virus. This is a big deal. A person who sheds less virus is less likely to transmit it to someone else.

Deborah Fuller,

Professor of Microbiology, School of Medicine, University of Washington

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This epaper has been produced with the assistance of

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



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

Second lockdown: Discipline and Responsibility

Self-protection equals protection for all. The logic is so utterly simple: if we are not infected, we cannot infect others

As my colleague Dr P. Chitson points out in his interview in this paper, 'the pandemic has shown that freedom without responsibility can be a toxic mix!' During discussions we had been having at various stages of the pandemic, he had opined that sooner or later the virus would find its way into the community, since the frontiers were not closed completely and international travel was taking place, though restricted and with quarantine protocols followed. His remark about 'freedom without responsibility' is therefore a timely one.

So the call for 'discipline and responsibility' during the announcement of the lockdown is in line with the scientific perception of the situation as it has been evolving and is being observed medically on the ground. To be more effective this appeal must be accompanied by personal example on the part of elites, experts and practitioners at all times, but also by dispelling the rumours still going around that arriving VIPs and VVIPs have been allowed to go about without following the recommended guidelines. However, we are reliably informed that they have had to comply with the protocol recommended. Still, to make assurance doubly sure to the people, this apprehension must be addressed so that the latter don't feel that they are being let down.

With the buzz that was going around since the identification of the new cluster before the last weekend, the lockdown didn't come entirely as a surprise, and in fact there is already speculation that it is likely to go beyond the 26th March. Unless ALL OF US show 'Discipline and Responsibility' by being rigorous about following the sanitary measures that we all know by heart already, but that perhaps 'Covid fatigue' and the fact that we had been deemed Covid-safe for quite some time had made us become complacent towards and rather lax in implemen-

ting the rules.

Covid-safe yes but not Covid-free, as this second wave has come to remind us. That it now does not morph into a surge depends a lot on how all of us conduct ourselves during this second lockdown, and that will also be factored into whether there may be an extension. To repeat the well-known cliché: we are all in it together, and we will sink or swim together. The responsibility is both individual and collective – because self-protection equals protection for all. The logic is so utterly simple: if we are not infected, we cannot infect others.

To that extent the call by religious heads and associations in regard to the ongoing gatherings for '40-heures', Cavadee and Maha Shivaratri was a most appreciated patriotic move, as the editorial in the last issue of the paper underlined. In particular, in the case of Maha Shivaratri, there had been lengthy and intensive prior preparations by enthusiastic youths across the island that started as far back as December last to get the kaanwars ready (vide the article by Savita



“The call by religious heads and associations in regard to the ongoing gatherings for ‘40-heures’, Cavadee and Maha Shivaratri was a most appreciated patriotic move. In particular, in the case of Maha Shivaratri, there had been lengthy and intensive prior preparations by enthusiastic youths across the island that started as far back as December last to get the kaanwars ready. No need to say they looked forward to accomplish the final step of the mission by journeying to Ganga Talao, and many are those who will miss the nocturnal magic that prevails there during this truly magnificent festival...”

Photo - Sun Resorts Hotels...

Tiwari in the last issue of the paper). No need to say they looked forward to accomplish the final step of the mission by journeying to Ganga Talao, and many are those who will miss the nocturnal magic that prevails there during this truly magnificent festival that is so infused with pure, sattvic joy and which is awaited with so much of yearning and fervour.

It was to be expected that putting a sudden stop to the momentum was going to be problematic, and rightly it started with a call for those who were already on the way – many from the far corners of the island – to complete their yatra, with all precautions observed. This may explain why there were still some on the road even until close to the announcement of the lockdown, even as others were being asked to refrain from going.

There is also a paradox here in the sense that since people were being advised to stay away, this would mean a reduction in the numbers at Ganga Talao – which many may have erroneously interpreted as therefore it's safe to be there! Nevertheless, practically all --

myself included – who had not yet started off cancelled their plans, and I must say I have really missed an opportunity to have interesting discussions about Maha Shivaratri with the young ones who were going to be my loving companions this year after many years of I-only journeys! Never mind, my dears, we will definitely catch up.

For many, many of us, this will be a year to remember, the one when the Maha Shivaratri yatra had to be called off because of Corona-ji.

Now we must hope that such a phenomenon will not recur in future, as the thinking in the medical and health profession is gaining ground that Covid-19 has already become endemic. Reflecting about 'Post-Corona' shortly after the declaration of Covid-19 as a public health emergency at the beginning of last year, we had written:

'Like other pandemics that came before it, the current Covid-19 episode will also come to pass. When, not even the best experts can say at the moment, but based on the past experience of the evolution of disease patterns over time, the most reasonable estimate is that it will be a few months at least. In course of time, viruses circulate among the population as a normal phenomenon, and produce diseases when the conditions are conducive – like the influenza virus which attacks during the cold weather, and then we talk about the "flu season". Because the influenza viruses are of different types as new ones emerge periodically, they are monitored by the WHO which advises what are the circulating types in the northern and southern hemispheres respectively, and vaccines are manufactured accordingly.

This may happen with Covid-9 too...'

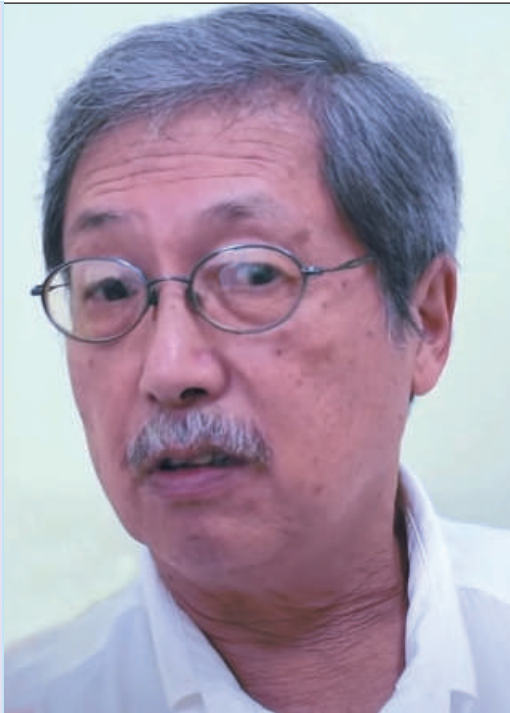
It has already happened, as Covid-19 is here to stay and has produced new variants as an evolutionary adaptation to survive the assault on it by the multi-pronged approach devised by public health experts, scientists and clinicians attempting to prevent its spread and curb severity and mortality – sanitary measures, innovative treatments, vaccines.

Henceforth we have to keep in mind that - At best we can control, but not eliminate, let alone eradicate Covid-19.

Dr Pierrot Chitson, Specialist in Internal Medicine and Gastroenterologist

“Vaccinating as many people as quickly as possible, preventive measures like masking and better medicines will eventually control the pandemic”

Dr Pierrot Chitson, Specialist in Internal Medicine and Gastroenterologist, has been following the Covid-19 pandemic situation at global and local levels very closely from the very beginning of its spread. In view of the detection of what appears to be a locally transmitted cluster, we sought his views on its possible evolution in the context of the global developments taking place. This interview was held before the PM's press conference on Tuesday night March 9.



*** The overriding issue of concern at the moment in the country is the detection of a local case of Covid-19 that has built up into a cluster, the source being still uncertain. And yet we have been Covid-safe for so long compared to so many other countries. Have we failed somewhere or was this to happen whatever we do?**

It was bound to happen sooner or later as the public had this false sense of security of the country being “Covid free”.

Most people had their masks on because of the law but did not use them properly and effectively (as these were worn under the chin or nose). There was no social distancing in public places/restaurants/places of worship. We even had health personnel complaining why we were screening patients for Covid before surgery or endoscopy!

It is a very tricky virus and bound to escape sooner or later despite quarantine, etc.

*** How do you view the national response in the face of this new emergency?**

I think we already have experience in testing and isolation strategies, but we need the capacity to do more rapid tests and as a small country we don't have the means to identify the various variants. Knowing which variant is circulating in the country will help to track the spread of the virus. Many countries are now monitoring sewage for assessing virus spread.

*** At this stage, do you apprehend a surge?**

The fact that our frontiers are still almost closed and that the public, private and religious institutions are keenly aware of the serious situation, we might get away from a second surge but rapid contact tracing, testing and isolation will be the key to quash the outbreak. And the public will have to collaborate in following the preventive measures.

*** Is it premature to speculate about a possible lockdown to stop the transmission of the virus?**

We probably need to learn from other countries like Singapore which managed to control the surges without locking down the country. Tracking technologies have been used but these have to be balanced with individual rights.

But we have to remember that we are not as disciplined like the East Asians who in general trust the authorities.

*** People had been initially hesitant about being vaccinated, and there are so many rumours going around about the Oxford Astra Zeneca vaccine produced by India that has been gifted to Mauritius. Tell us something about vac-**

cines in general, and about this particular one, Covishield.

Unfortunately, vaccine politics have confused many people. Scientific data are being discussed by the press, politicians and other lay people.

It is the first time in medical history that so many vaccines have received “emergency use” authorization. The bottom line is that all the current vaccines work very well in preventing severe disease, hospitalization and death. Issues like efficacy and herd immunity are controversial and may be already out of date with all the new variants.

Also all the current vaccines appear relatively safe, but only time will tell if all these new technologies are safer than the inactivated vaccines currently used for influenza for example.

*** How much of our population needs to be vaccinated for the country to be considered Covid-safe again?**

For a stable virus it is accepted that 60% of the population with immunity can provide herd immunity meaning that it will

coagulants are being used with good effect. Future and more expensive treatment will be monoclonal antibodies and other biological agents.

*** How do you compare the mortality rate of Covid-19 with that of equally lethal viruses?**

It could be comparable to the “Spanish Flu” of nearly a century ago, or even the H1N1 virus of a decade ago, but these viruses were lethal to the younger healthy population and lost their virulence after a few years.

This Covid virus is unfortunately more complicated and much more virulent in the elderly by a factor of probably more than a hundred. Also, the obese/overweight/diabetic/immune compromised are also more at risk.

*** One year after its appearance on the global stage, how do you view the pandemic situation? Is it getting under control fast enough?**

Unfortunately things won't improve much in the foreseeable future due to two big factors: it will take a few years to vacci-

“Unfortunately things won't improve much in the foreseeable future due to two big factors: it will take a few years to vaccinate the whole world; further, just like the flu, because of mutations, booster doses might be needed meaning we will be playing catch up! Let's hope that like most epidemics the virus eventually becomes less deadly!...”

be difficult for the virus to spread. However with Covid-19, it is not known. Recently in Manaus (Brazil) there has been another surge with a new variant despite being said that 70% of the population already had Covid antibodies according to surveys in blood donors.

*** What about developments in the treatment of the different aspects of the disease? For it seems to affect not only the lungs but other organs as well?**

More is known about the disease. Apart from the virus destroying lung tissues, it also disturbs the host immune response creating auto-immune, inflammatory and coagulation syndromes.

While oxygen treatment is very important, cheap therapies like steroids and anti-

nate the whole world; further, just like the flu, because of mutations, booster doses might be needed meaning we will be playing catch up!

Let's hope that like most epidemics the virus eventually becomes less deadly!

*** Do you think we will succeed in eliminating it? If not, what then should people and countries do for their long term protection?**

Many countries are now suffering from “Covid fatigue” and the health personnel especially nurses and doctors of many countries are now on the verge of exhaustion. Fortunately most personnel in health care facilities are dedicated to their jobs.

