

MAURITIUS **TIMES**

• "Always do your best. What you plant now, you will harvest later." -- Og Mandino

Will the opposition parties offer a credible and strong alternative to the majority in power?



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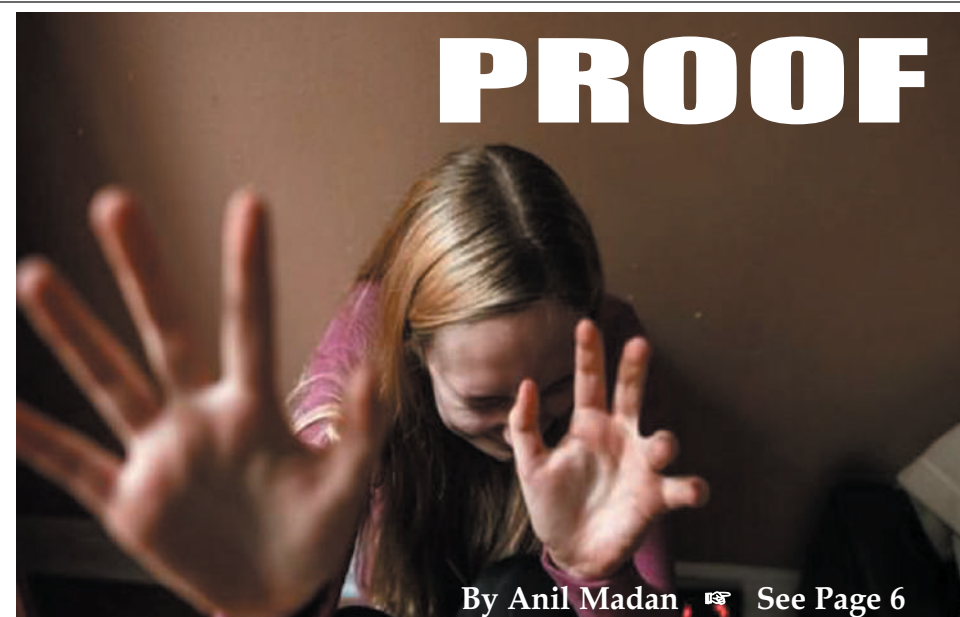
Lots of IMF programmes are never completed - because they're unworkable

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The Evolving Covid Situation

The evolving Covid situation is getting more and more complicated and confusing all over the world, that's the undeniable reality. The only constants are that all countries must scale up their vaccination to reach at least 60-70% of the population as soon as possible, that maintaining safe distance and masking up must be rigorously adhered to along with use of hand sanitiser, and that contact tracing/quarantine/isolation must be pursued until further notice. These are the absolute basics, which are to be enforced legally and breaches are to be sanctioned by special provisions in the legal armamentarium.

National authorities are left to work out the details based on these principles according to their specific given contexts and their resources, ranging from financial means to the deployment of the logistics required to meet these objectives based on expert recommendations.

The health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic continue to be dire, and the worse thing is that there is no way of predicting a timeline for return to a situation of less apprehension and more confidence in the future, which remains ever more uncertain.

Governments have had to take gambles based on shifting premises about prioritizing health or the economy, in what is a real Catch-22 situation. Damned if you do, damned if you don't. Here it has been decided to open up to tourists arrivals with protocols worked out so as to minimize any potential risk of contamination or infection emanating from them. They will initially be quarantined in the hotels where they will be staying, and it is expected and hoped that they will appreciate the concerns of the authorities and stick to the rules.

On the other hand, given the rise in the number of local cases and the total number of active cases as at 18 July (696), it is becoming more and more financially unsustainable for government to continue with the practice of quarantining people in the hotels. Besides, these are going to be needed to accommodate the tourists. It makes sense, therefore, to envisage the self-isolation of any cases that need it, provide they have received their two doses of vaccine. Except for those who for various reasons may not be able to self-isolate at home, when government will have to find a solution.

The larger, concerning issue is that it seems that several better resourced countries, for example Singapore and the UK, are coming round to the conclusion that Covid-19 is here to stay, and that it is not possible to continue with the kind of severe restrictions that have been applied so far. In any case here, except for opening up to tourists until now, much of economic activity had already been underway. It can also be said that by and large people have accepted that they must act more responsibly and wherever one goes in public places it is salutary to note that there is observance of the sanitary measures. We have had to deplore certain religious and social gatherings where people have flouted the norms, but the fact that among themselves there have been Covid cases in large numbers should alert others not to enact repeat performances of a similar nature.

The lesson that must be stressed over and over again is that there is no substitute for adherence to sanitary norms and to responsible behaviour. For the sake of oneself and everybody.

The Conversation

Lots of IMF programmes are never completed – because they're unworkable

IMF programmes run the risk of having too many conditions. This may drive countries into financial disaster. And back to the IMF again

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) gives loans to countries in economic trouble. In exchange, countries must implement a programme of painful policy reforms. Countries rarely complete these programmes.

We set out to uncover why.

IMF programmes usually last one to three years. Countries must meet policy conditions in regular reviews – typically every three to six months – to gain access to tranches of funding. Failure to implement them interrupts the programme.

Of 763 programmes between 1980 and 2015, 512 were interrupted, of which 291 did not resume – as our data from the IMF Monitor Database shows. This is a very high failure rate given that the IMF enters into every agreement on the basis that it wants to see it completed.

We argue that reform programmes may be unimplementable by design. We show that they simply entail too many policy conditions. Even reform-minded governments struggle to implement them.

Our research also investigated financial market responses to programme interruptions. We found that programme failure has serious repercussions for economic development. Failure sends a negative signal to markets, causing them to lose confidence in the ability of governments to stabilise the economy and undertake reforms. The result very often is a rise in inflation and increases in capital flight that deprive countries of much-needed capital for investment in public goods and services.

Behind the failure rate

Some scholars have blamed the failure rate on a lack of motivation by borrowing governments. Facing pressures from special interest groups, such as labour unions and business groups, governments often back-pedal from previous commitments.

In addition, scholars have found that countries that are friends with powerful donors like the US also experience more implementation failure. They receive favourable treatment, such as regaining access to IMF loans much faster than other countries, creating a moral



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hazard problem. In other words, encouraging bad behaviour.

Our paper breaks new ground in trying to understand why so many programmes fail by looking at their actual design.

We looked at whether the programmes themselves were in fact unimplementable. To do this we collected detailed compliance data for all 763 IMF programmes between 1980 and 2015. Our aim was to test if the number of conditions was related to programme interruption.

We found that each additional condition increases the likelihood of a programme interruption by at least 1.1% — a moderate effect given the average failure rate of 58.6%, but programmes typically include 22 such conditions, which boosts the failure probability accordingly.

Conditions to privatise state-owned enterprises, liberalise prices and overhaul the public sector were especially prone to cause implementation failure. This is because these conditions mobilise domestic opposition that can thwart programme implementation.

Our research also ruled out that implementation failure was driven by the occurrence of a financial crisis, macroeconomic instability, domestic opposition to policy reform, or geopolitical factors.

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Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

'Minds are like parachutes: they function best when open'

Isn't it a national shame that the authorities have had to take a decision to post 24/7 patrols by the Special Mobile Force at Ganga Talao so as to protect this sacred *patri-moine* (heritage site) from the kind of incident that happened there some weeks back? It was an occurrence that was deemed by every Mauritian except the perpetrators consuming alcohol, etc., as showing disrespect to the sacred site, which hosts a week-long pilgrimage by Hindus on the occasion of the celebration of Maha Shivaratri every year. It is public knowledge that this is the largest religious pilgrimage that takes place in the island, and sees the participation of devotees from abroad as well, and also includes non-Hindus.

Doesn't that episode and the forced consequent presence of the SMF there diminish our vaunted image as a country of peaceful coexistence, one of the major reasons why tourists are attracted to the island? Now that we are opening the borders again, surely this chain of events is nothing to be proud about, as it mars our reputation, which is already suffering from being tagged as having autocratic tendencies. Now we have to face the additional blemish of religious intolerance.

We should reflect on how we have descended so low as to openly and defiantly display such disrespect to both a religion, and to a sacred environment which has been a place of communion with the divine and pristine nature from the time of the closing years of the 19th century when the lake was first discovered by Pandit Jhummun Gossagne following a dream that he had. This itself is the stuff of legend, and every country treasures its legends, for they form part of the narrative which gives meaning to the life of a nation. Imagine going to visit the pyramids in Egypt without bothering to know about the profound story of how they came to be – something which is still being uncovered by dedicated seekers after the truth behind them.

Much as we want to keep religion out of politics and vice-versa, unfortunately we ourselves become culpable

SMF at Ganga Talao: What a shame!



“Anyone who goes to Ganga Talao with an open mind and a heart receptive to the awesomeness and beauty of nature cannot be unmoved by the splendour of the setting. The physical silence outside instantly merges into the inner silence of one's being. Contemplation sets in. As the moments succeed, coalesce and dissolve in time, the eyes begin to close by themselves as the silence sinks deeper and deeper. When they open again, after frozen time, one awakens afresh to the enveloping greenery, the soft ripples on the lake's surface, and the azure canopy above decorated with fluffy snow-like clouds. And anyone who has been lucky enough to be present there when mist has descended will wish that it would last forever! Such is the magic, the enchanting magic of Ganga Talao...”

parties and obstruct this separation when our actions threaten the peace and harmony of the country. At this point, there is no alternative but to have recourse to the government, that is the political process, which steps in, justifiably invoking national security. No government would miss such an opportunity to exert further control of the polity, in the process gaining laurels vis-à-vis its vote-bank and even at the national level, for showing prompt concern and efficiency in maintaining law and order. The perennial debate about more or less government then becomes a sterile one – ironically because of the devious and inconsiderate act of one or several citizens.

This is what happens when one acts without thinking, or out of misconceptions, prejudice and hate.

The onus therefore falls on civil society to discipline and correct its members by educating and inculcating in them the value of the respect and dignity of others. Unfortunately, we have not heard anything from the *Conseil des religions* on this matter. After all, this is surely an issue which ought to have been of direct concern to it? Because its declared role is to foster interfaith dialogue and to promote the understanding of each other's religion, and this was no doubt a golden opportunity for the *Conseil* to come out very forcefully: to first condemn such desecration (and also of *murtis* misunderstood as inert idols), canvass in favour of the law to take its course, and pre-empt any such misdemeanor in future by mounting a campaign to spread peace and mutual respect. It is still not too late, isn't it? What would potential tourists and the outside world think about the country's *Conseil de religions* which

fails to take a stand when an incident threatens to disrupt the religious harmony it is mandated to defend?

But beyond religion there is an even more important existential dimension that comes up in this discussion, one that has acquired immense traction as we fight climate change by trying to save, preserve and protect our environment. Every bit, every corner of it is important for the survival of Mother Earth, who births and nurtures us, and takes us back into her womb at the end of our lifespan.

Everywhere across the globe there is this growing awareness of our profound connect with Nature, with her sacred spaces that bear the memory and associated sentiments of people who have over time treated them as part of their collective being, a whole and a vibrant wholeness wherein each and everyone has a place, and both complement and complete each other.

Anyone who goes to Ganga Talao with an open mind and a heart receptive to the awesomeness and beauty of nature cannot be unmoved by the splendour of the setting. The physical silence outside instantly merges into the inner

silence of one's being. Contemplation sets in. As the moments succeed, coalesce and dissolve in time, the eyes begin to close by themselves as the silence sinks deeper and deeper. When they open again, after frozen time, one awakens afresh to the enveloping greenery, the soft ripples on the lake's surface, and the azure canopy above decorated with fluffy snow-like clouds. And anyone who has been lucky enough to be present there when mist has descended will wish that it would last forever! Such is the magic, the enchanting magic of Ganga Talao.

It is the same magic that one feels in the hushed atmosphere that engulfs the south rim of the Grand Canyon at dusk, as the sun is setting far across the abyss and the descending darkness softly displaces the play of the soft hues left by the dimming golden orb. Or when walking among the tall sequoia trees, the tallest on Earth, in the Mariposa grove of the Sierra Nevada. And undoubtedly too at designated spots of such similar magnificence on all continents.

From the dawn of humanity, humans have felt this deep communion with their planet, and this is nicely captured in an article in *The Conversation* of July 8, 2021 by Rob N. Williams Archaeologist & PhD Candidate, University of Sydney, titled: *'Will your grandchildren have the chance to visit Australia's sacred trees? Only if our sick indifference to Aboriginal heritage is cured'*.

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Will the opposition parties offer a credible and strong alternative to the majority in power?

Whether the population sees an alternative building up depends largely on opposition parties putting their collective efforts into a credible and energized thrust both inside and outside Parliament

Jan Arden

Hon Padayachy, Minister of Finance, perhaps influenced by the venerable Professor of a "love and care" economy, Lord Desai, undertook in Budget 2020-21 to raid our national reserves at the Central Bank for Rs 160 bn, 80 of which were to fund his budget deficit and another 80 billion towards enterprise support without much transparency.

But much worse was lurking in government's mystifying bag as the Minister of Finance proposed in the same budget nothing less than the replacement of the National Pensions Fund by a tax-based CSG without seeing the necessity of technical reports or consultations. Faced with a chorus of protests and a pending judicial review, Government or the Finance maestro has backpedalled, bringing to Parliament a hastily drafted Social Contributions Bill which aims to give the official kiss of death to the NPF. The exercise is seen as a brazen attempt to concoct a formula that might give credence to the epic campaign promise to the elderly about the doubling of their universal pension entitlement.

