

# MAURITIUS TIMES

• "Don't tell me that's part of a god's plan to kill hundreds of people by something which we cannot see. And nobody knows how to stop it." -- Sarvesh Jain

Fact Finding Committee on deaths of renal dialysis patients

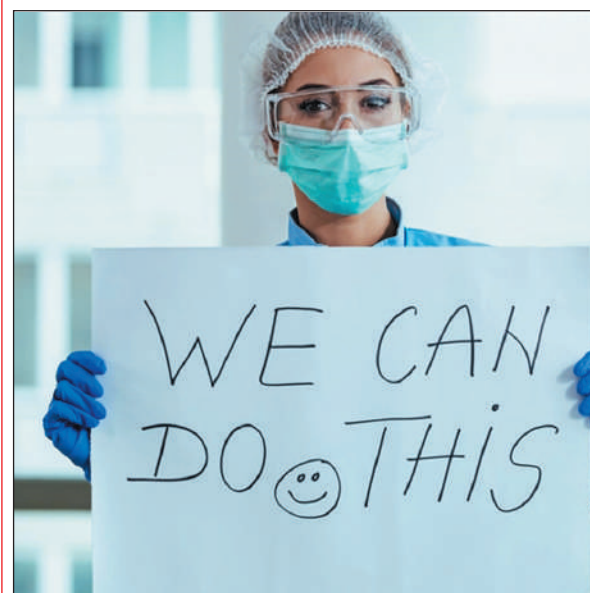
## "A minister must assume responsibility for the failings of a civil servant..."

... but that would not necessarily absolve the civil servant"

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## Neither Covid free nor Covid safe



'We have to constantly keep in front of us the crucial lesson that this pandemic has taught us: self-protection means that everyone is protected'.

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Opinion

## Anything and Everything?



People in a Mumbai hospital where a special coronavirus ward has been set up

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# Drugs, again

**W**hile the country was under lockdown 2.0, and everyone and every sector of activity had to make changes in how to conduct their activities, it seems that in one sector at least things didn't change: it is business as usual in the world of drug trafficking. We do not have to go by only the latest drug haul that was unearthed by the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit at Pointe-aux-Cannoniers, for there is no before and after in that domain. Periodic drug seizures have continued to take place, and lockdown 1.0 did not have any different impact on the drug trafficking business.

It is true that other societal mishaps continue unabated too - fatal road accidents, thefts of all types, frauds and corruptions, sexual violence and murders - but the drug crimes are unique in that they involve ever larger and mind-boggling sums of money. It is no longer millions or tens of millions. Not even hundreds - now it is about billions of rupees. Rs 3 billion is the estimate for the latest catch.

Whereas synthetic drugs have taken the country by storm over the past few years, targeting youth and infiltrating schools, the latest consignment would indicate that there is no shift in the landscape for consumption of the hard drugs, especially heroin which made up the lot at Pointe-aux-Cannoniers. There is still a clientele, judging by the amount seized. Ranging from the highest and most moneyed - rave parties - to those who have to beg, borrow or steal to procure the substance, creating social havoc, destroying families.

Whereas synthetic drugs have spread fast in particular because they are relatively easy to produce, with common chemicals that are readily available, and thus they are cheaper though more dangerous in terms of their effects - which have included deaths - heroin is of course the most expensive drug.

The question that naturally arises therefore is where does all this money come from to import drugs to the scale of billions of rupees? Those who are caught are clearly the small fries in the supply and distribution chain. The real issue is the source of such moneys. Investigative authorities must have their own methodologies to go about seeking the culprits, but this is clearly a herculean task that may get stuck on many reefs that they can make any headway. The network of all those engaged in the supply is likely to be vast and spread across countries and regions.

Getting to the root of the matter is definitely walking into tiger territory, and that is why it must be done within a legal framework that of necessity has international dimensions. A good way to continue would be to follow up on the recommendations of the Lam Shang Leen Commission Report. After all, in reply to a question from the Opposition at the time that the Report was made officially available, it was stated that a taskforce was to be set up to consider the implementation of the recommendations. Seeking clarification about where that taskforce has reached may begin to provide answers. In truth, though, will we ever get them! That is the worry. Meanwhile, the drug pandemic too will go on unabated.

## Mauritius Times

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## The Conversation

# Restricting digital media is a gamble for African leaders

*Digital media shutdowns in Africa will lead to higher economic costs and greater public outrage*



**C**ovid-19 pushed much of the world into the digital realm for everything from schooling and work to religious worship and dating. At the same time, many governments were turning data connections off. Full or partial shutdowns of the internet and social media are increasingly common parts of the "digital authoritarian" toolkit.

Many leaders seem threatened by the way digital media make it possible to share information and organise. Research shows that 2020 saw 156 full or partial shutdowns of the internet or social media like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp. South Asia accounts for almost three quarters of these shutdowns, with India leading the way.

Africa was the next most affected region, with 20 shutdowns affecting 12 countries. Disruptions lasted from as short as a day or less, in Burundi, Egypt, and Togo, to nearly 90 days in parts of Ethiopia's Oromia Region. A recent blockage of social media in Chad lasted for more than a year.

And 2021 has already seen shutdowns in Niger, Senegal and Uganda.

Governments have given varying justifications for these moves. These include: combating hate speech and fake news in Chad and Ethiopia, suppressing violence in Sudan, and preventing exam cheating in Algeria and Sudan. Disruptions in Mali in 2020 coincided with anti-government protests, while shutdowns were timed around elections in Burundi, Guinea, Tanzania, and Togo.

In some cases, official reasoning has shifted over time. When Uganda shut down digital media surrounding its January 2021 elections, foreign affairs minister Sam Kutesa initially said

the move was retaliation for Facebook's and Twitter's actions against government accounts. Investigations had alleged the government was behind "coordinated inauthentic behaviour" using fake accounts to spread disinformation and intimidate the opposition. After the election, however, Kutesa said the move was "a necessary step to stop the vitriolic language and incitement to violence."

## Views on digital media limits

Online commentary usually harshly criticises these shutdowns. But these posts aren't necessarily representative of general public opinion in affected countries.

To get a sense of broader opinion on these issues, we analysed data from Afrobarometer. This is an independent African research network that conducted nationally representative surveys in 18 countries in 2019/20. About 27,000 Africans participated in these surveys.

A larger share of respondents supported access to digital media. When given a choice between two statements, 48% agreed that "unrestricted access to the internet and social media helps people to be more informed and active citizens, and should be protected". Only 36% agreed that "information shared on the internet and social media is dividing (our country), so access should be regulated by the government".

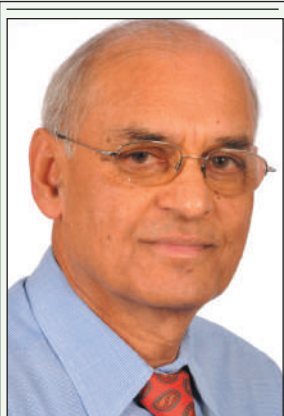
Jeffrey Conroy-Krutz

Associate Professor of Political Science,  
Michigan State University



# Neither Covid free nor Covid safe

*It is merely the reality that we must keep in mind as we go about, and not be under the illusion that we can now be totally free to do as we please*



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

**T**he easing of restrictions that have been in place must not lead us into the false belief that we are Covid-free. We are not, and it is most unlikely that we will ever be. Because the virus is now circulating all over the world, in all countries irrespective of their level of development. Like the influenza viruses, with which we have to live. Unlike the influenza viruses, though, the Wuhan virus or, Covid-19 as it is more commonly known per WHO designation, is not seasonal like the former which are more common in winter and affect mainly the elderly. Further, it is not restricted to the lungs but causes disease in practically all organs in all age groups, not even sparing children under the age of 12 in whom it produces what is known as a 'Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C).'

For a while towards the end of 2020 and beginning of 2021 the country may have been Covid-safe. That changed after January 2021 when probably the virus was in the community according to the information that has filtered in trickles. Whatever be, the fact is that after January we ceased to be Covid-safe, and currently therefore we are in a situation where **we are neither Covid-free nor Covid-safe.**

This is not being alarmist. It is merely the reality that we must keep in mind as we go about, and not be under the illusion - as we were when the lockdown was lifted last year - that we can now be totally free to do as we

**“Covishield + Covaxin + Sinopharm vaccination locally so far will add up to less than 300,000 people being covered, out of the nearly 1.3 million, that is, less than 25%. We need a minimum of 60% but ideally 70%-plus to be vaccinated to provide us with 'herd immunity'. When this will happen reminds uncertain, because it depends on whether and when we get further supplies of vaccine. However, herd immunity is not a guarantee against re-infection...”**



Going out? Help keep you and your family safe. Pic - static.toiimg.com

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please. This is what we did last year and until the current lockdown. We dumped all the sanitary measures. There had been much talk and writing about a 'new normal' after the lockdown. But we simply went back to our 'old normal' - behaving as we used to do before, freely taking part in large gatherings and moving about in crowds.

A recap of what we know about Covid-19, the virus and the disease, will help explain **why we are not Covid-safe.**

- As mentioned above, the virus is present in the community, since it is still being detected as tracing and testing are going on systematically - which is as it should be - in different geographical regions around the country. And thus, we may continue to have such rolling regional lockdowns, but how frequently and for how long cannot be known.
- The virus has an incubation period of 7-14 days, during which time the person does not have any symptoms. However, studies have shown that the person in this stage can still transmit the disease, through talking or coughing.
- The main mode of transmission of the virus is through the air, by droplets which do not go too far from the mouth (as in ordinary talking) or by finer aerosols which can spread over several feet, and in a closed room that can be risky for everybody.
- A certain percentage of the tests done turn out to be

negative in persons who are infected (false negative), for reasons that we need not go into here. What is more important is what this means for the population: that despite the negative test, the person may still be harbouring, and therefore spreading, the virus.

- Vaccination gives protection or immunity against the virus, but at this point there are insufficient data to indicate how long this immunity lasts. Knowing this will help to decide whether a booster shot of vaccine is required, and when: once a year? And for how many years more?
- *Vaccination does not prevent re-infection with Covid-19* - in other words, if you have had Covid once, it doesn't mean that you cannot have it again.
- The main effect of vaccination is to reduce the severity of disease if one gets Covid, and diminish the risk of death.
- For everybody to be safe, almost all the 7 plus billion people in the world will have to have been vaccinated. Constraints to achieving this goal include: availability of vaccine, having the logistics (storage facilities, enough syringes & paraphernalia, adequate numbers of trained staff and related human resources), overcoming vaccine hesitancy/opposition/fake info. The result: it will take several years for everyone on the planet to be vaccinated.
- Covishield + Covaxin + Sinopharm vaccination locally so far will add up to less than 300,000 people being covered, out of the nearly 1.3 million, that is, less than 25%. We need a minimum of 60% but ideally 70%-plus to be vaccinated to provide us with 'herd immunity'. When this will happen reminds uncertain, because it depends on whether and when we get further supplies of vaccine.
- However, herd immunity is not a guarantee against re-infection, especially because new variants are constantly evolving and being discovered. And they seem to be more transmissible and cause more severe disease.

Another factor of relevance is that, although reduced, there is a degree of air traffic that is taking place. This is likely to increase with the pressure to open frontiers, which in turn will further augment the risk of infection or re-infection, along with the potential introduction of the newer variants.

Moreover, considering the pattern of unfolding of the pandemic worldwide, it is clear that several countries have had third surges as well, and that is what gave rise to the term 'rolling lockdowns' as new ones followed the earlier ones. This means, therefore that we have to take seriously the possibility - if not probability - of a third wave.

For all these reasons, therefore, we have to constantly keep in front of us the crucial lesson that this pandemic has taught us: **self-protection means that everyone is protected.**

And so, for the love of family and friends, and out of a sense of civic responsibility, let us not let our arms down. That is, continue to implement the sanitary measures as long as required.



## Post-Covid Geopolitics and Power Plays

# The Next War Will Be Fought Over Water



Anil Madan

**I**t has often been said. The next war will be fought over water. You have all heard this.

Some years ago, when a friend repeated this presumptive truism, I replied: "The army that does not have water will lose."

The looming worldwide water shortage is a problem even bigger than climate change. Without water, humans cannot survive. That seems obvious. But when we speak of THAT kind of water, we are speaking of drinking water and water for agriculture. There is a shortage of both.