Unfortunately politics instead of science has prevented more effective policies and timely interventions. Vaccinating as many people as quickly as possible, preventive measures like masking and better medicines will eventually control the pandemic. And this pandemic has shown that freedom without responsibility can be a toxic mix.

“Unfortunately politics instead of science has prevented more effective policies and timely interventions. Vaccinating as many people as quickly as possible, preventive measures like masking and better medicines will eventually control the pandemic. And this pandemic has shown that freedom without responsibility can be a toxic mix...”

Covid-19: India's hunt for 'worrying' coronavirus variants

Like all viruses, the coronavirus that has caused the deadly pandemic keeps changing in small ways as it passes from one person to another.

The vast majority of these mutations are inconsequential, and don't alter the way the virus behaves.

But some mutations trigger changes in the spike protein that the virus uses to latch on to and enter human cells - these variants could potentially be more infectious, cause more severe disease or evade vaccines. Such variants have been already identified in UK, South Africa and Brazil, and have now spread to dozens of countries.

Last week, a top US health official warned that the spread of highly contagious variants was threatening to fuel a "potential fourth surge of cases" in the country. The Brazil variant appears more contagious and may evade immunity provided by past infection, scientists say. The British variant is responsible for a chunk of new infections in US and Europe, reports Soutik Biswas of BBC News.

Genome detectives around the world are hunting down these worrying mutations. Scientists are able to detect changes by sequencing the genome of the virus after taking a swab from an infected patient. They crack the genetic code of the virus - essentially prising open its instruction manual - and begin tracking the mutations.

India is beginning to beef up its surveillance system to track the genetic histories of local samples of the Sars-CoV-2 virus, that causes Covid-19.

The timing is crucial: a clutch of states have reported an uptick in infections even as caseloads have fallen sharply in the country. Naturally, there have been fears that new variants of the virus might be the reason for the spike.

India says it has found 242 cases of the three foreign variants - mostly the UK one - in the population so far. Scientists say they are unlikely to be linked to the recent spike in infection, which is being largely attributed to peo-



A few states have reported an uptick in infections even as caseloads have fallen sharply in India. Photo - ichef.bbc.co.uk

ple dropping their guard following the steep decline in cases.

But genome scientists are also "investigating" two variants found in samples in states like Maharashtra and Telangana which have seen a surge in infection rates. "We are collecting more samples from the field to investigate whether the two variants have any link with the surge. We cannot be complacent," Dr Sujeet Kumar Singh, director of India's National Centre for Disease Control, said.

In January, a group of genome scientists expressed concern in a paper that India "has so far not been sequencing" to full capacity, having deposited only about 6,400 genomes of the over 10.4 million recorded cases

(0.06%). Now a newly formed consortium of 10 genomic labs has been tasked to step up sequencing and report the results promptly.

Prof Ravindra Kumar Gupta, a Cambridge-based virologist, says "sequencing is highly desirable to understand what is going on" with the coronavirus.

But as India enters, in the words of Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, the "endgame of the pandemic", the hunt for variants has been intensified. "India is in a good position. Cases and deaths are low, hospitals are not overwhelmed, vaccination is picking up speed," says Dr Mishra.

"The only thing that can disrupt this is a dangerous new variant, which could be even be homegrown."



This French nuclear test took place over Mururoa Atoll in 1971. Photo - ichef.bbc.co.uk

French nuclear tests contaminated 110,000 in Pacific, says study

France concealed the true impact of its nuclear tests in the Pacific from the 1960s to the 1990s, a study has said.

Researchers used declassified French military documents, calculations and testimonies to reconstruct the impact of a number of the tests. They estimated that around

110,000 people in French Polynesia were affected by the radioactive fallout. The number represented "almost the entire" population at the time, the researchers found, reports BBC News.

French Polynesia, a French territory made up of hundreds of islands and atolls including Tahiti, was the site of dozens of

nuclear tests over 30 years.

Over the course of two years, researchers analysed around 2000 documents released by the French military and recreated the impact of "the most contaminating" of France's nuclear tests carried out between 1966 and 1974.

The study was carried out in collaboration between French news website Disclose, researchers from Princeton University and British firm Interprt.

The 41st test took place over Mururoa Atoll on 17 July 1974, when the atomic cloud took a different trajectory than planned. Some 42 hours after the test codenamed Centaur, "the inhabitants of Tahiti and the surrounding islands of the Windward group were subjected to significant amounts of ionising radiation", the report says.

The area was home to 110,000 people and Tahiti's main city, Papeete, alone had a population of 80,000.

According to the investigation, the resulting radiation from the French tests was between two and 10 times higher than estimates given by France's Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) in a 2006 report.

One reason, according to the findings, is that the CEA "did not always take into account the drinking of contaminated rainwater" when calculating the dose of radiation individuals were likely to have been exposed to.

The CEA study was used as the basis for determining whether people were eligible for compensation from the French government. The head of France's nuclear victims compensation committee, Alain Chrisnacht, told French media that the fallout over the Tahiti area had already been documented and a large number of requests for compensation had been agreed. The report, however, said only 63 Polynesian civilians had received compensation so far.

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Queen admits concern over racism claims as Buckingham Palace breaks silence on Harry and Meghan interview

The Queen has said accusations of racism in the ranks of the royal family will be "taken very seriously" following the Duke and Duchess of Sussex's bombshell interview with Oprah Winfrey. The rare intervention from the head of state, who has historically kept quiet on matters of controversy, came after claims of "crisis talks" in the palace due to the fallout from the televised interview, in which the couple detailed their reasons for stepping down as working royals, reports The Independent.

However, the statement released by Buckingham Palace on behalf of the monarch said "some recollections may vary" on the issue of racism. "The whole family is saddened to learn the full extent of how challenging the last few years have been for Harry and Meghan," the palace statement read. "The issues raised, particularly that of race, are concerning. While some recollections may vary, they are taken very seriously and will be addressed by the family privately."

Piers Morgan has stepped down as an



Queen admits concern over racism. Photo - s.yimg.com

anchor of ITV's Good Morning Britain after six years, the broadcaster has announced. It comes as Ofcom confirmed it was investigating comments Mr Morgan made about the Duchess of Sussex following her tell-all interview with Ms Winfrey - including that he "didn't believe a word" she said about having suicidal thoughts during her time as

a senior royal.

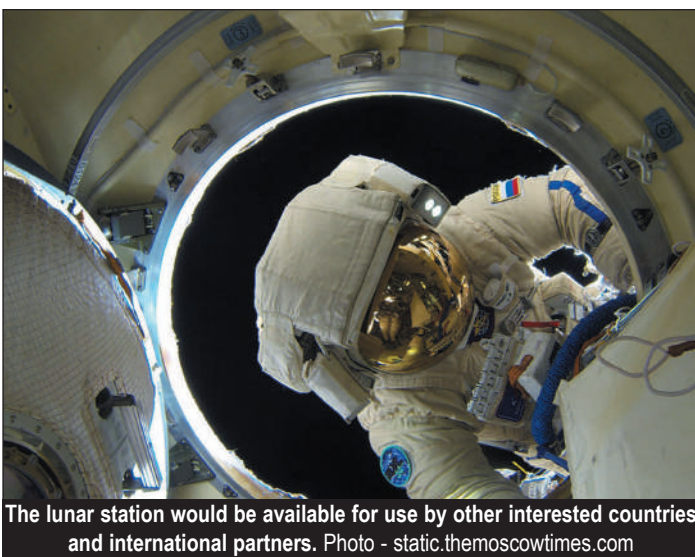
"I'm sorry, I don't believe a word she said... I wouldn't believe it if she read me a weather report," Morgan told viewers of Monday's show, before later referring to Meghan as "Pinocchio Princess" on social media.

The regulator said it received more than 41,000 complaints about Mr Morgan's remarks, making it one of the most reported incidents on TV, only slightly behind the Shilpa Shetty race row on Big Brother in 2007, which attracted 44,500 complaints.

Nurses have described Boris Johnson as "out-of-touch" after he claimed the government was looking after their wellbeing despite cutting their wages in real terms. The Royal College of Nursing accused Mr Johnson of being "blase" after he told reporters the government was on a recruitment drive. But sector leaders warned that there would be no way the government could keep additional nurses in the profession if it kept running down their wages and conditions.

Nursing groups and managers have warned that many nurses could quit if the government sticks with its approach. The government has indicated it is minded to increase the pay of nurses and other healthcare staff by just one per cent - effectively a cut because it is below inflation.

Russia and China Plan to build joint lunar space station



The lunar station would be available for use by other interested countries and international partners. Photo - static.themoscowtimes.com

Russia and China agreed Tuesday to build a lunar space station, as Moscow seeks to modernise its extra-terrestrial might and catch up with the United States in the space race.

Russia, which sent the first man into space during the Soviet Union, has been lagging behind Washington and Beijing in the exploration of the Moon and Mars.

Russia's space agency

Roscosmos said in a statement that a memorandum was signed by its head Dmitry Rogozin and Zhang Kejian of China's National Space Administration (CNSA), reports Agence France-Presse.

It said the lunar station will be designed as a "complex of experimental research facilities created on the surface and/or in the orbit of the Moon".

It would be available for use by other interested countries and international partners, the statement said, without details about the completion date.

Despite its former Soviet glory, Russia's space sector has suffered greatly in recent years from a lack of financing and corruption.

Moscow and Washington are collaborating in the space sector -- one of the few areas of cooperation left between the Cold War rivals.

Russia last year lost its monopoly for manned flights to the International Space Station (ISS) after the first successful mission of the US company Space X.

China has expressed its space ambitions, launching last year its Tianwen-1 probe that is currently orbiting Mars. In December it successfully brought samples of the Moon back to Earth, in a first mission of this type in over 40 years.

Quad meet to announce financing to boost India vaccine output: Report



Some of the additional vaccine capacity created in India would be used in vaccination efforts in Southeast Asian countries. Photo - c.ndtvimg.com

A first ever leaders' meeting of the Quad group of countries on Friday plans to announce financing agreements to support an increase in manufacturing capacity for coronavirus vaccines in India, a senior U.S administration official told Reuters.

The financing agreements will be between the United States, Japan and others and focus particularly on companies and institutions in India manufacturing vaccines for American drug-makers Novavax Inc and Johnson & Johnson, the official, who did not want to be identified by name.

The aim of the initiative by the

Quad, which groups the United States, India, Japan and Australia, would be to reduce manufacturing backlogs, speed vaccination, and defeat some coronavirus mutations, the official said.

"The idea is that the quicker you can vaccinate, the more that you can defeat some of these mutations. So this is a capacity that will come online later this year, and it will substantially increase our capacity, collectively," he said.

Some of the additional vaccine capacity created in India would be used in vaccination efforts in Southeast Asian countries, the official added.

The White House announced earlier on Tuesday that President Joe Biden will participate in an online Quad meeting on Friday, the first leader-level meeting of a group seen as part of efforts to balance China's growing military and economic power.

Compiled by Doojesh Ramlallah

Interview: Milan Meetarbhan

“People do matter. How competent they are or how mafia-like they are will impact on the future...

... but we should gather support around an ambitious common project”



In today's issue, Milan Meetarbhan shares his views on the political situation in the country, and regrets that it is personalities rather than policies and ideas which are dominating the scene. Politics has stifled the Civil Service whose qualified and competent cadre – as many are today – were bureaucrats who were listened to by the political class across the board in the construction of the country after Independence was obtained. He stresses on the need for a constitutional reform guided by an independent set of experts and after listening to all stakeholders. He also points to the need for a change of structure in the Labour Party that should too focus on policies and ideas and not on people.