Government is of course entitled to reform and consolidate our universal pension scheme but we would expect meaningful consultations with the opposition, the actuarial profession, civil society and NGOs rather than the mighty swipe of a furtive pen in a Budget Speech. As matters stand, more considerable headwinds are likely for Government both in Parliament, where Opposition MPs look likely to be expelled at the drop of no hat, and outside on the streets as the population is better informed of personal implications.

The revised CSG Bill of Minister Padayachy, added to the rampant impact of runaway prices and the array of new taxes in his June budget, has at least had the effect of pushing the parliamentary opposition to renew their collaboration at least around those thematic issues.

For some time now, population annoyance with the governing establishment and their "business as usual" come what may attitude have not found a satisfactory political outlet. Neither the social media activities, nor the flurry of judiciary enquiries spearheaded by the "Avengers", nor even the massive post-Wakashio manifestation in the streets of Port-Louis seem to have dented government's Teflon attitude. Duck your heads, tighten the screws and keep going seems to be the motto. This does not always hold good but that only happens when popular pressure and discontent forces the adoption of fire-fighting and other stop-gap measures.

Press conferences and Facebook Lives

As the ever astute former Minister Dharam Gokhool remarked 'Press conferences and Facebook Lives do not win elections' and suggests that there is some way to go for the Opposition to win the hearts and minds of the people. In the face of the people's difficulties in their livelihoods and employment, the inability of Opposition parties to work together and shake the haughtiness of government has been frustrating. It has been attributed, rightly or wrongly, to party and political calculations and



“The setback of 2019 was essentially a difficult pitch made worse by the divided front offered by the Opposition against ruthless adversaries. Those who masterminded such division within the Opposition to privilege their party calculations rather than larger national interests have themselves to blame for the current predicament and they should be wary of barking again at the wrong trees. Like the MMM, the LP has its own leadership issue to address but should that not be left to the collective wisdom and workings of each party which know they have to maintain unity while paving the way for a future that acknowledges the generational and political aspirations of their cadres?”

personal egos taking precedence over national interests.

The self-titled Alliance de l'Espoir, by excluding its natural, some would say, its only credible locomotive, the Labour Party, had murkied the waters in a rather surprising twist. Questions of leadership for the 2024 general elections that had been sidelined effectively, were suddenly brought to the fore in a stage-managed show where Paul Berenger was seen as the prime mover. Be that as it may, we are entitled to wonder whether Opposition maestros, banking on new arrival Nando Bodha - a long-time MSM and SAJ stalwart - and the media activism of Bhadain, had decided that they had enough traction on their own steam. It seems that they are now united in wishing that the LP returns to the Opposition table and brings its weight at least in Parliament to the pressures on government.

It is probable that the divisive actions engineered then may have left deep scars which need to be clarified in their resumed confidential exchanges. Without such clarity, the Alliance leaders may not be best placed to provide a "welcome back" side-chair to the LP. But we are not privy to how and under what terms the latter may accept to lead the Opposition back to its previous state of working unity and restore confidence between partners and with the population. It has to go through stages most probably, and this CSG Bill may well provide parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition the stepping stone it needed to begin the pathway of reconstruction on clearer and steadier grounds.

Navin Ramgoolam's leadership

Much has been said or alluded about Navin Ramgoolam's leadership of the LP, even before Paul Berenger made his rather rash intervention at the launch of the MMM-PMSD-Bodha-Bhadain alliance, later termed Alliance de l'Espoir. But even the MMM and the PMSD would have to recognise that the Labour Party has generally held its shape despite the bruising loss of two successive electoral battles, the second of which, in 2019, has been the subject of controversies and electoral petitions which are only now being heard in the courts. It has lost no MPs or even pre-electoral party candidates to the sirens from a government that is not loathe to dish out freebies. Experienced analysts and observers estimate those core sympathizers somewhere around 25-30% of the electorate globally, even if they acknowledge that the future of the LP leadership structure needs to be addressed.

Such an electoral base entrenched over years of loyalty should neither have been taken for granted or dismissed by neophytes or manoeuvring old hands. It is insufficient on its own or in a triangular setting to carry the day but indispensable to any attempt to unify the Opposition for a credible assault on Government House. The setback of 2019 was essentially a difficult pitch made worse by the divided front offered by the Opposition against ruthless adversaries.

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Of Political Conduct and Misconduct

“We see the rule of law being trampled in so many instances.

Is the President doing anything about it?”

More than fifty years after our independence how did we end up in this rut of misconduct and immunity, where our political elites, our systems and processes are the problem rather than the solution? Have we been complicit in this downward slide, eyeing the quid pro quo with hoodlums and crooks for our votes? Between the lines which substantiate the current pessimism, readers may find the seeds of necessary changes as we move on as a nation. Read on.

LEX

* How big a problem is political misconduct in Mauritian politics?

Misconduct by politicians is endemic in Mauritius, and if not controlled it will evolve into a pandemic and this can plunge the country in an unprecedented social unrest. Can one imagine politicians using fake news against opponents or distorting their statements? We see candidates using the power of money to buy votes. We see all kinds of cronies rubbing shoulders with politicians just to obtain dividends after an election. Take the case of the Mauritius Turf Club, which whether we like it or not forms part of our history. It seems that everything is being done to erase it for the benefit of a single individual. The list of misdeeds can go on.

* Even if Mauritians do take notice of the conduct of politicians, it could be that they do not attach much value to their integrity since a sleazy reputation, as past elections have shown, has not necessarily been a contributing factor to the defeat of some candidates or parties at the polls...

It would seem lots of people simply do not care so long as their bread is buttered, and they would use their community or caste credentials to obtain an undue advantage. Is it any wonder why candidates with a murky past get elected? The electorate has become an accomplice to all the sleaze as they are prepared to sell their conscience for money. There are lone sparrows with a higher conscience out there but can we really transform politics or the country for the better with this kind of rot?

* From a legal perspective, what would amount to political misconduct?

An act of misconduct can either amount to a criminal offence or be considered immoral. The Criminal Code lists out all the offences for which any citizen, including a politician, may be prosecuted. But who would dare investigate a politician of the majority in the present political climate? If the investigative agencies are perceived to be at the beck and call of the government, it's because they are quick to arrest anyone against whom a complaint has been made by a Minister or a Member of Parliament of the majority, but do not show the same zeal when they have to deal with offences allegedly committed by ministers, politicians of the majority or their stooges.

* Parliamentary self-regulation and a code of con-

duct in the UK did not deter some MPs, including senior ministers, abusing their official allowances (under the Second-home Allowance Scheme), as revealed by the Daily Telegraph in May 2009. Can self-regulation and a code of conduct work here? Or would it require instead a legal deterrence?

No government, and least of all the present one, can be expected to ever come up with a binding code of conduct for politicians. A code of conduct has no force of law and in case of breach it is up to the leader of the party to which the defaulting politician belongs to take appropriate action. In spite of serious allegations levelled against him, it took quite a long time for the former Minister of Commerce to step down or made to step down.

The legal deterrence would require a solid and comprehensive legislation. Who will bell the cat?

* Even if there have been abuses by British MPs, the Recall of MPs Act 2015 allows a recall petition to be held if a MP in the UK did certain wrongdoings. On 1 May 2019, Fiona Onasanya became the first MP to be removed from office after a successful recall petition. Recall elections are also provided for in a small number of countries including the United States, Peru, Ecuador, and Japan. Can we imagine Mauritian politicians, across the political spectrum, legislate in that direction?

When he was in the opposition, one senior minister in the present government was denouncing the political culture that allowed a Member of Parliament to stay put in spite of his misconduct... until he is sanctioned, if at all, by the electorate. Today as a senior minister that idea would barely ruffle his mind. No government would dare come up with a law on the recall of MPs. No government will risk the holding of a by-election unless the circumstances so require. So why provoke the anger of an errant member or the risk of a by-election?

“Who watches the watchman? Good question. The President of the Republic, who is supposed to be above politics, could, if he is not doing it, call the Prime Minister to order. After all, under the Constitution the President must uphold the rule of law. We see the rule of law being trampled in so many instances. Is the President doing anything about it?”

* As at present, does the law in Mauritius provide for disciplinary measures in cases of misconduct by politicians, in particular by government ministers?

The answer is NO. A Member of Parliament may resign or asked to resign if he has been convicted of an offence.

* Despite more civil society and media oversight efforts, abuse and scandals persist. Could it be said that the legal arsenal in Mauritius is lacking or deficient in bringing to book errant politicians, thus the occurrence of numerous scandals these last decades?

The legal arsenal is there but there is no political will to apply it. The law enforcement authorities have become subservient to any regime in place especially the current one. If they do nothing, what can you expect?

* What are the options available if the investigative agencies drag their feet or simply fail to fulfil their duties as per their mandates?

There is no option. What can the Director of Public Prosecutions do if a police file does not land on his table? What can a complainant do if the police refuses to register his complaint or takes a hell of a time to investigate? What is happening to all the files involving members of government at ICAC? It would seem nothing will happen under the current system.

* Centuries ago, Roman poet Juvenal asked: “Who watches the watchman?” It would seem that this question still does not have a fully satisfactory answer. Is there an effective answer to that question today?

Who watches the watchman? Good question. The President of the Republic, who is supposed to be above politics, could, if he is not doing it, call the Prime Minister to order. After all, under the Constitution the President must uphold the rule of law. We see the rule of law being trampled in so many instances. Is the President doing anything about it?

In Parliament, backbenchers are supposed to keep watch on the Executive. Instead, all the backbenchers are simply pouring insults on the opposition and heaping praise on the Prime Minister in the manner North Koreans do towards their leader. As for the electorate, the electors have simply bartered their votes for some money or other advantage.

The only ray hope is the opposition. But the opposition's voice is stifled by a Speaker. The other day he allowed a minister to read out the medical details of a deceased person in blatant breach of the law on medical confidentiality and the privacy of the deceased!

* Should we therefore conclude that the system can be rendered ineffective, if required, to defeat the cause of justice?

The system is already ineffective. Justice has become a one-way traffic in many instances. Politicians of the majority are reigning supreme in the field of justice with the help and connivance of the authorities and their blind stooges.

PROOF

Prosecution of predators who commit sexual abuse against women and children will no longer be shackled with illogical and unnecessary constraints that have made obtaining a conviction in such cases far too arduous and unpredictable



Anil Madan

On July 9, 2021, the Appeals Court of Massachusetts handed down an opinion that is likely to be heralded as one of the most significant advances in American jurisprudence in the prosecution of predators who commit sexual abuse against women and children. From now on, the prosecutors in such cases will no longer be shackled with illogical and unnecessary constraints that have made obtaining a conviction in such cases far too arduous and unpredictable.

No, this change does not reduce the requirement of proof of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. That familiar burden of proof remains intact. Even so, the change represents welcome progress in erasing antediluvian thinking.

Before we get to the ruling, consider that our national Constitution defines Treason against the United States and has this provision: "No Person shall be convicted of Treason unless on the Testimony of two Witnesses to the same overt Act, or on Confession in open Court." Note that an **out-of-court** "confession" does not count. One can understand that for a charge as serious as Treason, there is some level of corroboration sought as to an **overt act** — in fact, the **same overt act**.

In the case at hand, *Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. Colon*, the defendant was charged with a slew of sexual offenses against a minor under the age of 14. He was convicted of rape and indecent assault. The sordid details set out in the opinion of the Appeals Court do not bear repeating.

The principal point on appeal was the convicted defendant's challenge that the evidence was insufficient. The victim testified about the defendant's actions. At the time, she was thirteen.

The defendant argued on appeal that "there were no witnesses to the alleged assaults," "no physical evidence," "no medical or forensic evidence," and "no expert testimony."

The Appeals Court rejected this

attempt to undo the conviction. The language of Justice Rubin's opinion merits extended quotation:

"Notwithstanding the defendant's argument to the contrary, the *victim's testimony*, as credited by the jury and evidenced by their verdict, *suffices to support the defendant's convictions*. Surprisingly, the Commonwealth cites no case, nor have we found one, that simply states what we now hold: **The sworn testimony of the victim of a sexual assault, including rape, is evidence of the facts asserted.** The testifying victim is a witness. We reject the defendant's contention that corroborative, extrinsic, or forensic evidence, or expert or third-party witness testimony, is required to support a conviction of rape or sexual assault where the victim testified as a witness at the trial. Of course such evidence, if properly admitted, may corroborate the victim's testimony, but it is **not required** to sustain a conviction."

In short, what the Appeals Court emphasized is that the victim's testimony, which the jury found to be credible, was sufficient, standing alone, to support a finding beyond a reasonable doubt as to each of the convictions.

Although this case does not make new law, it clarifies the law in an unmistakable way. Again, Justice Rubin: "The idea that long infected our legal system that the victim's testimony in sexual assault and rape cases is less credible than the testimony of victims in cases involving other types of crimes — an idea that reflected nothing more than sexism and an unwillingness on the part of our courts to treat sexual crimes as the gravely serious matter that they are — has been rejected both by statute and by common law."

Justice Rubin also clarified some other points. It is not necessary in such cases that the victim produce evidence of a prompt contemporaneous complaint. And he cited an earlier Massachusetts case (which the US Supreme Court refused to review) stating that "the over-



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whelming body of current empirical studies, data, and other information establishes that it is not inherently 'natural' for the victim to confide in someone or to disclose, immediately following commission of the offense, that he or she was sexually assaulted," and rejecting "stereotypical assumptions to the effect that victims will immediately disclose a sexual assault and that the absence of a timely complaint suggests fabrication of the assault."

This case emphasizes that the old rule that the prosecution has to establish that a victim of sexual abuse made a "fresh complaint" is no longer the law.

