

MAURITIUS TIMES

• With many people homebound during the pandemic, art can bring about joy and positivity. It can transfer you to a different world. -- Nivedita Gouda

Interview : Steven Obeegadoo,
Premier ministre adjoint

“Le risque de résurgence du virus à Maurice était inévitable...”

**‘La fraude et la corruption ne
sauraient être tolérées**

*Toute violation de la loi devra être
sanctionnée par la Justice’*

☞ Voir Pages 7-8-9



The Scramble for Covid-19 Vaccines



*The priority of priorities of all countries is to vaccinate their
population to protect people against the risk of Covid-19
infection and reach the required herd immunity protection
against coronavirus as early as possible*

By Mrinal Roy * See Page 4

All together, Support for all



*Those who are facing great difficulties deserve the particular
attention of their government*

Dr R Neerunjun Gopee ☞ See Page 3

L'encanaillement

By Nita Chicooree-Mercier ☞ See Page 18

Audit Report

The report of the Director of the National Audit Office (NAO) for the fiscal year 2019-2020 is out. It is of particular significance this year given that it comes to confirm in a large measure the veracity of the various allegations that have been levelled since last year in relation to the 'Emergency Procurements' of drugs and equipment in the wake of the first lockdown in March 2020. Much of what had been criticised as unlawful and contrary to established procedures in the public service by politicians and the media has been validated by the NAO on the basis of the information contained in the files consulted and information made available to it. What is however unacceptable relates to the refusal of the ICAC to allow the Audit Director access to the contracts allocated under the Emergency Procurements before the completion of its audit.

Beyond the controversies regarding the 'Emergency Procurements' and addressed by the NAO, the 498-page report has again drawn attention to the considerable waste of public funds in diverse ministries, which came to its attention. Accordingly, huge amounts have gone waste; systems have been bypassed to draw unjustified advantages, while loss has been occasioned in other places due to dereliction of duty and absence of adequate follow-up on projects. No doubt more or other such cases will be uncovered next year. There will be shock and consternation at the abuses pointed out. They will be picked up again by the Public Accounts Committee and commented upon adversely and the public will keep treating that as a routine occurrence. All this ritual, it seems, will not stop the wastage of public funds from continuing. In the meantime, the public will keep contributing by paying up all sorts of taxes to fill the coffers of the Treasury in support of this system of perpetuation of wasted expenditures.

If this sort of thing had been happening in a private firm, in the majority of cases, the shareholders/directors would be taking the immediate appropriate redress actions in the light of the audit report to stop hurting the firm's interests. The job of auditors is to point out flaws in the system and not to implement remedial action; it is for the management of the concerned firm to recommend to the board actions to be taken for expeditious redress against the damage being done in the light of audit remarks.

In the case of the public sector, it is the efficiency of the government's revenue collection and its spending that call the attention of the Audit Office. It is for the top civil servants to pick up the points raised by the Director of Audit, analyse the flaws that give rise to shortcomings (in the case of revenue collections) and abuses (in the case of expenses undertaken or not undertaken on time or undertaken in such a manner as to result in wasteful duplication of expenses). The initiative for proposing corrective actions should come from the top civil servants who should implement them unless not endorsed explicitly by the Ministers.

The procedure is more or less the same in the case of parastatal bodies, except that in these cases, the corrective action proposed by the public servants employed by those institutions has to be endorsed by the Boards of the parastatal bodies. In such cases, the Minister comes in but not as directly as it is the case in central government. The boards are of course accountable to their Ministries but less directly so than in the case of central government departments. Thus, the boards of parastatals are more prone to abusive decisions.

So, what does one do? Go on piling up annual audit reports, even if they drew attention to aggravating cases of abuses? Accept the reproaches of malpractices to which attention is being drawn as if they were matters of routine? Set up the resulting inaction against the lapses pointed out as a local trade mark for governance?

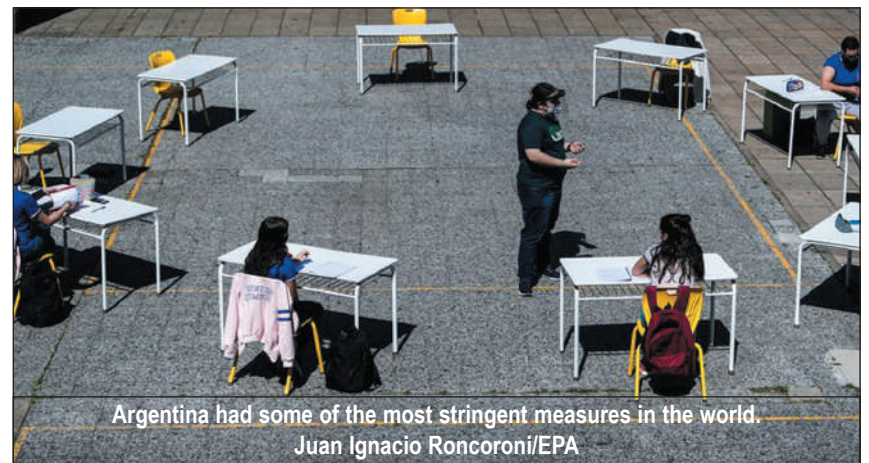
Action can only be taken effectively if the responsibility for seeing to it that what ought to be done correctly is laid down specifically on the shoulders of clearly identifiable individuals. It should be made clear right from the beginning as to who picks up the buck when things go wrong. Second, one cannot get away from punishment for under- or wrongful performance on public contracts and expenditures. It is when exemplary sanctions are actually made to apply that the tide of abuse will start being stemmed. Lawmakers have to explicitly set down sanctions to follow for deliberate slippage in the execution of public duties.

Who can decide to follow this route for stopping the kinds of abuses pointed out in the audit reports? It is only those who can come up with clean hands that can do so. But that seems to be another tall order...

The Conversation

What we learned from tracking every Covid policy in the world

For one year, 600 people tracked 20 types of coronavirus restriction in 186 countries – here's what they found out



In March 2020, as Covid-19 swept around the globe, my colleagues and I began debating the bewildering new measures popping up around the world with our master's students in a politics of policymaking class at the Blavatnik School of Government at Oxford University.

We had a lot of questions. Why were governments doing different things? Which policies would work? We didn't know. And to answer those questions, we needed comparable information on these new policies, including school closings, stay at home orders, contact tracing and more.

A few weeks later, we launched the Oxford Covid-19 Government Response Tracker to help find these answers. It has now become the largest repository of global evidence relating to pandemic policies.

To date, more than 600 data collectors from around the world have helped us track 20 different categories of coronavirus response, including lockdown, health, economic, and now vaccine policies in 186 countries.

We then group those policies into a number of indices, including the stringency index, which records the number and intensity of closure and containment policies on a scale of zero to 100. Fifteen countries reached 100 on the stringency index, while seven never surpassed 50. The countries with the highest average stringency were Honduras, Argentina, Libya, Eritrea and Venezuela. Those with the lowest were Nicaragua, Burundi, Belarus, Kiribati and Tanzania.

A year on, what else have we learned about how governments have handled the largest health crisis in memory?

One surprising observation is that similarities can actually outweigh differences. During the first months of the pandemic, governments mostly adopted similar policies, in mostly the same sequence, at mostly the same time – the two middle weeks of March 2020.

This policy convergence contrasts with the uneven spread of Covid-19 around the world. In March 2020, though the disease was already prevalent in some parts of Asia, and rapidly spreading in parts of Europe and North America, it had yet to reach a wide scale of transmission in many parts of the world. The global lockdown rush therefore contrasted with the varying epidemiological situations countries faced. This meant that some countries locked down too late, and others arguably too soon. But as the pandemic progressed, countries – and, in some parts of the world, states and regions – began to vary considerably.

Some governments were able to contain the first wave and then preserve those gains with a mix of targeted closure and containment measures, extensive testing and contact tracing, and firm international border controls.

Thomas Hale

Associate Professor in Public Policy,
University of Oxford

➔ Cont. on page 11

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Doojesh Ramlallah, Sultana Kurmally and Kersley Ramsamy

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

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



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

All together, Support for all

Those who are facing great difficulties deserve the particular attention of their government

When the Covid pandemic started to spread across the world at the beginning of last year and lockdown had to be imposed to nip it in the bud – which didn't quite happen as subsequent events have shown – economic activities ground to a sudden halt. In

order to limit the impact, governments came up with what was called stimulus packages or bail-outs. These were meant to support the important industrial and trade sectors; in our countries a bulk of this went to the hotel sector, that is the tourist industry.

As the situation has continued to aggravate, with surges that called for second and third lockdowns depending on the country, those most severely affected have been workers at the lower rungs and small businesses which depend on their day-to-day or week-to-week activities to earn a living. The country with the largest economy in the world, USA, has found itself having to vote another 1.3 trillion USD as emergency spending to add to the 4 trillion USD that Congress had already spent to fight the crisis. This additional sum of mind-boggling proportions for us has been approved despite objections from the Republicans who wanted to scale it down to USD 600 M.

Arguing that 'the government must fight the crisis from the bottom up', a leader in *The Economist* of February 6th 2021 suggested that 'Congress should spend whatever is needed on vaccinations and on increasing the incomes of workers bearing the brunt of the crisis. They have lost their jobs through no fault of their own, and if their incomes collapsed, they would slash their spending, spreading the pain to the rest of the economy. Extending a generous top-up to unemployment insurance benefits beyond its expiry in March should be a priority.'

Continuing that 'nobody should fret about the cost of providing what is in effect disaster relief,' a note of caution is sounded, namely that 'prolonging vast deficits, however, does carry a risk.' At this point, the rest that follows goes above my head, but if I have got it right the message is that those who are facing great difficulties deserve the particular attention of their government.

It would seem to me that the small planters and vegetable/fruit growers and sellers have somehow been left out of the equation in the support that has been extended by the authorities. It was so during the first lockdown last year. Vegetables and fruits were left to rot in the fields, or were stolen as the growers were not allowed to attend to their plantations, with scenes of those trying to even being chased out. This at a time when the crying need was precisely such items which form an essential part of the food requirements of everyone. And everyone – the *ti dimoune* – is not represented in the queue at the supermarkets.

To me this was a lacuna in the overall strategy of addressing the lockdown, that was not made up for in the current one either. It would have been a significant gesture of support to that category, and for the benefit of a wider section of the population that could have sourced supplies from their own locality, a critical factor in limiting at the same time the spread of the virus.

Because, as has been repeatedly said during this pandemic, we are all in it together.

* * *

This reminded me of the clarion call of PM candidate



“It would seem to me that the small planters and vegetable/fruit growers and sellers have somehow been left out of the equation in the support that has been extended by the authorities. It was so during the first lockdown last year. Vegetables and fruits were left to rot in the fields, or were stolen as the growers were not allowed to attend to their plantations, with scenes of those trying to even being chased out. This at a time when the crying need was precisely such items which form an essential part of the food requirements of everyone. And everyone – the *ti dimoune* – is not represented in the queue at the supermarkets...”

Narendra Modi to his countrymen during the campaign for the general election that in 2014 that brought him victory, which was

'Sab ka saath, sab ka vikas': 'All together, All for development.' I have adapted it as 'All together, Support for all' for the title of this article, to remind ourselves and our decision-makers the imperative need to extend assistance to all sectors, especially the most vulnerable who supply the most basic and vital need for our survival: food.

This also led me to wonder where Modiji could possibly have got his winning catchphrase, which he updated to 'Sab ka saath, sab ka vikas, sab ka visvas (everybody's trust)' in his second campaign that saw the leader of the largest democracy in the world being brought back to power with an even larger majority.

Perhaps he may have been inspired by the words of another illustrious countryman of his, and equally wise, late President Abdul Kalam – who shared with him a major common characteristic, namely, humble origins?

What led me to make this guess are the words of Dr Abdul Kalam, who visited Gujarat in August 2002, a few months after riots had taken place there. He describes this visit in his book 'Turning Points' (2012), from which I quote: 'All through my visit only one thought occupied my mind. We have many important tasks at hand to improve the lot of people and to accelerate development. Should not development be our only agenda? Any citizen following any faith has the fundamental right to live happily. No one has the right to endanger the *unity of minds*, because unity of minds is the lifeline of our country, and makes our country truly unique. After all, what is justice, what is democracy? Every citizen in the country has the right to live with dignity, every citizen has the right to aspire for distinction. To access the large number of opportunities, through just and fair means,

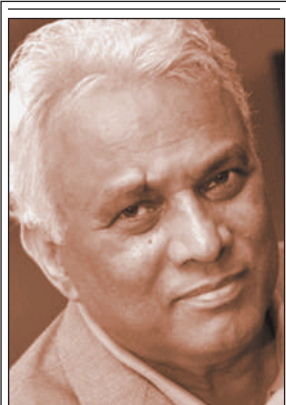
in order to attain that distinction and dignity is what democracy is all about.' (italics added)

It seems to me that these two dignified leaders may have 'clicked' – achieved a unity of minds as they went around together. Dr Abdul Kalam decided on the visit shortly after becoming President, against advice to the contrary. In his own words, 'Many apprehensions were expressed, among them that my visit might be boycotted by the chief minister, that I would receive a cold reception and that there would be protests from many sides. But, to my great surprise when I landed at Gandhinagar, not only was the chief minister but his entire Cabinet and a large number of legislators, officials and members of the public were present at the airport... Narendra Modi, the chief minister, was with me throughout the visit.'

Narendra Modi: such dignity, such greatness of mind and spirit, why such grandeur even one could add. Of the type that can even joke along with the clip that a relative in India forwarded to me, where someone is making humorous comments about the PM's monthly 'Mann Ki Baat', the author's main thrust being that instead he should have talked about 'kaam ki baat' – about work rather than mere thinking about it. Well, 'mann' can also mean vision, and it is only someone with a clear 'man' who can have an enlightened vision.

