

# MAURITIUS TIMES

• True leadership lies in guiding others to success. In ensuring that everyone is performing at their best, doing the work they are pledged to do and doing it well. -Bill Owens

Qs & As



**“ICTA is purely and simply sowing the germs of pre-censorship in the realm of social media”**

By LEX ➡ See Page 8-9

Covid-related deaths at the dialysis centres

## Untold, avoidable suffering



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee ➡ See Page 3



## The Covid-19 Vaccines Conundrum

*Time is of the essence if we want to contain and overcome the distress, death toll and dire socio-economic consequences of the pandemic*

By Mrinal Roy ➡ See Page 4



# Our Sliding Image

**A**s a country we seem to be losing our sense of perspective as regards our future, which means that we may be compromising the prospects of generations to come for jobs and livelihoods. For a start there are so many white elephant type projects that have been undertaken at great cost and are not yielding the returns that were expected, and are not benefiting in any way the population at large – an example much flagged is the sports complex at Cote d'Or. On the other hand there are the enormous sums that have been diverted in the matter of procurement of medical supplies, and the opacity about the so-called Safe City deal. All of this add up to the piling debt that the country faces. And if we add the catalogue of wastages that another Annual Audit Report has flagged, we are literally sitting on a powder keg that will explode any moment if we do not come to our senses before then.

We are not out of the Covid crisis despite the falling curve, that's for sure if we go by what is happening elsewhere even in the developed countries where experts are warning that they have to be prepared for further surges despite the vaccine rollouts and other measures being implemented. Moreover, social and law and order problems continue to plague us when we would have expected that there would be a better sense of responsibility among people in these already strained moments that we are going through.

We were already on the EU black list, and there is no saying when we will be cleared of this tag. On top of that we have adjudged by a Swedish agency as being among the top ten countries in the autocracy group. To add insult to injury, *Reporters Sans Frontiers* has downgraded us by five ranks.

And now government has come up with a proposal to amend the ICT Act against which there has been an uproar in the population, with those in the know drawing attention to the many controversial points in the paper that has been circulated. Although the public has been invited to make submissions about the proposed changes, too little time has been given for same.

We believe that there is some justification for an oversight mechanism to regulate social media content, as is happening in several jurisdictions. We must keep in mind, however, that they are in the big league and in a position to put pressure on the social media platforms – in our case mainly Facebook – in case the latter are in breach of the country's domestic laws. The fact that Facebook has not even bothered to respond to the request by ICTA for comments on its proposals should alert us to the need to be doubly cautious about how we go about setting up our local oversight platform. Any sign that it is intended to curb drastically the freedom of expression and to manipulate content in a repressive manner will impact further our international image.

We know the negative impact that this can have on investments and investors, and it behoves the leaders to therefore keep all that well in mind as they take sensitive decisions for the country.

## Mauritius Times

**Founder/Editor: Beekrumsing Ramlallah - Aug 1954-Sept 2000**

**Editor-in-chief: M. Ramlallah / Senior Editor: Dr RN Gopee**

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## The Conversation

# COVID-19 cost more in 2020 than the world's combined natural disasters in any of the past 20 years



Photo - themandarin.com.au

**W**hat have we lost because of the pandemic? According to our calculations, a lot — and many of the worst hit countries and regions are far from world media attention.

Typically, damage from any disaster is measured in separate categories: the number of fatalities and injuries it caused, and the financial damage it led to (directly or indirectly).

Only by aggregating these various measures into a comprehensive total can we begin to formulate a fuller picture of the burden of disasters, including pandemics.

The usual approach has been to attach a price tag to death and illness. Many governments calculate this “value of statistical life”.

They do this based on surveys asking people how much they are willing to pay to reduce some risk (for example, improve a road they often use), or by calculating the additional compensation people demand when they take on high-risk occupations (for example, as a diver on an oil rig).

By observing the amount of money people associate with small changes in mortality risk, one can then calculate the overall price of a “statistical life” as valued by the average person.

By adding the dollar value of asset damage to the “priced” value of life lost (or injured), the overall cost of an adverse event (such as an earthquake or an epidemic) can be calculated.

## Calculating ‘lost life years’

But “value of life” prices can vary a lot between and even within countries. There is also an understandable public distaste for putting a price tag on human life. Governments typically don't openly discuss these calculations, making it difficult to assess their legitimacy.

An alternative is a “life years lost index”. It is based on the World Health Organization (WHO) measure of “disability-adjusted life years” (DALY), calculated for a long list of diseases and published in a yearly account of the associated human costs.

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Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

**T**he country is currently convulsed by the deaths that have taken place at the dialysis centre in Souillac Hospital. To date, a total of 11 patients have died, and all were Covid positive. Most patients undergo long-term dialysis for kidney failure, for which there are many causes, diabetes and hypertension being two of the main ones in Mauritius, in addition to cardiac disease as well as chronic infection or stones in the kidneys. Kidney disease itself may lead to complications such as anemia, heart disease, bone disease, gastric problems, etc.

Over and above these conditions, these patients, the elderly in particular, may also have other medical conditions such as cancer which complicate matters for them. One must not also forget the medications that they are taking, which have their own side effects. Altogether, therefore, in addition to the main cause that has led to the kidney failure, there may be one or more other medical conditions (e.g. cancer) that are present, and all these are what are called co-morbidities. The result is that a patient who is undergoing dialysis is already in a compromised and weakened state of health.

Nevertheless, many patients in kidney failure have been leading more or less normal lives while undergoing regular dialysis for years altogether. The cause for concern at the moment is that so many of them have died in such a short time as they became infected with Covid. Clearly, it has precipitated their deaths, but this raises two issues:

1. To what extent is Covid solely responsible? Could there be other factors in their overall management that can be identified?
2. How and where did they get infected with Covid?

According to the statement made by the Minister of Health in Parliament, an independent enquiry has been set up at the level of the Medical Council to look into the matter, and whether there has been any medical negligence.

While this is in order, equally if not more important is for the health personnel (medical and nursing) to carry out their own analysis of the events, and review all the aspects of the management during this time of crisis and

## Covid-related deaths at the dialysis centres

# Untold, avoidable suffering



Photo - ca-times

**“Many patients in kidney failure have been leading more or less normal lives while undergoing regular dialysis for years altogether. The cause for concern at the moment is that so many of them have died in such a short time as they became infected with Covid. Clearly, it has precipitated their deaths, but this raises two issues: To what extent is Covid solely responsible? Could there be other factors in their overall management that can be identified? How and where did they get infected with Covid?”**

overload of work with its own burden of both mental and physical stress.

This is the only way to identify any gaps in what could be called the ‘supply chain’ of procedures and services that provision of the dialysis service entails, of medical, nursing, and general nature such as cleaning of the area, attending to non-medical needs of patients and so on. In principle this should lead to an updating of the existing protocols with a view to be better prepared for the future: for all the information that is reaching us from all over the world is that Covid is going to be around for a long time more, and we definitely need to keep that in view.

As regards the onset of infection in these patients, it goes without saying that the conditions in quarantine centres – including hygiene and food supply –, as well as transport to and from the Souillac Hospital must be thoroughly scrutinized.

However, there is one major factor which concerns dialysis centres: the quality of the air present in them. It is now established that the main mode of spread of Covid is by aerosols in the air. Both infected staff and patients can therefore transmit the virus, and this will be facilitated in the presence of fans and aircon equipment, which will only be recirculating infected air.

The way to prevent this is to have laminar air flow systems in these centres, and no dialysis centre in Mauritius currently has such a system. It is recommended for operation theatres also, and again our OTs are not equipped with laminar air flow systems. This is an issue which concerns the health system and its institutions which must be addressed with the degree of

urgency that it demands if we are to avert further cascades of Covid-related deaths at the dialysis centres. In the interim, the experts concerned should advise on how to curb potential Covid infections there.

It can be seen, therefore, that it will be premature to jump to any conclusion of medical negligence when there may be institutional lacunae also that must be taken into consideration, as to whether they can add up to being a form of contributory ‘institutional negligence’.

This is also of concern with respect to the unfortunate case of the death during delivery of the pre-term baby at the SSRN Hospital. This is not the place to go into any detailed discussion of the case, but there is a major and critical problem as regards our maternity services. That is the *total absence of any formal, accredited training for midwives*.

There was a programme in the past for a one-year training for midwives, and for those who qualified and were posted to the maternity services to be properly remunerated. Unfortunately, this programme has been abandoned. Unless it is reinstated and the conditions of service of midwives be reviewed, by recognizing their special competencies, it should not surprise if such mishaps recur.

When we were junior doctors, it is midwives who taught us how to conduct deliveries. Hats off to them, but they are no more. *The country needs properly trained and adequately remunerated midwives*.

A last point of equal importance relates to communication and support. In a lecture that was delivered in London many years ago (the Rock Carling Foundation Lectures), it was pointed out that nearly 50% of problems that arise in medicine are because of poor communication – at all levels: between senior doctors and junior doctors, doctors and nurses and the latter among themselves, and between health staff and patients and/or their relatives/ responsible parties.

And the more difficulty that is anticipated in any given case, as the one under reference for example, the greater the need for communication and dialogue, and being ready to respond to the anxieties of the patients, but also to be frank about what can or cannot be done, so that there are no undue expectations on the part of patients or relatives. In this regard, it is senior medical and nursing staff who must mentor their juniors, and also the nursing staff so that there is a coherence in the approach.

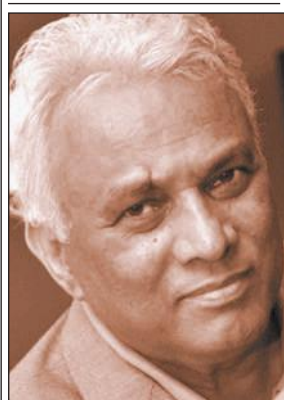
So much for the ‘technical’ aspect. But patients and their responsible parties also need psychological support and counseling in their moments of difficulty, and sadly, this is a neglected aspect of medical care in our health system. This is a particularly felt need in the public sector with its overload and the complexities of the healthcare-lay interface. This need too must be addressed, and we have enough general and clinical psychologists who can be roped in at such times of crisis to provide counseling and support.

The problem in this country is that we do not effectively use the range of our existing professional strengths. We would be so much of a better service if we were to do so, and thereby avoid the kind of untold and avoidable suffering that is an indictment for all of us.



# The Covid-19 Vaccines Conundrum

*Time is of the essence if we want to contain and overcome the distress, death toll and dire socio-economic consequences of the pandemic*



Mrinal Roy

**A**ccess to Covid-19 vaccines is currently a major bottleneck to the goal of achieving herd immunity and steering the world on a pathway towards a modicum of normality.

In February 2020, ahead of the official World Health Organization (WHO) announcement of the Covid-19 pandemic, hundreds of public health and infectious disease experts gathered at the WHO offices in Geneva and spent two days defining an 'R&D Blueprint' in preparation for a coronavirus pandemic. The underlying premise was that the world would unite and team up to fight and overcome the virus. There would be active collaboration and open source access to research and information-sharing among the global research community to minimize duplication and accelerate the discovery of vaccines.

Intellectual property rights were not mentioned in the scientific paper. Despite past experience regarding the protracted battle to have access to HIV drugs at affordable prices in affected developing countries, the scientists hoped that the scale of the threat and challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic would supplant the prevailing global medicine and drug distribution system based on proprietary rights and market monopolies.

On an optimistic note, the *Financial Times* in an editorial on 27 March 2020 wrote that 'the world has an overwhelming interest in ensuring Covid-19 drugs and vaccines will be universally and cheaply available.' The scientists therefore proposed that public and private actors would collect research and associated intellec-



Photo - static01.nyt.com

**“The current situation significantly restricts swift access to affordable Covid-19 vaccines to the majority of the population of the world. Is it not high time to urgently waive these decried rules under the present grim circumstances and boost Covid-19 vaccine production to ensure that every country of the world has swift and affordable access to vaccines for the benefit of humanity and the world? Time is of the essence if we want to contain and overcome the distress, death toll and dire socio-economic consequences of the pandemic...”**

tual property in a global knowledge fund for the duration of the pandemic. To this end, the WHO Covid-19 Technology Access Pool or C-TAP was thus launched in May 2020.