In the earlier Massachusetts case, the Supreme Judicial Court of this Commonwealth explained: "Corroborative evidence, including 'first complaint' evidence, is of course still admissible, but it is permitted in order to overcome, not give voice to, the societal tendency to disbelieve sexual assault victims, and the prejudicial misperception that 'real' victims will promptly disclose a sexual attack. Its purpose is to blunt the force of juror bias, and where such evidence is introduced, the jury must now be instructed that sexual assault complainants may delay reporting the crime for a variety of reasons."

On related matters, the Massachusetts Rape Shield Law adopted in 1977

excludes evidence of the victim's past sexual conduct as a "defense" to a rape charge. Nor is evidence of a general reputation for unchastity any longer admissible as a defense. And it was only in 1998 that the legislature amended the law relating to charges of drugging with intent to stupefy or overpower a victim with intent of having sexual intercourse. Since then, such a charge can be proved with the testimony of only one witness only.

The concluding paragraph of Justice Rubin's opinion is also worth reading:

"Instead, today, two bedrock principles of our law are that alleged victims of sex crimes are to be treated equally with other alleged victims of crime with respect to credibility, and that those against whom such crimes may or have been perpetrated are fully worthy of legal protection. As *would* be true were this any other type of criminal case, therefore, the victim's testimony alone, believed as it was by the jury, suffices to support the defendant's convictions."

It is refreshing to read an appellate court opinion that is crafted with care and commonsense.

And it's about time.

Cheer...
Bwana

South Africa: Protests against arrest of former Prez turned into targeted attacks on Indian community

South Africa is witnessing worst episode of riots and violence in years triggered by the imprisonment of former President Jacob Zuma.

79-year-old Zuma was sentenced to 15 months in prison for contempt of court after he failed to appear in court to testify as part of a government inquiry probing allegations of corruption during his term as President from 2009 to 2018.

Reportedly, soon after he was taken into custody by the police, Zuma's supporters started a riot in his home province of KwaZulu-Natal. The violence further spread to other provinces like Mpumalanga, Gauteng, and Northern Cape. Major urban centres like Johannesburg and Durban also saw ransacking of warehouses and stores, reports *Swaraj*.

Mob of thousands could be seen plundering retail outlets, malls and even radio stations, as well as attacking public and private property. Experts believe that while Zuma's arrests acted as a the spark, the underlying cause of riots is poor economic situation further worsened by the pandemic. In 2020, South Africa witnessed its sharpest decline in annual GDP since 1946, with a contraction of 7% in the economy. Since then, lockdown and other restrictions have hampered recovery.

According to a WSJ report, unemployment stood at a record high of 32.6% in the first three months of 2021; and that more than 10 million people, nearly a sixth of the population, had experienced hunger over the past seven days, as per a survey conducted in March and April.

However, the violence also has racist undercurrents. In a televised address to the nation on Sunday, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa expressed concerns about the violence being ethnically based. He further said, "What we are witnessing now are opportunistic acts of criminality, with groups of people instigating chaos merely as a cover for looting and theft."



People throw stones at police as they attempt looting at Letsoho Shopping Centre in Katlehong, east of Johannesburg, South Africa, Monday, July 12, 2021. Pic - AP

Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Johannesburg - the areas affected by the rioting - all have a sizeable population of Indian expats. Reports are pouring in that the businesses owned by Indians and Indian-origin South Africans are being targeted by rioters.

Social media platforms also witnessed a wave of hateful posts against Indians in South Africa. The posts also incited violence against them, asking the rioters to specifically locate Indians and their properties and possessions. The association of Zuma with the Gupta brothers and their role in the corruption cases is being used as an excuse to target Indians.

"Let us not forget that Jacob Zuma sold our country to Indian monopoly capital (IMC)," a Twitter handle supporting ethnic violence wrote.

The tensions between Black community and the Indian community in South Africa is worsened by the socio-economic disparity and the racist rhetoric promoted by various groups and parties.

Even as media attention on the targeted attacks on Indian communities in South Africa remains low, several members have posted online their fears, reports *Swaraj*.

A TOI report quoted Zanele Khomo, chief growth officer at Durban Chamber of Commerce, as saying: "In Durban, we've had 16 billion rand worth of stolen stocks and damage to malls and retailers. More than a third of this would be Indian businesses."

As riots started spreading with no government control in sight, many Indian property-owners reportedly had to resort to self-defence, with their own arms and ammunition.

Social media users shared videos of Indian community allegedly wielding arms to protect their family members and properties.

The South African government was criticised by the social media users for not taking swift action against the rioters.

Crime Stoppers International VP, Yusuf Abramjee, tweeted on 12 July, "What is President Cyril Ramaphosa waiting for? Do they want more malls to burn? Do they want more looting? This lawlessness is not stopping. ACT!! The country is on fire."

On Wednesday (14 July), Indian External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr S Jaishankar spoke to his South African counterpart Dr Naledi Pandor regarding the safety of Indian expats amid riots.

In a tweet, the EAM informed that the South African side had assured that its government was doing "utmost to enforce law and order" and asserted that "early restoration of normalcy and peace was its overriding priority".

Till now, reportedly more than 70 lives have been lost to rioting, and more than 1,200 people have been arrested. South Africa's consumer goods regulatory body estimates that more than 800 shops have been plundered. South African government has now deployed 25,000 troops to assist police in quelling the week-long riots



Reports said that 319 Tbps means one can download 57,000 full-length movies in 1 second. Pic - i.ytimg.com

Downloading over 50,000 movies in a second: What Japan's 319 Tbps internet speed means

Japan's National Institute of Information and Communications Technology has reportedly set a new world record for world's fastest internet speed at 319 terabytes per second. This is almost double the last record of the fastest internet speed in the world held by researchers from the University College of London, reports Poulomi Ghosh of Hindustan Times. The speed was 178 Tbps.

What 319 terabytes per second mean:

- The full form of Tbps is terabytes per second. One terabyte means 1,000 gigabytes. One gigabyte is 1024 megabytes.
- According to a report of 2020, the highest mobile broadband speed was experienced in South Korea, which was around 100 Mbps (megabytes per second).

- The same report said Singapore had the highest fixed-line broadband speed, which was 2015 Mbps.
- Hong Kong, according to the report, had an internet speed of 210.73 Mbps and Romania had 194.47 Mbps speed.
- With 178 Tbps, the last-held record of the fastest internet speed, one can download entire Netflix in just one second, reports said. With almost double that speed, entire Netflix will be insufficient for 319 Tbps.
- Many reports said that 319 Tbps means one can download 57,000 full-length movies in 1 second or the entire library of Spotify in less than three seconds.
- Nasa's system runs at 400 gigabytes per second.

Bitcoin a climate calamity? UN experts see sustainable development in cryptocurrencies

In recent months, many people around the world have raised concerns about Bitcoin mining, an energy-intensive process that involves using powerful computers round the clock to solve complex mathematical problems. Citing environmental concerns, Tesla CEO Elon Musk announced that his company would no longer accept Bitcoin. This led to a collapse in Bitcoin's market value, which was earlier skyrocketing on the back of confidence shown by the same tech billionaire.

Tim Berners-Lee, who wrote the source code of the World Wide Web, described Bitcoin mining as "one of the most fundamentally pointless ways of using energy."

Why does the Bitcoin network require a staggering amount of energy?

Bitcoin is a decentralised digital currency that has no physical existence. New Bitcoins are brought into circulation as a reward for a process known as 'mining'. The proof of transaction in cryptocurrencies is not stored in a central database, rather stored in a block and recorded by a distributed network of miners, reports Hindustan Times.

The miners are rewarded with new Bitcoins for each block they mine successfully. Recording a block involves solving mathematical problems which get more complex with each mining. Over the years, the algorithms kept getting longer and more complex, requiring special computers with colossal processing powers to record the block.

Naturally, such processes are energy-extensive and often rely on electricity generated with fossil fuels, particularly coal. As per an estimate by the University of Cambridge, Bitcoin mining consumes more than 178 (TWh) annually.

What does the UN say?

The UN experts believe that cryptocurrencies could actually improve their stewardship of the environment. In a report last month, the United Nations said that transparency is one of the most useful aspects of cryptocurrencies and can provide a trusted record of transactions, especially in countries with weak institutions and high levels of corruption. The World Food Programme (WFP) has found that blockchain technology can help ensure that cash gets to those who need it most.

It could be also helpful in protecting the environment since it has been used as a tool to eliminate illegal fishing in the tuna industry. The UN experts believe that the technology could provide a transparent way to show how countries around the world are taking action to reduce their impact on the climate.

On the issue of power consumption, the UN noted that many players in the industry are working to address it by switching to a different method to verify transactions. According to the report, the Ethereum Foundation has said that the energy cost of each transaction could be cut by 99.95% by switching to a different method called Proof of Stake, or PoS.

How to become a space tourist and the cost

Space will soon become a place, not just for astronauts but also tourists who can book a flight to go to the edge of unknown and take experience of a lifetime. Two billionaires - Virgin Galactic's Richard Branson and Amazon founder Jeff Bezos are taking early strides to open up the frontier for space tourism.

While Branson successfully spent some time at the edge of the space, Bezos - through his other company Blue Origin - will undertake the journey on July 23.

The nearly 11-minute flight will see Blue Origin crossing the Karman Line, 100 kilometres above, from where the limit of the space starts and descend through a parachute to a desert in Texas, reports Amit Chaturvedi of Hindustan Times.

What will it take to become a space tourist?

Nothing much actually. The person interested to go to space should be in reasonable shape. Virgin Galactic has said that its training will last for five days during which the astronauts will learn how to make the most of time spent in microgravity, as well as how to be safe and comfortable during periods of high acceleration. The company will also keep aerospace medical experts on hand to offer advice and help and check pre-flight fitness.

Blue Origin, meanwhile, will teach the potential



Jeff Bezos, founder of Blue Origin, at New Shepard's West Texas launch facility. Pic - AFP

astronauts everything they need to know for the space visit. Though it has not listed the day-wise training schedule, Blue Origin expects the participants to be able to climb seven flights of stairs (the height of the launch tower) in under 90 seconds. It has also prescribed a height requirement between 5'0" and 110 pounds and 6'4" and 223 pounds.

What will be the cost?

This is the part which takes space tourism to select few. Virgin Galactic sold the initial tickets at \$200,000 to \$250,000 each. And it has warned that the price will increase in the future. The company has so far sold 600 tickets.

Blue Origin has so far not announced the price of its tickets.

For those looking for a cheaper option, Florida-based company Space Perspective is taking space tourists on its Spaceship Neptune - a balloon-shaped pressurised capsule - for \$125,000 a seat. However, the capsule will ascend only 19 miles - far from the boundary of space, and weightlessness. Still, 300 seats for 2024 have all been sold.

Taliban leadership says ready for a political solution in Afghanistan



Since the drawdown of US-led troops from Afghanistan began, the Taliban have overrun several districts. Pic - AFP

The Taliban's supreme leader said Sunday he "strenuously favours" a political settlement to the conflict in Afghanistan, even as the hardline Islamist movement pushes a sweeping offensive across the nation.

Hibatullah Akhundzada's announcement came as representatives of the insurgents and the Afghan government sat down for a new round of talks in Qatar, stirring dim hopes for a revival of long-stalled peace talks, reports AFP.

"In spite of the military gains and advances, the Islamic Emirate strenuously favours a political settlement in the country," Akhundzada said in a statement ahead of next week's Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha.

"Every opportunity for the establishment of an Islamic system, peace and security that presents itself will be made use of by the Islamic Emirate," he added.

"We fully assure neighbouring, regional and world countries that Afghanistan will not permit anyone to pose a security threat to any other country using our soil."

For months, the two sides have been meeting intermittently in the Qatari capital, but have achieved little if any notable success. The discussions appear to have lost momentum as the militants made enormous gains on the battlefield.

The head of the High Council for National Reconciliation Abdullah Abdullah said the two sides were to meet on Sunday evening, but ducked journalists' questions about a possible joint statement.

There were no signs of an imminent breakthrough.

Taliban leader Akhundzada said his group remained committed to forging a solution to end the war, but slammed the group's opponents for "wasting time".

The insurgents capitalised on the last stages of the withdrawal of US and other foreign troops from Afghanistan to launch a series of lightning offensives across the country.

The group is now believed to control roughly half of the nation's 400 districts, several important border crossings, and has laid siege to a string of vital provincial capitals.

A spokesman for the Afghan security forces said that pro-government fighters had conducted 244 operations, killing 967 "enemy" fighters -- including key commanders.

"We have recaptured 24 districts so far, our goal is to retake all the territories... We are ready to defend our country," Ajmal Omar Shinwari told reporters.

Compiled by D. Ramlallah

'Samriddhi' and 'Vikas'

Religion and the Role of Businesses



Arvind Saxena

Businesses can step in as agents of peace building and actively help in formulating long-term strategies to foster cross-cultural understanding

Are 'samriddhi' and 'vikas' synonyms? I heard a speaker on a recent TV show talk about the implication of choosing one over the other. While the import of the comment was lost in the large number of issues being tossed around in the loud debate, I thought it was necessary to pause and think about the observation.

A look at the dictionary clearly brings out the difference between the two.

Samriddhi means prosperity, abundance, strength, success, welfare and development. *Vikas*, on the other hand, focuses on expansion, progress and development. Both include development, but the quality of development is different. The latter is more macho - it is acquisitive, assertive, combative and competitive. It is something which can be compared, in measures like GDP, share value and personal wealth.

