

MAURITIUS TIMES

• "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever." -- Mahatma Gandhi



Interview Milan Meetarbhan
“When democracy is perverted for short-term political gains at a time of serious global crisis, we all apprehend an uncertain future”

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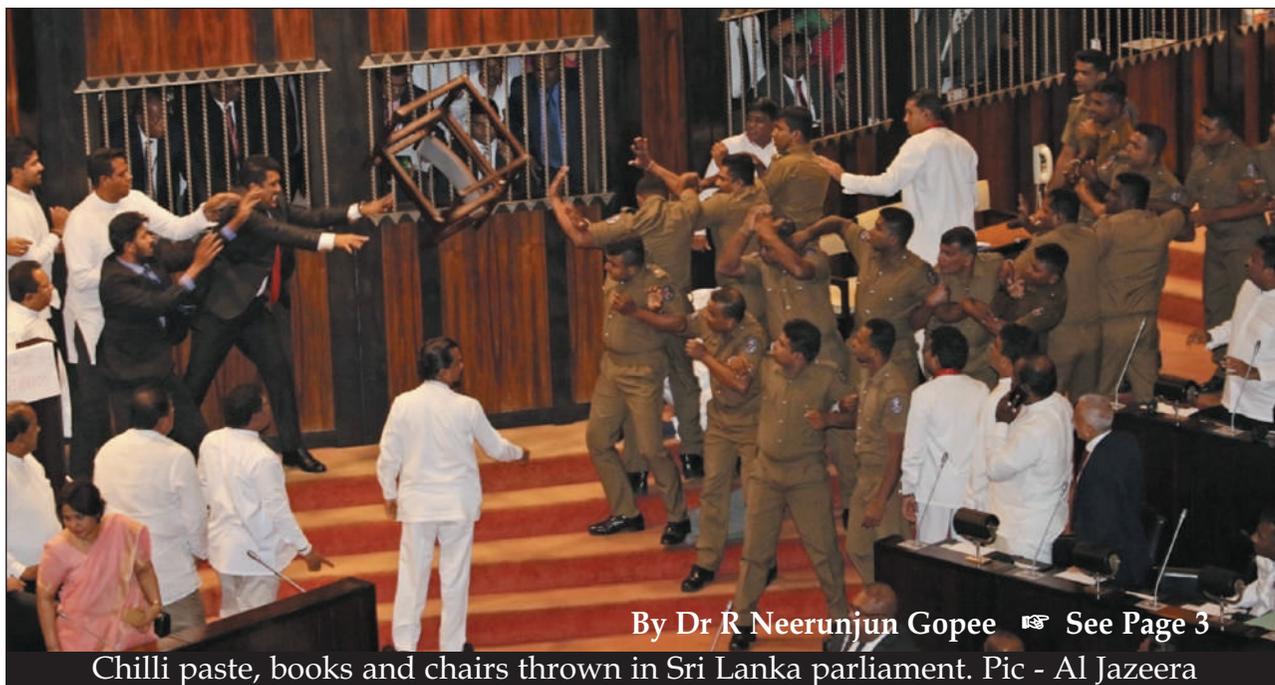
IPCC 2021 Report: 'Code Red for Humanity'

The world needs to act now. This is not the time for half-hearted measures but bold and determinant actions

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Chilli paste, books and chairs thrown in Sri Lanka parliament. Pic - Al Jazeera

SARS-CoV-2 mutations

Why the virus might still have some tricks to pull

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The Hillcrest Flyover



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Accountability & Checks and Balances

The overarching feature of a functioning democracy is that it has an effective system of checks and balances in place. This system should, on paper at least, ensure that government and related public institutions are held accountable for decisions that they take and for the consequences of these decisions. In principle these must be in the national interest, although that can be a very loose definition, which makes it harder to pinpoint blame and sanction those responsible for serious or obvious deviations.

However, as governments change, we seem to see almost the same pattern follow on, despite the electoral promises for remedial changes and doing things differently. The renewed pledges for transparency, meritocracy and competence soon give way to the old habits of anointing cronies, political sponsors and agents and so on. Raising of voices through the media and other forums are usually not enough to make a dent, and the government can forge on regardless.

The scenario seems to be repeating itself. The government seems to be prioritising the same game others have played in the past, taking it to another level. So, we appear to be heading again to politics of old - not on the deeper issues with which the country should be really concerned.

Looking back at the history of the country, there have been politicians with exceptional commitment to a better future for the country and its citizens. Whatever they have achieved has come through the independence and strength of public institutions implementing policies fairly and squarely in the 'public interest'.

Conscientious responsible officers and sterling qualities of governance - much before the notion of good governance gained popular currency - made everybody accountable. Parliamenterians used all their skills to dig out facts which mattered from the government side and expose abuses, if any. The Director of Audit was awaited every year with some trepidation by all officials dealing with public funds.

The media played its part against what they considered went against the public interest and was abusive. The judiciary, on its part, always stood as a last rampart against political abuse. Thus, even in the absence of a Freedom of Information Act, mechanisms existed to make decision-takers accountable.

Thereafter, politicians must have figured out that strong public institutions stood in the way of their being able to do as they wished. Not only were public office holders brutally disempowered by changing the Constitution to make them liable to be fired if they did not comply to the diktats of politicians in charge. The public institutions were themselves overwhelmed by sundry political appointees who were ever ready to do the bidding of the politicians. Those with nomenklatura links or willing to toe the line of master puppeteers rose through the ranks.

The question that arises is: can a system of checks and balances operate to prevent costly and harmful decisions being so endorsed and executed for the benefit of a few? The same who ensure that every contractual agreement these days seem to have a mandatory Confidentiality clause, from Liverpool Football Club to generous dishings of public monies by the Central Bank through its MIC undertaking?

People will make a hue and cry against irrational and abusive decisions if they know about them before it is too late. Moreover, such a hue and cry will be effective provided public instances deal with reported cases of abuse without delay, and stop a *mala fide* proposed action before contractual relations are firmly fixed for acquiring or disposing of assets by the public concerns.

Such proactive impartial moves would even have prevented many commercial decisions which have negative implications for the country and public undertakings but benefit those pulling the strings from behind. The country cannot afford to acknowledge wrong decisions taken, only to finally have taxpayers assume the costs thereof well after the real authors guilty of the guided misdeeds have departed the scene for good. Betamax, Britam, Safe City, Emergency Procurements in 2020 in the context of the Covid pandemic, amongst others, will have cost the taxpayers billions, and this cannot go on.

A redress mechanism that will act in real time to prevent abuses is very much needed. Those in office, despite their electoral prose in 2014 and again in 2019, have found it far better to run the system to their advantage. NGOs, the media and civil society can yearn for changed governance and accountability, but will those expectations be taken on board by those in the political class waiting in the wings?

The Conversation

SARS-CoV-2 mutations

Why the virus might still have some tricks to pull



Mutations are the ultimate engine of evolution and provide the raw material for natural selection to act. Some mutations are helpful for an organism and can become widespread in the species. Others are harmful or have little consequence. They arise due to errors when the genome is copied as a virus replicates, resulting in a single "base" (letter) being replaced with another.

The SARS-CoV-2 genome is made up of 30,000 individual bases. The rate at which mutations arise is typically expressed as the probability that any individual base will be erroneously replaced when the genome replicates. According to recent experimental evidence - which is yet to be published in a scientific journal - this is around three in a million.

Given this rate, we can ask how many mutations might arise every time someone gets infected. By multiplying 30,000 bases with the probability of 3/1,000,000, we get a total of about 0.1 mutations each time the genome replicates.

Peak infection lasts five to seven days, during which time the virus typically completes three to seven "replication cycles" (the steps from initial attachment to a host cell to the generation and release of newly synthesised virus particles). Five replication cycles would result in around 0.5 mutations (5x0.1), or one new mutation for every two people infected.

A different approach is to use genome sequence data. As each genome sequence is taken from a different infected person, this data allows us to calculate the rate at which mutations have accumulated in the global viral population, rather than within a single infection. By comparing the sequence data to an original "reference" genome (a very early virus genome) we can count how many mutations have accumulated in each genome. We can then see how quickly the number of mutations increases over time.

This tells us that the global population of viruses accumulates an average of about one mutation every two weeks - a rate similar to that within a single infected person.

To put this mutation rate into context, human genomes experience the equivalent of around 0.05 mutations every two weeks. On the face of it, this is not so different from SARS-CoV-2 (only 20 times slower), until you consider that the human genome is 100,000 times larger, making the rate of mutation *per base* to be around two million times faster in the virus than in humans.

Ed Feil, Professor of Microbial Evolution, University of Bath

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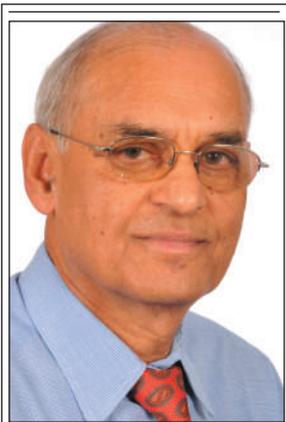


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Temple of democracy - a misnomer?



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

The latest incident in the National Assembly has prompted such a widespread response in the media that it would be superfluous to make any further comment. It was a confrontation between the Speaker and a member of the Opposition, whereby the former made what is perceived to be an unacceptable remark about a facial skin condition the member suffers from.

It would seem that, according to the Hansard, the Speaker's remarks were a riposte to the member's own repetitive one directed at him, namely, *'tonne boire'* ('you're drunk') as pointed out by one lady commentator on a radio programme last Sunday. She also added out that many a time the 'honourable members' behave like schoolchildren, carrying out conversations while another member or leader is standing and reading out an answer, and this causes disturbance and irritation to the chair, inviting rebukes or calls to order.

Be that as it may, it is a fact that there have been unpleasant verbal exchanges in the past as well, using language that does not befit the sacredness one associates with a temple, besides threats of physical violence (*'tombe dehors'*) that have also marred the atmosphere of the 'august' house.

However, a search online leads to a Wikipedia article about 'Legislative violence,' which reveals that there are antecedents galore. Thus, we read: 'Legislative violence broadly refers to any violent clashes between members of a legislature, often physically, inside the legislature and triggered by divisive issues and tight votes. Such clashes have occurred in many countries across time, and notable incidents still regularly occur.'

Although the sight of brawling politicians is incongruous with a legislature's stately image, its occupants, like in any other workplace, are still prone to stress and anger. The confrontational nature of politics, regardless of their location, and the high stakes involved often add to the simmering tensions.'

Personal respect and democracy go together. Only then can we continue to refer to the Parliament as a 'temple' of democracy



Congressional Reps were "nearly assassinated" during Capitol riots. Pic - Gothamist

“Legislative violence broadly refers to any violent clashes between members of a legislature, often physically, inside the legislature and triggered by divisive issues and tight votes. Such clashes have occurred in many countries across time, and notable incidents still regularly occur. Although the sight of brawling politicians is incongruous with a legislature's stately image, its occupants, like in any other workplace, are still prone to stress and anger. The confrontational nature of politics, regardless of their location, and the high stakes involved often add to the simmering tensions.”

Further, US Congressman Galusha A. Grow, no stranger to legislative violence, described the precursors thus:

'Crowd some hundreds of men together on a hot afternoon or night; fill them with the fire of partisan ardor; perplex them with doubt as to the personal gain or loss that may follow their vote on the question at issue, and instill them with envy of, and ill-will toward, their fellows, and you have abundant material for a row. All that is needed is an excuse, and that is too often found' - (Grow, Galusha A. (1900). "The Last Days of the Duello in Congress". *The Saturday Evening Post*).

After a mob forced their way into and attacked the Capitol in the pre-electoral period last year, killing one

policeman, the Speaker Nancy Pelosi said: 'Each day, when members enter the Capitol, this temple of democracy, we will remember his sacrifice.'

Verbal violence is one end of the spectrum which 'simmering tensions' leads to, the extreme being physical violence, ranging from throwing of objects such as paper and books of rules to water bottles, and even fist fights! The Wikipedia article, which covers 51 countries, gives examples of such 'brawls' that are undoubtedly a national dishonour.

Closer to us, in India, the Monsoon session came to an abrupt end two days ago with both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha being adjourned *sine die* two days ahead of schedule. Why? Because 'Opposition MPs climbed on the officials' table, waved black cloth and threw files when the Rajya Sabha began a discussion on farmers' protest against new reform laws. Several MPs stood on a table, while others crowded around it shouting anti-government slogans.'

This made the Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu break down as he expressed deep anguish, and who said he couldn't sleep because of the sacrilege in Parliament which he regarded as the 'temple of democracy.' He appealed 'to the collective consciousness of the House to seriously reflect on what happened yesterday and explore remedies', because 'failure to do so would certainly render our parliamentary democracy irrelevant,' and 'each member had to make a choice to be either the best parliamentarian or the worst disruptor.'

It is instructive to quote this extract from 'Feet of Clay: Threat to the Temples of Democracy' by F.F. Ridley (*Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 48, Issue 4, October 1995):

'Democracy also depends on trust in those who govern us, going beyond the government to cover the political establishment as a whole, government and opposition, leaders and back benchers. The growing public mistrust of politicians which Britain and other countries face today is not just functional, related to the seemingly inevitable failure to assure economic growth and security of employment or law and order at home and peace abroad; it is also personal. Without personal respect for its political establishment, democracy is undermined. Everyone sees enemies in the political establishment; that is proper so long as respect remains.'

Personal respect and democracy go together. Only then can we continue to refer to the Parliament as a 'temple' of democracy. Otherwise, it's a misnomer.



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Mrinal Roy

IPCC 2021 Report: 'Code Red for Humanity'

The world needs to act now. This is not the time for half-hearted measures but bold and determinant actions



“The headlines over the recent weeks have been monopolized by climate change related disasters. Widespread forest fires burning millions of acres in Oregon and California in the United States, Siberia in Russia, Turkey, Greece and Algeria, devastating and deadly flooding in Germany, Belgium and China, extreme temperatures in Canada and Finland, countries known for their cool climate. The Arctic lost an area of sea ice equivalent to the size of Florida between June and mid-July 2021...”