## Thwarted hopes

This optimism and global battle plan against the Covid-19 pandemic was however short-lived. The exclusive intellectual property rights have not been waived. Instead, the COVAX initiative which only provides vaccines for up to 20% of the population in low-to-middle-income countries has been patronizingly proposed. More than 165 countries, representing 60% of the world population have joined the COVAX initiative. This basically means that they would have to compete and battle on the global market to obtain an additional 50% of their vaccine requirements in order to assure herd immunity in a context of strapped vaccine supplies in the world. How and when will this daunting objective be achieved?

Despite hopes of global solidarity to together fight and win the battle against a common threat, intellectual property rights remain at the centre of the global crisis of supply and access to Covid-19 vaccines. Is this narrow approach a viable way forward to overcome the pandemic and achieve a modicum of normality? In a context

of pandemic and rising death toll should we not free Covid-19 vaccines which are the result of pointed research by high calibre scientists using their scientific expertise for the common good from the straightjacket of restrictive rules to assure affordable and swift access to vaccines to the world?

Why should intellectual property rights be imposed when the world is enduring the throes of such a deadly and disastrous pandemic? The penury of vaccines is artificial because of the constraints imposed by property rights. Without such questionable impediments in a pandemic, the production of Covid-19 vaccines can be significantly hiked to meet global demand. As is the case for most vaccines and medicines, the bulk of the demand for Covid-19 vaccines is from the low and middle-income countries.

## Government funding

In this context it must be flagged that the development of mRNA vaccines was fraught with risks as it was a new and pioneering technology. The US government therefore used federal funds, hence tax payers funds, to underwrite the research

costs of the Moderna and Pfizer mRNA vaccines. How can the two mRNA vaccines now be under the monopoly control of these giant pharmaceutical companies?

The uphill battle for access to Covid-19 vaccines has been further complicated by the decision taken on 13 April 2021 by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to call for a pause in the use of the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine after reports of a 'rare and severe' type of blood clot in some vaccine recipients. We should remember that the drugmaker Johnson & Johnson has concluded a deal to supply the African Union member countries with up to 400 million doses of its single jab Covid-19 vaccine.

The upshot is that the current situation significantly restricts swift access to affordable Covid-19 vaccines to the majority of the population of the world. Is it not high time to urgently waive these decried rules under the present grim circumstances and boost Covid-19 vaccine production to ensure that every country of the world has swift and affordable access to vaccines for the benefit of humanity and the world? Time is of the essence if we want to contain and overcome the distress, death toll and dire socio-economic consequences of the pandemic.

**S**pin doctoring of every hue and colour, state spawned narratives and social media spun fake news are having a field day. People are constantly being the object of sly manipulation. People therefore have to be extremely more vigilant and perpetually exercise sound judgment to gauge all the information and news dished out daily on media channels or conjured and relayed in viral mode on social media.

In a world where people are more and more exposed and trapped in the insidious web of fake news, it is more and

more imperative to hone our ability to rationally discern the genuine information from the trumped up and questionable piece of news. We basically need to systematically sort the wheat from the chaff.

Thank goodness, the investigative rigour of some media groups and independent investigative journalists such as the Gray Zone and others cut through the spin doctoring and systematically expose contrived narratives to provide bearings

and guide those with a questioning mind through the deluge of news, we are in McLuhanish mode daily brainwashed with.

Sometimes it takes time, determination and insightful investigative journalism to dig out the truth buried in well orchestrated narratives. For example, the invasion of Iraq by allied forces was triggered by repeated accusations of President George W. Bush and his top officials that

Iraq had Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). This claim has been debunked. The world now knows that there were no WMD in Iraq. The blind pursuit of geopolitical interests have plunged the world in so many questionable and deadly wars causing tremendous distress to people.

Similarly, some three years ago, the Syrian government was accused of an alleged chemical weapon attack in Douma in Syria, where at least 50 civilians were reportedly killed.

\* Cont. on page 11

## Sorting the wheat from the chaff



# Australia cancels belt and road deals; China warns of further damage to ties

**A**ustralia on Wednesday cancelled two deals struck by its state of Victoria with China on Beijing's flagship Belt and Road Initiative, prompting the Chinese embassy in Canberra to warn that already tense bilateral ties were bound to worsen, reports Reuters.

scheme.

"I consider these four arrangements to be inconsistent with Australia's foreign policy or adverse to our foreign relations," she said in a statement.

China's embassy in Australia voiced its "strong displeasure and resolute opposition" to the cancellations late on Wednesday.

"This is another unreasonable and provocative move taken by the Australian side against China," the embassy said in a statement. "It further shows that the Australian government has no sincerity in improving China-Australia relations."

Bilateral ties were strained in 2018 when Australia became the first country to publicly ban Chinese tech giant Huawei from its 5G network. Relations worsened last year when Canberra called for an independent probe into the origins of the coronavirus outbreak.

Australia's latest move "is bound to bring further damage to bilateral relations, and will only end up hurting itself," the Chinese embassy said.

## Australia cancels Belt & Road deal with China



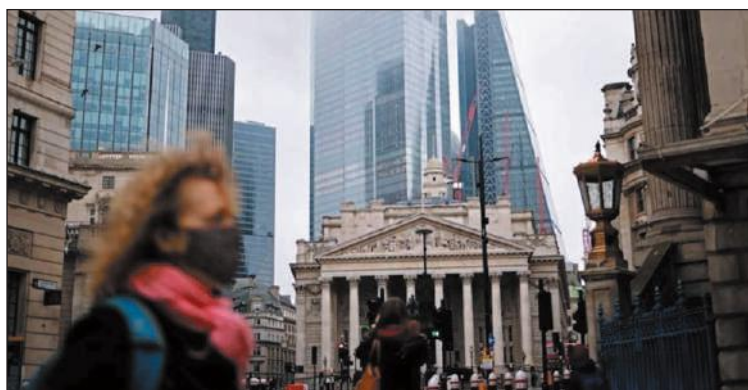
by Ankit Agrawal

Bilateral ties were strained in 2018 when Australia banned Chinese tech giant Huawei from its 5G network. Photo - i.yimg.com

Under a new process in Australia, Foreign Minister Marise Payne has the power to review deals reached with other nations by the country's states and universities.

Payne said she had decided to cancel four deals, including two that Victoria agreed with China, in 2018 and 2019, on cooperation with the Belt and Road Initiative, Chinese President Xi Jinping's signature trade and infrastructure

# Bank of England sees potential risks from cloud data providers



A pedestrian crosses the road near the Royal Exchange and the Bank of England in the City of London. Photo - Reuters

**T**he Bank of England might strengthen its controls on cloud data providers and other technology firms to counter possible risks to the stability of the financial system from the rise of fintech, Deputy Governor Dave Ramsden said.

The Bank of England (BoE) has expressed concerns before about the reliance by financial firms, especially fintech startups, on third-party

technology companies for key parts of their operations, and Ramsden said this scrutiny would intensify, reports Reuters.

"We plan to analyse further whether we need even stronger tools to manage the risk that critical third parties, including potentially cloud and other major tech providers, may pose to the Bank's ... objectives," Ramsden told the Innovate Finance conference on Wednesday.

Regulators globally have been tightening scrutiny of outsourced functions as they worry that core services financial firms provide to customers are vulnerable to outages at third parties.

Britain's government is keen to promote fintech as an area of growth and hopes that nimbler regulation will enable it to steal a march over the European Union, where British financial firms now have reduced access due to Brexit.



Macron's approval rating is around 40% in recent surveys Photo - globaltimes.cn

## French president Macron's job is on the line and these are main contenders

**I**n exactly 12 months time, the French will start the process of deciding whether they want to keep Emmanuel Macron as president, or dismiss him.

The 43-year-old former investment banker-turned-president has been bruised by his government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic, rallies against police violence and strikes against his pension reform, as well protests by the Yellow Vests movement that demands greater economic equality. And then, there's a perception he's arrogant and aloof, reports Bloomberg.

Even so, Macron's approval rating is around 40% in recent surveys. He can count on a strong base of loyal voters and with the left- and right-wing parties in disarray and bickering over who will represent them in April 2022, he's almost certain to make it to the second round of the election — probably finding himself again facing off with far-right leader Marine Le Pen.

It's a crowded and moving field, though, so don't rule out a surprise. After all, a year before Macron was elected, few would have bet on him.

Here's a look at some of the candidates who've already entered the race:

### The Populist: Marine Le Pen

The National Rally leader believes her third attempt to win France's top job will be the lucky one. In the decade since taking over the party from her father, Le Pen has been working hard to move it to the mainstream. She made it to the second round in the

previous presidential ballot in 2017, but suffered a crushing defeat when progressives rallied around Macron to keep her out of the Elysee.

As Le Pen, 52, stages her come back, she's been tapping into anger over economic inequality and the dominance of Paris over the regions. She's also lashed out at Macron for not having closed borders early enough to prevent the arrival of Covid-19 variants, as well as for the slow start to France's vaccination campaign.

### The Old-School Left Winger: Jean-Luc Melenchon

The leader of the far-left France Unbowed party is running for the third time as well, after winning 20% of the vote in the first round of the 2017 election.

Melenchon, 69, says the health crisis demanded a change in tactics so he's no longer calling on people to create chaos and disobey — or as he says, he wants to move on "from the period of sound and fury." He says he has dusted off his program and sought new ideas from key supporters, who tend to be highly-educated with lower revenue.

Melenchon's policy positions are firmly anchored to the left of the mainstream Socialist Party. He's a staunch critic of the EU as it is and defends protectionism as well as strong social benefits. He advocates boosting public debt, which he says will eventually not be repaid by the state, and wants to cancel debt owned by the European Central Bank.

➔ More on page 6



# April is "Sikh awareness month" in Illinois: Indian American congressman



Raja Krishnamoorthi said there has been a rise in hate crimes against the Sikh-American community. Photo - ocregister.com

Indian-American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi has entered a statement into the Congressional record to recognise April as 'Sikh appreciation and awareness month' in his home state of Illinois.

Underscoring the importance of

the recognition, Raja Krishnamoorthi said there has been a disturbing rise in hate crimes and violent acts perpetrated against the Sikh-American community.

This recognition, he said, is timely, given the disturbing rise in hate crimes and violent acts pepe-

trated against Sikh-Americans, most recently on April 15 at a Federal Express facility located in Indianapolis in which four Sikhs, including three women, were killed.

The first followers of the Sikh religion emigrated to the United States over 125 years ago, where they found work on farms located in California and in the lumber mills of Washington state, he said.

Despite suffering persecution and discrimination, these patriotic Sikh-Americans persevered and found ways to participate in civic life, including service in the United States Army, he added.

"In 1918, Sergeant Bhagat Singh Thind was the first serviceman in the history of the United States Army allowed to wear a tur-

ban as part of his military uniform. Sikh-Americans continued to proudly serve with distinction in the Second World War, Korean War, Vietnam War, and in our conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq," Raja Krishnamoorthi said.

In addition to military service, Sikh-Americans have made countless contributions to our common good, he said.

"They include scientists like Dr Narinder Singh Kapany, who is widely known as the 'father of fiber optic technology' and Dr Gurtej Singh Sandhu, one of the world's most prolific inventors. They include artists and musicians like Grammy nominee Snamat Kaur Khalsa, and activist and award-winning filmmaker Valarie Kaur,"

Raja Krishnamoorthi said.

"They include entrepreneurs like Waris Ahluwalia, an actor, model, and businessman. And they include men and women called to public service like Dalip Singh Saund, who in 1957 became the first Asian-American, Indian-American, and member of a non-Abrahamic faith to be elected to serve in this House of Representatives," he added.

During this month of appreciation for Sikh-Americans, Raja Krishnamoorthi said he wants to officially recognise the contributions of the more than 7,00,000 members of the United States Sikh community to business, the arts, science, medicine, literature and philosophy.