Mauritius Times: The 1960s and 70s produced the men that were required to participate in the transition of the country and in its socio-economic development from the pre- and post-Independence periods. Do you think the political heirs of those founding fathers of the nation have remained true to or did they along the way lose touch with the ideals that animated that earlier generation of men?

Milan Meetarbhan: I believe that in the 50s and 60s we had in the political class some people with conviction, commitment and competence to steer the nation in the most crucial decades of its political and constitutional history. There were - from some quarters - openly divisive politics, reprehensible slogans, fear-mongering and shameful tactics. But there were also people with vision who could see the long-term inherent danger for the country of certain proposals and stood their ground on what they considered to be in the best interests of the nation at large.

The more I read about that part of our constitutional history, the more amazed I am at how effective the towering figure of 20th century Mauritius, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, was intuitively grasping what could be the ramifications of certain proposals in terms of nation-building. Let me share one illustration of this.

When I worked on the Chagos dossier, I was really surprised at how in 1965 when awareness of international affairs was not necessarily high in small

island states, SSR could come up with what has subsequently been called the 'Lancaster House Undertakings' by an international arbitration tribunal.

Once he realized that the British and the Americans were bent on excising the Chagos and that there was no way leaders of the tiny colony could stop them,

“In mature democracies, politics are not always about people but more about policies. In Mauritius, as we have witnessed over the last few weeks, talks have not yet started on a future hypothetical alliance and no discussions had even started on a modicum of a common programme - but one historical king-breaker insisted that there should be agreement on who would be the candidate for Prime Minister...”

“Today we have a civil service which includes many people with postgraduate qualifications and great academic records but a public sector which has been highly politicised and stifles the promotion of talents and dedication to the nation and often rewards self-serving bureaucrats rather than those serving the nation...”

he gave the British government a hand-written note on his hotel stationery setting out the undertakings which he would like to extract from them.

Not only did these show a real mastery of geopolitical and long-term economic issues, but 50 years later an international tribunal could decide in our favour basing its decision essentially on what SSR had written on this small sheet of paper in his room at The Strand Hotel.

After independence we had some exceptional politicians but also one of the best crops of bureaucrats this country has ever had. Those civil servants who were part of the top cadre of various ministries were outstanding. We also had some civil servants who had no experience of international affairs who were selected on the basis of merit to undergo diplomatic training and subsequently served with distinction in our newly set up overseas missions. This first batch of diplomats was amongst the best people we have ever had in our foreign service and people who have served their country well need to be acknowledged.

In the first few years after independence, Mauritius was being elected as chair of international organisations, got the best deal on the Sugar Protocol, was elected to the Security Council, became the first OAU member-state outside continental Africa to chair the OAU (and SSR the first and only ethnic Indian to have chaired the organization).

Today we have a civil service which includes many people with postgraduate

qualifications and great academic records but a public sector which has been highly politicised and stifles the promotion of talents and dedication to the nation and often rewards self-serving bureaucrats rather than those serving the nation.

Forgive me for not echoing here the sentiments of my fellow countrymen on the bulk of our present-day political class. Even with some of the newer faces, as I have said before, the only thing new with them is just the faces.

*** If it's true that the well-being of the population has generally improved since Independence, inequality has been on the rise over the past several decades, and so also has economic concentration. These must be due to other contributing factors than globalization, the decline of trade unions or the eroding value of wages; politics must have contributed to that situation as well. What do you think?**

Mauritius has no doubt achieved economic progress since Independence. At the UN and elsewhere we are often asked by foreign leaders and diplomats about how we achieved this. Once I was invited to speak at Harvard on this and to put it in a nutshell. I highlighted the following: 1. The overall national consensus on economic policies of successive governments; 2. The broad democratic framework and trusted judicial institutions, and 3. The bold decisions to grant free health services and access to education.

➡ Cont. on page 8

'For rules not to be flouted you must have good governance and integrity but also sound law enforcement agencies.

Do we have any of these?'



☛ Cont. from page 7

If the foundations for our constitutional regime were laid down in the decade preceding Independence, the foundations for our economic development were laid down in the decade after Independence.

The revision of our history by some politicians has prevented younger generations from acknowledging the major contribution of the policies adopted in that crucial decade and the role played by those political leaders and public officials who laid the foundations for the country to prosper.

*** The main driver for political change and development in the country before and since Independence, the Labour Party, has lost two general elections consecutively since 2014, and it has since been facing a leadership issue. It may not be fair to focus on one single individual for the plight it finds itself in today, but how long can the Party stay away from the seat of power without becoming irrelevant in local politics?**

The Labour Party has just celebrated its 85th anniversary. No other party has shaped modern Mauritius as much as LP did. But the party has also thrived in the face of toxic adversarial ethnic politics and of challenges from powerful vested interests. A student of history who reads some of what was published in

papers like *Le Cernéen* in the 50s and 60s will have an inkling of how deleterious the climate was.

Labour did lose the 2014 elections, but the jury is still out on the 2019 elections. The MMM has lost more elections than Labour since its creation but the party has had the same leader for almost 50 years.

It is true that in mature democracies, leaders often pay the price of defeat in free, fair and credible elections. But in mature democracies, politics are not always about people but more about policies. In Mauritius, as we have witnessed over the last few weeks, talks have not yet started on a future hypothetical alliance and no discussions had even started on a modicum of a common programme - but one historical king-breaker insisted that there should be agreement on who would the candidate for Prime Minister and who will hold *"tous les postes constitutionnels"*. There is no agreement on a common programme yet but potential allies are expected to decide on who would implement the programme!

The debate over the Labour Party and any other party for that matter should be about ideas, party structures, empowerment of the membership, accountability, political platforms and not just about people. People do matter. How competent they are or how mafia-like they are will impact on the future. But we should gather support around an ambitious common project and not around personalities, sometimes just mythical figures.

*** The LP leader has gone back to his pet slogan of "rupture" that he would want to implement should the Party be returned to power. But getting back to power eventually would require restoring trust in the Party as a "force for good". Should that be a tall order for the LP?**

The public debate over the last few months has been about *"Changement de Système"*. Labour was therefore in tune with the public mood when its manifesto for the 2019 elections was called *"La Rupture - Changer le Système, Construire l'Avenir."* But the party was not good at selling its programme. It did not even have a formal launch for its manifesto and was content to just put it online.

To answer your question, I would say that Labour has a history, a set of values, a record of achievement but it cannot expect to be back in office simply because people reject the incumbent. Labour has to give itself a 21st century party structure and educate people on what it stands for. This is not a tall order. It's a matter of political

“The judiciary is, in my view, the one institution which has the largest degree of trust of the people. But I do feel that one of the major challenges faced by the judiciary is protracted proceedings, whether it's in commercial matters or governance or disputes afflicting private citizens. One of the global indexes in which Mauritius has done the least well is in relation to what is called 'enforcement of contracts'...”

will.

As I have said before, *il y a des travailleurs et il y a le travailisme, mais il faut un PARTI travailliste revigoré.*

There is strong interest from young and not so young people to assist and participate in consolidating the LP, but the party does not have the structure to accommodate them. This must change.

*** On the other hand, it may also not be fair to pin all the blame on the political class in one broad sweep for the trust deficit being increasingly talked about these days. The electorate shares part of the blame for electing the government it deserves – if only on the basis of Basic Retirement Pension increases, isn't it?**

“The 1968 Constitution was NOT one made by “We the People...” If we are to give ourselves a revised Constitution which remedies loopholes and includes new norms, deals with new technology, protects new rights and provides for greater accountability, this should be done not by the government of the day but as part of an independent exercise involving wide-ranging public consultations...”

Yes, it is true that we are going through a crisis of confidence (in addition to all the other crises). The succession of scandals has rocked confidence in the capacity of institutions to honestly and impartially handle abuse of authority, corruption, misuse of public funds, nepotism, cronyism, etc.

People are also losing faith in mainstream political parties. This opens the way for new forces that may emerge out of nowhere and which will not always necessarily be a force for good though some who emerge out of the present situation to fill in the vacuum may turn out to be those who will shape the future for the better.

Whilst the MMM is fixated on *"qui occupera les postes constitutionnels"*, and even that is an integral part of its historical *communalisme scientifique* strategy, the Labour Party and the post-independence PMSD have a major responsibility in rising up to the challenge of the times.

The Entente Travailliste/MMM/PMSD had the potential to provide a platform for retooling society. As in 1983 and in 1996, the MMM leadership has once again rocked the boat.

Unlike the LP, MMM and PMSD, the MSM has never been what the French call a *"mouvement"* though it calls itself one. It is best described as *un clan pouvoiriste*. It's been largely opportunistic in its conduct fuelled by its intrinsic business flair.

Once we elevate the political debate and focus on ideas more than people, the electorate will make more informed choices.

☛ Cont. on page 9

'Labour has a history, a set of values, a record of achievement but it cannot expect to be back in office simply because people reject the incumbent'

☛ Cont. from page 8

*** It would seem that corruption and fraud have more than ever before a major issue in the country over the past several decades; and there's also a trust deficit in the institutions that are financed by the taxpayer to combat these scourges. Why is it that the rules go on being flouted and the culprits remain unpunished and institutions do not deliver according to their mandate this happening?**

For rules not to be flouted you must have good governance and integrity but also sound law enforcement agencies. Do we have any of these?

ary is, in my view, the one institution which has the largest degree of trust of the people. But I do feel that one of the major challenges faced by the judiciary is protracted proceedings, whether it's in commercial matters or governance or disputes afflicting private citizens. One of the global indexes in which Mauritius has done the least well is in relation to what is called "enforcement of contracts."

We have seen recently how the claims of the Trump camp have been addressed by at least 60 different US courts in a matter of days.

In parliamentary democracies, a ruling party controls both the executive and



have very serious consequences.

*** If there is a case for perfecting our democracy and our constitutional regime, 50 years after Independence, how should we go about it and where do we start?**

I will not speak about substantive changes to our Constitution but only about how to go about considering and adopting the changes that are required.

I first suggested in an article published on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of our independence that reforms to the Constitution should be considered by an independent body, a *Comité de Sages* and that *cet exercice devrait se faire sans aucun a priori*. I still believe that this should be the case.

We saw what a disaster the last attempt to change the electoral system was when a self-serving constitutional amendment bill was introduced by the government of the day. The 1968 Constitution was NOT one made by "We

constitutional emancipation as well as on our electoral system were marked by ethnic considerations. Yet despite all the efforts made to curb communal divisions, politics in Mauritius has been dominated by ethnic and identity interests and influences since Independence. Rama Sithanen would tell us that despite "tweaks at the edges to be presentable, respectable and to appear national but the core will likely continue to be what it has been since Independence: a cleaved society and a polarised country indeed." We have lost that battle, haven't we?

No, I would not say so. Rama Sithanen is an astute observer and analyst, and I do not dispute his remarks. But I do not want to give up hope. I am worried though about the dog whistles and the clever charade of some desperate politicians who have decided to use what one of their advisers claimed privately to be their "last joker", that of the rallying communal cry.

“The debate over the Labour Party... should be about ideas, party structures, empowerment of the membership, accountability, political platforms and not just about people. People do matter. How competent they are or how mafia-like they are will impact on the future. But we should gather support around an ambitious common project and not around personalities, sometimes just mythical figures...”

If the MBC acts in breach of rules of decency and of the law of the land, who should take action? The regulator? Does it have the will, the independence and competence to do so?

The Police? 18 months ago there was a complaint filed with the police about a flagrant breach of the law by the MBC. This breach had even been flagged by the Electoral Commission. What have the Police and the regulator done about this? Nothing that we know of.