Our homeland, planet Earth faces an emergency situation. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2021 report prepared by 234 scientists from 66 countries, released this week, is a damning indictment of irresponsible human activities which are causing unprecedented weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe. The report was approved last week by 195-member governments of the IPCC, through a virtual approval session that was held over two weeks starting on 26 July. Our planet is in distress. The world needs to act now.

The IPCC report points out that many of the changes observed in the climate are unprecedented in thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of years, and some of the adverse impacts such as continued sea level rise are already irreversible. It will not be reversible over hundreds to thousands of years, even after emissions fall. Despite the undertaking by 196 signatory countries of the December 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change to limit global warming to 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial (1850-1900) levels, some six years later the global average temperature is already about 1.2° Celsius warmer than the pre-industrial level.

Code red

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres warned that the IPCC report 'is a code red for humanity. The alarm bells sounded by the scientists are deafening and the evidence is irrefutable'.

According to the studies carried by the IPCC, there is an imminent risk of reaching or crossing the internationally-agreed temperature rise threshold of 1.5 degrees between 2021 and 2040 and most probably in the early 2030s. The world will probably reach or exceed 1.5 degrees C of warming within just the next two decades. However, the IPCC scientists say a catastrophe can be avoided if the world acts fast. There is hope that deep cuts in emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases, could quickly make air quality better and stabilise rising global temperatures.

The world would therefore urgently have to significantly cut down carbon emissions to limit world global temperature rise

to 1.5 degrees C, the temperature ceiling scientists say is necessary for preventing climate change related catastrophes. Past this critical temperature threshold every fraction of a degree of warming would cause disastrous and costly fallouts. In a scenario of unchecked high emissions of greenhouse gases, the world may warm by up to 5.7 degrees C by 2100, with catastrophic consequences for humanity and planet Earth.

In order to measure the gravity of the situation, it should be flagged that the world has not experienced global warming of more than 2.5°C for more than 3 million years.

The damage is already done. Even if carbon emissions are drastically reduced, global warming is now part of the climate system. The world will thus have to face more calamitous and destructive extreme weather events than we are experiencing today. Future generations will have to adapt to these extreme weather conditions

Unprecedented

The signs are not good. The IPCC findings also highlight that 'human activities has warmed the climate at a rate that is unprecedented in at least the last 2000 years. They are the principal driver of many changes in snow and ice, oceans, atmosphere and land. In 2019, atmospheric CO₂ concentrations were higher than at any time in at least 2 million years and concentrations of methane and nitrous oxide were higher than at any time in the last 800,000 years.

Global surface temperature has increased faster since 1970 than in any other 50-year period over at least the last 2000 years. Temperatures during the most recent decade (2011–2020) exceed those of the most recent multi-century warm period, around 6500 years ago. Global mean sea level has risen faster since 1900, than over any preceding century in at least the last 3000 years.'

The headlines over the recent weeks

have been monopolized by climate change related disasters. Widespread forest fires burning millions of acres in Oregon and California in the United States, Siberia in Russia, Turkey, Greece and Algeria, devastating and deadly flooding in Germany, Belgium and China, extreme temperatures in Canada and Finland, countries known for their cool climate. The Arctic lost an area of sea ice equivalent to the size of Florida between June and mid-July 2021.

Saving our homeland

Saving planet Earth therefore necessarily means taking bold and drastic actions to substantially cut down emissions in the 2020s to limit global warming to 1.5 °C. The world also needs to 'redefine the way in which we use and produce energy, make and consume goods and services and manage our land'. Carbon capture and storage should be part of our arsenal of climate change mitigating strategies, Limiting the dangerous effects of climate change requires the world to reach net-zero CO₂ emissions by 2050 and make major cuts in non-CO₂ gases like methane.

The IPCC report shows that no region will be left untouched by the adverse impacts of climate change. Such disastrous climate change related events are expected to multiply and be more destructive. They will continue to affect livelihoods, agriculture, water systems and ecosystems. However, their enormous human and economic costs far outweigh the costs of urgent and timely action.

Any delay in adopting the urgent actions required will cause many of the dire consequences of climate change such as melting ice sheets, rising seas, species loss and more acidic oceans to become irreversible over time. These adverse fallouts will worsen as emissions increase.

Make or break

2020-30 will be the determinant decade to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C. If the world fails to drastically curb carbon emissions in the 2020s and reach zero CO₂

emissions by 2050, the target of limiting global warming to 1.5°C could get out of hand. The consequences faced by the world would as a result be far more disastrous than the havoc wreaked by the present extreme weather events.

The upshot is that governments across the world must, ahead of the COP26 climate negotiations to be held in Glasgow from 31 October-12 November 2021, significantly beef up their actions to robustly deal with the scale of the climate change crisis and existential threat faced by the world. This *inter alia* means markedly hiking up their 2030 emissions reduction targets and undertaking to reach net-zero emissions at latest by 2050.

This is a make-or-break situation for the world and people. The world must necessarily choose to do what it takes to save our planet if we want a safer and sustainable future for the young and future generations.

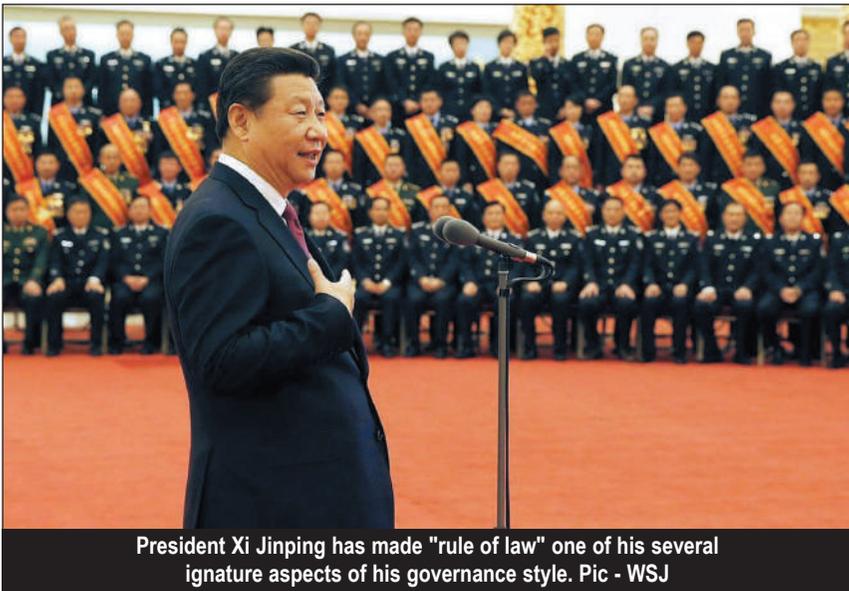
As a Small Island Developing State, Mauritius is particularly vulnerable to the dire fallouts of climate change and rising sea level. Despite all the rhetoric about green and renewable energy, the share of solar energy in the country in 2020 is a paltry 1% and that of wind farms is a mere 0.1%. In contrast, highly polluting and lucrative coal produced 30.7% of the country's energy requirements in 2020 whereas in line with a dwindling sugar cane production, a decreasing volume of bagasse and cane biomass continued to be the systematically hyped alibi for highly polluting coal and produced only 11% of our energy output in 2020.

Preventing Armageddon

The energy policy of the country has for too long been held hostage by the vested lobbies bent on monopolizing and increasing the share of lucrative private sector production of electricity, a public good, in the country. The pursuit of Mammon cannot supplant the sustainability and safety of our planet and mankind or public interest. The country's energy policy thrust and strategy must therefore be urgently recast to significantly increase the share of renewable energy to 35% or more by 2025, eliminate the use of highly polluting coal and markedly reduce the use of fossil fuels. It is equally important to end the monopolies in the energy production sector and open up the shareholding of energy production companies and power plants to the general public and through investment funds.

The world is facing an unprecedented crisis. Time is running out. This is not the time for half-hearted measures but bold and determinant actions to prevent the catastrophic fallouts of climate change. There is no other way if we want save our planet and the people from the dire consequences of an impending climate change Armageddon.

China to bring in sweeping new laws on governance



President Xi Jinping has made "rule of law" one of his several signature aspects of his governance style. Pic - WSJ

The Chinese government has said it will make new laws on national security, monopolies, education, and culture. The ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) and the State Council, or China's Cabinet, publicised the plans late on Wednesday as part of a five-year plan for "building a law-based government".

President Xi Jinping, perceived as China's most powerful ruler since Mao Zedong, has made "rule of law" one of his several signature aspects of his governance style, which will be extended if - as expected - he seeks a third term next year.

The CPC and the government said in a blueprint for the five years to

2025 that they would also improve legislation around public health by amending the infectious disease law and the "frontier health and quarantine law".

"It (the new document) urges improving government functions in various fields, including economic adjustment, market supervision, social management, public service, and environmental protection," Xinhua reported on the 10-point plan.

In the document, China's top leadership urged "...governments at all levels to promote law-based administration with the help of digital technologies, including the internet, big data, and artificial intelligence".

On improving the law-based business environment, the plan calls for concrete efforts to prevent the administrative power from eliminating or stifling competition, reports Hindustan Times.

"It also promises strengthened enforcement of anti-monopoly and anti-unfair competition laws."

"It stresses pushing forward legislative activities and studies in key areas such as national security, bio-security, infectious diseases prevention and control, and digital economy."

The unveiling of the document seems to be part of Beijing's ongoing crackdown on technology companies and the private education system.

Earlier this year, Beijing launched anti-monopoly investigations into some of the country's biggest technology firms; tech giant Alibaba accepted a record \$2.8 billion fine after an investigation found that it had abused its dominant market position for years.

The government has sharpened scrutiny of after-school tuition services offered by individual teachers, raiding such places.

A Reuters report said that shares in many Chinese companies listed in the US, Hong Kong and mainland China have fallen sharply this year as investors' concerns grow over the crackdown.

US reported 35% increase in new Covid-19 cases last week, India 2% decline: WHO



Number of COVID-19 cases reported each week in Florida has tripled since the state reopened. Pic - CTV New

The United States reported the highest number of coronavirus disease (Covid-19) cases among all countries last week, registering a worrying 35% increase in new infections from the previous week, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). The highly contagious Delta variant of coronavirus has become the dominant strain across the globe as many countries are reimposing restrictions to contain the virus.

In its weekly epidemiological report, the UN health agency said that the US, India, Iran, Brazil, and Indonesia reported the most number of Covid-19 cases. While India, Brazil and Indonesia witnessed a decline in infections from the previous week, the United States and Iran reported a huge spike with 734,354 and 248,102 new Covid-19 cases respectively.

The Delta variant was reported from seven additional countries last week, taking the total number of countries reporting the variant of concern to 142, as per the WHO report. Citing a study, the UN health agency highlighted that the viral load of the first positive test of Delta infections was approximately 1,000 times higher than that of the original strain.

WHO shares guidelines for 'safe travel' as countries reopen their borders

As the Delta variant of coronavirus threatens global travel plans, the World Health Organization (WHO) has shared guidelines on 'safe travel' during the pandemic. Several countries have resumed international flights to boost their airline and tourism industry which are badly hit by the restrictions imposed to contain Covid-19.

Mike Ryan, executive director of WHO's health emergencies programme, stressed that the economy won't be revived unless countries get their way out of Covid-19.

"If you go on a country from 10% normal travel and you go overnight to 100% travel, then our advice is always to start slowly, open up slowly, take it step-by-step and see if that affects your situation positively or negatively and then adjust as needed," Ryan said.

Maria Van Kerkhove, Covid-19 technical lead at WHO, asked travellers to take responsibility while travelling by adhering to guidelines



Family and friends see off travellers in the departures hall at Hong Kong International Airport in Hong Kong, China. Pic - Bloomberg

required by governments and airlines, reports Hindustan Times.

"If they asked to wear a mask throughout travelling wear that mask, carry your hand gel with you, take all of those precautions as you go through that stage of leaving your house to entering into that other country, that other place that you

live," she said.

"The virus travels in people and so you could be infected in the place that you are travelling. You have a responsibility to keep yourself safe, keep those who you're travelling with safe and also not to bring the virus around with you," Van Kerkhove added.

Man with right to British citizenship facing deportation to Jamaica

A man who has been in the UK for nearly 30 years and is believed to have the right to British citizenship under the Windrush scheme is facing deportation to Jamaica. Sanjay McLean, 41, moved to Britain aged 12 in 1993 to join his father, Alpheus Thompson, a British citizen who first came to the country in the 1950s as part of the Windrush generation.

Under the rules of Home Office's Windrush scheme, which was set up in 2018 after it emerged thousands of Commonwealth citizens in the UK were being wrongly deprived of their rights, Mr McLean is eligible for British citizenship, according to his lawyers. But he is one of dozens of people who have been served removal directions on a controversial charter flight to Jamaica on Wednesday. This is despite repeated claims by the Home Office that deportees are not eligible for support or compensation from the Windrush schemes and have no entitlement to British citizenship.

Mr McLean, who was detained in Harmondsworth removal centre at the end of May and only obtained legal representation three days ago, attended secondary school and college in the UK before working in the care sector and later as a painter and decorator.

* Contd on page 6



Virginia Giuffre with Prince Andrew and Ghislaine Maxwell at Prince Andrew's London home in a photo released with court documents. Pic - NBC News

Prince Andrew: Refusal to talk to Epstein investigators 'straining relations between UK and America'

US authorities are growing increasingly frustrated with Prince Andrew's failure to cooperate with their probe into the network surrounding convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. People familiar with authorities' investigations into Epstein's business affairs said the lack of information-sharing had caused diplomatic strain, with US law enforcement and diplomats raising the matter with their British counterparts, reports The Independent.

They said a new civil case brought by Virginia Giuffre, alleging the Duke of York sexually abused her as a teenager, will add further tension over the issue, along with the prosecution of Epstein's former girlfriend Ghislaine Maxwell, who is set to go on trial for sex trafficking charges later this year. There are fears the issue could sour broader efforts to collaborate on high profile legal cases. The prince has consistently denied the allegations, while Ms Maxwell also denies the charges against her.

Afghanistan: Ghani rallies warlords in the battle for Mazar-i-Sharif

The battle for Mazar-i-Sharif, a historic stronghold against the Taliban, has become the new focus of the Afghan conflict, with its fall likely to have a catastrophic strategic and symbolic impact on the government. The president, Ashraf Ghani, flew to the city on Wednesday to hold talks with two former leaders of the Northern Alliance, the Uzbek and Tajik commanders Abdul Rashid Dostum and Atta Mohammad Noor, to bolster the fight against the insurgents.