## India: More infectious virus variants raise Covid cases to record level

India has reported more than 314,000 new Covid cases on Wednesday for the first time, surpassing the record for infections in a single day previously set by the US in January. The country also saw its deadliest day so far, as it recorded 2,104 deaths due to coronavirus in the day up to Thursday morning.



Photo - static.independent.co.uk

India recently outstripped Brazil to become the second worst-hit country in the pandemic and it has been rocked by a devastating second wave since the country appeared close to a return to normalcy in January. There are widespread shortages of oxygen and hospital beds in Delhi, currently the worst-affected single city, while the situation is also dire in the states of Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, which reported 67,468 and 33,214 new infections respectively.

Experts have attributed the second wave to the emergence of more infectious virus variants, as well as fatigue with pandemic safety measures and the decision to allow a range of large political and religious gatherings.

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## Britons who have received their first vaccine dose subsequently infected by new variants

Britons who have received their first vaccine dose have subsequently become infected by new coronavirus

variants, NHS Track and Trace's chief medical adviser has said. Dr Susan Hopkins told the BBC's Andrew Marr Show last Sunday that both the South African and Kent variants have been identified in people "who have had their first dose of vaccine".

She added: "That's to be expected, we know that these vaccines aren't 100 per cent protecting you against infection and that's why we ask people to take caution. You can see that they're not as good against the South African variant as they are against our own B.1.1.7 at preventing infection and transmission."

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## Derek Chauvin charged with murdering George Floyd

Derek Chauvin, the former Minneapolis police officer charged with murdering George Floyd, an unarmed black man, has this week been found guilty on all three charges he was faced with. His most serious conviction is second-degree murder, which carries a maximum prison sentence of 40 years in Minnesota. The other charges were third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter, which carry maximum penalties of 25 years and 10 years in prison, respectively.

Chauvin, who showed no emotion as the verdict was



Chauvin declined to testify, after invoking the Fifth Amendment. Photo - essence.com

read, nodded towards the judge as his bail was revoked and he was handcuffed and led out of the courtroom. He will remain in police custody until sentencing in June. The jury came to the unanimous decision after hearing a wide range of testimony from witnesses presented by both the defence and prosecution during the three-week trial, but only needed about 10 hours of deliberation to reach a verdict.

Although he had the option to tell the jury his side of the story, Chauvin declined to testify, after invoking the Fifth Amendment in court in Minneapolis, reports The Independent.

## Football's European Super League to reshape

Football's European Super League has pledged to "reshape" after the withdrawal of the Premier League's so-called Big Six clubs left plans for the new breakaway competition in disarray.

A dozen of the biggest clubs in Europe had committed to forming a new tournament that they hoped would grow to rival the Champions League. However, in the face of a wave of public backlash from fans, football figures and even politicians, all six Premier League clubs - Liverpool, Manchester City, Manchester United, Chelsea, Tottenham and Arsenal - quit on a dramatic Tuesday evening.

The venture now appears to be dead in the water with both Inter Milan and AC Milan said to be on the verge of walking away too. In response to their departures, the Super League announced early on Wednesday morning it is considering "appropriate steps to reshape the project".

Liverpool, Manchester United, Manchester City, Chelsea, Arsenal and Tottenham - the so-called "Big Six" of the English Premier League - faced a fierce backlash from the league, FA, government, pundits, supporters and players over their plans to join the new tournament as founding members. Critics are concerned for the effect of the new scheme on football's long-standing competitive pyramid and have accused the owners involved of a brazen disregard for the cultural, social and sporting history of the clubs they represent.

➔ More on page 7



## Syria loses voting rights at global chemical watchdog for poison gas use in civil war

**S**yria loses voting rights at global chemical watchdog for poison gas use in civil war

Syria on Wednesday was stripped of its voting rights by member states at the global chemical weapons watchdog after its forces were found to have repeatedly used poison gas during the civil war.



A boy stands next to the remains of a missile at the city of Douma in Damascus, Syria on April 16, 2018. Photo - media.pri.org

A majority of nations voting at the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) supported a decision to immediately revoke Syria's privileges at the agency.

The proposal was initiated by 46 out of 193-member countries on the OPCW's governing Conference of States Parties, including Britain, France and the United States. It passed by 87 votes in favour to 15 against, meeting the required two-thirds majority of votes. There were 34 abstentions out of 136 countries taking part.

Iran, Russia and Syria were among those to vote against.

Although largely symbolic, the move sends a political signal to Syria that breaches of the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention, which prohibits all use of chemicals on the battlefield, will not be accepted.

Repeated investigations by the United Nations and the OPCW's special Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) concluded that Syrian government forces used the nerve agent sarin and chlorine barrel bombs in attacks between 2015 and 2018 that investigators said killed or injured thousands.

Syria and its military ally Russia have repeatedly denied using chemical weapons during the war, which has turned the once-technical agency into a flashpoint between rival political forces and deadlocked the UN Security Council.

## China-built port city plan challenged in Sri Lanka's top court

**T**he court is considering petitions from about 20 individuals and organizations concerned about the constitutional integrity of the panel overseen by the president, and the lack of direct oversight by regulators, including the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. The government introduced the Colombo Port City Economic Commission draft bill in parliament this month, reports Bloomberg

For parliamentarian Harsha de Silva, a member of the main opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya, the move to allow the president to appoint the board and chief executive officer of the commission adds to Rajapaksa's authority. The president last year succeeded in a bid to amass executive powers for his office after his government won a super majority vote to amend the constitution.

The port city "will catalyze the next phase of growth, however for this to work, we want to make sure that it is done right," said de Silva, who was involved in developing a



China-built port city plan challenged. Photo - static.hkej.com

first draft for a law administering the Colombo Port city when in government.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lanka Bar Association in its challenge said the bill infringes on judicial functions and may violate articles of the constitution dealing with the unitary state and sovereignty of the people. Some lawmakers and Buddhist clergy linked to Rajapaksa's party have also opposed the Commission, calling it an attempt to form a Chinese colony.

Sri Lanka has been one of the countries drawn to China's Belt and

Road Initiative. The port city in Colombo, being built by China Communications Construction Co., also has a plan to build a financial district -- pitched as a new hub between Singapore and Dubai -- with a marina, a hospital, shopping malls, and 21,000 apartments and homes.

Concerns over the port city being a Chinese colony are misplaced, and the project will be a source of non-debt inflows that will help drive growth by reducing red-tape faced by investors, said State Minister for Money and Capital Markets Nivard Cabraal.

## Facebook Messenger users hit by scammers in over 80 countries

**G**roup-IB, a global threat hunting and adversary-centric cyber intelligence company have detected a large-scale scam campaign targeting Facebook Messenger users all over the world, reports ANI.

Group-IB Digital Risk Protection (DRP) analysts have found evidence proving that users in over 80 countries in Europe, Asia, the MEA region, North and South America might have been affected, the company said in

a release. "By distributing ads promoting an allegedly updated version of Facebook Messenger, cybercriminals harvested users' login credentials," the company said.

The cyber intelligence company has discovered about 1,000 fake Facebook accounts distributing links to an allegedly updated version of Facebook Messenger. Users who followed the link would then be redirected to a fake Facebook Messenger website with a login form, through which cyber criminals harvested users' credentials.

According to the intelligence company, scammers used official Facebook logos and shortened link names that resembled the real ones. Group-IB said that the social media giant itself has nothing to do with the scheme.

## All countries should phase out coal by 2040, says United Nations chief

**T**he United Nations is pushing for a global coalition committed to net zero emissions by 2050 which will cover all countries, cities, regions and businesses, Antonio Guterres, United Nations Secretary General said on Monday. He also called on Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries to phase out coal by 2030, and 2040 elsewhere.

Ahead of the April 22-23 Virtual Leaders' Summit on Climate convened by the United States of America where 40

world leaders are likely to speak, including PM Narendra Modi, Guterres said he expects the most important countries, in relation to climate change, will be able to commit to net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by the middle of the century and to commit to a drastic reduction of emissions for the next decade by reviewing their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

During a press interaction on Monday evening to launch the World Meteorological Organisation's State of

Global Climate 2020 report, Guterres said it's a risk to have developing countries like India and China still investing in coal power plants that will be soon stranded assets.

When asked how a target of net zero emissions by 2050 for all countries reconciles with the principle of CBDR (common but differentiated responsibilities), Guterres said it's possible through a large effort of solidarity of developed countries with developing countries in finance and technology. CBDR, is a principle under



the Paris Agreement requires richer countries to lead and take historical responsibility for the emissions caused in the past by them.



## Regulating Social Media

# "ICTA is purely and simply sowing the germs of pre-censorship in the realm of social media"

**T**he dust has not settled on the controversy raised by the amendments that the Information and Communication Technologies Authority is proposing to put forward to the Government, as contained in its Consultation Paper released for public circulation, with a view to regulating the use and addressing the abuse and misuse of social media in Mauritius. It's not likely to settle any time soon in view of the intention of Opposition parties to challenge any such amendments before the Supreme Court. While most stakeholders are in favour of some form of regulation to address the abuse and misuse of social media, doubts have been expressed about the real motivation behind these proposals. Will they serve to control what gets circulated on social media and silence any opposition to the government?

LEX



**“That social media should be regulated in order to prevent any abuse is necessary, even laudable - provided that the regulations comply with the Constitution. There should not be any regulation that removes or severely restricts the right to freedom of expression...”**

\* Though it's a welcome and laudable initiative to have circulated its Consultation Paper on proposed amendments to the ICT Act, one cannot help wondering why the Government chose, through ICTA, to take this route rather than press ahead as it is wont to do to get the amendments voted by Parliament on the strength of the strength of its comfortable majority. What could be the reasoning behind the Government's initiative?

Possibly the ICTA wants to show its good faith by giving the impression that it wants to engage in a dialogue with the public before suggesting any amend-

ments. We know how much abuse has been made under the legislation with the arrest of individuals on mere complaints from members of government.

\* Does it look like the proposed amendments in their current form, as proposed in the Consultation Paper, go against the provisions in relation to our democratic values and freedom of expression as enshrined in the Constitution of Mauritius?

Social media freedom is covered by the provision in relation to freedom of expression just like press freedom. Any fundamental right may be derogated from provided the derogations are justifiable in a democratic society.

The Information and Communication Technologies Authority (ICTA) regulates or curtails the harmful and illegal contents on the internet and other information and communication services.

\* If we were to go by the values - ideological, philosophical, etc - of our judiciary, can it be anticipated what would likely be the position of our Judiciary on the proposed amendments to the ICT Act? What do past judgements of our Supreme Court inform us about the values it feels strongly about?

The Supreme Court has always struck down legislation that it considered incompatible with constitutional provisions. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land by virtue of section 2 of the Constitution which reads as follows: *'This Constitution is the supreme law of Mauritius and if any other law is inconsistent with this Constitution, that other law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void.'*

**“The Supreme Court has always struck down legislation that it considered incompatible with constitutional provisions. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land by virtue of section 2 of the Constitution which reads as follows: ‘This Constitution is the supreme law of Mauritius and if any other law is inconsistent with this Constitution, that other law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void.’”**

\* Most social media users and the public generally might agree on the principle in favour of some form of oversight over social media content, as several jurisdictions cited as examples in the Consultation Paper are undertaking, but others are plainly against any form of oversight. Is that an option?

That social media should be regulated in order to prevent any abuse is necessary, even laudable - provided that the regulations comply with the Constitution. There should not be any regulation that removes or severely restricts the right to freedom of expression

\* With a view to “addressing the abuse and misuse of social media in Mauritius”, ICTA contends that “not only legal but also technical enforcement measures would be required”. Thus, its proposal to intervene upstream by first identifying “whether the online content is an illegal and harmful content” before taking the action to curtail such content. Sounds reasonable to the layman, but could that be construed as an usurpation, by an executive organ, of judicial power that can only be exercised by a court of justice?

By proposing to intervene before a message is released in order to determine whether it is illegal or harmful, the ICTA is purely and simply sowing the germs of pre-censorship in the realm of social media.

