

# MAURITIUS TIMES

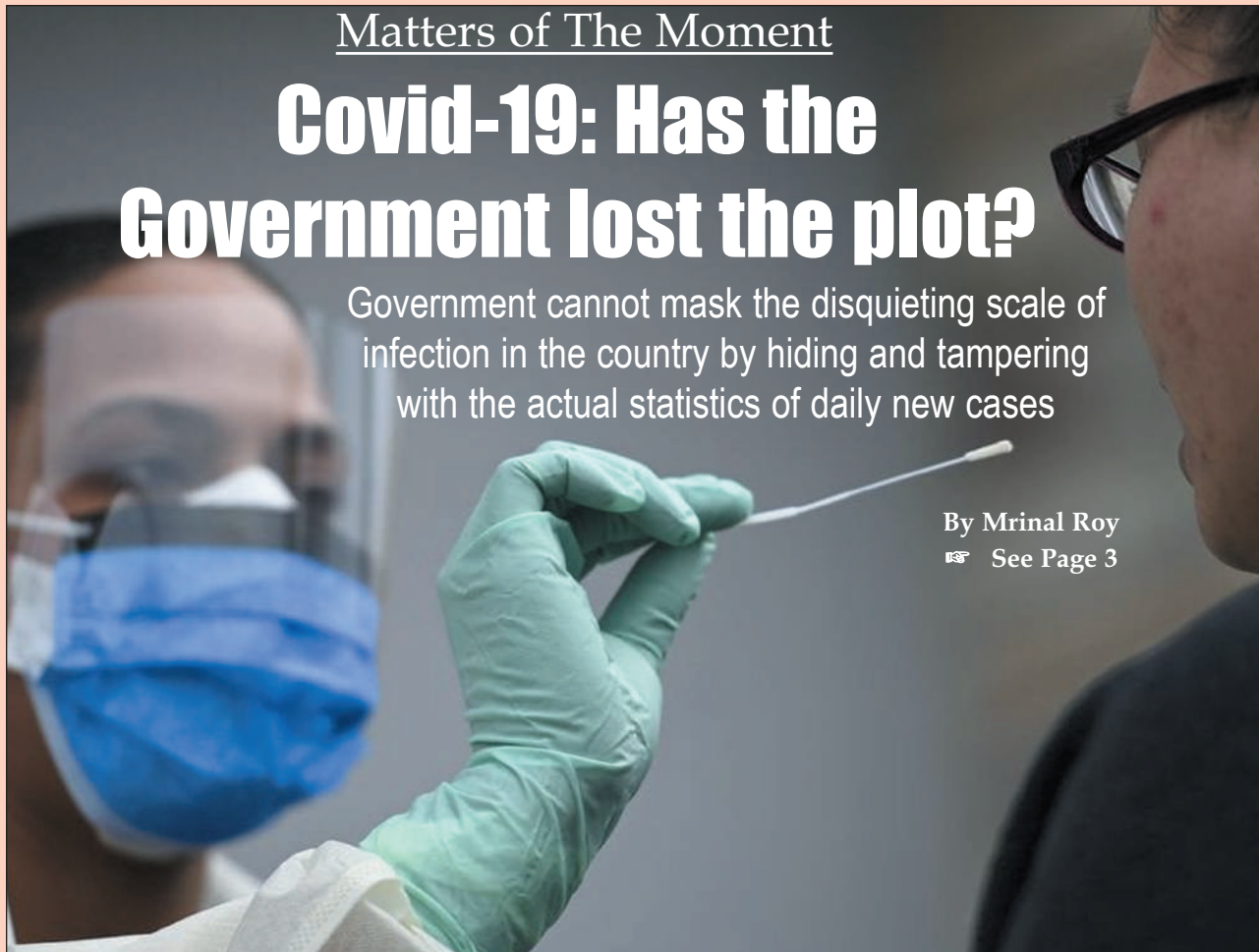
• "The victor will never be asked if he told the truth." -- Adolphe Hitler

## Matters of The Moment

### Covid-19: Has the Government lost the plot?

Government cannot mask the disquieting scale of infection in the country by hiding and tampering with the actual statistics of daily new cases

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### Government of national unity: 'A most indecent proposal'

\* 'The middle class is rapidly thinning down. The low- or no-income group is also expanding, reflecting new forms of poverty and inequality'

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## Lifestyle

### Diet doesn't mean food only



'Your diet is not only what you eat. It's what you watch, what you listen to, what you read, the people you hang around with'

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## Carnet Hebdo

### The Mauritian Dream



We have been used to hearing about Mauritians migrating to more developed and prosperous countries. We hardly give a thought to why people from other countries would like to make a far-flung island in the Indian Ocean their home. What is likely to motivate them? Pic - Outlook

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### The impact of Covid-19 has been lower in Africa. We explore the reasons

The emergence of variants of concern with increased potential for transmission and more severe disease in the younger population could make Africa more susceptible to a severe Covid-19 epidemic

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# The Conspiracy of Silence around Land Dispossession

**A** Truth and Justice Commission (TJC) was set up in April 2008 with the task of uncovering the realities about slavery and indentured labour in Mauritius during colonial days. Its report was submitted to the President of the Republic at the end of November 2011. To a question fielded by the then opposition in December 2011 on the actions that Government was proposing to take in light of the Commission's recommendations, the reply was that, given that the report was voluminous, it would be desirable to examine its contents first and then take the actions that would be deemed necessary.

One could not expect the then government and those that have succeeded it to implement all of the recommendations contained in the report, but that they would at least proceed with those which were thought implementable at the earliest. Nothing much has happened since, except for the setting up of an inter-ministerial committee presided by Hon Xavier Duval with a mandate of looking into the implementation of the TJC's recommendations.

One would recall that besides the sufferings and handicaps the former slaves and indentured labourers and their descendants had to endure down the years, as highlighted by the Commission, the latter also found out how unscrupulous notaries, land surveyors and other middle men wrenched away the possessions of those who could not defend themselves against the legal and commercial armada. The Commission did not recommend monetary compensation against all the abuses made by the powerful of those days in view of an identification problem as to who really are the descendants of slaves today.

There is also the impracticality of establishing the guilt of those who are sitting on huge fortunes inherited through questionable practices of those days -- a problem compounded by the change of 'ownership' of those lands through legal means down the years. However, it is suspected that a lot of land was seized unlawfully or "prescribed" against the helplessness of those claiming their ancestors were the true owners.

One may conveniently seek refuge in a legalistic approach and contend that the issue of land dispossession and redress is complex. But that would be tantamount to governments failing to live up to their constitutional and moral obligations to promote the norms of justice, fairness, and equity - and that would push the victims of land dispossession to resort to hunger strikes in order to get the government to act, as done some time back by Clency Harmon.

It's not known where matters stand as regards the action of Mr Harmon, but the question of land dispossession has again come up in the context of legal action taken against Alteo Agri Ltd by the Kisorbo family who allege that they have been dispossessed of 200 arpents of land situated at Olivia, in the district of Flacq, which belonged to their ancestor, Nicholas Mayeur. This case had been highlighted by the Truth and Justice Commission's report as follows: "This fraudulent acquisition is transcribed in the 'Bureau des Hypothèques twenty-six years after as evidenced by N53/193, allowing enough time to plead prescription." Justice Ratna Seetohul-Toolsee has ruled in favour of the Kisorbo family to initiate legal action in this matter of "revendication" against the contention of Alteo Agri Ltd that it was time barred, as prescribed by the law for such action to be entered within a period of 30 years.

Another case ventilated by the Fabrique de Saint-Julien relates to the alleged dispossession of 25 arpents belonging to the Fabrique, and which today have come under the ownership of Alteo Milling Ltd. Besides representations made to the milling company, the matter has also been referred by the parishioners of Saint-Julien to the Catholic Diocese, which would reportedly privilege dialogue. This will hopefully produce a satisfactory denouement for both parties.

Land grabs by settlers and colons aided and abetted by administrative authorities during the heydays of colonial empires are self-evident on all continents. Red Indians in North America, aboriginals and Maoris down under, were dispossessed and parked in reserves while closer to us the Boers and Anglos pushed the native tribes of Southern Africa further north as millions of acres of fertile or reserve-rich lands feathered the nests of imperial grabbers. There was no easy answer with the end of colonial administrations as the cases of Zimbabwe or Madagascar illustrate.

We adopted the Mandela route of a TJC but have to make sure there is neither a conspiracy of silence, nor an impenetrable veil behind which are hiding those who pull the strings and direct governments to give in to their agenda. Protecting illicit land grabs under colonial administration, however complex the judicial issues, can hardly be in the national interest of independent nations or the general welfare of those people emerging from centuries of battering. Who are those who stand to gain from obfuscation of truth and do they wield such influence over the representatives of the people?

## The Conversation

### The impact of Covid-19 has been lower in Africa. We explore the reasons

*The emergence of variants of concern with increased potential for transmission and more severe disease in the younger population could make Africa more susceptible to a severe Covid-19 epidemic*



International efforts should prioritise equitable access to vaccines.  
Pic - Universal Images Group

**T**here's been an increase in Covid-19 deaths across Africa since mid-July 2021. But the impact of the pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa remains markedly lower compared to the Americas, Europe and Asia.

The reasons for this are not yet clear. Several factors have been suggested as potentially influencing the low burden of Covid-19 illness. These include age demographics, lack of long-term care facilities, potential cross-protection from previous exposure to circulating coro-naviruses, limitations of SARS-CoV-2 testing which may have resulted in an undercounting of deaths, and effective government public health responses.

In a recent paper our team of public health researchers, led by health analyst Janica Adams, examined these possible explanations by reviewing the scientific literature. The aim was to help guide public health decision making to contain Covid-19.

#### Common theories

A number of hypotheses emerged from the literature review. In this article we explore the most common ones. More research is needed to better understand how these factors contribute to the lower burden of Covid-19 disease in the African context.

#### The young age demographic of sub-Saharan Africa

Age has been observed as a significant risk factor for severe Covid-19 illness. Most deaths occur in those aged 65 or older. The median age in North and South America, Europe and Asia ranges from 32 to 42.5 years. The age demographic structure of sub-Saharan Africa is much younger – the median age is 18.

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\* Cont. on page 11

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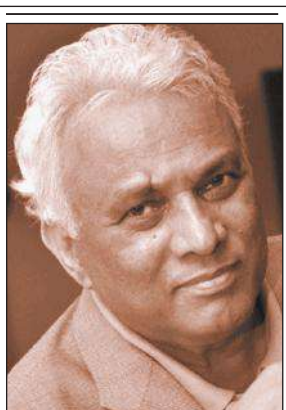
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# Covid-19: Has the Government lost the plot?



Mrinal Roy

Government cannot mask the disquieting scale of infection in the country by hiding and tampering with the actual statistics of daily new cases

**T**here is a marked surge in the number of new cases of Covid-19 infection in the country since the beginning of August. From 18 August to 25 August a total of 2607 new cases of infection have been detected in the country, which means an average of 325 new cases of infection per day. The number

of daily new cases which were in single or double digits in April has jumped to three digits in August.

Despite the daily assertion in the official government communicate that most of the cases of coronavirus infection are asymptomatic, this cannot hide the alarming fact that the scale and extent of infection is patent evidence that the virus is rampant in the country. Many enterprises, the workplace, offices, dormitories, hospitals, schools, prisons, police stations and random locations across the country have all become centres of infection.

This unprecedented situation in the country has heightened the risk of infection while commuting, at the work place, at school or while shopping. People and in particular the elderly are justifiably scared to go out. Is this an efficient or sensible way to manage the Covid-19 pandemic when we are yet to vaccinate the whole eligible population?

It is not rocket science to understand that what is important is not that the high number of cases of coronavirus infection in the country is asymptomatic but that they are all carriers of the virus and that the multitude of infected persons who remain undetected risk spreading the Covid-19 infection in the community even more. Has the government strategy of opening up the economy driven by their new mantra of 'learning to live with the virus', before first breaking its chain of transmission in the community backfired?

## Questionable stratagems

Government cannot therefore mask the disquieting scale of Covid-19 infection in the country by hiding and tampering with the actual statistics of daily new cases. These statistics must be publicly available in a transparent manner. The format used to present the Covid-19 statistics has already been tweaked. The new stated policy of effecting PCR tests only on persons aged more than 65 years who are not vaccinated, have a condition of comorbidity, been in contact with infected persons and show symptoms of Covid-19 infection is therefore patently shortsighted and extremely irresponsible. It occults and does not provide a true picture of the state of coronavirus infection in the country. The stark reality as attested daily through PCR testing is that a fully vaccinated person can be infected and asymptomatic but remains a carrier of the virus. The infected persons are vectors of infection who can infect others in the community as well as children who are not vaccinated.