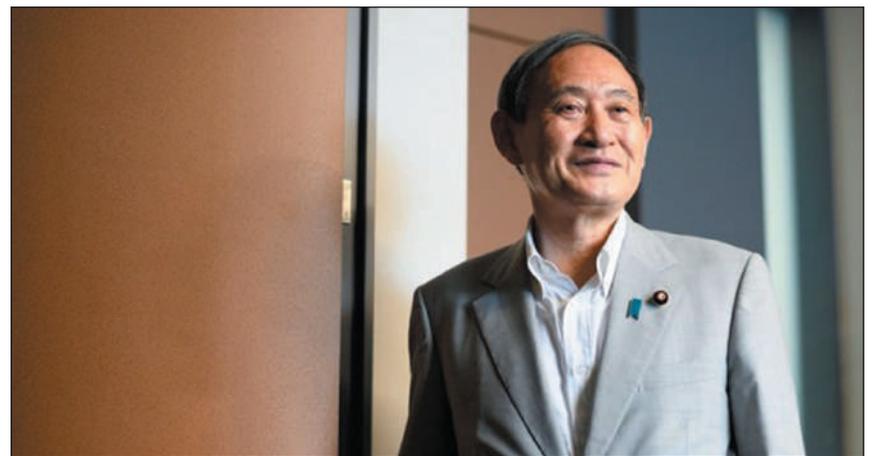
This is a volte face for Mr Ghani who, with the active encouragement of the US and the West, had attempted to neutralise warlords and their militias, and to give primacy to the Afghan army and police. However, the alarming pace of the Taliban advance has forced the president to turn to those he once sought to sideline. It comes after the Taliban seized three more provincial capitals in Afghanistan and a local army headquarters, putting nine of the nation's 34 in the insurgents' hands amid the withdrawal of US troops - something US president Joe Biden said he did not regret as he instead urged the country's leaders to fight for themselves.

Japan's Yoshihide Suga gets no Olympics boost as he heads into election

Support for Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga fell to new lows in three media polls, showing the Tokyo Olympics did little to shore up his approval ahead of a general election that must be held by the end of November.

Suga's initially high support was hit by disapproval of his handling of the pandemic, with the current wave of infections bringing case numbers to their worst levels yet, though death rates remain relatively low. A slow start to vaccinations means less than one-third of the population is fully immunized.

A survey by the Yomiuri newspaper carried out between Aug. 7-9 found support for Suga's cabinet at 35%, the lowest since he took office in September. A separate survey by broadcaster JNN put support at 32.6%, also a fresh low, while a third poll published by the Asahi newspaper found support had tumbled below



Much of the public opposed Yoshihide Suga's decision to press ahead with staging the Olympics, amid fears it could become a super-spreader event. Pic - i0.wp.com

30%, often cited as crisis level for Japanese leaders, reports Bloomberg.

Much of the public opposed Suga's decision to press ahead with staging the games, amid fears it could become a super-spreader

event. Relatively few cases were directly linked to the Olympics, which ended Sunday, although experts said the event may have prompted a more relaxed attitude toward virus precautions, and thus worsened the spread.

Singapore deputy PM for greater economic integration between India and Asean

India should consider greater economic integration with Southeast Asia, including through the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), to unlock the country's full potential, Singapore's deputy prime minister Heng SweeKeat said on Wednesday.

Heng, who is also the coordinating minister for economic policies, made the remarks while addressing the opening session of the Confederation of Indian Industry's virtual annual meeting against the backdrop of concerns among Southeast Asian nations about lack of focus in India's economic ties with the region.

He noted that the Indian government has itself recognised that "a self-reliant India is not an insular India", and said the "door remains open" for India to join RCEP when it is ready. At the same time, Heng said, India has an important role to play in contributing to the diversification of the global supply chain and making it more resilient,

reports Rezaul H Laskar of Hindustan Times.

"The importance of collaboration to unlock India's vast potential means that India should consider greater economic integration with the region," he said. While acknowledging that globalisation comes with costs, Heng said if India can address "these downsides well - through reform, transformation and attracting new investments - it will be in a good position to ride the post-Covid wave of globalisation".

Describing RCEP as an "important regional agreement", Heng said it comprises the ten Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) members and five major trading partners and is the "largest agreement of its kind in history". He added, "We fully appreciate why India is unable to join the RCEP at this moment. But the door remains open, and we welcome India to do so when you are ready."

'Will make them realize': North Korea warns US, South Korea over 'hostile acts'

North Korea on Wednesday denounced South Korea for moving ahead with its plan of joint military exercise with the United States despite repeated warnings. In a statement released on state media Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), senior North Korean official Kim Yong Chol said that "peace and trust" touted by Seoul was a mere wordplay as they opted for an alliance with "outsiders" but not with "compatriots".

South Korea and the US have begun preliminary military drills as they prepare for full-scale exercises scheduled from August 16-26, report-

ed the Yonhap news agency. On Tuesday, South Korea said that the North didn't answer routine calls in inter-Korean hotlines that were recently restored hotlines suspended a year ago by Pyongyang, reports Hindustan Times.

While Seoul and Washington insist that preliminary drills are designed to examine the allies' readiness to respond to a potential contingency, Pyongyang sees it as confrontation. Kim said South Korea must realise "how dearly they have to pay for answering our good faith with hostile acts after letting go the opportunity for improved inter-Korean rela-

tions."

North Korea has been facing sanctions from the United States over its nuclear activity and intercontinental ballistic missiles. Washington recently indicated that it is not willing to lift any sanctions as a precondition to restart talks with Pyongyang. US state department spokesperson Ned Price said last week that the Biden administration welcomes the restoration of inter-Korean communication lines and is willing to meet North Korean leaders "anytime, anywhere, without preconditions."

Milan Meetarbhan

“When democracy is perverted for short-term political gains at a time of serious global crisis, we all apprehend an uncertain future”



The events that have hit the headlines over the last couple of weeks raise a number of legal and constitutional issues: the powers of the Speaker, the report of the Britam Commission and the setting up of a new Betamax Commission, the appointment of an Acting Police Commissioner and accountability for the use of public funds. We asked Milan Meetarbhan, a Barrister with a focus on Public Law and author of a book on Mauritian Constitutional Law to comment on these topical issues. We also asked our guest who is also a political strategist to comment on the political context of the current public debates. Read on:

Mauritius Times: Your earlier comments on democracy and institutions would suggest that your assessment of the current state of our democracy would be quite critical. Is that correct?

Milan Meetarbhan: On Saturday last, 7 August 2021, it was exactly 54 years since Mauritians were asked to vote in the most crucial election in our country's history. A majority of voters elected a government which moved for Mauritius to become a sovereign State. We were then given a Constitution that proclaimed that the country would be a “sovereign democratic” State.

What is the state of our democracy after 53 years of independence and after major advances worldwide with regard to democracy, governance, accountability and transparency?

Mauritius opted for a constitutional regime based on parliamentary democracy. 53 years ago, we had Harilal Vaghjee as Speaker and where does our Parliament stand today? Do we have more accountability or less? Two weeks ago, the Minister of Finance stood up in the Assembly and said he cannot give any information on how 80 billion of public funds have been spent or will be spent. Do we have more accountability and transparency or less?

Over the last year there have been negative reports on Mauritius in the international media over MV Wakashio, over the ICTA proposals to intercept social media traffic,

over what's happening in Parliament. One EU funded European institution has in its 2021 Democracy Report stated that that Mauritius is one of the three countries to have joined “the major autocratisers”. Following the ICTA proposals, several NGOs, academics and media across the world denounced the first country to propose such drastic control of social media. Only last week, the World Bank published the Supreme Audit Institutions Independence Index which does not put our country in the list of countries where independence of institutions is Very High or High but only in the third group where it is “substantial”.

We know that the Director of Audit whose duties are laid down in the Constitution has been denied access to certain information. We live in a country where a corruption

“The opposition parties in Parliament currently have a working relationship and that can make them more effective. They cannot come together only because they have a common adversary and they want the MSM out. The parties can come together only if they agree on a common programme for alternative policies and commitments. They have not done that yet...”

agency takes over ten years to investigate an allegation against a prime minister, over five years in the case of a former Attorney general and we don't know how long it will take to conclude its investigation of a former DPM allegedly named in a report by a reputed international organisation.

This is the state of our democracy today at a time when the world including our own country are facing serious challenges. Very serious challenges not only because of the pandemic and its resulting economic crisis but also because of the dire forecasts about the impact of climate change. The UN panel pointed out this week that climate change is happening faster and is more severe than expected. The latest UN report is being described as the starkest warning yet on climate change.

Whilst small countries like ours cannot do much to influence the course of events on these global issues (except to some extent through some regional or interest groups like AOSIS - Alliance of Small Island States - for climate change) yet governments should at the national level ensure that we can on the one hand mitigate the consequences of these global challenges and on the other hand not adopt policies for short-sighted political gains which only make these consequences still harsher for the country.

“After Pravind Jugnauth was cleared of all charges in the MedPoint case when he won his appeals before the Supreme Court and the Privy Council, would it still be in order for a future government to set up a Commission of Enquiry (CoE) over this matter? Would it be in order to appoint a CoE to investigate the manner in which the case was conducted and in particular the role of certain law enforcement or investigative agencies?”

We know that there were worrying signs for our economy before Covid-19 and indeed before the 2019 elections. Yet the ruling party went to the polls boasting about its record and promising more largesse. When democracy is perverted for short-term political gains at a time of serious global crisis, we all apprehend an uncertain future.

*** In the wake of what has been happening lately in Parliament, many people have been asking for reforms to the Standing Orders of the National Assembly. Will that help to give Parliament back the respect it deserves?**

Standing Orders, like many other practices and procedures inherited from the colonial power, certainly need to be updated and perfected. But the wide discontent with the present conduct of parliamentary proceedings does not result from the imperfections of the Standing Orders. Both the Executive and the Chair are acting in an unprecedented manner which changes the nature of our parliamentary democracy.

● Cont. on page 8

'Opposition parties cannot come together only because they want the MSM out.'

They can come together only if they agree on a common programme for alternative policies and commitments'

● Cont. from page 7

We should remember that under the same constitutional provisions and the same Standing Orders we have had Speakers like Ramesh Jeewoolall, Kailash Purryag and Razack Peeroo who have conducted proceedings in a totally different way from what we have witnessed lately.

The current parliamentary proceedings epitomize MSM culture. The Speaker was nominated by Pravind Jugnauth who subsequently elevated him to the highest distinction of the country. As I have stated before, the responsibility for the present state of things in the Assembly lie squarely with Pravind Jugnauth. I am glad to note that over the last week both the MMM and the PMSD have said exactly the same thing. I believe that the focus on the Speaker is misplaced. We have to look elsewhere to understand what's happening and who is responsible for the downgrading of Parliament not only in terms of the conduct of proceedings but also in terms of the increasing lack of accountability of the Executive to the Assembly.

It's not only about the Chair but also the manner in which the Executive is dealing with parliamentary affairs. Refusal to answer some questions or protracted answers to some other questions to avoid embarrassing questions on the agenda, getting the opposition to speak at late hours or early hours in the morning so that the government speakers can monopolise prime time, avoiding sittings on Tuesdays when MPs can ask questions. All this is the doing of the Executive. So, we have both the Executive and the Chair appointed and supported by the Executive which are responsible for where our National Assembly stands today.

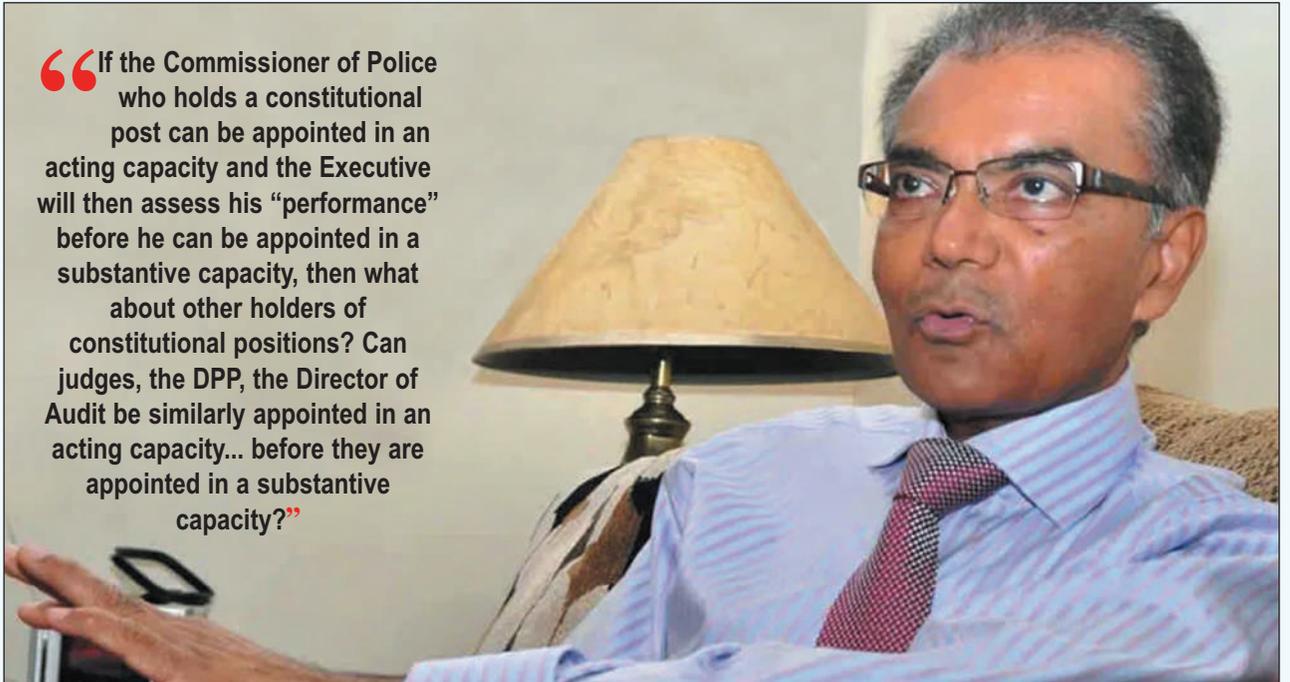
I note with concern that Avinash Teeluck, a former Labourite, who is probably emerging as the more decent face of the MSM, said that he took at face value the Speaker's statement that he was only joking when he aggressively repeated 11 times "Look at your Face". If parliamentarians express unqualified and unconditional support for a Speaker and take at face value the ex post facto rationalization of a shameful act, then who should act as a check?