And that only underscores further that unity of minds that allows such jokes (and jokers) to be taken at face value. One shudders to imagine what could befall the perpetrator of such innocent gibes in neighbouring countries where democracy is only a façade and humour is severely proscribed on ideological or scriptural grounds. And where minds are 'left at the counter': as my Indian friend advised me to do when he paid a ticket for me to accompany him to see a Hindi film in the days when they were worth seeing...

The Scramble for Covid-19 Vaccines



Mrinal Roy

More than a year after the coronavirus outbreak was declared a pandemic, the surges of Covid-19 infection across the world fuelled by new variants remain unabated. A third wave of coronavirus infection is currently sweeping across Europe amid vaccine supply constraints. New lockdowns and curfews have been imposed in France, Poland, Ukraine and various other countries. Germany has extended existing restrictions in a bid to curb a third wave of coronavirus infections. France, Italy, Germany and Spain have recorded the most coronavirus deaths in the European Union (EU).

Amid tensions over Covid-19 vaccine supplies between the EU and the UK, the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has threatened that the EU could envisage bans on vaccine exports arguing that the current supply arrangements with EU vaccine manufacturers are slowing down its own vaccine rollout. The EU prepares to tighten Covid-19 vaccine export rules and demand reciprocity arrangements.

A tug of war has thus broken out between the UK and the rest of Europe over supplies of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine in a context of rising Covid-19 infection in EU countries. The UK is insisting that its supply contracts with the AstraZeneca vaccine manufacturers in the EU must be honoured to ensure that its vaccination campaign remains on track. The UK is therefore firmly opposed to any proposals to block exports to Britain.

Last week the European Medicines Agency, the EU vaccine regulator, has on the basis of new expert analysis reconfirmed that the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine was 'safe and effective', did not increase the risk of blood clots and that its benefits far outweigh its potential risks. As a consequence, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands, which had suspended the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine, have decided to resume the vaccination of their citizens with this vaccine.

Competing demand

The rising and competing demand for the AstraZeneca vaccine, which is the world's most widely used vaccine, from EU countries, the UK, countries across the world and the requirements of the COVAX programme has put tremendous pressure on supplies of the vaccine.

In this context, the Serum Institute of India, which is the largest producer of vaccines in the world and a key player in Covid-19 vaccination efforts in India and globally, has already advised Brazil, Saudi Arabia and Morocco that further supplies of the AstraZeneca vaccine to them will be delayed due to surging demand for vaccines in India to meet

The priority of priorities of all countries is to vaccinate their population to protect people against the risk of Covid-19 infection and reach the required herd immunity protection against coronavirus as early as possible



Photo - HT - Satish Bate

“How can the leader of the MMM come up with the thoughtless and inane knee-jerk reaction of ‘tini tini’ the Covaxin vaccination campaign in the teeth of intelligible and easily accessible scientific evidence available? The choice of a vaccine is a serious business. It cannot be determined by Freudian slips. If we are to win the battle against the Covid-19 pandemic, we imperatively need to make rational choices based on an expert and thorough assessment of all the scientific and other evidence available...”

the objectives of the world's biggest inoculation drive. India has this week temporarily halted AstraZeneca vaccine exports.

Sluggish pace

European leaders are also being criticized for the sluggish pace of their vaccination programmes. The statistics are telling. Less than 12% of the EU's population has received the first dose of the vaccine compared with nearly 40% in the UK. France has so far administered the first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine to only 9.20% of the population whereas two doses of the vaccine have been received by only 3.60% of the population.

There is therefore a no holds barred scramble for vaccines across the world in a context of insufficient supplies to meet global demand. Countries which had negotiated confirmed orders early have been able to secure vaccines. Those that were slow to get out of the starting gates are now struggling to have access to the vaccines. Access to Covid-19 vaccines is patently unequal.

The current surge of Covid-19 infection in Mauritius through various hotbeds of infection attests to the continued presence of the virus in our midst. This situation can rapidly get out of hand if we do not all strictly abide by prescribed sanitary and social distancing norms and diligently wear masks to break the chain of Covid-19 infection and stop its spread in the country. More importantly, we also need to accelerate the vaccination drive in the country to protect the population at large and in particular the most vulnerable against the risk of infection.

Harbinger of hope

The priority of priorities of all countries is to vaccinate

their population to protect people against the risk of Covid-19 infection and reach the required herd immunity protection against coronavirus as early as possible. The sooner this objective is met, the sooner the country will be able to break the crippling shackles of the pandemic. Herd immunity is a passport towards a modicum of normality and a sine qua non condition to reboot the economy and reignite the process of economic recovery.

The vaccination of the population is therefore a harbinger of hope for economic actors and in particular those operating in the tourism and air travel sectors which have suffered the brunt of the adverse fallouts of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Covid-19 crisis cannot be a political punching ball. It must unite the people and the country to achieve these common national objectives as quickly as possible.

In a context of vaccine supply constraints, countries across the world are therefore looking for and using alternative vaccines available to carry out their vaccination drive. Quite a few countries are thus using a mix of Covid-19 vaccines

The UAE has, for example, primarily used the Chinese Sinopharm vaccine to vaccinate most of its population. In some cases of low immune response, a third dose of the vaccine has even been administered. The Russian Covid-19 vaccine Sputnik V is used in Russia, Argentina Hungary, Serbia and the UAE. Neither Sinopharm nor Sputnik V have been approved by the WHO.

Delays in approval by regulatory bodies risk converting approved vaccines into a closed shop benefitting from tremendous commercial edge.

Freudian slip?

Against such a grim backdrop, how can the leader of the MMM come up with the thoughtless and inane knee-jerk reaction of 'tini tini' the Covaxin vaccination campaign in the teeth of intelligible and easily accessible scientific evidence available? The choice of a vaccine is a serious business. It cannot be determined by Freudian slips.

'Tini Tini' is already destined to become one of the most popular meme of our rich political folklore.

If we are to win the battle against the Covid-19 pandemic, we imperatively need to make rational choices based on an expert and thorough assessment of all the scientific and other evidence available and weigh the benefits with the risks involved.

We must also note that the American drugmakers Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson have promised investors they will soon hike vaccine prices.

Our priorities must be the safety of the people through vaccination and the rapid implementation of an innovative economic recovery plan bearing in mind the game changing lessons learnt from the Covid-19 pandemic. Any delay in swiftly attaining these cardinal objectives will cost billions of Rupees in support measures and economic loss to the country.

In such a context, how can anyone irresponsibly propose to stall the vaccination drive and by extension tacitly endorse a costly delay in the process of economic recovery and a modicum of normality in the country?

Is it not high time to cut loose from the inanity of narrow political narratives for the good of country and people?



According to the health ministry data, the first dose of the vaccine was given to over 5.2 million nationals - 55.96% of the population. Photo - The Times of Israel

50% of Israeli citizens received both shots of Covid-19 vaccine

Over 50 per cent of Israeli citizens have received both shots of a coronavirus vaccine, Health Minister Yuli Edelstein said on Thursday.

"We have passed the 50% threshold mark of all Israeli citizens who received the second dose of the vaccine. Thanks to all of them, the State of Israel is defeating coronavirus. All that remains is to follow the instructions so that coronavirus does not return," Edelstein said on Twitter.

According to the health ministry data, the first dose of the vaccine was given to over 5.2 million nationals (55.96% of the population) and 4.46 million of them were also administered to the second dose (50.07% of the population).

Israel started inoculating its population against the coronavirus on December 20 and the country oversaw one of the most rapid vaccine rollouts of anywhere in the world. The country is using the vaccine developed by Pfizer.

Brazil second nation to top 3,00,000 Covid-19 deaths

Brazil has reached 300,000 confirmed Covid-19 deaths and become the second nation to top that figure. The United States hit the same milestone on December 14, but it has a larger population.

Wednesday's coronavirus figures from the Brazilian health ministry added another 2009 deaths to the country's tally, which local media say is an undercount, reports PTI.

On Tuesday, Brazil hit a single-day record of 3251 Covid-19 deaths and authorities fear that April could be as grim as March in the country's overwhelmed hospitals.

Brazil added 100,000 deaths to its tally in only 75 days, a spike health experts have blamed on a lack of political coordination, new variants that spread more easily and a disregard for health protocols in many parts of the country.

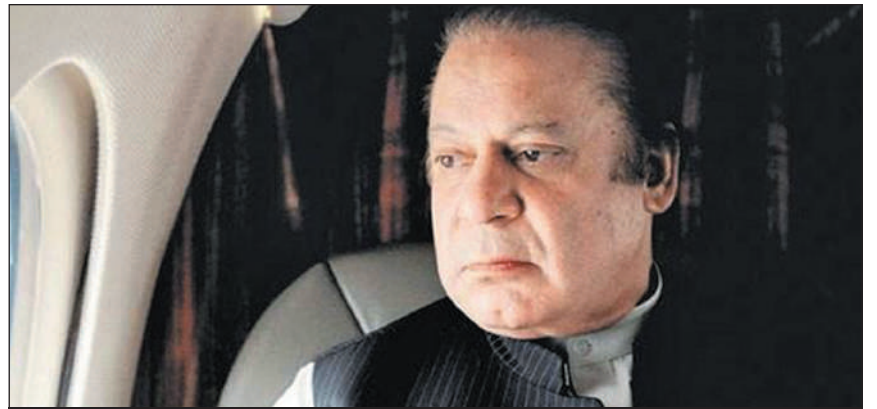
Pakistan Interior ministry refuses to renew Nawaz Sharif's passport

Pakistan Interior Ministry on Wednesday decided not to renew the passport of former Prime Minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif who is currently residing in London, reports ANI.

The interior ministry stated this in response to a query by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made on February 19 regarding the "request for issuance of new diplomatic passport by the former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif", reported Dawn.

Sharif's passport had expired in February of this year. Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed had already announced in January that the PML-N supremo's passport would not be renewed as per instructions from Prime Minister Imran Khan.

The letter by the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Foreign



PML-N supremo's passport not renewed as per instructions from Prime Minister Imran Khan. Photo - thenews.com.pk

Affairs turned down the request and stated that the renewal of Nawaz Sharif's passport would not be processed by the relevant authorities.

The interior ministry stated that in order to return to Pakistan, Nawaz

Sharif may apply for an Emergency Travel Document (ETD) from the Pakistan High Commission in the UK, and "the same may be issued once he produces prior bookings of travel to Pakistan through PIA (Pakistan International Airlines) only."

US surpasses 30 million Covid-19 cases amid vaccinations

The United States on Wednesday surpassed 30 million cases of Covid-19 even as the country is making progress on the number of vaccinations.

While daily new infections have decreased significantly from their peak in January, new cases remain high at around 55,000 cases per day, while 1000 people are dying every day despite a decline in casualties due to

vaccinations, reported The Hill.

Meanwhile, hundreds of spring breakers have been flocking to the streets, beaches and restaurants in Miami Beach in Florida, prompting health officials to urge people not to let down their guard.

Health officials have also warned against states lifting coronavirus restrictions until a wider share of the population is vaccinated.

"When I'm often asked, 'Are we turning the corner?' my response is really more like, 'We are at the corner. Whether or not we're going to be turning that corner still remains to be seen,'" said Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious disease expert, on Wednesday during a White House briefing.

In Bangladesh, protests to mark 'Genocide Day'



Troops of Bangladesh Freedom Army, followers of East Pakistan's Sheikh Mujibur Rahman march off to war against Pakistan Army troops, near Jessore, East Pakistan. Photo - AP

Protests will be held at 34 spots across Bangladesh on Thursday to mark 'Genocide Day' in memory of the three million people killed by Pakistani forces during the 1971 Liberation War.

'Genocide Day' has been observed in Bangladesh since 2017 against the atrocities committed by the Pakistan Army on civilians on the night of March 25, 1971,

when it launched Operation Searchlight in Dhaka to curb the Bengali nationalist movement.

The protest will also include vehicles with 'Genocide Day' posters, reports ANI.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh will also observe a "one-minute blackout" on March 25 to mark 'Genocide Day'. The 'blackout' would be observed from 9:00 pm to 9:01 pm across the country, the Dhaka Tribune reported citing an official statement.

The daily reported that no lighting will be allowed at all the government, semi-government, autonomous organisations, and private buildings and installations on the night of March 25.

According to the official, key point installations (KPIs) and emergency installations will be exempted from the blackout program, Dhaka Tribune reported.

UK govt tells ministries to wave Union Jack



Flying the national flag is less common in the United Kingdom than in some other countries, such as the United States. Photo - Daily Express

the United States. But since Johnson was elected in December 2019, the Union Jack has become increasingly visible - an ever-present backdrop to interviews by government ministers from their offices or homes.

The British government said Wednesday that the national flag should fly on all government buildings, the latest move in a highly visible embrace of the Union Jack by Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

The government has told ministries and local administrations that the flag should be flown every day instead of the current practice requiring it to be hoisted for special occasions, such as the opening of Parliament and the birthday of Queen Elizabeth II.

"People rightly expect to see the Union Flag flying high on civic and government buildings up and down the country as a sign of our local and national identity," Local Government Secretary Robert Jenrick said.

Flying the national flag is less common in the United Kingdom than in some other countries, such as

Biden puts Kamala Harris in charge of border influx



Kamala Harris said there was "no question that this is a challenging situation." Photo - .dailymail.co.uk

US President Joe Biden on Wednesday tasked Vice President Kamala Harris with tackling an influx of migrants on the Mexican border, aiming to take charge of a situation that has energized opponents of the new administration.

"I can think of nobody who is better qualified to do this," Biden said at a White House meeting with Harris and other top officials as thousands flee violence in impoverished Central America.

"When she speaks, she speaks for me," Biden said, adding: "I give you a tough job."

Harris said there was "no question that this is a challenging situation."

It marks the first time that Biden has assigned a specific portfolio to Harris, who is seen as representing a younger generation in the Democratic Party and has been constantly at his side since they entered office in January, reports AFP.