\* Cont. on page 9



# 'It is a hardly a secret how institutions filled with political nominees function.

*What criteria will the NDEC use to determine whether the content of a social media site is illegal or harmful'*

\* Cont. on page 8

\* The other contentions, which ICTA has put forward to justify its proposals concern the language barrier with offensive and abusive online content posted in Creole and which "remain unattended or are not addressed in a timely manner" by the social media administrators, the absence of regional offices of the same administrators on Mauritian soil. Most victims of abusive content and hate speech are likely to support the first justification. What's your take on that?

Section 46 of the ICT Act makes it an offence to use an information and communication service, including telecommunication service to send, deliver or show a message which is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character; or which is likely to cause or causes annoyance, humiliation, inconvenience, distress or anxiety to a person.

**“The law will be voted by all the yes men on the government benches without their realizing what they voting for. Little do they realise that there may/might be a boomerang effect. Once the law is voted, it stays on the Statute Book until the Supreme Court gets an opportunity to determine whether it is constitutional or not...”**

The law is there. What is required is to detect the culprits and punish them. But that section is being used to hunt down the political opponents of the regime.

\* Most of the jurisdictions which have implemented measures or envisaging to address the issue of abuse and misuse of social media have, as mentioned in the Consultation Paper itself, promulgated laws to make social media companies "take more responsibility for the safety of their users and tackle harm by content" by removing such content within 24 or 36 hours of it being uploaded online, failing which substantial fines are imposed. It appears that few or none have gone as far as intervening upstream to address the issue of social abuse. Why is that so?

Given the widespread use of social media it may be difficult to address abuse in a rational and comprehensive manner.

When Facebook's chief executive, Mark Zuckerberg, testified before the US Congress in 2018, the Senators expressed their skepticism that Facebook would be able to regulate itself. The Senators threatened to enact privacy rules and other regulations.

The matter is very complex. Even if you have rules and regulations, there will always be hackers that will breach any rule or control.



\* Could it be that these jurisdictions have the clout to make sure that the social media companies comply with their duty of care as promulgated in their respective domestic laws, which is clearly not the case here? It would appear that Facebook has not even responded to ICTA's request for its comments to its proposed amendments to the relevant ICT law...

In spite of regulations there have been all kinds of abuses by private individuals, especially politicians. We witnessed this phenomenon during the election campaign of 2019.

Facebook and other social media platforms are in a chicken and egg situation. On the one hand, they feel that freedom of expression should have its way unhindered and they rely on the good sense of people. On the other hand, if social media platforms come up with many restrictions, they may see a drop in the use of their platforms. This will mean a drop in profits. Do not forget the colossal sums of money social media platforms generate in terms of commercials and other related matters.

\* Given the current atmosphere of trust deficit in the Government, the National Digital Ethics Committee (NDEC) as the decision-making body on social media contents, and the selection of the Chairperson and members of the NDEC (deemed to be "independent, and persons of high calibre and good repute") have, as expected, not gone down well since it is feared that political nominees might do the bidding of the political masters. Right?

I can do no better than to quote what Vinod Boolell wrote in *l'Express* on 22 April when he said:

"The pressing and vital question to be addressed is how will the members of the NDEC be appointed? No

doubt they will be political appointees. No doubt the law establishing the NDEC will spell out that the members should act independently. But it is a hardly a secret how institutions filled with political nominees function. What criteria will the NDEC use to determine whether the content of a social media site is illegal or harmful."

**“Possibly the ICTA wants to show its good faith by giving the impression that it wants to engage in a dialogue with the public before suggesting any amendments. We know how much abuse has been made under the legislation with the arrest of individuals on mere complaints from members of government...”**

To that, I may add another question: Will the NDEC take orders from Big Brother who will keep constant watch on not only social media platforms but also on the NDEC itself?

\* The deadline for submission of comments on the Consultation Paper falls on 5 May 2021. What are the options available to concerned stakeholders if the Government goes ahead and votes the amendments? Would a judicial challenge be entertained by our Courts or would the principle of parliamentary supremacy prevail?

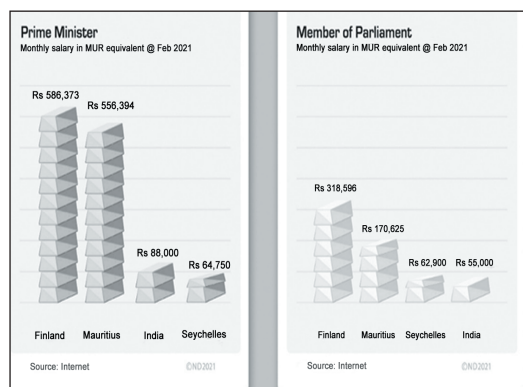
There will be no option. The law will be voted by all the yes men on the government benches without their realizing what they are voting for. Little do they realise that there may be a boomerang effect.

Once the law is voted, it stays on the Statute Book until the Supreme Court gets an opportunity to determine whether it is constitutional or not.



## Des niveaux de rémunération en accord avec le "new normal" post-Covid?

Nita Deerpalsing



A noter que les montants ci-dessus reflètent seulement les salaires de base.

Pour les montants totaux en ce qui concerne Maurice, il faut rajouter les autres bénéfices et privilèges, tels que :

1. une série d'*allowances* (fuel allowance, driver allowance, phone allowance, entertainment allowance, etc.);
2. 25% des salaires de base sont exemptés de tout taxe;
3. le 13ème mois, les voitures personnelles *duty-free*;
4. l'indexation automatique à toutes les révisions du *Pay Research Bureau* (PRB);
5. les véhicules de fonction; les policiers VIPSU; les policiers de garde;
6. les *per diem* (allocations de voyage) alloués sur une base *a priori* sans obligation de justification de dépenses;

Y aurait-il un 'reset' en vue à la lumière des conséquences économiques de la crise sanitaire mondiale?

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## COMMUNIQUE

COVID-19

### GOVERNMENT WAGE ASSISTANCE SCHEME (GWAS) and SELF-EMPLOYED ASSISTANCE SCHEME (SEAS)

*Extension for the month of April 2021*

Following the decision of the Government of the Republic of Mauritius to extend the **Government Wage Assistance Scheme (GWAS)** and the **Self-Employed Assistance Scheme (SEAS)** for the month of April 2021, the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) informs employers and self-employed individuals of the following measures for the payment of the financial assistance.

#### A. Tourism Sector

Financial assistance under **GWAS** and **SEAS** will be provided to employers and self-employed individuals operating in the tourism sector in the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues for the **full month of April 2021**.

#### B. Sectors other than the Tourism Sector

A full month of financial assistance for **April 2021** will be provided under **GWAS** to **Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)** operating in the island of Mauritius. (An SME is an enterprise whose turnover for the accounting year ended in the year 2020 did not exceed Rs 50 million.)

Under **SEAS**, self-employed individuals operating in the island of Mauritius will be provided a **full month financial assistance** for April 2021 provided they meet the eligibility criteria.

#### C. Amount of Financial Assistance

The financial assistance payable under GWAS for April 2021 is equivalent to one month's basic wage of all employees drawing a monthly basic wage of up to Rs 50,375, with a maximum financial assistance of Rs 25,375 per employee.

The monthly financial assistance under SEAS for April 2021 is Rs 5,287.

#### D. Application for GWAS and SEAS to the MRA

Eligible **employers** are required to apply for **GWAS** for April 2021, electronically, using the facilities available on the MRA website: [www.mra.mu](http://www.mra.mu)

**Self-employed individuals** who have already applied for **SEAS** for any of the months from March 2020 to March 2021 are **NOT** required to make an application for SEAS for April 2021. The bank account of each eligible applicant will be credited with an amount of Rs 5,287.

Self-employed individuals who have previously made an application for SEAS and are no more eligible to the allowance for the month of April 2021, are requested to withdraw their application using the facility available on MRA website: [www.mra.mu](http://www.mra.mu)

#### E. Financial Assistance under GWAS and SEAS will be provided to eligible employers and self-employed individuals even where a Work Access Permit (WAP) has been issued.

For further details, kindly visit the MRA website: [www.mra.mu](http://www.mra.mu) or phone the MRA Helpdesk on 207 6000 during working hours.

MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY

17 April 2021

Ehram Court, Cnr Mgr. Gonin & Sir Virgil Naz Streets, Port Louis, Mauritius  
 T: +230 207 6000 | F: +230 207 6048 | M: headoffice@mra.mu | W: www.mra.mu





# Sorting the wheat from the chaff

\* Cont. from page 4

At the time experienced military officials raised serious doubts as to whether it was likely that Syria would carry such a condemnable attack when it was on the verge of a military victory. This alleged attack swiftly triggered retaliatory air strikes against the Syrian government by the US, UK and France.

## Debunked narratives

The conclusion of the investigation of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the world's top chemical weapons watchdog, into the alleged attack that there were 'reasonable grounds' to conclude a chemical attack had occurred is at the centre of a major crisis. Veteran OPCW inspectors who investigated the alleged chemical attack in Douma say that their probe was censored and manipulated. Their original report concluded that observed symptoms of the victims in Douma 'were inconsistent with exposure to chlorine and no other obvious candidate chemical causing the symptoms could be identified.'

A series of whistleblowers and veteran inspectors within the OPCW as well as its



Photo - dailymail.co.uk

former chief, José Bustani, have openly challenged the conclusions of the report on Douma. Speaking to the UN Security Council last week, veteran German diplomat and former UN Assistant Secretary-General Hans von Sponeck called for an end to the 'stonewalling of accountability and unacceptable smear tactics' against members of the Douma investigative team who had challenged the tenor and conclusions of the report.

In an open letter entitled 'Statement of

Concern' released last month, a long list of international personalities including José Bustani, Professor Noam Chomsky, former presidential candidate Tulsi Gabbard and a host of academics, etc., have expressed their deep concern that 'since the publication by the OPCW of its final report on the alleged Douma attack in March 2019, a series of worrying develop-

**“Sometimes it takes time, determination and insightful investigative journalism to dig out the truth buried in well orchestrated narratives. For example, the invasion of Iraq by allied forces was triggered by repeated accusations of President George W. Bush and his top officials that Iraq had Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). This claim has been debunked. The world now knows that there were no WMD in Iraq. The blind pursuit of geopolitical interests have plunged the world in so many questionable and deadly wars...”**

ments has raised serious questions with respect to the conduct of that investigation.' They add that 'it is now well established that some senior inspectors involved with the investigation, one of whom played a central role, reject its conclusions and OPCW management now stands accused of accepting unsubstantiated or possibly manipulated findings with the most serious geo-political and security implications.'

## Damning indictment

This is a damning indictment amid the growing outcry over the Douma scandal. It raises profound questions regarding the independence and neutrality of major international institutions such as the OPCW tasked with ensuring international peace and security.

These developments also focus attention on mainstream TV channels and media groups across the world which carried away by the breaking news rat race blithely relay narratives spun by governments, opposition parties, corporations and other vested lobbies, some of which are subsequently debunked. Without the objective scrutiny and acid test of incisive investigative journalism, they stake their credibility, relevance and survival.

**Mrinal Roy**

# COVID-19 cost more in 2020 than the world's combined natural disasters in any of the past 20 years

\* Cont. from page 2

For example, in the map above we see Australia has a life-years-lost figure of 0.02. This means, on average, every person in Australia lost just over seven life days from the pandemic. In New Zealand, where fewer people died and there have been only a few thousand cases, the figure is 0.01, meaning each person lost fewer than four life days.

In India, by contrast, the average person lost nearly 15 days and in Peru the equivalent figure is 25 days. That loss is based on a combination of the precipitous recession and the death and sickness caused by the virus directly.

So, how do we put this in context? Is losing 25 days a catastrophic loss that justifies the kinds of public actions we have observed around the world? We can answer that question by comparing the impact of COVID-19 to other disasters.

## The price of a pandemic

When we compare the total aggregate costs of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 with the average annual costs associated with all other disasters in the previous 20 years, we find the pandemic has indeed been extremely costly (in terms of lost life years).

This is despite those past two decades

having seen many catastrophic events: horrific tsunamis in Indonesia (2004) and Japan (2011), very damaging hurricanes in the US (2005 and 2017), a high-mortality cyclone in Myanmar (2008), deadly earthquakes in India (2001), Pakistan (2005), China (2008), Haiti (2010) and Nepal (2015), and others.