There is another kind of water that is also important and that is the water of the oceans of the world. That water is important in two respects. *First*, it is a virtually endless source of drinking water provided one can desalinate and distribute it. *Second*, even in this age of intercontinental ballistic missiles, control of the seas gives nations the ability to project power, perhaps as never before.

As we look at the horrific surge of Covid-19 infections and deaths in India, it is reasonable to ask if the world will indeed get past this virus. Or will it become a permanent part of human existence and the landscape we must face? Certainly, as I have previously observed, given that the world's population is some 7.8 billion and worldwide vaccine production is at best about two billion doses a year, it will take about six years to vaccinate the entire world, three if we can double production capacity. This means that with mutants and variants galore, we may be far from a post-Covid world.

If we do get to a post-Covid world, what do water shortages have to do with geopolitics? Well, if you go back to 1947 and the partition of India and Pakistan, you will often hear that the conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir is about the rights of Hindus versus Muslims. The truth is that Kashmir is a conduit for major rivers feeding water from the Himalayas to India as well as that part of it that became Pakistan. The conflict has little to do with religion and everything to do with water.

At a higher level, the Indo-Gangetic Plain is the source of much of the water that feeds the subcontinent. Equally so, is the Tibeto-Gangetic Plain or Tibetan Plateau which provides water for almost one-quarter of the world's population. It is home to ten of the great



Water Wars: The Next Great Driver of Global Conflict? Pic - nationalinterest.org

**"If one seeks to explain why China took control of Tibet, one realizes that it has nothing to do with the Communist regime's abhorrence of religion or Buddhists, but everything to do with control of water. And as China engages with Bhutan and Nepal and the occasional flare-up with India in the remote heights of the Himalayas, think water..."**

rivers of the world including the Yellow River, the Yangtze, the Mekong, the Brahmaputra, the Sutlej and the Indus. As the glaciers diminish and the glaciated reserves of the world's water supply dissipate, control of water will be more and more imperative.

So, if one seeks to explain why China took control of Tibet, one realizes that it has nothing to do with the Communist regime's abhorrence of religion or Buddhists, but everything to do with control of water. And as China engages with Bhutan and Nepal and the occasional flare-up with India in the remote heights of the Himalayas, think water.

China continues to be aggressive with India about control of these great water Plains or Plateaus. Some years ago, when the water supply was abundant, it seemed the winner would gloat, have an economic advantage and yet leave the loser with a gravely diminished water supply but sufficient to get by. Unfortunately, climate change, glacier melt, and pollution have diminished available water to the point that diversion by any one nation of a great river could present an existential threat to the other. Considering that India and China

are both nuclear powers, this is dangerous ground.

Or, turn to Africa. In sub-Saharan Africa, 40% or more of the population is at severe risk of water shortages. The same is true in India, China, Australia and the south-western United States. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, or GERD, is the subject of vociferous complaints from Sudan and Egypt as their water supply is threatened. In the Middle East, skirmishes and wars over water have been commonplace for decades recently and indeed for centuries on a grand scale.

Expect these conflicts in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East to get more intense as time goes on.

The great challenge for almost every nation in the years ahead will be to provide adequate water for domestic use and for agriculture. Desalination provides one major path to get to sufficiency in this area. Rainwater collection is another avenue. These are perhaps the two means to avoiding cross-border conflicts between nations across the continents.

The oceans are vitally important for shipping lanes, fishing grounds, and national security. Here, we see that China is the ascendant power. With an aggressive fleet development program, sophisticated aircraft carriers and a naval presence that dwarfs every other country's navy, China has become the dominant power in the Pacific Ocean and that part of it known as the South China Sea.

Is there a silver lining here? Well, China is dominant because it trades with the rest of the world, often on advantageous commercial terms. The last thing it needs to do is intimidate the nations of the world or put a damper on trade. Will China see an advantage to being a benign influence in the world or will it insist on domination, control and a ruthless exercise of power?

It seems a given that regardless of what the US and other nations do, China will be a dominant and major naval force in the world. The question is whether China will have the enlightened self-interest to tread lightly and reap the benefits.

Cheerz...  
Bwana





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1956-2020



# Anything and Everything?

*Argumentation on pretty much anything and everything is undeniably part of the Indian psyche across that vast subcontinent. An attaching virtue perhaps in the normal run of things but something of an irritant during this pandemic spike*

Jan Arden

A section of the Indian media and some Op-eds have resorted to the political blame-game and finger-pointing in the midst of India's worst nightmare, some squarely throwing the sink at the Union government, the ruling BJP philosophy or PM Modi personally. Those of us farther away from Indian shores, who might have thought the images, horror stories and desperate shortages of anything and everything, from hospital beds, oxygen, trained nursing personnel to medical and vaccine supplies, would be a time to focus on immediate, concrete solutions and urgently revising mid-term priorities, may feel bemused, if not outraged.

Around mid-2000, I read 'The Argumentative Indian', from world-renowned economics Professor Amartya Sen, working since 1972 in the UK and the USA who was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1998 for his seminal contributions in the less fashionable areas then of poverty, development and welfare economics. I was intrigued by the title, even if the author seemed to be straying afar from his fertile fields and was probably addressing a Western audience, unfamiliar with the intricacies of India in the early years of this millennium.

From what I recall, Prof Sen was trying to demonstrate to his readers that Indian culture is a rich tapestry where the fundamental tolerance of the Hindu ethos has, over its multi-millennial history, broadened the country's heritage and endowed it with a long and rich tradition of argumentation - a recipe, he believed, against fundamentalism. It was a strange paradox he did not fathom how and why such vaunted tolerance was giving way to a Hindu renaissance, that liberal and Western schools term as fundamentalism.

This benign view might have earned plaudits from other like-minded academics, but I felt disappointed with the rather light and perhaps disjointed collection of essays, that started off surprisingly with the quiet acceptance of the main tenets of the theory of Aryan invasion that, by the turn of this century, had been already discredited by the international scientific community after decades

of data mining and soul-searching.

As I recall, the Indian-born but largely Western based erudite also made light of the centuries of historical resistance to foreign invasions and their overlords, to the liberation struggles leading to political independence or to the hard-nosed real-politics of constant harassment of weakened post-partition India by hostile neighbours east, west and north. Assuming that India was a lumbering and slumbering elephant that should be permanently fixated in some stoic fortitude, complaining now and then to the United Nations only when the harassment was overbearing, has become the epitome of what a vast majority of Indians seem to reject today.

\* \* \*

## Indian polity

But moving away from Prof Sen, it can certainly be argued that argumentation on pretty much anything and everything, specially but not only on politics, is undeniably part of the Indian psyche across that vast subcontinent. An attaching virtue perhaps in the normal run of things but something of an irritant during this pandemic spike. Might the Indian political fraternity and their media have held off their sparring instincts in a country buckling to desperately mobilize all its resources to stave off a much worse nightmare?

There are probably undoubted failings of the BJP-led Union government as the first wave of coronavirus was slowly being brought under control for much of the third semester of 2020 up to March 2021. The Opposition has a point that instead of using that vital space for planning and getting ready for a second phase, which was more infectious or deadly elsewhere, a false sense of security had focused BJP's government messaging on India's rise as a pharmaceutical and vaccine world-supplier. As late as March 2021, the Indian Health Minister, a medical doctor, was claiming to the Delhi Medical Association that India was in the "end-game of the pandemic", a confident



“The grim toll of 400,000 infection cases a day, with peak forecasts of anywhere between 800,000 to 1 million in the coming months, leaves room for neither complacency from Union and State governing structures nor futile and gloating political point scoring. In India's complex constitutional federal structure, public health, outside the circumstances of this pandemic, fall squarely in the lap of State authorities, many of which are extremely allergic to outside interference from the Union government in New Delhi...”

assessment he might long regret.

The grim toll of 400,000 infection cases a day, with peak forecasts of anywhere between 800,000 to 1 million in the coming months, leaves room for neither complacency from Union and State governing structures nor futile and gloating political point scoring. In India's complex constitutional federal structure, public health, outside the circumstances of this pandemic, fall squarely in the lap of State authorities, many of which are extremely allergic to outside interference from the Union government in New Delhi.

Federalism forces PM Narendra Modi or any Indian PM, the only avenue of consultation and arbitration on many tough choices, whether for oxygen supplies, hospital beds, medical staffing or even vaccine pricing, in fact over most public health matters during the pandemic. That leaves a lot of room for blame apportionment, should this be the right priorities of the day in the midst of this utter and desolate chaos facing India Inc.

\* \* \*

## Arundhati Roy

But in keeping with India's age-old anything-and-everything-goes tenet, we can suspect that PM Modi is such a convenient punching ball and pet-hate figure, that many won't resist the temptation to throw the sink squarely at his feet. One such highly literate voice is Arundhati

Roy, who blasted away with typical flamboyance her anti-Modi leitmotiv "...what we are witnessing is not criminal negligence, but an outright crime against humanity." She knew her by-line would be taken up and regurgitated by the trendy "radical chic" bourgeoisie in India and elsewhere.

Feted in overseas liberal circles, Roy has the undoubted ability to string words, sentences, idioms and images into blistering attacks of anything and everything. From global capitalism, greed and cynicism, the IMF/WB twin sisters, Mahatma Gandhi, US Imperium and its "stooges", the wars on Iraq and Syria, Iran and Afghanistan, to her consistent controversial railings against India since 1998, nothing has found grace from her haughty perch over the past quarter-century.

Sadly, the biological cross between two feisty fiefdoms, Kerala and Bengal, the cleverness with words makes for fiery pamphlet prose, but one cannot help feeling that contrarily to Prof Sen, her somewhat predictable, tiring and despairing accusations offer even her audience little hope or constructive avenues where salvation might lie. Except perhaps from her generational fixation on "peace and love" or her professed comradeship for urban Naxalites and Maoist guerrillas.

\* Cont. on page 11



## Fact Finding Committee on deaths of renal dialysis patients

# “A minister must assume responsibility for the failings of a civil servant...

... but that would not necessarily absolve the civil servant”

**A** Fact Finding Committee to be chaired by Mrs Deviyanee Beesoondoyal, former Judge, has been set up to inquire into the recent death of renal dialysis patients at the New Souillac Hospital would have as Assessors, Dr P. Chitson and Dr S. Mareeachalee. This has come about as a result of a lot of public pressure in the media and on social media platforms - like most others in the past following public resentment of perceived institutional failings. Fact-finding committees have the responsibility of determining the facts relevant to decide a controversy, and in light of their findings, disciplinary proceedings or even a police case may be instituted if the evidence so warrants. Tied to that is the issue of accountability. Who should ultimately bear responsibility for executive or departmental failings? Is it the minister in the case of the public service, or is it the civil servant/s found to have been negligent or imprudent in dealing with a specific matter? Lex sheds light on the different issues involved in this debate.

LEX

\* Government has appointed a Fact Finding Committee to inquire into the recent death of renal dialysis patients at the New Souillac Hospital to be chaired by former Judge Mrs Deviyanee Beesoondoyal. Its terms of reference appear wide-ranging in terms of the issues to be addressed. Is that 'fact-finding' exercise a necessary preliminary step in determining whether a disciplinary investigation is warranted?

A fact-finding committee is an investigative body. It cannot summon witnesses but can invite people to come and give evidence on the subject matter of the inquiry. In the light of the findings, there may be disciplinary proceedings or even a police case if the evidence so warrants.

\* Numerous fact-finding committees have been set up by successive governments here to inquire into controversies concerning alleged fraud at SIFB, disappearance of 16 kg heroin whilst in official custody, alleged medical negligence in public hospitals, Food and Mouth disease, Britam, etc. Not all reports have been made public, whilst some of these Committees are still ongoing. Is that acceptable?

Certainly not. Whatever be the reason is a matter of speculation. But politically it can be surmised that if the findings are unpalatable to the government of the day or to their protégés, then the report will be buried in some drawer in the corridors of power.

\* According to the United Nations, which also has established fact-finding procedures relating to serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law, etc., fact-finding should be "comprehensive, objective, impartial and timely". One would therefore expect the chairpersons of such Committees and their assessors to meet that high standard of conduct that is expected of them, isn't it?

In the absence of evidence to the contrary, there is no reason to suggest that the Committee will not be impartial and will not work objectively. However, when the same persons are appointed to chair commissions or inquiries, the question may be asked as to why some specific or a select group of persons are chosen for such assignments.

\* Can we compel a Mauritian government to act on

specific matter.

A civil servant can be disciplined under the Public Service Commission Regulations. But if a minister does not accept responsibility for the failings of a civil servant and does not resign, there is not much one can do except wait for the next elections to apply the required sanction.