*** There is also the view that the Standing Orders and the powers of the Speaker cannot be incompatible with the Constitution. But it remains to be seen if the Supreme Court will intervene if the actions of the Speaker go against the Constitution in light of the doctrine of parliamentary supremacy?**

The Constitution is the supreme law of the land. Section 48 of the Constitution which provides that the National Assembly may regulate its own procedure also expressly provides that this power is "subject to the Constitution". Ultimately, it is for the judiciary to decide if a law adopted by the Assembly and a *fortiori*, rules of procedure made by the Assembly and application of these rules are consistent with the Constitution or not. The conduct of proceedings is governed by rules and the ultimate authority which can decide whether such conduct is consistent or not with the Constitution is the judiciary.

We do not have parliamentary sovereignty as in the UK. It is now settled law in Mauritius that even the decisions of the DPP, who is given wide discretion and protection under the Constitution, can be subject to judicial review. Why should those of the Speaker be exempted? Should a Speaker have unfettered discretion and not be subject to any

“If the Commissioner of Police who holds a constitutional post can be appointed in an acting capacity and the Executive will then assess his “performance” before he can be appointed in a substantive capacity, then what about other holders of constitutional positions? Can judges, the DPP, the Director of Audit be similarly appointed in an acting capacity... before they are appointed in a substantive capacity?”



form of control except by those who appointed him?

It's true that the concept of a democratic state is underpinned by the doctrine of separation of powers. But the doctrine also provides that each separate and independent organ acts as a check on the other. In our constitutional regime, there is no reason why the judiciary cannot act as a check on the legislature. It can quash legislation duly adopted by the Assembly but it cannot quash a decision of the Speaker or a disciplinary action taken by a political majority against a member of the opposition? Who then does the opposition member have recourse to when there is an arbitrary decision, if it's not the Supreme Court?

*** As a lawyer focusing on Public Law, what is your view of the report of the commission of inquiry over Britam and the appointment of another commission of inquiry over the Betamax case?**

I believe that the appointment of a Commission of Enquiry (CoE) over Britam raises a number of questions at different levels: legal, institutional and political.

In purely legal terms, in what circumstances would it be in order to appoint a CoE after a matter has been thrashed out by the highest courts of the land? For example, after Pravind Jugnauth was cleared of all charges in the MedPoint case when he won his appeals before the Supreme Court and the Privy Council, would it still be in order for a future government to set up a CoE over this mat-

“In our constitutional regime, there is no reason why the judiciary cannot act as a check on the legislature. It can quash legislation duly adopted by the Assembly but it cannot quash a decision of the Speaker or a disciplinary action taken by a political majority against a member of the opposition? Who then does the opposition member have recourse to when there is an arbitrary decision, if it's not the Supreme Court?”

ter? Would it be in order to appoint a CoE to investigate the manner in which the case was conducted and in particular the role of certain law enforcement or investigative agencies?

At the institutional level, if the Executive which has the discretion to set up a CoE obstinately refuses to do so in certain cases which involves its own members but only does so in other cases where its political opponents may be involved, this not only constitutes a blatant abuse or misuse of its powers but it also runs the risk of CoE's being perceived as a political instrument. Given that sitting judges are often asked to chair CoEs, doesn't the perception that these commissions, in fact set up for political reasons, may put these judges in an embarrassing position?

At the political level, it could be argued that the government has once again scored an own goal with the Britam report. The CoE on Drugs named a number of people close to, or are part of, the MSM. The CoE on Britam has highlighted serious lapses of a dysfunctional government in 2015. The report is to that extent an indictment of the MSM government.

People were outraged after they found out that taxpayers had to foot a 6-billion-rupee bill because of the MSM's ineptitude in handling the rescission of the Betamax contract and subsequent litigation. The setting up of a CoE might have been a Machiavellian attempt at digression and public opinion management, but it could turn out to be yet another own goal.

*** On the other hand, what do you make out, again from a Public Law perspective, of the comments being made about the fact that government has appointed only an Acting Commissioner of Police and not one in a substantive capacity?**

The post of Commissioner of Police (CP) is not only one which is protected by security of tenure i.e., the holder cannot be removed except if an investigation is carried out by a specially appointed tribunal but also the Constitution specifically provides for the independence of the CP.

● Cont. on page 9

'In our constitutional regime, there is no reason why the judiciary cannot act as a check on the legislature'



“Refusal to answer some questions or protracted answers to some other questions to avoid embarrassing questions on the agenda, getting the opposition to speak at late hours or early hours in the morning so that the government speakers can monopolise prime time, avoiding sittings on Tuesdays when MPs can ask questions. All this is the doing of the Executive....”

● Cont. from page 9

Why appoint an acting CP? Is an acting CP entitled to the same protection afforded to someone holding the position in a substantive capacity? Some have said that there is a precedent for this situation when Mr Feillafe was appointed acting CP. This is wrong. At the time, the substantive holder was suspended and of course no one could be appointed as CP until and unless the post became vacant. The situation today is different. The post is vacant following the retirement of the CP and there is no reason why someone should not have been appointed in a substantive capacity.

Of course, there is much speculation as to why the regime chose this route. We have been told that the acting CP will be on some sort of probation and will be confirmed if his performance is satisfactory. Really? Will satisfactory performance mean compliance with “instructions from above”? Who will decide on satisfactory performance, the Prime Minister or the DFSC? Is this appointment in fact a stop-gap measure since the regime could not decide who amongst its protégés should be appointed and therefore went for an interim appointment until it could sort this out?

If the CP who holds a constitutional post can be appointed in an acting capacity and the Executive will then assess his “performance” before he can be appointed in a substantive capacity, then what about other holders of constitutional positions? Can judges, the DPP, the Director of Audit be similarly appointed in an acting capacity and their performances evaluated (and by whom) before they are appointed in a substantive capacity?

In any case, this is yet another illustration of how the regime plays around with fundamental constitutional norms.

The main question we have to ask ourselves is whether the constitutional protection and independence of the CP have been waived by ensuring that there is only an interim CP? The CP is appointed by the DFSC after consultation with the PM. Who decided that in this case only an acting CP should be appointed? Did the DFSC make such a recommendation?

*** Attention has been diverted from the controversy regarding the disbursements of the MIC with the release of the Britam report four years after it was set up and the setting up of the Betamax commission of inquiry. The Minister of Finance has refused to disclose the beneficiaries of loans dished out by the MIC on the basis of the confidentiality clause in the loan agreements. Does he have a point there?**

The Government invokes confidentiality in its agreement with a foreign government, it invokes confidentiality in its procurement contract for what it calls Safe City and now it

invokes confidentiality in loans granted out of public funds. It says that the beneficiaries have asked for a confidentiality clause in the loan agreements. If that's so, then those who claim public funds for their businesses facing economic difficulties also have the leverage to demand confidentiality!

Ministers keep shielding behind the fact that the entity dishing out the loans is a company. But who are the ultimate shareholders of the company? Don't they have a right to know? It should also be pointed out that since stress is being laid on the fact that the vehicle used for procurement or for granting loans are companies incorporated

under the Companies Act, then there may be circumstances which give rise to personal liability of the Directors of the companies concerned.

*** At the end of the day, the Government gives the impression of remaining undisturbed by the criticisms of its decisions from different quarters. It presses ahead, it appoints other commissions of inquiry, or diverts attention from the unpalatable to other issues likely to embarrass opposition members. The opposition seems unable to work its way out of this tricky situation. Your comments?**

I must say that, after the public outrage over the procurement contracts during the first lockdown last year, I was expecting the government not to have a change of heart or a cultural shift because that would be out of form for the MSM, but at least to try - not for reasons of statecraft but for purely political reasons - to be seen in a different light with regard to its management of public funds. But I now realise that they have not deemed it necessary to even change the optics. They couldn't care.

The control and accountability must come from outside if it will not happen from within. The people must therefore look to the Public Accounts committee, the Director of Audit, the Supreme Court and international institutions to ensure proper governance and accountability.

*** On the other hand, there is no clear indication of what the majority of the people feel about the current situation. Most also appear undisturbed; the planters, large and small, and pensioners, etc., are content with what the government is dishing out in terms of assistance and allowances, so you better not talk to them about the threats to democracy... What do you make out of this stalemate?**

It is true that in any society there are segments of the electorate who will vote mostly on bread-and-butter issues and others who will consider issues like governance, transparency, protection of rights, etc. The truth of the matter is that at the end of day the cost of poor governance, nepotism, corruption, and so on is borne by the whole population at some point. Opinion leaders and political parties have to make sure that this is driven home to everyone.

*** The next elections are three years away, and there is no indication as yet as to whether the Court will reject or not the electoral petitions. We have seen in the meantime the government remaining united against a di-**

vided opposition. How do you see things evolving till the next election?

Theoretically the next elections should be held in 2024 when the mandate of the present Assembly runs out. But that does not mean that no elections could be held earlier. After the 1982 elections, the government held 100% of the seats but Mauritians were called to the polls again one year later in 1983.

I believe that opposition parties in Parliament currently have a working relationship and that can make them more effective.

Opposition parties cannot come together only because they have a common adversary and they want the MSM out. The parties can come together only if they agree on a common programme for alternative policies and commitments. They have not done that yet. So, let's not put the cart before the horse.

As far as the electoral petitions are concerned, I believe that whatever the Supreme Court decides, there is likely to be an appeal to the Privy Council. Even if the Privy Council acts diligently, the final decision is not likely to be known any-time soon. Our country needs to seriously consider procedural reforms regarding electoral challenges to ensure timely decisions on the validity of elections and the legitimacy of those exercising executive and legislative powers.

*** Finally, there has been a lot of concern expressed lately about the sustainability of the free press in Mauritius. How can we ensure that we not only have freedom of the press but that the media can still play an important role in our country?**

“53 years ago, we had Harilal Vaghjee as Speaker and where does our Parliament stand today? Do we have more accountability or less? Two weeks ago, the Minister of Finance stood up in the Assembly and said he cannot give any information on how 80 billion of public funds have been spent or will be spent. Do we have more accountability and transparency or less?”



According to several opinion polls, many people believe that several of our institutions are now weaker than ever. People cannot trust these institutions to ensure a functional democracy. In this climate of despair, the media have a more important role than ever. The independent media can keep a government on its toes and hold it accountable.

The public service broadcaster is now beyond the pale. It has stooped so low that it is beyond redemption. In these circumstances, the private media have a higher responsibility. Today we have citizen journalists on the net and there is a lot of information shared on social media. We know that there have been attempts to stifle dissent on social media.

The independent media, both print and broadcast media, are more than ever crucial to the future of our democracy. The commercial pressure on the print media with the advent of technology and various forms of mass communications is enormous and the people as the ultimate beneficiaries of a free and independent media must provide the support needed.



Dr Rajagopal Soondron

The knell of our total freedom and peace is being heard; for the Hillcrest Flyover, inaugurated this week, will be welcoming fleets of vehicles in our vicinity.

Some 10 years ago the beautiful flower trees in the middle corridor of Hill Crest Avenue had to be felled to give way to better roads with a new roundabout at the crossroads with Tulips Avenue; Sodnac had come of age. So we thought.

But with the coming of the Metro Express the Road Development Authority was forced to review the set-up in Sodnac, Quatre Bornes. The Metro would play havoc with the daily heavy traffic in the St Jean - La Louise Road; so, a flyover, the Hill Crest Bridge, was conceived to ferry traffic from the north and south of M1 highway into Sodnac and Quatre Bornes and back. The local residents, putting up with a lot of inconvenience, had suddenly seen their landscape changing beyond expectation.

We were awed by the infrastructural work done with so many of these massive heavy-duty vehicles removing the recent roundabout to make way for a wonderful bridge across the M1 highway.

Our Flyover

Many of us have visited the site hundreds of times - out of curiosity or on our daily trip for our footing or jogging. In time of confinement, it was sad to see less of us there, though we saw a few who had dared to venture out into the pitch-dark night after 7 pm, far from the eyes and siren of the police - to keep body, mind and soul in one piece.

Now that the bridge is completed, we would love it to be declared traffic free zone! Oh! We are day dreaming. Jogging and trotting our children, kids and youngsters, donning their best sportswear, have enjoyed their mini scooters, tricycles, cycles on that new flyover; it was fun to watch them frolicking and gamboling around up and down hill -- much to the apprehension of the elders. Young couples were happy to give their tots their first taste of real freedom, fresh air and sunshine of the vicinity.

Walking those wide roads on the bridge early morning, midday on Sundays, but mostly after 5 pm, be it summer, winter, sunny or raining, we watched the flow of traffic late afternoon heading south. Half-closing our eyes in the wintry cold dusk, as

The Hillcrest Flyover



we looked north, we would discover a string of whitish sparkling diamonds from the slow-moving vehicles' headlamps, while turning south we would be enthralled by a chain of rubies or sapphires as the same traffic tail lamps moved slowly towards the new Phoenix fly over.

Dreaming on the Flyover

Standing on the bridge some of us wondered what state of mind the car passengers are in as they head for home after long day's work in the capital. Are they in a hurry to see their small kids and spouse? Are some already thinking of the dinner ahead or looking with apprehension for the coming confrontation with their better half at home? Are they back from some legal torturing sessions in the court of law in Port Louis; are they worried that their job is under threat as the unknown Covid-19 goes on harassing us? Who are those passengers and drivers - what are they thinking? And we wondered what could each of them tell us about his or her life history?

Sometimes we plunged into some reverie - looking with new eyes, awe and wonder -- because at the peak of confinement we were quite miserable to witness the emptiness of the M1 highway, lifeless and mortally dull. We suddenly realize that we missed that routine activity which is so much a part of our life we had taken it for granted. The empty M1 reminded us that we are addicted to human movements and activities, which contribute to that sense of being really alive. Lockdown has taught us that our mind is tuned to function maximally in the presence of other human beings and interactions. Just as we had realized that the English Football league and the present Olympics are less appetizing and enthusiastic without people in the stands!