This is an indication of the state of our law enforcement agencies and regulators today.

*** The judiciary is often referred to as the last bulwark of democracy and the guardian of the rule of law, especially in the face of an overbearing government. One would have expected that the electoral petitions lodged since early last year would have been fast-tracked. Are the checks and balances in our system not operating as they should in this matter as well as with respect to governance issues?**

I have always expressed my respect and trust in the judiciary as the guardian of the rule of law as you state. The judi-

legislative branches of government and if its legality is questioned, acts done or laws passed will be seriously impaired if it is subsequently found that the ruling party did not have a lawful mandate. The clock cannot be turned back.

The party may use all the procedural tricks in the book to delay proceedings to ensure that the final outcome is postponed until after the next elections. We cannot expect a sitting government to change the law to prevent this from happening.

What can judges do within existing law to ensure that there is prompt settlement of disputes relating to governance whether it's in relation to constitutional matters or electoral matters or judicial review of administrative action? This in my view is one of the urgent questions that have to be addressed.

At a time when our country will also face serious challenges on the economic front, prompt settlement of disputes will be one of the factors that will inspire investor confidence. For the ordinary citizen facing an "ordinary" legal dispute, this may be seen as just one of the ordinary run of the mill cases but for the person concerned and his family, delays may

“I am worried about the dog whistles and the clever charade of some desperate politicians who have decided to use what one of their advisers claimed privately to be their "last joker", that of the rallying communal cry. This is dangerous the more so that it is done in what is often a superficially respectable manner. A subtle campaign clearly read and understood by the faithful is led by some to save their own skin...”

the People..." If we are to give ourselves a revised Constitution which remedies loopholes and includes new norms, deals with new technology, protects new rights and provides for greater accountability, this should be done not by the government of the day but as part of an independent exercise involving wide-ranging public consultations.

*** We know that public debates on**

This is dangerous the more so that it is done in what is often a superficially respectable manner. A subtle campaign clearly read and understood by the faithful is led by some to save their own skin but is alluring enough to mobilise the base. The campaigners could not care about what their campaign does to the country.



Dr Rajagopal Soondron

The "*diable*", the devil virus, has called out for the *jab* - the vaccination.

We can suppose that what we commonly call as '*diable*' can be translated to 'devil'. To many of us that virus, the 7th of the corona family, is the devil incarnate that has disrupted the lives of millions across the world.

Is it really the devil? Some of us may have doubts. Already many serious researchers are saying that we humans are 7% of viral origin! Others put the figure at 50%! So Covid virus may be our faraway relative -- who knows.

And the Jab

The *jab*, otherwise the *blow*, is the cynical Anglo-Saxon's name for the vaccination; in other parts of the world the head of state takes it first to motivate their people. That *jab* might remind us of Mauritian parents who, to frighten their children into submission in the doctors' surgery, would brainwash those poor kids into the '*pikire*' anti-culture. However, the Anglo-Saxons had succeeded to raise many an adult and foreign medical student's eyebrows and distaste by their queer habit of referring to food when describing some diseases: *the rice water stools of cholera, the anchovy sauce stool in amoebiasis infestations, pea soup stools of typhoid fever, spruce juice sputum of bronchiectasis!* And the *jab* is in line with that bizarre English medical culture.

In this 21st century we expected that educated people would start to be wiser - but academia and many health professionals are found split into two lobbies. Some of them are of the view that the vaccine produced in record time has not undergone rigid testing to claim to be that safe, being still on experimental basis. Other experts are perhaps espousing the view of the politicians: something has to be done to set the economy back on foot, lest the rigours of a strained financial situation would soon be felt by one and all, pushing most of us into an uncertain future.

Great medical authorities have exposed themselves to ridicule by crying out against the recent *jab*. Their logic: it took us 10 years of trial and error and retrospective studies to produce a safe vaccine, and here we have a dozen anti-Covid vaccines being dumped in our lap within some months. Meanwhile

Of 'Jab' and 'Diable'



Getting the jab. Photo - Gettyimages

Europeans are queuing up to have their vaccination as fast as possible, while in other parts of the world - in India and Mauritius - many are hesitating to take the *jab*. Only time will tell about its safety. But still the majority of the medical profession is for the *jab*.

On the other hand, a member of the European Union took her Chairman to task for encouraging Big Pharma to make billions out of the vaccines without proper rigid counter control: the corporates will not be liable to prosecution if their products should turn out to be sour. They are thus being seen as the '*diable*' in person, even going to the extent of blackmailing some governments to accept their terms so as to overfeather their own nest.

An Indian radio reported how a very famous pharmaceutical company had even blackmailed Argentina to mortgage one of its military bases - if she wants the *jabs*! While the rich countries' elites who so often want us to believe in their compassion for the poor of the world are - under the counter - hoarding the vaccines. Canada has already a stock of five times what it needs, conveniently forgetting its promise to the down-trodden. It is "*boeuf dan di sable*".

Covid-19 may finally do us good by reminding us of the dormant '*diable*'

simmering within us, with the hope that we would yet again learn from our weaknesses and codify new rules for international behaviour. The '*diable*' is far from dead; will the fallen angel rise from the ashes?

And the 'diable'

We Mauritians know our '*diable*' very well for we even have a 'Camp Diable'. It always kept us wondering why it was so named. As to the '*diable*' itself, different religions have given their own version of the presence of the devil in our life, as if God Himself has not succeeded to get rid of him when he created the universe. The devil is the fallen Angel, the temptation, the personification of the evil itself, all leading us to infer that Man - full of doubts, always at the crossroads of his conflict between his faculty of reason and his deep-seated emotions -- had little chance against the Devil while evolving his concept of God.

Oh yes, the '*diable*' has haunted all of us since the beginning of time. It represents our negative qualities - just as we have enthroned our positive qualities in an abstract and symbolic all-loving God. Does the '*diable*' linger in the fear module of our mind, maybe epitomizing the fear our ancestors felt in their dark jungle as

they tried to learn to survive? Could that fear have been transmitted from generation to generation through some epigenetic process, thereby generating a complex mental entity - always being fuelled progressively by external prevailing uncertainties of a cruel life and an internally conflicting psychology? And action being equal and opposite, all this led to the antithesis of that inner devil, forcing man to conceive a more noble entity - God? So as to maintain his psychological equilibrium, thereby ascertaining his sanity down the ages? Who knows. Maybe that's how we invented God.

Meanwhile the *jab*, a product of our intelligence, has come our way. To vaccinate or not to vaccinate? That's the question. If we don't, then many of us, specially the elders may not make it far. Will new variants come up and make things worse? And if we get vaccinated, how do we know how safe it is? Most of us are afraid of being at the receiving end, of being that minimal percentage of unfortunates who won't make it.

For the first time in our medical history we are facing a difficult choice: where doctors are divided, where they have doubts as to what constitute real scientific procedures, many are ready to cut corners because they believe things might get out of hand. And we must not forget that some men, believed to be honourable, are ready to sell their soul and falsify scientific results for monetary reward promised to them by Big Pharma. The '*diable*' in some of us is still there.

Meanwhile many of us realize that we have evolved a very complex consumer society - a chain reaction that could easily bring misery to millions of us should it get derailed.

Could we prevent that by taking the *jab*?

We'll have to put up with delayed reactions, learn our lesson, and save millions from more hunger.

It's our choice: to surrender ourselves to the '*diable*' or to the *jab*?

Let's go for the *jab*.

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The royal family can't keep ignoring its colonialist past and racist present

Concerns raised by the Sussexes about racism within the royal family point to a larger issue. The Windsors are entangled in a history of colonialism and racism



Benjamin T. Jones
Lecturer in History,
CQUniversity Australia

The most explosive element of the Sussexes' highly anticipated interview with Oprah Winfrey was the claim that someone within the royal household had "concerns" over how dark-skinned the couple's son Archie might be.

While Winfrey later clarified neither the Queen nor the Duke of Edinburgh were behind the remark, Meghan also suggested their son was denied the title of prince because of his mixed race.

The interview points to a larger issue of racism in the British monarchy, both contemporary and historical.

When the couple began dating, some hoped it would usher in a period of royal renewal. Meghan, who has an African-American mother and a white father, was presented as a symbol of the modern, inclusive monarchy. These hopes were gradually dashed with consistently negative media coverage, including unfavourable comparisons with Meghan's sister-in-law, Kate Middleton, the Duchess of Cambridge.

Meghan revealed to Winfrey that the pressure to perform official duties in the face of mounting criticism led to depression and suicidal thoughts. The couple lamented the lack of support they received from the royal family.

It is a tragic story at an individual level but it also points to a history of structural racism within the monarchy. Harry noted that the press attacks on his wife had "colonial undertones", which the royal family refused to address. These are part of a longer history of colonialism and racism in which the Windsors are entangled.

The slave trade

The Queen's distant ancestor, Elizabeth I, was integral to establishing the British slave trade. One of the founders of the trade in the 16th century, Sir John

Hawkins, impressed Elizabeth by capturing 300 Africans. His biographer Harry Kelsey calls him "Queen Elizabeth's Slave Trader" and notes that she contributed her ship, Jesus of Lubeck to his next voyage in 1564.

In 2018, Prince Charles denounced Britain's role in the slave trade as an "atrocious" but there have been calls for the Queen also to apologise on behalf of the monarchy.

Republican campaigner Graham Smith has led the charge noting that the current royals "are sitting on a hugely significant amount which was acquired from slavery and empire".

A colonial mindset

The British empire contracted after the World Wars and eventually dissolved in 1960s. Nevertheless, a colonial mindset has persisted. This has been regularly demonstrated by the casual racism of Prince Philip. Visiting Australia in 2002, he asked an Aboriginal Australian if they were "still throwing spears".



Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip watch as Warren Clements of the Tjapakai Aboriginal Dance Group makes fire by rubbing sticks in Cairns in March 2002. Brian Cassey/AP

In 1999, he mused that an old-fashioned fuse box must have been "put in by an Indian". In 1986, he warned British students in China that they would become "slitty-eyed" if they stayed too long. Australia, China, and India, are just three of dozens of countries touched by British colonisation.

While the Prince's comments - and many others - are often dismissed as "gaffes" or poor jokes, they tie into a culture war, suggesting colonialism was ultimately a net good and Britain was



The Duke and Duchess of Sussex pose with their newborn son in May 2019. Domic Lipinski/PA

spreading civilisation throughout the world.

Journalist Peter Tatchell has argued that the institution of monarchy is itself inherently racist as there have only been, and likely will only ever be, white monarchs. He notes,

A non-white person is [...] excluded from holding the title of head of state, at least for the foreseeable future. This is institutional racism.

While this could change, of course, the treatment of Meghan and the alleged concerns over her son's skin colour suggest the privileging of whiteness is deeply ingrained.

Being seventh in line to the throne, there was never a realistic chance Archie would become king. The notion that his mere proximity to the throne has sparked concerns, and the failure to defend Meghan from racist attacks, again points to a structural issue.

The marriage of Harry and Meghan in 2018 by charismatic African-American Bishop Michael Curry, serenaded by a gospel choir, was a public relations coup for the royals. The Sussexes' exit from royal life after such a short period, and the reasons why, is highly damaging.

Royal silence

The monarchy has remained largely

silent on the history of racism in Britain and how the royal family has benefited from racism and colonialism.

After the death of George Floyd sparked the Black Lives Matter movement, thousands across Britain were quick to show their support and solidarity. So strongly did the movement resonate, in 2020 the English Premier League had the words Black Lives Matter printed on players' shirts, opening matches with players taking a symbolic knee.