Such questionable stratagems risk causing the number of cases to rise even more with adverse fallouts such as an increase in Covid-19 hospitalization and a rising death toll. There is therefore an imperative need at a time when cases of Covid-19 infection are rife to urgently take robust measures to first and foremost contain the spread of the virus by breaking its chain of transmission in the community.

We must remember that the country is scheduled to reopen its borders to tourists as from 1 October when vacci-

nated international travellers will be welcomed in without restrictions. The present rate and extent of infection in the country risk affecting the classification of Mauritius as a Covid-safe tourist destination. There is also a real risk that tourists are infected during their stay in the country. Such a situation would be extremely detrimental to the tourist industry. Has the government lost the plot?

The present situation is patently fraught with serious risks. This is not the time for stratagems but for bold and determinant actions to turn around a perilous situation, save lives and protect a sector of crucial importance to the economy. It is therefore imperative to urgently take every action necessary to stem the pervasive spread of the virus in the country and make Mauritius Covid-safe again ahead of the opening of our frontiers on 1 October. There is still time to act. This is a necessary step if we want to break the chain of Covid infection in the country. This is feasible provided the necessary robust actions are urgently taken as Mauritius has the advantage of being an island and a small country.

## New factors

We must realize that the situation regarding the pandemic in the world is constantly evolving. A series of important developments are reshaping the Covid-19 situation. They have a direct bearing on the management of the pandemic in the world.

The Delta variant of coronavirus is now the dominant strain in many countries across the world. Amongst the 65 countries which have registered Covid cases caused by the Delta variant, those most affected include UK, US, Denmark, Germany, France, Singapore, Mexico, South Africa, Japan and Russia. The share of Delta variant detected vary between 99.8% (UK) and 69.6% (France), two countries which are our principal sources of tourists. In such a context every precaution must be taken to prevent the highly transmissible Delta virus from entering the country and infecting people.

At the beginning of August, Pfizer (which is the only vaccine approved for use on children of 12 years and above) and Moderna raised the price of their Covid-19 vaccine. These biopharmaceutical companies are set to obtain tens of billions of dollars in revenue this year as they sign new deals with countries anxious to secure supplies for potential booster shots in the face of the spread of the highly infectious Delta coronavirus variant.

## Third dose

At a time when the latest data from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) show that around half of the population in high-income countries have been vacci-

nated whereas barely more than 1% have been vaccinated in low-income countries, many countries are planning for a booster third dose. After Israel and Hungary, many of the largest nations in Europe, as well as the US have started or are planning to administer a booster dose of Covid-19 vaccine to protect their population. The protection period of Covid-19 vaccines is not yet clearly established from the data available. However, the thumb rule envisaged to beef up the vaccine protection is a booster third dose some 10-12 months after being fully vaccinated.

We must remember that there is already a scarcity of vaccines in the world owing to production and other constraints to meet global demand. A third booster dose admini-



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nistered in rich and other countries renders availability of and access to Covid-19 vaccines to low-income countries even more difficult.

This is an extremely controversial decision at a time when billions of people are still waiting for Covid-19 vaccines. It is an untenable situation as the battle against the pandemic will not be won until the whole world is vaccinated and protected. The World Health Organization has thus asked countries to hold off on booster doses until at least the end of September, by which time it hopes that at least 10 percent of every country's population will be vaccinated.

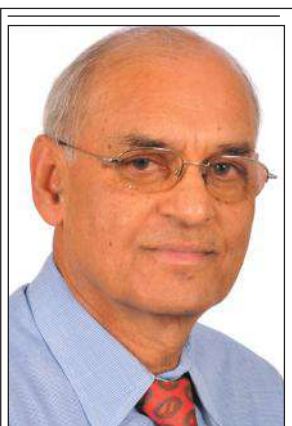
## Way forward

There are health, economic and moral implications for failing to vaccinate the world as evenly and fairly as possible. The world has to fight the battle against the pandemic together. However, vaccine inequity remains a major constraint. According to the World Health Organization over 3.5 billion vaccines have been distributed globally, but more than 75% of those have gone to just ten countries. This lopsided vaccination drive is already causing major supply bottlenecks to meet rising demand fuelled by economic recovery in rich countries.

This is not therefore the time to pander to narrow parochial interests but for solidarity and generosity among the caucus of world nations. The only sensible and viable way forward is for the world to address and overcome the pandemic in a holistic manner with every country including the most vulnerable on board. Not to do so is to shoot ourselves in the foot.



# Diet doesn't mean food only



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

***'Your diet is not only what you eat. It's what you watch, what you listen to, what you read, the people you hang around with'***

Take the best and leave the rest' - I apply this dictum to the contents that come on a 24/7 basis on social media, which is now an integral part of our lives in the most easily accessible and available form: the

smartphone. Earlier it used to be said of men that the car is like their mistress. Nowadays with gender parity or equality - or whatever! - both men and women have become slaves to the smart device.

With so much of unverifiable material continuously popping up on it, and the more recent phenomenon of fake news, one has to perforce be selective as regards what to pay attention to. But from time to time there comes a message that rings true and strikes a chord, and that gives one food for thought. Such as that in a good morning message yesterday, in which I read: 'Your diet is not only what you eat. It's what you watch, what you listen to, what you read, the people you hang around with. Be mindful of the things you put into your body emotionally, spiritually, and physically.'

In other words, all that we consume: what we see, hear, smell, feel (through touch), and eat, as well as what comes more directly into our minds from our interactions with others or individual experience, that is, emotionally and spiritually.

And here the acronym favoured by management gurus captures that dimension; GIGO - garbage in, garbage out.

In common parlance diet is about food and drink, and after reading that post the next thing that I came across as I was browsing was an article by James Brown, Associate Professor in Biology and Biomedical Science, Aston University with the title: 'A diet consisting mainly of fruit is bad for you.'

Both as a doctor and as layman I took an interest in and read it, to learn from the opening lines that - 'Plant-based diets have become increasingly popular in recent years, both for health and ethical reasons. One extreme form of plant-based diet is "fruitarianism", a diet based largely on consumption of raw fruit.' The author comes to the conclusion that 'it is clear that people who follow this restrictive diet are potentially putting their health at serious risk,' citing the case of 'a nine-month-old girl dying after being fed a fruit-only diet. The girl died vastly underweight and malnourished.' Rightly, he advises: 'Before changing a diet, especially if the change is going to be extreme, it is always wise to speak to your doctor first. Incorporating more fruit and vegetables as part of a balanced diet is a far safer, healthier way to approach fruit consumption.'

This is sensible advice. It is good that there is increased awareness all over the world -- in the more fortunate countries where one can afford this luxury (unlike the situation in countries that are pursuing destructive agendas, and currently Afghanistan immediately comes to mind) - of health matters, in which diet figures highly,



**“It is good that there is increased awareness all over the world of health matters, in which diet figures highly, and fad diets with catchy names (veganism, vegetarianism and other 'isms', 'high carb,' 'low carb' and what have you...) are hyped up. Unfortunately, people who take to these diets tend to become extremists and absolutists in their views about preference and very often are unwilling to listen to reason, with the potential to come to harm eventually...”**

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As far as I am concerned, the only time when formal dieting in terms of food is relevant and important is when one is suffering from some ailment which necessitates restrictions or additions to what one is eating and drinking, such as the need to reduce sugar or salt in diabetes and hypertension respectively. Otherwise, the golden rule that I have always followed is eat everything but in moderation. For personal reasons I have stopped eating meat and chicken for many years now, resorting to sea foods only as non-veg fare when I feel like it. But one can jolly well get along, that is be healthy, on a purely vegetarian diet.

As a doctor I get asked about diet by my patients, friends and acquaintances. I am not a dietitian, but in the medical course we do learn about nutrition, and any advice that I give is based on my medical knowledge as

well as my personal experience and observations of people. For example, a week ago at the open market in Forest Side an elderly lady vendor whom I regularly buy from held up a small jar of calcium supplements she told me she was taking, adding that they were quite expensive. I have been seeing her for nearly three years, ever active and almost sprightly, and always smiling and courteous to her clients: picture-perfect healthiness, physically and mentally.

We converse in Bhojpuri, and she wanted to know whether she should continue to take the tablets, and what to eat. My reply was that whatever I am buying from you, that's what you should eat, as well as other vegetables that are all to be found under this roof - as I do, and that is enough to keep all of us in good health. You're running about is enough exercise for your age, I told her. As for the tablets, since you have paid for them, have one on alternate days until you are done, and only take tablets if you are prescribed them should you fall sick.

As for the rest of what we consume with our eyes and ears, and what we feed into our minds - that's for some other time.

For now, bon appétit!

## MAURITIUS TIMES To Our Readers

65 years ago, *Mauritius Times* was founded with a resolve to fight for justice and fairness and the advancement of the public good. It has never deviated from this principle no matter how daunting the challenges and how costly the price it has had to pay at different times of our history.

We are determined not to abandon this line of action, which is the cardinal principle of our raison-d'être. This is what has given *Mauritius Times* a unique standing in the local publishing world.

Our production circumstances have changed since last year with the onset of the Covid-19 lockdown, and we have had to move to the digital platform. We have since March 2020 freely circulated the paper via WhatsApp and by email, besides making it available on our website.

However, with print journalism in Mauritius and across the world struggling to keep afloat due to falling advertising revenues and the wide availability of free sources of information, it is crucially important for the *Mauritius Times* to still meet its cost of production for it to survive and prosper.

Readers will no doubt appreciate that it takes a lot of time, hard work, money and the continued support of our contributors to produce the *Mauritius Times* - as we have done without interruption in these last 65 years. We can only continue doing it with the support of our readers.

We hope you'll continue to support the paper by taking a subscription or by making a recurring donation through a Standing Order to our not-for-profit Foundation. Our future will be secure with the support of our readers and well-wishers.

*The Editorial Team*

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# Dissent and Political Parties in Mauritius



Sada Reddi

*More than ever dissent has become the only way to hold on to democracy*



**“When parties fail to live up to their expectations, they vote with their feet, sometimes joining other parties or even founding their own parties. It is hardly surprising that dissent has shaped the political landscape in all countries and Mauritius is no exception. While dissent is generally suspect in the eyes of many, it is an essential ingredient for democracy to survive and must be encouraged and applauded as a democratic value...”**

At a moment when the national imagination is speculating about a national government comprising several parties it is opportune to reflect on dissent in party politics. The public tend to view political parties as disciplined armies marching under the orders of the party leaders. The reality could hardly be more different.

People join parties with different objectives and ideals and for different reasons. And when parties fail to live up to their expectations, they vote with their feet, sometimes joining other parties or even founding their own parties. It is hardly surprising that dissent has shaped the political landscape in all countries and Mauritius is no exception. While dissent is generally suspect in the eyes of many, it is an essential ingredient for democracy to survive and must be encouraged and applauded as a democratic value; the more widespread it is the better for political life.

All parties have faced dissent during their lifetime. Very often the differences are sufficiently minor to be swept under the carpet so to keep projecting an image of unity. In other cases, differences have to be accommodated until a manageable consensus is reached. When this happens, political parties explain such compromise as a sign of internal democracy within the party. But when differences cannot be accommodated within an organisation or a party, splits occur, leading sometimes to expulsions or purges.

In March 1969, a group of dissidents broke away from the IFB. The IFB withdrew from the government and five of its members joined the MLP. The PMSD was split after it joined the coalition government in 1969, and in 1970 the PMSD dissidents formed the UDM ('Union Démocratique Mauricienne'). In 1973, Dev Virahsawmy resigned from the MMM and formed the MMSP ('Mouvement Militant Socialiste Progressiste').

Earlier, in 1971 a few founding members of the MMM had left the MMM. In July 1979, dissidents from the MLP, led by Harish Boodhoo, were expelled from the Labour Party and they went on to form the PSM. In 1994, the MMM split led to the creation of the RMM. Within the PMSD, the rift between Sir Gaetan Duval and his son, Xavier, led to the formation of the PMXD, which stood for 'Parti Mauricien Xavier Duval'. The MSM is a fusion of MMM dissidents and the PSM. The list of parties which have suffered splits are numerous and dissent continues to rent parties up to the present.