Speaking earlier to CBS News, Harris acknowledged that the United States needed to speed up its processing of migrants' asylum claims and care better for them.

"It's a huge problem. I'm not going to pretend it's not," Harris said in the interview.

But she said that the administration, in office for less than 100 days, needed to repair a structure torn apart by former president Donald Trump, who rose to power on an aggressive anti-immigration agenda.

"We have to reconstruct it. It's not going to happen overnight," Harris said of the immigration system.

Ingenuity Mars helicopter: NASA to attempt first off-world flight in April

NASA is targeting early April for the Ingenuity Mars Helicopter to make the first attempt at powered, controlled flight on another planet, the space agency said Tuesday.

Right now, the ultra-light aircraft remains fixed to the belly of the Perseverance rover, which touched down on the Red Planet on February 18.

On Sunday, Perseverance dropped the debris shield that had protected Ingenuity during landing, and is currently making its way to the "airfield" where Ingenuity will attempt its flights.

Once there, it will have 30 Martian sols -- equal to 31 Earth days -- to carry out its mission.

"The best guess we have right now is April 8," for the first flight, said Bob Balaram, Mars Helicopter chief engineer at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, though he added it could be sooner or later by a few days.

Balaram revealed for the first time that Ingenuity is carrying a small piece of cloth that covered one of the wings of the Wright brothers' first aircraft that achieved the first powered flight on Earth at Kitty Hawk in 1903, to pay tribute to the milestone.

Ingenuity will be attempting to fly in an atmosphere



This NASA photo obtained on March 23, 2021 shows an illustration of NASA's Ingenuity Mars helicopter standing on the Red Planet's surface. Photo - AFP

that is one percent the density of Earth's, which makes achieving lift harder -- but will be assisted by a gravity that is one-third our planet's.

The first flight will involve climbing at a rate of about three feet (one meter) per second to a height of 10 feet (three meters), hovering there for 30 seconds, then descending back to the surface.

Ingenuity will be taking high resolution photography as it flies.

US Senate passes resolution on importance of Indo-Pacific partnerships

A powerful Senate committee has passed a resolution reaffirming the importance of America's alliances and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region, including with India.

The United States greatly values other partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region, including with India, Singapore, Indonesia, Taiwan, New Zealand, and Vietnam, said the resolution introduced by Senators Robert Menendez and Jim Risch. Menendez is the chairman of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee, while Risch is its ranking member.

The resolution passed by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Wednesday reaffirms the enduring commitment of the United States to treaty allies in the Indo-Pacific region and NATO, as well as to other



The resolution was passed by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Wednesday. Photo - cdni.rt.com

partners, including its treaty obligations for mutual defence. It now moves to the Senate floor.

Emphasising the primary importance of the United States' relationships, alliances, and partnerships to global peace and prosperity, the resolution welcomed and sought to advance the continued collaboration of the

United States and its allies and partners to respect and defend the rules-based international order and the values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law that undergird common security and prosperity.

The resolution calls on the Biden administration to ensure that the United States' policy and posture reflect the requirements of extended deterrence to preserve non-proliferation benefits, assure allies, and to deter, and if necessary, respond, across the spectrum of nuclear and non-nuclear scenarios in defence of allies and partners.

It also supports maintaining robust diplomatic, economic, and defence budgets as critical to advancing cooperation with allies and partners on shared challenges.

Interview: Steven Obeegadoo, Premier ministre adjoint

"Le risque de résurgence du virus à Maurice était inévitable..."

mais il faut bien comprendre que Maurice a été un des très rares pays au monde à demeurer "Covid Safe" pendant neuf long mois"



La gestion de la pandémie par les autorités ne laisse personne indifférent. Si certains ne voient aucun inconvénient à ce que le gouvernement ait décrété un deuxième lockdown, d'autres sont critiques envers les décisions prises en brandissant des scénarios les uns plus dramatiques que les autres. Pour y voir plus clair, nous avons invité un membre du Gouvernement et Vice Premier ministre, Steven Obeegadoo, pour nous en parler...

Mauritius Times: Le Gouvernement a-t-il été pris de court par la seconde vague de Covid-19, comme le soutient l'Opposition et qui déplore aussi l'absence d'un plan stratégique ou d'un 'Contingency Plan'?

Steven Obeegadoo: Non. Il faut bien comprendre que Maurice a été, très certainement, un des très rares pays au monde à demeurer «Covid Safe» pendant neuf long mois. Ailleurs, cela aurait été considéré comme relevant d'un miracle mais, en vérité, c'est le résultat d'une gestion très rigoureuse de la sécurité sanitaire.

Toutefois, au vu de l'évolution de la pandémie au niveau planétaire, le risque de résurgence du virus à Maurice était inévitable. Dès l'apparition des premiers cas, le gouvernement, fort de l'expérience acquise l'année dernière, a déployé la stratégie qui consiste à tester, tracer, et isoler avec, en complément, un confinement complet depuis le 9 mars dernier.

Cette stratégie a déjà porté ses fruits car la quasi-totalité des nouveaux cas détectés concernent des personnes iden-

tifiées à travers le «contact tracing». J'ai confiance que l'on aura très bientôt maîtrisé cette deuxième attaque de la Covid-19.

Alors qu'il s'agit d'une question de survie pour la nation, l'Opposition a adopté une posture démagogique en disant tout et son contraire. Le jugement de l'Histoire lui sera sévère.

*** Mais il y a aussi d'autres questions susceptibles d'attiser la suspicion ou même l'hostilité vis-à-vis du Gouvernement: le 'Consent Form' obligatoire pour se faire vacciner (le Covishield est exonéré du 'Consent Form' en Inde alors qu'il faut en signer pour le Covaxin), le Government Notice (GN) 486 qui limite le mouvement des parlementaires, et aussi ce qui ne paraît pas très clair: les arrangements ou accords pour l'approvisionnement des vaccins. Vos commentaires ?**

L'Opposition voit le mal partout et se nourrit du désarroi des gens qui sont confrontés à un bouleversement sociétal sans précédent. Nous sommes dans une situa-

tion exceptionnelle, qui requiert des mesures exceptionnelles.

Pour comprendre le « Consent Form », il faut se référer d'une part, au procédé normal dans le monde de la santé publique et, d'autre part, aux exigences découlant du fait que les vaccins anti-Covid ont été développés en urgence.

Guerre mondiale. L'incertitude est omniprésente et l'on commence à peine à mesurer les conséquences psychologiques et mentales pour l'individu. Sur le plan économique, nous vivons la première récession depuis 1980 et le danger de la fermeture d'entreprises et du chômage guettent.

“Quant à l'affaire Kistnen, je m'abstiendrai bien évidemment de tout commentaire vu les enquêtes et les procès judiciaires en cours. Néanmoins, je souhaite ardemment que toute la vérité soit faite sur cette affaire, les responsabilités de tout un chacun établies. Que vérité soit dite et justice rendue!”

Par ailleurs, à ce jour, quelque 476 millions de personnes ont été vaccinées de par le monde. Les vaccins proposés aux Mauriciens ont été validés par un conseil scientifique et le 'National Covid-19 Vaccination Committee', et ne comportent pas de risques majeurs. Notre pays est doté d'un système de protection social connu de tous, et notre Constitution offre des protections individuelles, garanties par un judiciaire indépendant. Dès lors, où est le problème ?

Quant aux restrictions de déplacement, elles découlent du confinement et sont valables pour les députés de la majorité comme pour ceux de l'Opposition. Par rapport à l'obligation de rester chez soi, sauf pour motif impérieux, il me semble que les députés devraient donner l'exemple. Par ailleurs, l'approvisionnement en vaccins représente, ces jours-ci, un défi extraordinaire même pour les pays les plus riches, et Maurice ne fait pas exception.

Le peuple mauricien, comme les peuples du monde entier, vit un traumatisme sans précédent, depuis la Deuxième

D'aucuns se réfèrent à une crise existentielle pour l'humanité avec plus de 2,7 millions de morts. Voilà la raison pour laquelle les tentatives de l'Opposition d'attiser un sentiment de défiance démontrent un antipatriotisme flagrant alors que la situation est grave et exige un consensus national pour affronter la Covid-19.

*** Par ailleurs, la pandémie est aussi une crise socio-économique, qui va s'accroître plus longtemps, plus l'économie reste fermée. Qu'est-ce qui explique, selon vous, la décision du Gouvernement de ne pas être plus explicite sur la durée du confinement? Le PM a parlé «d'une nouvelle phase qui débutera à partir du 31 mars» sans en dire plus...**

Les impératifs sanitaires pour protéger la population et les exigences économiques pour permettre à tout un chacun de gagner sa vie imposent des arbitrages complexes. Le déconfinement partiel offre une réponse mûrement réfléchie et la période qui s'étend jusqu'au 31 mars nous permet de nous y préparer.

➔ Suite en page 8

“Je n'ai jamais quitté le MMM mais j'en ai été exclu pour avoir dit ceci : que le parti au sein duquel j'ai milité depuis l'adolescence doit se réinventer pour être en phase avec la population et réapprendre à gagner. Je suis convaincu que la Plateforme Militante a pris la bonne décision en rejoignant, en 2019, l'Alliance Morisien...”

'La fraude et la corruption ne sauraient être tolérées

Toute violation de la loi devra être sanctionnée par la Justice'



La priorité est la protection sanitaire. La stratégie de sortie de crise repose sur la poursuite des mesures sanitaires pour éviter tout nouveau «lockdown» qui serait très dur pour l'économie. Il s'agit, d'une part, de contenir le virus, puis de l'extirper de la communauté à travers la stratégie «tester, tracer, isoler» et de prévenir toute résurgence en faisant respecter les mesures barrières. Mais, à moyen terme, «Sel Solisyon: Vaksinasyon»!

A ce jour, nous avons vacciné plus de 10% de notre population et nous

enquêtes en cours fassent toute la lumière quant aux allégations, en faisant le tri entre les accusations gratuites colportées à des fins politiciennes et les cas d'abus et de corruption avérés.

Toute personne doit être comptable de ses actes et toute violation de la loi devra être sanctionnée par la Justice. La fraude et la corruption ne sauraient être tolérées.

Nous avons la chance de vivre en démocratie et le rapport du Directeur de l'Audit est un instrument important pour la bonne gouvernance. Si un tel rapport alimente l'artillerie de l'Opposition en munitions, il offre aussi aux ministères l'opportunité d'améliorer leur gestion des ressources de l'Etat, qui requiert un effort continu... C'est vrai pour toute Opposition et tout Gouvernement. Et vive la démocratie !

“En toute honnêteté, je ne puis, comme Premier ministre adjoint, me plaindre d'un quelconque manque de démocratie interne et, croyez-moi, ce fut tout le contraire lors de mes premiers pas comme ministre, et ce ne sont pas mes amis du MMM, qui ont été ministres, qui me contrediront à cet égard...”

☛ Suite de la page 7

Entretiens, l'Etat est venu de l'avant, à nouveau, avec le «Wage Assistance Scheme», qui touche quelques 230,000 Mauriciens, en sus des 46,000 bénéficiaires du secteur du tourisme, ce qui représente un montant total d'environ Rs 2,5 milliards. Ajoutons à cela, plus de Rs 500 millions qui seront déboursées, sous le «Self Employed Assistance Scheme», pour soutenir quelques 202,000 individus pour le mois de mars. Ces derniers percevront également un «one-off grant» de Rs 10,000.

Qui plus est la Banque de Maurice et la Banque de Développement sont venues de l'avant avec des facilités pour soutenir les entreprises. Tout cela a un impact certain sur les finances publiques. Néanmoins, il est de notre devoir de protéger les plus vulnérables, de protéger l'emploi et de soutenir la consommation.

* Selon Axys, l'impact économique du confinement se chiffre autour de Rs 5,3 milliards pour les 15 premiers jours, et chaque semaine d'épidémie et de confinement va aggraver cette estimation. Au-delà de l'assistance aux salariés, aux 'self-employed' et aux entreprises, le Gouvernement dispose-t-il d'une stratégie de sortie de crise?

cherchons à atteindre «l'immunité collective» d'ici la deuxième moitié de l'année. S'ensuivra la réouverture des frontières, si cruciale pour le secteur du tourisme, le monde des affaires et l'investissement étranger. Le prochain exercice budgétaire aura la tâche ardue, malgré les contraintes, de définir les mesures d'accompagnement de la relance économique.

* Par ailleurs, si cette crise a détruit des emplois ici comme ailleurs et asséché des secteurs entiers, elle en a aussi dopé d'autres - les «grands gagnants de l'économie de confinement» -, et cela a été confirmé par le directeur de l'Audit dans son rapport pour l'année financière 2019-20. Tous les gouvernements ont eu à faire face à l'urgence sanitaire, mais ils n'ont pas tous contourné les procédures normales sous prétexte que la santé publique n'a pas de prix. Comment réagissez-vous à cela?

Les gouvernements, à Maurice comme ailleurs, ont dû agir en urgence et cela comporte bien évidemment le risque que des gens peu scrupuleux cherchent à en profiter. Cela est immoral et inacceptable.

Je souhaite vivement que les

* En d'autres temps, vous disiez que « le comportement de certains élus, les «affaires» et le mépris pour le programme inspirent un sentiment de rejet des politiciens, confirmé par le taux d'abstention croissant...» C'était en juin 2019, dans un entretien à Le Défi. Vous avez sans doute fait part de vos convictions à qui de droit au sein du Gouvernement et défendu ces mêmes convictions quand le besoin s'est fait sentir, n'est-ce pas?

“La démocratie est à parfaire et les modèles de démocratie politique sont certes à repenser. La Plateforme Militante avait fait connaître ses propositions à l'époque, mais j'attends toujours de connaître celles de l'Alliance PMSD-MMM ou du Parti Travalliste...”

Rassurez-vous, l'exercice du pouvoir n'a en rien changé mes convictions et j'œuvre pour mon pays, au sein du gouvernement de L'Alliance Morisien, dans le respect de ces mêmes convictions.