The royal family said nothing. By protocol, the monarchy does not comment on political issues but its role is to offer moral leadership. Without explicitly endorsing Black Lives Matter, the Windsors could have contributed to the zeitgeist by offering statements condemning all forms of racism and visibly championing anti-racism charities.

As a society, Britain is having a difficult national conversation about its imperial past. Statues of slave owners are being torn down and attempts to decolonise the curriculum are gathering pace.

If the royal family is not able to make similar attempts to confront the racism in its past and present, it risks falling ever further out of touch with the people it is supposed to represent.

Can vaccinated people still spread the coronavirus?

Cont. from page 2

This seems to be the case with coronavirus vaccines. In a recent preprint study which has yet to be peer reviewed, Israeli researchers tested 2,897 vaccinated people for signs of coronavirus infection. Most had no detectable virus, but people who were infected had one-quarter the amount of virus in their bodies as unvaccinated people tested at similar times post-infection.

Less coronavirus virus means less chance of spreading it, and if the amount of virus in your body is low enough, the probability of transmitting it may reach almost zero. However, researchers don't yet know where that cutoff is for the coronavirus, and since the vaccines don't provide 100% protection from infection, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people continue to wear masks and social distance even after they've been vaccinated.

3. What about the new coronavirus variants?

New variants of coronavirus have emerged in recent months, and recent studies show that vaccines are less effective



New, more infectious and transmissible variants of the coronavirus might limit the effectiveness of current vaccines. AP Photo/John Raoux

tive against certain ones, like the B1351 variant first identified in South Africa.

Every time SARS-CoV-2 replicates, it gets new mutations. In recent months, researchers have found new variants that are more infective – meaning a person needs to breathe in less virus to become infected – and other variants that are more transmissible – meaning they

increase the amount of virus a person sheds. And researchers have also found at least one new variant that seems to be better at evading the immune system, according to early data.

So how does this relate to vaccines and transmission?

For the South Africa variant, vaccines

still provide greater than 85% protection from getting severely ill with COVID-19. But when you count mild and moderate cases, they provide, at best, only about 50%-60% protection. That means at least 40% of vaccinated people will still have a strong enough infection – and enough virus in their body – to cause at least moderate disease.

If vaccinated people have more virus in their bodies and it takes less of that virus to infect another person, there will be higher probability a vaccinated person could transmit these new strains of the coronavirus.

If all goes well, vaccines will very soon reduce the rate of severe disease and death worldwide. To be sure, any vaccine that reduces disease severity is also, at the population level, reducing the amount of virus being shed overall. But because of the emergence of new variants, vaccinated people still have the potential to shed and spread the coronavirus to other people, vaccinated or otherwise. This means it will likely take much longer for vaccines to reduce transmission and for populations to reach herd immunity than if these new variants had never emerged. Exactly how long that will take is a balance between how effective vaccines are against emerging strains and how transmissible and infectious these new strains are.

Deborah Fuller,
Professor of Microbiology, School of
Medicine, University of Washington

Quotable Quotes

"A question that sometimes drives me hazy — am I or are the others crazy?" -- Albert Einstein

"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving." -- Albert Einstein

"All that is valuable in human society depends upon the opportunity for development accorded the individual." -- Albert Einstein

"Let us not forget that human knowledge and

skills alone cannot lead humanity to a happy and dignified life" -- Albert Einstein

Once you are an immigrant, you never forget that you are one. -- Jorge Ramos

"When widely followed public figures feel free to say anything, without any fact-checking, it becomes impossible for a democracy to think intelligently about big issues."

-- Thomas L. Friedman

NOTICE FOR PERMISSION FOR LAND USE

Take notice that I **Mrs Janee Amavasee** will apply to the **Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes** for a Building and Land Use Permit for a proposed **The Golden Basket General Retailer at Draper Avenue, Quatre Bornes.**

Any person feeling aggrieved by the proposal may lodge in writing to the above named Council within 15 days from the date of this publication.

Date: 10 March 2021

IRRIGATION AUTHORITY EMPLOYEES UNION PLAINE DES PAPAYES

Members are kindly invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Irrigation Authority Employees Union to be held on Thursday 01st April 2021 at 9.00 am at the Irrigation Authority Office Compound at Plaines des Papayes.

AGENDA

1. Reading and approval of minutes of proceedings of the last AGM
2. Matters Arising
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Amendments to Rules (if any)
5. Motions (if any)
6. Any other Business.

Members who wish bring any motion should write to the secretary of the Union at the latest by Friday 26/03/2021.

S. Bhagooli
Secretary





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Drink my poison

There was this guy at a bar, just looking at his drink. He stays like that for a half hour. Then a big trouble making truck driver steps next to him, takes the drink from the guy and just drinks it all down. The poor man starts crying.

The truck driver says, "Come on man, I was just joking. Here, I'll buy you another drink. I just can't stand to see a man cry."

"No, it's not that," the man replies, wiping his tears, "This day is the worst of my life. First, I oversleep & I go in late to my office. My outraged boss fires me. When I leave the building to go to my car, I find out it was stolen. The police say they can do nothing. I get a cab to go home, and when I get out, I remember I left my wallet. The cab driver just drives away. I go inside my house where I find my wife in bed with the gardener. I leave my home, come to this bar, and just when I was thinking about putting an end to my life, you show up and drink my poison."

A: I have the perfect son.
B: Does he smoke?
A: No, he doesn't.
B: Does he drink whiskey?
A: No, he doesn't.

B: Does he ever come home late?
A: No, he doesn't.
B: I guess you really do have the perfect son. How old is he?
A: He will be six months old next Wednesday.

Mother superior tells two new nuns that they have to paint their room without getting any paint on their clothes.

One nun suggests to the other, "Hey, let's take all our clothes off, fold them up, and lock the door."

So they do this, and begin painting their room. Soon they hear a knock at the door. They ask, "Who is it?"

"Blind man!" The nuns look at each other and one nun says, "He's blind, so he can't see. What could it hurt?" They let him in.

The blind man walks in and says, "Hey, nice tits. Where do you want me to hang the blinds?"

Why is it that your nose runs, but your feet smell?

A wealthy man was having an affair with an Italian woman for a few years.

One night, during one of their rendezvous, she confided in him that she was pregnant. Not wanting to ruin his reputation or his marriage, he paid her a large sum of money if she would go to Italy to have the child. If she stayed in Italy, he would also provide child support until the child turned 18.

She agreed, but wondered how he would know when the baby was born. To keep it discrete, he told her to mail him a postcard, and write "Spaghetti" on the back. He would then arrange for child support.



One day, about 9 months later, he came home to his confused wife. "Honey," she said, "you received a very strange postcard today."

"Oh, just give it to me and I'll explain it later," he said.

The wife handed the card over and watched as her husband read the card, turned white, and fainted.

On the card was written "Spaghetti, Spaghetti, Spaghetti. Two with meatballs, one without."

Q: If you have 13 apples in one hand and 10 oranges in the other, what do you have?
A: Big hands.

An old man is met by his attorney, and is told he is going to be audited. He rides to the IRS office with his attorney, and when he gets there, he begins to talk with the IRS agent. "I bet \$2,000 I can bite my own eye!"

The IRS agent agrees to the bet, believing it an impossible task. The old man laughs, pulls out his glass eye, and bites it. The IRS agent is dumbfounded. The old man bets \$3,000 he can bite his other eye. The IRS agent knows there's no way possible to do this, so he once more agrees.

The old man cackles, pulls out his dentures, and bites his eye. Then the old man finally wagers, "I bet \$20,000 I can stand on the far side of your desk, pee over the desk, and get it into your wastebasket, without missing a single drop."

The agent knows he won't be able to, so once more he agrees. The old man indeed misses, peeing all over the desk, and on the paperwork. The IRS agent jumps for joy, but then notices the attorney over in the corner moaning.

"Are you all right?" asks the agent.

"No! On the way over here, he bet me \$400,000 he could pee on your desk and you'd be happy about it!"

Life's LESSONS

A Beautiful Poem by Lee Tzu Pheng

(Singapore Cultural Medallion winner)

Sip your tea
Nice and slow,

No one ever knows
When it's time to go,
There'll be no time
To enjoy the glow,
So sip your tea
Nice and slow...

Life is too short but
Feels pretty long,
There's too much to do, so much going
wrong,
And most of the time you struggle to be
strong,

Before it's too late
And it's time to go,
Sip your tea
Nice and slow...

Some friends stay,
Others go away,
Loved ones are cherished, but not all
will stay,
Kids will grow up
And fly away,
There's really no saying how things will
go,
So sip your tea
Nice and slow...

In the end it's really
All about understanding love,
For this world
And in the stars above,
Appreciate and value who truly cares,
Smile and breathe
And let your worries go,
So, just sip your tea
Nice and slow...

*This poem is beyond all relationships but
made for us all.*

When I'm dead.
Your tears will flow
But I won't know
Cry with me now instead!

You will send flowers...
But I won't see
Send them now instead

You'll say words of praise...
But I won't hear
Praise me now instead!

You'll forget my faults...
But I won't know...
Forget them now, instead!

You'll miss me then...
But I won't feel
Miss me now, instead!

You'll wish...
You could have spent more time with me

Spend it now instead!

When you hear I'm gone,
you'll find your way to my house to pay
condolence
but we haven't even spoken in years...
Please look for me now!

Spend time with every person around
you, and help them with whatever you
have to make them happy! Your families,
friends, acquaintance...

Make them feel special. Because you
never know when time will take them
away from you forever.

1. Alone I can 'Say' but together we can
'Talk'.
2. Alone I can 'Enjoy' but together we
can 'Celebrate'.
3. Alone I can 'Smile' but together we
can 'Laugh'.

That's the beauty of human relationships.
We are nothing without each other.
Stay Connected.

Things about financial management every newlywed couple should know

Marriage isn't just a promise between two people for life, but also a change of responsibilities, habits, preferences, and most importantly, finances. Your regular money habits will see a vast change once you marry, because options of buying houses, future-planning policies, investments come into the game.

It deeply impacts your lifestyle changes that are connected to financial habits as well. An organised financial plan is a good way to start your future with your spouse. So, TOI brings to you some things about financial management that every newlywed couple should know.

Understand each other's money motivations

Openly communicate with your spouse about their money habits. Narrate your family's money structure in an organised manner. Being transparent about spending matters is the key to keeping an open mind in any situation that might escalate into fights and arguments over money matters. If your partner has a history of overspending, then discuss the matter in a mature way.

Plan financial goals

Laying out a constructive financial plan makes it easy for partners to communicate their thoughts and opinions on how to spend and save money on necessities. Discuss your future planning aspects and the budget framework required for it, like a bigger home when



you both decide to extend our family or an account entirely dedicated to emergency savings.

Maintain assets

Both the partners will probably have assets and liabilities from their own families that will now be maintained in their marriage. These may include cars, estate investments, loans or even debts. Being honest and open about assets will help you both to act on them accordingly, with a well organised financial plan. This will further support your financial goals and priorities.

Combine finances

Some couples willingly join their finances while others like to maintain a separate account just for themselves, after joining other accounts together.

Combining bank accounts and tax statements will help you both to register a balanced account where you both are contributing to it equally and are also splitting all expenses. This does not allow any impartiality or fraud in any case since both partners are equally working towards a common financial goal.

Setting budgets and insurance

Following a monthly budget framework will help you to curb unnecessary expenses and follow an organised framework. Tracking the expenses and savings is an excellent way to establish a common ground for financial goals. You and your partner should also set up health, estate and other investments for the future/retirement plan.