\* The fact that departmental failings keep happening every year, as highlighted by the Director of Audit in his annual reports, which is almost akin to a permanent fact-finding committee, indicates that nobody is held responsible for wastage of resources resulting in huge losses. Who should bear responsibility for such failures: the ministers or the civil servants?



Renal patients. Pic - assets.telegraphindia.com

“The person responsible for the hospital is responsible and must see to it that patients are treated in a safe clinical environment. We have Regional Health Directors who have a duty to see to it how health care centres or hospitals falling under their purview are functioning. The job of Regional Health Director cannot be limited to sitting in an office and be at the beck and call of the minister concerned...”

their report of a fact-finding committee, beyond the point setting up such a committee - usually following intense public pressure to get down to the bottom of a controversy?

There is no way one can compel the government to act on the findings of an inquiry. If a citizen applies to the Supreme Court to compel the government to act, his case will be thrown out without any ado on the ground that he does not have any *locus standi*. In other words, he does not have an interest to act.

\* Tied to the debate on fact-finding committees is the issue of accountability. Who should ultimately bear responsibility for executive or departmental failings? Things appear to be more straightforward in the private sector than it is in the Civil Service...

According to well-established tradition, a minister must assume responsibility for the failings of a civil servant. But that would not necessarily absolve the civil servant if he has been grossly negligent or imprudent in dealing with a

Both. A minister is responsible for his department and must accept responsibility for what goes on in his department. The civil servant has a duty to comply with rules and regulations and the code of ethics of the civil service.

\* Renal dialysis patients at the New Souillac Hospital got infected by Covid-19 and 11 patients have died. A fact-finding committee has been set up by Government to inquire, inter alia, into the circumstances of those deaths. Whose job is it to ascertain that sanitary protocols have been followed at the New Souillac Hospital and at the quarantine facility at Tamassa Hotel? Is it the Minister's responsibility?

The person responsible for the hospital is responsible and must see to it that patients are treated in a safe clinical environment. We have Regional Health Directors who have a duty to see to it how health care centres or hospitals falling under their purview are functioning. The job of Regional Health Director cannot be limited to sitting in an office and be at the beck and call of the minister concerned.



# Big Myanmar protests to mark the "global Myanmar spring revolution"

**M**yanmar security forces opened fire on some of the biggest protests against military rule in days, killing at least five people on Sunday, media reported, three months after a coup plunged the country into crisis, reports Reuters.

The protests, after a spell of dwindling crowds and what appeared to be more restraint by the security forces, were coordinated with demonstrations in Myanmar communities around the world to mark what organisers called "the global Myanmar spring revolution".

"Shake the world with the voice of Myanmar people's unity," the organisers said in a statement.

Streams of demonstrators, some led by Buddhist monks, made their way through cities and towns including the commercial hub of Yangon, the second city of Mandalay.

Two people were shot and killed in the central town of Wetlet, the Myanmar Now news outlet reported, while two people were killed in different towns in Shan State in the northeast, two media outlets reported. One person was also killed in the northern jade-mining town of Hpakant, the Kachin News Group reported.

The protests are only one of the pro-



Streams of demonstrators, some led by Buddhist monks, made their way through cities and towns including the commercial hub of Yangon. Pic - AFP

blems the generals have brought on with their Feb. 1 ouster of the elected government led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

Wars with ethnic minority insurgents in remote frontier regions in the north and east have intensified significantly over the past three months, displacing tens of thousands of civilians, according to U.N. estimates.

In some places, civilians with crude weapons have battled security forces while in central areas military and government facilities that have been secure for

generations have been hit by rocket attacks and a wave of small, unexplained blasts.

The state-run broadcaster in its main Saturday evening news bulletin gave details of at least 11 explosions over the previous 36 hours, mostly in the main city of Yangon. It reported some damage but no casualties.

There have been no claims of responsibility.

"Some rioters who do not want stability of the state have been throwing and planting handmade bombs at government

buildings and on public roads," the state broadcaster said.

The military, which ruled for almost 50 years until launching a tentative reform process a decade ago, acknowledged in mid-April the death of 248 protesters, saying they were killed after they initiated violence.

Several members of the security forces have been killed in the protests, the military says.

The protests and a parallel civil disobedience campaign of strikes have crippled the economy and raised the prospects of hunger for the poor, aid agencies have warned.

The U.N. Development Programme warned last week that the impact of the pandemic and the political crisis could see as many as 25 million people slide into poverty by 2022.

The military said it had to seize power because its complaints of fraud in a November election won by Suu Kyi's party were not addressed by an election commission that deemed the vote fair.

Suu Kyi, 75, has been detained since the coup along with many other members of her party.

## Celebrity politicians test voter interest in post-Trump era

**F**rom Ronald Reagan and Arnold Schwarzenegger to Al Franken and Donald Trump, there's a rich history of celebrities trying out new careers in politics.

The list could soon grow. In California, former Olympian Caitlyn Jenner is running for governor. In Texas, Oscar-winning actor Matthew McConaughey is generating buzz as a potential candidate for governor. In New York City, Andrew Yang, a businessman who gained fame during his quixotic 2020 presidential run, is a leading contender for the Democratic mayoral nomination, reports AP.

Each has the type of name recognition that other political newcomers would envy. But as they consider running some of the nation's largest and most complicated governments in the country, their lack of experience in public office could be a vulnerability. That's especially true after the tumult of the Trump era, when the reality television star-turned-president often spent more time raging about his media coverage than managing the federal bureaucracy.

"I do think it definitely makes it slightly harder," said Daniel Ketchell, who was chief of staff to Schwarzenegger, the bodybuilder-turned-Hollywood star who won a California recall election in 2003 and became a two-term governor. "I think people are looking at you and that narrative of: We just elected an outsider celebrity and it didn't work out for the country, we didn't get much done for the country, we all were stressed out all the time."

Jenner, a gold medal-winning decathlete and transgender rights activists perhaps best known for being part of the Kardashian family, launched her campaign last week challenging Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom in his likely recall race. Bolstered by her 3.5 million Twitter



Former Olympian Caitlyn Jenner is running for governor. Pic - bloximages.newyork1.vip.townnews.com

followers and nearly 11 million on Instagram, the Jenner campaign believes that name recognition - will make her a strong competitor in a race they see as a referendum on Newsom's leadership.

But Rob Stutzman, a GOP consultant in the state who advised Schwarzenegger's winning recall campaign, said there are key differences between Jenner and Schwarzenegger, who was then arguably the biggest movie star in the world.

"There's famous and then there's Arnold Schwarzenegger famous," he said, rejecting the idea that Trump had turned voters against celebrities.

"People will say they don't like celebrity candidates until there's a celebrity candidate they like," he said. "A lot of Democrats hated Donald Trump, but they might be pretty enthralled with Matthew McConaughey. ... It's still about winning and likability."

Much else is also different this time around.

California has grown even more Democratic over the past 20 years, making it harder for a Republican,

especially one who openly backed Trump, to gain traction.

Schwarzenegger, strategists note, was already well known in the state as a champion of after-school programs, and had a history of civic engagement, having served as chair of President George H.W. Bush's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. It also didn't hurt that he was married to Maria Shriver, a member of the Kennedy family dynasty.

Reagan was also well versed in politics before running a campaign of his own by virtue of leading the Screen Actors Guild.

While Jenner has advocated for transgender people since coming out in 2015 and experience in the business world, it is unclear where she stands on a slew of other policy questions. Indeed, her current website offers only a vague 68-word statement, along with a fundraising portal and online store selling stemless wine glasses and yard signs. (Her campaign says policy plans are coming soon.)

Celebrities-turned-politicians have long recognized the extra work they must do to counteract a dearth of governing experience. When Schwarzenegger ran, aides created what they called "Schwarzenegger University" to get up to speed on issues.

Franken, the "Saturday Night Live" star who later became a Democratic senator from Minnesota, largely avoided the national press during his first years in office as he tried to redefine himself as a serious lawmaker. Jesse Ventura, the professional wrestler who became Minnesota's governor, surrounded himself with experienced aides.

But star power, argued Democratic strategist Hank Sheinkopf, is what voters want.

"We live in a culture of gossip and entertainment. That's how Trump became president."





TRIPS waiver will help all, 10 Democratic senators and 108 Congress members have written to US President Joe Biden. Pic - PTI

## Democrat senators support India's TRIPS waiver proposal for Covid-19 vaccines

At least 10 Democratic senators in the United States have written to President Joe Biden and urged him to support a proposal moved by India and South Africa at the WTO last year, seeking a temporary waiver of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) for Covid-19 vaccines, therapeutics and related technologies.

The senators include progressive leadership in the US Senate led by Bernie Sanders, who is the chairman of the budget committee, and senators Elizabeth Warren, Tammy Baldwin, Sherrod Brown, Richard Blumenthal, Chris Murphy, Jeff Merkley, Ed Markey, Chris Van Hollen and Raphael Warnock.

The senators have endorsed the temporary lifting of restrictions of intellectual property barriers to allow countries to locally manufacture Covid-19 diagnostics, treatments and vaccines to ensure equitable access to health-care. They have said that supporting the TRIPS waiver would help everyone and the current flexibilities in TRIPS are ill-suited to a global crisis.

On Saturday, 108 members of the House of Representatives sent a letter to President Biden saying unless countries co-operate and share medical technology, there will not be a sufficient supply of vaccines, diagnostics and treatments. The letter has been signed by Pramila Jayapal, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Ro Khanna, Karen Bass, Brad Sherman and others.

A targeted, time-limited waiver would help to flatten the curve and also help restore America's leadership in public health on the global stage.

Meanwhile, India and South Africa are preparing for a fresh push at the WTO for the waiver, people familiar with developments said on condition of anonymity on Saturday.

## One in two people globally lost income due to the pandemic: Report

US-based polling company Gallup, which surveyed 300,000 people across 117 countries, found that half of those with jobs earned less because of Covid-19 pandemic disruptions. This translated to 1.6 billion adults globally, it said.

"Worldwide, these percentages ranged from a high of 76% in Thailand to a low of 10% in Switzerland," said researchers in a statement.

In Bolivia, Myanmar, Kenya, Uganda, Indonesia, Honduras and Ecuador, more than 70% people polled said they took home less than before global health crisis. In the United States, this figure dropped to 34%.

The Covid-19 crisis has hit



A vendor sits outside a stall in a deserted 'Ramadan market' set up by the district government in Kuala Lumpur. Pic - Bloomberg

workers across the world, particularly women, who are over-represented in low-paid precarious sectors such as retail, tourism and food services.

A study by the international charity Oxfam on Thursday said the pandemic had cost women around the world \$800 billion in lost income.



The South China Sea is particularly contentious because China's smaller neighbors also have competing claims. Pic - d.newsweek.com

## China's carrier group conducts exercises in South China Sea

China's Shandong aircraft carrier group has recently conducted routine annual exercises in the South China Sea, the People's Liberation Army said Sunday, after Beijing criticized the U.S. for sending Navy ships into the strategic area.

well as maintaining regional peace and stability.

We hope the outside world will view it in an objective and rational way. In the future, the Chinese navy will continue to hold similar exercises as planned," said Gao.

The Shandong is the second Chinese aircraft carrier to enter service after the Liaoning, which was originally purchased as a hulk from Ukraine and entirely refurbished.

The Chinese Defense Ministry last week urged the U.S. to restrain its front-line forces in the air and seas near China. U.S. reconnaissance aircraft and warships have become more active around China since President Biden took office, it said.

The South China Sea is particularly contentious because China's smaller neighbours also have competing claims to one of the world's busiest sea lanes, which Beijing claims virtually in its entirety. China has constructed several man-made islands in the disputed waters in what the U.S. says is a move to militarize the area.

Navy spokesperson Gao Xiucheng said in a statement that the exercises were completely legitimate and part of safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests, as

## Kabul on high alert as US extends deadline for removing troops from Afghanistan

Kabul security was ramped up on Saturday as the city braced for reaction from the insurgent Taliban as US troops still present under President Joe Biden's orders, beyond the May 1 withdrawal deadline agreed in 2020 with the Trump administration.

An increased military presence and security at checkpoints were visible in the Afghan capital, and a security source said the city had been placed on "high alert". Military patrols and security were being increased in main cities around the country, the source said.

Under the Trump administration's February 2020 deal with the Taliban,

foreign forces were to withdraw from the country by May 1 while the Taliban held off on attacking foreign troops and bases. But President Biden announced last month after reviewing the situation that forces would stay in the country for months beyond May, withdrawing by Sept. 11.