The Sight

Looking west from the middle of the bridge we could see Candos Hill, les Trois

Mamelles and Corps de Garde, with a timid Mountain Rempart top hiding behind the Hill. They looked majestic at nightfall as the sun goes bidding us good night, while Venus would be twinkling and climbing up in the western night sky. What to say of those ever-amazing sunsets illuminating the western sky into a wonderful hue of pink, orange and pale golden yellow. And turning round we would be enthralled by the majestic range of the Port Louis-Moka range, with Le Pouce and Pieter Both seeming to be carved out from the sky beyond, sometimes with the thumb or head shrouded by some fluffy whitish cloud. Should we be late for our walk we would miss the sunset, but a cool yellowish full moon rising on the eastern horizon would amaze us; many women could hurry to admire her after their Purnima rituals at home.

That bridge somehow gives us a panoramic view of the whole of our island, as if we are in one of these copulas in a Futurescope; if only we could lie down, we would have a circular, globular view of the vast expanse of the blue-sky umbrella enveloping us on all sides at once. It's as if we are seeing the whole of Mauritius at a glance.

Walking east beyond the flyover we come to the huge roundabout with a circular plot of land surrounded by some 22 quadrants all around it, like one of those zodiacal charts. We have gone round and round it happily and freely on our walk, but not for long.

And the Metro Express meanwhile!

The wonder and pride of seeing the new flyover is inflated by the Metro track that is being laid down just below and adjacent to the bridge; we would look on as we followed the progress being accomplished by the Indian workers on that track -- keeping us dreaming of the day that we would travel from Sodnac to Port Louis or

Curepipe. Some wondered and betted that our South Passerelle would be pulled down to make way for rail tracks; we lost - for the architects had truncated part of the northern and eastern compound of the Dreamton Park so that the Metro would meander between that Park and the Passerelle.

We saw how a black plastic was laid on the dammed track to be covered by layers of fine and coarser macadam on which the rails' lower crossbars were themselves laid; how the electric poles were erected north to south at about 75 feet apart; and we witnessed how the Indian workers went on working day and night. Meanwhile we kept speculating about the site for the Metro station. Now we are sure it would be just behind the old Port Louis bus stop opposite Shoprite/Winners area, not far from home. Two footpaths from Hillcrest will lead to the Flyover and end just above the Metro track. Many of us kids or seniors may come here to be witness to the changes brought about.

Moving with time

The days are already counted dear tots, kids, young couples, senior citizens. We will miss all those months of walk, of wonder, of fresh air from the South East, of those wonderful sunsets in the west and the full moon in the east - from that wonderful vintage site; and of those cool, breezy late afternoon trips that we enjoyed with impunity and total freedom in Sodnac. For the Hillcrest Bridge will soon be declared free for the four-wheelers. And regretfully... a no man's land for us pedestrians.

Sodnac and Hillcrest Avenues won't ever be the same. Metro Express oblige.

A pity for us local residents.

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How to get rid of age spots

These small, flat, dark areas on your skin won't hurt you, so you don't have to treat them. But if you don't like how they look, you can make the spots less noticeable or even make them disappear. You also can stop new ones from forming and keep the ones you have from getting darker.

You can find lots of skin-lightening products at the drugstore. But before you buy, check the ingredients. Look for creams that contain tranexamic acid, niacinamide, or kojic acid. Keep in mind: For creams to work, you'll have to use them regularly for weeks or months. And they might irritate your skin.

Beware of mercury

Make sure nothing on the label suggests your skin lightener contains mercury. It can damage your liver and nerves. People who get close to you while you wear products containing mercury can develop serious health problems, too. You might see the words "mercury" or "mercuric" on the bottle or tube. But products with mercury might also list any of these ingredients: calomel, cinnabaris, hydrargyri oxydum rubrum, or quicksilver.

Get a prescription

It's OK to try drugstore products. But a dermatologist



could save you time and money on creams that may not work. Your doctor can help figure out which formulas, if any, will be best for your skin. Prescription remedies are stronger than the ones you can buy over the counter. They usually have hydroquinone. Sometimes they have retinoids or a mild steroid, too. You'll still need to use them regularly for months.

Age spot procedures

If you want to get rid of dark spots fast, a procedure that removes layers of discoloured skin may work better than a lightening cream. These techniques include laser treatments, freezing (cryotherapy), dermabrasion, micro-

dermabrasion, microneedling, and chemical peels. Keep in mind that procedures cost more than creams. They also come with more risks. Your doctor can help you weigh your options.

Can foods help?

You may have seen that certain ingredients in your kitchen like lemon juice, oatmeal, or honey can help with age spots. While these things aren't going to hurt your skin, they probably won't do much for your age spots. If you really want those spots to fade, it's best to use products or procedures that your doctor recommends.

Try some makeup

No matter which treatment you choose, getting rid of those age spots will take time. In the meantime, you could try using makeup to cover them up and make them harder to see.

Age spot prevention

To keep age spots lighter and avoid new ones, try these tips. Avoid the sun, especially at times when it's most intense. Use a good, broad-spectrum sunscreen before you go outside, and reapply often. Wear gloves, a hat, or other clothing to protect the areas where you have age spots.

Consider your skin type

Age spots are more likely if you have fair skin. But people with any skin colour or type can get them. A doctor can help you decide the best way to fade age spots, given your skin colour and type or other things.

Reviewed by Stephanie S. Gardner, MD - WebMD

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Why the virus might still have some tricks to pull

● Cont. from page 2

So, SARS-Cov-2 has experienced roughly the same amount of mutational evolutionary change during the pandemic (proportional to genome size), as humans have since *Homo habilis* first walked the Earth about 2.5m years ago.

New variants

The calculation described above refers to the number of mutations expected within a single line of descent (lineage) from one virus particle to the next, and so on. To work out the total number of mutations arising during an infection we also need to take into account all the virus particles produced, each of which follow their own mutational path.

The total number of infectious virus particles produced over the course of an infection is around 300,000 and 300,000,000. If each lineage accrues an average of 0.5 mutations, then the estimate of the total number of mutations during an infection in all the virus particles combined will be somewhere around 100,000 to 100,000,000 – being conservative, rather than exact.

The virus's RNA code contains four letters: G,C,U and A – there are 30,000 of them in the genome. Mutation might change any one of these letters to any of the other three letters in the code. This gives about 100,000 possible single mutations in total.

It therefore follows that all possible single mutations are likely to arise during each single infection. So why did we not see new dangerous variants emerging until several months into the pandemic?

The overwhelming majority of these mutations will not have any meaningful consequences, or will even be harmful to the virus. What's more, only a tiny fraction of virus par-

ticles within an infected person cause further infections. Almost all of the mutations that accumulate within a host will be lost once the infection is resolved. Also, because the time between infections is short, natural selection will have little opportunity to pick the "best" mutants with which to infect new hosts.

We should be extremely thankful for these tight genetic "bottlenecks" as the virus transmits from one host to another. It is sobering to reflect that countless new dangerous variants may have emerged within infected people across the world, but apart from the half dozen or so mutants lucky enough to get passed on and subsequently spread to become variants of concern, they have been quickly consigned to evolutionary oblivion.

Evolutionary handicap?

The fact that almost all the mutations arising within a

single infection never make it out into the wider world confers a major evolutionary handicap on the virus. However, this can be compensated for if the total number of infections is very large.

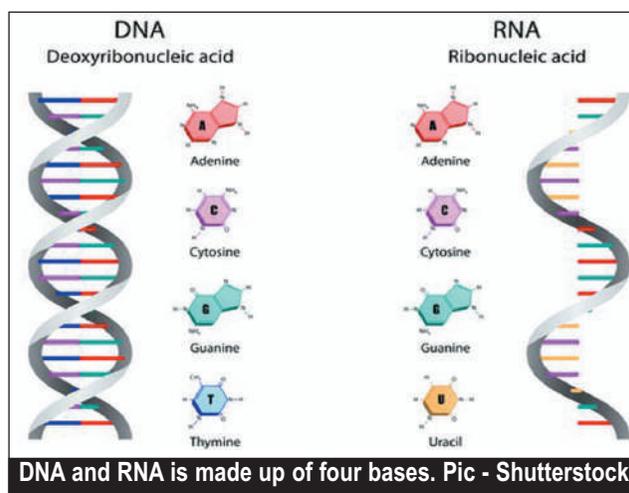
At the time of writing, there were about 620,000 infections a day globally. If an infection passes on an average of 0.5 mutations, this means that globally around 300,000 new mutations are passed from one host to another each day.

Just as the overwhelming majority of mutants arising within a single infected person will never be passed on, so the vast majority of those that make it through one initial transmission event will not go on to spread more widely in the population. But recall that the maximum number of possible mutations is around 100,000. So it is conceivable that every possible single mutation in the viral genome is transmitted from one person to another every day.

This may give the impression, as some commentators have recently opined, that the virus may be running out of evolutionary options, and that the chance of new, dangerous types occurring is small.

However, some properties of the virus might not be determined by single mutations acting alone, but by the interaction of multiple mutations acting in concert on the same genome. For example, the effect of a specific mutation might be greatly enhanced if it happens to arise within a genome that has already been affected by other specific mutations. If such effects are common in SARS-CoV-2, then the virus may yet have some evolutionary tricks to pull.

Ed Feil, Professor of Microbial Evolution, University of Bath



Programme des Courses																
1 THE BROADWAY BILL PLATE 1650 m - Valeur [0-25] - 12h15																
1 Man From Seattle	RG	9-3/6-5-6	61	R.Joorawon	8	570	2 Dreamforest	CD	5/3-1-2-5	60.5(-3)	M.Sonaram	9	530			
3 Brooklyn's Choice	SH	0-0-0-0-8	60	I.Santana	6	1200	4 Overdose	AS	2/6-4-2-8	60	S.Rama	5	500			
5 Arnica Montana	SN	0-0-0-0-7	59.5	D.Bheekary	2	1100	6 Fundraiser	P	7-A/7-3-9	59.5	K.Kalychurun	7	3300			
7 Seoul	JMH	0-0-0-2-2	59	J.Allyhosain	4	330	8 Barak Lavan	SN	5-8-8/5-5	57	G.D.Aucharuz	3	700			
9 Lady's Knight	RM	2-3-4/9-8	56	P.C.Orffer	1	900										
2 THE NIPPY REGEN PLATE 1400 m - Valeur Benchmark 36 - 12h50																
1 Anderson	SJ	0-0-0-0-8	61	T.Juglall	3	3300	2 Good Buddy	JMH	3/7-4-1-3	61	J.Allyhosain	8	600			
3 High Voltage	AS	0-R-6-9-6	60.5	S.Rama	2	1600	4 Varside	SH	2-3/2-2-7	60	I.Santana	10	1000			
5 Ron's Joy	GR	0-1-5-1/1	59.5	B.Sooful	5	450	6 Bollinger	P	1-8/10-8-2	59	G.D.Aucharuz	6	280			
7 Zigi Zagi Zugi	SN	3-3-5/C-3	59	D.Bheekary	4	750	8 Canary Island	VA	0-0-0-2-1	58	B.Fayd'herbe	7	800			
9 Lasair	JMH	0-9-8-8/10	58	B.Bhaugerothee	1	3300	10 Sacred Night	VA	1-2-6/6-7	56.5(-3)	A.Roy	9	3300			
3 THE NOBLE CHIEFTAIN PLATE 1650 m - Valeur Benchmark 41 - 13h25																
1 Snowy Mountain	P	0-0-0-9-4	61.5	K.Kalychurun	2	1600	2 Absolutist	AS	0-0-0-6-4	61	S.Rama	3	1600			
3 Moschino	VA	1/6-7-3-2	60	B.Fayd'herbe	1	260	4 Paddingtons Luck	GR	2/1-8-10-1	60	N.Teeha	5	450			
5 Tiger's Rock	JMH	0-0-0-7-6	59.5	B.Sooful	7	3300	6 Viking Trail	SJ	4-3/5-2-2	59.5	J.Allyhosain	6	450			
7 G I Joe	PM	0-1-3-1-3	59	R.Oliver	4	340										

16è journée samedi 14 août 2021																
4 THE COURTESY CUP 1500 m - Valeur Benchmark 46																
1 Bold Horizon	AS	0-0-0-0-9	60	S.Rama	5	3000	2 Juniper Lane	PM	0-0-2-2-1	60	R.Oliver	1	330			
3 Kaydens Pride	RM	2-3/1-1-1	60	P.C.Orffer	6	265	4 Sea Dance	CD	6-4/4-1-5	59.5(-3)	M.Sonaram	3	700			
5 Sockeroo	G	0-0-0-7-R	59.5	S.Donohoe	2	730	6 Steak And Ale	GR	0-5-4-6/2	58.5	B.Sooful	4	700			
7 Trip To The Sky	SJ	3-3-1/2-2	58.5	D.Bheekary	7	1200										
5 THE SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI CUP 1400 m - Valeur Benchmark 51 - 14h35 - 14h00																
1 Bassam	RG	nouveau	60.5	R.Joorawon	5	800	2 Quatro Five Six	PM	0-0-0-4-4	60.5	R.Oliver	6	1400			
3 All About The Bass	P	1-4-2-8/3	59.5	G.D.Aucharuz	2	430	4 Captain Flynt	GR	0-6-7/1-2	59.5	B.Sooful	4	370			
5 Culture Trip	SN	0-0-0-1-1	59.5	D.Bheekary	7	470	6 King Of Tara	VA	6/8-5-1-1	59	B.Fayd'herbe	8	800			
7 Gimmetherain	SJ	1-5-5/4-5	58	J.Allyhosain	1	800	8 Lickerio	AS	6-7-6/7-10	57.5	S.Rama	9	3300			
9 Soul Connection	SPN	0-0-0-6-7	57	K.Kalychurun	3	1300										
6 THE WINTER STAKES 1850 m - Valeur G.3 - 15h10																
1 Twist Of Fate	VA	0-0-1-4-2	61	B.Fayd'herbe	8	350	2 Alyaasaat	GR	1-1-2/1-4	58.5	N.Teeha	2	370			
3 Eyes Wide Open	G	0-0-0-0-6	58	S.Donohoe	3	1200	4 Alshibaa	RM	3-1-2-1/3	57.5	P.C.Orffer	4	360			
5 Patrol Officer	GR	1-1/3-7-2	56.5	B.Sooful	1	460	6 Marshall Foch	GR	0-0-0-10-11	55.5	A.Roy	11	5000			
7 Table Bay	G	2/1-3-3/7	55	Y.Emamdee	6	2500	8 Opera Royal	SH	5-2-5/5-5	54.5	I.Santana	7	1400			
9 The Dazzler	SN	2-4-1/6-6	54.5	R.Oliver	5	1400	10 Made To Conquer	SJ	0-7-5-6-4	54.5	M.Sonaram	10	5000			
11 Red Mars [EA]	SJ	2-2/5-3-1	52	-----	9	-----										