Laughter is the best medicine

Covid Maths

One girl from Bangalore South had been tested positive for Covid-19.

So the family of the girl and her boyfriend are now quarantined.

Later it was found that the girl has 3 boyfriends. So 37 members of those 5 families are sent for quarantine!

Thereafter it came to be known that 2 of her boyfriends have 2 more girlfriends! Among those girlfriends, one has 2 more boyfriends! Among them, one is married!

Join maths classes - to learn newly introduced syllabus in Mathematics, called Covid Maths....

Appartement à louer - long terme



Appartement meublé de 3 c.a.c, climatisé, cuisine équipée, piscine et parking, sécurité (24/24) à Trou aux Biches - Complexe Fleury sur Mer
Tel: 57809413 - 57530881

To Rent

Fully furnished and air conditioned 3-bedroom apartment at Fleury sur Mer Complex, Trou aux Biches for long-term.
Parking and 24 hour security, swimming pool
Tel: 57809413 - 57530881

Diet & Weight Management

You can lose weight, one small habit at a time

Weight loss can feel like a roller coaster: Up, down, up, down. Find your way to steadier ground by committing to a few small, simple habits.

You'll keep moving toward your goal, while your small habits build into larger ones that can permanently change your behavior.

Winning Ways

One reason that small habit changes can work is because you build success quickly. Each time you follow through on a small habit, you build your confidence. You feel more in control.

Plus, when you've set up a specific small habit, you can reduce anxiety about whether you're doing "it right" or doing "enough." If your small habit is to eat a vegetable every day at lunch, every time you do it, you can log it as a success.

Keep it simple

The most important thing to remember when you choose a small habit is to make it something you can do. Set yourself up for success.

Over time, you can ramp up that small habit to the next level for even better results. For instance, after eating a

vegetable every day at lunch becomes a no-brainer, you can move to the next level of your goal. That could be to eat two vegetables at dinner every day.

That's the beauty of making small habits -- one habit becomes routine, and then you add another small habit. You keep moving steadily in easy steps that move you toward big change.

Link the habit to something that motivates you. Changing old behaviors takes work, so you need a good reason to make a new habit worth your effort.

Improving your health is a great reason. If that inspires you, terrific! But if it doesn't, try picking something more concrete and immediately noticeable.

If you want to drink water instead of soda, one way you could motivate yourself is to save the money you'd spend on soda to splurge on something you don't usually get for yourself. New music? A special magazine?

Your motivation can also be more about how you feel or think. Maybe you feel healthier and more natural when you drink water.



Bollywood Roundup



'Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety' turns 3: Nushratt Bharucha recalls her 'first film to enter 100-cr club'

The romantic comedy *Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety* was released three years ago on this day. Actress Nushratt Bharucha recalls the film changed a lot of things for her professionally and helped her grow.

"This film got a tremendous response from the audience, which is super fresh in my mind till now. It was my first film to enter the one-billion rupees club and I am just too grateful to have been part of it all. It was like a turning point of my career where I feel, I got the recognition that I had worked so hard for," she says.

The film was helmed by Luv Ranjan and also starred Kartik Aaryan and Sunny Singh Nijjar.

"I was very comfortable with Luv sir's style of shooting and working with Kartik and Sunny. We were all just enjoying every bit of the shoot. I really miss that experience and am glad that I had it," Nushrat adds.

The actress will be seen next in the horror film *Chorrii*. She also has *Hurdang* and *Janhit Mein Jaari* in the pipeline.

Manushi Chillar: I'm getting a Diwali debut similar to Deepika Padukone

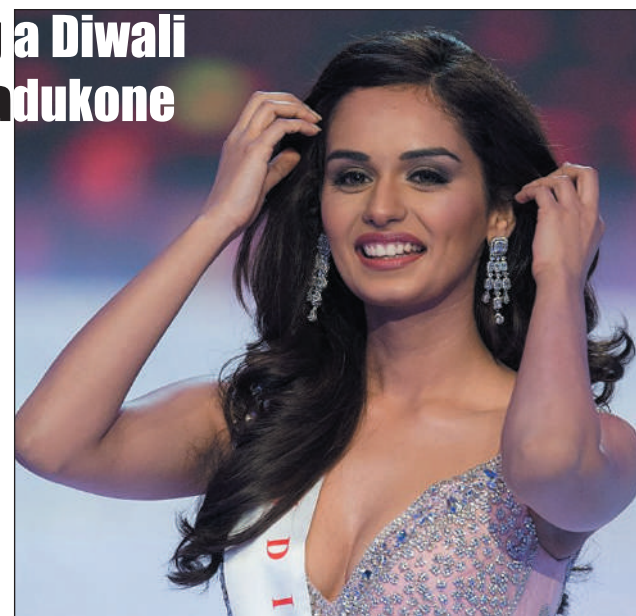
Miss India 2017 Manushi Chillar is all set for a Bollywood debut in the ambitious historical drama *Prithviraj*. She stars opposite superstar Akshay Kumar who essays the title role of Prithviraj Chauhan. She feels lucky that her film is scheduled for release on Diwali, one of the most important weekends of the year, reports IANS.

"Growing up, I remember going to the theatre to watch a movie during Diwali. It was evident to us that one of the biggest films of the year would be released on Diwali and (watching films) was a community viewing exercise. Today, as my film has been slated for a Diwali release, I can only be grateful that I'm getting this launch by YRF," said Manushi.

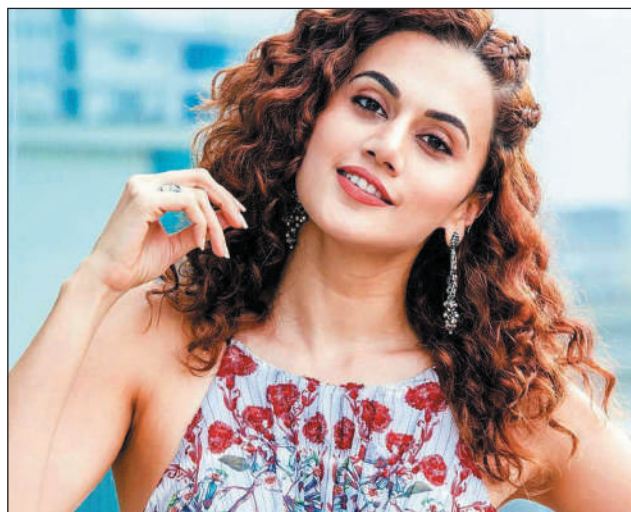
The 23-year-old actress says she has given it her all for the film, and is eager to see the audiences reaction.

"I have given this debut my all and have worked consistently on myself for over a year, to deliver this important and beautiful part. So, I'm quite eager for my film to do well and hopefully for people to love it," she said.

One is prompted to think of Deepika Padukone, who



had a Diwali debut in 2007 opposite Shah Rukh Khan in *Om Shanti Om*. "When you say that I'm getting a Diwali debut similar to the debut Deepika Padukone, I can only consider myself fortunate. Deepika is someone many girls look up to and is an inspiration to many," she replied.



Taapsee Pannu on Monday began shooting for her forthcoming film *Dobaaraa*. The new age thriller film is being helmed by Anurag Kashyap, who has previously directed the actress in the 2018 film *Manmarziyaan*.

Taapsee Pannu starts shooting for Anurag Kashyap's 'Dobaaraa'

"My #DobaaraaSeries. Coz some collaborations deserve to be repeated. Ready to create more memories because we were running out of *Manmarziyaan* stories to tell...@anuragkashyap10 let's do this #Dobaaraa," Taapsee tweeted.

Talking about the film, Taapsee had recently shared: "This is going to be one of its kind thriller. This is going to be unique more so because it's got someone like Anurag directing it and Ekta backing it. It's my second collaboration with Anurag after *Manmarziyaan* and *Sunir* (of ATHENA) after *Badla* so I know there are expectations riding on this."

The film is being produced by Shobha Kapoor, Ekta Kapoor, Sunir Kheterpal and Gaurav Bose.

Kriti Sanon wraps up schedule for 'Bachchan Pandey'



Kriti Sanon has wrapped up shooting her portions for the upcoming action comedy *Bachchan Pandey*, starring Akshay Kumar.

Kriti posted a picture on Instagram posing with Akshay in their characters for the film. "And it's a schedule wrap for me with @akshaykumar for#SajidNadiadwala's#BachchanPandey directed by@farhadsamji.. #Myra @wardakhannadiadwala. One of the bestest, most fun and memorable schedules I have had so far," Kriti wrote as caption.

"Time just flew and we ended up making a film in between the echoing laughs, gaming sessions and never-ending lunches and dinners as we all became one family! It was surely the saddest Goodbye from the beautiful Suryagarh Palace... but we shall meet again soon! Can't wait to see you guys in Cinemas! @nadiadwalagrandson," she added.

In the Farhad Samji directorial, Akshay plays a gangster who aspires to be an actor, while Kriti plays a journalist who wishes to be a director. The film also features Arshad Warsi as the hero's friend.

Jacqueline Fernandez aces aerial acrobatics



Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez took everyone by surprise as she shared a picture of performing a jaw-dropping stunt with the help of aerial silk.

Jacqueline posted a picture on Instagram, where she is seen wearing an ivory coloured leotard. She is seen hanging in air with the help of a fabric which gives her support from the waist.

"Upside down Hi!" she wrote as the caption.

The actress made her Bollywood debut with *Aladin* in 2009. She later went on to do films such as *Housefull* (2010), *Murder 2* (2011), *Dishoom*, *Judwaa 2* (2017), *Brothers* (2015), *Kick* (2014) and *Race 3* (2018).

She currently has multiple films lined up.

Jacqueline will be seen in the Akshay Kumar starrer *Bachchan Pandey*, *Kick 2*, *Bhoot Police* and *Cirkus* in the coming months.

TV couples who fell in love on the sets of Ekta Kapoor's shows



tied the knot. However, after 16 years of marriage, the two called it quits.

Ankita Lokhande and Sushant Singh Rajput

Ankita and Sushant met and fell in love on the sets of their television show, *Pavitra Rishta*. Their jodi became popular with the viewers in no time. The two were a part of *Jhalak Dikha Jaa* where Sushant also proposed to Ankita for marriage and she replied with a 'yes'. They were in a relationship for several years before calling it quits.

Asha Negi and Rithvik Dhanjani



Another couple who fell in love on the sets of *Pavitra Rishta* were Asha Negi and Rithvik Dhanjani. They hit it off from the first day itself and were in a relationship for almost seven years before they parted ways.

Gautami Gadgil and Ram Kapoor

Gautami and Ram Kapoor met on the sets of the TV show, *Ghar Ek Mandir*. They fell in love, and after dating for a while they tied the knot on Valentine's day in 2003. The couple has completed almost two decades of marriage and has two kids - daughter Sia and son Aks.

Gauri Yadav and Yash Tonk

Gauri and Yash met on the sets of their thriller show *Kahiin Kisi Roz*. While they were not the main leads, they played brother and sister-in-law on the show. They fell in love with each other and got married. The couple has two daughters, Pari and Myrah.

Kritika Kamra and Karan Kundra

Kritika and Karan may no longer be together but the couple's jodi became quite popular after they starred in Ekta Kapoor's show, *Kitani Mohabbat Hai*. Their relationship, however, didn't last long. While Kritika remained single, Karan moved on and started dating Anusha Dandekar.



There are several television actors who have found love on the sets of their shows. And there are many out of these who were cast by producer, Ekta Kapoor. While some of them continue to be together, there are others who have ended their relationship and moved on. Here's taking a look at TV couples who fell in love on the sets of Ekta Kapoor's shows, as reported by Times of India.