Violence against Afghans has escalated starkly in recent weeks, with more than a hundred Afghan security force personnel killed. On the eve of the previously agreed withdrawal deadline, a huge blast in eastern Logar killed dozens as they broke their fast during the holy Islamic month of Ramadan. It was not clear who was behind the attack.

## US sets pandemic-era high for air travel, over 1.6 million

Nearly 1.67 million people were screened at U.S. airport checkpoints on Sunday, according to the Transportation Security Administration. That was the highest number screened since March 12 of last year when air travel began to plummet, reports AP.

However, it was still 35% below the number of airport travellers reported on the comparable Sunday in 2019, according to TSA figures.

Airlines started to see an increase in bookings around mid-February, and the TSA has screened at least 1 million people every day since March 11.

Vacation destinations have been most popular - business travel, which is more profitable for airlines, remains drastically diminished.

Airline executives are cautiously optimistic about summer travel as more Americans get vaccinated against Covid-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says it is safe for vaccinated people to travel within the United States, although it continues to warn against travel to most foreign countries.



# Boris Johnson's Downing Street refurbishment: might a law have been broken?

The Electoral Commission says there are "reasonable grounds to suspect an offence or offences may have occurred".



Boris Johnson and his partner, Carrie Symonds, are facing questions over who paid for their Downing Street flat to be refurbished. Alamy/Toby Melville

The British Electoral Commission has announced that Boris Johnson, the, erm, prime minister of the United Kingdom, is under investigation. Well, to be precise, the Commission will investigate whether any transactions relating to refurbishment undertaken at Johnson's flat are an offence under political financing law. In fact, in its official statement, the Commission suggested that there are "reasonable grounds to suspect an offence or offences may have occurred". But what has actually happened here? What are the laws that might have been broken? And why is it a problem anyway?

The row begins, as will be all too familiar in homes across the globe, with a bit of good old-fashioned DIY. Every prime minister gets £30,000 a year in public money to renovate their private residence. The accusation laid at the door of Johnson and fiancée Carrie Symonds is that their works came in at as much as £200,000.

This wasn't an issue until the prime minister's former adviser Dominic Cummings entered the fray. He launched a blistering attack suggesting that Johnson planned to have donors (most notably Lord David Brownlow) "secretly pay" for the refurbishment. Adding that it was "unethical, foolish, possibly illegal and almost certainly broke the rules on proper disclosure of political donations if conducted in the way he intended".

## What are the rules?

So if it was (possibly) illegal and did break the rules, what are those rules in the first place? In the main, it is an issue of disclosure. Any donation of over £7,500 to a party or £1,500 to an MP must be declared to the Electoral Commission

within 30 days. This rule applies to money that is loaned and also applies to lots of donations that might not look like a simple cash transfer.

So, if you buy an MP a photocopier, if you sponsor meetings and events, if you



Johnson and opposition leader Keir Starmer engaged in a very heated exchange during PMQs. Alamy/House of Commons

do paid research, or, indeed, if you provide £58,000 (either as a loan or otherwise) to decorate their house, it needs to be declared. This is the crux of the rule that may or may not have been broken and the questions that the Electoral Commission will put to Johnson and his associates.

Johnson insists that he has paid for the renovations with his own money but continues to evade questions about whether Lord David Brownlow paid for them in the first instance before being repaid. If the money was donated (or loaned) by Lord Brownlow either to Johnson or his party

and it wasn't declared in a timely manner, then electoral law has been broken. There are, of course, legislative complexities but, at the end of the day, it's as simple as that.

## What happens next?

A long investigation lies ahead to get to the bottom of this matter. In terms of outcome, the sanctions the Electoral Commission can hand down are small. It can issue a maximum fine of £20,000 and involve the police if further laws are deemed to have been broken. However, the political damage could be vast.

As well as having (not all that punitive) sanctioning powers, the Commission also has significant investigatory powers. It can call on anyone it likes to give evidence. That might include Symonds, cabinet secretary Simon Case and/or Lord Brownlow. It can subpoena private WhatsApp messages, emails and other evidence and - as the Brexit Party discovered - visit party offices for more information if needed.

The investigation, then, which will run and run, has the potential to be as damaging as any sanctions that might come from it.

one particularly out-of-touch contribution came from Daily Mail columnist Sarah Vine, wife of Cabinet Office minister Michael Gove, who reminded us that the prime minister "can't be expected to live in a skip".

"Cash for curtains" is also damaging because it is happening at the same time as numerous inquiries into other potential scandals surrounding lobbying. A drip-feed of revelations has raised significant questions about standards and ethics in public life - and left many with the sense that these are not things the current administration has all that much interest in.

However, there is, as yet, limited evidence of the all-important "public cut through". The law is complex, and very few people really want to get stuck in to the minutiae of regulating donations. Are MPs inboxes filling up in the same way as they did in the wake of Cummings' trip to Barnard Castle? Apparently not, yet.

Moreover, mud doesn't seem to stick to Johnson as easily as it does other politicians. He is no stranger to issues with regards to personal standards of good behaviour and yet continues to be popular. All this may be priced in for voters.

However, we know that things can snowball rather quickly, as they seem to be doing at present. I often think of Johnson's predecessor, David Cameron - and his rather abrupt downfall - in situations like this. Remember, he was known as the "essay crisis" prime minister. He would always, somehow, get out of a sticky situation at the last minute. Then, one day, he didn't.

So, whilst you might not bet your house on it being curtains for Boris just yet - the snowball is getting bigger and bigger. And it is rolling towards Downing Street at quite a skip now.

## Sam Power

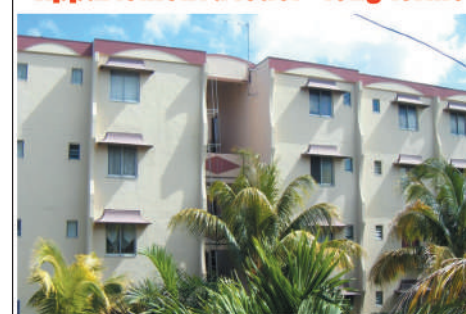
Lecturer in Corruption Analysis (Politics), University of Sussex

## 99 problems, of which a kitchen is one?

Beyond the legal, there is also the question of tone. In general, no one will deny a prime minister the right to do up the flat that they live in. But defending that right in itself leads to rather awkward situations that can make those in power seem pretty out of touch.

MPs found this during the expenses scandal of 2009, when their claims for lavish decor created the sense that their idea of reasonable costs were far removed from those of the wider public. In this case,

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From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

4<sup>th</sup> Year No 163

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 20th September 1957

● *Our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds.* -- George Eliot

K. Singh

On Saturday last a small group of Mauritians spent over two hours at Holborn Hall listening to two non-Mauritians talking to them about their own island home. They were Fenner Brockway and Peter Ibbotson speaking on *My General Impression of Mauritius and The Economy of Mauritius* respectively at the inaugural meeting of the Mauritius League. There was to be a third non-Mauritian speaker, Michael Malim, but owing to illness he could not attend. By any standard the audience was not impressive but it was not in any way unimpressed by the wealth of accurate details with which the speakers marshalled their facts.

Introducing the speakers, Dr Cure, the chairman, quite fittingly observed that in spite of glittering Mauritian names like Brown Sequard, Robert Edward Hart and Malcolm de Chazal, Mauritius which has had relations with two great European powers like Britain and France, derives its reputation in these countries from a badly printed stamp, a sluggish extinct bird or an over-sentimental novel - Bernardin de St Pierre's *'Paul et Virginie'*. It was the wish of the Mauritius League to help make Mauritius better known, he continued, and that was why Fenner Brockway and Peter Ibbotson who were well-versed in the affairs of Mauritius had been invited to join in the inaugural manifestation of the League.

Before giving his impressions of Mauritius itself, Fenner related the circumstances which led to his going to Mauritius. It was July 1955 when he left London for a tour of the then Gold Coast, Sudan, Kenya and Madagascar. Mauritius was not in his original programme but while he was in Madagascar, he received an invitation from the editor of the *Mauritius Times*, B. Ramlallah, which he, though fever-ridden, accepted. On reaching Mauritius he recovered within 24 hours. Perhaps, he added with a smile, owing to the freer atmosphere which contrasted strikingly with the quasi-police state of Madagascar.

His visit to Mauritius was a revelation to him. He was surprised to find, contrary to what he had been told or read, close, friendly relations between the various racial groups of the island. He recalled a lunch he had with the Ag. Governor and two Mauritians who gave him a depressing picture of Mauritius stating that any advance in the Constitution would be disastrous to the

# Mauritius In Perspective



Washerwomen in the river at Tamarin

colony. But after having met a cross-section of the population he was convinced that Mauritius could and should advance constitutionally. It was his view that had Mauritius had an Anglo-Mauritian minority with economic interests in the island it would have been very difficult for Mauritius to progress in the political sphere.

His visit to the Legislative Council confirmed his opinion that colonies tend to copy too closely the British system of parliamentary procedure; he would suggest that Mauritius, and for that matter all other colonies, while retaining the fundamental principles of British parliamentary procedure should evolve a pattern of their own which would be without the unnecessary and cumbersome paraphernalia of the British system.

Regarding the economic problems of Mauritius, Fenner thought they were staggering indeed. "One need not be misled by the present prosperity of the sugar industry which is so dependent on weather conditions," he said. He went on to suggest that this dependence on a single industry made it imperative to develop other industries which might stand the Mauritians in good stead in case of a cyclone or a slump in sugar prices on the world market. There was also the population problem which must be tackled as soon as possible; he thought that Madagascar which has vast untapped natural resources could absorb a considerable number of Mauritians. He also believed that owing to the fiscal policy of the metropolis,

colonies like Mauritius would be unable to solve their social problems even if they have responsible government and suggested that the political parties of Mauritius press for a commission of inquiry into the whole economic structure of the colony.

Finally, he stated that he would like to see Mauritius become a self-governing unit within the Commonwealth. He remembered the romantic island with its exotic beaches crowded with palm trees, its majestic and fascinating mountains and the wonderful coloured earths of Chamarel. If only he could end his career as the British consular resident in independent Mauritius!

During the ten-minute discussion which followed it was revealed by Mrs F. Bolton, Fenner's secretary, that as a result of pressure by James Johnson, Fenner and others in the Commons, the British government started negotiations with the Government of Madagascar about the possible emigration of Mauritians to Madagascar. The Government of Madagascar took the view that the arrival of Mauritians to Madagascar would inflame racial problems!

Peter Ibbotson had to speak on a ticklish and rather indigestible subject: economy. Inevitably he had to quote figures. In 1955 the total exports of the colony was Rs 251.75 m and the sugar industry alone accounted for Rs 244.5m; in 1954 the total revenue was Rs 250m and income tax collected Rs 38m. That was more than enough to show to what

extent Mauritius was dependent on the sugar industry. Moreover, as three-fourths (180 000 arpents) of the arable area was already under cultivation and as the population was rapidly growing there was little ground for expecting any rise in the living standards of Mauritians. There was of course the tea industry, fast growing but subject to the same dangers as the sugar industry; besides, the cost of production of tea in Mauritius was much higher than in other countries and consequently places Mauritius at a disadvantage in competing in the world market.

In the face of such a situation he believed that to stabilise the economy of the island (a) the cement project should be implemented, (b) sugar should be refined in Mauritius and if possible, Mauritius should produce sweets, chocolates or should try vegetable and fruit canning.

Ibbotson also gave a picture of the pitiable plight of Mauritius workers which grows worse while the production goes up. He also noted that the sugar estates intended to reduce their monthly paid labour force: in 1955 it dropped by 1000. Concluding, he said that the problems of Mauritius should be viewed as a whole; they are all connected with one another. He wondered whether it would not be possible to transfer Madagascar and Reunion to the Commonwealth thus enabling the federation of Madagascar-Reunion Mauritius.

London 14 Sep 1957



# Anything and Everything?

\* Cont. from page 5

The touchingly evocative author of the Booker-prized 'The God of Small Things' (1997), challenging some of India's taboos, has morphed into a country-less citizen, a self-styled passionaria that the Che might have lauded, but to many, a poignant figure of the quintessentially Indian anything and everything ethos.