7 THE PEACE PARADE PLATE 1400 m - Valeur Benchmark 31 - 15h45																
1 Nao Faz Mal	RG	3-1/3-5-5	60	R.Joorawon	2	350	2 Sand Path	CD	6-2/1-1-5	60(-3)	M.Sonaram	3	350			
3 James Peter	SN	0-0-0-1-6	59.5	D.Bheekary	5	550	4 Crazy Charlie	GR	1-3/4-3-9	59	N.Teeha	8	600			
5 Al Jazeera	CR	0-0-0-4-1	58.5	P.K.Horil	7	900	6 Divine Connection	SPN	6-7-4-3/4	58.5	J.Allyhosain	1	700			
7 Duke Of Abercorn	JMH	0-0-0-0-8	58.5	B.Sooful	4	2200	8 Quest For Good	P	nouveau	58.5	K.Kalychurun	6	3500			
8 THE ROLLING SANDS PLATE 1500 m - Valeur [0-26] - 16h20																
1 Beni Des Dieux	RG	0-0-0-0-5	60	J.Allyhosain	4	400	2 Oxford Blue	CD	0-7-4-5-3	60(-3)	M.Sonaram	7	320			
3 San Andreas	SJ	0-0-0-0-3	60	N.Teeha	6	430	4 Global Spectrum	RM	0-0-0-6-4	59.5	P.C.Orffer	3	1200			
5 Supreme Elevation	JMH	0-0-0-7-9	59.5	B.Bhaugerothee	1	2000	6 Amandla	JMH	2-3/5-1-3	59	B.Sooful	5	430			
7 Cloud Seeder	AS	0-0-7-7-10	59	S.Rama	2	1100										
Selections																
1. Seoul, Dreamforest, Overdose																
2. Bollinger, Ron's Joy, Good Buddy																
3. Moschino, G I Joe, Viking Trail																
4. Kaydens Pride, Juniper Lane, Trip To The Sky																
5. Captain Flynt, Culture Trip, Gimmetherain																
6. Alshibaa, Alyaasaat, Twist Of Fate																
7. Nao Faz Mal, Sand Path, Divine Connection																
8. Oxford Blue, Amandla, Beni Des Dieux																

Laughter
is the **BEST**
Medicine



Matrimonial Ad

A wealthy lonely rich widow decides to look for a companion. She places an advert in the local press. It reads:

'Rich widow looking for a gentleman to share life and fortune with. Must never beat me or run way - and has to a great in bed.'

For several months, her phone rings off the hook and applications fill her letterbox, but none seems to fit her requirements. Then one day the doorbell rings. She opens the door to find a man, with no arms and legs, lying on the welcome mat.

"Who are you, what do you want?" she asked perplexed.

"Hi, your search has ended, for I'm the man of your dreams, I've got no arms so I can't beat you and no legs, so I can't run away," he replies.

"Hmm, what makes you think that you are so great in bed?" she states.

He looks at her smugly, "Well," he grins, "did not I ring the bell?"

No need to rush

Just after taking off, the captain of a 747 makes an announcement to the passengers about the flight time and the expected arrival time and so on... but after he's finished he forgets to turn off the mike. He turns to his co-pilot and says: "Right, I'll finish off this sandwich, then I'll nip back and join the new red-headed stewardess."

In horror, one steward, who is at the rear of the plane, rushes down the aisle to prevent the captain's indiscre-

tion going further. On the way, an old lady grabs her arm as she goes past.

"Why be in such haste, dear, he said he had to finish his sandwich first," she says.

An elderly woman went to her local doctor's office and asked to speak with her doctor. When the receptionist asked why she was there, she replied, "I'd like to have some birth control pills."

Taken back, the doctor thought for a minute and then said, "Excuse me, Mrs Glenwood, but you're 80 years old. What would you possibly need birth control pills for?"

The woman replied, "They help me sleep better."

The doctor considered this for a second, and continued, "How in the world do birth control pills help you sleep?"

The woman said, "I put them in my granddaughter's orange juice, and I sleep better at night."

What did the zero say to the eight? I like your belt!

If you think nobody cares if you're alive, try missing a couple of payments.

A young boy was walking along the docks one day admiring the ships, when a man walked up behind him and said, "Thinking of becoming a sailor?"

"Yes, I am!" replied the boy.

"Well," the man said, "I have sailed many years and have had many adventures."

The boy looked the man up and down, and saw that he had an eye patch, a peg leg, and a hook. "I would love to hear of your adventures," said the boy.

"Well," the man said, "I was sailing around the Cape of Good Hope when I encountered pirates. They boarded my boat and I fought them 'til there was only one left. But before he got away he cut off my leg!"

"That sounds terrible!" exclaimed the boy.

"Aye lad, it was, but I got over it and continued sailing the seas."



"How did you get the hook?" inquired the boy.

"I was once again sailing around the Cape of Good Hope on my way home when I encountered the same pirate with a whole new crew. They boarded me again and I fought down to the last man, only this time as he got away, he cut of my hand!"

"That is awful!" the boy once again exclaimed.

"Aye lad, but again I got over it and continued sailing the seas."

"Tell me how you got the eye patch! Was it the pirates again?"

"No lad, this time I was just out fishing one day, I heard the cry of a seagull, and when I looked up it sh*t in me eye!"

"Pardon me sir, but I didn't know you could lose an eye from seagull sh*t."

"Well lad, 'twas the first day with the hook!!!"

Q: Why don't witches wear underwear?

A: So, they can get a better grip on the broom.

When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.

Life's Lesson

Why do dogs live less than people?

Being a vet, I was asked to examine a 13-year-old Dog named Batuta. The family expected a miracle.

I examined Batuta and found out that he was dying of cancer and that I couldn't do anything...

Batuta was surrounded by the family. The boy Pedro looked so calm, caressing the dog for the last time, and I wondered if he understood what was going on. Within minutes, Batuta fell peacefully asleep never to wake up again.

The little boy seemed to accept it without difficulty. I heard his mom wondering: why is dog's life shorter than human beings?

Pedro said, "I know why."

The boy's explanation changed my way of seeing life.

He said: "We come to the world to learn to live a good life, how to love others all the time and be a good person, right?! As dogs are already born knowing how to do all this, they don't have to live for as long as we do..."

Understand?"

Moral of the story is:

If a dog was your teacher, you'd learn things like:

1. When your loved ones arrive home, always rush to greet them.
2. Never miss an opportunity to go for a walk.
3. Allow the experience of fresh air and wind on your face to be pure ecstasy!
4. Take naps.
5. Stretch before you rise.
6. Run, jump and play daily.
7. Avoid "biting" when just a "growl" would suffice.
8. In very hot weather, drink lots of water and lay in the shade of a Frondous tree.
9. When you're happy, dance moving your whole body.
10. Delight yourself with the simple joy of a long walk.
11. Be faithful.
12. Never intend to be something you are not.
13. If what you want is ??buried"... dig until you find it.
14. And never forget: When someone has a bad day, be silent, feel close and softly make them feel like you're there.

Mystery in life...

• At age of 40... 'highly educated - less educated' are the same. (Less educated people may even earn more money)

• At 50... 'beauty - ugly' are the same. (No matter how pretty you are. At this age... wrinkles, dark spots etc. Can no more be hidden.)

• At 60... 'high position - low position' are the same. (After retirement, even a peon will avoid looking at his boss)

• At 70... 'big house - small house' are the same. (Joints degeneration, hard to move, only require a little space to sit.)

• At 80... 'have money - no money' are the same. (Even when you want to spend money, you don't know where to spend)

• At 90... 'Sleeping - waking up' are the same. (After you wake up, you still don't know what to do)

Take life easy..

In the long run, we'll all be the same...
So, forget all tensions of life & enjoy.....



P. Laxman

Psychologist

Associate Member :

American Psychological Association

Can you save your marriage after an affair?

Infidelity is a betrayal of the deepest nature, compromising the very foundation of a marriage. This is true even when the affair is "only" emotional -- when a partner turns to someone other than (and instead of) their partner for deep personal connection. In the wake of an affair, many couples struggle intensely with the question of whether their relationship can heal.

There is no one single destiny for marriages after an affair. Each path forward is difficult, but it's also as unique as each relationship. There are couples that not just survive, but also thrive. The couples who are able to move past infidelity are similar in that the partners tend to respond in certain basic ways:

- **The spouse who cheated shows remorse.** Healing can only happen when the person who committed adultery fully admits and takes responsibility for their actions. The person must also show remorse for the damage they've done with no hedging or justifying the infidelity. They must plainly acknowledge that going outside the marriage was wrong. They can make a lot of headway by saying something like, "What I did was wrong. I'm truly sorry for it and for the pain that I caused you."
- **The spouse who cheated validates their spouse's pain.** The spouse who remained faithful will undoubtedly feel a range of emotions, such as hurt, betrayal, sadness, and anger. The one who cheated must hear, acknowledge, and validate their feelings. This is a process that will require many conversations as the spouse processes their emotions.

Listening again and again can be wearing, but it's essential that the unfaithful partner be patient. They must

Couples who are able to move past infidelity usually have these three responses to the painful experience in common. Leslie Becker-Phelps, PhD, psychologist, tells us more about this painful episode in a couple's life.

remain empathic and compassionate, even as their spouse visits and revisits their past actions -- ones that they cannot change.

Importantly, the hurt partner must ultimately be looking for their pain to be soothed and for reconnection, not just for retribution. Remaining deeply angry and clinging to a desire to emotionally beat up their spouse cannot repair the relationship; and it will only damage it further. However, hopefully, if their spouse can listen compassionately to their pain, they will eventually feel comforted. The pain will be eased, though not forgotten. At that point, the marriage might be able to move along a path toward reconciliation.

Both spouses work together to repair their relationship. They must assess the state of their marriage before the

affair. While having an affair is not acceptable, problems in the marriage that might have led to this must be addressed. By talking openly about how each of them contributed to their struggles, they can work on improving and strengthening their marriage. Their conversations must be open, honest, and unfold in a way that rebuilds trust, caring, and a sense of being a team.

The hope is that your efforts can improve communication, increase caring interactions, and nurture a closer connection. This takes persistence and a commitment to returning to a loving relationship. While such efforts will not change the past or eliminate the pain of betrayal, you and your partner can use that painful past to create a stronger, healthier marriage.

Leslie Becker-Phelps

He
&
She

We know pills, pumps, and surgeries work for unsatisfactory performance in bed, but what about food? Are there things you can eat that can help with ED? There are reasons to think there may be, even if more evidence is needed to confirm the potential of the following foods.

Watermelon: This sweet, refreshing fruit has a compound that can have effects similar to ED meds on your blood vessels. It may even rev up your sex drive, studies say. Most of watermelon is water, but the rest is loaded with lycopene, an antioxidant that's good for your heart, prostate, and skin.

Oysters: These shellfish may boost your testosterone levels, and that can help with sex drive. They're also chock-full of zinc, a nutrient your body needs. But you may save yourself problems by making sure they're cooked. Make sure you know where they come from, and that they're cooked properly.

Coffee: Your morning cup of joe is more than a satisfying pick-me-up. It may give your love life a boost, too. Men who drank two or three cups' worth of caffeine a day were less likely to have erectile dysfunction, one study found. That's because caffeine helps boost blood flow.

Dark Chocolate: This treat may have perks below the belt. An ounce a few times a week can help your ticker -- and what's good for your heart could be good for other parts, too. Chocolate is rich in flavanols,

Men's Health

Foods to Help Men

Besides pumps and pills, there's reason to think certain foods might help, too, suggests Nazia Q Bandukwala of WebMD



plant nutrients that can increase blood flow and lower blood pressure. It also helps your body make more of nitric oxide, which can help and is in many ED medications.

Nuts: Walnuts have lots of arginine, an amino acid your body uses to make nitric oxide. They're also good sources of vitamin E, folic acid and fiber. Don't add more than a few small handfuls to your daily diet, though. Nuts are high in calories.

Juice: Maybe you enjoy an adult

beverage made from grapes, but here's a reason to drink the stuff kids like. Nutrients in Concord grape juice also increase the amount of nitric oxide in your body. If you're not wild about drinking grape juice, try pomegranate juice. It appears to have the same effect.

Garlic: The strong-smelling bulb may help between the sheets. If plaque forms on the walls of the arteries, blood flow could be cut off or reduced. That could cause a problem when it comes to

romance. Garlic in your diet may help keep your arteries healthy and clear as you age.

Fish: Salmon and other fatty fish are great sources of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids, which may boost nitric oxide in your body. They'll lower your blood pressure and your risks for heart attack and blood clots. Aim for 8 ounces of salmon a week. Sardines, fresh albacore tuna, and mackerel are other good sources of omega-3s.

Greens: Kale is also a nitric-oxide booster. Aside from the possible benefits to your sex life, leafy greens are nutritional powerhouses. They're packed with vitamins, minerals and omega-3s.

Peppers: You might spice up your love life by adding some chili peppers to your diet. The stuff in cayennes, jalapenos, habaneros, and other peppers that give them their heat relaxes the arteries -- and that helps blood flow to the heart and other organs, including the penis. Chilies can also help lower blood pressure and cholesterol and prevent blood clots.

Olive Oil: Olive oil may help your body make more testosterone. It's also full of the good-for-you monounsaturated fat, which can help get rid of the bad cholesterol in your body. Opt for extra-virgin olive oil -- that means the olives were pressed without chemicals or high heat, which preserves the healthy antioxidants.