Samriddhi is more nuanced; it is difficult to measure but can be observed and sensed. The underlying element in the latter is harmony, equitable prosperity and development, not necessarily in money terms. So the question is what do we want for our nation - *Samriddhi* or *vikas*?

Like most commonly used indicators of *vikas*, GDP is a poor measure of development. It effectively hides the disparity in incomes and the growing gulf between the rich and the poor. It also does not take into account the availability of food, health, education, shelter, employment, sanitary working conditions, a degree of social security, human rights and a harmonious society where citizens can live in peace. These are the same citizens who send elected leaders to the legislatures to improve the quality of their lives and safeguard their interests in using the nation's resources, of which they are equal owners.

Unfortunately, since the early 1990s we have focussed only on 'vikas'. While this has undoubtedly lifted a very large number of our people above the poverty line, an equally large number of people have found their living standards pushed down during the same period. We lost organised employment opportunities, lost the voice of trade unions, lost our freedoms of privacy and questioning. This is jaundiced progress. It is the antithesis of *samriddhi*.

So how do we bring *samriddhi* to our nation? To start with we must keep things simple yet focussed. Refuse to get into legalese and semantics, and keep things intelligible for the common man. The first and obvious thing to do is to increase the size of the economic pie. Since the government cannot do this by itself, the corporate world will have to play its role.

The simple caveat, in this partnership, is total transparency and public audit of all their activities, to ensure equitable spread of wealth. Transparency builds legitimacy and there is growing evidence to show that good corporate governance adds to the shareholder value of a company.

The second thing is to enforce the rule of law and protect public institutions to maintain their autonomy and



“Secularists seem convinced that a policy of ignoring or marginalising religious believers and groups is a necessary requisite for unity. Yet it is a fallacy to think that religious diversity is always at odds with social cohesion. Religion is not a genie to be contained; it can actually be a powerful counterweight to narcissist, supremacist thinking and a force that unites, not necessarily divides. Its potential must be recognised, not feared...”

integrity. All such institutions should also be open to public questioning and subject to statutory oversight. Finally, we will need to look at social harmony as a determining factor in the overall wellbeing of the people.

Religion is a key determinant of not just social harmony but economic development too. A large number of studies from across the world have found some correlation between the economic development of a country and the predominance of religion in its social life.

A 2014 study by researchers in Georgetown University and Brigham Young University, for example, identified that freedom of belief is one of the vital factors that contribute to economic success. The study looked at the GDP of 143 countries and found that innovative strength was more than twice as likely in countries with low religious restrictions. The study noted:

“...religious hostilities and restrictions create climates that can drive away local and foreign investment, undermine sustainable development, and disrupt huge sectors of economies. Perhaps most significant for future economic growth... young entrepreneurs are pushed to take their talents elsewhere due to the instability associated with high and rising religious restrictions and hostilities.”

According to a study by Damian J. Ruck, R. Alexander Bentley and Daniel J. Lawson, published by the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences (2018), if India discards its religious beliefs that perpetuate caste and gender inequalities, it could more than double its per capita GDP growth of the last 60 years in half the time.

A question often asked is what is wrong if people are becoming more conscious of their religious identities? Why should anyone be afraid of this? The best answer is that such a development should become a cause for concern if

the assertion of a particular religious identity has a negative impact on others.

Secularists seem convinced that a policy of ignoring or marginalising religious believers and groups is a necessary requisite for unity. Yet it is a fallacy to think that religious diversity is always at odds with social cohesion. Religion is not a genie to be contained; it can actually be a powerful counterweight to narcissist, supremacist thinking and a force that unites, not necessarily divides. Its potential must be recognised, not feared.

The real problem, in my view, is not increased spirituality, which by itself would most certainly be a welcome development; rather, it is the shrinking space for religious freedom, expression and most importantly, tolerance.

Promoting tolerance at the community level is an area where intervention is required. The increasingly influential business community can play a vital role in rolling back the rising tide of intolerance.

It is a fact that no country can grow economically if it has to struggle with internal conflict, but the problem gets compounded when nations try to hide their poor socio-economic indicators

behind aggressive religiosity, often claiming that their economic progress is being hampered because their resources are being taken up in their fight to protect their religion.

Religion, however, need not always be viewed suspiciously or contemptuously. In a world where it has been hijacked by narrow interests, an unhealthy and unwarranted fear of religion is exactly what the zealots want. Everyone must avoid playing into their hands.

A country whose economy is not growing is bad news for the corporate world. Our business leaders have to understand that protecting religious freedom and promoting a culture of mutual respect and tolerance will help create a climate that is conducive to sustainable development. It is a *sine qua non* for generating long-term economic growth.

One of the ways business can influence the discourse is by articulating their opposition to intolerance and being proactive in discouraging religious confrontations. They can, nay must, step in as agents of peace building and actively help in formulating long-term strategies to foster cross-cultural understanding as part of their CSR initiatives.

Together with religious leaders, they can identify places that are susceptible to outbreaks of religious hostilities, and support programmes to encourage inter-faith dialogue, social harmony and justice. They need to wake up in their own 'mercantilist' interests and, of course, the interest of our country.

It is evident that 'materialistic and competitive *vikas*' cannot bring about 'egalitarian, just and harmonious *samriddhi*'. There are enough warning signs that we have to reconstruct our socio-economic development model before it is too late.

Arvind Saxena is a former Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) in India.

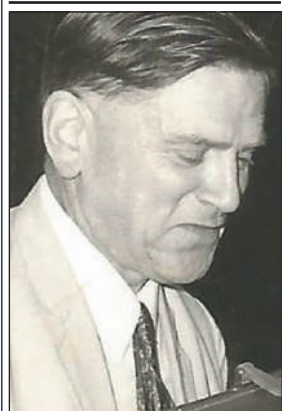
From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

4th Year No 168

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 25 October 1957

• To seem and not to be is throwing the shuttle without weaving. -- Proverb



Peter Ibbotson

Increase Civil Servants' Salaries

Rightly the Federation of Civil Service Unions is asking for higher wages for the members of its constituent unions. The higher-paid civil servants, those with over 10,000 rupees a year are having a salary increase, but

not so the lower and middle ranks of the Civil Service. And it is on just those ranks, with their low salaries, that the high cost of living bears most heavily and severely.

I have never made any secret of my belief that the first people to be considered when salary revision is being considered – revision upwards, of course – should be those with the lowest incomes. After all, their income covers a very bare minimum standard of life, and if the cost of living goes up – as it has steadily in Mauritius – they have hardly any margin to cover a rise in prices. Therefore, increases in salary scales subsequent to rises in the cost of living should go first of all to the lowest-paid employees.

If personal sacrifices is talked about, I must point out that Civil Servants in the lowest salary ranges are making permanent sacrifices in order to exist on their miserable wages. The highest-paid Civil Servants have room to make sacrifices; they can give up some or other luxuries to make their income go further, if necessary; but the lowest-paid workers cannot give anything up. Their whole salary has to be spent on rent and food and fares and clothes; and they cannot stop spending money on any of these necessities.

When personal sacrifice is talked about by the well-paid members of the community, I am reminded of a biting satirical cartoon I saw years ago. A ladder over the side of a ship had men clinging on every rung. The man on the lowest rung had his head just above water. One rung lower, and he would be submerged; hence, drowned. The man on the top rung was saying "Come on, we must all make equal sacrifice, we must all move one rung lower!"

So, with increases in the cost of living. A man with a salary of 10,000 or more rupees a year is cushioned against rising costs; he has long to wait before his income is overtaken by rising costs. But the man with 4,000 rupees a year is less well cushioned against rising costs; and the man with 1,500 rupees a year is less well cushioned still. It is notorious, too, that increased costs are never paralleled by increased incomes; wages always lag behind costs.

The Government decided not to consider a general revision of Civil Service salaries. At the same time, they decided to increase the salaries of the higher-paid Civil Servants. This decision has had a bad effect on the Civil Service in two ways: firstly, it has upset the balance of pay relativities established by the Ramage Report, and secondly it has disturbed staff relationships within the Civil Service. The Public Servants Association stressed these



two points in their petition to the Governor-in-Council in August last. The Colonial Secretary has, however, given an assurance that the Working Party (which has already begun its work), will concern itself with the revision of the wages and salaries of the lower-paid Civil Servants.

This should not take the Working Party long. It should be plain even to the meanest intelligence (and the members of the Working Party are far from being mean of intelligence) that a salary scale of Rs 1,140 by 60 to 1,380 (e.g., head gardeners) or a scale of Rs 1,200 by 60 to 1,620 – with an efficiency bar at Rs 1,440 – for messengers is not enough for a man to live on and bring up a family in decency.

A worker recently detailed his monthly budget in the *Mauritius Times*. With a wife and four children (a size of family common, indeed we can say typical, in Mauritius) he spent Rs 79.20 a month **for food alone!** He said: "*Nous ne dépensons pas comme les riches, mais comme de pauvres gens.*"

To prove this assertion, he added, "*Nous achetons les légumes chaque dimanche, cela coûte Rs 2.50 par semaine... Voulez-vous que nous mangeons du poisson frais une fois par semaine? Deux livres de poisson, ça fait Rs 2.60... Nous avons le droit de manger de la viande une fois par mois à Rs 2.25 la lb; 2 lbs., Rs 4.50.*"

Meat once a month; fresh fish once a week; milk in the family's tea – by no means luxuries; yet these add to the monthly food bill and bring it up to Rs 110.10 a month.

Add to this the cost of clothes; expenses in connection with illness and death; fares to and from work (and bus fares have just gone up all over the island); and it is easy to see that Rs 1,440 a year, or Rs 120 a month, are barely enough to sustain a family, with a meagre standard of existence. For food, vegetables and rice; with fish once a week and meat once a month! Such is the standard of existence which hundreds of lower-paid workers are compelled to endure in a colony which is officially prosperous.

Officially, of course, Mauritius is prosperous. We were

told so as recently as March 12, 1957, by the then Acting Colonial Secretary:

"It is appropriate here to refer to the extremely favourable financial position in which we find ourselves... Our reserves by June 30 next, the end of the current financial year, will probably be of the order of Rs 75 millions."

How can the Government justify, when its spokesman in the reply to the Address from the Throne boasts of a **"favourable financial position"** refusing an immediate all-round increase of Civil Service salaries? And how can they still expect lower-paid civil servants to swallow talk of financial stringency imposing the need for personal sacrifice by individual employees? Of course, they can't!

On the other hand, it was wrong for Hon Koenig to raise the matter of higher salaries for civil servants in the Legislative Council. The question of salary increases ought properly to be left to the appropriate negotiating body. It is important to build up a strong trade union movement; and it is not the duty of a MLC to side track the trade unions and the negotiating machinery, the Whitley Councils, by raising salary claims in Council. We all know why Hon Koenig made his speech in Council supporting the Federation of Civil Service Unions in their demand for a general revision of salaries.

Public opinion must be brought to bear in support of the civil servants' just claims for better wages. The civil servants have other complaints as well as low wages, however; and it is well to give some of them an airing too. The messengers, for example, are disturbed not only by their low wage scale but also by their work. Many messengers find that they are being given jobs to do by their superiors, especially by heads and sub-heads of departments, which have nothing to do with the public service. For example, government messengers find themselves sent on private errands for their superior officers. **"Run out and buy me a tin of tobacco"** says Monsieur X; and the *pion* has to obey although he knows full well that he is not there to do such tasks. Public money should not be spent on paying men to buy tobacco for a high-up; or again, the superior officer says to a messenger; **"Take this list of shopping and go out and buy me this, and this, and this. And when you have done so, take them to such-and-such a place"** – all work which has nothing at all to do with the public service.

The messengers themselves do not like this. Nor does the public – at least, not that section of the public is aware of such abuse of public servants' time. For it is an abuse to employ a public servant on private errands. And it is an abuse which ought to be stopped. It is easy to say that the remedy lies in the *pion's* own hands – he can refuse to perform private tasks in the Government's time; but if he did so, he would soon find himself victimised and out of a job, flung on to the pavement!

So, let us unite in demanding justice for the lower-paid civil servants; financial justice terminating in an increase of salary so that the balance of pay relativities is restored; additional justice in an extra increase after that, so that lower-paid workers can enjoy a better life than at present; and occupational justice in a definition of duties so that public servants cannot be employed any more on private tasks.

SMF at Ganga Talao: What a shame!



● Cont. from page 3

He goes on to explain how 'this year's NAIDOC (National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee) theme "Heal Country" asks all Australians to take stock of the ongoing threat and desecration of Indigenous heritage — including sacred, cultural trees. This heritage not only holds value for Indigenous Australians, but for all Australians as a cornerstone of our national identity.'

And how "Aboriginal ontology captures the relationship between all worldly and spiritual phenomena, and relationship to Country. Aboriginal people view the landscape and all things within it not as inanimate places or objects, but as sentient landscapes and entities with agency and metaphysical properties.

'Sacred trees are pivotal points in a nexus of inter-personal relationships between person-animal-plant, in person-person kinship, in identity and connection to place. They hold our ancestor stories; they are a direct link to our old people. Trees transcend simple economics and sit at the centre of the sacred — they are sentinels in ceremony, birthing and burials.'

Further, 'The common thread in Indigenous tree use is its sustainable practice. Rarely would a tree be felled purely for economic gain because its inherent value is realised for spiritual and broader ecosystem health.'

He goes on to write about the even more insidious of 'the threat of public indifference. It's a sickness that has spread through our nation's institutions and political systems. This sickness shows a lack of respect for Indigenous culture and our humanity. Its symptoms take the form of ongoing desecration of our heritage.'