Dissent in political parties resulting in splits or break-ups are usually condemned by the party leadership and the partisan electorate for, when such breakaways occur, they weaken the party, undermine its unity or may reflect poorly on party leadership. Party loyalists also join the chorus in castigating dissidents and subscribe to the motives given by the party leadership. Such dissidence is ascribed to a number of motives ranging from treachery, sell-out or naked self-interest.

These reasons are always suspect for they are used to conceal the real reasons, which very often may have to do with poor leadership or policy failures. In fact, other factors being papered over are more important - such as clash of personalities, ideological differences, disagreements on public policies but equally important is the authoritarian attitude of party leaders and the domination of the party and its organisation by particular groups which make splits inevitable, especially as all parties in Mauritius tend in varying degrees to be more patrimonial and dynastic than democratic.

It is also true that the political culture in Mauritius generally regards dissent in parties as disloyal. In government such 'disloyalty' undermines effective government, cohesion and executive action, and parties do everything to maintain discipline through whips and even toying with Cabinet and PPS posts to keep dissent at bay. Ultimately, the absence of dissent in both government and opposition parties means that parties vote on party lines and MLAs have little scope to air independent views or reflect the wishes of their constituents.

Whatever be the motives of those who dissent from their parties, whether they invoke lofty principles or are barely cloaked matters of material interest, dissent by itself is healthy for the functioning of democratic life. Look at the numerous small parties which are the fruits of dissent that have punctuated the political landscape over half a century of political life - MMSP, Les Verts, PSM, Parti du Sud, Lalit, Rezistans ek Alternativ, MR, MTD, MMSD, RMM and many more.

All these parties have enriched the political landscape, they represent a wide spectrum of political ideas and approaches to politics and have in various ways

served as a brake to authoritarian tendencies, broken the hold of the mainstream parties on the electorate and weakened them during electoral contests.

They make governments more representative and legitimate than they would have been otherwise. For example, small parties that had been in government alliances like the PSM, the PMSD, Les Verts or ML, despite their minority support have provided legitimacy to governments, helped them to become inclusive or given them an image of inclusiveness more acceptable to the population even if this appears symbolic to many. Otherwise, the dominant government party either would have appeared to represent either one ethnic group or a particular slate of constituencies. This would have made it difficult for any government to win the adherence of the population in a plural society like Mauritius.

Dissent when it occurred in government parties and alliances has led to the breakup of government and the postponement or the withdrawal of certain objectionable measures. In 1982, divergence on economic and cultural policies led to the breakup of the MMM-PSM government and new elections in 1983. The issue of republic and more particularly the prospect of an MSM-MMM alliance provoked disagreement in the government.

The bill making Mauritius a Republic was postponed until the formation of a new government which then proceeded to make Mauritius a Republic. The Labour-MSM government was weakened after the departure of the MSM from the government following the MedPoint affair. More recently the PMSD walked out of government when an attempt was made to rein in the independence of the DPP, thus putting a brake to the authoritarian tendencies of government.

Whatever judgement one may have of dissent, it plays a crucial role in the furthering of democracy. This is why after all we have an adversary political system with an official opposition party or alliance with a leader of the Opposition, where dissent from the opposition benches can be voiced out on any issue. It contributes significantly to increase accountability and transparency, and even when questions are evaded and long-winded answers given are irrelevant and incomplete, they nevertheless unwittingly signal to the public various cases of maladministration and corruption.

Over time the Mauritian public has slowly learnt the lesson that dissent is crucial for democracy to survive and they will not only support politicians dissenting from their parties but they have become suspicious of strong governments which ride roughshod on independent views expressed by party members. Whatever be their support at one time for 60-0 or for parties winning overwhelming majorities with more than a three-quarter majority in the National Assembly, it seems that that the electorate is no longer supportive of a government of national unity nor for strong majority governments that will be tempted to override good governance principles or the wishes of the electorate. More than ever dissent has become the only way to hold on to democracy.



## Covid-19 origin probe has 'stalled', window of opportunity closing fast: WHO experts



People wearing face masks walk on a street market, following an outbreak of the coronavirus disease in Wuhan, China February 8, 2021. Pic - Reuters

The search for the origins of the Covid pandemic that has killed millions and crippled economies is at a standstill even as time is running out, scientists charged with the task by the UN warned Wednesday.

An initial report by the team of independent, international experts sent to China by the World Health Organization in January concluded that it was most likely that the SARS-CoV-2 virus jumped from bats to humans via an intermediate animal, reports AFP.

A competing hypothesis that the virus somehow leaked from a lab, like the specialised virology laboratory in Wuhan, was deemed "extremely unlikely". But in a comment in the journal 'Nature', 11 of the 17 scientists on that mission said it was only intended as a "first step in a process that has stalled."

Tracing the biological trail back to the earliest pockets of the disease, which first surfaced in Wuhan in late 2019, becomes

more difficult as evidence disappears or becomes corrupted.

The statement comes less than two weeks after the WHO, in a bid to revive the probe, urged China to hand over information on the earliest Covid-19 cases.

This should include Covid data for 174 infections identified in December 2019 that China failed to share during the initial investigation, the experts said.

The investigators said "it was agreed" at the time that the second phase of research would fill in this gap.

But China pushed back against the WHO request earlier this month, saying the January investigation should suffice and that calls for further data were motivated by politics, not science.

The WHO meanwhile highlighted Wednesday that the international experts' report, published in March in coordination with their Chinese counterparts, had laid out a number of studies that should be conducted, insisting there was no reason to wait.

Beijing has especially bridled at the suggestion that the virus might have escaped from the Wuhan virology lab.

On Tuesday US intelligence agencies presented President Joe Biden with a report looking at both the animal transmission and "lab-leak" hypotheses. The findings were described as inconclusive.

## Race to flee Taliban picks up pace

Afghans on Wednesday faced an increasingly desperate race to escape life under the Taliban after US President Joe Biden confirmed that evacuations will end next week. Over 80,000 people have been evacuated since August 14, but huge crowds remain outside Kabul airport hoping to flee the threat of repression in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.

Biden said on Tuesday the US would stick to his August 31 deadline to completely withdraw its troops despite warnings from European allies that not all vulnerable Afghans would be able to leave by then. His worry about staying beyond the deadline is the risk of a terror attack. "The longer we stay, starting with the acutely growing risk of an attack by a terrorist group known as ISIS-K, which is an ISIS affiliate in Afghanistan," Biden said.

The Taliban will continue to allow Afghans who have the right documents to leave Afghanistan after August 31, Germany's ambassador to Afghanistan said. Markus Potzel tweeted he met with Taliban deputy chief negotiator Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai, who "assured that Afghans with legal documents will continue to have the opportunity to travel on flights after August 31".

The Afghan capital's airport has been gripped by chaos as US-led troops try to maintain a secure perimeter for evacuation flights, surrounded by Afghans, reports Agencies.



Afghans race to flee Taliban after Biden confirms airlift deadline. Pic - The Phuket News

The US said it will prioritise the removal of its troops on the last couple of days, the Pentagon said. There are about 5,400 troops at the airport, a number that Biden says will go down to zero by the end of the month.

China and Russia on Wednesday projected a united front on the Taliban's takeover in Afghanistan with the top leadership of the two countries pledging to enhance cooperation on handling the aftermath. In a call to Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping reiterated China's position of non-interference and respecting Afghanistan's sovereignty.

According to official media reports, Putin told Xi that he shares China's positions and interests in Afghanistan and is willing to work together to "prevent foreign forces from interfering and destroying" Afghanistan.

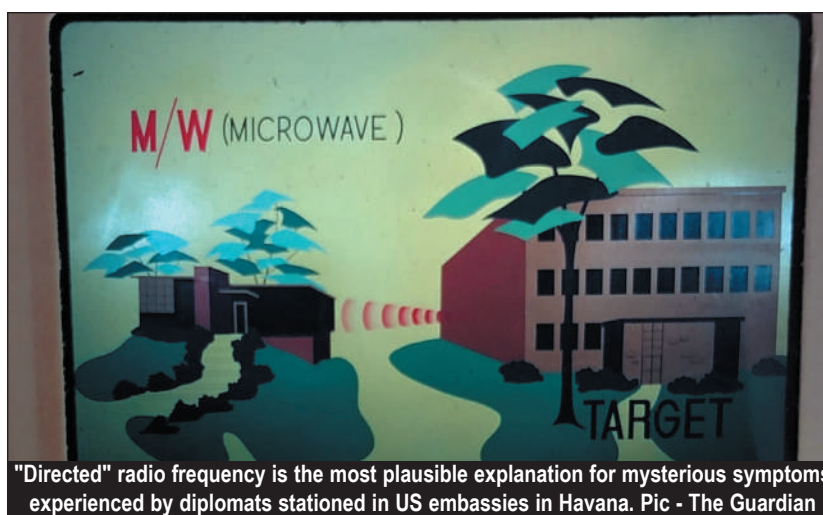
## What is 'Havana syndrome', the mysterious condition plaguing US officials?

A disease -considered to be mysterious so far - called the 'Havana Syndrome' has left several US diplomats plagued with severe headaches, nausea, and possible brain damage this week. While many officials are convinced that the Havana Syndrome is a sustained attack involving electronic weapons, there are also conflicting ideas about it. The condition, which seems to have almost uniformly affected US officials, has sparked several theories - from a 'microwave attack' to weapons that focused on ultrasound, poison, and even a reaction to crickets.

A brief run-down of the entire situation surrounding the Havana Syndrome:

On Tuesday, US vice-president Kamala Harris delayed for several hours a trip to Vietnam after the US embassy in Hanoi reported a possible case involving "acoustic incidents" there, raising concerns she could be a target. Ultimately Harris did go to Hanoi, but the US state department said it was investigating a case of what the federal government officially dubbed an "anomalous health incident" or AHI. It was later unofficially called the 'Havana Syndrome' by the media, reports Joydeep Bose of Hindustan Times.

However, it is important to understand that the 'Havana



"Directed" radio frequency is the most plausible explanation for mysterious symptoms experienced by diplomats stationed in US embassies in Havana. Pic - The Guardian

Syndrome' is not new. Dozens of such cases were reported by US diplomats and intelligence officers since 2016, first in Cuba, then in China, Germany, Australia, Taiwan, and in Washington, DC itself.

In July, the 'New Yorker' magazine reported there have been dozens of cases among the US officials in Vienna, Austria since the beginning of 2021. However, the actual number of incidents reported among American officials

has been kept under the wraps for security reasons.

### Why is it called the 'Havana Syndrome'?

The syndrome was first named after Havana after the administration of former US President Donald Trump pulled the country's officials out of the Cuban capital and expelled 15 Cuban diplomats from Washington, hinting that either its government or Russia was behind the attacks.

After Trump accused Cuba of perpetrating the attacks, the US government reduced staff to the embassy in the country to a minimum. The Cuban foreign minister, in turn, accused the US of lying about the incident and denied any involvement.

There are concerns among officials of the US state department that a powerful rival, possibly Russia, is mounting the attacks.

Following Kamala Harris' delayed trip to Vietnam, former CIA operative Marc Polymeropoulos, himself a victim of the same syndrome in Moscow in 2017, said the volume of attacks appeared to be mounting.

\*Contd on page 7



## Thailand develops robotic system to squeeze out more AstraZeneca vaccine doses



The prototype "AutoVacc" machine costs \$76,243, including other materials like syringes. Pic - saltwire.com

That is up 20% from the standard 10 doses drawn manually, they said. The machine only works on AstraZeneca multi-dose vials currently and labels show each vial can provide 10 to 11 doses, reports Reuters.

"The machine guarantees with accuracy that we can gain an extra 20% from each vaccine vial - from 10 to 12 doses," said Juthamas-Ratanavaraporn, the lead researcher of the team at the university's Biomedical Engineering Research Center. "The extra 20% that we get means that if we have AstraZeneca for 1 million people, this machine can increase the number of doses to 1.2 million people," said Juthamas.

While some health workers using low dead space syringes (LDSS) that aim to reduce wastage can draw up to 12 doses per vial, it requires manpower and a high level of skill, she said.

Thailand had kept Covid-19 largely under control for much of the pandemic, but more virulent variants like Delta have sent cases and deaths soaring since April, ramping up pressure on authorities to increase the pace of vaccinations.

As Thailand struggles with its worst coronavirus outbreak yet, researchers in the country have developed a machine to draw out Covid-19 vaccine doses more efficiently and optimise lower-than-expected supplies.

Using a robotic arm, the

"AutoVacc" system can draw 12 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine in four minutes from a vial, according to researchers at Chulalongkorn University, who made the machine that has been used at the university's vaccination centre since Monday.