From Sara Ali Khan to Ananya Pandey, meet Bollywood's new trendsetters

Fashion changes by era and age, and in these times it's the moment for the young starry cohort to dictate the trends. Here are the young Bollywood stars who are making waves in fashion, as reported by Gulf News.

Alaya F

Alaya F, the daughter of Pooja Bedi and granddaughter of actor Kabir Bedi, debuted in Bollywood with "Jawaani Jaaneman". Alaya is the quintessential millennial girl who knows her fashion quite well. At 23, her signature style is glamorous and has an interesting sense of style that is chic and peppy.

Ananya Pandey

Ananya Pandey made headlines even before she entered Bollywood with her style quotient at Le Bal in Paris. As a debutante, her choice of dressing in Jean Paul Gaultier gown made rounds on social media. The "Student Of The Year 2" actress is making the right moves when it comes to fashion. From her casual and chic style to glamorous looks, Ananya aces the game. The 21-year-old loves her sneakers and can be seen pairing them with almost every outfit effortlessly.

Sara Ali Khan

Saif Ali Khan and Amrita Singh's daughter, Sara Ali Khan is already being counted among the next big things at the Bollywood box office. Fashion-wise, at 25, the four-film-old actress has had quite a journey from *chikan* kurtas to chic dresses. From taking on bold separates to breezy white kurtas, she has aced every look. Her signature style is all about being simple, comfortable, and quirky.

Janhvi Kapoor

Janhvi Kapoor has impressed the fashion police in a short span of time. Late superstar Sridevi's daughter carries her fashion sense naturally. At 24, Janhvi seems to have a penchant for classic and timeless pieces. The actress sports stylish gym wear and white salwar suit with

equal ease. Be it for dance classes or family time, Janhvi steps out with classic sartorial statement.

Khushi Kapoor

Following in the footsteps of elder sister Janhvi, Sridevi's younger daughter is a fashionista in the making. She gives major style inspiration to the millennial fan brigade. Khushi, 20, is a true-blue Gen Z style star as she sports traditional wear or neon bikini with equal and utmost ease.

Although she hasn't made her entry in Bollywood yet, she has already won hearts with her quintessential dressing style. Studying in New York, she balances Bollywood glamour with an international appeal in her wardrobe.

Shanaya Kapoor

Sonam Kapoor's younger cousin Shanaya is no less than a millennial diva. Even before entering the Bollywood glam world, at 21, she is at her A-game when it comes to getting her style quotient right. Going by the confidence and ease with she carries herself, it seems she is ready to embrace the showbiz world with a bang. Whether it's attending filmy parties or hanging out with friends, she maintains a fashion-forward approach when it comes to picking outfits. Her fashionable choices surely hint at a budding trendsetter in the making.

Suhana Khan

Shah Rukh Khan's daughter Suhana Khan is known for her bold and hot style on her social media. The superstar's daughter gets dressed in the costliest of outfits and pulls them off with confidence. Suhana's choice of outfits stands out from her contemporaries.

At 21, even before her entry into showbiz, this star kid serves up trendy millennial looks in every outfit.

Navya Naveli Nanda

The granddaughter of Amitabh Bachchan, Navya Naveli has naturally inherited her mother Shweta Nanda's flair for fashion. At 22, the young girl is a business entrepreneur, and she has a quirky yet stylish approach towards her choice of clothes. Her love for sneakers is often witnessed in her pictures.

Aaliyah Kashyap



Filmmaker Anurag Kashyap's daughter Aaliyah joined the league of the fashionable Gen Z as a fashion vlogger. Her bio on YouTube reads: "Hi guys! I am a 20-year-old YouTuber based in California! I love making lifestyle vlogs and fashion/beauty videos."

Aaliyah is often seen posting fashionable pictures with her best friend Khushi Kapoor on social media. The fashion enthusiast is known for her classic and impeccable style statement.

Anjini Dhawan

Varun Dhawan's niece and producer Siddharth Dhawan's daughter Anjini Dhawan has already become an internet sensation with her bold fashion choices. She grabs the limelight with every photo of hers on social media. Anjini, 20, is often spotted at Bollywood parties and events in glamorous looks.

Manoj Bajpayee reveals he has survived 'politics and powerful opposition' in Bollywood

Manoj Bajpayee is a seasoned star who has earned massive praise for his unique choice of projects and stellar performances. He is currently basking in the success of his several OTT projects and promises to deliver even more entertaining content. In a recently interview, Manoj Bajpayee opened up about his journey in Bollywood and stated that he has evolved as an action actor and is learning new tricks all the time. He also stated that his journey in films has been miraculous as he has survived all the politics, the blind items and all kinds of powerful opposition.

The actor described his 25 years in Bollywood as a 'roller-coaster' ride and that someday he may pen all his experience in an autobiography. Despite a hit like 'Satya' in the beginning of his career, Manoj Bajpayee revealed that his journey was not a 'bed of roses'.



With the popular 'Family Man' series, Manoj Bajpayee has etched his name in the most successful OTT shows list. With streaming platforms there is no scope for box office, but the actor only seeks audience appreciation. Sharing his opinion on box office figures, Manoj Bajpayee had previously told ETimes, "There is no such thing as box office success. Just because a film has made 100-200 crores, it doesn't mean that it has become successful. You have to compare the investment with the profit, we don't do that. We get really happy when a film makes 100 crore and above. But in actuality, the people who go and watch these films in numbers, if they feel that they are let down by the content, then they won't spread a positive word about it."

Jennifer Winget goes for hair transformation; stuns fans with new look



Jennifer Winget surprised her fans with her new hair transformation in a new post. The actress went all bold by opting for a cherry red colour. This

is unlike how her fans have seen her before.

From playing coy to bold characters in TV shows ranging from *Dil Mil Gaye* and *Saraswati Chandra* to *Beyhadh*, *Bepannah*, the actress is known for her versatility.

Just like the rest of us, she, too, dealt with feelings of languishing and boredom in lockdown, and didn't shy away from admitting and sharing this on her Instagram. From meditating to napping, binge watching to even lazing about, she tried it all.

To break the monotony further, she decided to finally give herself a hair colour transformation, reports TOI.

On the other hand, it was only last month that Jennifer had shared that she was down with Covid-19.

In a post, she had written, "Down but not out... YES, It's TRUE! Corona came a-knocking and caught me off guard. But know that, I am asymptomatic and feel absolutely fine. So, to everyone worried and concerned, don't be! Here to report that I am quarantining, wining and dining and cannot wait to kick back in action. A bummer, this, but I promise it's only a minor blip, just paused for a bit to emerge stronger, better, healthier and raring to go."

just paused for a bit to emerge stronger, better, healthier and raring to go."

Yukti Kapoor on wearing a police uniform for 'Maddam Sir': 'It's a blessing to play this role'

Yukti Kapoor is currently seen as SAB TV's cop-comedy 'Maddam Sir'. The actress plays the role of sub-inspector Karishma Singh in the show. TellyChakkar got in touch with Yukti who opened up about her role as Karishma Singh and much more about the show.

On being asked how she feels when she wears the uniform and gets into her character, Yukti said, "It is a different feeling. I feel so blessed to wearing this 'Vardi'. It is a big thing that I got to wear this uniform and play a police officer. I feel different when I wear this costume."

Yukti salutes the frontline warriors police officers who were there on their toes during the Covid times and helped people.

The actress reveals that she gets completely into her character once she wears the police officer's uniform.

Yukti has previously done shows like *Jhilmil Sitaaron Ka Aangan Hoga*, *Siya Ke Ram*, *Balika Vadhu*, *Agnipheera*, *Namah Lakshmi Narayan* among others.



From Divyanka Tripathi to Surbhi Jyoti: Meet the highly educated celebs

We often think that the popular stars from the television industry aren't very sound in academics, however, these actresses have got all the speculations wrong. Starting from Divyanka Tripathi to Surbhi Jyoti, these actresses have got some heavy educational degrees in their kit-ties, as mentioned in an article

published by Jansatta.

Divyanka Tripathi

Before she headed to show-biz, she was preparing for civil service exams. The actress also has a degree in mountaineering.

Surbhi Jyoti

Surbhi Jyoti has done her masters in English.

Devoleena Bhattacharjee

Devoleena Bhattacharjee aka Gopi Bahu has done pursued Economics in grads, later did a course in jewellery designing too.

Surbhi Chandna

Surbhi Chandna has got an MBA degree in Marketing.

YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

You'll finally find a just balance in your affective life. The material field will provide you with opportunities which you no longer dared to hope for; good money entries. Your professional chances will be reinforced.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 6, 9, 11, 20, 33

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

This time clandestine love affairs will greatly appeal to you, but know how to measure out the consequences of your acts. On the friendship plane, there'll be storm in the air; therefore try to control your reactions better.

Lucky Numbers: 10, 13, 16, 24, 26, 31

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

Try to find a just balance between work and play, otherwise you'll be nervous, tense. You can't complain about loneliness: not only you'll be very well surrounded but also, you'll launch great common projects with your friends.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 7, 9, 12, 17, 32

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

Some nervousness which might play dirty tricks on you physically and also psychologically. Risks of tensions in your family life; you'll have no desire to be diplomatic, but you can at least try to be so.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 4, 7, 14, 19, 26

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

All doors will be opened to you and you can achieve the projects which you've been nurturing for a long time. You'll be going to know the refined love which you've been ceaselessly dreaming of. Your aged parents may give you worries.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 7, 16, 24, 30, 36

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

You'll be inclined to see nothing else than annoyances in conjugal life; be less biased! Beware of swindles; be particularly on your guard against people who'll present themselves to you as missionaries. It will be the moment to concentrate your forces in your work.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 4, 15, 17, 24, 25

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

Your ideas will be interesting and their originality can make you to be noticed in a very positive manner. Don't take things too much at heart otherwise your nervous resistance might be harmed.

Lucky Numbers: 17, 18, 20, 30, 36, 38

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

In work as well as in love, you'll have great satisfactions thanks to your increased flair. Try to be at the same time firm and understanding toward your children. You'll be given a chance to repair your past errors; make the most of it.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 16, 20, 24, 29, 31

Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

You'll work desperately hard at your projects and the reward will not be long to come. Support the little ways of your beloved one's with tolerance and understanding; you have your own, too! Relaxation will be indispensable to fight fatigue.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 9, 10, 17, 21, 23

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

Success will be strictly proportional to your efforts, on condition to remain cautious. The help of your best friends will prove precious. Think to make investments; privilege safe values. Shaky couples will recover new energy.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 11, 14, 19, 21, 30

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

Heart wise, you'll show yourself sensual and enthusiastic. You'll have far too much to choose from good business affairs and interesting investments; but it will be necessary to remain vigilant so as not to engage all your savings in one project.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 7, 10, 15, 20, 33

Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

Unexpected domestic problems will require all your attention. Your popularity will be on the increase, many people will seek your company. Refuse to take part in gossip. The sentimental sky will darken a little for you.