If we look at the life years lost in 2020 by continent, per person, from COVID-19 compared to the average annual cost of all other disasters 2000-2019, we'll see that the costs of the pandemic are much higher — more than three times higher in Asia and more than 30 times higher in Europe.

The most vulnerable countries have been small, open economies such as Fiji, Maldives and Belize, which rely heavily on the export of services, especially tourism.

These are not necessarily countries that have experienced a high number of deaths from the pandemic, but their overall loss is staggering.

More generally, the per-capita loss associated with COVID-19 is particularly high in most of Latin America, southern Africa, southern Europe, India and some of the Pacific Islands. This is in stark contrast to where the global media's attention has



Photo - nzherald.co.nz

Much public and media attention has focused on the death toll and immediate economic impact from COVID-19. But the human and social costs associated with that economic loss are potentially much greater, particularly in poorer countries.

The heavy burden many small countries have borne has, to some extent, been overlooked. Countries such as Lebanon and the Maldives are experiencing dramatic and painful crises, largely under the radar of world attention.

However, our conclusion that the human cost of the economic loss is possibly much higher than the cost associated with health loss does not imply public policies such as lockdowns, border restrictions and quarantines have been unwarranted.

If anything, countries that experienced a deeper health crisis also experienced a deeper economic crisis. There has been no effective trade-off between saving lives and saving livelihoods.

been directed (the US, UK and EU).

## Costs will continue to rise

These measures are for 2020 only. Obviously, the pandemic is continuing to rage, and will most likely continue to have an impact on the global economy well into 2022. Many of the adverse economic impacts will still be felt years from now.

Worryingly, some of the countries that have already suffered the greatest economic impact have also been slow to secure enough vaccine doses for their populations. They may well see their economic slumps carry on into next year, especially with larger, richer countries having the resources to buy vaccines first.

**Ilan Noy** - Chair in the Economics of Disasters and Climate Change &

**Nguyen Doan** - Doctoral student in economics, Te Herenga Waka — Victoria University of Wellington



# Exercise boosts immunity and makes vaccines more effective - new study

*Meeting the recommended guidelines for physical activity reduces the risk of falling ill and dying of infectious diseases by 37%*



Physical activity reduces the risk of falling ill and dying of infectious diseases by around one third. MitarArt / Alamy Stock Photo

The availability of vaccines has brought hope for the end of the pandemic. Yet COVID deaths and cases are still surging around the world. As we try to immunise the world, the most likely scenario for the next few years is that COVID-19 will be like other infectious diseases, such as flu, that we will need to continuously manage and protect ourselves against.

One of the best ways to do that is by being physically active.

We already know that physical activity is one of most effective ways to prevent chronic diseases, along with diet and quitting smoking. A study from 2008 found that physical inactivity is responsible for more than five million premature deaths every year.

Now, a new systematic review of evidence by me and my colleagues shows that regular physical activity strengthens the human immune system, reduces the risk of falling ill and dying from infectious disease by more than a third and significantly increases the effectiveness of vaccination campaigns. This has important implications for pandemic responses.

In our study, we systematically gathered and reviewed all available evidence relating to the effect of physical activity on the risk of falling ill and dying from infectious diseases such as pneumonia - a frequent cause of death from COVID-19 - on the functioning of the immune system and on the outcome of vaccination. The study was conducted too early in the pandemic to include research into COVID-19 itself, but the findings are highly relevant to the current pandemic

response.

We found consistent and compelling evidence across six studies involving more than a half million participants that meeting the recommended guidelines for physical activity - 30 minutes of activity, five days a week - reduces the risk of falling ill and dying of infectious diseases by 37%.

This adds to the results of another new study conducted in the United States specifically on COVID-19. The effect is at least as strong if not more so than the effect reported for other risk factors of COVID-19 such as age or having a pre-existing condition such as diabetes.

We also found reliable evidence that regular physical activity strengthens the human immune system. Across 35 independent randomised controlled trials - the gold standard for scientific evidence - regular physical activity resulted in elevated levels of the antibody immunoglobulin IgA. This antibody coats the mucosal membrane of our lungs and other parts of our body where viruses and bacteria can enter.

Regular physical activity also increases the number of CD4+ T cells, which are responsible for alerting the immune system of an attack and regulate its response.

Finally, in the randomised controlled trials we studied, vaccines appear more effective if they are administered after a programme of physical activity.

A person who is active is 50% more likely to have a higher antibody count after the vaccine than somebody who is not active.

This can be a cost-effective and easy way of boosting vaccination campaigns. Considering the difficulties in supply chains, this could be a wise move to make every dose count.

## How physical activity wards off disease

There are three mechanisms that make physical activity an effective medicine against infectious diseases.

First, it protects against risk factors of severe and fatal infection. Physically active people are less likely to develop obesity, diabetes, respiratory and cardiovascular conditions. Epidemiological studies have shown that COVID-19 and other respiratory infectious diseases are more severe for people who have these conditions.

Physical activity also reduces stress and chronic inflammation, in turn reducing the likelihood of adverse and fatal infections. Most COVID-19 and pneumonia fatalities have been as a result of uncontrolled inflammatory response.

Finally, our immune system is stronger if we are physically active.

## We need to get moving

Physical activity is undeniably an important way to make populations less vulnerable to infectious diseases and future epidemics and pandemics. It should be used more urgently and effectively in fighting the current COVID-19 outbreak, but also as a long term investment to prevent the devastating social and economic impacts this pandemic has had on society.

Governments encouraged people to stay active early in the pandemic to cope with lockdown measures. There was a



surge of interest in exercise immediately following lockdown in most communities. Unfortunately, this has not translated into positive change in activity levels.

Instead, an apparent decrease in physical activity levels has been seen globally in the past year. This is a dangerous trend that could make the population more vulnerable to infectious and chronic diseases in the short term. Left unchecked, it will also leave a damaging long-term legacy and increase the burden of disease and its associated social and economic cost.

Underestimating the impact of physical inactivity could also exacerbate the unsustainable and unacceptable health inequalities highlighted by the pandemic. Generally, physical activity levels are lower in societies with greater economic inequalities and this affects women most.

It is now more important than ever for governments and health professionals to galvanise all sectors of society to promote physical activity.

Every move counts in fighting this pandemic and managing infectious disease in the future.

**Sebastien Chastin, Professor Health Behaviour Dynamics, Glasgow Caledonian University**





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64<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
1956-2020



LAUGHTER  
IS THE  
BEST  
MEDICINE



# Bob and Steve got lost in a desert

After days of walking without any water or food, they noticed a mosque.

Bob said: "Yes, thank God! I will walk in saying that my name is

Mohammad, and you say that your name is Ahmed, this way we'll get some food! Deal?"

Steve said: "No, I'm sticking with my name."

They walked into the mosque and the Sheikh saw them.

The Sheikh asked: "What are your names?"

Bob:: "My name is Mohammad."

Steve: "My name is Steve."

Sheikh said: "Guys, please bring some food and water for Steve. And you Mohammad, Ramadan Mubarak."

\*\*\*

Q. What did the pop star do when he locked himself out?

A. He sang until he found the right key!

\*\*\*

An old man goes into the Social Security Office and fills out an application. Too old to have a birth certificate, he is asked to prove he is old enough. He opens his shirt and shows them the gray hair on his chest and they accept that as proof.

He goes home to his wife, shows her the cheque, and explains to her what has happened.

She replies, "Well get back down there, pull down your pants, and see if you can get disability!"

\*\*\*

One day in class, the teacher brought a bag full of fruit and said, "Now class, I'm going to reach into the bag and describe a piece of fruit and you tell me which fruit I'm talking about. Alright, the first one is round, plump, and red."

Little Johnny raised his hand high but the teacher ignored him and picked Deborah who promptly answered, "Apple."

The teacher replied, "No Deborah, it's a beet, but I like your thinking. Now the second one is soft, fuzzy and coloured red and brown."

Johnny is hopping up and down in his seat trying to get the teacher to call on him but she calls on Billy.

"Is it a peach?" Billy asks.

"No, it's a potato, but I like your thinking," the teacher replies. "Okay the next one is long, yellow, and fairly hard."

Johnny is about to explode as he

waves his hand frantically but the teacher calls on Sally who say, "A banana."

The teacher responds, "No, it's a squash, but I like your thinking."

Johnny is irritated now so he speaks up loudly, "Hey, I've got one for you teacher. Let me put my hand in my pocket. Okay, I've got it. It's round, hard, and it's got a head on it."

"Johnny!" she cries, "That's disgusting!"

"Nope," answers Johnny, "It's a quarter, but I like your thinking!"

\*\*\*

There were two cannibals who captured a man. They decided it would be fair if they started eating from opposite ends. After a few minutes, the one who started at the head asked the other one, "How's it going down there?" And the other one replies, "I'm having a ball!"

\*\*\*

Q: Why don't cannibals eat comedians?

A: They taste funny.

\*\*\*

Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish and he will sit in a boat and drink beer all day.


\*\*\*

A mother tells her little boy, "Johnny, you mustn't eat too many lollies or I'll hide the lolly jar."

GRAND 2021  
MESSAGE

What's the difference between a man buying a lottery ticket and a man arguing with his wife?

The man buying a lottery ticket actually has a chance to win!



Johnny asks, "Why?"

His mother says, "Because something bad will happen! Your tummy will blow up big like a balloon and then pop!"

The next day at church, the boy is sitting next to a pregnant woman. He points to her belly smiling and says, "I know what you've been doing!"

\*\*\*

Q: Why did the tofu cross the road?

A: To prove he wasn't chicken.

\*\*\*

A lady sitting in the dentist chair told the dentist, "I would rather go through the pain of child birth than have you drill in my mouth."

The dentist replied, "Well, you had better make up your mind so I can adjust my chair."

Food for Thought

# Harry or Harry - which one are you?

Larry and Harry, two homeless men were given a chance to travel to a third world country on an all-expenses paid trip. They were told to carry nothing and return with nothing. They were to make sure they spend all that was given to them.

Provision had been made for their expenses and welfare which they would get upon arrival at their destination. The only caveat was that neither of them knew when they would be asked to return home.

As they arrived, they were both given a huge sum of money and a credit card with no limits, but reminded to spend it all before returning to their home country. At this, they became instantly wealthy by local standards.

Harry thought to himself. "Wow! This is my opportunity to live like a king for I don't

know how long this would last."

So, he went and rented a Ferrari and rented the best room in the best hotel in town. He went to the best stylist, shaved and transformed his looks. He had parties every day. Everyone in the city thought the cars and the wealth were his and they loved and respected him for it.

But at the back of his mind, Harry knew he would go back home someday and leave all of it behind but he didn't want to think about it.

Larry, on the other hand rented a small Honda to get him around town and stayed in a modest inn. He thought to himself. "This money will not last and I don't know when I am going back so I have to do something tangible with it."

He decided to use it to change some people's lives while there was still time. So, he got busy, went out on the streets and started making a difference. He didn't just give away money, rather he tried to help people be self-sufficient. He paid off all the school fees of some promising young ones to enable them get an education and take care of themselves and their families.

He found some responsible adults and funded them in a business that guaranteed

they would be able to take care of their family and create employment.

He devised a means of helping some of the homeless people get off the street and getting them into a trade for he thought "I wish someone would do this for me when I get back."

In short, while Harry was there, he was busy changing lives...

Then after just two months they were suddenly notified that it was time to go back. They hadn't even finished spending all the money but still had to leave it all. They both said their goodbye and headed for the airport. At the airport they were given their original clothes to put back on before boarding the plane back to their country.

Harry reminisced on the good times he had, but wasn't too happy that he was going back to his old life. How would he readjust to being homeless?

Larry on the other hand felt good. He came with nothing and is leaving with nothing, but he at least helped others with a chance at life and that alone meant the world to him.

Readjusting to being a homeless person wouldn't be a problem because he never lived like the wealth was his anyway

and always had it at the back of his mind that he would leave it all someday.

But little did they know that each moment they spent on vacation was being secretly recorded and they would be rewarded accordingly.