## Blue Origin to launch New Shepard spacecraft carrying lunar landing technology today

Jeff Bezos' space flight company Blue Origin is all set to launch its New Shepard (NS) spacecraft on Thursday from West Texas. The spacecraft will fly a NASA lunar landing technology demonstration on the exterior of the booster, and commercial and NASA-supported payloads inside the crew capsule, the company said in a statement.

"This will be the 4th flight for the New Shepard program this year and the 8th flight for this particular vehicle, which is dedicated to flying scientific and research payloads to space and back," Blue Origin said in a statement on August 23.

The New Shepard spacecraft had flown Jeff Bezos, his brother Mark, Wally Funk, and a fourth passenger to space in July. Till date, the spacecraft has flown more than 100 payloads to space across 11 flights. New Shepard is a 60-foot-tall and fully autonomous rocket-and-capsule combo that cannot be piloted from inside the spacecraft. The launch will be webcasted live on the company's website.

## India's only investment in Afghanistan is on its people: Jaishankar

Indian external affairs minister S Jaishankar Thursday said that India had only invested in friendship of Afghan people and was sure that it would get full value of its investment in Afghanistan.

Replying robustly on behalf of the Narendra Modi government before 37 leaders from 31 parties attending the all-party meeting on Afghanistan situation, Jaishankar made it amply clear that India was very much at the centre of the global diplomacy post capture of Kabul by the Taliban and the ground situation was too fluid to take a call on future ties with the present regime, reports Shishir Gupta of Hindustan Times.

While the all-party meeting appreciated the ministry of external affairs for handling the Afghan situation, the MPs questioned what steps were India taking towards engagement with the Taliban and the recognition of the new regime in Kabul.

To this question, Jaishankar replied that India was in a wait and watch mode as there was no certainty either on the ground in Kabul or within the international community over the new rulers of Afghanistan. He said due to divisions with the Taliban, there was no certainty about the government in



Jaishankar made it amply clear that India was very much at the centre of the global diplomacy post capture of Kabul by the Taliban. Pic - Republic World

Kabul, the Doha Process was in a stalemate, there is no consensus over sanctions against Afghanistan if any, law and order situation in the entire country was critical and there was no final decision on

till when the US will stay in that country.

Under the circumstances, Jaishankar said, it would be foolhardy to take a policy call on Kabul and India should avoid the path where events force it to take a decision and that too without full assimilating the facts on ground.

To the allegation that India had been isolated, Jaishankar shot back that Russian President Vladimir Putin, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, US Secretary of

State Antony Blinken, UK Foreign Minister Dominic Raab, Saudi Arabian State Foreign Minister Adel Aljubeir have all been in touch with India. The Qatar government wants to keep in touch with India over Afghanistan and India as president of UNSC called a special session on Afghanistan on August 16.

Compiled by Doojesh Ramlallah





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1956-2020



Sheila Bunwaree

## Government of national unity 'A most indecent proposal'



**S**heila Bunwaree, one of the MMM's leading voices, responsible for coordinating their 2019 manifesto and a respected academic, needs no presentation. We thought it useful for our readers to get her articulate views on various topics of current interest and broader issues regarding our development during and post-pandemic, the pains and sufferings of the middle and lower income categories and the psyche of those running affairs of government on our behalf. She minces no words and should give readers food for thought.

ineptitude, scandals, multiple alleged cases of corruption, opacity, profligacy and arrogance.

How can one possibly envisage a government of national unity with people who refuse to understand the ins and outs of the growing polarisation of our society, who refuse to listen and to act when more than 150,000 people take to the streets. A government of national unity is a most indecent proposal in the current circumstances. To me, it is an unpalatable scenario and will only do more harm to the country.

**\* In light of the challenges facing the country due to the Covid pandemic, especially those on the economic front, wouldn't a national unity government create the conditions for a less adversarial political climate, which would be necessary in the present circumstances for economic recovery?**

**“The pains of a continuous rise in the cost of living are taking their toll on various segments of society. Those who were part of the upper middle class are beginning to swell the ranks of the lower middle and poorer classes. The middle class is rapidly thinning down. The low- or no-income group is also expanding, reflecting new forms of poverty and inequality. People are having to readjust their consumption patterns often at the cost of their health...”**

It is true that a less adversarial climate can perhaps assist in creating more time and space to address the complex challenges we are confronted with. But with the personality types of a good number of those at the helm of the country, no serenity can be achieved by joining forces with them. Quite a few represent all that is reprehensible and unethical.

The critical juncture that the country is at right now,

demands that we have a team which is truly concerned by the suffering of the people, which has the ability to propose and implement a new '*projet de société*' -- one which allows the nation to breathe on the social, political, cultural and economic front. History is replete with examples of national unity governments, with the latter often arising in times of war or in post-conflict societies, in search of some form of reconciliation. True, we are at war with the pandemic and its economic spillovers but it would be impossible to reinvent the economy by sitting at the same table with those very people who are insidiously perpetuating the war by the choice and adoption of wrong policies.

The war of the 70% or so, who did not vote this government, is a war against poverty, oppression, social injustice, gender inequality, the destruction of the environment, money politics, autocratic rule, institutional decay, waste and absence of meritocracy - in short, a war against bad governance.

Economic recovery requires that we take bold and courageous decisions and adopt a right policy mix to attract FDIs, encourage sound investments, the creation of productive and environment friendly jobs, addressing our rapidly growing public debt, put a brake to the erosion of our purchasing power, encourage export competitiveness and create genuine opportunities for small entrepreneurs.

There is enough evidence that the incumbent government is looking in a different direction altogether; so, forming a national unity government would mean legitimising the ongoing toxic politics. Mauritius deserves much better.

**\* The emergence of new strains of the coronavirus suggests that the current uncertainty about the pandemic might persist for quite some time and that it might continue to impact negatively on the economy. It would seem tourism is not, as it was expected, picking up and things do not look bright for other sectors as well. What are your feelings about what could be the most likely scenario over the short/medium term?**

Our economy is in dire straits - a debt to GDP ratio well above the official figure of 95% according to a number of experts as well as a number of other macroeconomic fundamentals in the red. Given these conditions, there is no doubt that the emergence of new strains of the coronavirus will bring more uncertainty.

**Mauritius Times:** In the midst of everything that was happening in the country these last few weeks, we have been served with a snapshot of the leaders of the MSM and Labour Party in conversation at a reception. This led to speculations about an imminent national unity government, which was subsequently rubbished by the leaders of the opposition. What's your take on that?

**Sheila Bunwaree:** If people think that a snapshot is some kind of precursor to the formation of a national unity government, then we are really doomed. It reflects the paucity of thinking and the lack of political acumen within certain sections of society. What is more important to my mind, is to ask ourselves, why would anyone who commands self-respect and who is serious and sincere about his or her engagement in politics, wish to see and/or join a government of national unity, accommo-dating members of the current regime - a regime which is marked by



# 'The middle class is rapidly thinning down. The low- or no-income group is also expanding, reflecting new forms of poverty and inequality'



• Cont. from page 8

That said, we should not put all our economic distress on the pandemic's back. The current regime's inability to remove its blinkers, to shake off its complacency and to stop living in fantasy land is mind-boggling. No reasonable person with a minimal understanding of the tourism and travel industry in a context of a pandemic, would suggest that tourism will pick up fast enough to allow Mauritius to receive some 650,000 tourists in this financial year. Anyone with an iota of intelligence would know that it would take at least a couple of years for the tourism industry to go back to some kind of normality. So, you are right;

**"What is more important to my mind, is to ask ourselves, why would anyone who commands self-respect and who is serious and sincere about his or her engagement in politics, wish to see and/or join a government of national unity, accommodating members of the current regime - a regime which is marked by ineptitude, scandals, multiple alleged cases of corruption, opacity, profligacy and arrogance..."**

tourism is not picking up. And sadly, other pillars of the economy are also paining to revive.

Getting off the FATF and EU grey list remains a challenge for the offshore and financial services sector. The blue economy remains underdeveloped. Efforts to redynamise our export competitiveness in the textile and other sectors remains thin; free trade areas such as the Africa continental free trade area, the Chinese free trade area and the CECPA-Mauritius-India trade agreements are not being optimised.

SMEs have taken a severe blow and very little is offered by way of genuine opportunities and this while the MIC continues to privilege a handful of cronies and others close to the corridors of power. Listening to the small planters makes one realise how alarming the situation is in the agricultural sector. Being heavily dependent on food imports with some 80% of our food requirements coming from overseas, raises important questions around food security. On the other hand, the pandemic has certainly shown us that ICT and digital technology will drive the economy of the future but we remain insufficiently prepared.

Sadly, the scenario for the short and medium term seems rather bleak. Economic recovery takes a long time and unless you have the right mindset and the predisposition to consult with relevant stakeholders, and the competence to formulate and implement the right policies, it would be impossible to see the economy grow to a reasonable level in the next couple of years.

**\* What is also a matter of concern is the direct impact of the pandemic on the cost of living for the middle- and low-income groups. Wage assistance and higher old-age pensions, courtesy of the Lepep government, have most probably mitigated its impact on most Mauritian households, but the former is almost over now. What's going to happen to these people?**

That the wage assistance scheme and higher old-age pensions acted as a buffer and helped a number of households cope with the immediate impacts of the pandemic cannot be denied. But what now?

The pains of a continuous rise in the cost of living are taking their toll on various segments of society. Those who were part of the upper middle class are beginning to swell the ranks of the lower middle and poorer classes. The middle class is rapidly thinning down. The low- or no-income group is also expanding, reflecting new forms of poverty and inequality. People are having to readjust their consumption patterns often at the cost of their health.

Some people have even reported eating only one meal a day and at times even going to bed hungry. Increasing numbers of people are bound to become victims to the violence of inequality and other poverty related problems. Many of those people will be left in the lurch.

**\* Speaking of old-age pensions, you would surely have learnt from social conversations that Mauritians**

**across most social strata are looking forward to their Rs13,500 benefits as promised by the government. And that's probably going to be a convincing argument for the "homo economicus" - who acts rationally and seeks to maximize personal satisfaction - when the time comes...**

There is no space for the traditional economic man anymore- no economic modelling and rationality seems to work anymore. No economic pundit can claim to know what will happen exactly.

**"It makes no sense to reduce educational policy-making to the question of exams and results only. The official policy stand of 5 credits constitutes yet another mechanism of exclusion. The thousands of children pushed to the margins of society represents a huge waste of our human capital and therefore a big loss to the economy- an economy whose demographics are already showing us that the worker-pensioner ratio is on the decline..."**

The idea that human beings are rational creatures and that daily living conditions can be assessed by the use of some mathematical formulas cannot be seen as acceptable any more. Economics need to be humanised. No argument can be convincing anymore.

We know too well that the Rs 13,500 promised to the elderly was an electoral bribe and where is the rationality in all of this when a mere Rs375 compensation could not be paid to the elderly? Whose personal satisfaction will we be able to address in the future seems like a legitimate question?

**\* On the education front, there has been much debate regarding SC results and the official policy stand of 5 credits. As an educationist, do you think this is truly good for our country and our children?**

It makes no sense to reduce educational policy-making to the question of exams and results only. The official policy stand of 5 credits constitutes yet another mechanism of exclusion.

• Cont. on page 10

## NOTICE FOR PERMISSION FOR LAND USE

Take notice that I, **Mega Pro Ltd** represented by **Mr Ashishtranum Kumar Dhunnoo** will apply to the District Council of Moka for a Building and Land Use permit for a proposed Warehouse at Royal Road, Valetta.

Any person feeling aggrieved by the proposal may lodge an objection in writing to the above-named Council within 15 days from the date of this publication.

Date: 27.08.2021



# 'The official policy stand of 5 credits constitutes yet another mechanism of exclusion.'

The thousands of children pushed to the margins of society represents a huge waste of our human capital'

• Cont. from page 9

The thousands of children pushed to the margins of society represents a huge waste of our human capital and therefore a big loss to the economy- an economy whose demographics are already showing us that the worker-pensioner ratio is on the decline. This coupled with a fall in fertility and the persistent brain drain does not augur well for the nation's productivity.

Socially, we are sitting on a time bomb with so many young people disoriented and no jobs to go to. A thorough rethink of our education system is required for post pandemic Mauritius and the shaping of a 'new normal'. The latter has to be built on greater inclusiveness, equity and social justice.