D'abord, il faut comprendre le réel et, en particulier, la crise écologique planétaire, les inégalités croissantes associées à une mondialisation inéquitable, et dans le contexte actuel, la pandémie de la Covid-19, qui se conjuguent pour mettre à

mal la démocratie et le progrès social. Ensuite, à partir de mes convictions profondes qui reposent sur le socialisme, l'écologie et la démocratie, il s'agit d'identifier des pistes pour avancer vers plus de justice sociale et de démocratie dans l'unité et la défense des équilibres écologiques.

Être au gouvernement me permet de passer de l'analyse théorique à la pratique, de la parole à l'acte. Et, c'est ce à quoi je m'emploie, avec toute la force de mes convictions, avec passion et intégrité.

* Vous aviez fait cette déclaration dans le cadre d'une campagne nationale menée alors par la Plateforme Militante (PM) en faveur de la révocabilité des élus – «un élément central du programme de la PM pour Réinventer la Démocratie» disiez-vous. Il y a aussi les institutions qu'il faut secouer dans cette réinvention de notre démocratie, en particulier la police et l'ICAC, dont les dysfonctionnements ont été mis en évidence lors de l'enquête judiciaire sur la mort de Soopramanien Kistnen. Qu'en pensez-vous?

La Plateforme Militante a ses idéaux et son projet de société énoncé à sa création. Ensuite, il y a l'Alliance Morisien de 2019, composé du MSM, du ML, du Muvman Patriot Morisien et de la Plateforme Militante, qui a remporté les dernières élections avec un projet de gouvernement commun.

Je le répète, être au gouvernement me permet de passer de la parole à l'acte, du dire au faire, pour mettre en œuvre le projet du gouvernement de l'Alliance Morisien, qui a été plébiscité aux dernières élections. C'est ce à quoi je m'emploie aux côtés du Premier ministre et de mes collègues ministres. Evidemment, l'imprévu de la Covid-19 est venu compliquer les choses mais nous gardons le cap en cherchant, malgré les difficultés à concilier sécurité sanitaire, relance économique et justice sociale.

Notre pays fait face à des moments des plus difficiles qu'il ait connus depuis l'indépendance, et je suis heureux d'être au gouvernement pour assumer mes responsabilités de Mauricien et apporter

mon humble contribution afin de sortir le pays de la crise. La démocratie est à parfaire et les modèles de démocratie politique sont certes à repenser. La Plateforme Militante avait fait connaître ses propositions à l'époque, mais j'attends toujours de connaître celles de l'Alliance PMSD-MMM ou du Parti Travalliste.

☛ Suite en page 9

'L'affaire Kistnen : 'Que toute la vérité soit faite sur cette affaire, les responsabilités de tout un chacun soient établies, et que justice soit faite'



“Je vous avouerai éprouver beaucoup de peine à voir Paul Bérenger relégué au deuxième rang des traverses parlementaires, derrière Xavier Duval et mon ami Rajesh Bhagwan, au dernier rang! Est-ce pour cela que nous avons lutté ensemble pendant tant d'années? L'obsession de renverser le gouvernement peut-elle tout justifier?”

☛ Suite de la page 8

Quant à l'affaire Kistnen, je m'abstiendrai bien évidemment de tout commentaire vu les enquêtes et les procès judiciaires en cours. Néanmoins, je souhaite ardemment que toute la vérité soit faite sur cette affaire, les responsabilités de tout un chacun établies. Que vérité soit dite et justice rendue!

Et si cela devrait révéler un dysfonctionnement quelconque au niveau des institutions, le gouvernement avisera. Mais en attendant, gardons-nous de procéder à des jugements hâtifs à partir d'allégations de l'Opposition car cette affaire a été trop politisée.

*** En ce qui concerne la chose politique, je présume que le MMM, c'est déjà le passé pour vous – tout comme la Plateforme Militante dont on n'entend plus parler depuis votre association avec le MSM. L'avenir, pour vous, se trouve avec et dans le MSM. C'est ça?**

Je vous avouerai éprouver beaucoup de peine à voir Paul Bérenger relégué au deuxième rang des traverses parlementaires, derrière Xavier Duval et mon ami Rajesh Bhagwan, au dernier rang! Est-ce pour cela que nous avons lutté ensemble pendant tant d'années? L'obsession de renverser le gouvernement peut-elle tout justifier?

Je ne renonce pas à une réunification de ce qu'on appelle «les militants», ceux censés partager des valeurs de gauche articulées dans un programme de transformation sociale. Mais, il faudrait avant que le MMM se ressaisisse pour reconnaître les grandes avancées sociales réalisées ces dernières années par Pravind Jugnauth et le MSM. Je me réfère, par exemple, au salaire minimum, au «Workers Rights Act», à la revalorisation dramatique de la pension de vieillesse, le Métro, les manuels scolaires gratuits jusqu'en «Grade 9», et j'en passe. Que de mesures dont le MMM rêve depuis des décennies! Et les inégalités économiques qui reculent...

En attendant, la Plateforme Militante s'implante dans différentes régions du pays en accueillant les militants déçus, les orphelins du MMM, et en apportant sa pleine contribution à l'Alliance Morisien et au gouvernement. Par exemple, nous mettons en place le plus vaste programme de construction depuis l'indépendance.

*** Maintenant que vous y êtes, c'est-à-dire faisant partie de la grande famille du MSM, dites-nous ce que vous percevez comme étant ses forces et ses**

défauts...

Je ne suis pas du MSM, et cette question devrait s'adresser au leader ou au secrétaire général du MSM. Pour ma part, et en tant que militant, je vous dirai que tout comme ce fut le cas entre 1990 et 1993, 2000 à 2005, et puis encore entre 2012 et 2014, nous travaillons en bonne intelligence avec nos amis du MSM, sans le moindre problème jusqu'ici, et dans une atmosphère de franche camaraderie.

*** Alors que c'est l'absence de démocratie au sein du MMM qui vous a poussé vers la porte de sortie et vous a amené à mettre sur pied la Plateforme Militante pour «Réinventer la Démocratie», on dit qu'une des grandes forces du MSM, c'est dû au fait que ce n'est pas un parti démocratique. C'est le leader qui décide de tout. Est-ce effectivement le cas dans le parti – et dans le gouvernement?**

Je ne connais pas et je ne me mêle pas des affaires internes au MSM. Par contre, je connais bien le fonctionnement d'un gouvernement ayant été ministre sous Navin Ramgoolam de 1995 à 1997, sous SAJ de 2000 à 2003, puis sous Paul Bérenger de 2003 à 2005.

Je puis vous affirmer que, de manière générale, le gouvernement dans son ensemble est informé et décide de toutes les questions importantes. Même, en dehors des réunions du Conseil des ministres, le Premier ministre consulte souvent ses ministres.

Certes, sous les conditions exceptionnelles du confinement, le 'Covid 19 High Level Committee' peut être amené à agir dans l'urgence mais, même là, il s'agit toujours d'un fonctionnement collégial.

En toute honnêteté, je ne puis, comme Premier ministre adjoint, me plaindre d'un quelconque manque de démocratie interne et, croyez-moi, ce fut tout le contraire lors de mes premiers pas comme ministre, et ce ne sont pas mes amis du MMM, qui ont été ministres, qui me contrediront à cet égard.

Par ailleurs, aujourd'hui, j'ai la possibilité de faire valoir mes idées et de les mettre en œuvre comme le MMM ne me l'a jamais permis après la débâcle de 2014.

*** Il faut reconnaître toutefois que le leader et Chef du Gouvernement dispose d'une équipe de conseillers et stratèges, dont certains feraient partie de la fameuse «La Cuisine», et qui seraient capables de se mesurer aux meilleurs stratèges du PTR et du MMM – même en l'absence de Nando Bodha. Qu'en est-il au fait?**

J'objecte avec force à ce terme «la cuisine» qui est d'un sexisme flagrant et injustifiable. Ce terme insinue, de manière perfide, que la place de l'épouse du Premier ministre est à la cuisine et nulle part ailleurs. Elle n'aurait ainsi aucun droit de conseiller son époux ou de se mêler de politique mais devrait plutôt cuisiner!

Les époux des femmes dirigeantes politiques sont bien moins souvent attaqués et même lorsqu'ils le sont, souvenez-vous d'Asif Ali Zardari, le très controversé compagnon de Benazir Bhutto, personne ne penserait à les dénigrer ainsi en se référant à «la cuisine». C'est faire preuve d'une misogynie des politiciens de la vieille école.

Cela dit, le Premier ministre a, en effet, la chance d'avoir, à ses côtés, des collaborateurs très compétents qui représentent un atout pour l'action gouvernementale.

La façon dont la crise sanitaire est gérée en est la preuve éclatante.

*** Le DPM subit-il les diktats de cette «Cuisine»?**

Je ne subis les diktats de personne depuis mon expulsion du MMM et je n'accepterai jamais de repasser par là.

Les allégations de «diktats de la cuisine» ne sont rien que des inventions de ceux qui n'ont pu digérer leur défaite de 2019 et qui essaient, par de vils mensonges, d'empoisonner les esprits des Mauriciens.

Ceux-là, comme l'ancien Président Trump aux Etats-Unis, incitent leurs supporteurs à la haine et utilisent un langage on ne peut plus grossier et violent tel le fameux «BLD». Est-ce l'alternative proposée aux Mauriciens? Ou alors le triste spectacle de s'entre déchirer pour un hypothétique futur poste de Premier ministre à quatre ans des prochaines législatives? Ils décrédibilisent le Parlement et ils s'attaquent à l'intégrité de notre système électoral.

Dans toutes mes années au MMM, dans l'Opposition, je n'ai jamais connu cela. Dans leur quête d'un renversement du gouvernement par la rue, ils font fi de la Covid-19 pour s'attaquer aux principes fondamentaux de notre démocratie.

“Les gouvernements, à Maurice comme ailleurs, ont dû agir en urgence et cela comporte bien évidemment le risque que des gens peu scrupuleux cherchent à en profiter. Cela est immoral et inacceptable. Je souhaite vivement que les enquêtes en cours fassent toute la lumière quant aux allégations...”



*** Avec recul, pensez-vous avoir pris la bonne décision politique après vos démêlés avec Paul Bérenger?**

Dois-je vous rappeler que je n'ai jamais quitté le MMM mais j'en ai été exclu pour avoir dit ceci: que le parti au sein duquel j'ai milité depuis l'adolescence doit se réinventer pour être en phase avec la population et réapprendre à gagner.

Je suis convaincu que la Plateforme Militante a pris la bonne décision en rejoignant, en 2019, l'Alliance Morisien. Alors que notre pays traverse les moments les plus difficiles de son Histoire depuis 1968, la place de tout patriote est aux côtés du gouvernement.

Gouverner est autrement plus difficile que d'opposer. Nous allons remettre notre pays sur ses pieds pour reprendre, dans l'unité de notre peuple, le chemin du progrès social et de la transition écologique. Encore et encore, il s'agit d'élargir le champ des possibles pour chacun et pour tous! Je suis et je demeure du côté de l'espoir et de l'action.



Rhena Bunwaree

Will working from home increase opportunities for women?

Covid-19 has dramatically changed how we view Working from Home (WFH), which is now a much more widely accepted practice in Mauritius. This would seem on the surface to be an equaliser for women, but it may set them back. Rhena Bunwaree, a Media Relations expert investigates the emerging trends on how women are faring with remote work.

Before a tiny virus brought the world to its knees, work-from-home or WFH was a privilege few women could demand. But the most recent lockdown has seen further workplace closures and a move to full-time home working for many. It's tempting to think the flexible options brought by the 'Work from Home' scheme last year is a big equaliser for women. But this is not as simple as it sounds. The ability to work from home runs much deeper than a reduced commute time and increased productivity.

Keeping choices personal

Remote work allows women to work and watch their children grow up without having to hit a pause on their career progression. But when people talk about women in remote work, it's often a discussion about being a mum in remote work. When thinking about the best parts of women working from home, a lot of what comes to mind is mum stuff. But it's important not to equate "working women" with "working mums." And for women who are not mothers, this policy is still attractive. It gives them peace of mind that they do not have to put their career goals on the backburner to enjoy the benefits of remote work. But before we declare victory, we need to consider the high family demand that can be stressful when working from home.

The cultural nuances of working from home

The familial expectations placed on Mauritian women are significant. They bore the brunt of the workload at home even before the Covid-19 pandemic. This virus has only triggered social and emotional fallout. Juggling domestic responsibilities and always-on-work expectations can be stressful. Besides, most of our homes are not designed for work, noise-free private space for 8-10 hours a day. The house or apartment and dodgy Wi-Fi can make working from home even more stressful. For example, for some women in the middle of the working day, meals need to be planned. This is the case especially with elderly parents with strict meal times.

A solution to gender inequality?

The home is not a neutral space: it is drenched with gendered expectations of obligations that family members have



Getty Image AFP/O. Scarff

towards each other. Married, heterosexual families remain a major stumbling block to gender equality. The notion of men as breadwinners looms large. Deviations from this have adverse consequences for heterosexual marriages. The male-breadwinner and female-carer norm can be too much for many couples to bear. Without attitudinal and behavioural shifts, gender inequality remains out of reach.

A new form of "presenteeism"

What happens when some team members are in the office or travelling for work while others are WFH? Will we see a gender skew, with men in the office, very visibly contributing to the business, while women are out of sight and mind? Unless companies learn to evaluate output, rewarding people for what they actually contribute rather than for the show they put on, a world of mostly remote work may increase organisations' bias for rewarding those who are present, disproportionately harming women. WFH also has implications for those who get pulled into quick or informal decision-making discussions. If going to the office becomes a status symbol, the concern is that more men will have privileged access to it than women.