Now, which one do you think would be cast back out to the slums as a homeless person and which one would be entrusted with large sums of wealth and position of authority?

The same goes with our lives here on earth.

We are sent here on a mission and will return empty handed except for the recordings of our dealings here on earth.

Yet, many of us walk around thinking that the wealth we have is ours to keep forever.

We look at ourselves in the mirror and think that what we see will always be there, forgetting that we are wearing a temporary cloth, a human body, that would be required of us before we leave this world.

Our vacation on earth is but a short time while eternity is forever. How we spend this vacation determines how we get to spend eternity.



## About ageing



# Exercising after 40

*While no amount of exercising can stop the process of ageing, it can indeed be slowed down*

**F**or many, the concept of ageing sets in with their 40th birthday. This transition can get all the more traumatic if you enter your forties with an inactive lifestyle. Blood pressure, poor heart health, osteoporosis are some of the health issues that can grip you. While no amount of exercising can stop the process of ageing, it can indeed be slowed down with an active lifestyle, reports Times of India.

Once you turn 40, you lose one per cent muscle every year. The right types of exercises can prevent this muscle loss, delay (or even prevent) cognitive decline, which is a common result of aging.

For those with an active lifestyle develop better coping mechanisms towards age related issues. And the inactive ones will eventually feel it even harder to even stay active. So what do they need to do?

### Flexibility

Working on flexibility gets imperative after 40. There are various flexibility tests to assess if you are at risk of high blood pressure or poor heart health. Fitness experts suggest active isolated stretches wherein you hold every stretch for two seconds, improving circulation and elasticity.

### Too much cardio?

If you are new to workout, do not directly jump on to doing long hours of cardio exercises that require extreme

endurance training. More than 45 minutes of cardio is not recommended for people above 40.

### HIIT

High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) is as much for those over 40 than for the younger lot. Doing extreme intensity workout for shorter durations, 3-4 times a week is any day better than long hours of workouts. Science has proved that HIIT also enables production of HGH - human growth hormone - preventing muscle loss. But remember, you must allow your body to recover.

### Core workout

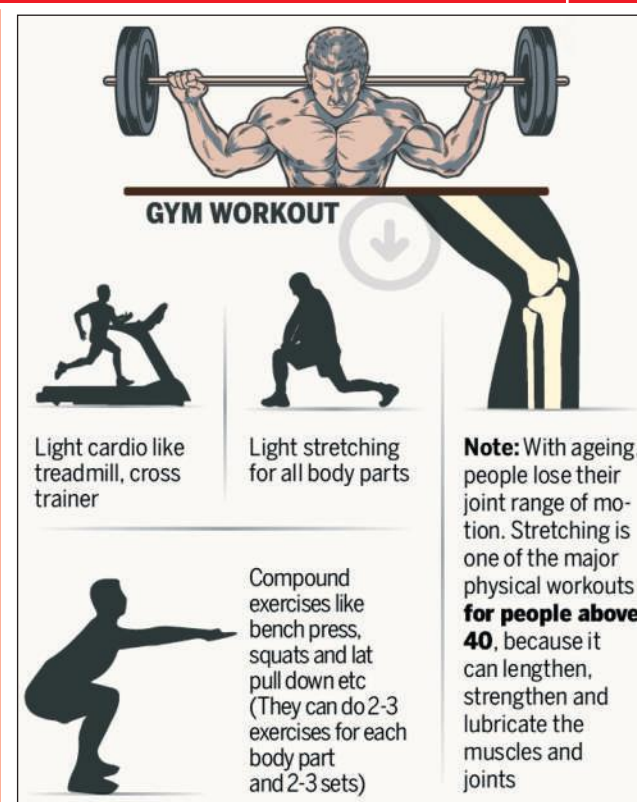
Exercises that engage your core like planks, work on inner muscles and its benefits go a long way. Various plank variations can be done for better balance and posture. Make sure, you hold the plank right.

Here is a sample workout by fitness expert, Neeraj Mehta:



### How to start?

According to fitness expert Alkhas Joesph, you need to start your fitness journey in the most gradual manner. "For those who have been inactive, it is important to give your



body time and the results will be seen automatically."

Fitness expert Neeraj Mehta talks about three kinds of exercises that make you injury-proof and can benefit our body in a variety of ways: Stretching exercises like sun salutation and warrior stretch for lubrication in our muscles; Strength training like free squats, pushups and planks to increase your core strength. It manages three major body parts: chest, back and legs; Cardio exercises like brisk walking and jogging to encourage healthy heart movement.

There has been a long ongoing misconception about following weight training post 40. However, many studies suggest that weight training is essential to fuel bone and muscle strength in the body as these two tend to become weak due to inactivity and can lead to lethargy.

"We need to indulge in mindful training and eating, keeping in mind our medical condition. To increase muscle and bone density, it is important for us to do weight training for 4 days a week, for 30- 40 minutes," says fitness trainer and expert Kumar Mannava. According to Mannava, it is important to get personalised consultation, as bodies react differently to different exercises post 40.

Therefore, it is essential to indulge in any kind of exercise that you like post 40 to promote your body to become its fittest best. If you have been following a fitness regime already, continue doing it, however, consult your instructor as to what will suit your body. Understanding what your body requires and working accordingly will give you the best results.

## Food for Thought

# All fused bulbs are the same!

**A** senior executive retired and shifted from his palatial official quarters to the housing society, where he owned a flat.

He considered himself big and never talked to anyone. Even while walking in the society park every evening, he ignored others, looking at them with contempt.

One day, it somehow transpired that an elderly person sitting beside him started a

conversation, and they continued to meet.

Every conversation was mostly a monologue with the retired executive harping on his pet topic: "Nobody can imagine the big post and high position I held before retirement. I came here due to compulsions..." and so on, and the other elderly person used to listen to him quietly.

After many days, when the retired executive was inquisitive about others, the elderly listener opened his mouth and said:

"After retirement, we are all like fused bulbs. It does not matter what a bulb's wattage was, how much light or glitter it gave, after it gets fused."

He continued, "I have been living in this society for the last 5 years and have not

told anyone that I was a Member of the Parliament for two terms. On your right, over there is Vermaji, who retired as General Manager in Indian Railways. Over there is Singh Saheb, who was a Major General in the Army. That person sitting on the bench in spotless white dress is Mehraji, who was the chief of ISRO before retirement. He hasn't revealed it to anyone, not even to me, but I know.

"All fused bulbs are now the same - whatever its wattage was - 0, 10, 40, 60, 100 watts - it doesn't matter now. Neither does it matter what type of bulb it was before it got fused - LED, CFL, Halogen, Incandescent, fluorescent, or decorative.

"And that, my friend, applies to you too.

The day you understand this, you will find peace and tranquillity even in this housing society."

The rising sun as well as the setting sun are both beautiful and adorable. But, in reality, the rising sun gets more importance and adoration, and is even worshipped, whereas the setting sun is not given the same reverence. It is better to understand this sooner than later.

Our current designation, title and power are not permanent.

Keeping lots of emotions with these things only complicate our life when we lose this one day. Remember that when the game is over, the king and the pawn go back in the same box.





## Minissha Lamba on Bollywood struggle: 'No one wanted to manage me'

**M**inissha Lamba has opened up about her Bollywood struggle, but asserted that she worked on her own terms. Minissha said that she was discovered by Shoojit Sircar, and it took six months to convince her to act in his film *Yahaan*.

She said that after the film bombed, 'no one' wanted to manage her. But, she added, things fell into place for her eventually.

She told Times Now, "No one wanted to manage me. They gave excuses about how they are busy as they felt my debut was an art-house kind of a movie. They did not want to put the energies into me. Everything I did was on my own. I did not have anyone pitching for me. Despite all that, I do feel there was a luck factor involved. People who wanted to work with me called me themselves. I got a call from Yash Raj. Whatever work I did with Excel was because I had got a call from them. No one told them to take her. When I look back, the struggle was decent. It would be wrong for me to say that I struggled. Things fell into the place, in a way I had not expected honestly."

Minissha has appeared in films such as *Honeymoon Travels Pvt. Ltd* and *Bachna Ae Haseeno*. She also appeared on the eighth season of reality show *Bigg Boss*.

The actor got divorced from restaurateur Ryan Tham last year. She spoke about the separation in an interview earlier this year. "Life goes on and the important thing is to be happy. If something is not working, part ways amicably. Today we have options for that; there is no stigma attached to separation," she told a leading daily.



## Rashmika Mandanna opens up about doing Bollywood movies, says she felt it was the right time

**A**fter impressing one and all down south, Rashmika Mandanna is all set to make her big Bollywood debut soon. Talking about it, she called this the right time to be doing Bollywood movies, reports Times of India.

Spilling the beans on the same, Rashmika said that before the pandemic hit, she had no time as she was occupied with films down south. According to her, she didn't feel at that time that she should do Bollywood films.

Elaborating further, she added that once Covid hit and other projects slowed down, she felt it was the right time to do it and that's when *'Mission Majnu'* and *'Goodbye'* came. According to her, there is no particular reason why she didn't do it because back then she had a couple of Hindi film offers but the actress felt now is the right time.

When asked if working in Bollywood is in any way different from working in films down south, the actress reportedly said that every team, director, crew member works differently. So, if the same cast is working with a different team, they become different. So, according to her, none of them are the same individual but no industry is different. Everyone is just a storyteller.

Rashmika will be seen making her debut with *'Mission Majnu'* co-starring Sidharth Malhotra in the lead role. Apart from this, she has also bagged *'Goodbye'* where she will be sharing the screen space with none other than Amitabh Bachchan. It also features Pavail Gulati and Neena Gupta in key roles.

## Inside Rajkummar Rao's luxurious split-level Mumbai home, actor recalls living in Gurgaon with 16-member joint family

*Step inside Rajkummar Rao's gorgeous new house in Mumbai that speaks volumes about the actor's personality. As he takes viewers on a tour of his space that has hammocks, eclectic art and a view of Mumbai, the actor also introduced Indian Express to his pet Gaga.*



**R**ajkummar Rao's new house in Mumbai is a good mix of classy and royal, and it speaks volumes about the actor and his choices. In a video, Rajkummar gives a tour of his house, which he says took 2 years to be ready. "I found the energy absolutely right. So, instantly I decided that I am going to have this house for myself," the actor said.

While talking about the house, he said that he experimented with textures and tones of the décor just like how he experiments with his characters on screen. "You should not be scared of experimenting with your décor.

That is what I do in my work as well. As an actor, I take a lot of risks, experiment with my characters, which is what we have done with the house as well," the 36-year-old said adding that he loves detailing "even in the terms of my work. Being an actor, I believe in it."

The *Roohi* actor recalled that this is his fourth house in Mumbai. "I grew up in Gurgaon, in a joint family. There were some 16 people living together. When I moved to Mumbai, I shared my house with two of my friends. We used to sleep on the floor." Then he spoke about moving to another house where he experienced a lot of his firsts, "I got my first film there, I won my first National Award there," he recalled.

In the house, one would also come across very quirky quotes. One of the doors had "Never forget where you started" written over it. Explaining that, Rajkummar said, "I believe in this. I didn't want to become an actor to chase fame but because I fell in love with this art. Being an actor and playing so many characters in one lifetime keeps me rooted and uncorrupted. There is nothing else I can do in this life than being an actor."

That's not it. There is another wall with "You are exactly where you need to be" written over it, which the actor calls a sum-up of his journey in the film industry so far. "I truly believe your hard work takes you places. The work I have done in 15 years has brought me here. Now, whatever I do, will take me ahead," *The White Tiger* actor stated.

On the work front, Rajkummar was recently seen in *Roohi*, which also starred Janhvi Kapoor and Varun Sharma. He recently wrapped *Badhaai Do* with Bhumi Pednekar.



# Shweta Tiwari stuns everyone with her transformed avatar

Shweta reveals her fitness goal as she shows off her sleek abs



**K**asauti Zindagi Kay fame Shweta Tiwari has stunned everyone with her transformed avatar in the past few days. The actress has lost a tremendous amount of weight and is strictly following a perfect regime to stay fit, reports Times of India..