As for fans of the main national Opposition party, the Indian National Congress, the tweets and accusations are out already, no doubt a convenient switch from any analysis of another drubbing in the five State Assembly polls to which it happily participated this year. A wipe-out in West Bengal and defeats in Kerala, Puducherry and Assam are certainly not subjects the Indian National Congress and its leadership would dwell on, yet they have a bearing for India's democratic space.

The BJP, after the immediacy of coordinating and directing immediate assistance to States as they combat the dead-

ly surge, will have food on its plate to analyze where it went wrong, both in second wave preventive measures and in failing to make an impact in the highly prized battle for Bengal, personally led by political heavyweight Amit Shah.

\* \* \*

## The Agalega Issue

Many might consider these as rather distant from our local conditions, even if we share historical and cultural affinities that run deep for a large fraction of the population, not to mention steadfast Indian technical and financial generosity, vaccine *maitri* being only the latest example. Considering the vastness of our maritime frontiers, its secure surveillance needs and its exploitable potential, we have every reason to wish for greater collaboration with India, and indeed a strategic partnership between whatever governments are in place across the seas.

Mauritius lives with the quasi-permanent scars of the unlawful and immoral pre-independence excision of the

Chagos, an overhang that India understands fully as it stood by our country in the latest and ongoing UN battles for its sovereignty on that archipelago. Those clouds will continue to hover above the Agalega status and developments, about which little information is forthcoming in



“Mauritius lives with the quasi-permanent scars of the unlawful and immoral pre-independence excision of the Chagos, an overhang that India understands fully as it stood by our country in the latest and ongoing UN battles for its sovereignty on that archipelago. Those clouds will continue to hover above the Agalega status and developments, about which little information is forthcoming in the National Assembly, no doubt for valid national security reasons. There may be room however to consider within those parameters, both from Indian and Mauritian sovereign perspectives, whether some degree of greater openness would not be incompatible with our long and traditional ties...”

the National Assembly, no doubt for valid national security reasons. There may be room however to consider within those parameters, both from Indian and Mauritian sovereign perspectives, whether some degree of greater openness would not be incompatible with our long and traditional ties.

Jan Arden

## Quotable Quotes

*“I think it's very healthy to spend time alone. You need to know how to be alone and not be defined by another person.”* -- Oscar Wilde

*“Without great solitude, no serious work is possible.”* - Pablo Picasso

*“You cannot be lonely if you like the person you're alone with.”* -- Wayne Dyer

*“Don't think of introversion as something that needs to be cured... Spend your free time the way you like, not the way you think you're supposed to.”* -- Susan Cain

*“We're born alone, we live alone, we die alone. Only through our love and friendship can we create the illusion for the moment that we're not alone.”* -- Orson Welles

*“The ingredients of health and long life are great temperance, open-air, easy labor, and little care.”* -- Philip Sydney

*“To lose patience is to lose the battle.”* -- Mahatma Gandhi

*“One moment of patience may ward off great disaster. One moment of impatience may ruin a whole life.”* -- Chinese Proverb

*“You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, smarter than you think, and loved more than you'll ever know.”* -- A.A. Milne

*“If plan A doesn't work, the alphabet has 25 more letters — 204 if you're in Japan.”* -- Claire Cook

*“If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude.”* -- Maya Angelou

*“Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough.”* -- Oprah Winfrey



## COMMUNIQUE

### ONLINE VAT REGISTRATION ON INCORPORATION OF A COMPANY

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) informs the public that a new facility has been developed jointly by the MRA and the Corporate and Business Registration Department (CBRD) for **online VAT Registration** of a company on incorporation under a single process.

While making an online application to the CBRD for incorporation of a company, the applicant will, henceforth, be required to provide details relating to VAT registration and will be registered by the MRA for VAT purposes, where applicable. Immediately after its registration as a company by the CBRD, the MRA will inform the company of its VAT registration status and the assigned VAT Registration Number.

Where a company has been VAT-Registered, the effective date of the VAT registration will be:

- the date the company will start business as declared in the application; or
- the date of incorporation,

whichever is the later.

Where a company has not been VAT-Registered on incorporation and thereafter:

- becomes liable for compulsory VAT registration; or
- wishes to be voluntarily VAT-Registered,

the company will have to apply for VAT registration directly to the MRA.

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

30 April 2021

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# Restricting digital media is a gamble for African leaders



Pic - s1.econotimes.com

☛ **Cont. from page 2**

Majorities in 10 countries supported unrestricted access. Support was highest in Cabo Verde (64%), Gabon (63%), Côte d'Ivoire (63%) and Nigeria (61%). Majorities supported regulation in only three countries: Mali (53%), Ethiopia (53%) and Tunisia (59%).

## Guarding freedoms

Unsurprisingly, regular users of digital media were more supportive of freedoms. Of the 37% of respondents who reported using some form of digital media for their news at least a few times a week, 62% favoured unrestricted access. Only 35% favoured regulations.

Over half (54%) of respondents reported never using digital media for news in the last month. Those non-users were more divided, with 37% favouring regulations and 39% favouring unrestricted access. A quarter (24%) of non-users did not share an opinion or could not choose between the positions.

Factors like age, residence and education also made a difference. The groups more likely to use digital media were also more supportive of unrestricted access. The youngest respondents (18-25) were almost twice as likely to oppose restrictions than the oldest respondents (over 60) were (56% vs 30%). Urban residents favoured

unrestricted access more than rural residents (56% vs 43%). And those with post-secondary education were much more favourable towards unrestricted access than those without formal education (60% vs 34%). Men were only slightly more supportive of unrestricted digital media than women (50% vs. 47%).

Perhaps surprisingly, support for unrestricted digital media does not fall neatly along political lines. Even among those who said they trusted their president "some-what" or "a lot", 45% still supported unrestricted digital media, versus 39% who favoured restrictions. Those who said they only trusted their national leader "a little" or "not at all" were even more supportive of open digital media: 53% supported unrestricted access and 34% supported regulations.

## Cost of shutdowns

Restricting digital media is a gamble for African leaders. On the one hand, many governments are embracing digital media shutdowns, particularly around elections and protests, to limit threats. They argue such moves are necessary to halt "the dissemination of messages inciting hate and division", as a Chadian government spokesperson put it. In some cases, like Ethiopia and Mali, populations seem generally supportive of governments' restrictions.

But commerce, education and social communication are increasingly online. One analysis found that digital media restrictions cost African economies some \$237 million in 2020. And using Afrobarometer data from 16 countries, we find that the share of Africans who regularly get news from digital media almost doubled, from 22% to 38%, between 2014 and 2019.

If African populations are sceptical now of limits on digital media, that opposition might grow as more enter the digital space for commerce, work, education, entertainment and social communications. Shutdowns will generate not only higher economic costs, but likely greater public outrage as well.

**Jeffrey Conroy-Krutz**

*Associate Professor of Political Science, Michigan State University*

## Life's Talk

# The Benefits of Being 50 or Older

**I**would never change my amazing friends, my wonderful life, my beloved family for less grey hair or a flatter stomach.

As I got older, I became kinder to myself and less critical of myself.

I became my friend...

I didn't blame myself for eating extra biscuits or not making the bed or buying something stupid that I didn't need.

I have the right to be "messy and extravagant".

I have seen many dear friends leave this world too soon, before they realised the great freedom of ageing.

Who will blame me if I decide to read or play on my computer until four and sleep until noon?

It will make me happy to stay in bed or in front of the TV for as long as I want.

I will dance with those wonderful hits of the 70s and 80s and at the same time if I want to cry for a lost love ....

I'll go...

...if I want, along the beach in shorts

too stretched out on a decaying body, diving into the waves with abandon despite the punishing stares of others in the jet set.

You will grow old too.

I know that sometimes I forget that there are some things in life that should

also be forgotten.

I remember the important things. Of course, my heart has also been broken over the years.

But broken hearts give us strength, understanding and compassion.



Pic - livingwhilegray.com

A heart that has never suffered is spotless and sterile and will never know the joy of being imperfect.

I am fortunate to have lived long enough to have grey hair and my youthful laughter has forever engraved deep furrows in my face.

Many never laughed, many died before their hair turned silver.

As you get older, it's easier to be positive.

You care less about what other people think.

I don't question myself any more.

I've earned the right to make mistakes.

I like being old.

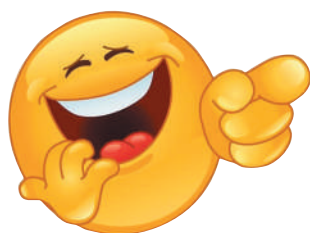
I like the person I have become.

I won't live forever, but while I'm still here, I won't waste time regretting what might have been or worrying about what will be.

And if I feel like it, I'll eat dessert every day.



## Laughter is the BEST Medicine



### Who made your life worth living?

**A**t a wedding party recently, someone yelled, "All the married men, please stand next to the one person who has made your life worth living!" The bartender was crushed to death.

\*\*\*

Two salesmen were going door to door, and knocked on the door of a woman who was not happy to see them. She told them in no uncertain terms that she did not want to hear their offer and slammed the door in their faces.

To her surprise, however, the door did not close and, in fact, bounced back open. She tried again, really put her back into it, and slammed the door again with the same result - the door bounced back open.

Convinced these rude salesmen were sticking their foot in the door, she reared back to give it a slam that would teach them a lesson, when one of the men said: "Ma'am, before you do that again, you need to move your cat."

\*\*\*

Teacher: "If I gave you 2 cats and another 2 cats and another 2, how many will you have?"

Johnny: "Seven."

Teacher: "No, listen carefully... If I gave you 2 cats, and another 2 cats and another 2, how many will you have?"

Johnny: "Seven."

Teacher: "Let me put it to you differently. If I gave you 2 apples, and another 2 apples and another 2, how many would you have?"

Johnny: "Six."

Teacher: "Good. Now if I gave you 2 cats, and another 2 cats and another 2, how many would you have?"

Johnny: "Seven!"

Teacher: "Johnny, where in the heck do you get seven from?!"

Johnny: Because I've already got a freaking cat!"

\*\*\*

A guy was at a bar and needed to fart. He decided the music was so loud that he just went for it and timed his farts to the beat of the music.

After he relieved himself he looked up to see everyone staring at him. Then he realized that he was listening to his iPod.

\*\*\*

#### #Tech-Kid



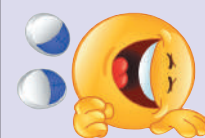
An old woman is upset at her husband's funeral. "You have him in a brown suit and I wanted him in a blue suit."

The mortician says, "We'll take care of it, ma'am," and yells to the back, "Ed, switch the heads on two and four!"

\*\*\*

"Doctor, my nose is 11 inches long!"

"Come back when it grows into a foot!"



Doctor: "You'll live to be 60!"

Patient: "I am 60!"

Doctor: "See! What did I tell you?"

\*\*\*

Two hunters are out in the forest when one of them collapses. He doesn't seem to be breathing and his eyes are glazed.

The other guy takes out his phone and calls 911 and gasps, "My friend is dead! What can I do?"

The operator says "Calm down. I can help. First, let's make sure he's dead."

There is a silence, then a gunshot is heard. Back on the phone, the guy says "OK, now what?"

\*\*\*

I saved a bunch of money on car insurance by switching to reverse and leaving the scene.

\*\*\*

A man walks into a bar. He gets very drunk and asks the bartender where the restroom is. The bartender explains it's the third door to the right, but the man goes into the third door to the left. He finds a large golden toilet. The man takes a big poop in it and leaves. He continues to return to drink there every week, and every time he goes to poop in that golden toilet. One day he finds the golden toilet is gone, so he asks the bartender about it. The bartender exclaims, "So you're the one who's been pooping in my tuba!" (The tuba is the lowest-pitched musical instrument in the brass family.)

## Life's LESSONS

### Je suis bon

**W**illiam Shakespeare disait:

Je me sens toujours heureux, savez-vous pourquoi? Parce que je n'attends rien de personne; attendre fait toujours mal. Les problèmes ne sont pas éternels, ils ont toujours une solution, la seule chose qui n'a pas de remède est la mort.

Ne permettez à personne de vous insulter, de vous humilier ou de diminuer votre estime de soi. Les cris sont l'instrument des lâches, ceux qui ne pensent pas.

Nous rencontrerons toujours des gens qui nous considèrent comme coupables de leurs problèmes, et chacun aura ce qu'il mérite. Nous devons être forts et ressusciter des chutes que la vie nous impose, pour nous rappeler qu'après le sombre tunnel plein de solitude, de très bonnes choses viennent...