Work and family conflict

A wealth of research suggests that flexible working may actually increase family conflict. This is because it can lead to an expansion of work and increase the domestic burden. A recurring finding is that women are more likely to carry out more domestic responsibilities while working flexibly. But men are more likely to prioritise and expand their work spheres. For example, one study found that profes-

sional men with and without children, and professional women without children, seem to increase their unpaid overtime hours. This is especially the case when they have more control over their schedules, but professional women with children do not. Working from home is thus a narrow response towards gender equality at home.

What can employers do to make WFH easier for women?

Will WFH offer women the flexibility they desire? WFH may provide flexibility, but is it enough? We need to change the narrative of women working from home. Modern companies need to embrace remote work as a way to level out the playing field for working women.

A combination of different tactics should be used to tailor interventions to support the female workforce WFH. But for

that to happen, the following guidelines can serve as a starting point.

- Understand that remote working does not occur in a vacuum. Take active steps to challenge any embedded assumptions about the gender-normative roles of mothers and fathers.
- Avoid the development of two tiers of employees. If most but not all women are WFH, don't turn the office into the first-class section of a business lounge. Organisations need to re-examine the gender distribution at home and in the less-crowded office. This will ensure an equal amount of flexibility and "hybrid" access for everyone.
- Upgrade your performance evaluation processes and metrics to focus on outputs. Do not include assessments from periods of lockdown when childcare was unavailable.
- Increase flexibility: Allow women increased flexibility to work at times that suit them better. For example, some companies found that women prefer working later in the evening when their children were more settled for the day.

It is possible that more flexible working patterns will remain beyond the end of the Covid-19 pandemic, and that it will become the norm. Only time will tell. But industries that can adapt and cater to the modified requirements of women in the WFH scenario will stand to gain.





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LIC Centre, 1st Floor,
John Kennedy Street,
Port Louis

marketing@licmauritius.intnet.mu

208 1485, Ext 24 [Port Louis]
4674960 [Qautre Bornes]

1956-2020

What we learned from tracking every Covid policy in the world

➔ Cont. from page 2

Places like China, Taiwan, Vietnam and New Zealand all managed not just to flatten the curve but to keep it flat, albeit with a few small flare-ups. In our data, we count 39 countries that have only experienced one wave of disease, though limited testing and reporting systems, or government suppression of information, make it hard to determine the true number.

Other countries have had less success, seeing second, third, or even fourth waves of disease. Some of these have been relatively small outbreaks, controllable with test and trace measures and targeted restrictions. For example, South Korea and Finland, though not able to eliminate the virus, have largely kept it from stressing health systems.

Rollercoaster countries

Too many countries have been on a veritable rollercoaster of rising and falling infections with corresponding policy whiplash and tragic death tolls. The United States, United Kingdom, South Africa, Iran, Brazil and France have seen successive waves of disease and have phased in and out of restrictive policies.

Though initially debated, the scientific literature is now clear: Covid-19 restrictions work to break the chain of infection, with timely, sharper restrictions having greater effect than slower, weaker ones.

But while clearly true on average, there is no guarantee this recipe will always work. Countries like Peru suffered rising disease despite restrictive policies, perhaps showing that compliance and trust are also key to effectiveness. Some evidence also suggests that stronger economic support makes Covid-19 restrictions more effective.

Money isn't everything

While we can identify patterns of successful response, it



Senegal has kept cases low and the economy running.
Catherine Leblond/Alamy Stock Image

is also evident that none of the country characteristics that were expected to provide an advantage before the pandemic, such as wealth or autocracy, have clearly done so.

If you divide the world into countries with above average and below average deaths, robust government responses and weak ones, you will find in both groups plenty of rich countries and poor countries, democracies and dictatorships, those ruled by populists and those governed by technocrats.

Success and failure are moving targets. As the pandemic has evolved, so have government responses. According to our data, vaccines are now available in 128 countries and rising. Notably, some of the countries most swiftly rolling out vaccination – Israel, the UK, the United States, the UAE – are places that have previously struggled to control the virus through restrictions and test-and-trace systems.

Lessons for the future

One year on, the pandemic is by no means over, but already our data suggests some implications and lessons for governments.

First, old ideas about what contributes to pandemic preparedness need to be updated. Some countries with formidable scientific and healthcare capacity stumbled mightily. At the same time, places with less capacity, including Mongolia, Thailand and Senegal have managed to largely keep people healthy and the economy running.

Second, learning from others, or even from past experience, cannot be taken for granted. In March 2020 eastern European countries like the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Bulgaria saw what happened to their western neighbours and imposed restrictions before community transmission became widespread. They largely avoided the death tolls many western European countries experienced in the first wave.

But then just a few months later some of the same eastern European countries did the exact opposite, waiting too long to reimpose measures as cases rose in the autumn, with all too predictable consequences.

Finally, while our work has tracked individual governments' responses, it is clear that exiting the pandemic will require global cooperation. Until transmission is curtailed throughout the world with restrictions and vaccinations, the risk of new variants sending us back to square one cannot be ignored.

In the first year of the pandemic we saw little cooperation between governments. In the next, we will need to work together to control this disease.

Thomas Hale

Associate Professor in Public Policy, University of Oxford

D. Juggoo

Prayer is an invocation or act that seeks to activate a rapport with an object of worship through deliberate communication. Prayer is a communication to God... Prayers are central to the practice of humanity.

It can be said that 80% of human beings on the earth pray to God. In almost all religions, prayers occupy an important role and place. In fact, prayers can take four forms such as:

- Prayer of Adoration/Blessing,
- Prayer of Contrition/Repentance,
- Prayer of Thanksgiving/Gratitude, and
- Prayer of Supplication/ Petition/ Intercession.

Prayer is done by those who trust the power of word, thought and God. Prayer can be spoken, silent (no talking), or in a song. It can be used to praise God or to ask for something including help and forgiveness.

God, through prayer, opens eyes, changes hearts, heals wounds, and grants wisdom. The power of prayer should never

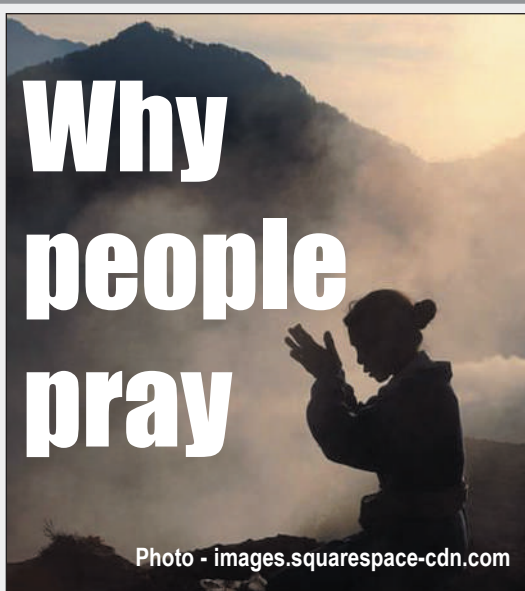


Photo - images.squarespace-cdn.com

be underestimated because it draws on the glory and might of the infinitely powerful God of the universe.

People turn to prayer because it is the most personal way to experience God, to encounter Him and to grow in knowledge of Him

In Hinduism, the Gayatri Mantra is the most representative prayer. Hindus recite it on a daily basis, not only contemplating

its straightforward meaning, but also dwelling on and imbibing its sound, regarded to be pregnant with spiritual meaning.

Be it in church, mosque, temple or any other place, prayer is useful to gather people together, unite people, share happiness. Prayer is used to preach tolerance, practise forgiveness, to bring peace and happiness.

Prayers are powerful. Whatever your religion is, a simple prayer can change the way you view things. It can give you the strength you need to overcome life's challenges and adversity.

As a good person and honest individual, I think my daily Morning Prayer (mantras) should be as follows:

Oh God! I thank you for having wakened me this morning and keeping me alive.

Dear God, please give me strength when I am weak, love when I feel forsaken, courage when I am afraid, wisdom when I feel foolish, comfort when I am alone, hope when I feel rejected, and peace when I am in turmoil.

Dear God, please today I ask your forgiveness for all the negative and harmful words/thoughts I have spoken/thought about any person knowingly or unknowingly. I am but a simple person. At times, I make mistakes and hurt others without realising same. I may abuse myself in many ways and abuse others as well.

Dear God, please help to transform myself, my thoughts, my attitude and behaviour. Make me a better person. Give me the courage to understand other pains, others worries and sacrifice. Make my tongue the best communication tool so that whenever I utter a word it should be courteous, polite and heart touching.

Dear God, I have to thank you for looking beyond my faults and for loving me unconditionally. Give me eyes to see the needs of the difficult people in my life, and show me how to meet those needs in a way that pleases.

Dear God, please make me a better person for myself and the world.

Dear God, thank you for the gift of family and friends. Holding them in my heart is one of the most precious things I can never get tired of. Bless everyone, for they deserve all goodness You have given to me.

Walking can relieve leg pain in people with peripheral artery disease

Exercise has been used in the treatment of many medical conditions, including heart and lung diseases. But it can also play an important role in treating peripheral artery disease. Our latest review shows that for people with peripheral artery disease, exercise programmes may help improve walking ability and quality of life by relieving symptoms of leg pain, cramps, and fatigue that some people experience.

Peripheral artery disease is a common type of cardiovascular disease, which affects 236 million people across the world. It happens when the arteries in the legs and feet become clogged with fatty plaques through a process known as atherosclerosis.

While some people with this disease experience no symptoms, the most classic symptoms are pain, cramps, numbness, weakness or tingling that occurs in the legs during walking - known as intermittent claudication. These problems affect around 30% of people with peripheral artery disease. Intermittent claudication is more common in adults over 50, men and people who smoke.

Currently, peripheral artery disease treatments focus on managing symptoms and preventing the arteries from becoming more clogged, which will reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke. Medications may also be prescribed to reduce cholesterol or treat high blood pressure, which are both risk factors for developing peripheral artery disease.

Managing intermittent claudication is especially important as people who have it are at a higher risk of other cardiovascular diseases, such as heart disease and stroke. On top of this, the leg pain they experience means people often cannot walk very far. This could lead to lower fitness levels and reduced quality of life. It may even cause depression, as people are no longer as independent as they'd like to be in their daily life.

But exercise programmes may offer another treatment approach for people with intermittent claudication. Evidence from our latest review shows exercise can help increase the distance patients can walk pain-free, and may reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke. We also uncovered what it takes for an exercise programme to be successful.

We found that for people with intermittent claudication, a supervised, walking-based exercise programme is most likely to improve their symptoms. This programme should ideally be done at least three times per week for a minimum of three months. Patients should try to walk at a challenging pace (meaning it causes them to experience strong leg pain) for

Leg pain while walking is a common symptom of peripheral artery disease.



Around 30% of people with peripheral artery disease experience leg pain, numbness, or tingling while walking. beeboys/ Shutterstock

three to five minutes before resting until the pain goes away. The walk-rest pattern should be repeated for about 30 to 60 minutes.

This type of exercise programme was shown to significantly improve claudication symptoms, as indicated by an increase in the distance a person can walk without pain. It also increases quality of life and overall fitness levels.

For those who can't access a supervised walking programme, this type of exercise can still be done independently, and should also be carried out at least three times a week for 30 to 60 minutes each time. We recommend people start walking regularly for exercise at their own pace, building up their walking speed and time gradually. Monitoring how far you walk with an app or smartwatch may be helpful. If you don't have those, street markers (such as lampposts) can help you check if you're walking a little further each day and make sure you are progressing the exercise.

For those exercising independently, we also recommend they plan their route as much as possible to identify places where they can rest safely in between their walking bouts and try to keep it as fun as possible, perhaps by walking with friends. Other activities that people with intermittent claudication can take part in safely include going to the gym, cycling, dancing, or bowls. There is less evidence for these how beneficial types of activities are, but they may help to improve symptoms and keep people engaged with the things they enjoy.

Our review also found that resistance

exercise (such as lifting weights) can help to improve muscle strength in patients with intermittent claudication. Resistance exercises can be used alongside a walking programme and can be done two to three times per week with each session including exercises for the main muscles of the upper and lower body.

It's worth noting that people with intermittent claudication shouldn't worry about walking with leg pain because this pain does not equate to harm being caused. Claudication pain is thought to be a result of insufficient blood flow to the exercising muscle. Walking while experiencing claudication pain could, over time, stimulate the growth of new blood vessels in the legs and improve symptoms.

However, people are advised not to exercise if they feel unwell and should go and seek medical advice if they experience any concerning symptoms when they do exercise - such as chest pain, dizziness or sickness.

Our review shows exercise can help manage claudication pain, and may limit the progression of atherosclerotic disease throughout the body. Regular exercise may improve claudication pain in several ways, including improving the way blood vessels work and helping the leg muscles use oxygen more efficiently.

Not only can this exercise be done alone or as part of a supervised programme, but it may also have other benefits, including improving cardiovascular health, mood and sleep.

Amy Elizabeth Harwood
Research Fellow, Clinical and Exercise Sciences, Coventry University

Chris Seenan
Senior Lecturer, Physiotherapy, Glasgow Caledonian University

Garry Tew
Associate Professor, Exercise and Health Sciences, Northumbria University, Newcastle

Sanlam

Central Agency Ltd

Accredited Agency

Contact: Mrs V. Gopal

1st floor, ARC Building, c/r SSR & Sir William Newton Streets,
Port Louis Tel: 208 0289 / 5782 5678 - Fax: 213 0961

Email: centralagency@intnet.mu

Home



Motor car

car

Lorries



Four men are in the hospital waiting room because their wives are having babies.

A nurse approaches the first guy and says, "Congratulations! You're the father of twins." "That's odd," answers the man. "I work for the Minnesota Twins!"

A nurse then tells the second man, "Congratulations! You're the father of triplets!"

"That's weird," answers the second man. "I work for the 3M company!"

A nurse goes up to the third man saying, "Congratulations! You're the father of quadruplets." "That's strange," he answers. "I work for the Four Seasons hotel!"

The last man begins groaning and banging his head against the wall.

"What's wrong?" the others ask.