Shweta has already undergone a massive weight loss and

it looks like nothing is stopping her now. In her latest Instagram story, the actress posted an amazing picture flaunting her toned abs and wrote, "I don't have a deadline! 1 pound at a time. And I will reach there!"

Seems like the *Mere Dad Ki Dulhan* actress is following a perfectly framed workout regime

and diet to keep herself fit.

Earlier, Shweta posted another ravishing picture flaunting her abs on Instagram and left everyone dazed with her hotness. Fellow celebs from the television industry praised the actress and showered her with love and compliments in the comments. A mother of two, Shweta Tiwari who seems to be aging backwards shared a little about her 'not so easy' weight loss journey in one of her Instagram posts earlier. She posted a picture with her nutritionist and credited her for her fitness achievement. Shweta wrote, "Weight Loss! Phew... Weight loss is not easy...it's very hard! You need lot of dedication lot of self-control and will power!"

Talking about her work, Shweta was last seen in the lead role as Guneet Sikka in *Meher Dad Ki Dulhan* opposite Varun Badola.

## 'Kundali Bhagya'

# Twinkle Vashist reveals that she would love try do a role reversal with Ruhi Chaturvedi

**Z**ee TV's show *Kundali Bhagya* is one of the most popular TV shows on the small screen. The popular daily soap has managed to garner rave reviews from the masses ever since the beginning. Popular TV actors like Dheeraj Dhoopar, Anjum Fakih, Abhishek Kapur, Shraddha Arya, Ruhi Chaturvedi, Manit Joura, Sanjay Gagnani, and Swati Kapoor are seen in pivotal roles on the show.

Viewers have seen how Karan and Preeta's life has been full of ups and downs, especially after Kritika got married to Prithvi. In addition, the show witnessed a shocking twist in the story where Akshay was shown dead and various members of the Luthra family, especially Preeta, were held responsible for it.

While the truth is yet to be unfolded, fans are getting curious to know who was behind Akshay's murder. There are many negative characters in the show who can possibly be responsible for Akshay's murder.

Harmisha Chauhan of *TellyChakkar* got in



touch with actress Twinkle Vashist aka Kritika, who was suspected of Akshay's murder.

When asked whether it was true, she said that there is a possibility. If that is the case, then Kritika's character will be seen having negative shades.

On being asked which character she would choose for a role reversal, the actress said, "I would love to play Sherlyn's character, which is played by Ruhi Chaturvedi."

On being asked whether Ruhi would be able to play her character well, Twinkle, said, 'Absolutely, she will play my character in the best way. But she will be like, 'No way'.'

## YOUR STARS

### Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

Frictions with some of your neighbours or certain people of your family; don't let things grow acrimonious. You'll be subjected to rather painful questionings which, however, will improve your mind and your heart.

**Lucky Numbers:** 14, 15, 19, 20, 22, 30

### Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

Life in your home can be disturbed if you don't show great comprehension. It would be high time for you to show more lucidity in love matters; don't trust any first one who comes. There will be an interesting real-estate affair to seize.

**Lucky Numbers:** 8, 18, 19, 20, 31, 36

### Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

If you give the best of yourself, professional success will be at your arm's reach. Your vitality will decrease significantly; eat better balanced foods. You'll be confronted with a difficult sentimental problem, but with the help of a friend you'll get you out of it.

**Lucky Numbers:** 9, 10, 11, 17, 30, 32

### Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

Your love life will be fraught with strife; watch out, everything could as a result go down the drain! Read your mail and your contracts again carefully before signing them: negligence could prove to be fatal this time.

**Lucky Numbers:** 4, 9, 22, 26, 31, 40

### Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

To succeed in your professional or personal projects, restrict yourself to the essential and show perseverance. If you have difficulty finding a sister soul, it's because your standards are too high.

**Lucky Numbers:** 2, 4, 15, 19, 21, 30

### Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

Your professional qualities will be fully recognized. Love will suddenly seem more vital to you, and you'll be entirely willing to do everything to appease your heart. Your immune defenses will be weakened: avoid close contact with sick people.

**Lucky Numbers:** 2, 7, 15, 18, 19, 20

### Gemini: May 21 - June 20

Many satisfactions in prospect, heart wise and workwise; you'll be very brilliant, self-confident and efficient. You'll climb up in the social hierarchy. You'll obtain excellent results at your work. For once, do yourself pleasure by indulging in a small folly.

**Lucky Numbers:** 9, 11, 15, 20, 23, 36

### Cancer: June 21 - July 22

You'll be secured by luck and should spend your coming month-ends in style. This time, you'll have wisdom not to demand happiness with a capital H, and you'll be satisfied with small happy events within your reach.

**Lucky Numbers:** 5, 10, 14, 16, 20, 31

### Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

A fine week to reach some of the professional goals close to your heart. But don't give your confidence too easily at this moment: you're likely to be a victim of unscrupulous people, who will tell you numerous lies.

**Lucky Numbers:** 1, 12, 18, 20, 30, 36

### Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

Friendship will be in the limelight: your exchanges will be coloured with graciousness and sympathy; but it's possible that envy or jealousy hides behind certain friendly marks, be attentive in order to detect them.

**Lucky Numbers:** 7, 9, 15, 22, 30, 36

### Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

Many upheavals, and you should to show flexibility in order to cope with them gracefully. Family life is likely to go through a small crisis; don't let anybody meddle with your household affairs. Possible amorous pains, but don't despair, let time heal.

**Lucky Numbers:** 18, 19, 30, 36, 38, 40

### Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

During this week, try to stay on the alert instead of seeking to solve delicate problems. Everything will go well as far as your love affairs are concerned; past disappointments and disillusionations will be forgotten!

**Lucky Numbers:** 11, 15, 18, 20, 21, 30



## CINE 12

Vendredi 23 Avril - 21.15

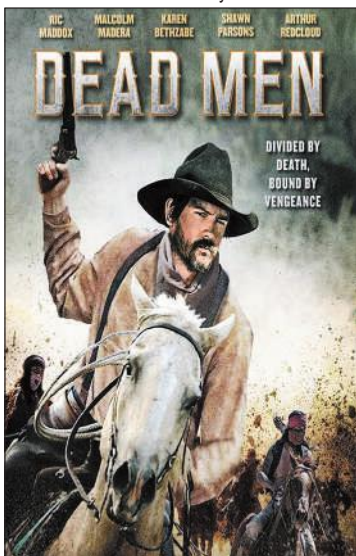
## Resident Evil: Damnation

Avec: Dave Wittenberg, Matthew Mercer,  
Courtenay Taylor

## CINE 12

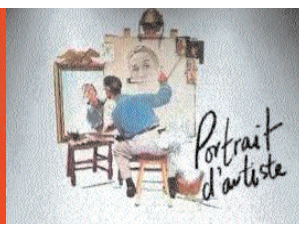
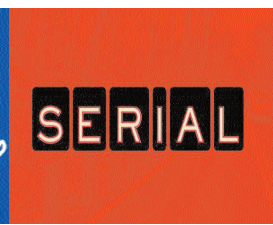
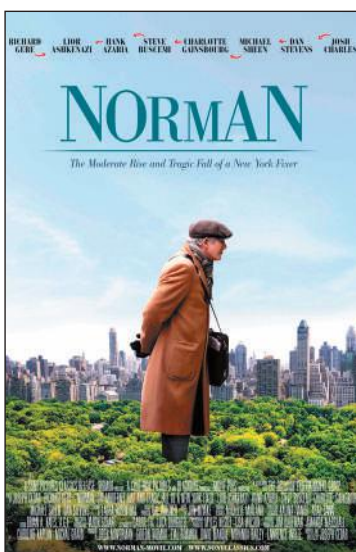
Samedi 24 Avril - 21.15