Concluding that 'We must ask ourselves some tough questions' (as in his title), he asks further, 'Will your grandchildren have the same opportunity to visit and sit with sacred trees on Country — to listen to them, to speak to them and to appreciate them?'

And rightly emphasises: 'This is not just an Indigenous issue, or only about Indigenous struggle. Indigenous heritage is an asset all Australians can enjoy, celebrate, and advocate for greater protection and sustainable management. Once gone, it can never be replaced.'

If we apply this clear reasoning to the sacred landscape of Ganga Talao, we should all realise that it is not a place where one goes to gratify one's senses and exhibit baser instincts. Instead, it is one where there is a call from the divine to transcend them and to open our minds to the light of the spirit, and elevate ourselves beyond the mundane that pulls downwards.

The choice is ours. As Dr Abdul Kalam, former President of India, said, 'We live in an age of guided missiles and misguided minds.' Why not prefer that our minds be guided by and towards the light? The sooner this happens, the quicker the SMF can return to its barracks, and we thus regain our island's reputation.

RN Gopee



COMMUNIQUE

PAYMENT OF GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY ON ESSENTIAL GOODS (GSOG) TO ELIGIBLE TRADERS

- Further to the promulgation of the Consumer Protection (Maximum Price of Essential Goods) Regulations 2021 (Government Notice No. 158 of 2021), the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development has entrusted the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) the responsibility to effect payment of subsidy on a monthly basis on essential goods, specified in the GN 158 of 2021, to **eligible traders** at the rate mentioned in the communiqué issued by the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection on 10 July 2021. An extract of the communiqué related to the applicable rate is being reproduced hereunder:

Product	Subsidy (Rs) (i.e. retail price will be reduced by)	Unit of Measure
Canned Fish (Pilchard & Sardines)	2	Unit
Canned Tomatoes	6	Unit
Cheese	5	250g
Edible Oil	15	1 Litre
Margarine	10	500g
Milk Powder	15	1 kg
Pulses (dholl petit pois, dholl gram, lentilles noires, lentilles rouges, gros pois)	5	500g

- This measure shall come into operation on 12 July 2021.
- Eligible traders under this measure shall be:
 - any registered/licensed importer, manufacturer, wholesaler or distributor of the essential goods specified in the GN 158 of 2021, **who sells those goods directly to a retailer**;
 - any registered/licensed importer or manufacturer who also holds a Retailer Licence and sells the essential goods specified in the GN 158 of 2021 **directly to members of the general public**;
 - any licensed retailer who still has in his possession a remaining stock of essential goods as specified in GN 158 of 2021 on 12 July 2021.
- To benefit from the payment of the subsidy, eligible traders are required to **register with the MRA** through its website on **www.mra.mu**. The necessary online facility along with a registration guideline will be available as from **Monday 19 July 2021**.
- At the time of registration, the eligible traders under paragraph 3 shall also be required to provide the details of their unsold stock in their possession on 12 July 2021 of essential goods as specified in GN 158 of 2021 as per the template and in the registration guideline provided on the online platform.
- To benefit from the payment of the subsidy, registered eligible traders under paragraph 4 shall be required to submit their application **ONLINE** through MRA website **as from 01 August 2021**, as follows:
 - any licensed retailer referred to under paragraph 3 (iii) shall make their application as from 01 August 2021.
The application for payment of subsidy shall be made only **once** in respect of the unsold stock of essential goods which was still in his possession on 12 July 2021.
 - any importer, manufacturer, wholesaler or distributor referred to under paragraph 3 shall –
 - make the application for payment of the subsidy not later than 7 working days after the end of that month for all sales effected during the preceding month; and
 - be required to submit together with their application, the details of purchases and sales of essential goods to licensed retailers made during the preceding month as per the template and application guideline provided on the online platform.

Facilities for the submission of online applications for the payment of the subsidy under this measure, along with an application guideline, will be available on MRA website as from 01 August 2021.
- All payments of the subsidy will be credited directly in their respective bank accounts.**
- Copies of the GN 158 of 2021 and the communiqué issued by the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection on 10 July 2021 are available on the MRA Website.
- For further details, kindly visit the MRA website: **www.mra.mu** or phone the MRA Helpdesk on 207 6000 or Customs Department on 202 0500 during working hours.

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15 July 2021

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Will the opposition parties offer a credible and strong alternative to the majority in power?

• Cont. from page 4

Those who masterminded such division within the Opposition to privilege their party calculations rather than larger national interests have themselves to blame for the current predicament and they should be wary of barking again at the wrong trees. Like the MMM, the LP has its own leadership issue to address but should that not be left to the collective wisdom and workings of each party which know they have to maintain unity while paving the way for a future that acknowledges the generational and political aspirations of their cadres?

By inaugurating the Cabinet ministerial post of "Minister Mentor" for its late figure-head SAJ, the MSM has perhaps unwittingly opened up new avenues in the great game of political alliances which had traditionally been limited to the key posts of a largely honorary President, the PM, the Vice-PM and the deputy PMs. While the MSM no longer holds that Mentor card, could it turn into a game-changer for an Opposition looking for a common platform but seems to have many aspiring heads for political responsibilities in the national interest? That may be entirely speculative and certainly premature, but the possibilities opened up would certainly not have escaped the LP politburo or even the MMM.



“Unprincipled deals, fire-fighting and emergency procurements have eroded government credentials. The financial repercussions of the Betamax affair, the rupee devaluation, rising prices and the impression that government will make free and liberal use of our central bank reserves and pension funds, have piled the pressure on the MSM and its helpers. Whether the population sees an alternative building up depends largely on opposition parties putting their collective efforts into a credible and energized thrust both inside and outside Parliament...”

Restoring credibility

Leadership issues for 2024 can perhaps be shelved again but that is only part of the equation to restore credibility of a platform that aims to provide an alternative to the population. Credibility needs to be reinforced by a common agreement on key values, a manifest of key themes that would seal any future working arrangement and herald a new order and way of conducting business. At this juncture, and even nearer elections perhaps, nobody needs or reads a 100-page detailed manifesto, but, more efficaciously, the six or seven key themes that would drive a unified opposition and deliver the new political, management and institutional culture that large fractions of the population expect and demand. Each theme could be supported by deliverable pledges summed in one page and that should be achievable over the coming months.

Credibility, if the damaging temptations of divisive party politicking and jockeying are reasonably settled, will require reaching out to grassroots and the actual people, the electoral base supports who have been patiently keeping their frustrations in check. The consumer NGOs, trade unions and civil society can raise the tempo but calling for general elections at this early stage

could be unproductive and damaging. The horizons of municipal elections may be getting nearer and offer the opportunity for a joint Opposition platform to roll out its electoral machinery and reach out to those disenchanted with MSM policies and practices in office. That will be for electoral politburos to work out and sort out the inevitable pebbles if national interests are to retake the fore.

The population's judgment on how government handled the twin catastrophe, sanitary and economic, will be balanced by an equal query on what credible alternative the Opposition can provide. Unprincipled deals, fire-fighting and emergency procurements have eroded government credentials. The financial repercussions of the Betamax affair, the rupee devaluation, rising prices and the impression that government will make free and liberal use of our central bank reserves and pension funds, have piled the pressure on the MSM and its helpers.

Whether the population sees an alternative building up depends largely on Opposition parties putting their collective efforts into a credible and energized thrust both inside and outside Parliament.

Jan Arden

Lots of IMF programmes are never completed – because they're unworkable

• Cont. from page 2

Our explanation for our findings was that that over-ambitious programme designs were the result of intra-organisational bargaining within the IMF bureaucracy. While an area department within the IMF drafted the initial reform programme, functional departments used their amendment power to include policy conditions that they cared about, without due consideration of local circumstances, which led to overambitious programmes.

We are not the first to voice such concerns about the complexity of the IMF's programmes. The fund's own Independent Evaluation Office noted in relation to the 1994 programme of the Philippines:

The IMF was simultaneously pushing for reforms to the oil pricing system and to tax policy, each of which required congressional approval ... In the view of some staff, this may have been overambitious, exceeding the capacity of the political system to digest several major reforms at the same time.

The dependency trap

Our research also investigated financial market responses to programme interruptions. Using annual data for all developing countries, we found that investors rate a country lower when it had a permanent interruption of an IMF programme. Monthly data from 30 emerging market economies showed that a permanent interruption increased the cost of borrowing by governments by about 3%.

Programme interruptions lead to adverse financial market reactions. When investors lose confidence in a country's ability to undertake market-liberalising reform, they require higher interest rates on their loans.

Borrowing countries that failed to implement IMF programmes therefore faced the risk of more volatile capital flows and higher refinancing costs. Ultimately, higher financing costs made them even more dependent on the Fund, entrapping them in a cycle of dependency.

What to do about it

Our findings have important implications for theories of compliance as well as for policymaking in international organisations.

Given the detrimental effects of IMF programme interruptions for developing countries, it is puzzling that the reform of IMF conditionality is lagging.

The IMF has often blamed weak capacity and lack of "political will" for poor implementation. This predominant view was challenged by Horst Köhler, a former IMF managing director, who launched a "streamlining initiative". Its goal was to reduce the number of conditions.

But the number of conditions remained high. This is partly because of the rigid process by which new IMF programmes come about. When a country requests a programme, the draft agreement must be approved by all nine of the IMF's sector departments. This empowers departments to include their "pet issues", which results in overam-

bitious programmes.

An implication of our findings is a need for greater leadership to ensure policy coherence in IMF programmes. This is even more important right now with a record-high number of 80 new IMF lending arrangements due to the Covid-19 crisis in developing countries.

Under the dual Covid-19 health and economic crises, these programmes run the risk of having too many conditions. This may drive countries into financial disaster ... and back to the IMF again.

Bernhard Reinsberg, Lecturer in International Relations, University of Glasgow & Thomas Stubbs, Senior Lecturer in International Relations, Royal Holloway University of London

Alcooliques Anonymes

Boite postale 98 - Rose Hill
A tous les membres de A.A.

Alcooliques Anonymes (AA) tiendra son Assemblée générale annuelle le dimanche 8 août à la Grande Salle d'Oeuvre de l'Eglise Sacré Coeur de Beau Bassin de 9h30 à 12h00.

AGENDA

1. Adoption du procès-verbal de l'Assemblée générale annuelle de 2019-2020
 2. Rapport du Président
 3. Rapport du Trésorier
 4. Adoption du bilan financier de l'année (1er juillet 2020 au 30 juin 2021)
 5. Election du Conseil de Service 2021-2022
 6. TAQ
- Votre présence est indispensable.

Le Secrétaire



Don't mess with old people

George Phillips, an elderly man, from Meridian, Mississippi, was going up to bed, when his wife told him that he'd left the light on in the garden shed, which she could see from the bedroom window. George opened the back door to go turn off the light but saw that there were people in the shed stealing things. He phoned the police, who asked "Is someone in your house?"

He said: "No, but some people are breaking into my garden shed and stealing from me."

Then the police dispatcher said: "All patrols are busy. You should lock your doors and an officer will be along when one is available."

George said, "Okay."

He hung up the phone and counted to 30. Then he phoned the police again.

"Hello, I just called you a few seconds ago because there were people stealing things from my shed. Well, you don't have to worry about them now because I just shot them..." and he hung up.

Within five minutes, six police cars, a swat team, a helicopter, two fire trucks, a paramedic, and an ambulance showed up at the Phillips' residence and caught the burglars red-handed.

One of the policemen said to George, "I thought you said that you'd shot them!"

George said, "I thought you said there was nobody available!"

How the media treats doctors

A car driver is riding by a Zoo when he sees a little girl leaning into the lion's cage. Suddenly, the lion grabs her by the collar of her jacket and tries to pull her inside to slaughter her, under the eyes of her screaming parents.

The driver jumps off his car, runs to the cage and hits the lion square on the nose with a powerful punch. Whimpering from the pain, the lion jumps back letting go of the girl, and the man brings her to her terrified parents, who thank him endlessly.

A reporter who has watched the whole event asks him, 'Sir, this was the most gallant and brave thing I've seen a man do in my whole life. I'll make sure this won't go unnoticed. I'm a journalist, you know, and tomorrow's paper will have this story on the front page... So, what do you do for a living and what political affiliation do you have?'



The driver replies, 'I'm a doctor in private practice.'

The journalist leaves, and the following morning the newspaper reads on the front page:

"Doctor assaults African immigrant and steals his

lunch"

... and that pretty much sums up the media's approach to the doctors these days...

British PM Boris Johnson has been blessed with a baby boy from his girlfriend, during lockdown 29 Apr 2020.

Johnson and Johnson have come out with a single dose Covid vaccine...

They let out an ad featuring the PM with his kid and their vaccine's name in bold letters -

Johnson and Johnson - only one prick needed!

The bakery owner hires a young female shop assistant who liked to wear very short skirts and thongs.

One day a young man enters the store, glances at the shop assistant and at the loaves of bread behind the counter.

Noticing her short dress and the location of the raisin bread, he has a brilliant idea. "I'd like some raisin bread please," the man says.

The shop assistant nods and climbs up a ladder to reach the raisin bread located on the very top shelf.

The man standing almost directly beneath her is provided with an excellent view, just as he thought.

When she descends the ladder, he decides that he had better get two loaves.

As the shop assistant retrieves the second loaf of bread, one of the other male customers notices what's going on and requests his own loaf of raisin bread.

After many trips she is tired and irritated and begins to wonder, 'Why the unusual interest in the raisin bread?'

Atop the ladder one more time, she looks down and glares at the men standing below. Then, she notices an elderly man standing amongst the crowd.