"I work for 7 Up!"

A couple are rushing into the hospital because the wife is going into labour. As they walk, a doctor says to them that he has invented a machine that splits the pain between the mother and father. They

agree to it and are led into a room where they get hooked up to the machine.

The doctor starts it off at 20% split towards the father. The wife says, "Oh, that's actually better."

The husband says he can't feel anything.

Then the doctor turns it to 50% and the wife says that it doesn't hurt nearly as much. The husband says he still can't feel anything.

The doctor, now encouraged, turns it up to 100%. The husband still can't feel anything, and the wife is really happy, because there is now no pain for her. The baby is born.

The couple go home and find the postman groaning in pain on the doorstep.

Q: What do cats eat for breakfast?

A: Mice Krispies.

Q: What do you get when you cross a fish and an elephant?

A: Swimming trunks.

Q: What did the big chimney say to the little chimney?

A: "You're too young to smoke."

Q: What is the difference between a teacher and a train?

A: One says, "Spit out your gum," and the other says, "Choo choo choo!"

Q: What do clouds do when they become rich?

A: They make it rain!

Five out of six people agree that Russian Roulette is safe.



First you brought the files home. Then the calculator. Then the typewriter, the dictaphone and now the secretary. You have converted your home into an office. Is it fair?

Q: What happens once in a minute and twice in a moment but never in a decade?

A: The letter "m."

Contest in a girl's college: Write a short story which contains religion, sex and mystery.

Winner's story: "Oh god, I am pregnant, I wonder who did it."

There's a blond and a brunette in a car. The brunette is driving while the blonde is in the passenger seat. They're going down a steep hill when the brunette realizes that the brakes don't work.

The brunette tells the blonde that the brakes don't work and they will drive off the side of the cliff because they failed to stop.

The blonde then replies, "Don't worry! There's a stop sign ahead."

Q: What is the colour of the wind?

A: Blew.

A child goes to his father and asks, "Father, how do parents think of names for their children?"

The father answers, "Well, son, the night before the mother gives birth; the father goes into the woods and camps for the night. When he wakes the following morning, the first thing he sees is what he names his child, which is why your sister is named Soaring Eagle. Why do you ask, Bear Poop?"

A School Principal's Speech at a Graduation

He said: "The doctor wants his child to become a doctor. The engineer wants his child to become an engineer. The businessman wants his ward to become CEO. But a teacher also wants his child to become one of them, as well. Nobody wants to become a teacher by choice. Very sad but that's the truth.

The dinner guests were sitting around the table discussing life.

One man, a CEO, decided to explain the problem with education. He argued, "What's a kid going to learn from someone who decided his best option in life was to become only a teacher?"

To stress his point he said to another guest: "You're a teacher, Mrs Sharma. Be honest. What do you make?"

Teacher Mrs Sharma, who had a reputation for honesty and frankness replied, "You want to know what I make?" She paused for a second, then began:

"Well, I make kids work harder than they ever thought they could.

I make a C+ feel like the Medal of Honour winner.

I make kids sit through 40 minutes of class time when their parents can't make them sit for 5 min. without an I-Pod, Game Cube or movie rental."

(She paused again and looked at each and every person at the table.)

"You want to know what I make?

I make kids wonder.
I make them question.



I make them apologize and mean it.
I make them have respect and take responsibility for their actions.
I teach them how to write and then I make them write. Keyboarding isn't everything.
I make them read, read, read.
I make them show all their work in math.
They use their God-given brain, not the man-made calculator.
I make my students from other countries learn every thing they need to know about India while preserving their unique cultural identity.
I make my classroom a place where all my students feel safe.
Finally, I make them understand that if they use the gifts they were given, work hard, and follow their hearts, they can succeed in life."

(Mrs Sharma paused one last time and then continued.)

"Then, when people try to judge me by what I make, with me knowing money isn't everything, I can hold my head up high and pay no attention because they are ignorant.

You want to know what I make?

I make a difference in all your lives, educating kids and preparing them to become CEOs, and doctors and engineers...

What do you make Mr CEO? Only money?"

His jaw dropped; he went silent.

Always be proud be a teacher.



How your gut health affects your whole body

You have many bacteria in your body. In fact, you have more of them than you have cells. Most are good for you. The ones found in your gut not only help you digest foods, they work all over your body and can be good for your physical and mental health.

Gut microbiome

This is home base for the bacteria in your digestive tract. Here, they help you break down food and turn nutrients into things your body can use. They stop growing when they run out of food, so you'll only have what you need.

Fighting the good fight

In the gut microbiome, the "good" bacteria do more than just help with digestion. They help keep your "bad" bacteria in check. They multiply so often that the unhealthy kind don't have space to grow. When you have a healthy balance of bacteria in your gut, it's called equilibrium.

Unhealthy balance

Studies have found that if you have too much of a certain kind of bad bacteria in your gut microbiome, you're more likely to have:

- Crohn's disease
- Ulcerative colitis
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)

Researchers are looking into new treatments for them that target the bacteria in the gut microbiome.

Gut bacteria and your heart

Some kinds of gut bacteria may be part of the link cholesterol has to heart disease. When you eat foods like red meat or eggs, those bacteria make a chemical that your liver turns into something called TMAO (trimethylamine-N-oxide). TMAO may help cholesterol build up in your blood vessels. Researchers are studying a natural substance called DMB that's in olive and grapeseed oil. They think it might keep your bacteria from making TMAO.

Gut bacteria and your kidneys

Too much TMAO also may lead to chronic kidney disease. People who have the disease don't get rid of TMAO like they should. That surplus can lead to heart disease. Researchers think it's possible that too much TMAO might make you more likely to have chronic kidney disease in the first place.

Gut bacteria and your brain

Your brain sends messages all over your body.

Researchers believe your gut may talk back. Studies show that the balance of bacteria in the gut microbiome may affect your emotions and the way your brain processes information from your senses, like sights, sounds, flavors, or textures.

Scientists suspect that changes in that balance may play a role in conditions like autism spectrum disorder, anxiety, and depression, as well as chronic pain.

Gut bacteria and obesity

An unhealthy balance in your gut microbiome may cause crossed signals from your brain when it comes to feeling hungry or full. Researchers think there may be a link to the pituitary gland, which makes hormones that help set your appetite. That gland can affect the balance of bacteria in your gut, too. Some studies on treating obesity are exploring this link.

Can you change your gut bacteria?

You get your gut microbiome at birth, and the world around you affects it as you grow up. It's also influenced by what you eat. That's why it can be different depending on where you live -- and why you may be able to tilt the balance a bit.

Probiotics

Found in some foods, these are "good" bacteria like the ones already in your gut. They can add to the bacteria in your intestinal tract and help keep everything in balance. But they're not all the same. Each type works in its own way and can have different effects on your body.

How can probiotics help?

They can make your immune system stronger. They may boost gastrointestinal health, too, especially if you have something like irritable bowel syndrome. Some probiotics also may help ease allergy symptoms and help with lactose intolerance. But because our gut microbiomes are unique, if and how they work can be different for everyone. And some experts feel more research is needed.

Sources of probiotics

You can find them in dairy products like yogurt and aged cheeses. Look on the ingredients list for live cultures of bacteria like bifidobacterial and lactobacilli. They're also in fermented vegetables, like kimchi and sauerkraut, and pickled vegetables, like onions and gherkins.

Prebiotics

Think of these as a food source for probiotics. They



may help your body take in calcium better and boost the growth of helpful bacteria in your gut.

They're found in fruits and vegetables, like:

- Bananas
- Onions
- Garlic
- Leeks
- Asparagus
- Artichokes
- Soybeans

You can also get them in foods with whole wheat.

Synbiotics

Probiotics can boost the growth of good bacteria, and prebiotics are good for probiotics. When you combine the two, it's a synbiotic. The idea behind them is to help probiotics live longer. You can make synbiotic combinations with things like bananas and yogurt or stir-fry asparagus with tempeh.

Other ways to change gut bacteria

There may be other ways to change your gut microbiome and treat things tied to its balance. For example, fecal transplants (exactly what it sounds like) change your gut bacteria to treat things like C. diff and ulcerative colitis. A device called deep transcranial magnetic stimulation (dTMS) uses a coil put on the scalp to stimulate the brain and change gut bacteria. It shows promise for treating obesity.

Neha Pathak, WebMD

That's Life

Mimetic Desire

Have you ever seen children at a party playing with balloons. One child suddenly grabs a red balloon and yells: "This balloon is mine!" Inadvertently, all the children drop their balloons and fight over this red balloon. A very dumbed down example of what René Girard calls "mimetic desire".

A lot of our desires don't emerge from within, but from 'outside'. We import our most powerful desires from imitating the desires of other people.

In fact, the entire advertising industry is founded on the exploitation of borrowed desire. Human desire is not a linear

process, where a person autonomously desires an inherently desirable object. Rather, we desire according to the desire of others. If we are not aware, others influence us on what to desire. And this is amplified on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram which are excellent conduits of mimetic desire.

French thinker Montesquieu explained it beautifully "If we only wanted to be happy it would be easy; but we want to be happier than other people, which is almost always difficult, since we think them happier than they are."

Getting clear about what really matters to you is incredibly important, and not as simple as it appears.

Don't follow the desires of another. Understand that what makes them feel rich and fulfilled is not the same for you. Look for your own happiness & stay blessed.

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'Bell Bottom' to 'Prithviraj': 6 Bollywood movies based on true events releasing in 2021

In the last few years, Indian cinema has created some gripping feature films like Mission Mangal, Uri: The Surgical Strike, Raazi, Gold, Padman and many others based on real-life events. 2021 is no different, according to Priyadarshini Patwa of gqindia.com, as makers are gearing up to release some of the much-awaited movies based on true events.



1. The Big Bull

Set in the late 1980s-early 1990s, *The Big Bull* stars Abhishek Bachchan in the lead as a stockbroker who rocked the Dalal Street and made history. The plot of the film will certainly remind you of Hansal Mehta's critically acclaimed series *Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story*. Directed by Kookie Gulati, the film also stars Ileana D'Cruz, Ram Kapoor, Sumit Vats, Sohumi Shah, Nikita Dutta and Lekha Tripathi in pivotal roles.

Release Date: 8 April 2021

2. Bell Bottom

Starring Akshay Kumar, Vaani Kapoor, Huma Qureshi, Lara Dutta and Adil Hussain, *Bell Bottom* is one of the most anticipated movies of the year. Directed by Ranjit M Tewari, the spy thriller is based on a 1980s plane hijack and portrays the story of India's forgotten heroes. Kumar will play the role of a RAW agent and Lara Dutta will essay the role of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Release Date: 28 May 2021

3. '83

The sports drama '83 stars Ranveer Singh as cricketer Kapil Dev - the captain of the Indian Cricket Team during the 1983 Cricket World Cup. Directed by Kabir Khan, the movie also stars Deepika Padukone as Romi Bhatia (Kapil Dev's wife), Tahir Raj Bhasin, Saqib Saleem, Harrry Sandhu, Ammy Virk, Jiiva, Pankaj Tripathi, Boman Irani, Nishant Dahiya, Sahil Khattar, and Amrita Puri.

Release Date: 4 June 2021

4. Maidaan

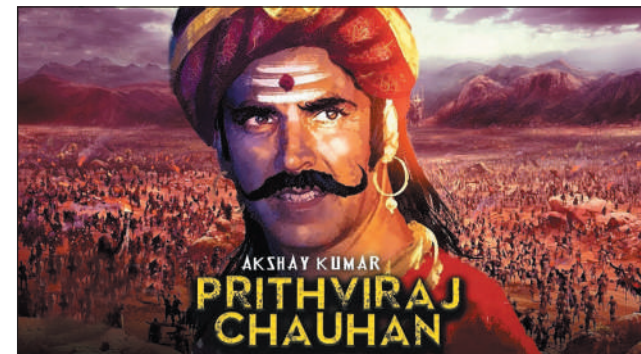


Ajay Devgn's *Maidaan* revisits history and tells us the story of the time that was said to be the golden era of Indian football. The film captures various aspects that made the decade - from 1952 until 1962 - the most remarkable one in Indian football history. Ajay Devgn will be seen donning the role of coach Syed Abdul Rahim under whose leadership the Indian football team won the

Asian Games in 1951 and 1962. Directed by Amit Sharma, the film also stars Keerthy Suresh. *Maidaan* is likely to clash at the box office with SS Rajamouli's *RRR*.

Release Date: 13 October 2021

5. Prithviraj



Yash Raj Films' upcoming movie *Prithviraj* stars Akshay Kumar and Manushi Chhillar in the lead. Directed by Dr Chandraprakash Dwivedi, the movie marks the Bollywood debut of Chhillar and also stars Sanjay Dutt and Sonu Sood in pivotal roles. The historic action drama is a biopic of legendary warrior king Prithviraj Chauhan. The story revolves around the First Battle of Tarain led by Chauhan. "It is truly an honour that I will be playing the role of one of the most fearless and courageous kings of India, Prithviraj Chauhan. As a nation, we should always celebrate our heroes and immortalise what they did to propagate the values that Indians lived by. *Prithviraj* is our attempt to bring to light his valour and daredevilry," Akshay Kumar told IANS.

Release Date: 5 November 2021

6. Bhuj: The Pride of India

Set during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, *Bhuj: The Pride of India* revolves around IAF Squadron Leader Vijay Karnik who was in-charge of the Bhuj airport. During the war, the IAF airstrip at Bhuj was destroyed in combat. But Karnika, with help of 300 women, reconstructed the base that ultimately played a vital role in winning the war. The movie also marks the Bollywood debut of actress South Indian actress Pranitha Subhash.

Release Date: In 2021

Tanushree Dutta to make Bollywood comeback

Tanushree Dutta celebrated her 37th birthday on March 19. The year is special for the actress as she is preparing for her comeback in the industry and for that she has lost 18 kg already. She recently shared a number of photos on Instagram showing her amazing transformation. She also talked about her weight loss journey.