**\* We hear many people saying what's the point of allowing the 'weaker' students with less than 5 credits to move on to HSC when the PSC's minimum requirement for joining the public service is for 5 credits at SC with English and other qualifications. Should we lower the standard for the sake of those who do not make the effort or for one reason or the other are unable to make it?**

It is important to remember that not everyone intends to join the public service but more importantly, isn't it time to revisit the requirements needed by the PSC?

There are so many people with diverse talents which unfortunately go unrecognised. I do not wish to partake in this most illogical reasoning around the 5 credits issue and which is, for that matter, also void of any form of justice whatsoever.

The argument that the 5-credit bar is reflective of high standards and a culture of effort is nonsensical. Research shows that there are alternative ways of evaluating people than a mere 2-hour exams paper. True, there may be a few students making insufficient effort but we cannot penalise hundreds of others who are often the victims of a highly discriminatory and oppressive system of education.

**\* There is also the issue of so many of our students falling out of the system at an early age, and this raises the question of whether we are getting enough return on our investments in education and training. What do you think?**

Investing time and money in education is an investment in human capital. But when we have a system which fails such a high percentage of our children, turning them into illiterates and/or young delinquents: we are certainly not getting adequate returns on our investments. The latter constitute a major chunk of our national budgets but any cost benefit analysis will show that the system remains highly inefficient.

We cannot go on with 'business as usual' with almost no accountability and no one to take responsibility for a system which is failing the nation. For all these reasons and what I evoked earlier, there is an urgent need for *'les assises de l'éducation'*

**\* Are the other pathways and opportunities created for those not performing well in the traditional exams sufficient?**

Certain people argue that the polytechnics and MITD



training centres constitute alternative pathways and opportunities for those who do not meet the minimum criteria set to access HSC. When we look at the numbers of places that exist in the polytechnics and the numbers that are pushed out of the mainstream system, there seems to be a disjuncture.

In addition to this problem, we must ask ourselves why is it that many of the young people do not see the alternative training and pathways offered as an opportunity? Is it a lack of appropriate communication about what is offered, do they feel ill-equipped to deal with subjects and fields that they have never been exposed to at schools, are they imbued with the idea that technical training and education is for second-class citizens, or are they simply aspiring to be part of an academic elite and think that given a chance, they will be able to make it through their HSC and attend a traditional university since university requirements across the world have relaxed entry requirements?

Are the technical schools/centres catering for the disabled who are not performing well in the traditional academic framework? Is there a gender dimension to the

**“SMEs have taken a severe blow and very little is offered by way of genuine opportunities and this while the MIC continues to privilege a handful of cronies and others close to the corridors of power. Listening to the small planters makes one realise how alarming the situation is in the agricultural sector. Being heavily dependent on food imports with some 80% of our food requirements coming from overseas, raises important questions around food security...”**

embracement of technical schooling? Judging by the huge gender gaps on the enrollment figures available for the MITD, one can easily conclude that there are important subtle discriminatory mechanisms which are stifling opportunity for girls.

There are so many more questions which remain unanswered. Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the 17 SDGs established by the United Nations speaks of 'ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.' Are the so-called alternative pathways helping towards meeting this goal?

**“The war of the 70% or so, who did not vote this government, is a war against poverty, oppression, social injustice, gender inequality, the destruction of the environment, money politics, autocratic rule, institutional decay, waste and absence of meritocracy - in short, a war against bad governance...”**

Clearly this is a sector which demands further research and from there on we can perhaps hone our educational/technical training policy making more effectively. But if we carry on investing in new technical institutions and developing legislative frameworks to justify their creation, we are simply putting the cart before the horse.

**\* Another major challenge is that as small highly vulnerable island state we will be increasingly subjected to climate change. Do you think our development paradigm will respond to the climate change challenge?**

Based on 'unsustainable' consumption and production practices, our current economic model is detrimental to the environment and ecology and therefore leaves little room for the curbing of climate change.

A few announcements have been made in the last budget as regards the green economy, and that coal would be phased out by 2030, that some 60% of the country's energy requirements would supposedly come from renewables. That's all very good. I cannot but wait to see all these measures being implemented.

Legal and regulatory frameworks such as the recent climate change bill, for instance, are not enough, there needs to be a change in mindset. The sustainability of the environment is too often mistakenly thought to compete with economic development and if that persists, we shall see the continued destruction of our forests, marine pollution, soil erosion, water stresses, etc., all of which exacerbating human induced climate change.

We also need to educate our citizens regarding sustainability and sustainable development, get them used to the 3 Rs- Reduce, Recycle and Reduce as well as know more about adaptation and mitigation measures. We should perhaps inspire ourselves from Kate Raworth's doughnut economics model and Partha Dasgupta's 'economics of biodiversity'; only then will we be equipped to start embedding Nature in our development model and embrace a new paradigm. Another good starting point would be inscribing the Rights of Nature in our Constitution.



\* Cont. from page 2

The stark difference in age demographics can be demonstrated by comparing Canada and Uganda, which are similar in population size. In Canada, the median age is 41.1. Around 18% of the population is 65 or older. In contrast, the median age of Uganda is 16.7. Only 2% of the population is 65 or older. Canada has recorded nearly 1.5 million Covid-19 cases and 27,000 deaths compared to fewer than 100,000 cases and 3,000 deaths in Uganda. COVID-19 has a significant impact on older people. Countries with larger proportions of older people are more likely to be hardest hit.

#### Lack of long-term care facilities

Most elderly people in sub-Saharan Africa don't live in long-term care facilities. These facilities pose significant risks for infectious diseases. Covid-19 has substantially affected those living in long-term care facilities. During the first wave of the pandemic, about 81% of deaths in Canada occurred in those facilities.

In sub-Saharan Africa, provision of care is mostly left to families. This limits the number of formal caregivers and thus reduces the chance of transmission. An exception to this is South Africa, which has an established long-term care sector. South Africa was the worst affected country in sub-Saharan Africa. And 33% of Covid-19 outbreaks in South Africa occurred in long-term care facilities during the first wave.

#### Potential cross-protection from local circulating coronaviruses

It's been suggested that prior exposure

## The impact of Covid-19 has been lower in Africa. We explore the reasons

to circulating coronaviruses could reduce the severity of Covid-19 illness if people have developed antibodies. A previous study demonstrated that prior exposure to endemic coronaviruses resulted in lower chance of death and lower disease severity compared to those who were not previously exposed. Human-bat interactions are common in some rural areas of Africa.

#### Limitations of SARS-CoV-2 testing

There are concerns that the limited SARS-CoV-2 testing may have resulted in an undercounting of Covid-19 related deaths in sub-Saharan Africa. Insufficient data collection may mean we don't really know the incidence and prevalence of Covid-19. Though varying across sub-Saharan Africa, testing levels have been low compared to other areas of the world.

#### Effective government public health response

The rapid response of several African governments and health organisations may have played a significant role. At the beginning of the pandemic, several measures were taken: screening, establishment of the Africa Task Force for Novel Coronavirus, suspension of flights from China and closure of borders in 40 African nations. New programmes also promote sharing of Covid-19 information across sub-Saharan Africa.

In contrast to high-income countries which focus on non-communicable diseases, health organisations in sub-Saharan Africa focus on infectious diseases. The formation

of national public health institutions has been key in curbing infectious diseases in Africa through disease surveillance, diagnostics and rapid response to outbreaks.

But stringent lockdowns have taken a serious economic and societal toll across sub-Saharan Africa. Lockdowns resulted in increased food insecurity, teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence, and disruptions in treatment of malaria, TB and HIV. Africa's 54 nations are not all the same, and local responses should be tailored to the health, social and economic realities in specific countries.

#### South Africa: the outlier

In contrast to the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa has experienced higher proportions of Covid-related hospitalisations and deaths. South Africa has a remarkably higher median age and a long-term care sector. In addition, the higher rates of HIV and TB in South Africa have been associated with higher Covid-19 death rates. The prevalence of noncommunicable disease in South Africa is higher than in other regions, which may contribute to the higher burden of Covid-19 disease. South Africa also has better diagnostic capabilities and healthcare documentation than other sub-Saharan African countries. This may contribute to higher reporting rates.

#### Recommendations

We believe that the low median age and a small percentage of vulnerable elderly contribute significantly to sub-Saharan

Africa's lower Covid-19 death rates.

Based on our research, we propose several policy prescriptions to help improve health practice.

Lockdowns lead to severe health consequences for the young and the poor in the African context. Therefore, reduced emphasis on lockdowns should be considered.

Better communication with the public is required to help curb Covid-19.

Governments should find adequate financial support for vulnerable sectors, possibly from external agencies.

Governments and health agencies should ensure that medical infrastructure is available in the case of a severe outbreak, as seen with the oxygen shortage in India.

International efforts should prioritise developing vaccines that are effective against virus variants of concern and ensuring equitable access to such vaccines.

The emergence of variants of concern with increased potential for transmission and more severe disease in the younger population could make Africa more susceptible to a severe Covid-19 epidemic. These variants need to be monitored through molecular epidemiologic surveillance. And further studies are needed to better understand potential mechanisms of severe disease in the African context.

**Alex Ezech, Drexel University;  
Michael Silverman & Saverio Stranges,  
Western University**

## Programme des Courses - 18<sup>e</sup> journée samedi 28 Août 2021

### 1 THE TURFFONTEIN PLATE 1400 m - Valeur [0-20] - 12h30

1 Double Winner	P	7-9-R/8-8	61	K.Ramsamy	2	2000
2 Ocean Drive South	CD	7-6-5-4/7	61	S.Rama	7	800
3 Le Quartier	CD	0-0-7-8-9	60.5(-3)	M.Sonaram	5	2000
4 Loosen Your Tie	JMH	N-6/4-6-2	60	B.Sooful	1	310
5 Manetheren	SN	7-6-5-5-7/1	60	J.Allyhosain	3	500
6 What A Kid	RG	5/2-6-3-6	59.5	R.Joorawon	4	550
7 Million Dollar Man	CR	0-0-0-3-7	59	D de Gouveia	9	800
8 Groban	RM	7/7-3-8-R	58	P.C.Orffer	6	1500
9 Bypass	SPN	10-3-8/2-2	55	O.Sola	8	430
10 Midnight Messenger	SPN	5-6/3-3-8	55	T.Juglall	10	1300

### 2 THE WALLIS MC CLOUD PLATE 990 m - Valeur [0-25] - 13h05

1 Fort Mchenry	JMH	0-0-8-3-R	60(-4)	N.S.Batchameah	9	820
2 Intothemystic	SN	0-0-0-10-6	60	S.Bussunt	1	1600
3 Mauritius	SH	0-0-0-1-1	60	I.Santana	7	155
4 Badawee	SJ	9-6-2-9-9	59.5	B.Woodworth	5	650
5 Global Glory	PM	0-0-2-9-R	59.5	J.Allyhosain	2	500
6 Gunner Runner	GR	6/8-7-5-6	59	N.Teoha	4	1000
7 Duke Of York	IRM	4-R/3-5-4	58.5	P.C.Orffer	6	1200
8 Secret Idea	CD	2-1-5-1/5	58(-3)	M.Sonaram	3	1600
9 Celestial Magma[EA]	PM	0-0-0-0-7	58	-----	8	-----

### 3 THE ICE AXE PLATE 990 m - Valeur Benchmark 46 - 13h40

1 Prince Of Venice	PM	0-0-5-5-R	61.5(-3)	A.Roy	5	385
2 Candy Apple	GR	4-2/5-1-1	60.5	B.Sooful	2	320
3 Captainofthesea	RG	1-3-5-5-5/	60	R.Joorawon	8	1300
4 Henry Tudor	CD	6-6-9/9-6	60(-3)	M.Sonaram	3	400
5 Mac 'N Scar	SH	3-8/3-1-3	60	I.Santana	1	300
6 Gang Leader	P	0-0-0-0-8	59.5	K.Ramsamy	4	1500
7 Lickerio	AS	7-6/7-10-8	59	S.Rama	7	1500
8 Waimea	JMH	0-0-7-7-7	55.5	O.Sola	6	300