Thinking that she can save herself another trip, she yells at the elderly man, "Is it raisin for you too?"

"No," he stammers, "But it's quiverin' a little!!!"

Life's Lessons

Anger & empty boats

A monk decides to meditate alone.

Away from his monastery, he takes a boat and goes to the middle of the lake, closes his eyes and begins to meditate.

After a few hours of unperturbed silence, he suddenly feels the blow of another boat hitting his. With his eyes still closed, he feels his anger rising and, when he opens his eyes, he is ready to

shout at the boatman who dared to disturb his meditation.

But when he opened his eyes, he saw that it was an empty boat, not tied up, floating in the middle of the lake... At that moment, the monk achieves self-realization and understands that anger is within him; it simply needs to hit an external object to provoke it.

From then on, whenever he meets someone who irritates or provokes his anger, he remembers: the other person is just an empty boat. Anger is inside me...

Wisdom

Magnifique et tellement vrai

-- Jacques Prévert

A peine la journée commencée et ... il est déjà six heures du soir.

A peine arrivé le lundi et c'est déjà vendredi... et le mois est déjà fini... et l'année est presque écoulée.

... et déjà 40, 50 ou 60 ans de nos vies sont passés.

... et on se rend compte qu'on a perdu nos parents, des amis.

... et on se rend compte qu'il est trop tard pour revenir en arrière...

Alors... Essayons malgré tout, de profiter à fond du temps qui nous reste...

N'arrêtons pas de chercher à avoir des activités qui nous plaisent...

Mettons de la couleur dans notre grisaille...

Sourions aux petites choses de la vie qui mettent du baume dans nos cœurs.

Et malgré tout, il nous faut continuer de profiter avec sérénité de ce temps qui

nous reste. Essayons d'éliminer les "après" ...

Je le fais après ... Je dirai après ... J'y penserai après ...

On laisse tout pour plus tard comme si "après" était à nous.

Car ce qu'on ne comprend pas, c'est que: après, le café se refroidit...

après, les priorités changent...

après, le charme est rompu...

après, la santé passe...

après, les enfants grandissent...

après, les parents vieillissent...

après, les promesses sont oubliées...

après, le jour devient la nuit...

après, la vie se termine...

Et après c'est souvent trop tard... Alors ne laissons rien pour plus tard...

Car en attendant toujours à plus tard, nous pouvons perdre les meilleurs moments,

les meilleures expériences, les meilleurs amis, la meilleure famille...

Le jour est aujourd'hui... L'instant est maintenant...

Nous ne sommes plus à l'âge où nous pouvons nous permettre de reporter à demain ce qui doit être fait tout de suite.



Your daily habits are key to a healthy immune system. Sleep is a necessity, not a luxury. The best thing you can do is make sure you're getting 7 to 8 hours of quality sleep every night. If you have trouble doing that sometimes, a short nap (of less than 30 minutes) can help make up some of the deficit. Tips from Brunilda Nazario, MD, of WebMD ...

Have a sleep routine

A bedtime ritual can get your body ready for sleep, which can help make sure you get enough ZZZs. Start by turning down the lights before bedtime to get your mind in a good place for sleep, then set up your pillows and pull down your bed sheets to prepare for bed. You might follow that with a bath or some chamomile tea to relax and wind down.

Be active

Make regular exercise a part of your life. A good goal is 30 to 45 minutes a day at least 5 days a week. There'll probably be days when you don't want to do it, but research shows that physical activity is good for your immune system. Whether it's taking a walk, riding a bike, or lifting weights, find something you like to do and find a time every day that works for you. That'll make it easier for exercise to become a healthy habit.

Find your special place

Healthy Living

9 ways doctors boost their immune systems

It won't surprise you to learn that they exercise regularly. They also practise these other habits

Stress can affect your immune system and your ability to fight off illness. You can help manage it by doing something you like or going somewhere that relaxes you. For example, getting outside and into nature can be a great way to stop, breathe, and rebalance yourself.

Be mindful

A lot of us think we're supposed to be busy all the time, but that's not really good for us. It can be hard to just shut it off, so you need to retrain yourself to think a different way. Try to be aware of when you're about to short-circuit. When it

comes, take a step back. There are apps for your phone or programs from various organizations that can help with that.

Eat right

A healthy, balanced diet gives your body the nutrients it needs to work the way it should. Your eating plan should include protein with each meal -- like fish, chicken, tofu, or beans. Get a variety of fruits and vegetables too. It's also important to stay away from fast food, because it can cause inflammation that can hamper your immune system.

Go with natural sources

If you feel like you're coming down with something, you don't need to take supplements to give your immune system a boost. Instead of vitamin C tablets, opt for tea with ginger or honey. As we get older, our ability to fight off germs can fade a bit. If you notice that you're getting colds more often, try getting more zinc into your diet. You can get it from things like seafood and beans.

Find your 'tribe'

Don't underestimate the power of connecting with others. Socializing with people you care about can lower stress and, in turn, be good for your immune system. A weekly catch-up with family and friends can do wonders for your mental and physical health.

Relationships

Things being single has taught me

My happiness is mine alone. I should be happy above anyone else because there will be many people who will want to be a part of my happiness for their benefit. You shouldn't have to endure that.

I can't force someone to like me. I shouldn't have to change myself to fit others' expectations and preferences. The right person will come along who will only want to be with the real, authentic you.

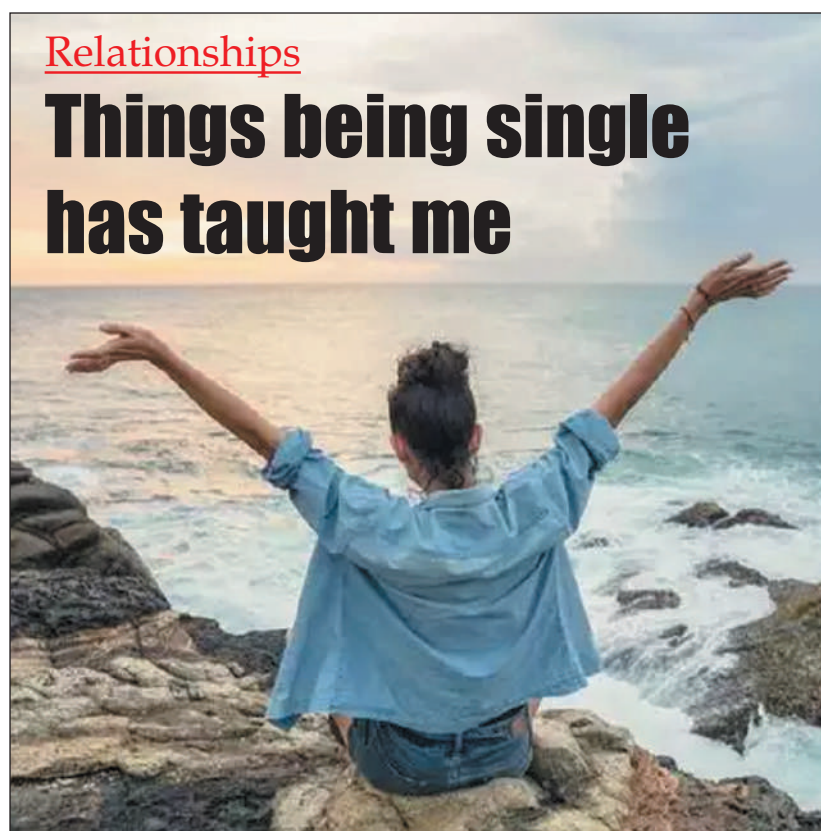
Independence is costly. Many relationships prevent you from being completely independent because you always have a partner beside you who will want to be dependent physically, emotionally or even financially.

Nobody should cross my boundaries. Setting healthy boundaries among people, even my closest friends is necessary to uphold what I really want to

share or not. Nobody should also tell you what I would prefer not to hear from them.

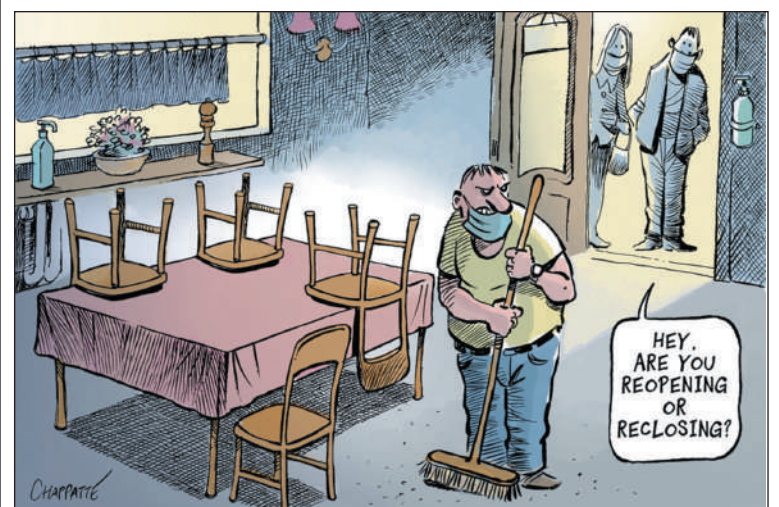
Sometimes, being single is just being compassionate for yourself. Who says only relationships make you feel amazing? Being single is an act of self-compassion as well.

I don't need to lower my standards to fit in order to find someone. Having expectations is simply what you know you deserve. There's no reason to lower your expectations only to find a compatible partner.



Being single is an altogether different vibe. Being accountable for your own happiness gives you a different feeling that sets you apart from others. However, you may feel miserable seeing others settling down or starting families. Relationships teach you a lot, but not more than staying single and being your own person. Here are some truths being single has taught me, as reproduced from TOI.

If someone criticises your dreams, they are not worth your time. You shouldn't have to let go of your dreams just because someone thinks the opposite of you.



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Bhumi Pednekar gained 30 kgs, lost 35 kgs to play Sandhya in Dum Laga Ke Haisha

Bhumi Pednekar's Sandhya is a realistic representation of a thinking woman in the 90s who has been taught to treat her husband like a God by a patriarchal society, but she is well aware that his place is no different than hers



When *Dum Laga Ke Haisha* released in 2015, it was a small-scale film that warmed up the audience's hearts and eventually became a success because of its simplicity. The story of Sandhya, played by Bhumi Pednekar, and Prem, played by Ayushmann Khurrana, was the age-old tale of an arranged marriage where the bride and groom don't get the opportunity to choose their partners, and have to just go along with whatever their parents say but it was in this world, that we got to meet the strong-willed Sandhya who won't just settle.

The headstrong, liberal Sandhya isn't shy of dancing at her own wedding and is well aware that society looks at women her size a little differently, but she loves herself regardless. Sandhya is educated, has definitive aspirations for her career so when she finds herself married to a man who can't get himself to look at her beyond her weight, she breaks down, but only in the privacy of her own room when no one can see her.

In the film, Sandhya is shown as the woman who tries hard to make her relationship work. From *satin nighties*, to

English films, she puts in all the groundwork to make a happy home for the newlyweds so when Prem berates her in public, her instinct tells her to slap him across the face, and so she does. Sandhya is a realistic representation of a thinking woman in the 90s who has been taught to treat her husband like a God by a patriarchal society, but she is well aware that his place is no different than hers.

Dum Laga Ke Haisha was Bhumi Pednekar's first outing in the movies. From what we have learnt since then, Bhumi chose to put on weight for her role and shed those kilos later. While we have heard such stories of actors molding their bodies for the role before, we have hardly heard a newcomer do this. This act in itself speaks volumes about



Bhumi's commitment to Sandhya and how she accepted her as it is.

The actor has famously said that she put on 30 kgs for the film and lost 35kgs in the span of four months after the film ended. She has famously said that when she was trying to gain weight, she would wake up to a butter chicken breakfast. "I'm in love with the film and have watched it innumerable times! There wasn't a moment's doubt about the role, I was being paid to do two things I love, eat and act!" Bhumi had said at that time.

On her weight loss and a healthy lifestyle, the actor told Vogue, "I've lost over 35kg, after gaining 30kg for a film. Since then, it's been a constant process of improvement—but I didn't do it by starving myself. I work really hard; it's become an active part of my routine. I like to mix it up—pilates, running, strength and weight training," she said.

"My weight never came into my way of happiness. I talk about it openly because people should know that it's a wrong approach to life," the actor has said.

Bhumi shared screen space with Ayushmann in this film and while this was before he became the next-big-thing in Bollywood, he was still a formidable co-actor. His work in *Vicky Donor* had made him the resident Delhi boy of Bollywood and it was no easy feat for a newcomer to claim attention while standing next to him. Not just that, she had to hold her ground alongside veteran actors like Seema Pahwa, Alka Amin, Sheeba Chaddha and Sanjay Mishra and she did that with utter comfort.

The scene where Sandhya has an altercation with Sheeba's character over the expiration date of food items, her sharp comebacks shine. Her casual approach to her mother's exaggerated concern makes you laugh. And her effort to make Prem and Sandhya fall in love with each other, makes you root for them.

Dum Laga Ke Haisha released in 2015 and since then, Bhumi has appeared in films like *Shubh Mangal Saavdhan*, *Lust Stories*, *Sonchiriya*, *Saand Ki Aankh*, *Bala*, *Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitare*, among others and while her work has been promising throughout, her debut has made a mark that will continue to shine for years.