Tanushree says that after her transformation she has been getting a couple of projects and is excited for her comeback in Bollywood and South films. The actress also revealed that can foray into international cinema in future. However, currently she is confused about finding the right representation as Hollywood is a new territory for her, reports India Today.

Tanushree Dutta is enjoying love and compliments

Tanushree Dutta made headlines after years of oblivion in 2018 when she spoke against Nana Patekar in #MeToo movement. The actress is now moving past that incident and is now trying to start afresh. She has started working on her looks and has shed 18 kg already. She has been receiving positive feedback for her weight loss and is loving it. In an interview with News 18, Tanushree said, "I'm enjoying all the love, adulation, and compliments that



are coming my way from fans, well-wishers, and industry folks in Bollywood."

She added, "Looks are an important aspect of our profession and all successful artistes are mindful of their health and fitness. I'm getting screen ready again and that's what people are witnessing in my life journey. Isn't it exciting to witness someone rise from the grave? To resurrect from ashes despite being written off multiple times over body, looks, acceptability?"

What did Tanushree say about her comeback?

Talking about her comeback, Tanushree Dutta said, "I have been flooded with quite a few work offers and calls lately so that feels really good and vindicating."

She is open to opportunities in Hollywood films, but currently concentrating on Indian projects as she feels more comfortable here. She said, "There's a possibility I can foray into the international cinema at some point in the future as well but I'm confused about finding the right representation as Hollywood is new territory."

She added, "I have much to offer this world as an artiste and as a human being."

After winning the Miss India pageant in 2004, Tanushree Dutta made her debut in Bollywood with *Chocolate* in 2005. However, after working in a couple of films she bid adieu to the industry.

Rubina Dilaik-Abhinav Shukla to Charu Asopa-Rajeev Sen TV couples who gave their marriage a second chance

It's not always that married couples get to live their happily-ever-after. Sometimes problems creep in and differences seem insurmountable. There are some who give in and get divorced. There are others who manage to overcome their differences and reconcile. Here's taking a look at television couples who gave their marriage a second chance, as reported by Times of India.



Rubina Dilaik and Abhinav Shukla

In the house of *Bigg Boss 14*, Rubina Dilaik shocked everyone when she revealed that Abhinav and she were on the verge of getting divorced. They decided to be a part of *Bigg Boss* to test if they'd be able to sail through and give their relationship one last chance. The couple, however, came out stronger.

In his exclusive interview with ETimes TV after *BB*, Abhinav shared, "Everything is fine now. There's no divorce happening. The show made us stronger and strengthened our bond. When we were discussing the show before giving a nod to it, I jokingly told Rubina that once you see the fights inside the *BB* house, you might forget the little fights we had."

Post the show, Rubina and Abhinav are pretty much together. In fact, they are going to be seen in Neha Kakkar's upcoming song.

Charu Asopa and Rajeev Sen



Problems between Charu and Rajeev began to surface soon after they got married in June 2019. It became apparent when they deleted all their posts together and unfollowed each other on social media. Not only this, during the lockdown, Rajeev left his Mumbai home and the couple did not celebrate their first wedding anniversary together.

He claimed, "I guess someone close to Charu is brainwashing her, because she is a simple and innocent girl. It could be someone from her so-called huge friend circle."

Charu in another interview to BT said, "I don't know if we are together or not. All I can say right

now is he is Delhi and I am here in Mumbai. What will happen in future I am waiting for God to show me the path. If there is light at the end of the tunnel, I will surely see."

However, by the end of 2020, the couple reconciled. They went on a family holiday to Dubai and are a part of all the special occasions together.

Amit Tandon and Ruby Tandon

Amit and Ruby got married in 2007. They have a daughter Jiyana. The couple went through a rough patch in their marriage wherein they were set to get divorced. However, things took a turn when Ruby, a dermatologist, was arrested for misbehaving with DHA (Dubai Health Authorities) in 2017. This got the couple back together and closer than before.

In his exclusive interview to ETimes TV in 2019, Amit had shared, "I think we went through a lot of ups and downs in a very short span of time and it taught us many things. We realised that we are better together as a couple and we should give each other a chance. This is the best thing we can do for each other and our child."

He had also spoken about how their separation took a toll on their daughter Jiyana's schooling and mindset. This led the couple to reconcile and give their marriage another chance.

Keith Sequeira and Rochelle Rao



The couple took up a marriage counselling course during the lockdown to keep the spark of their marriage alive. Rochelle shared that it helped to bring them closer. "It changed our relationship in a great way, like there were a few things that we had both said and done to each other in the last couple of years that were misunderstood and not processed properly.

"This gave us the opportunity to just clear the air without targeting or making it look like a fight. It was actually very sweet because we sorted out matters in a healthy way. So that changed our opinion of each other," she told BT.

Zarina Wahab and Aditya Pancholi

Television actress Zarina Wahab and Aditya Pancholi tied the knot in 1986. Despite reports of Aditya's affairs with Pooja Bedi and Kangana Ranaut, she has stood strong in support of her husband.

Even though Aditya admitted to having an affair with Kangana, it didn't ruffle their marriage. The couple continue to be together and it's been more than three decades that they have been married to each other.

YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

A touch of vanity will have to be fought because it'll encourage you to want to be right toward and against all. Excellent financial perspectives - you'll succeed in increasing your income; your material situation should start to improve.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 11, 12, 17, 21, 30

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

This week will be good and even very good for flirting, for love and, why not, for marriage too. Very worrisome financial problems. In case of a litigious affair, ask for an expert's advice instead of trying to sort it out by yourself. You'll lack objectivity.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 14, 15, 20, 23, 36

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

Unexpected encounters could very well lead to profound friendships. You'll be looking towards the future and you'll enthusiastically follow the direction of the wind. Delightful harmony with your spouse or partner.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 7, 10, 15, 18, 30

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

Your life as a couple will be very pleasant if you pay attention to your remarks. You'll show much sympathy and kindness to people around you. It'll be stronger than you: you won't be able to resist the pleasure of buying everything that you like.

Lucky Numbers: 13, 15, 17, 23, 26, 30

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

Your relationships with the other sex will be tinted with romanticism. Think about getting rid of those relations that don't bring anything to you and that only make you waste your time and even your money; only keep those of whom you're sure and who share certain interests with you.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 11, 12, 17, 19, 30

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

You'll feel confident and sure of yourself. The obstacles that were strewn on your road will gradually disappear. Many positive influxes for the improvement of your relations with your partner; the atmosphere will be delightful if you show kindness to the other one.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 4, 18, 21, 24, 27

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

You'll have the possibility of overcoming obstacles which have very much delayed your progress in your work. Be careful of your too great susceptibility, which is likely to provoke emptiness around you.

Lucky Numbers: 20, 25, 26, 30, 33, 36

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

Efforts will have to be made to overcome your usual reserve and express your feelings: that's what will be expected of you. Heart wise, you'll feel a great need for tenderness; don't look somewhere else for happiness that's just simply at your home.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 7, 18, 20, 27, 30

Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

Disregarding your natural reserve, this time you'll be able to show boldness, which will bring you success in more than one field. But you'll have a hard time establishing a dialogue with your family circle; misunderstanding and incomprehension will multiply.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 15, 22, 33, 36, 40

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

You'll be confronted with complicated and painful circumstances; be confident, everything will work out to the best of your interests. At work, someone will try to tread on your path; put the intruder in place immediately.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 11, 20, 21, 33, 39

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

A chaotic week: in love as well as in business, you'll be absent-minded and will excel in muddling up the simplest things. A favourable week to move or to fix up the home. Above all don't mix up your emotions and money: it would be an explosive mixture.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 9, 11, 15, 20, 30

Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

You'll stake on the long term in your professional as well as sentimental matters. If you have to make a choice, your preference will go to the one that's most likely to resist time. You'll manage to settle a litigious matter definitely.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 5, 12, 11, 20, 29

CINE 12

Vendredi 26 Mars - 21.15

UFO/OVNI: Sur La Piste Des Extraterrestres

Avec: Alex Sharp, Gillian Anderson, Ella Purnell



CINE 12

Samedi 27 Mars - 21.15

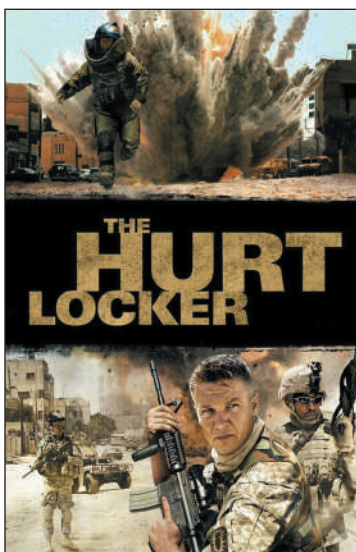
Misconduct

Stars: Josh Duhamel, Anthony Hopkins, Al Pacino



CINE 12

Dimanche 28 Mars - 21.15



vendredi 26 mars

MBC 1

07.00 Dessin Anime
08.45 Film: A Doggone Hollywood
10.15 Serial: Magic Mania
11.00 Mag: Garden Makeover
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
12.55 Mag: Urban Gardens
13.55 MBC Production
14.30 D.Anime: Johnny Test
15.07 D.Anime: The Garfield Show
15.19 D.Anime: Kulipari An Army...
15.42 D.Anime: HTDT - Humpty...
16.02 D.Anime: La Famille Blaireau
17.00 Serial: Heidi, Bienvenida
17.30 Live - Covid-19
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.20 Prod: Mauritius Dancing...
21.10 Serial: When Calls The Heart
23.00 Le Journal

MBC 2

10.00 Serial: Ki Jaana Mein Kaun
11.05 Serial: Zun Mureed
12.04 Film: Natsamrat
14.04 DDI Magazine
15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha
15.21 Serial: Aamhi Doghi
15.42 Serial: Mooga Manasulu
16.07 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal
16.30 Serial: Suno Chanda
16.56 Serial: Achra Ke Moti
17.09 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
17.30 Serial: Chhanchhan
18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone
18.30 Prod: Goute A Tout S4
19.00 Mag: Sur Mesure
19.30 DDI Magazine
20.00 Serial: Band Khirkiyan
20.42 Mag: Urdu Program
21.28 Local: Urdu Programme - Noor-E-Iman

MBC 3

06.00 Mag: Eco India
06.26 Mag: Shift
06.38 Mag: Carnet De Sante
07.55 Doc: Fresh Fruit Fakeers
08.46 Doc: 360 GEO
09.42 Doc: Antarctica
10.24 Doc: Seeds Of Profit
12.06 Mag: Border Crossing
12.33 Mag: Le Saviez vous?
12.39 Mag: Tomorrow Today
14.01 Doc: 360 GEO
14.52 Doc: Antarctica
15.34 Doc: Seeds Of Profit
16.20 Mag: Eco India
16.46 Mag: Shift
17.14 Mag: Border Crossing
17.43 Mag: Le Saviez Vous?
18.00 Doc: China's Gateway To...
20.05 Doc: Guilt-Free Brew
20.30 Local: News (English)
20.40 Doc: Wildlife Heroes

Cine 12

01.30 Film: Drone
02.58 Serial: The Good Doctor
03.40 Film: Bleeding Steel
05.20 Tele: Muneca Brava
06.02 Serial: 19-2
06.44 Serial: Island Doctor
09.00 Serial: The Magicians
09.45 Tele: Daniella
10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor
11.00 Serial: The Good Doctor
12.00 Film: Bleeding Steel
13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava
14.45 Serial: Island Doctor
16.40 Serial: The Magicians
17.23 Serial: 19-2
18.05 Tele: Daneilla
19.10 Tele: Tanto Amor
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Serial: Killjoys
21.15 Film: UFO/OVNI: Sur La Piste Des Extraterrestres

Bollywood TV

08.00 Film: Lekar Hum Deewana Dil
12.05 / 19.54 - Sanjivani
12.30 / 20.11 - Radha Krishna
12.48 / 20.32 - Agniphera
13.07 / 21.09 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai
13.29 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek
13.49 / 21.46 - Naagin S3
14.35 / 21.59 - Ikyawann
14.51 / 22.25 - Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
15.14 Film: Karo Time Pass Year
Starring: Tiku Talsaniya, Ketaki Dave and Piyush Der
18.00 Live: Samacher
18.30 Kundali Bhagya
18.52 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka
19.11 Mere Angne Mein

samedi 27 mars

06.00 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà
07.12 D.Anime: Trollhunters
08.23 D.Anime: The Minimaghty...
12.00 Le Journal
12.30 Tele: Daniella
14.45 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies
15.00 D.Anime: The Garfield Show
15.12 D.Anime: The Minimaghty...
15.46 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies
15.48 D.Anime: Robot Trains
16.13 D.Anime: La Famille Blaireau
16.25 D.Anime: Baby Boss
16.50 Serial: Nowhere Boys
17.16 Local: Info En Langue Des...
17.30 Live-Covid 19
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Entertainment: Dance
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.20 Local: RDV Muzikal
21.10 Film: A Kind Of Magic
23.00 Le Journal

07.00 Film: Giddh
Starring: Om Puri, Smita Patil, Nana Patekar
08.42 Mag: DDI Magazine
10.00 Bade Acchelagte Hai
12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhyia Bhare
12.22 Serial: Mooga Manasulu
12.45 Serial: High School
13.07 Annakodiyum Ainthus Pengalum
13.30 Serial: Anu Pallavi
15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha
15.20 Film: Ladies Tailor
Starring: Rajpal Yadav, Kim Sharma
17.18 Mag: DDI Magazine
18.44 Mag: Sur Mesure
19.44 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha
20.15 Serial: Bitti Business
20.45 Film: Haunted Villa LonaVala
Starring Balraj Solanki, Rupa Banerjee