Lucky Numbers: 14, 16, 20, 21, 23, 30



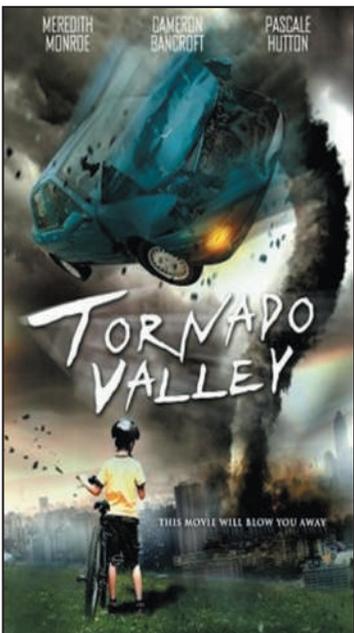
Vendredi 13 août - 21.15



Samedi 14 août - 21.20



Dimanche 15 Août - 21.40



	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
vendredi 13 août	07.00 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 10.15 Local Prod: Rodrig Prog 11.10 Tele: Soleil Levant 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 13.05 Local Prod: Elle 14.00 Local: Generations J 14.30 D.Anime: Petit Creux 14.43 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 14.55 D.Anime: Astrology 15.19 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 15.32 D.Anime: Petit Creux 15.58 D.Anime: Johnny Test 16.19 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill 17.05 Serial: Superstore 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.25 Local: Come On Let??S 21.20 Serial: Beauty And The Beast 23.35 Mag: Eye On Sadc	08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3 10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4 12.30 Film: Madurai Veeran 14.41 DDI Magazine 15.05 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.27 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.49 Serial: Bava Maradallu 16.07 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 16.28 Serial: Aatish 16.48 Serial: Imtihaan 17.05 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.34 Serial: Chhanchhan 18.00 Serial: Dr. Qin 18.30 Mag: DDI Magazine 19.05 Journal Kreol 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.02 Serial: Band Khirkiyan 20.46 Local: Anjuman 21.09 Local: Urdu Programe 22.07 DDI Live	06.00 Mag: Eco India 06.26 Mag: Shift 06.38 Mag: Sur Mesure 06.52 Mag: Border Crossing 07.17 Mag: Tomorrow Today 09.00 Educational Prog: Grade 5 11.30 Educational Prog: Grade 6 14.03 Doc: 360 GEO 14.55 Doc: The Neanderthals 16.20 Doc: Eco India 16.49 Mag: Shift 17.01 Mag: Sur Mesure 17.14 Mag: Border Crossing 18.00 Doc: Coding Art 18.46 Mag: Arts And Culture 19.00 Student Support Prog... 19.29 Mag: Euromaxx 20.05 Doc: Innovation On Board 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.40 Sos Animaux En Darger 21.31 Doc: Nom De Code: Poilus...	03.26 Serial: Chicago Med 04.07 Film: Signed, Sealed, Deliv... 05.31 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.13 Serial: Madam Secretary 07.16 Film: Coup De Foudre A La... 09.00 Serial: Macgyver 09.45 Tele: Teresa 10.37 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.00 Serial: Chicago Med 12.00 Film Signed, Sealed Deliv... 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: Coup De Foudre A La... 16.39 Serial: Macgyver 17.27 Serial: Madam Secretary 18.05 Tele: Teresa 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: Dynasty 2 21.15 Film: Haunted Avec: Roberto D'Antona, Michael Segal, David White	08.00 Film: Anjaam Starring : Shahrukh Khan, Madhuri Dixit, Johnny Lever 12.08 / 19.54 - Radha Krishna 12.31 / 20.11 - Chupke Chupke 12.50 / 20.32 - Mere Sai 13.12 / 21.09 - Agniphera 13.34 / 21.24 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.57 / 21.46 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.04 / 22.55 - Sethji 15.15 Film: Isi Ka Naam Zindagi Starring Aamir Khan, Farha Naaz, Pran, Shakti Kapoor 18.00 Live: Samacher 18.53 Kundali Bhagya 19.14 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 19.36 Serial: Bhakharwadi 19.58 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak
samedi 14 août	06.00 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill 06.26 D.Anime: Teenie Fables 07.00 D.Anime: Sissi, Jeune Impe... 07.23 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 07.47 D.Anime: Sabrina: Secrets... 08.07 D.Anime: Cosmic Quantum... 08.42 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 08.55 D.Anime: Pet Alien 12.00 Le Journal 12.35 Tele: Teresa 14.55 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 15.22 D.Anime: Astrology 15.45 D.Anime: Wishfart 15.58 D.Anime: Petit Creux 16.43 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill 17.00 Serial: Creeped Out 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Entertainment: Dance 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.25 Local: Le Rendez Vous 21.20 Film: Gattaca Avec: Ethan Hawke, Uma Thurman...	07.00 Film: Watan Ke Rakhwale 09.29 Serial: Vir: The Robot Boy 10.00 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 11.40 Serial: Bloody Romance 12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhya Bhare 12.24 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 12.47 Serial: High School 13.11 Annakodiyum Aintu Pengalum 15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.30 Film: Rishton Ki Saanjh Starring Asif Basra, Tanu Bhardwaj, Aditi Charak 17.30 Mag: DDI Magazine 19.00 Live: Journal Kreol 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.06 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha 20.28 Serial: Bitti Business Wali 21.01 Film: Grand Masti Starring: Vivek Oberoi/afab Shivdasani and Riteish Deshmukh	06.00 Mag: Amazing Gardens 06.26 Doc: The Bridge Of Minor... 06.52 Mag: Vue D'en Haut 07.46 Doc: Car Wars 10.17 Doc: Botticelli's Inferno 11.05 Doc: Amazing Gardens 11.31 Doc: The Bridge Of Minor... 11.57 Mag: Vue D'en Haut 15.06 Student Support Prog 17.43 Mag: Tendance XXI 18.09 Doc: Builders Of The Future 18.36 Doc: Garden Party 19.05 Mag: Future Mag 19.37 Doc: Tricky Memory 20.30 Local Prod: News (English) 20.40 Doc: Tree Stories 21.32 Doc: Taste Hunters 22.25 Doc: Vincent Van Gogh Superstar 23.07 Doc: Amazing Gardens 23.33 Doc: Zambia	01.24 Film: Haunted 02.44 Serial: The Night Shift 03.24 Film: Containment 04.40 Tele: Tanto Amor 06.10 Serial: Ddynasty 2 06.48 Film: Dominion 08.30 Serial: Mike Hammer 09.18 Serial: Brooklyn Nine Nine 09.59 Serial: Incorporated 10.41 Film: Flip That Romance 12.18 Serial: The Night Shift 13.28 Serial: Chicago Med 15.05 Tele: Amanda 15.48 Tele: Muneca Brava 16.30 Mag: Hollywood On Set 17.00 Serial: Dynasty 2 17.45 Film: Du Mauvais Cote Da La Loi 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Series: Dynasty 2 21.15 Film: Bleeding Steel 23.00 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir	04.05 Radha Krishna 04.26 Chupke Chupke 04.48 Mere Sai -- Shraddha Aur... 05.11 Agniphera 05.34 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 06.00 Zindagi Ki Mehek 06.16 Sethji 06.38 ChhanChhan 07.02 Kundali Bhagya 07.25 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 08.02 Zindagi Ki Mehek 10.00 Motu Patlu 10.12 Siddhi Vinayak 12.01 Serial: Bhakharwadi 14.00 Chupke Chupke 16.24 Pavitra Rishta 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Film: Sanju Star: Ranbir Kapoor, Paresh Rawal, Manisha Koirala 21.08 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 21.51 Serial: Naagin
dimanche 15 août	06.00 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill 06.24 D.Anime: Teenie Fables 06.46 D.Anime: P'tit Cosmonaute 08.11 D.Anime: Cosmic Quantum... 09.35 Serial: Lucas Etc 10.00 Local: Zanaf Nou Zil 10.30 Serial: Backstage 12.00 Le Journal 12.35 Tele: Teresa 14.06 Local: Elle 15.24 D.Anime: Petit Creux 15.26 D.Anime: Astrology 15.49 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 17.05 Serial: Les Copains Carlin 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Local Prod: Gata Rahe Mere... 19.30 Le Journal 20.10 Local: Groov'in 21.05 Film: Tornado Valley Avec: Meredith Monroe, Cameron Bancroft, Pascale Hutton	07.00 Film: Yeh Dil Kisko Doon 10.00 Local Prod: MBC Prod 11.00 Serial: Oru Kai Osai 11.22 Serial: Santoshi Maa 12.00 Film: Tanhaji Stars: Ajay Devgn, Saif Ali Khan, Kajol, Neha Sharma 14.13 DDI Magazine 15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.22 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 15.45 Serial: He Mann Baware 16.09 Apoorva Raagangal 17.05 Mahakali 17.51 Kisna 19.30 Local: Tipa Tipa Nu Avance 19.00 Live: Journal Kreol 20.05 Serial: Mann Mein Vishwas.. 20.50 Serial: CID 21.36 Serial: Naagin Season 2 22.17 Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki 22.57 DDI Live	06.00 Mag: Amazing Gardens 06.26 Doc: Zambia 06.52 Mag: Vue D'en Haut 07.46 Mag: Healthy Living 10.44 Doc: Vincent Van Gogh... 11.30 Doc: Amazing Gardens 11.56 Doc: Zambia 12.22 Mag: Vue D'en Haut 14.58 Doc: Taste Hunters 17.43 Mag: Magnifique 18.09 Doc: Builders Of The Future 18.36 Doc: Garden Party 19.05 Mag: Trend Book 19.37 Doc: Chernobyl, Fukushima 20.30 Local Prod: News (English) 20.40 Doc: Car Wars 21.32 Doc: Comme Une Envie De... 22.25 Doc: Istandul Quake 23.07 Mag: Magnifique 23.33 Doc: Builders Of The Future 23.59 Doc: Garden Party	01.08 Film: Bleeding Steel 02.53 Serial: Unforgotten 03.38 Film: Gattaca 05.20 Tele: Tanto Amor 06.18 Serial: Dynasty 2 07.00 Film: Bleeding Steel 08.30 Serial: Mike Hammer 09.17 Film: Gattaca 10.54 Film: Du Mauvais Cote De La Loi 12.30 Serial: Unforgotten 13.30 Serial: Chicago Med 15.29 Tele: Amanda 16.16 Tele: Muneca Brava 17.00 Serial: Dynasty 2 17.45 Serial: Unforgotten 18.30 Serial: Rich Man, Poor Man 19.35 Mag: Hollywood On Set 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: Pure Genius 21.15 Film: Liberte Sauvage	00.35 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak 02.09 Bhakharwadi 03.59 Chupke Chupke 06.01 Pavitra Rishta 08.00 Motu Patlu 08.11 Ikyawann 10.00 Jaana Na Dil Se Door 12.00 Piya Albela 14.00 Agniphera 16.29 Punar Vivaah 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Film: Mission Mangal Starring: Akshay Kumar, Vidya Balan, Sonakshi Sinha, Taapsee Pannu, Nithya Menen 20.30 Entertainment: Dance 21.16 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 23.13 Serial: Piya Albela

MBC 2

Samedi 14 août - 21.00

Stars: Vivek Oberoi/afab Shivdasani and Riteish Deshmukh



Dimanche 15 Août - 18.30

Stars: Akshay Kumar, Sinha, Taapsee Pannu, Nithya Menen



If I could go anywhere: India's Varanasi - a sacred site on a river of rituals and altered states



Cherine Fahd
Associate Professor, School
of Design, University of
Technology Sydney

Varanasi, or Banaras as the locals call it, is one of India's most sacred cities. Located in the province of Uttar Pradesh in northern India, it is an important place of pilgrimage for Hindus.

Buddhists and spiritual seekers from around the globe are also drawn to its waters. For yogis there is a transformative promise of gurus and ashrams. For Buddhists there is Sarnath, the town where Buddha is believed to have given his first teaching after receiving enlightenment.

There is also bhang lassi, a yogurt drink laced with cannabis for psychedelic effect.

Author Geoff Dyer hilariously rendered Varanasi in his semi-autobiographical novel - *Jeff in Venice, Death in Varanasi* - as the place to go to lose and find yourself.

To be lost in Varanasi is dangerously exciting.

Everyday death and renewal

In 2018 I was awarded a two-month artist residency by Asialink to Varanasi's Kriti Gallery. I had never been to India, and what I did know of Varanasi I had learned from television trips featuring actors Miriam Margolyes and Judith Lucy as guides. I remembered Margolyes' visit to a hostel where people from all over India could reserve a room to wait out their death.

Varanasi is where Hindus want to die to escape the cycles of birth, death and rebirth.

Dying in Varanasi is everyday. That's not to say dying is ordinary. On the contrary, it is a sacred art form, a spiritual passage that is part of the daily practice of living.

Art is everywhere, especially in the rituals and ceremonies performed in celebration of the Hindu gods.

I want to return to hear the chanting performed by the hustle of pallbearers as they commemorate the dead on their way to the rising flames. I wish to follow them to Manikarnika, one of the cremation ghats



A morning ritual in Varanasi's sacred river Ganga. Cherine Fahd, Author provided (no reuse)

(broad steps to the riverbank).

To see a body in the street - veiled and wrapped in the most beautiful coloured silks, ribbons, pigments and flowers, and carried upon a bamboo stretcher for all to see - changed my view of death.

To be close to the everydayness of death reminds me I am alive. This is why Varanasi is addictive. Its effect is to make me hyper-aware of my living status, especially when I'm pinned by the horns of a bull to the wall of an alleyway as he tries to pass me.

Life without seatbelts

I long to be lost in the commotion of Varanasi street life, among the street dogs, buffaloes, cows, horses, and monkeys. A family on a motorbike, bodies piled onto and into every sort of automobile. No seatbelts, just flowing fabrics of the most beautiful patterns, colours and textures.

I want to cross the treacherous roads, to walk in front of cars, buses, trucks and tuk-tuks that are continuously beeping their horns in a cacophony of blasts and bles, knowing they won't run me over.

Not even the smell of rotting rubbish mixed with the sweet aroma of cow dung, chai and warm milk deters this dream.

Varanasi is beautiful and filthy, vibrant and muddy, and home to stunning silks with intricate gold and silver thread work. You take the good with the bad in Varanasi: the abject poverty, friendly people, dust bowl cricket, endless paradoxes and the Harmony Bookshop.

When I return I will be customarily dressed in my all-black uniform from home. I will gaze upon the beautiful women in their brightly coloured sarees, the bits of flesh poking out teasingly at the waist. And I'll wonder, "Why don't I wear colour?"

In India, art is wearable. Art is on the streets and in the temples. And the front

door of every house.

Bathing and prayer

Varanasi has 88 ghats. In two months, I only visited a quarter of them, including my favourite, Lassi Ghat.

The ghats are used chiefly for bathing rituals, for puja, and somersaulting.

It is oppressively hot, 38° at 8am. The locals bathe and pray and touch. Touch is everywhere. Bodies feeling, pushing, pressing, caressing, splashing each other. The texture of bodies. Hair and wrinkles.

No one is flexing, or spray-tanned or botoxed. Life is dirty and sacred and real. There is no airbrushing and no denying death. The water is magical but muddy. Highly polluted. No one seems to notice.

The performance of private rituals in public has long been my thing. In Paris, during the heatwave of 2003, I photographed bathers along the Seine.

Women with cameras

Unlike Bondi Beach, I don't need a permit to take photographs at the Ganga. The locals and pilgrims are unperturbed by a woman with a camera.

I learn that I am following in the footsteps of other female photographers. The late Australian photographer Robyn Beeche had been a regular visitor, as was the late great US photographer Mary Ellen Mark.

Studying their works reminds me that art is chiefly an expression of our humanity. An expression that is everywhere in Varanasi.

For now, from lockdown, I'll travel through my photographs and as I do, I will perform a prayer for India, a country devastated by the pandemic.

Cherine Fahd
Associate Professor, School of Design,
University of Technology Sydney



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor

Questioning Beliefs



We must make sure our beliefs are actually our own and not a story that's put on us by somebody else.

Just as the stock market rises and falls in response to what people are willing to put their money behind, we have inside ourselves an inner economy that rises and falls in response to our beliefs about what is possible. Sometimes the degree to which we are willing to challenge our belief systems determines the success of our inner economy.

For example, imagine that your family of origin had a belief that musical talent was not something they possessed. As a member of that group, you would likely inherit that same belief about yourself. As a result, even if you had a great desire to create music, you might be hesitant to really get behind yourself, fearing that your investment would not pay off. Even if you had the courage to follow your passion, your inner belief that you are not inherently talented would probably be a major obstacle to investing your energy in your dream.

On the other hand, if you found a way to release that negative belief, a great flood of energy would pour forth, greatly increasing the likelihood of your success. How much energy we are willing to invest in the various ideas, dreams, and visions we carry within is like the money people are, or are not, willing to invest in the various commodities available for trade on the stock market. And in both cases, belief plays a key role in determining how willing we are to get behind something.

One way to open up the possibility for greater success in our inner economies is to understand that belief is not the reliable guide we sometimes think. There are other more reliable indicators of success that we can put our faith in, such as passion, gut instinct, and intuition. Some of the most successful investors in the stock market are the ones that go against the grain, trusting their instincts over the prevailing opinion about what will work.

In the same way, we can learn to trust our heart's desires and our instincts to guide us, questioning any beliefs that stand in the way of our ability to fully invest in ourselves. As we withdraw energy from limiting ideas about what is possible, we free up the resources that have the power to make our inner economy thrive.