Taapsee Pannu announces her production house Outsiders Films, thriller Blurr is first film on her slate

Taapsee Pannu has announced her first production Blurr under her banner Outsiders Films. It was, however, her boyfriend Mathias Boe who left people laughing with his comment

Bollywood actress Taapsee Pannu, who has been working in films for more than a decade, is all set to add another milestone in her career, as she launched her production house 'Outsiders Films'. Taapsee on Thursday took to her social media platforms to make the big announcement — her production house and the first film she will be producing.

Elated with the launch of the production house, Taapsee shares, "I am thrilled to embark upon this new journey and diversify my love for cinema with my production house 'Outsiders Films'. Having my business ventures, management comes naturally to me. Hence, I always thought of setting my own production house. The audience and the industry have given me a lot of support and love over the 11 years of my career. With Outsiders Films, I aim to give back to the industry and empower talent who are looking for a breakthrough and come with no background like me. Pranjal and I together look forward to opening doors

for new and fresh talents, both in front and behind the camera."

She also shared the name of her first film, *Blurr*. "And here's the first one of the slate The chill to match the thrill! #BLURR! @zeestudiosofficial, #OutsidersFilms & @echelonproduction come together for an edge of the seat thriller. Directed by @AjayBahl, starring @taapsee."

However, it was her boyfriend, former badminton player Mathias Boe who stole the show with his comment. "I'll do a movie for free. Hit like if you wanna see me in a Bollywood movie," he wrote.

Taapsee also shared a post on Instagram where she shared a picture of herself with her partner Pranjal Khandhdiya.

For her new venture, Taapsee has joined forces with Pranjal, who is a content creator and producer for over 20 years. He has been involved in the production of renowned films such as *Super 30*, *83*, *Soorma*, *Piku*, *Mubarakan*, *Azhar* and is also producing *Rashmi Rocket*, starring Taapsee.



Talking about naming the company, Taapsee shared, "Pranjal and I both come from humble backgrounds that's when the name Outsiders Films clicked with us. We aim to produce meaningful, entertaining, and quality content."

According to the actor's production team, Outsiders Films will be doing ground productions for all the projects they are involved in rather than just having mere profit-sharing arrangements. The first project from the production house will be a thriller, with Taapsee headlining it.

This is not the first time Taapsee has spread her wings into entrepreneurship, the 33-year-old actor also owns a wedding planning company and a badminton team called 7 Aces Pune. On the work front, Taapsee was last seen in Netflix's *Haseen Dilruba*. She is set for a string of releases with *Loop Lapeta*, *Rashmi Rocket*, *DooBaaraa* and *Shabaash Mithu*, a sports biopic on the Indian cricket team captain Mithali Raj.

When Ekta Kapoor changed the TV game in 2000: Her early collaborators spill the beans

On Ekta Kapoor's birthday, her early collaborators from Sameer Nair to Hiten Tejwani reveal the attributes that made her TV's queen



It all started in a garage with an idea about a sitcom about five girls and some borrowed money. The year was 1995 and a newly liberalised India was looking at an entertainment boom and Ekta Kapoor would be the queen of it. *Hum Paanch* would lead to *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi*, TV would lead to films and then OTT, but these were early days yet. Ruling the TV industry was perhaps a twinkle in her eye at that time, but as those who collaborated with Ekta back in those days, there was no doubting the resolve.

On Ekta Kapoor's birthday on June 7, Indian Express mapped her rise from a teenaged producer to the 'czarina of television' who changed the way India watched TV. She should also be credited to introduce K-dramas -- the daily shows, which, for numerous reasons, started with the letter K. Starting from *Kyunkii Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi*, the producer has iconic shows like *Kasautii Zindagii Kay*, *Kahiin Toh Hoga*, *Kaahin Kissii Roz* and more recently chartbusters like *Kundali Bhagya*, *Naagin*, *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein* to her credit. She not only gave the audience a plethora of content to consume but also became the epitome of success others would try to emulate.

The stars were aligned

A few years before Ekta struck gold on Star Plus with her repertoire of shows, the channel was in a joint venture with Zee to air a mix of Hindi and English shows. The hybrid programming was a non-starter and the channel could never pose a serious competition to the other major players, Zee TV or Sony TV. In 2009, as the partnership came to an end, and Sameer Nair took the lead of a new team. Ekta Kapoor had already produced *Hum Paanch* and did a soap in Tamil Nadu but she wasn't getting a chance to make a soap as most boxed her as a successful 'comedy' producer in Hindi market.

"Towards the end of 1999, Ekta

and Jeetendra came to meet me to discuss *Kyunki*, and honestly, I just fell in love with the idea the moment she narrated it to me. We decided to do a daily at prime time, which I think was the killer act," remembered Sameer Nair, while talking to indianexpress.com. Interestingly, the team was also secretly working on a biggie - *Kaun Banega Crorepati* with Amitabh Bachchan. Both these iconic shows launched on the same day, July 3, 2000, and changed the game for *Star Plus*, and television as a whole.

The media professional revealed that the team was initially a bit startled when they saw *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi*. However, they decided to go with it without even any feedback. "It had a very different cinematic language and Star, which had quite a westernised approach, had not done something like this. It was a hardcore *desi* format and I told the team, let's not meddle with it. We did not want to compare it with our earlier programming. Hence, the show went on air without any channel feedback and comment. And what a run it had," he shared with a smile.

Sameer Nair said that dailies being on prime time rather than afternoon slot also did the trick. Given the suc-

cess *Kyunki* brought to the channel, they worked rapidly with Ekta Kapoor, "In three months we launched *Kahani* and in another three months *Kasautii Zindagii Kay* was greenlighted." The entire prime time was filled up and KBC was shouldered on both sides by these soaps, which together created magic, making the channel an undisputed leader. "Amitabh Bachchan opened the gate of the fortress and Ekta joined in. Together they both have been a significant contributor to Star's journey," added Nair, who is currently serving as CEO of Applause Entertainment Limited.

Having worked with Ekta Kapoor as the Balaji group CEO, he concluded by saying that she continues to dominate the industry making some great shows.

Ekta knows the pulse of the audience

One of her collaborators from the early years, actor Hiten Tejwani shared that Ekta Kapoor managed to create magic with her shows because she understood what the audience wanted. "She trusted her artists and they just delivered," he said, adding that Ekta has a sixth sense when it comes to choosing the right talent to play the part.

Stating that he too believes they were destined to be a part of this revolution, Hiten Tejwani added that he feels they 'were at the right place, at the right time'. He said, "Thanks to her, I got to play some lovely characters, which are still remembered by people. The whole idea of creating something is that more people see it, and she aced it with her knowledge and the talent to understand viewers so well."

While Hiten was doing character roles in *Ghar Ek Mandir*, *Kabhi Sautan Kabhi Saheli* and *Kaahiin Kissii Roz*, he was asked to shoot the pilot for *Kutumb*. "The channel (Sony TV) immediately approved it and Ekta called me that we were ready to go on air. There was just no looking back for me then." The actor added that he too trusted her vision and would go to shoot for her projects without many questions. "Even when *Kutumb* was set to end, she called me and said that I have to report on *Kyunki* set the next day to play Karan. She said I would get more details on the set. That's the kind of equation we shared and I don't think that time will ever come back."

Post *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi*, Hiten has been part of Balaji Telefilms' shows like *Pavitra Rishta*, *Kasautii Zindagii Kay*, *KKoi Dil Mein Hai*, *Kkavyanjali*, *Karam Apnaa Apnaa*, and *Meri Aashiqui Tum Se Hi*.



Social media's an influencing factor but not the sole reason to cast actors, say celebs

TV stars discuss the importance of social media following in an actor's life, from influencing casting directors to affecting appeal, they say it has become important, but don't deny that talent, too, matters, reports Kavita Awaasthi of Hindustan Times.

Sharad Malhotra

To an extent, it does matter as people form an opinion based on your social media following. Fortunately, or unfortunately, such is the power and impact that many a times, casting for a project is also dependent and even influenced based on your social media popularity.

Brands prefer to collaborate with those who have a high number and good engagement ratio. If you have a million or more followers, the money too gets better. With some talent and a million followers, you might grab an opportunity of a lifetime.

Unfortunately, talent gets overshadowed and someone much more deserving could lose out on work, just because he/she might be less popular on social media compared to his contemporaries. Especially with the influx of digital shows casting agencies/directors/producers keep an eye on who's popular and influencing the social media space.

Dheeraj Dhoopar

Your work of art as an actor is of primary essence but having followers will definitely give an additional push. I won't be surprised if someday that becomes the most important factor for casting an actor.

I don't know if one should have more than millions of followers just to get good roles on TV but it is a good way to judge how popular one is. It also gives you a better insight towards your fans and followers.

Aly Goni

Earlier people used to know an actor by their character names, but now because of social media people know the actors better. While there's nothing wrong for the producers to want to cast someone, who is known by the millions, but I feel this criterion should be given the least preference as social media following doesn't guarantee good acting.

Social media popularity has nothing to do with an actor's skill. There are so many good actors who have a few followers or are away from social media. I don't think it's important to have more huge following to get good roles.

Hiten Tejwani

I have heard that producers and creative do check your social media to check what's happening in your life and see how many followers you have and cross check. I don't think social media followers affect chances. If an actor, fits the role, then you are cast and having a huge following, doesn't ensure a good role.

Adaa Khan

Of late, social media has been quite an in thing, not all but few producers do take your social media fan following into consideration. It does improve the chances of being cast. Though casting directors don't necessarily choose actors based on the number of followers on social media but they do gauge the popularity and visibility of the actor.

In case of travel collaborations and even regular collaboration, your social media is looked upon. Even for music videos, the casting agencies take your popularity into consideration. A million followers is not a compulsion to get a good role on TV, if you have the talent and you fit the part, you will get the role. Social media is one of the influencing factors but not the sole factor.

CINE 12

Mardi 6 juillet - 21.10

Get Out



MBC 1

Mercredi 21 juillet - 21.00

Dominion: The Last Star Warrior



MBC 2

Jeudi 22 juillet - 21.19

Hollywood Homicide



mardi 20 juillet

MBC 1

06.45 Local: Entrepreneurat Au...
10.15 Local: Artizan
10.30 Mag: Euromaxx
11.10 Tele: Soleil Levant
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Local: Les Grands Noms...
12.55 Local: Come On Let???
14.30 D.Anime: The Garfield Show
14.57 D.Anime: Trolls: En Avant...
15.19 D.Anime: Little Spirou
15.37 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie
15.39 D.Anime: Dinofroz
16.05 D.Anime: Petit Creux
16.18 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain
18.56 Local: Shravan Mass?
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.35 Local: An Eta Dalert
21.05 Film: Beyond White Space
23.10 Le Journal

MBC 2

07.00 DDI Live
08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3
10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4
12.30 Film: Haathi Mere Saathi
Starring: Rajesh Khanna, Tanuja
15.25 Serial: Aamhi Doghi
15.44 Serial: Bava Maradullu
16.08 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal
16.29 Serial: Silah
16.54 Serial: Imtihaan
17.16 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
17.34 Telugu - Premabhishekam
18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone
18.30 DDI Magazine
19.00 Journal Kreol
19.30 Coming U Graphics
20.04 Local: Programme In Tamil
20.30 Film: Bahurani
Star: Rekha, Rakesh Roshan, Utpal Dutt

MBC 3

06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa
06.39 Mag: Voa Connect
07.12 Mag: In Good Shape
07.47 Doc: Amazing Gardens
08.13 Mag: Future Mag
09.00 Educational Prog: Grade 5
11.30 Educational Prog: Grade 8
14.03 Doc: Tresors Oublies De La..
14.29 Doc: 360 GEO
15.21 Mag: Global 3000
15.47 Mag: Washington Forum
16.58 Mag: Eco@Africa
17.37 Mag: Voa Connecte
18.06 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto...
19.00 Student Support Prog Grade 7
19.31 Mag: Made In Germany
20.40 Local: News (English)
21.04 Doc: Snapshots
21.36 Doc: Charles Pathé & Léon
22.48 Local: Klip Seleksion
23.30 Doc: The World's Biggest...