06.00 Doc: China's Gateway To...
06.42 Mag: Global 3000
07.08 Mag: Le Saviez Vous?
07.15 Mag: Euromaxx
07.44 Doc: Wildlife Heroes
08.36 Doc: Greetings From Planet
09.29 Doc: Albania's Last Trains
10.11 Doc: Our Friend The Atom
11.02 Doc: China's Gateway To...
11.39 Mag: Arts And Culture
12.18 Mag: Euromaxx
12.47 Doc: Wildlife Heroes
13.31 Doc: Greetings From Planet...
14.31 Doc: Albania's Last Trains
20.05 Doc: Printing Out The World
20.30 Local: News (English)
20.40 Doc: La Ville Passe Au Vert
21.32 Doc: Destinations
23.46 Fine-Tuning The Climate
00.28 Doc: Asteroids
01.10 Doc: Amazing Gardens
01.36 Doc: Beneath The Waves

01.26 Film: UFO/OVNI: Sur La Piste
02.51 Serial: Dynasty 2
03.31 Film: Cassidy Red
05.02 Tele: Esmeraldas
05.43 Serial: Killjoys
06.50 Film: Hope Dances
08.35 Serial: Midnight, Texas
09.11 Serial: Shades Of Blue
10.40 Film: UFO/OVNI: Sur La Piste
12.15 Serial: Dynasty 2
13.19 Serial: The Good Doctor
15.05 Tele: Amanda
15.48 Tele: Muneca Brava
16.30 Mag: Hollywood On Set
17.00 Serial: Killjoys
17.45 Film: A Kind Of Magic
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Series: Killjoys
21.15 Film: Misconduct
22.56 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
09.47 Motu Patlu
10.20 Siddhi Vinayak
12.00 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
14.00 Sanjivani
16.00 Pavitra Rishta
18.30 Film: Khullam Khulla Pyar Karen
Star: Govinda, Preity Zinta, Prem Chopra
20.52 Serial: Siya Ke Ram
21.34 Serial: Naagin

dimanche 28 mars

06.00 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà...
06.26 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis A..
08.11 D.Anime: The Minimaghty Kid
09.30 Mag: Future Mag
10.00 Local: Zafan Nou Zil
12.00 Le Journal
12.40 Tele: Daniella
15.05 Prod: Goute A Tout Season 4
15.33 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies
15.35 D.Anime: The Garfield Show
16.01 D.Anime: Robot Trains
16.28 D.Anime: La Famille Blaireau
16.52 D.Anime: Baby Boss
17.30 Live-Covid 19
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Local: Yeh Shaam Mastani
19.30 Le Journal
20.10 Local: Groove??In - Kafe Kiltir
21.15 Film: House Of Cards
23.00 Le Journal

07.00 Film: Mangalsutra
Starring: Rekha, Anant Nag, Prema Narayan
09.00 DDI Magazine
10.00 Local Production
11.00 Serial: Oru Kai Osai
11.22 Serial: Santoshi Maa
12.00 Film: Ek Hi Raasta
Starring - Ajay Devgn, Raveena Tandon, Raza Murad
14.16 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
17.51 Serial: Kisna
18.30 Local: Tipa Tipa Nu Avance
19.30 DDI Magazine
20.00 Serial: Mann Mein Vishwas..
20.50 Serial: CID

06.00 Doc: Amazing Gardens
06.26 Doc: Beneath The Waves
06.52 Mag: Vue D'en Haut
07.46 Doc: La Ville Passe Au Vert
08.37 Doc: Destination
10.15 Doc: Can The Citarum Still...
11.10 Doc: Amazing Gardens
11.53 Other: 44th International...
13.53 Mag: Vue D'en Haut
14.18 Mag: Check In
17.17 Doc: Can The Citarum Still...
18.00 Mag: Tendance XXI
18.30 Doc: Ville En Fête
20.05 Doc: Too Good For The...
20.40 Doc: Comme Une Envie De...
21.32 Doc: Destination
21.45 Doc: Mr. Brown
22.37 Doc: Pablo Escobar??S
23.19 Doc: The Mennonites
00.01 Mag: Tendance XXI
00.27 Doc: Ville En Fête

03.16 Serial: Hawaai Five-0
03.57 Film: Shadow People
05.04 Tele: Esmeraldas
05.46 Serial: Killjoys
06.32 Film: Avenging The Throne
08.30 Serial: Midnight, Texas
09.11 Film: A Kind Of Magic
10.41 Film: Zapped
12.16 Serial: Hawaii Five 5-0
13.03 Serial: The Good Doctor
15.05 Telenovela: Amanda
15.45 Tele: Muneca Brava
16.29 Mag: Close Up
17.00 Serial: Killjoys
17.45 Serial: Hawaii Five-0
18.30 Serial: Macgyver
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Serial: The Good Doctor
21.15 Film: The Hurt Locker
23.26 Tele: Dulce Amor

00.40 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
02.19 Sanjivani
04.06 Pavitra Rishta
05.33 Film: Khullam Khulla Pyar Karen
Starring: Govinda, Preity Zinta, Prem Chopra
08.01 Motu Patlu
08.11 Karn Sangini
10.04 Jaana Na Dil Se Door
11.44 Piya Albela
13.50 Agniphera
15.41 Bin Kuch Kahe
17.32 Punar Vivaah
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Film: Hindustani Film
20.45 Entertainment: Dance
21.26 Bade Acche Lagte Hai
23.16 Piya Albela

MBC 2

Samedi 27 Mars - 20.45

Stars: Balraj Solanki, Rupa Banerjee



Dimanche 26 Mars - 15.15

Stars: Tiku Talsaniya, Ketaki Dave and Piyush Der



L'encanaïllement

La population, dans sa grande majorité, adhère aux concepts de responsabilité et de devoir, les limites de la volonté individuelle et de l'intérêt collectif, et la nécessité d'une entente par le dialogue dans les rapports sociaux civilisés. Mais il faut veiller à ce maintien de l'équilibre nécessaire...



Nita Chicooree-Mercier

La propension à s'emporter facilement entrave la compréhension, refuse le dialogue, et fait obstacle à une entente possible, et à l'extrême, le recours à la violence physique rend caduque l'utilité du langage.

Accepter ses torts, et présenter des excuses, si ce n'est pas trop demander, est hors de question pour un individu qui érige sa seule volonté en loi du moment et défie, par le sabre, l'autorité des forces de l'ordre.

Et ce n'est pas la première sortie musclée contre les policiers à Goodlands. C'était bien sur ces bonnes terres, il y a trois ans, qu'une bande de jeunes gens s'amusait à simuler une course de motos sur la route. Ils avaient refusé d'obtempérer à l'injonction de la police, et une échauffourée d'un des leurs avec un agent les avait fait revenir en bande de fauves, et à coup de barre de fer, ils avaient saccagé le domicile du policier.

Les gens de la localité s'étaient portés bénévoles pour faire réparer la maison. Le ministère des Infrastructures publiques s'était chargé de trouver une piste éloignée des habitations, où la montée d'adrénaline faisait bon ménage avec la pétarade des motos.

Cette fois-ci, confinement oblige, c'est dans la cour qu'on assène des coups de sabre à un policier venu intimer aux responsables l'ordre de revoir à la baisse les décibels de la musique dont ils font profiter, contre leur gré, aux gens de l'entourage.

Espace public, espace privé

Au lieu de calmer les mâles excités, la propriétaire, en affirmant son statut de manière vulgaire, projette toute la médiocrité de pensée de ceux qui manient mal, ou ignorent tout simplement, les concepts de responsabilité et droit, contrainte et liberté, et les règles de civilité qui permettent le fonctionnement civilisé de la société.

J'ai raconté, dans cette colonne, l'anecdote de cet homme d'affaires qui se permit de garer sa voiture sur la plage de Mont Choisy à deux mètres du lagon afin



“La vulgarisation des voyages, facilitée à l'étranger par un pouvoir d'achat accru, s'est accompagnée d'un relâchement dans le comportement chez l'adulte, et chez l'enfant-roi, une tendance à prendre la salle d'attente de l'aéroport pour un terrain de jeux où on se pourchasse joyeusement. Et dans l'avion, n'en parlons pas ! On joue, on crie et on hurle sous le regard bien veillant des parents. Une contamination qui n'a pas encore atteint le hall de l'aéroport SSR ni les avions d'AM pour l'instant. Mais elle est bien visible dans les allées des supermarchés où les enfants se donnent à cœur joie à courir dans tous les sens, à hurler ou à rouler par terre dans l'indifférence totale des parents de la jeune génération de trentenaires...”

que son épouse et ses deux filles soient épargnées de l'effort physique de marcher quelques mètres pour se mettre à l'eau. Lorsque je lui fis remarquer que ce genre de comportement est inadmissible et qu'il devrait se garer comme tout le monde sur le parking public, il déclina son patronyme, et frappant la poitrine de son doigt joufflu, martela le très arrogant **'Vous savez qui je suis, moi ? Moi, les amendes de Rs2000, je peux payer un tas.'**

Tout ce qu'il ne fallait pas dire... La réponse ne tarda pas : **'Peu importe, vous allez faire comme tout le monde, sinon, j'appelle la police.'** Il finit par obtempérer. 'Vous vous rendez compte de l'exemple que vous donnez à vos enfants ?' On aurait aimé éviter de faire la leçon à un adulte devant ses enfants car cela bouscule les codes sociaux et les règles de la bienséance.

De temps à autre, d'autres continuent de se garer sous les filaos, et le rappel à l'ordre émis sur un ton mou par le policier dépêché sur place, tel que **'Rendez un service, allez mettre votre voiture sur le parking, s'il vous plaît'**, est peu susceptible d'être efficace. On ne peut s'empêcher de faire remarquer à l'agent qu'il ne risque pas de se faire obéir en s'abstenant de faire preuve de fermeté.

De voir les gens délimiter un espace en famille entre les filaos attachés les uns aux

autres par les draps fleuris et paréos bigarrés est chose courante. Mais souvent, le banc public est annexé dans le territoire improvisé, le temps d'un pique-nique. Ils vous regardent, ébahis, lorsque vous leur faites la remarque, et mettent un peu de temps à accepter de bonne foi que, si le banc est public, ils ne peuvent pas le privatiser pour leur seul confort.

Un jeune homme crut être dans ses droits de mettre la musique à tue-tête sur la plage à six heures du matin, l'heure du jogging des riverains. Il se braqua à la première remarque et insista sur son droit de faire comme bon lui semble dans un lieu public. Il se borna à ne pas comprendre que les autres n'ont pas à subir sa musique et qu'il n'était pas chez lui dans son espace privé. Le genre qui entend raison seulement sous la menace d'une intervention policière.

La négation de l'espace public

De ce manque de retenue, voire même de vulgarité, qu'on a vu se répandre depuis des années dans les grandes villes modernes à l'étranger, on croyait que nous en serions préservés pour un certain temps dans la petite société conservatrice de l'île, régie par bien de codes qu'on ne défait pas au gré des caprices individuels.

Que nenni ! Les incivilités ont fini par s'inviter au fil des années. Exemples : les conversations téléphoniques à haute voix,

peu discrètes sur le trottoir ou sur la route devant le domicile privé, pimentées d'un postillon d'injures terminant par *mama*, si besoin est, à l'arrêt d'autobus, dans le transport public où la musique du téléphone pour tous est décidée unilatéralement.

La vulgarisation des voyages, facilitée à l'étranger par un pouvoir d'achat accru, s'est accompagnée d'un relâchement dans le comportement chez l'adulte, et chez l'enfant-roi, une tendance à prendre la salle d'attente de l'aéroport pour un terrain de jeux où on se pourchasse joyeusement. Et dans l'avion, n'en parlons pas ! On joue, on crie et on hurle sous le regard bienveillant des parents. Une contamination qui n'a pas encore atteint le hall de l'aéroport SSR ni les avions d'AM pour l'instant. Mais elle est bien visible dans les allées des supermarchés où les enfants se donnent à cœur joie à courir dans tous les sens, à hurler ou à rouler par terre pour signifier leur mécontentement dans l'indifférence totale des parents de la jeune génération de trentenaires, peu soucieux de la nuisance sonore qui pourrait incommoder les autres.

Ces incivilités ordinaires ont en commun, avec les agressions musclées des individus réfractaires à un rappel à l'ordre, le refus de reconnaître aux autres le partage civilisé de l'espace public. Les rares policiers qui jouent aux justiciers en se livrant à un passage à tabac disproportionné d'un individu qui leur tient tête, comme l'incident dans un quartier 'sensible' pendant le confinement l'an dernier, sont également condamnables.

Il faut espérer que la violence contre les forces de l'ordre, diffusées sur France 24 à Maurice, ne serve pas de modèle à casser-du-flic, défolement favori d'une certaine racaille en mal de sensation forte. Sinon, le mot *sovaz*, mot passe-partout tiré du vocabulaire limité dont dispose le parler kreol, et utilisé pour désigner le comportement le plus bénin, du jeune homme qui fait le galant à celui qui a une mentalité d'arriérés, et à l'extrême, celui qui cogne pour un rien, risque de trouver tout son sens si certains s'autorisent à venir aux coups et à tuer au gré de leurs caprices. Les "sauvageons" et "sauvages", on en récolterait par grappes. Déjà, le cutter, couteau, sabre, et récemment le revolver, servent à régler disputes, adultères, guerres des bandes et tutti quanti.

On n'est pas à un stade de "sauvagerie" dans les rapports du public avec les autorités. Le laxisme est loin d'être à l'ordre du jour dans le maintien de l'ordre et de la paix par les autorités, et la population - dans sa grande majorité - adhère aux concepts de responsabilité et devoir, les limites de la volonté individuelle et l'intérêt collectif, et la nécessité d'une entente par le dialogue dans les rapports sociaux civilisés. Mais il faut veiller à ce maintien de l'équilibre nécessaire et, entre autres moyens, la MBC pourrait, dans son rendez-vous quotidien avec la population, être mise à contribution pour expliquer des concepts qui ne sont pas bien compris par certains membres du public.