Divyanka Tripathi and Vivek Dahiya

The two met on the sets of Ekta Kapoor's show, *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein*. It was their fans who first pointed out that they look good together and the rest is history. The couple dated briefly, met each other's families and tied the knot in 2016 in Divyanka's hometown, Bhopal.

Gauri Pradhan and Hiten Tejwani



The couple, who had worked together earlier for a commercial, were cast as the lead pair in Ekta Kapoor's show, *Kutumb*. That's when they fell in love with each other. Not just *Kutumb*, they also played lovers in the hit daily soap, *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi*. After dating for two years, the couple tied the knot in 2004 in a private ceremony. The two are parents to twins - son Nevaan and daughter Katya.

Shweta Kawatra and Manav Gohil

Shweta and Manav met on the sets of *Kahani Ghar Ghar Kii*. They started as friends. But when Manav began to develop feelings for Shweta, she started to ignore him. It's only later that she realised that she loves him, too. And that's when they began dating. Just like Gauri and Hiten, they got married in 2004 and are parents to a baby girl.

Rinku Dhawan and Kiran Karmarkar

The on-screen brother-sister duo met on the sets of their show *Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki*. They played the roles of Chaya and Om respectively in *Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki*. Soon, they fell in love and

YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

Your intuition will play an important role and will allow you to evolve in the professional sector in a very constructive way. Love will be for you much more spiritual than carnal: you'll sublimate it.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 9, 11, 30, 36, 40

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

Risk of sentimental instability: your relationships will prove complicated or stormy. Take into account the necessity of re-establishing order in your finances and ensuring your material future. Be very careful in your gestures, because there'll be an imminent risk of accident.

Lucky Numbers: 11, 12, 18, 20, 31, 36

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

Be ready to take advantage of the unforeseen but beneficial events that could take place in your professional environment. You'll be entitled to great sentimental joys.

Lucky Numbers: 11, 17, 20, 23, 24, 30

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

You'll have the chance of making some encounters that probably could fulfill your heart's desires. You'll compel yourself to develop and follow a precise financial strategy, and you'll quickly obtain good results.

Lucky Numbers: 15, 18, 20, 33, 36, 39

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

A good intuition will help you to solve some troubles that have been worrying you for a long time. Excellent results in your job thanks to your persevering energy. Enjoying certain ease, it'll be now possible for you to consider financial investments.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 9, 12, 17, 21, 30

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

You'll have to make important decisions concerning your professional and social ambitions. Give up the project that has not given you the anticipated satisfaction. React against the tendency to shirk responsibilities concerning sentimental matters.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 11, 19, 20, 30, 32

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

In the family, your children will give you great joys. You'll need a lot of tact and diplomacy if you work in a team or if you have a staff under your orders. Extraordinary complicity with your loved one.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 17, 20, 24, 30, 36

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

Heartwise there'll be many joyful events: meetings, love at first sight, favourable evolution of the sentiments or intentions of the loved one! Your relations with your family will be very tense, but there'll be a possibility of quick reconciliation.

Lucky Numbers: 15, 16, 23, 30, 34, 35

Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

You'll tend to spread yourself too thin this time, thus losing your efficiency. You'll also be very receptive to so-called spiritual appeals from various sects or congregations. An encounter taking place in a completely unexpected way may turn out to be interesting for single people.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 8, 9, 14, 22, 30

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

The strange and the weird will invade your daily humdrum routine; don't worry, but rather take advantage of it! If you're suffering from headaches or dizziness, try to take more rest and remain aloof from your worries; beware of seafood.

Lucky Numbers: 16, 19, 20, 27, 31, 35

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

You'll be able to make good bargains, and the small delays that annoyed you will be forgotten. Don't judge your fellow-men too hastily; show fair play and indulgence. Good astral influxes, which will favour your love affairs.

Lucky Numbers: 20, 21, 23, 27, 32, 34

Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

It'll be difficult for you to make some savings, but prudence will be essential in the financial domain. You'll have many opportunities to meet a partner to your liking who, in addition, will share your passions; have an honest comportment.

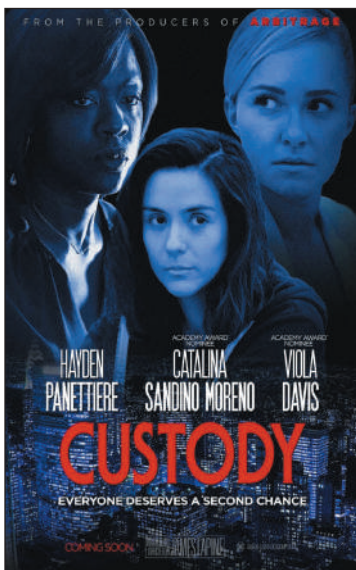
Lucky Numbers: 2, 9, 14, 20, 21, 29



Vendredi 5 Mars - 21.15

Custody

avec: Viola Davis, Hayden Panettiere, Catalina Sandino Moreno, Tony Shalhoub



Samedi 13 Mars - 21.15

The Monster

Star: Zoe Kazan, Ella Ballentine, Aaron Douglas



Dimanche 14 Mars - 21.25

**MBC 1**

08.31 Film: Rock Dog
10.00 Serial: Oh Yuck!
10.25 L'Harmonie Des Couleurs
11.05 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
12.55 Local: Les Grandes Lignes
13.25 MBC Production
14.25 Local: Evasion - Cap Malheur..
15.10 Local: Profil
15.25 Local: L'Harmonie Des...
16.02 Local: Retrouvizer
17.20 Message Of Hon Pravind Kumar Jugnauth
17.35 Live From The State House, Le Reduit - Flag Raising Ceremony 2021
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.20 Local: L'Harmonie Des Cou...

MBC 2

10.00 Serial: Ki Jaana Mein Kaun
11.05 Serial: Zun Mureed
12.04 Film: Velaiilla Pattadhari 2
14.00 DDI Magazine
15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha
15.21 Serial: Aamhi Doghi
15.42 Serial: Mooga Manasulu
16.07 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal
16.28 Serial: Suno Chanda
16.50 Serial: Achra Ke Moti
17.15 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
17.36 Serial: Chhanchhan
18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone
18.30 DDI Magazine
19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol
19.30 DDI Magazine
20.00 Serial: Band Khirkiyan
20.44 Local: Anjuman
21.09 Local: Urdu Programme - Noor-E-Iman

MBC 3

06.00 Mag: Eco India
06.26 Mag: Shift
06.38 Mag: Carnet De Sante
07.53 Doc: Iran Short Of Water
08.49 Doc: 360 GEO
09.44 Doc: Mega Yachts
10.27 Doc: Youth-Inducing Yogurt?
12.06 Mag: Border Crossing
12.32 Mag: Le Saviez vous?
12.40 Mag: Tomorrow Today
14.01 Doc: Can Green Investment..
14.31 Film: Garfield Et Cie
15.19 Film: Bound - The Epic...
16.05 Film: M. Peabody Et Sherman
17.33 Serial: Heidi, Bienvenida A...
18.00 Doc: Guinea-Bissau
18.43 Mag: Arts And Culture
19.01 Student Support Programme
20.06 Doc: Wildlife Heroes
21.00 Local: News (English)

Cine 12

01.37 Film: The Quiet Hour
03.02 Serial: S.W.A.T
03.40 Film: Signed, Sealed,...
05.07 Tele: Muneca Brava
05.46 Serial: 19-2
06.34 Film: Godzilla
09.00 Serial: The Magicians
09.45 Tele: Daniella
10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor
11.00 Serial: S.W.A.T.
12.00 Film: Signed, Sealed,...
13.18 Tele: Muneca Brava
14.26 Film: Godzilla
16.44 Serial: The Magicians
17.26 Serial: 19-2
18.05 Tele: Daneilla
19.10 Tele: Tanto Amor
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Serial: Powers
21.15 Film: Custody
23.01 Tele: Muneca Brava

Bollywood TV

08.00 Film: Haathi Mere Saathi
12.05 / 18.30 - Sanjivani
12.30 / 18.51 - Radha Krishna
12.48 / 19.14 - Agniphera
13.07 / 19.36 -
Bade Acche Lagte Hai
13.29 / 22.00 -
Zindagi Ki Mehek
13.49 / 22.22 - Naagin S3
14.30 / 23.05 - Ikyawann
14.51 / 23.27 -
Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
15.14 Kundali Bhagya
15.36 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka
18.00 Live: Samachar

vendredi 12 mars

samedi 13 mars

dimanche 14 mars

06.00 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà
07.18 D.Anime: Trollhunters
08.27 D.Anime: The Minimighty Kid
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Tele: Daniella
14.45 D.Anime: Sur Mesure
15.00 D.Anime: Sissi
15.29 D.Anime: The Garfield Show
15.54 D.Anime: La Ligue De Super
16.17 D.Anime: HTDT
16.28 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies
16.32 D.Anime: Robot Trains
16.43 D.Anime: Trolls
17.09 Mag: Mimetismes
17.25 Serial: Nowhere Boys
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Entertainment: Dance
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.25 Local: Concert Musical Avec Boyzini Et Joelle Corette
21.20 Film: The Monster
23.00 Le Journal

06.00 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà...
06.25 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis...
08.09 D.Anime: Oum Le Dauphin...
09.30 Mag: Future Mag
10.00 Local: Zafan Nou Zil
12.00 Le Journal
12.30 Tele: Daniella
15.25 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies
15.27 D.Anime: The Garfield Show
15.53 D.Anime: Kulipari An Army...
16.16 D.Anime: HTDT
16.28 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies
16.44 D.Anime: Trolls
17.05 Mag: Mimetismes
17.20 Serial: Nowhere Boys
17.50 Mag: Origami
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Local: Yeh Shaam Mastani
19.30 Le Journal
20.00 Prod: La Meteo
21.25 Film: Bleeding Steel

07.00 Film: Anuradha
Starring: Balraj Sahni, Leela Naidu
09.18 Mag: DDI Magazine
10.00 Bade Acchelagte Hai
12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhya Bhare
12.31 Serial: Mooga Manasulu
12.50 Serial: High School
13.10 Annakodiyum Ainthus Pengalum
13.35 Serial: Anu Pallavi
15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha
15.20 Film: Ekka Raja Rani
Starring: Govinda, Vinod Khanna, Paresh Rawal
18.09 Mag: DDI Magazine
19.00 Zournal Kreol
20.05 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha
20.31 Serial: Bitti Business
21.00 Film: Khakee
23.50 DDI Live

07.00 Film: Usne Kaha Tha
Starring: Sunil Dutt, Nanda
09.17 DDI Magazine
10.00 Local Production
11.00 Serial: Oru Kai Osai
11.22 Serial: Santoshi Maa
12.00 Film: Batti Gul Meter Chalu
Starring - Shahid Kapoor, Shraddha Kapoor, Divyendu Sharma
14.30 Mag: DDI Magazine
15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha
15.20 Serial: Mooga Manasulu
15.43 Eka Lagnachi Teesri Gosht
16.06 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal
17.00 Serial: Mahakali
18.30 Local: Tipa Tipa Nu Avance
19.30 DDI Magazine
20.00 Serial: Mann Mein Vishwas..
20.50 Serial: CID
21.36 Serial: Naagin S2

06.00 Doc: Guinea-Bissau
06.42 Mag: Arts And Culture
06.55 Mag: Global 3000
07.21 Mag: Le Saviez Vous?
07.58 Doc: Wildlife Heroes
08.50 Doc: Patisserie, Le Beurre...
09.43 Doc: Like, Date, Delete
10.24 Doc: Displaced: Tomatoes...
11.11 Doc: Guinea-Bissau
11.51 Mag: Arts And Culture
12.05 Mag: Global 3000
12.39 Mag: Euromaxx
12.56 Doc: Wildlife Heroes
16.20 Mag: Le Saviez Vous?
20.05 Doc: La Ville Passe Au Vert
21.00 Local: News (English)
21.10 Doc: Destination
21.23 Doc: Raymond Loewy
22.19 Doc: Battle Of Social Net...
22.57 Doc: Farming Policies For...
23.40 Doc: Amazing Gardens
00.06 Doc: Zenith

06.00 Doc: Amazing Gardens
06.26 Doc: Zenith
06.52 Mag: Vue D'en Haut
07.45 Doc: La Ville Passe Au Vert..
08.37 Doc: Destination
09.47 Doc: Battle Of Social Net...
11.10 Doc: Amazing Gardens
12.07 Mag: Vue D'en Haut
13.00 Doc: La Ville Passe Au Vert
14.05 Doc: Destinations
17.37 Mag: Check In
18.00 Mag: Tendance XXI
18.33 Doc: From Vogtland To...
20.05 Doc: Comme Une Envie De...
21.00 Doc: News (English)
21.10 Doc: Destination
21.23 Doc: Tea War, The Adventure
22.19 Doc: Soyalism
22.57 Doc: The Dresden Legend
23.40 Mag: Tendance XXI
00.10 Doc: From Vogtland To...