Avant de discuter, respirez,  
Avant de parler, écoutez,  
Avant de critiquer, examinez-vous,  
Avant d'écrire, pensez,  
Avant de faire mal, regardez,  
Avant d'abandonner, essayez,  
Avant de mourir, vivez !!

La meilleure relation n'est pas celle d'une personne parfaite, mais celle dans laquelle chaque individu apprend à vivre, avec les défauts de l'autre et admirant ses qualités.

Si vous voulez être heureux: rendez quelqu'un heureux; si vous voulez recevoir: donnez un peu de vous-même, entourez-vous de bonnes personnes et soyez l'une d'entre elles.

Rappelez-vous: parfois, quand vous vous y attendez le moins, il y aura ceux qui vous feront vivre de bonnes expériences!

Ne gâchez jamais votre présent pour un passé sans avenir.

Une personne forte sait comment garder sa vie en ordre. Même avec des larmes dans les yeux, elle s'adapte pour dire avec un sourire:

Je suis bon.

## Existential questions

**I** became a bit spiritual this morning. So I closed my eyes and sat still and started thinking:

1. Who am I?
2. Where did I come from?
3. Why have I come?
4. Where to go?

Then came my wife's voice from the kitchen:

"You are lazy number one, don't know from which world you have come

to spoil my life, get up and go to take a bath"

The answers to my four existential questions were attained with complete ease and marked the completion of my spiritual journey!

\*\*\*

Q: Why is the letter B very cool?

A: Because it's sitting in the AC.

\*\*\*

An American Indian boy goes to his mother one day with a puzzled look on his face. "Mom, why is my big brother named Mighty Storm?"

"Because he was conceived during a mighty storm."

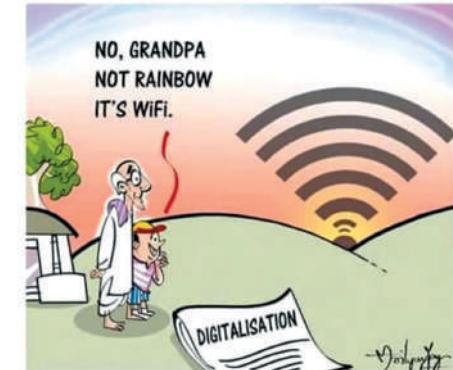
"Why is my sister named Cornflower?"

"Well, your father and I were in a cornfield when we made her."

"And why is my other sister called Moonchild?"

"We were watching the moon landing while she was conceived. Tell me, Torn Rubber, why are you so curious?"

#### #Tech-Kid





When stress builds up over time, it can easily become so large that you can't really see beyond it. You feel blocked from the enjoyment that comes with experiences that normally lighten your mood. Even when you can name those positives, you don't feel them. Weighed down by stress, restlessness, lethargy, and negativity, it can feel impossible to find your way back to feeling good. But there are ways to feel better.

When you feel stuck in a negative mindset, you may need to force yourself to do things that can help you pull out of it. Despite how it feels -- and despite how the news and our lives are filled with the restrictions and difficulties brought by Covid-19, etc. -- life is not all bad. You can benefit greatly from looking for the bright spots and opportunities to make life better.

Some ways suggested by psychologist Leslie Becker-Phelps, PhD, to help you feel better are to:

**Limit screen time.** Especially with the massive increase in people working from home, many are spending so much time on their phones, tablets, and computers that they often feel a sense of deadening from it.

While it is easier to stay glued to your device -- and your seat -- try pulling your attention away from your screen when you don't need to be working. Get involved in something in your immediate environment, or get out to enjoy a different one.

**Make constructive use of alone time.** This is especially important, given recent restrictions in activities. You might reflect more on yourself and your life with the idea of clarifying what is important to you. As you do, look for ways to pursue a meaningful, engaged life.

You could find things to do in the now, such as taking an online class in something you've always wanted to learn, or work to gain clarity on long-term plans.

**Nurture your relationships.** If your relationships are feeling strained, pay attention. Consider whether there

## Relationships

# How to get out of a negative mindset

are things you can do to resolve problems and strengthen a sense of closeness. Often, just finding enjoyable activities to do together can help. For instance, you might watch a movie you both like and then talk about it afterward.

**Choose to slow down and appreciate the moment.** Being less busy because you have no other choice can leave you frustrated as you look for ways to return to your previous active pace. But if you choose to live more deliberately, attending to each experience and what it has to offer you, then you may find a greater sense of calm.

This can mean appreciating the beauty outside, savouring the meal before you, or deciding to engage in an enjoyable activity with a partner or friend.

**Enjoy the great outdoors.** Even if you don't feel motivated to get outside, doing so can be re-energizing - though with frigid winter temperatures, you might be more inclined to describe it as invigorating, or even shockingly cold! Still, you may feel better for your efforts.

Looking for positives when you aren't exactly in the mood can feel like you are lying to yourself. So acknowledge your emotional struggles and the very real challenges in your life. Then choose to try to find a path out of your emotional anxiety, depression, or general malaise. By consistently making efforts to find opportunities feel better, you truly can help yourself make the most of your life.

## Men's Health

# Natural Ways to Boost Testosterone

*Eat more magnesium, build up your strength, and do these other things to help raise your testosterone levels*

### Add zing to your meals

Onions and garlic are your allies in the kitchen and in the bedroom. They help you make more and better sperm. Both raise levels of a hormone that triggers your body to make testosterone. And both have high levels of natural plant chemical called flavonoids, which safeguard your li'l swimmers against damage.

### Pile on the protein

Chicken, fish, and eggs are some of your options. Tofu, nuts, and seeds have protein, too. Try to get about 5 to 6 ounces per day, although the ideal amount for you depends on your age, sex, and how active you are. When you don't eat enough of these foods, your body makes more of a substance that binds with testosterone,



leaving you with less T available to do its job.

### Go fish

Fatty kinds like salmon, tuna, and mackerel are rich with vitamin D. It's a natural testosterone booster because it plays a crucial role in hormone production.

### More magnesium

This mineral blocks a protein from binding with testosterone. The result? More of the usable man-stuff floating around in your blood. Spinach is packed with magnesium. Almonds, cashews, and peanuts are good sources, too.

### Order oysters

There's a reason why these mollusks are known for being great for fertility. They have almost five times your recom-

mended daily dose of zinc. This mineral helps your body make testosterone. You can also get it in beef and beans. And it's often added to breakfast cereal.

Bonus: Zinc boosts your immune system.

### Pick pomegranate

Start your day with a glass of this ancient seedy fruit's juice instead of OJ. It lowers levels of stress hormones, such as cortisol, which helps raise levels of sex hormones including testosterone. And it can lower your blood pressure and put you in a better mood!

### Diet down

A Mediterranean-style diet can help keep your weight in check and protect you from insulin resistance, which is related to lower T levels. And when your testosterone is low, your fat levels go up, which can lead to your body not using insulin well. You can break this cycle.

Trade saturated fats for healthier ones such as olive oil, avocado, and nuts. Choose lean meats and whole grains. Eat lots of veggies and fruits.

### Back off the beer

It takes only 5 days of regular drinking for your testosterone level to drop. Alcohol may throw off many parts of your body's hormone system. Heavy drinkers can have shrunken testes, thin chest and

beard hair, and higher levels of the female hormone estrogen.

### Use glass, not plastic

Be careful about what you store your leftovers in. Bisphenol-A (BPA) is a chemical found in some plastics, cans, and other food packaging. It can mess with your hormone-making process. After 6 months, men who worked around BPA every day had lower testosterone levels than men who didn't.

### Build your strength

Focus your workouts on your muscles. Hit the weight room at the gym, or get a trainer to help you with a routine on the exercise machines. Cardio has its benefits, but it doesn't boost your testosterone like strength training can.

Be careful to not overdo it. Too much exercise can take your T level in the other direction.

### Get enough ZZZs

Your body turns up the testosterone when you fall asleep. The levels peak when you start dreaming and stay there until you wake up. But daytime testosterone levels can drop up to 15% when you get only 5 hours of sleep. Aim for 7 or 8 hours every night, even if it means a shift in your schedule or a

Nayana Ambardekar, MD  
WebMD



# Huma Qureshi shares fitness secrets



**A**ctress talks about new show, her diet and why being a celebrity isn't always glamorous

Reality shows about celebrities and their fabulous lives is often heavily scripted and stage-managed, but Bollywood actress Huma Qureshi swears that her new show *'Fit Fab Feast With Huma Qureshi'*, which gives you a ring-side view of her life, doesn't fall into that familiar trap. "It's not a manicured version of my life," declares Qureshi over a Zoom video call with Gulf News.

The *'Leila'* star and its makers were particular to keep her flagship show 'organic and real', instead of being wickedly vicarious. "I make mistakes, I get cranky, I cry and I vent. I also throw a fit ... But I have realised that there's no point in wallowing in something for too long," said Qureshi.

Perhaps, it was her recent health scare involving her father, who was hospitalised suddenly, helped her put things in perspective.

"Recently, my father became very unwell and we as a family came together and took care of him ... He's fine but those eight or nine days were very scary for us. I remember telling my mom not to come to the hospital if she continued crying. So we worked on building a positive experience and we bonded so well. It's the first time I am talking about it," explained Qureshi. Her life philosophy and her hard-won faith will reflect in all 10 episodes of *'Fit Fab Feast'*, streaming now on Zee Zest.

The show aims to de-mystify the life of a celebrity living under the public glare. How do they sustain their near-perfect personas and how do they get red carpet ready?

"Being a celebrity is like running on a

treadmill with an incline of four and a speed of 12. The trick is to keep breathing ... If my show can add a bit of fun to my viewers' life or they take away a bit of fitness, fashion or food from me, then I am happy. Even if my show inspires someone to take a walk outside their homes, I would be happy," said Qureshi.

The glossy episodes follow Qureshi attempting different work-outs with celebrity trainers such as Namrata Purohit or Yasmin Karachiwala, eating food in Michelin-starred restaurants in Mumbai, and having animated discussions with her interior decorator who is now doing up her home in Mumbai.

Qureshi, originally from Delhi, made her acting debut in 2010 and has acted in films including *'Gangs of Wasseypur'* and *'Dedh Ishqiya'*. She made it in Bollywood without the help of industry insiders. Excerpts from our candid chat with Qureshi as we discuss her new show, which premiered this March, the pressures of being a star and keeping up with appearances....

**Tell us about your new show 'Fit Fab Feast with Huma Qureshi'?**

My show is about fashion, fitness, and food - my three passions. And it's on a network that we have all grown up watching.

The idea behind my show was to talk about the three most important things in a person or an actor's life. We wanted to go behind the scenes and show you what goes into our lives. You will see me make mistakes or try workouts that I am unable to do. The idea is not to do a glorified version of things.

**So you have adopted a warts-and-**

**mole approach to your celebrity?**

I always think of myself as this random girl-next-door. I have come from humble beginnings and I am here today. I have made my share of public mistakes and I will continue to make them. No one is here to hold my hand and say: 'Don't do this or don't do that'.

The show will follow me as I go to places, explore, or try making something on my own in the kitchen - sometimes with disastrous results. There was a time when the camera followed me doing a workout that was incredibly difficult to do ... This show will capture all that. It's about letting go and it was a lot of fun.

**Out of curiosity, which workouts were tough for you?**

Right from Pilates to Cross-Fit to working out at home with big water bottles can be difficult. Even going to a place where you can bounce and jump on a trampoline can be difficult ... There are 10 episodes and you will see me do a different workout in every episode.

Good reality shows are usually the ones in which people reveal a part of their personality which you would normally not see. Being a celebrity is not just about going places and eating fancy food. It's also about your string of faux pas. Post the pandemic in 2020, it has taught us that self-care is important. It's taught us to look after our physical health, our mental health, and our spiritual health. For the first time in our lives, we were doing work outs at home, trying to colour our own hair or make our banana bread.

**Your title of the show seems to suggest that you can be fit even if you feast ... Isn't that contradictory?**

If you are on a diet, you don't have to eat just a cucumber. Healthy food can be a perfectly balanced meal and that won't take your eyes off your goal. As human beings, we thrive on going out and eating at restaurants. You don't want to miss out on that sense of community feel because you are watching your diet. People have this idea that you have to punish yourself and your body in order to look a certain way. Taking care of yourself doesn't mean that you punish yourself ...

Fit Fab Feast is an oxymoron. But what I am trying to tell you is that you can go to restaurants and still eat or drink healthy. It's about making the right choices. It's about educating yourself about what's healthy for us. My show will underline that you can enjoy your life, feast, and be fit. There's no need to starve yourselves to look good.