### 4 THE PRINCESS ANNE CUP 1450 m - Valeur Benchmark 51 - 14h15

1 Arabian Air	CR	9-6-4/5-6	61	D de Gouveia	6	2000
2 Bassam	RG	0-0-0-0-6	60.5	R.Joorawon	10	2000
3 Pop Icon	SPN	0-7-R-10-6	60.5(-4)	N.S.Batchameah	7	3000
4 Culture Trip	SN	0-0-1-1-7	59.5	J.Allyhosain	1	450
5 Colour My Fate	AS	0-0-0-2-2	59	S.Rama	4	430
6 Afdeek	RM	5/4-8-9-1	58	P.C.Orffer	11	1400
7 Carlas Mambo	SJ	1-5/3-1-4	57.5	B.Woodworth	5	1600
8 Walls Of Dubrovnik	SH	0-0-1-1-1	57	I.Santana	3	165
9 Roll Of Drums	CD	7-7-7-6-5/	56.5(-3)	M.Sonaram	2	2500
10 Choir Of Angels	JMH	R-8-6-R-R	55.5	B.Sooful	8	1600
11 Roman Dancer [EA]	G	1-7-1/1-3	59	-----	9	-----

### 5 THE SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL CUP 1600 m - Valeur Benchmark 56 - 14h50

1 Backpacker	VA	0-0-10-4-3	61	B.Fayd'herbe	3	230
2 Red Mars	SJ	2-2/5-3-1	61(-3)	A.Roy	6	350
3 Tsitsikamma Dance	RM	5-4/2-1-4	61	P.C.Orffer	5	500
4 Tower Of Wisdom	GR	N-6/4-3-2	60.5	B.Sooful	4	450
5 Creation	SPN	0-0-0-9-7	60(-4)	N.S.Batchameah	1	1200
6 The It Factor	PM	0-0-0-0-10	57	R.Joorawon	2	2000
7 Absolutist	AS	0-0-6-4-1	55	S.Rama	7	650

### 6 THE RAJCOOMAR GUJADHUR CUP 990 m - Valeur [50+] - 15h25

1 Marauding	G	1-6/2-8-3	61	S.Donohoe	2	285
2 Winter Chill	VA	nouveau	60.5(-3)	A.Roy	4	1100
3 Rob Roy	VA	1-1-3/2-1	60	B.Fayd'herbe	7	260
4 Master Of Illusion	CD	0-0-4-7-7	57(-3)	M.Sonaram	5	2000
5 Bergerac	AS	0-0-0-9-R	56	S.Rama	6	2500
6 Huyssteen	RG	4-1/1-3-5	56	B.Sooful	3	450
7 Noir's Boy	SJ	0-0-0-0-8	55.5	T.Juglall	1	900
8 Al Bragga	G	nouveau	54.5	Y.Emamdee	8	550

### 7 THE WING PASSAGE PLATE 1450 m - Valeur Benchmark 31 - 16h00

1 Straight	JMH	4/6-1-1-4	60(-3)	A.Roy	3	430
2 Yankeedoodledandy	G	9-11-8/3-3	60	S.Donohoe	8	500
3 Pforzheim	SPN	0-6-3-2-R	59.5	J.Allyhosain	1	350
4 The Jazz Singer	SH	7-6-9/6-7	59	I.Santana	5	1500
5 Travelin Man	RM	3-2-4/3-4	59	P.C.Orffer	7	475
6 Tyrian	PM	5-7/4-5-5	59	S.Bussunt	6	2000
7 Flowerscape	RG	1/2-4-2-1	58.5	R.Joorawon	4	650
8 Taranaki	GR	3-2-4-6/1	58	B.Sooful	2	430

### 8 THE ANTOINE ULCOQ PLATE 1850 m - Valeur [0-26] - 16h35

1 Affranchi	VA	7-6/9-8-8	61.5(-3)	A.Roy	4	1200
2 Overdose	AS	6-4-2-8-1	61.5(-4)	N.S.Batchameah	1	350
3 Captain Scabiosa	SH	0-0-0-0-8	61	I.Santana	2	920
4 High Key	SN	4/3-5-6-2	60.5	J.Allyhosain	8	400
5 Dreamforest	CD	3-1-2-5-4	60(-3)	M.Sonaram	5	470
6 Master Mariner	JMH	0-0-7-8-7	60	B.Sooful	6	1600
7 Justinian	G	0-0-6/2-2	58.5	S.Donohoe	3	350
8 Glitterrock	AS	7-8-8/6-2	54.5	S.Rama	7	700

## Selections

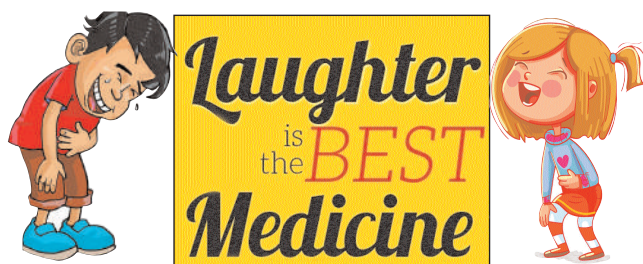
- Loosen Your Tie, Bypass, Manetheren
- Mauritius, Secret Idea, Duke Of York
- Candy Apple, Mac 'N Scar, Prince Of Venice
- Walls Of Dubrovnik, Culture Trip, Colour My Fate
- Backpacker, Tower Of Wisdom, Red Mars
- Rob Roy, Marauding, Huyssteen
- Pforzheim, Taranaki, Straight
- Overdose, Justinian, High Key



"This is a neuroscientific explanation of why learning another new language is easier than acquiring a second. Bilinguals only have two points of reference. Multilinguals can use their knowledge of three or more languages in their brains to learn another new one," said Sakai.

1. GREATFIVEEIGHT, ROCHESTER, BARAK LAVAN
2. TICKET TO CAIRO, CITADEL, ULTIMATE WARRIOR
3. BELLAGIO KING, G I JOE, EIGHT CITIES
4. CAPTAIN GARETT, GO JEWEL, TRIPOD
5. MAMBO ROCK, INAUGURATION, SOCKEROO
6. KAMADEVA, BARITONE, UNDERCOVER AGENT
7. REMUS, RAHEEB, ROCK MANOR
8. CAPKUTA. FREE TO WIN. CLOUD SEEDER





## Beat 'em all up real good

One day a man arrives at the pearly gates and meets St Peter. They're going through the necessary paperwork and documentation so St Peter asks the man, "So, did you have any memorable experiences that stood out on earth?"

The man pauses for a second to think and responds, "Why, yes I did have a quite memorable experience! I was at this bar getting a drink next to a beautiful young lady when this big bunch of bad bikers barged in and started harassing the young lady. After awhile I had to step in so I picked the biggest, baddest looking dude of the group and went up to him, punched him in the gut and yanked out his eye brow ring. Then I looked at the rest of the gang and said, "If you don't leave now, I'll kill all of you!"

St Peter then looked up shocked and said, "Oh my goodness! When did all this happen?"

The man looks down at his watch..." Oh, I'd say about 4-5 minutes ago."



## Churchill's wife and the street sweeper

Clementine, Sir Winston Churchill's wife, was talking to a street sweeper for a while. "What did you talk about for so long?" asked Sir Winston.

She smiled, "Many years ago he was madly in love with me."

Churchill smiled ironically, "So you could have been the wife of a street sweeper today."

"Oh no, my love," Clementine replied, "If I had married him, he would have been the prime minister today."

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## Corporate Joke

Agency: "Sir, we found three candidates as per your requirements. How do you want their placements, sir?"

MD: "Put about 100 bricks in a closed room. Then send the candidates into the room and close the door, leave them alone and come back after a few hours and analyse the situation:

1. If they are counting the bricks, put them in Accounts department.
  2. If they are recounting the bricks, put them in Auditing.
  3. If they messed up the whole room with the bricks, put them in Engineering.
  4. If they are arranging the bricks in some strange order, put them in Planning.
  5. If they are throwing the bricks at each other, put them in Operations.
  6. If they are sleeping, put them in Security.
  7. If they broke the bricks into pieces, put them in Information Technology.
  8. If they are sitting idle, put them in Human Resources.
  9. If they say they have tried different combinations yet not a single brick has been moved, put them in Sales.
  10. If they have already left for the day, Put them in Marketing.
  11. If they are staring out of the window, put them in Strategic Planning.
- And...
12. If they are talking to each other and not a single brick has been touched, Congratulate them and put them in Top Management.

## Life's Lesson

### The Ant's Destination

One Sunday morning, a wealthy man sat in his balcony enjoying sunshine and his coffee when a little ant, which was going from one side to the other side of the balcony carrying a big leaf several times more than its size, caught his eye.

The man watched it for more than an hour. He saw that the ant faced many obstacles during its journey. It paused, took a diversion and then continued towards its destination.

At one point the tiny creature came across a crack in the floor. It paused for a little while, and laid the huge leaf over the crack. It then walked over the leaf, picked the leaf on the other side, then continued its journey. The man was captivated by the cleverness of the ant, one of God's tiniest creatures.

The incident left the man in awe and forced him to contemplate over the miracle of Creation. In front of his eyes there was this tiny creature of God, lacking in size yet equipped with a brain to analyze, contemplate, reason, explore, discover and overcome.

A while later the man saw that the creature had reached its destination - a tiny hole in the floor which was the entrance to its underground dwelling. And it was at this point that the ant's shortcoming was revealed. How could the ant carry into the tiny hole the large leaf that it had managed to carefully bring to the destination? It simply couldn't! So the tiny creature, after all the painstaking and hard work and exercising great skills, overcoming all the difficulties along the way, just left behind the large leaf and went home empty-handed.

The ant had not thought about the end before it began its challenging journey; the large leaf ultimately proved to be nothing more than a burden to it.

The man learned a great lesson that day. That is the

truth about our lives too.

We worry about our family, we worry about our job, we worry about how to earn more money, we worry about where we should live, what kind of vehicle to buy, what kind of dresses to wear, what gadgets to upgrade... only to abandon all these things when we reach our destination.

We don't realize in our life's journey that these are just burdens that we are carrying with utmost care and the fear of losing them... only to find, that at the end, they are useless since we can't take them with us.

Instead of the John,  
I call my bathroom the Jim!  
That way, it sounds better when  
I say I go to the Jim first thing  
every morning!!!



Serenity RavenWolf.com

## Funny Stories



### A barber and a fool

A barber shop was filled with customers when a little boy walks into the shop.

Looking at the little boy, the barber whispers to his customer, "This is the most foolish kid in the world. Watch while I prove it to you."

The barber puts a dollar bill in one hand and two quarters in the other, then calls the boy over and asks, "Which do you want, son?"

The boy takes the quarters and leaves.

"What did I tell you?" said the barber. "That kid never learns!" the barber said laughing.

Later, when the customer leaves the shop, he sees the same young boy coming out of the ice cream store.

"Hey, son! May I ask you a question? Why did you take the quarters instead of the dollar bill?" asked the man.

The boy licked his favorite ice-cream and replied, "Because the day I take the dollar, the game is over."



## Health & Balance

# Tips to prevent your next migraine

*It's better to avoid a migraine than to try to stop the pain once it's started*

### Start with the basics

Doubling down on good health habits helps prevent some migraines. Don't skip meals. Drink plenty of water. Be consistent about coffee, and you may not have to give it up. Sleep for 7 to 8 hours every night; you're more likely to have a migraine with less than 6 hours or more than 9. Regular exercise, especially cardio, will boost endorphins. Ease into your workouts with a warmup and end with a cool-down.

### Nutrients

Having more of these in your diet may help prevent migraines:

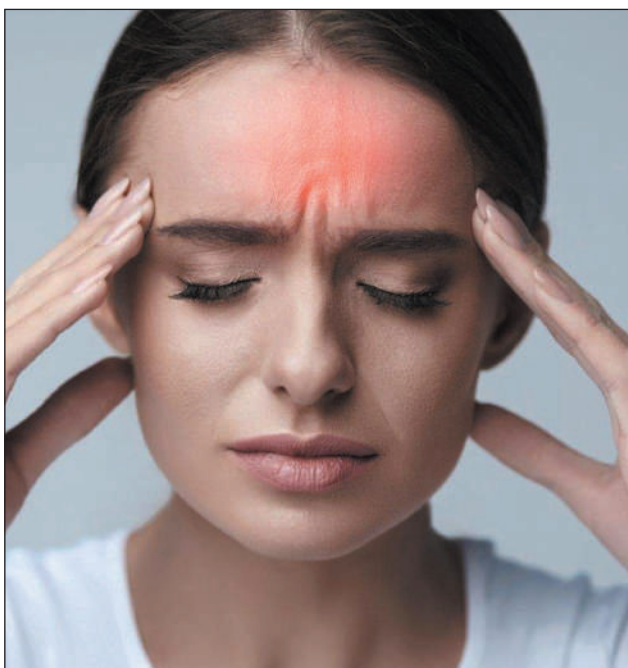
- Magnesium, a mineral in greens, grains, nuts, and seeds
- CoQ10, an antioxidant in fatty fish and whole grains
- Riboflavin, a B vitamin in milk and beef
- Melatonin, a brain hormone that regulates sleep, in many plant-based foods like tomatoes, olives, walnuts, barley, and rice

Ask your doctor before you take them as supplements though.