## Dead Men

Starring: Ric Madox, Aaron Marciniak,  
Richard O. Ryan

## CINE 12

Dimanche 25 Avril - 21.15



MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
<b>vendredi 23 avril</b> 07.00 Dessin Anime 10.35 Serial: Radio Free Roscoe 11.10 Tele: Soleil Levant 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.50 Mag: Urban Gardens 14.26 D.Anime: The Hive 14.34 D.Anime: Spirit: Au Galop... 14.57 D.Anime: Sindbad And The 7 15.09 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 15.32 D.Anime: Kung Fu Panda 15.55 Film: Ogre - Animated Film 17.00 Serial: Mustangs FC 17.30 Live - Covid-19 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.20 Prod: Lottery Vert Draw 20.25 Local: Festival Fashion Mau.. 21.25 Serial: When Calls The Heart 22.15 Serial: Seat Team	10.00 Serial: Bisaat-E-Dil 11.05 Serial: Zun Mureed 12.04 Film: Pedavi Datani Matokatundhi 13.57 DDI Magazine 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.30 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.46 Serial: Bava Maradallu 16.07 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 16.22 Serial: Suno Chanda 16.56 Serial: Achra Ke Moti 17.16 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.35 Serial: Chhanchhan 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 DDI Magazine 19.05 Zournal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Serial: Band Khirkiyan 20.49 Local: Anjuman 21.15 Local: Urdu Programme - Noor-E-Iman	06.00 Mag: Eco India 06.26 Mag: Shift 06.38 Mag: Sur Measure 07.51 Mag: Science Ou Fiction 08.17 Doc: 360 GEO 09.54 Doc: On Route 7 into the... 10.34 Doc: Beneath The Waves 12.00 Mag: Border Crossing 12.20 Mag: Le Saviez vous? 12.28 Mag: Tomorrow Today 13.20 Doc: 360 GEO 15.00 Doc: On Route 7 Into The... 15.43 Doc: Beneath The Waves 16.12 Mag: Eco India 16.38 Mag: Shift 16.50 Mag: Border Crossing 17.18 Mag: Tomorrow Today 17.47 Doc: Muay Thai 20.05 Doc: Olivia's Garden 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.40 Doc: Wildlife Heroes	01.02 Film: Cassidy Red 02.33 Serial: Hawaii 5-0 03.14 Film: The Misfits Club 05.08 Tele: Muneca Brava 05.41 Serial: 19-2 06.23 Film: Thirteen Days 09.00 Serial: Chicago Fire 09.45 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.00 Serial: Chicago Med 12.00 Film: The Misfits Club 13.34 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.14 Film: Thirteen Days 16.40 Serial: Chicago Fire 17.20 Serial: 19-2 18.05 Tele: Daneilla 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: Killjoys 21.15 Film: Resident Evil Avec: Dave Wittenberg, Matthew...	08.00 Film: Aasoo Bane Angaarey 12.05 / 19.54 - Sanjivani 12.30 / 20.11 - Radha Krishna 12.44 / 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 15.21 Film: Happy Phir Bhag... Starring: Sonakshi Sinha, Diana Penty, Jimmy Shergill 18.00 Live: Samacher 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.52 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka 19.11 Serial: Bhakharwai 19.33 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak
<b>samedi 24 avril</b> 06.00 D.Anime: Mega Man 06.35 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis... 06.46 D.Anime: Dinofroz 07.12 D.Anime: Dee Dee The Little.. 07.25 D.Anime: Wishfart 07.47 D.Anime: Oum Le Dauphin... 08.10 D.Anime: The Minimighty... 08.27 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Tele: Daniella 14.50 D.Anime: The Hive 15.20 D.Anime: Sindbad And The 7 15.33 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 16.00 Film: Shopkins, Des Courses 17.15 Local: Info En Langue 17.30 Live - Covid-19 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Entertainment: Dance 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.10 Local: RDV Muzikal 21.10 Film: Dead Men 00.20 Le Journal	07.00 Film: Judaai 09.29 Serial: Vir: The Robot Boy 10.00 Bade Acchelagte Hai 12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhyia Bhare 12.29 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 12.52 Serial: High School 13.14 Annakodiyum Ainthus Pengalum 13.37 Serial: Anu Pallavi 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.21 Film: Luka Chuppi Starring: Kartik Aaryan, Kriti, Aparshakti Khurana 17.37 Mag: DDI Magazine 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol 19.59 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha 20.29 Serial: Bitti Business 21.00 Film: My Wife's Murder Starring: Anil Kapoor, Suchitra Krishnamoorthi and Nandana Sen 22.39 DDI Live	06.00 Doc: Muay Thai 06.55 Mag: Global 3000 07.21 Mag: Le Saviez Vous? 07.26 Mag: Euromaxx 07.55 Doc: Wildlife Heroes 08.45 Le Monde Des Couleurs 09.37 Doc: Displaced: Oil and... 10.20 Doc: Rotta And Roll 11.02 Doc: Muay Thai 11.48 Mag: Global 3000 12.22 Doc: Le Monde Des Cou... 13.14 Doc: Displaced: Oil And... 13.51 Doc: Rotta And Roll 14.42 Student Support Prog... 20.05 Doc: Garden Party 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.40 Doc: 360 GEO 21.32 Doc: Destinations 21.45 Doc: SOS Animaux En... 23.29 Doc: Northern Lights 00.11 Doc: Amazing Gardens 00.37 Doc: More Sense, Less...	01.26 Film: Resident Evil: Damnation 02.56 Serial: Dynasty 2 03.45 Film: The Head Hunter 04.54 Tele: Esmeraldas 05.36 Serial: Killjoys 06.44 Film: Hope Dances 08.30 Serial: Mike Hammer 09.20 Serial: The Enemy Within 10.02 Serial: 12 Monkeys 10.40 Film: Archie Chien Robot 2 12.15 Serial: Dynasty 2 13.00 Serial: Chicago Med 15.05 Tele: Amanda 15.48 Tele: Muneca Brava 16.30 Mag: Hollywood On Set 17.00 Serial: Killjoys 17.45 Film: Red Dog: True Blue 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Series: Killjoys 21.15 Film: 55 Steps 23.10 Tele: Dulce Amor	04.05 Sanjivani 04.26 Radha Krishna 04.48 Agniphera 05.09 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 05.31 Zindagi Ki Mehek 05.55 Ikyawann 06.13 Bin Kuch Kahe 06.36 Kundali Bhagya 06.58 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka 07.18 Serial: Bhakharwadi 08.00 Zindagi Ki Mehek 09.47 Motu Patlu 10.12 Siddhi Vinayak 12.00 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 14.00 Sanjivani 16.00 Pavitra Rishta 18.30 Film: October Star: Varun Dhawan, Banita Sandhu, Gitanjali Rao 20.24 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 21.10 Serial: Naagin
<b>dimanche 25 avril</b> 06.00 D.Anime: Mega Man: Fully... 06.24 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis A.. 07.56 D.Anime: Oum Le Dauphin... 09.30 Mag: Future Mag 10.00 Local: Zafan Nou Zil 10.30 Serial: Backstage 12.00 Le Journal 12.40 Tele: Daniella 15.05 Prod: Goute A Tout 15.35 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 15.47 D.Anime: The Twisted Whis... 16.00 Film: Les Trolls 17.30 Live-Covid 19 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Local: Yeh Shaam Mastani 19.30 Le Journal 20.10 Local: Groove'In - Kafé Kiltir 21.15 Film: Philadelphia Stars: Tom Hanks, Denzel Washington, Roberta Maxwell 23.05 Le Journal	07.00 Film: Biradari Starring: Shashi Kapoor, Faryal, Lalita Pawar 09.20 Serial: Vir: The Moie 10.00 Final Of Ramayan Chanting 11.09 Serial: Oru Kai Osai 11.31 Serial: Santoshi Maa 12.00 Film: Bumm Bumm Bole Starring - Darshel Safari, Atul Kulkarni, Rituparna Sengupta, Ziyah Vastani 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.20 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 15.45 Eka Lagnachi Teesri Gosht 16.06 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 17.00 Serial: Mahakali 17.42 Serial: Kisna 18.30 Local: Tipa Tipa Nu Avance 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Serial: Mann Mein Vishwas.. 21.00 Serial: CID	06.00 Mag: Amazing Gardens 06.26 Doc: More Sense, Less... 06.50 Doc: The World From Above 07.47 Doc: 360 GEO 08.39 Doc: Destination 10.36 Doc: Northern Lights 11.21 Doc: Amazing Gardens 11.48 Doc: More Sense, Less... 12.40 Mag: Check In 14.01 Doc: Destinations 17.36 Doc: The World From Above 18.00 Mag: Tendance XXI 18.30 Local: Talk On Ramadan 20.05 Mag: Check In 20.30 Local Prod: News (English) 21.45 Doc: Le Douanier Rousseau 22.36 Doc: The Black Tears Of... 23.18 Doc: The Red Children 00.02 Mag: Tendance XXI 00.27 Doc: Ville En Fête 00.52 Doc: Garden Party	00.40 Film: 55 Steps 02.35 Serial: Hawaai Five-0 03.16 Film: Cassidy Red 04.47 Tele: Esmeraldas 05.28 Serial: Killjoys 06.10 Film: Clarity 08.00 Serial: Mike Hammer 08.49 Film: 55 Steps 10.44 Film: Red Dog: True Blue 12.15 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 13.03 Serial: Chicago Med 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: Norman: The Moderate 23.13 Tele: Dulce Amor	00.40 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 02.04 Sanjivani 04.06 Pavitra Rishta 05.33 Film: October Starring: Varun Dhawan, Banita Sandhu, Gitanjali Rao 08.01 Motu Patlu 08.11 Karn Sangini 09.58 Jaana Na Dil Se Door 11.42 Piya Albela 13.31 Agniphera 15.20 Bin Kuch Kahe 17.27 Punar Vivaah 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Film: Hindustani Film 20.55 Entertainment: Dance 21.17 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 23.08 Piya Albela

## MBC 2

Samedi 24 Avril - 21.00

Stars: Anil Kapoor, Suchitra  
Krishnamoorthi and Nandana Sen

Samedi 24 Avril - 18.30

Stars: Varun Dhawan, Banita  
Sandhu, Gitanjali Rao



# European Super League collapse: US football owners badly misread supporter culture in England

*Two days after 12 of Europe's leading clubs broke away to launch a new competition, they appear to be back in the fold*

**B**arely two days after it was unveiled, the European Super League (ESL) is dead in the water. All six of the English clubs who made up the 12 founding members of the proposed breakaway competition pulled out, following loud opposition from everyone from the FA to Uefa to the UK government to fans. With the owners now hastily apologising and trying to make amends, the ESL founder and Juventus chairman, Andrea Agnelli, has conceded defeat.

There is much discussion about what exactly the owners of these 12 clubs were hoping to achieve with their ESL announcement, but it surely wasn't this debacle. One aspect of this story that is particularly noticeable is that American owners figured heavily in the English end of the breakaway, with Liverpool, Arsenal and Manchester United all controlled from the US.

While England and the US have a lot in common, the design and administration of field sports is not one of them. This very short-lived super league has demonstrated just how big these differences are.

## Place power

The franchise model of the US is as much about cooperation off the field as it is competition on it. Things that would be unconscionable in England are commonplace in the US. Relocation is probably the best example.

Beginning in 1936, the National Football League's Los Angeles Rams have also been called the Cleveland Rams and St Louis Rams. Most recently, the NFL's Oakland Raiders have shifted to Las Vegas (they also had a stint in Los Angeles in the 1980s and 1990s).

And it doesn't end with American football. In baseball, the Salt Lake City Trappers were forced to move several hours away to Pocatello, Idaho in 1993 and then Ogden, northern Utah in 1994. This was because the Portland Beavers, who played in a superior league, did a deal with Salt Lake City officials to move to the city and use the Trappers' baseball park. The Beavers renamed as The Salt Lake City Buzz, and following several more name changes, they are now known as the Salt Lake City Bees.

English football fans do not tolerate this kind of thing. In June 2012 the Malaysian owners of Cardiff City announced that the club would be changing from their traditional blue jerseys to a new red kit, emblazoned with a dragon rather than the blue-bird that had first appeared in the 1960s.

Outrage immediately ensued from the supporters. The blue of Cardiff, first worn around 1908, was not for changing. A statement issued by the club at the time, focusing on broadening the club's appeal to "international markets" and "major and significant" investment, did nothing to



Chelsea fans protesting the ESL proposals as their club became first to withdraw from project. EPA

appease the fans. The red jersey had to go.

Following two and a half years of pressure from fans, Cardiff City announced on January 9 2015 that the "club will wear a blue home kit and red away kit next season (2015/16)". The crest was also going to be redesigned to feature the traditional blue-bird. So much for Welsh dragons.

Around the same time, Hull City supporters entered a protracted battle with the Allam family, which owns the football club. Hull's chairman, Assem Allam, a British-Egyptian industrialist, was seeking to change the name to Hull Tigers. After more than two years of protests and disagreement, a vote confirmed that the change had been resisted. The fans had won again.

What both owners apparently failed to appreciate were the historical roots of these clubs, stretching back more than 100 years. Supporters have deep emotional attachments to club colours or names that are intertwined with customs, habits and ways of behaving.

## Why the ESL got relegated

The owners of England's big six clubs seem to have made a similar mistake on a massive scale. The idea that six clubs, all members of the oldest set of interconnected leagues in the world, could simply walk away from nearly 140 years of tradition, league design and competitive behaviour as well as unravel 70 years of European competition by moving to a system with no promotion or relegation, was never going to work.

The sanctity of promotion and relegation is what sets European football apart from most American team sports. A super league in which the biggest teams automatically took part would have had devastating consequences for domestic leagues: weakened teams, meaningless fixtures, reduced attendance demand - the list goes on.

While the fallout from this is yet to be known, almost everyone agrees that European football needs to change to

reflect the modern game. There are too many international commitments for players, and the group stages of the Champions League have become largely uncompetitive. This is down to both the seeding of the draw by Uefa and the large number of top clubs in the competition, many of whom appear every year, since three or four clubs from each league qualify each season.

However, the new Champions League system that is due to begin in 2024-25 looks like a move even further in this direction. It will expand the competition in a way that will make it possible for two or three more big clubs to qualify even if they don't finish in the top four places in their domestic league the previous season (or win the previous year's Champions League or Europa League).

It means almost twice as many European matches each year and moves closer to a system in which the biggest clubs are always guaranteed to qualify - though clearly not guaranteed enough from the perspective of the breakaway 12. It is not clear whether they these teams will now accept this system or insist on further negotiations with Uefa.

Whether the collapse of the ESL could now change the direction of travel to reduce the dominance of the top clubs in this system is an interesting question. The fabric of the game and the wishes of supporters throughout Europe should be protected, though there is not much sign of opposition to the Champions League reforms.

At any rate, Uefa and the breakaway clubs are co-dependent and will inevitably have to come back together. The European Super League was not the answer but it may still act as the catalyst for a way forward.

**Robert Butler**

Director of the Centre for Sports Economics and Law, University College Cork



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor

## Goals - A Concrete Dream

**I**t is vital to take action on your goals in life, rather than just daydreaming about them.

Our desires act as fuel, propelling us toward new horizons. Without something to strive for, we stagnate and become stuck in ruts of our own making because we are unsure of what to do next. Goals are the dreams that we are willing to work for. When we set goals, we take responsibility for our lives and choose to wholeheartedly devote ourselves to our aspirations. Even if we only take the smallest steps toward achieving our ambitions, it is vital that we actively pursue our goals rather than just daydreaming about them. Having goals makes us feel good because it adds a sense of purpose and direction to our lives.

When you endeavor to achieve clear and quantifiable goals, your choices and actions take on new significance. Consciously creating your goals can help ensure that the success you seek is attainable and serves you. Your plan must be conceivable, tangible, and measurable. If you cannot visualize your goal in great detail or believe that you can realize them, you may find it difficult to commit to your goals and take the necessary steps to achieve them.

Make sure that your goals have the potential to be emotionally satisfying. You may even want to write them down. Putting your goals into words can keep your intention fresh in your mind and remind you of your purpose. As you make progress toward realizing your goals, give yourself a reward each time you take a step forward so that you have the incentive to keep going. If you find yourself stuck in a rut, examine ways in which you can revise your strategy so that your plan can work.

In creating goals, you create your future by outlining your destiny. When you choose your goals using your head and heart, you take the first step in manifesting what you want. You grant your own wishes every time you achieve another goal.