01.28 Film: Custody
03.12 Serial: Dynasty 2
03.58 Film: Hollows Grove
05.12 Tele: Esmeraldas
05.52 Serial: Powers
06.34 Film: Brush With Danger
08.30 Serial: Midnight, Texas
09.12 Serial: Shades Of Blue
09.54 Serial: Unforgotten
10.41 Film: Custody
12.24 Serial: Dynasty 2
13.06 Serial: S.W.A.T
15.09 Tele: Amanda
15.46 Tele: Muneca Brava
16.30 Mag: Hollywood On Set
17.00 Serial: Powers
17.45 Film: The Ballad Of Lucy...
19.18 Mag: Ultimate Countdown
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Series: Powers
21.15 Film: Maudie
23.06 Tele: Dulce Amor

02.57 Serial: Hawaai Five-0
03.39 Film: The Monster
05.08 Tele: Esmeraldas
05.51 Serial: Powers
06.39 Film: Clarity
08.30 Serial: Midnight, Texas
09.11 Film: I Think My Babysitter's
10.41 Film: The Ballad Of Lucy...
12.16 Serial: Hawaii Five 5-0
13.03 Serial: S.W.A.T
14.34 Mag: Close Up
15.05 Tele: Amanda
15.49 Tele: Muneca Brava
17.00 Serial: Power
17.45 Serial: Hawaii Five-0
18.30 Serial: Macgyver
19.17 Mag: Ultimate Countdown
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Serial: Falling Water
21.15 Serial: Island Doctor
22.45 Tele: Dulce Amor

04.05 Sanjivani
04.26 Radha Krishna
04.48 Agniphera
05.09 Bade Acche Lagte Hai
05.31 Zindagi Ki Mehek
05.51 Ikyawann
06.13 Bin Kuch Kahe
06.41 Kundali Bhagya
06.58 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka
07.18 Mere Angne Mein
08.00 Zindagi Ki Mehek
09.40 Motu Patlu
10.00 Siddhi Vinayak
12.00 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
14.00 Sanjivani
16.00 Pavitra Rishta
18.30 Film: Khuda Gawah
Star: Amitabh Bachchan, Akkineni Nagarjuna, Sridevi
20.50 Serial: Siya Ke Ram
21.18 Serial: Naagin

00.40 Siddhi Vinayak
02.19 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
04.17 Sanjivani
06.00 Pavitra Rishta
08.01 Motu Patlu
08.11 Karn Sangini
10.04 Jaana Na Dil Se Door
11.44 Piya Albela
13.27 Agniphera
15.19 Bin Kuch Kahe
17.06 Punar Vivaah
18.00 Samachar
18.30 Film: Namaste England
Stars: Parineeti Chopra, Arjun Kapoor, Satish Kaushik
20.30 Entertainment: Dance
21.28 Bade Acche Lagte Hai
23.06 Piya Albela

MBC 2

Samedi 13 Mars - 21.00

Stars: Amitabh Bachchan, Akshay Kumar, Ajay Devgn, Aishwarya Rai



Dimanche 14 Mars - 18.30

Stars: Parineeti Chopra, Arjun Kapoor, Satish Kaushik



12th March in a Free Country



Nita Chicooree-Mercier

Independent Mauritius grants the right to freely express opinions, ideas and thoughts to all citizens, and most Mauritians strongly value such freedoms, speak out their mind fearlessly, and warm-blooded as they are, call a spade a spade. They have also not given in to political correctness and the tyranny of the 'offended' class composed of all manner of oversensitive minorities on matters pertaining to gender, feminism, ethnicity, religion, race, colour, which are undermining free speech in Western democracies these days.

Folks here have a propensity to engage in heated debates on a wide range of topics in relation to politics, economy, international diplomacy and so on. Just as there is the Argumentative Indian, we can rightly label our average countryman over here as the Argumentative Mauritian. Undoubtedly, the legacy of a millennia-old tradition of dialectics, philosophers and thinkers flows in the blood of many citizens. Free modern education granted by the government in the 1970s played a key role in giving wider access to knowledge. Over the years it has helped people become less emotional in discussions and talks, and adopt rational and nuanced views.

It is up to the public to develop a mind of their own and not let comments driven by emotional outbursts on social networks or selective coverage of current topics on international television channels influence their way of thinking. Freedom to publish online comments does not mean that all comments are enlightened - the more so whenever the authors hide behind fake names and prefer anonymity to an open and frank interaction with others in the press and the internet.

The more enlightened and well-informed the public is, the less does it waste time on hot air blown right and left in the name of free expression. Neither are policy makers expected to be intimidated by social network cacophonies and frenzied refrains in the media. There is no obligation for local seasoned analysts to parrot Time magazine's view that 2020 was the annus horribilis. It brushes in one stroke all the horrors that marked the 20th century in the world. The dark tunnel from the 70s until around 1986 that kept parents

“Among key economic challenges to be addressed in a post-Covid era, the issue of dynastic accumulation of wealth and economic power in the private sector, which empowered a few lobbies to use their bargaining power to hold elected rulers as hostages and remote-control demonstrations for their own interests, calls for serious review. This situation cannot last forever. It is high time to operate a shift and open the sector to more potential investors and buyers from Asia, mainly from Japan, India, South Korea and Singapore...”

praying for better days and urged educated young Mauritians to fly away for a better life has certainly not faded from collective memory.

It is glaringly obvious why in this free country some people indulge in self-censorship, invent taboo subjects where there are none, keep mum over a few significant issues while they noisily jump to the ceiling all year round to defend all aspects of democracy as if they were living in Cuba or Iran. Has it occurred to anyone why Slavery Day was hardly commented in the media this year? A serious sociologist or any keen observer of events is likely to put it down to the unprecedented honeymoon that implicitly claims to have brought two different social groups together since July 29th and September 12th. Unsurprisingly, the media toed the line. Not a word from those who have a propensity to outline significant historical dates such as May 1st or Women's Day in press articles. Are they embarrassed by a deeper survey of slavery over centuries across the world?

A new style of crimes is surfacing in the country, merciless and ruthless. Only the case of a drug-related delinquent who violently rammed into an ADSU female police officer and dragged her body for 500 meters raised an outcry. Is it surprising that some recent crimes did not lead anyone to express outrage in the media? Pen-pushers lost their voice. In October 2020, in Grand Bay, a married young woman, mother of two children, stabbed one of her young lovers mercilessly and turned the knife in his belly, giving him no chance of survival. Upon witnessing such violence

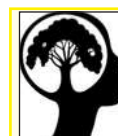
two women passing by fainted. Not a word on radios and in the press. Comments toned down since the identity of the perpetrators is being divulged in the case of the three bullets fired by young men riding a motorcycle. A crime committed out of revenge, apparently. Last month a 29-year-old drug addict slit his mother's throat; two years ago, another young man killed his mother and cut her body into pieces. Victims deserve compassion regardless of their identity and social class.

On Women's Day, an incident of wife-beating in a car drew the kind attention of a journalist who did not hesitate to give out names, comment the video and all. Another article in the Mauritian press referring to a case of rape in India and the judgment of the Supreme Court of India was decried. Running out of ideas? Similarly, Qatari television channel Al Jazeera chose to report on domestic violence in India and women's rights in South America on Women's Day as if, in comparison, the Middle Eastern countries were a paradise for women. When it comes to reporting on violence and women, India stands out as a favourite place to direct the spotlight on for media outlets which are oversensitive, touchy and too insecure about the cultural backyard they identify with. Selective reporting is a convenient strategy to shove one's dirt under the rug, look away and divert attention to other countries. Such tactics are not only grotesque and laughable, they are downright pathetic.

On the 53rd celebration of Independence Day everybody is free to wave the national flag and sing the national anthem even if it might still be a case of sour grapes for those whose parents did not vote for Independence. Among key economic challenges to be addressed in a post-Covid era, the issue of dynastic accumulation of wealth and economic power in the private sector, which empowered a few lobbies to use their bargaining power to hold elected rulers as hostages and remote-control demonstrations for their own interests, calls for serious review. This situation cannot last forever. It is high time to operate a shift and open the sector to more potential investors and buyers from Asia, mainly from Japan, India, South Korea and Singapore.

Hopefully, an additional Year of Gloom may herald a new era of Hope, a definite turning point in the economic sector, which can be further enhanced by tremendous gains from the ocean economy in Agalega and retrocession of Chagos regions in a near future, which is likely to change the economic landscape completely.

Among the most outspoken people who do not mince their words and are unfettered by self-censorship, political correctness and fabricated taboo issues, a more organized and lasting platform is needed to freely debate and express themselves in private and public groups and make up their own mind on where to draw the line.



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor

Stepping Out From Where We Were

From the peace at our centre, we gain distance from our emotions to connect to intuitive wisdom.

Albert Einstein said, "No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it. We must learn to see the world anew." A Nobel Prize winner, Albert Einstein's scientific theories transformed the world's understanding of the universe and its workings, so we can believe that these words come from his personal experience and helped him to explore both science and life itself. He offered us an example of what can be learned by looking deeply into nature to reach a deeper understanding of all life and by following our ideas to their logical conclusions in our minds before acting upon them in the world.

When we apply this quote to our lives, we can see that we cannot create abundance by staying in a consciousness of poverty, nor can we gain a sense of power in our lives while identifying ourselves as a victim. Situations begun from anger or fear can have little chance of reaching a state of peace and trust unless someone involved can conceive of that possibility and act upon it. We need to find ways to step outside of our limited understanding in order to seek a bigger picture. One way to do this is to shift our perspective to see the situation from another's point of view and ideally the perspective of all others involved. Even if we can't truly know another's motivations, by imagining what they might be, we open ourselves up to numerous possibilities and an expanded vision. This alone can shift our feelings of anger to compassion and the desire for a positive solution for all involved.

Once we have opened our mind to greater possibilities, we can connect to our higher self for inspired solutions. From the peace at our center, we gain distance from our emotions to connect to intuitive wisdom that offers us understanding of the underlying causes and the inspiration needed to guide our steps in a new direction. Albert Einstein showed us the impact that can be made when we raise our consciousness and allow ourselves to imagine the possibilities.