### Monitor and manage stress

Write down your stress level at the end of each day. When it's higher than normal (a sign that a migraine is likely), ask your doctor if it's a good idea to take your migraine medication. This may help you avoid getting one.

Yoga is great for easing stress. If you do it regularly,



like 5 times a week, you may also get fewer migraines. Choose a gentle style, not a challenging one.

### Migraine prevention medication

If you don't respond to other treatments and you have more than 4 migraine days a month, your doctor may suggest preventive medicines. You can take these regularly to reduce the severity or frequency of the headaches. These include seizure medicines, blood pressure medicines (like beta blockers and calcium channel blockers), and some antidepressants. CGRP inhibitors are a new class of preventive medicine that your doctor may recommend.

### Be aware of your menstrual cycle

For many women, migraines follow a monthly pattern, often in the stretch before and during each period. Taking NSAIDs (like ibuprofen or naproxen) or your preventive medication for a few days before your period may help. If that doesn't work or your period is irregular, ask your doctor about using birth control pills continuously.

### Watch the weather

While you can't always avoid it, you can try to become less sensitive to elements that affect you -- like higher temperature, humidity, a drop in barometric pressure -- by facing them regularly and for gradually longer stretches. If you get migraines more often when you also have a stuffy, runny, or itchy nose, ask your doctor if antihistamines or allergy shots could help. Avoid decongestants; they can sometimes cause migraines.

### Acupuncture

In some studies, this ancient Chinese practice was effective for reducing the number of migraine headaches for many people. Acupuncture seems to be about as effective as some of the standard medical treatments in preventing migraines.

### Tinted glasses

Special lenses might help if your migraines are triggered or made worse by light. And they're available without a prescription.

### At-home devices

Hand-held gadgets send magnetic or electrical signals to certain nerves in your brain. Depending on the unit, you simply place it on your head or neck for a short amount of time. Over time, you may get fewer migraines and need less migraine medicine.

### Review your medicines

Some prescription and over-the-counter products, from heartburn pills to antidepressants, have been linked to migraine. Check with your doctor to see if what you're taking could be a trigger. Adjusting the dose or changing problem drugs may lower the number of migraines you get.

### Don't wait for pain

Most migraines start with at least one symptom hours or even a day before a headache sets in. Common ones are yawning, a change in mood or irritability, fatigue, neck ache, and sensitivity to light. Take your migraine medication as soon as you notice any of these signs, and you may be able to prevent a full-blown attack.

WebMD

## Healthy Living

# Hypertension: 5 warning signs of emergency you must look out for

**H**ypertension or high blood pressure isn't the problem of only adults. Anyone above 20 can develop this health concern which requires constant monitoring of the blood pressure level to live a happy and long life. The most dangerous thing about high blood pressure is that it can go unnoticed for years as the symptoms are not prominent. The problem is only detected once it reaches a dangerous level and starts damaging other organs. It can also lead to life-threatening complications like heart attack and stroke. Extreme high blood pressure is an emergency and requires immediate attention. Here are some signs of extremely high blood pressure when you need immediate medical attention.

**Shortness of breath:** People suffering from pulmonary hypertension usually feel out of breath easily and have difficulties in performing everyday activities. But



sudden suffocation can also be a sign of stroke and heart attack. Prolonged high blood pressure can lead to fatigue and shortness of breath.

**Blood spots in eyes:** A red spot in the eyes also known as a haemorrhage is caused as a result of increased blood pressure. Too much pressure on the walls of the arteries may stretch the tissues, which becomes damaged after a point. It even damages the arteries and optical nerves of your eyes if left untreated

for a long time. Sometimes blood spots in the eyes are also caused without any identifiable cause. In any case, it is vital to visit a doctor.

**Dizziness:** Sudden dizziness and loss of balance or coordination are warning signs of a stroke. It is a common sign in the case of prolonged high blood pressure. Apart from this, sudden dizziness experienced sometimes when suffering from hypertension may be due to loss of oxygen supply to the brain. Dizziness can also be caused due to the medication for high blood pressure.

**Anxiety:** Having high blood pressure can also trigger feelings of anxiety. Severe anxiety leads to symptoms like breathlessness, sweating, trembling and heavy breathing. All these issues need immediate medical attention. Even anxiety can spike your blood pressure

level which may have a severe impact on your mental and physical health.

**Vomiting:** High blood pressure, also called hypertensive crisis, may lead to symptoms like vomiting. This symptom of hypertension also requires immediate medical attention. Other symptoms of extremely high blood pressure may include confusion, nose bleed and blurred vision.



## Debina Bonnerjee recalls she and Gurmeet Choudhary 'had no work for three years' before *Ramayan*

Television actor Debina Bonnerjee has recalled that she and her husband and actor Gurmeet Choudhary 'had no work for three years' before they starred in *Ramayan*. She also said that they didn't have money either, reports Hindustan Times. The couple played Sita and Ram in the serial, which aired for three years from 2006 to 2009.

Speaking to a leading daily, Gurmeet Choudhary said, "We have experienced the lockdown feel previously too. When we were new, we didn't have work and used to sit at home."

Debina also said, "Before *Ramayan*, we had no work for three years. Paise bhi nahi hote the, ghar mein hi khaana banate the, jo sab logon ne lockdown mein kiya, humne woh sab tab hi kar liya (We didn't have money then, we used to eat at home. What people did during the lockdown, we had done earlier)."

Earlier this year speaking to Hindustan Times, Debina and Gurmeet spoke on the impact of playing the roles of the deities. "I believe that one does have a few of those qualities then only he or she can play such roles well. And also, when one is portraying a certain character then the characteristics of the great ones do impact you. So, since we have played their roles, we feel close to Lord Ram and Sita," she had said.

Gurmeet had said, "Since we always had their blessings probably that's the reason, I feel we were able to make a mark in the TV industry with the show *Ramayan*."



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### 'We visited a mall after months in Delhi, and it felt different'

On the other hand, speaking to Times of India, Gurmeet Choudhary and Debina Bonnerjee, who were in Gurgaon and Delhi recently, said "It felt amazing to visit Delhi this time." Besides a photo-op, the couple also took out some time for a short trip to a mall. "It felt different because we went to a mall after a long time," said Debina, while Gurmeet added, "Debina actually got emotional

ter that you play. I'm done being a sari-clad vamp, it's time people see my other shades. There have been a lot of offers, but I want to take up something that I haven't already played. I don't mind playing a negative character or a character with grey shades, but it has to be beyond the realm of what I have done."

She added, "Times have changed and I am itching to once again play a role that becomes iconic, the medium can be any--television, OTT or films. What's most important is that there needs to be a spark that can light up the screen."

Urvashi made her acting debut in the Doordarshan series Shrikant, in which she essayed the role of Rajlaxmi. She also featured in *Dekh Bhai Dekh*, as Shilpa. She became a household name by playing the role of Komolika in *Kasautii Zindagii Kay*. The actor has also starred in *Waqt Ki Raftar*, *Ghar Ek Mandir*, *Kabhii Sautan*, *Kabhii Sahelii*, and *Kahiin To Hoga*.

In 2012, she participated in Colors TV's Bigg Boss 6 and emerged as the winner. She was also seen in the series Chandra-kanta, as Queen Iravati.

Urvashi Dholakia was 16 when she tied the knot, and welcomed her twin sons -- Sagar and Kshitij -- at the age of 17. She

has raised them as a single mother.

Earlier this year, she had told a leading daily, "My children and family want me to settle down but I haven't given it a serious thought yet (laughs). My children often ask me to get married or date someone but whenever I'm faced with these topics, I always laugh it off. Kya sochu main, not that ki mera time chala gaya hai (what should I think, I'm not old), but I can't overthink things beyond a point."

because she got the chance to shop. Aisa lag raha tha hum kab se mall nahi gaye the."

**I give everything to the project I agree to do:**  
**Gurmeet**

Gurmeet, who became a household name with TV shows like *Ramayan*, *Geet - Hui Sabse Parayi* and many others, has now also ventured into films, web projects and music videos. The actor adds that he focusses on giving his best to all his projects rather than the medium. He says, "I love movies. This was always the dream and now that dream is happening. I am enjoying this process and whatever I do, I give my 100% to it."

**I interact with more people and that's how I am able to learn:**  
**Debina**

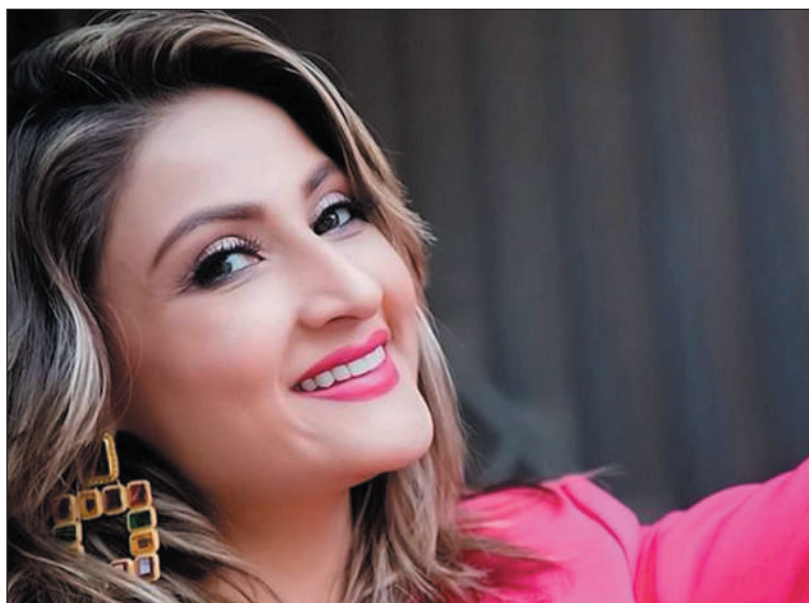
Debina, who has also been focussing on her career as an influencer, shares that people think it is easy because she is a popular face, but that's not the case. "While being popular means you have an existing fan following, but uske baad ki journey aap ki apni hoti hai. The initial 10,000 followers may come easy but the journey after that is all yours. The effort that I put, my consistency, and hard work have helped. I interact with more people and that's how I am able to learn," she says.

**'We will never forget the second wave'**

While Gurmeet tried to help people on ground in the second wave with his team, Debina ensured that she was there for her family members during this time. "In the first wave, we all were thinking about keeping ourselves occupied, but the second wave was more about humankind than keeping oneself busy. It was more about helping everyone. We realised the importance of society. It was more about taking care of each other mentally," says Debina.

Gurmeet adds, "I think we were able to survive the second wave because people helped each other. I don't think I will be able to forget the second wave ever."

## Urvashi Dholakia says she's 'done being a sari-clad vamp'



Urvashi Dholakia has spoken about the roles she has played so far, adding that she is 'done being a sari-clad vamp'. She became popular for playing Komolika in *Kasautii Zindagii Kay*.

Speaking to a leading daily, Urvashi Dholakia said, "As much as I love the work that I have done, I also feel that there is a certain stereotyping that has happened. Somewhere, people stop seeing you outside the charac-

## I am reliving my father's dream: Sumbul

Seen in Article 15, Sumbul Touqeer Khan is glad to have been able to pursue her father's wish of making a career in acting.

"My father went out of his way to see me and my sister (Saniya) make a name in the entertainment industry. He being a theatre director and choreographer, closed his academy in Delhi to bring us to Mumbai where we could try our luck and relive his dream of acting," says the Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein and Chandragupta Maurya actor.

In a short span of time, she has done notable characters in a number of shows and enjoys when praise comes her way.

"I remember when I started shooting for Article 15 it was a small role but in those seven days of shooting Anubhav (Sinha) sir was really happy with my performance. It turned out to be important enough to earn me praises from many including Ayushmann (Khurrana) sir."

Like many others Sumbul too had a tough time during the pandemic resulting in loss of work.

"Last year due to lockdown my show went off air and I was out of work. I love to go to work every day and that's something I look forward to in my life. But I was stuck in Nagpur with no work at all. Savings too were declining fast and I was too anxious. This year, for a change, it was not as bad because I had a show where I play a protagonist and then work didn't stop as we relocated to another city for the shoot of *Imlie*," says the young actor.