**What have you discovered about yourself during this pandemic?**

Kindness is the new currency. Let's all try to be kinder towards each other. If there's something that disturbs you, you don't have to solve it right away. Learn to let go if it's not important.



## Ruhi Singh: Tough to make space in Bollywood if you're from a small town

**A**ctress and influencer Ruhi Singh says it is tough to make a mark in Bollywood if you don't have the right backing. The actress, who has worked in films as *'Calendar Girls'* and *'Ishq Forever'*, as well as web series such as *'Spotlight'*, *'Bang Baang'* and *'Chakravyuh'*, says an outsider has to be mentally strong to make it in the industry.

"It's very tough to make space for yourself in Bollywood, especially if you are someone who's come from a small town like me, and are standing up on your own terms and are a self-made person or a one-woman army. That's what I call myself," Ruhi, who hails from Jaipur, told IANS.

"I believe in keeping it simple, I give it my best shot during auditions and hope that someone sees the spark in me and believes in me. It's easy to say that it's tough out there and it is, it can dampen your spirit but that's where mental strength comes into play. I know I am not a quitter and I just continue to work hard on every aspect. I think if you have the talent and skill sets, the opportunities will come your way," she says.

Talking about her upcoming project web series *'Runaway Luga'*, she says: "It's a very entertaining project and I have enjoyed myself thoroughly. It's a character I have never portrayed before and I can't wait to see it out in the public domain," she says.



Mandira Bedi, Krushna  
Abhishek-Kashmera Shah...

## TV celebs who opted to extend their families through adoption and surrogacy

There are several television couples who opted for adoption and surrogacy to experience the joy of parenthood. The list includes popular names from the world of television including Ekta Kapoor, Mandira Bedi, Krushna Abhishek-Kashmera Shah among others. Take a look as reported by Times of India:

### Mandira Bedi and Raj Kaushal

Mandira Bedi, who is married to filmmaker Raj Kaushal, welcomed 4-year-old Tara into her family in July, 2020. The announcement of adoption was made by her through an Instagram post in October last year. The actress is also a mother to son, Vian, who was born in 2011.

### Sanjeeda Shaikh and Aamir Ali

Sanjeeda and Aamir might not be together anymore but the two were blessed with daughter Ayra Ali, who turned one last year, through surrogacy. The couple chose to keep the news of their baby a secret until last year. Aamir now loves to share little moments he spends with his baby girl on social media.



Krushna Abhishek and Kashmera Shah

Krushna Abhishek and wife Kashmera Shah, who got married in 2013, welcomed twin sons - Ryan and Krishank - through surrogacy. In an interview to ETimes TV, Kashmera had spoken about her struggles to conceive 14 times in a span of 3 years. Post this, they opted for surrogacy.

### Sunny Leone and Daniel Weber

Splitsvilla host Sunny Leone and her husband adopted a baby girl Nisha Kaur Weber in July 2017. The couple also has twin sons, Asher and Noah Singh Weber, who they welcomed through surrogacy in March 2018.

### Ekta Kapoor

Ekta Kapoor surprised everyone by announcing the birth of her son, Ravie, through surrogacy in January 2019. The television producer also shared her struggles in

becoming one through an elaborate post back then. Cut to 2021, Ravie has become the centre of Ekta's world and often features in her posts on social media.

### Sakshi Tanwar

Sakshi Tanwar of Kahaani Ghar Ghar Ki fame adopted a baby girl, Dityaa, in 2018. Just like Ekta, she is a single mother. Back then Sakshi had announced, "With the blessings of my parents and the support of my family and friends, I have adopted a baby girl, who will soon turn nine months old. I am delighted to share my happiness with everyone as I welcome this bundle of joy into my life. This is undoubtedly the greatest moment of my life. My family and I are elated to embrace Dityaa. She is the answer to all my prayers, and I feel blessed to have her in my life."

### Samir and Neelam Soni

Celebrity couple, Samir and Neelam Soni, who got married in 2011, adopted their daughter, Ahana Soni, after almost two years of their wedding in September, 2013.

### Sandip Soparrkar

Choreographer Sandip Soparrkar, who has been a part of several television shows, adopted a baby boy in 2007. He got married to longtime girlfriend Jesse Randhawa, but the couple got divorced. He is a single parent now.

### Gurmeet Chaudhary and Debina Bonnerjee

Television couple Gurmeet Chaudhary and Debina Bonnerjee, who played the role of Ram and Seeta in Ramayan, adopted two daughters - Pooja and Lata. They met them during a family wedding in Gurmeet's hometown in Bihar. Pooja is an orphan, who stayed with her uncle, whereas Lata's father had passed away.

## Kundali Bhagya - One of the most lovable villains in show business



*'If you face rejections that doesn't mean you are not capable. It just means that the time is not right'*

TV actor Sanjay Gagnani is currently entertaining the audience with his acting chops as the vicious villain Prithvi Malhotra in *Kundali Bhagya*. The 32-year-old, who has been in the showbiz for a really long time, acquired a new-found fame through *Kundali Bhagya*. In an exclusive conversation with ETimes TV, Sanjay Gagnani bared his heart out about the love he received through this daily soap, experimenting with films as a rookie in the entertainment industry and facing rejections. The actor is a romantic at heart, also revealed about his 'filmy' real life love story. Read on:

### About Kundali Bhagya

Balaji (Production house of *Kundali Bhagya*) is home and I re-entered the show last month. It has always been

very welcoming and has been a magical journey for me as we all know that my role was supposed to be a cameo for three months, and now it's been more than three-and-a-half years since I have been on the show, and whatever I am today, is because of this show. So, it has been a very overwhelming and magical journey for me and it is treating me like never before.

When I got to know I'm going to be a villain on this show, I was ready for all the hate and abuse that a villain should receive from the viewers, but surprisingly, it has been the other way round. Slowly and gradually Prithvi Malhotra has been one of the most lovable villains, and I think this is the first time in the history of not just the television medium but any medium of India where a villain is loved by the audience.

### Girlfriend Poonam's reaction to the female gazes at him

She feels proud and very lucky. At times when she finds out a particular girl or a gang of girls checking me out, she feels proud 'Okay, this is the guy you are checking out but he is mine, he belongs to me.' So, she's never insecure and she just feels happy and proud whenever such instances happen.

### About his wedding with Poonam Preet Bhatia

I don't think I'll be able to answer this question for the next couple of months but yes, very soon.

### About his real-life love story

It's a total filmy story and is a social media love story. We both connected with each other for the first time on Facebook, and we started chatting and speaking over the call. After a month, I asked her to come to Mumbai because I found her very photogenic, and I felt she should try her luck here because the entertainment industry is

here. She was very kind enough to come and see me, and that's how our love story began. We spent time with each other for a week and that's when we felt that we were meant for each other. When she was flying back to Delhi, that's when I proposed to her at the airport in front of hundreds of people, and she promised me that she will be back to Mumbai, not for a week or month but forever. And, that's what she did after a month, she moved to Mumbai for me and we have been in a live-in relationship since then.

### On facing rejections and being replaced

Yes, many times. It happens with every actor and even after being listed in the top iconic villains of the industry, (gestured towards his own self), and is happening even now. Rejection is a part of an actor's life. I feel even when I'll do films, the rejections will continue because there are a lot of factors. But yes, I want to tell everyone and actors from any medium, 'Please take failures in your stride. If you face rejections that doesn't mean you are not capable. It just means that the time is not right. If the time is not right today, then the time will be better tomorrow or day after tomorrow as they say 'apna time aayega.'

### Is there any actor that you admire?

I look up to not just actors but every human being that I come across. I try to learn and grab good qualities from every human around me. If there is an artist that comes on our show for one day, I don't look down upon them because they are also actors and they are also performers. If I get to learn anything from them, I look up to them also, thinking 'yeh cheez toh isne bahut achhi ki, ye shayad mai nahi kar sakta, but mujhe seekhne ko mili' (The artist has performed a particular scene very perfectly, maybe I would never be able to do it, but I got to learn how to do it.) So, I am a learner for life and because I am an actor, an observer. I always look around for positive things.



## CINE 12

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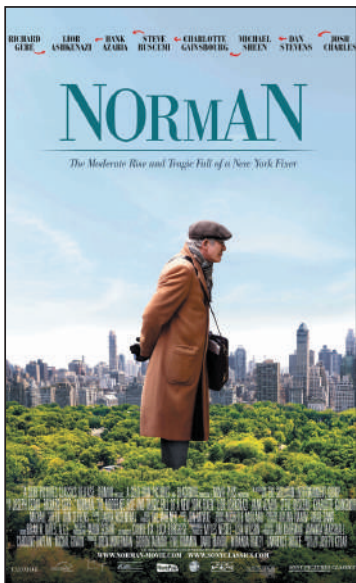
## Anna Karenina