Cine 12

01.27 Film: Sniper Special OPS
02.49 Serial: Shades Of Blue
03.31 Film: Auggie
05.33 Serial: Gone
06.40 Film: Ride/Le Grand Saut
09.00 Serial: Macgyver
09.48 Tele: Daniella
10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor
11.01 Serial: Shades Of Blue
12.00 Film: Auggie
13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava
14.17 Mag: Hollywood On Set
14.45 Film: Ride/Le Grand Saut
16.41 Serial: Macgyver
17.32 Serial: Gone
18.14 Tele: Daniella
19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor
20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones
20.30 Serial: Gone
21.15 Film: Get Out
22.54 Tele: Muneca Brava

Bollywood TV

08.00 Film: Bewafai
Starring Rajesh Khanna, Rajnikant, Pran
12.04 / 19.54 - Radha Krishna
12.26 / 20.11 - Chupke Chupke
12.48 / 20.32 - Mere Sai
13.09 / 21.09 - Agniphera
13.31 / 21.24 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai
13.53 / 21.59 - Zindagi Ki Mehek
15.04 / 22.25 - Sethji
15.33 Film: Namaste England
Star: Parineeti Chopra, Arjun Kapoor, Satish Kaushik
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Kundali Bhagya
18.52 Serial: Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein
19.14 Bhakharwadi
19.37 Siddhi Vinayak

mercredi 21 juillet

07.15 Local: Profil
08.00 Local: Palette
10.30 Mag: Check In
11.10 Tele: Soleil Levant
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
12.55 Mag: Green Touch
14.30 D.Anime: The Garfield Show
14.56 D.Anime: Astrology
15.18 D.Anime: Little Spirou
15.25 D.Anime: Rev & Roll
15.36 D.Anime: The Drakers
17.05 Serial: Superstore
17.35 Local: Zafan Nou Pei
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.20 Prod Indepen: Lottotech
21.20 Film: Dominion: The Last Star Warrior
Stars: Barry Lynch, Travis Hammer, Christine Joëlle

08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3
10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4
12.30 Film: Naukar Biwi Ka
15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek
15.25 Aamhi Doghi
15.47 Bava Maradallu
16.01 Apoorva Raagangal
16.27 Serial: Silah
16.47 Serial: Imtihaan
17.05 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
17.26 Serial: Kulvadhu
18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone
18.30 Mag: DDI Magazine
19.00 Journal Kreol
19.30 Mag: DDI Magazine
20.06 Programme In Marathi
20.30 Film: Sur Rahu De
Star: Spruha Joshi, anshuman vichare
22.15 DDI Live

06.00 Rev: The Global Auto...
06.26 Doc: Baby Business
06.52 Mag: Check In
07.18 Mag: Made In Germany
08.13 Doc: Les Artisans Du Rebut
09.00 Educational Prog: Grade 5
11.30 Educational Prog: Grade 8
14.00 Doc: Snapshots
14.26 Doc: Charles Pathé & Léon
15.47 Local Prod: Klip Seleksion
16.32 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto...
16.58 Doc: Baby Business
17.24 Mag: Check In
17.59 Mag: Motorweek
18.30 Mag: Vous Et Nous
19.00 Student Prog Grade 7
19.28 Doc: Garden Party
20.04 Mag: Tendance XXI
20.30 Local: News (English)
21.03 Doc: Comme Un Poisson...
22.00 Mag: Business Africa
22.21 Mag: Focus On Europe

01.34 Film: Get Out
03.11 Serial: Shades Of Blue
04.01 Film: Atlantic Rim
06.06 Serial: Gone
06.46 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive...
09.00 Serial: Macgyver
09.45 Tele: Daniella
10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor
11.01 Serial: Shades Of Blue
12.00 Film: Les Rêves De Lindsay
13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava
14.45 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive...
16.30 Serial: Macgyver
17.20 Serial: Gone
18.05 Tele: Daniella
19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor
20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones
20.30 Serial: Madam Secretary
21.15 Film: They Came To Cordura
23.13 Tele: Muneca Brava
23.55 Serial: Macgyver

08.00 Film: Namaste England
Star: Parineeti Chopra, Arjun Kapoor, Satish Kaushik
12.04 / 20.06 - Radha Krishna
12.24 / 20.26 - Chupke Chupke
12.44 / 20.02 - Mere Sai - Shrad...
13.10 / 20.46 - Agniphera
13.31 / 21.09 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai
13.50 / 21.50 - Zindagi Ki Mehek
14.54 / 21.46 - Sethji
15.23 Film: Rajdhani Express
Starring: Leander Paes, Sudhanshu Pandey, Priyanshu Chatterjee
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Kundali Bhagya
18.51 Ishaaron Ishaaron...
19.13 Bhakharwadi
19.36 Siddhi Vinayak

jeudi 22 juillet

06.00 Local: Klip Seleksion
06.45 Local: Sur Prise
07.10 Local: Aktiv
10.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today
11.00 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous?
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
12.25 Local: L'art Et La Matière
12.50 Local: Le Rendez Vous
14.30 D.Anime: The Garfield Show
15.18 D.Anime: Little Spirou
15.24 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis...
15.36 D.Anime: The Drakers
17.05 Serial: Superstore
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain
18.55 Local: Tirth Yatra
19.30 Le Journal
20.15 Film: Malaal
Stars: Meezaan Jafri, Sharmin Segal, Chinmayee Surve

08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3
10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4
12.30 Film: Aasoo Bane Angaarey
Starring Jeetendra, Madhuri Dixit, Deepak Tijori
15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek
15.25 Aamhi Doghi
15.47 Bava Maradallu
16.01 Apoorva Raagangal
16.32 Serial: Silah
16.53 Serial: Imtihaan
17.12 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
17.29 Local: Amrit Vaani
17.39 Local: Bhajan Sandhya
18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone
18.30 Serial: Ghar Pahucha Da...
19.00 Journal Kreol
19.30 Mag: DDI Magazine
20.15 Local: Les Grandes Lignes
20.36 Local: Retrovizer
21.19 Film: Hollywood Homicide

06.26 Mag: Vous Et Nous
07.19 Doc: Garden Party
07.49 Mag: Tendance XXI
08.11 Mag: Vue D'en Haut
09.00 Educational Prog: Grade 5
11.30 Educational Prog: Grade 8
15.21 Mag: Focus On Europe
15.47 Doc: Legendary Hotels
16.29 Mag: Motorweek
17.02 Mag: Vous Et Nous
17.25 Mag: Arts.21
18.00 Mag: Eco India
18.30 Mag: Shift - Living In The...
19.00 Student Prog Grade 7
19.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today
20.01 Mag: Science Ou Fiction
20.30 Local: News (English)
20.40 Doc: Sculptrices, Ni Muses...
21.32 Doc: The Wirecard Case
22.14 Doc: Manufacturing Igno...
22.57 Doc: The Faroes

01.48 Film: Kill Kane
03.03 Serial: Shades Of Blue
03.44 Film: They Came To Cordura
05.42 Tele: Muneca Brava
07.05 Film: Dominion: The Last Star
09.00 Serial: Macgyver
09.48 Tele: Daniella
10.36 Tele: Tanto Amor
11.00 Serial: Shades Of Blue
11.41 Film: The Came To Cordura
13.39 Tele: Muneca Brava
14.20 Mag: Hollywood On Set
14.45 Film: Dominion: The Last...
16.37 Serial: Macgyver
17.32 Serial: Madam Secretary
18.05 Tele: Daniella
19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor
20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones
20.30 Serial: Madam Secretary
21.14 Serial: Supercopier
22.04 Film: Virtual Revolution

08.00 Film: Rajdhani Express
Star: Leander Paes, Sudhanshu Pandey, Priyanshu Chatterjee
12.05 / 19.54 - Radha Krishna
12.22 / 20.11 - Chupke Chupke
12.48 / 20.32 - Mere Sai
13.07 / 21.09 - Agniphera
13.33 / 21.24 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai
13.48 / 21.50 - Zindagi Ki Mehek
14.09 / 21.46 - Naagin
15.02 / 21.59 - Sethji
14.55 / 22.52 - Mere Sai
15.39 Film: Pyare Mohan
18.00 Samachar
18.30 Kundali Bhagya
18.51 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein
19.14 Serial: Bhakharwadi
19.38 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak



Jeudi 22 juillet -

15.20

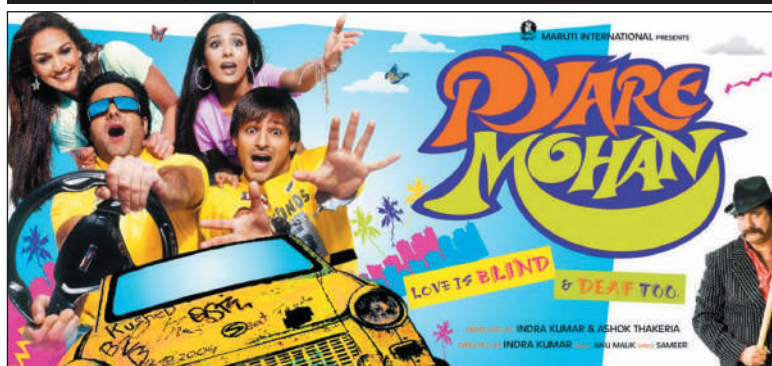
Star: Fardeen Khan, Vivek Oberoi, Esha Deol, Amrita Rao, Boman Irani



Jeudi 22 juillet -

20.15

Stars: Meezaan Jafri, Sharmin Segal, Chinmayee Surve



Why have South Africans been on a looting rampage? Research offers insights

An uncomfortable reality is that looting is perceived by the looters to be socially acceptable and is often encouraged and endorsed within social and community networks



Police enter a flooded mall that had been ransacked. Photo by Marco Longari/AFP via Getty Images

The looting of businesses, shopping centres and warehouses in South Africa over the past week, particularly in the KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces, has taken place at an unprecedented scale. It has affected both poor and middle-class areas. Private as well as government property has been damaged and destroyed. People have been injured and lives have been lost.

A variety of narratives have emerged in an effort to explain the looting frenzy. Some have accused die-hard supporters of former president Jacob Zuma of fuelling the unrest. Others have intimated that the looting is a consequence of state capture and the high level of criminality in South Africa.

There have been suggestions that the current disorder is akin to a rebellion of the poor brought about by acute food insecurity.

Research findings on looting, nonetheless, suggest that such phenomena are rarely caused by one thing. Rather, it's often the outcome of various factors.

Looting in South Africa has taken place intermittently for decades in the context of an ongoing crisis of poverty, inequality and unemployment. It occurred under apartheid and continued to take place after democracy 1994. But it has traditionally been largely confined to marginalised urban and peri-urban areas.

Incidents of looting have often been synonymous with outbreaks of xenophobic violence and service delivery protests. These have overwhelmingly happened in townships and informal settlements in which shops and businesses owned by foreign nationals have been plundered.

A study on xenophobic violence and the spaza shop sector by myself and researchers from the Safety and Violence Initiative showed that looting was often a highly localised phenomenon. That is,

foreign-owned spaza shops (small, informal retail outlets) were vulnerable to looting in communities where a combination of factors were at play. Among them were intense xenophobic attitudes, ineffective measures to regulate competition among shop owners, dysfunctional community leadership and the alienation of foreign shop owners.

We noted in our study the uncomfortable reality that a key driver of looting was that it was perceived by the looters to be socially acceptable. And it was often encouraged and endorsed within social and community networks.

Our findings echo those in a number of publications on looting in the US and England.

However, as underscored in our report, looting does not spontaneously emerge. It usually comes about due to instigation by influential individuals or groups who actively articulate that looting against specific targets is permissible and justifiable.

The drivers

In political violence literature, the process of active encouragement is often referred to as brokerage. A good example was during the storming of the Capitol building in Washington DC. Trump supporters were actively encouraged to engage in acts of sedition by leaders of extremist groups.

Brokerage has been a central feature of the current looting spree in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. Supporters of Jacob Zuma have been actively encouraging South Africans to engage in acts of violence and civil disobedience.

Individuals who are more prone to violence and criminal offending tend to initiate the looting. Ordinary people may then join. Acts of looting are often contagious and develop a life of their own. This is due

to group dynamics where acts of looting by some may encourage others.

In addition, collective disorder offers a degree of camouflage and impunity for criminal actions.

The absence of capable guardians, such as police and private security, can also contribute to looting by ordinary people.

Another important observation from the xenophobic violence study was that the looting of spaza shops tended to be more widespread in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. This was due to the greater prevalence of groups and networks willing to engage in various forms of collective violence. Action taken included protests, extortion, political assassinations, taxi conflicts and hostel violence. This mainly entails violence between groups of residents over control of hostels, which are often badly maintained.

Recent reports have suggested that groups and networks like this have contributed to igniting and accelerating the present spate of looting.

The intensity of the ongoing looting in parts of KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng signifies a convergence of brokerage, an upsurge in attitudes that looting is socially allowable, and a willingness of certain pro-violence groups and networks to actively facilitate looting across the two provinces.

But these factors don't adequately account for the significant shift of the looting into middle class retail areas and commercial properties.

The grand scale and bold nature of suggests well-resourced "hidden hands" that have expertise in provoking and instigating civil disorder.

Poor state of security

A report published in December 2018 revealed deeply troubling findings about state security in South Africa. The report was drawn up by the high-level review panel on the country's State Security Agency.

In particular, it showed that elements within the intelligence services at the time had access to large sums of money and had not only fuelled political factionalism but had engaged in sophisticated "dirty tricks" operations against governing party factions aligned to President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The police minister announced on Wednesday that former intelligence operatives and Zuma loyalists, some of whom may still be on the State Security Agency payroll, were under investigation for possibly instigating the looting and disorder.

**Guy Lamb, Criminologist/Lecturer,
Stellenbosch University**



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor

Humanity - We Are Family

We are human, we are family -- we all look at the same stars, we all laugh and cry, we all love.

When it comes to our families, we sometimes see only our differences. We see the way our parents cling to ideas we don't believe, or act in ways we try not to copy. We see how practical one of our siblings is and wonder how we can be from the same gene pool. Similarly, within the human family we see how different we are from each other, in ways ranging from gender and race to geographical location and religious beliefs. It is almost as if we think we are a different species sometimes. But the truth is, in our personal families as well as the human family, we really are the same.

A single mother of four living in Africa looks up at the same stars and moon that shine down on an elderly Frenchman in Paris. A Tibetan monk living in India, a newborn infant in China, and a young couple saying their marriage vows in Indiana all breathe the same air, by the same process. We have all been hurt and we have all cried. Each one of us knows how it feels to love someone dearly. No matter what our political views are, we all love to laugh. Regardless of how much or how little money we have, our hearts pump blood through our bodies in the same way. With all this in common, it is clear we are each individual members of the same family. We are human.

Acknowledging how close we all are, instead of clinging to what separates us, enables us to feel less alone in the world. Every person we meet, see, hear, or read about is a member of our family. We are truly not alone. We also begin to see that we are perfectly capable of understanding and relating to people who, on the surface, may seem very different from us. This awareness prevents us from disconnecting from people on the other side of the tracks, and the other side of the world. We begin to understand that we must treat all people for what they are -- family.