Star: Keira Knightley, Jude Law,  
Aaron Taylor-Johnson

## mhc 1

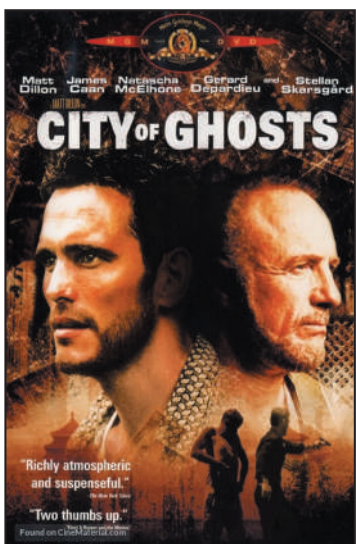
Mercredi 5 Mai - 21.20

## Norman: The Moderate...



## mhc 2

Jeudi 6 Mai - 21.15

Avec: Matt Dillon, James Caan,  
Natascha McElhone

MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
<b>mardi 4 mai</b> 07.00 Dessin Anime 10.35 Serial: Radio Free Roscoe 11.00 Mag: Le Saviez Vous? 11.10 Tele: Soleil Levant 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.50 Local: Fashion Festival Mau.. 13.45 Les Grands Noms Interna.... 14.05 D.Animes: The Hive 14.34 D.Anime: Robot Trains 14.48 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 15.00 D.Anime: The Twisted Whis... 15.35 Film: The Emoji Movie 17.00 Serial: Mustangs Fc/ Mighty... 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja 18.55 Local: Charcha - Climate Ch.. 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.35 Local Prod: An Eta Dalert 21.10 Film: Hollows Grove 23.00 Le Journal	<b>mardi 4 mai</b> 10.00 Serial: CID 10.48 Serial: Ye Vaada Raha 12.04 Film: Bajrangbali Starring: Biswajeet, Dara Singh, S. Kapoor, Moushumi Chatterjee 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.20 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.45 Serial: Bava Maradullu 16.08 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 16.29 Serial: Suno Chanda 16.53 Serial: Achra Ke Moti 17.12 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.32 Telugu - Premabhishekam 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 DDI Magazine 19.00 Zournal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Local: Tamil Programme 20.30 Film: Shalimar Star: Dharmendra, Zeenat Aman, Rex Harrison	<b>mardi 4 mai</b> 06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa 06.52 Mag: Voa Connect 07.27 Mag: In Good Shape 07.53 Doc: Amazing Gardens 08.19 Mag: Future Mag 09.43 Mag: Global 3000 10.08 Doc: The Wirecard Case 11.00 Mag: Eco@Africa 11.26 Mag: Arts And Culture 11.39 Mag: Voa Connect 12.26 Mag: In Good Shape 13.18 Mag: Future Mag 13.50 Doc: 360 GEO 14.42 Mag: Global 3000 15.08 Doc: The Wirecard Case 16.01 Mag: Eco@Africa 16.27 Mag: Arts And Culture 18.02 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto... 19.00 Open Univ: Student Support 19.31 Mag: Made In Germany 20.04 Doc: Ville En Fête	<b>mardi 4 mai</b> 01.43 Film: Kill Kane 02.57 Serial: Hawaii 5-0 03.38 Film: United 05.16 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.58 Film: Dam Sharks 09.00 Serial: Chicago Fire 09.45 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: Chicago Med 12.00 Film: United 13.34 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.15 Mag: Hollywood On Set 14.45 Film: Dam Sharks 16.41 Serial: Chicago Fire 17.23 Serial: Absentia 18.05 Tele: Daniella 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: Absentia 21.15 Film: Anna Karenina 23.20 Tele: Muneca Brava	<b>mardi 4 mai</b> 08.00 Film: Daud 12.04 / 19.54 - Sanjivani 12.26 / 20.11 - Radha Krishna 12.57 / 20.32 Agnphera 13.09 / 21.09 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.28 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.51 / 21.59 - Naagin Season 3 14.44 / 22.25 - Ikyawann 14.52 / 22.56 - Mere Sai - Shraddha Aur Saburi 15.23 Film: Manmarziyaan Starring: Abhishek Bachchan, Taapsee Pannu, Vicky Kaushal 18.00 Live: Samacher 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.52 Serial: Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka 19.15 Serial: Bhakharwadi
<b>mercredi 5 mai</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 Prod Indepen: Met Seryer 13.00 Local: Groov'in 13.55 D.Anime: The Hive 14.02 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà 14.24 D.Anime: Robot Trains 14.49 D.Anime: The Twisted Whis... 15.01 D.Anime: Kung Fu Panda 15.25 Film: Jumanji 17.05 Serial: Backstage 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja 18.55 MBC Production: Arogya 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.25 Local: MBC Production 21.20 Film: Norman: The Moderate 23.15 Local: Le Journal	<b>mercredi 5 mai</b> 07.00 DDI Live 09.00 Serial: Chacha Bhatija 09.22 Serial: Chota Bheem 10.00 Pyar Ka Dard Meetha Meeth 12.00 Film: Chirag 14.37 DDI Magazine 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.22 Aamhi Doghi 15.44 Bava Maradallu 16.10 Apoorva Raagangal 16.30 Serial: Suno Chanda 16.53 Serial: Imtihaan 17.12 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.33 Serial: Kulvadhu 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 Serial: DDI Magazine 19.00 Zournal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Programme In Marathi 21.00 Film: Justice Bao 22.34 Live: DDI Live	<b>mercredi 5 mai</b> 06.00 Rev: The Global Auto... 06.26 Doc: Look And Act 06.52 Mag: Check In 07.26 Mag: Made In Germany 07.52 Doc: Ville En Fête 10.05 Local: Klip Seleksion 10.47 Doc: Back To Chernobyl 11.58 Doc: Look And Act 12.26 Mag: Check In 12.59 Mag: Made In Germany 13.25 Doc: Ville En Fête 13.51 Doc: Olivia's Garden 15.14 Mag: Close Up 16.24 Doc: Back To Chernobyl 17.04 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto... 17.30 Doc: Look And Act 18.00 Mag: Motorweek 18.30 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous? 19.00 Student Support Prog... 20.04 Mag: Tendence XXI 20.40 Local: Business Connect 21.24 Doc: Comme Un Poisson...	<b>mercredi 5 mai</b> 00.42 Serial: The Good Doctor 01.23 Film: Anna Karenina 03.27 Serial: Hawaii 5-0 04.08 Film: Super Eruption 05.32 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.56 Film: Final Fantasy 09.00 Serial: Chicago Fire 09.45 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: Chicago Med 12.00 Film: Super Eruption 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: Final Fantasy 16.40 Serial: Chicago Fire 17.20 Serial: Absentia 18.05 Tele: Daniella 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: 19-2 21.15 Film: The Professionals 23.12 Tele: Muneca Brava 23.54 Serial: Chicago Fire	<b>mercredi 5 mai</b> 08.00 Film: Manmarziyaan Starring: Abhishek Bachchan, Taapsee Pannu, Vicky Kaushal 12.04 / 20.06 - Sanjivani 12.24 / 20.26 - Radha Krishna 12.56 / 20.02 - Agnipheera 13.10 / 20.46 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.30 / 21.09 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.53 / 21.31 - Naagin Season 3 14.35 / 21.46 - Ikyawann 14.52 / 21.59 - Mere Sai - Shraddha Aur Saburi 15.23 Film: Raanjhanaa Starring: Dhanush, Sonam Kapoor, Abhay Deol 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.51 Ek Rishta Saajhed Ka 19.16 Bhakharwadi
<b>jeudi 6 mai</b> 06.00 Local: Klip Seleksion 06.45 Local: Sur Prise 08.53 D. Anime: Investion Story 10.05 D. Anime: Astrology 10.35 Serial: Radio Free Roscoe 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.45 Local: Le Rendez Vous Avec.. 13.40 Local: Zanfan Nou Zil 14.18 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà.. 15.00 D.Anime: The Twisted Whisk.. 15.40 Film: L'Incrovable Destin De... 17.05 Serial: Backstage 17.30 Live - Covid-19 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Jamai Raja 18.55 Local: Tirth Yatra 19.30 Le Journal 20.15 Film: Good Newwz Stars: Akshay Kumar, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Diljit Dosanjh..	<b>jeudi 6 mai</b> 10.00 Karm Phal Data Shani 12.05 Film: Kasam Starring: Anil Kapoor, Sudhir Dalvi, Poonam Dhillon 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.21 Aamhi Doghi 15.43 Bava Maradallu 16.05 Apoorva Raagangal 16.27 Serial: Suno Chanda 16.46 Serial: Imtihaan 17.07 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 Serial: Ghar Pahucha Da... 19.00 Zournal Kreol 19.20 DDI Magazine 20.05 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 20.30 MBC Production 20.56 Local Prod: Profil 21.09 Film: City Of Ghosts Starring: Matt Dillon, James Caan, Natascha McElhone	<b>jeudi 6 mai</b> 06.00 Mag: Motorweek 06.25 Mag: Vous Et Nous 07.28 Doc: Garden Party 08.25 Doc: The World From Above 09.44 Mag: Initiative Africa 10.10 Mag: Focus On Europe 11.21 Mag: Motorweek 11.47 Mag: Vous Et Nous 14.13 Doc: Comme Un Poisson... 15.32 Mag: Focus On Europe 16.43 Mag: Motorweek 17.37 Mag: Arts.21 18.03 Mag: Eco India 18.30 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous? 18.35 Local: Talk On Ramadan 19.00 Student Support Prog... 19.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today 20.05 Mag: Science Ou Fiction 20.30 Local: News (English) 21.32 Doc: Sri Lanka 22.14 Doc: One Way Ticket	<b>jeudi 6 mai</b> 01.17 Film: The Professionals 03.14 Serial: Hawaii 5-0 03.56 Film: Flawless 05.40 Tele: Muneca Brava 07.04 Film: Norman: The Moderate 09.00 Serial: Chicago Fire 09.45 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: Chicago Med 12.00 Film: Flawless 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.15 Mag: Hollywood On Set 14.45 Film: Norman: The Moderate 16.41 Serial: Chicago Fire 17.23 Serial: 19-2 18.05 Tele: Daniella 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: 19-2 21.55 Film: Finding Forrester 00.05 Tele: Muneca Brava	<b>jeudi 6 mai</b> 08.00 Film: Raanjhanaa 12.05 / 19.54 - Sanjivani 12.22 / 20.11 - Radha Krishna 12.48 / 20.32 Agnipheera 13.07 / 21.09 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.29 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.48 / 21.46 - Naagin 14.29 / 21.59 - Ikyawann 14.55 / 22.52 - Mere Sai 15.20 Film: Sauda Starring: Sumeet Saigal, Neelam, Vikas Bhalla 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.51 Ek Rishta Saajhed Ka 19.16 Serial: Bhakharwadi 19.38 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak

Jeudi 6 Mai  
- 15.20Star: Sumeet Saigal, Neelam, Vikas  
BhallaJeudi 6 Mai -  
20.15Stars: Akshay Kumar, Kareena  
Kapoor Khan, Diljit Dosanjh..



# Young British Indians are embracing arranged marriage - just not in the traditional sense

*The range of arranged unions that now exist can be thought of as a spectrum, and younger generations tend to prefer a love connection*



Raksha Pande

Arranged marriages occupy an awkward place in contemporary Britain. For some, they're equivalent to forced marriage. Others see them as a quaint custom in need of adjustment to the modern ideal of western-style "love marriages". However, my decade-long research with British Indians paints a rather different picture of this practice.

Far from being a homogeneous tradition, modern arranged marriages involve a variety of matchmaking practices where each family tailors its own version to suit modern identities and ambitions.

Among the first generation, transnational arranged marriages were the norm. People would go back to India to find partners, with the added expectation that their children would follow a very traditional style of arranged marriage. But there was a marked shift in the attitude of the British-born second generation.

For this group, attitudes towards arranged marriages began to noticeably shift in the 1960s and 1970s. They felt that unlike their parents, traditional transnational marriages would not work for them and their children who identified more with Britain than with India.

The range of arranged marriages that now exist can be thought of as a spectrum, with forced marriages that involve marrying someone against their will at one extreme and the most westernised style of courtship and marriage (including inter-religious marriages or instances where parents may only be involved in arranging the wedding) at the other.

## Two new versions of arranged marriage

My research has highlighted two styles of arranged marriage that lie between these extremes. Both appear to be the most popular ways through which young British Indians have embraced arranged marriages.

The first of these is called "semi-arranged marriage", where parents who wish to help their child find a potential part-



In 'love-cum-arranged marriages', couples go on dates and get to know each other before asking their families to approach the parents of their love interest. Tetra Images, LLC/Alamy

ner will introduce them to several candidates from within the British Indian population that they think could make a suitable match. Introductions can involve sifting through specially commissioned bride or groom CVs, studio photographs, events similar to speed-dating organised by local temples and, increasingly, matrimonial websites (even social media sites like Facebook and Instagram).

After introductions are made, the relationship follows an established pattern of the couple going on dates (sometimes chaperoned) to get to know each other better. They're also gently encouraged to fall in love in the run-up to the wedding. Families don't frown upon these types of courtships because matches are approved by the parents of the couple themselves. All those I interviewed who went through this version of arranged marriage confessed to being in love with their chosen partner by the wedding.

The other style is what my research participants called "love-cum-arranged marriages", where the person who wants to get married finds someone they like themselves. In these marriages, couples go on dates and get to know each other before asking their families to approach the parents of their love interest in order to arrange a formal introduction. This is followed by parent-approved courtship and then marriage.

Falling in love independently of parental involvement was important in love-cum-arranged marriage. But what was more pressing was actively socially engineering the process so that one fell in love with the right person, matching parents' criteria of a desirable partner and

standards that were tacitly underlined while growing up.

## Priorities among British Indians

Young British Indians practicing love-cum-arranged marriages felt they had the "freedom to fall in love with anyone" but within certain boundaries - typically making sure to fall in love with someone of the same religion, ethnicity and class.

The importance of caste (the hierarchical Indian system of social division primarily based on hereditary status and resistance to inter-marriages) is becoming rarer in these instances. And some negotiations in class boundaries were permitted among research participants.

However, sharing the same religion and ethnicity were seen as non-negotiable, which meant that the arranged aspect of this style of marriage still carried weight. Love-cum-arranged marriages were regarded not as a compromise but as the ideal to meet the desires of both the parents and the child.

Indeed, the popularity of these two styles underscores the requirement of "learning to love" among British Indians - where previously in traditional-style arranged marriages, the focus was on learning to love the partner you had chosen after a brief introduction or with little choice (especially for women).

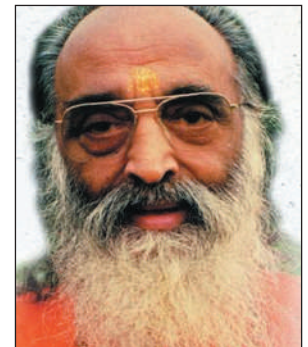
For British-born generations today, love as learning involves first discovering the boundaries of family expectations and preferences in relation to future partners. Secondly, (and more significantly), it requires putting that learning into practice through self-censure and falling in love with someone who parents would be likely

to approve of. This hybrid form of marriage allows British Indians to adapt different elements to reflect both the British and Indian aspects of their identities.

These two styles of marriage - semi-arranged marriage and love-cum-arranged marriage - symbolise the future of arranged marriages in Britain. Younger British Indians increasingly prefer the latter over the former.

While forced marriage has been made illegal in the United Kingdom and love marriages are held up as the norm, arranged marriages end up occupying a grey zone between the two - always suspect and never desirable. Consequently, people who have arranged marriages are treated with suspicion and are regarded as a threat to social cohesion. As such, it is ever more important to acknowledge the diversity of arranged marriage forms.

We need to move beyond the idea that love and arrangement have to be mutually exclusive, embodying the differences between traditional Eastern and the modern Western cultures respectively. In fact, love and arrangement can exist in tandem, as shown by the marriage styles that are popular among British Indians today.



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