## BollyBytes



### Kriti Sanon's next film is about adoption of parents

**K**riti Sanon who has delivered her career's best performance with *Mimi* is clearly basking in the glory. Her next film with Rajkumar Rao is about a couple who are looking out to adopt parents in their life to fill the void. Kriti Sanon gets talking to a daily about this film and finds it funny that while her last film was about surrogacy, this one is about adoption. She further reveals that the film is a wonderful slice-of-life drama and has a beautiful message which has been treated in a light manner.

Kriti Sanon has *Adipurush* next where she will be seen playing the role of Sita. She also has Varun Dhawan starrer *Bhediya*, *Bachchan Pandey* with Akshay Kumar and *Ganapath* with Tiger Shroff. There is also *Ala Vaikunthapuramuloo* with Kartik Aaryan which is yet to be made official.



### Deepika Padukone keeps it casual and stylish

**B**e it airport looks, glamorous red carpets, or casual public appearances, Deepika Padukone's sartorial choices have always been ahead of the curve. This time the actress made a casual appearance in the city with glam and elegance.

Dressed in a white T-shirt, teamed with a pair of black leather trousers, the actress looked breathtaking. A dark lip colour, and subtle make-up and complemented with a delightful smile tied her whole look together. She was seen waving at the camera-men while she made way towards her car.

On the work front, Deepika will be seen sharing the screen space yet again with Ranveer Singh in Kabir Khan's '83', where he essays the role of cricketer Kapil Dev and she would be playing his on-screen wife Romi Dev. Apart from that, she also has several interesting projects in her kitty which include Shakun Batra's untitled next with Ananya Panday and Siddhant Chaturvedi, for which she has recently wrapped shooting too.

### Riteish Deshmukh, Tamannaah Bhatia to star in Netflix's 'Plan A Plan B'



**R**iteish Deshmukh this week announced he is set to make his digital debut with a quirky coming-of-age Netflix film "*Plan A Plan B*" co-starring Tamannaah Bhatia.

The film follows the story of a matchmaker who believes marriage is for everyone - except herself - and a successful divorce lawyer with a secret. "What happens when they cross paths? Can opposites coexist, let alone attract?" the synopsis read.

Deshmukh said he was thrilled to be making his digital debut with "*Plan A Plan B*". "What excites me the most is the terrific storyline of the film and the journey of this unexpected love story."

Bhatia called "*Plan A Plan B*" a special film and said she was bowled over by the character of a matchmaker. "Working on this film has been a great experience. I can't wait for the world to witness this unique story very soon," she said.

## YOUR STARS

### Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

You may fall madly in love this time. A turn may be rounded in your career or ambitions this time; prepare your terrain, make the necessary arrangements and make yourself be appreciated for your efficiency in your work.

**Lucky Numbers: 1, 15, 17, 20, 25, 27**

### Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

You'll have good chances to make good returns on your resources or to find a lodgings. You'll be very romantic; a fortuitous encounter will throw you into wonder; you'll have sometimes the impression that it all is too beautiful to be real!

**Lucky Numbers: 7, 11, 12, 29, 36, 40**

### Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

In love, a little jealousy will be good, but much jealousy will be disastrous! An intimate friend of yours will try to abuse your confidence. Financial operations and transactions concerning family possessions will be favoured.

**Lucky Numbers: 5, 9, 11, 12, 26, 31**

### Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

Beware of certain of your friends who are too intrusive. Take your spouse's counsel of prudence into consideration and, if necessary, let him/her take care of the strings of the purse; otherwise you may have bad surprises.

**Lucky Numbers: 4, 9, 24, 29, 31, 33**

### Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

Single natives will find a mate after their hearts. At work, you're going to have unexpected strokes of luck. Small tensions on the family front. Excellent chance concerning money matters.

**Lucky Numbers: 5, 7, 8, 20, 23, 26**

### Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

Everything will become easier for you; think to settle certain delicate problems definitely. You can make good business deals. You must canalize your energy well and beware of exhilaration, otherwise there'll be risks of small incidents.

**Lucky Numbers: 5, 7, 19, 20, 26, 30**

### Gemini: May 21 - June 20

If you let yourself go to multiplying useless spendings, you could have serious troubles very soon. Single people will make promising encounters, but they will not be ready to renounce their freedom.

**Lucky Numbers: 9, 12, 19, 20, 26, 30**

### Cancer: June 21 - July 22

You could win a lot in a game of luck. Your morale is at a low ebb? Then concern yourself more of your interior, your garden, or of other people, and everything will fare better.

**Lucky Numbers: 2, 9, 17, 21, 25, 26**

### Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

Remain yourself, don't try to resemble others. You'll lack dynamism and will want to do nothing; or, on the contrary, in certain cases, you'll be overflowing with bubbling energy to the point of sinking into excessive nervousness.

**Lucky Numbers: 1, 4, 5, 7, 12, 33**

### Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

This week should bring you great amorous satisfactions: intimacy, complicity, sensuality. You'll be in a position to succeed in a first-rate financial operation which will make people jealous of you.

**Lucky Numbers: 7, 9, 15, 18, 22, 33**

### Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

Single natives will enter a period of amorous stability. At work, don't hesitate to see large and far. Some good money entries. If you desire to travel, all chances will be on your side; go and meet people outside your habitual environment.

**Lucky Numbers: 1, 9, 11, 14, 16, 20**

### Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

The financial field will imply traps and you'll need much reflection so as not to take a bad decision. In your career, clearly define your objective and pursue it with tenacity for you're beginning now to go through a phase of positive evolution.

**Lucky Numbers: 6, 11, 17, 23, 33, 36**



## CINE 12

Vendredi 27 août - 21.15



## MBC 1

Samedi 28 août - 21.20



## MBC 1

Dimanche 29 Août - 21.40



## MBC 1

07.00 Local: Mots & Ecrits  
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: Twirlywoos  
14.43 D.Anime: The Garfield Show  
15.22 D.Anime: Astrology  
15.48 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie  
15.51 D.Anime: Petit Creux  
16.16 D.Anime: Johnny Test  
16.37 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie  
17.05 Serial: Dark Oracle  
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  
23.40 Mag: Eye On Sadc

## MBC 2

08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3  
10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4  
12.30 Film: Chhuti Jashe Chakka  
15.05 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek  
15.23 Serial: Aamhi Doghi  
15.44 Serial: Bava Maradallu  
16.07 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal  
16.28 Serial: Aatish  
16.48 Serial: Imtihaan  
17.05 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala  
17.25 Serial: Chhanchhan  
18.00 Serial: Dr. Qin  
18.30 Mag: DDI Magazine  
19.05 Zournal Kreol  
19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna  
20.02 Serial: Band Khirkiyan  
20.46 Local: Anjuman  
21.09 Local: Urdu Programme  
22.07 DDI Live

## MBC 3

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 8  
14.57 Doc: 360 GEO  
15.49 Doc: The Wonderful World...  
17.17 Doc: Eco India  
17.43 Mag: Shift  
18.00 Doc: The Memory Illusion  
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 Fine-Tuning The Climate  
22.14 Doc: Healthy Eyes  
22.57 Doc: Bohemian Switzerland..

## Cine 12

03.09 Serial: The Magicians  
03.51 Film: Signed, Sealed, Deliv...  
05.15 Tele: Muneca Brava  
06.08 Serial: Madam Secretary  
06.36 Film: War Room  
09.00 Serial: When Calls The Heart  
09.45 Tele: Teresa  
10.37 Tele: Tanto Amor  
11.00 Serial: The Magicians  
12.00 Film Signed, Sealed Deliv...  
13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava  
14.45 Film: War Room  
16.39 Serial: When Calls The Heart  
17.18 Serial: Madam Secretary  
18.05 Tele: Teresa  
19.00 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones  
19.35 Mag: Hollywood On Set  
20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones  
20.30 Serial: Dynasty 2  
21.15 Film: Little Women  
23.08 Tele: Muneca Brava

## Bollywood TV

08.00 Film: Fun2SHH...Dudes In  
The 10th Century  
12.08 / 19.54 - Radha Krishna  
12.31 / 20.11 - Chupke Chupke  
12.50 / 20.32 - Mere Sai  
13.12 / 21.09 - Agniphera  
13.27 / 21.24 -  
Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
13.50 / 21.46 - Zindagi Ki Mehek  
14.17 / 22.20 - Maharakshak  
14.57 / 22.55 - Sethji  
15.25 Film: Luka Chuppi  
Starring Kartik Aaryan, Kriti  
Sanon, Aparshakti Khurana  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Kundali Bhagya  
18.52 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein  
19.14 Serial: Bhakharwadi  
19.36 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak

vendredi 27 août

samedi 28 août

dimanche 29 août

06.00 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill  
06.24 D.Anime: Teenie Crazee  
07.00 D.Anime: Sissi, Jeune Impe...  
07.21 D.Anime: Kid Lucky  
07.45 D.Anime: Sabrina: Secrets...  
08.07 D.Anime: Cosmic Quantum...  
08.33 D.Anime: The Garfield Show  
09.03 D.Anime: Pet Alien  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.30 Tele: Teresa  
15.06 D.Anime: The Garfield Show  
15.23 D.Anime: Linkers  
15.48 D.Anime: Astrology  
15.50 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie  
16.41 D.Anime: Johnny Test  
17.10 Serial: Les Copains Carlins  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Entertainment: Dance  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.05 Local: Autour Des Valeurs...  
21.15 Film: Les Heures Sombres  
Avec: Gary Oldman, Lily James...

07.00 Film: Raja Jani  
08.48 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 Aintthu  
Pengalum  
15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek  
15.25 Film: Main Tera Hero  
Starring Varun Dhawan, Ileana  
D'Cruz, Nargis Fakhri  
17.24 Mag: DDI Magazine  
19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol  
19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna  
20.06 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki  
Rahasya Gatha  
20.20 Serial: Bitti Business Wali  
21.01 Film: Judgementall Hai Kya  
Starring: Rajkummar Rao, Kangana  
Ranaut

06.00 Doc: The Memory Illusion  
06.42 Mag: Arts And Culture  
06.55 Mag: Global 3000  
07.50 Doc: Innovation On Board  
09.51 Doc: Healthy Eyes  
10.33 Doc: Bohemian Switzerland  
11.45 Mag: Arts And Culture  
11.58 Mag: Global 3000  
14.11 Fine-Tuning The Climate  
14.56 Student Support Prog  
17.44 Doc: Amazing Gardens  
18.16 Doc: Troubled Treasures  
18.36 Mag: Vue D'en Haut  
19.05 Mag: Check In  
19.37 Doc: Fresh Fruit Fakers  
20.30 Local Prod: News (English)  
20.40 Doc: Tree Stories  
21.32 Doc: Taste Hunters  
22.25 Doc: The Atom And Us  
23.07 Doc: Amazing Gardens  
23.33 Doc: Troubled Treasures  
23.58 Mag: Vue D'en Haut

01.08 Film: Little Women  
03.42 Serial: The Night Shift  
03.43 Film: The Quiet Hour  
05.08 Tele: Tanto Amor  
05.49 Serial: Dnynasty 2  
06.29 Film: Clarity  
08.35 Serial: Mike Hammer  
09.16 Serial: Brooklyn Nine Nine  
10.04 Serial: Unforgotten  
10.50 Film: Little Women  
12.51 Serial: The Night Shift  
13.32 Serial: The Magicians  
15.05 Tele: Amanda  
15.48 Tele: Muneca Brava  
16.30 Mag: Hollywood On Set  
17.00 Serial: Dynasty 2  
17.45 Film: Monstre Sur Commande  
20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones  
20.30 Series: Dynasty 2  
21.15 Film: Legacy  
22.46 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  
16.00 Pavitra Rishita  
18.00 Samachar  
18.30 Film: Shaadi Ke Side  
Effects  
Star: Farhan Akhtar, Vidya  
Balan, Vir Das  
20.45 Serial: Siya Ke Ram

06.00 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill  
06.24 D.Anime: Teenie Crazee...  
06.35 D.Anime: P'tit Cosmonaute  
08.06 D.Anime: Cosmic Quantum...  
09.35 Serial: Lucas Etc  
10.00 Local: Zafan Nou Zil  
10.30 Serial: Backstage  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.40 Tele: Teresa  
14.10 Local: Elle  
15.05 D.Anime: Twirlywoos  
15.16 D.Anime: The Garfield Show  
15.31 D.Anime: Petit Creux  
17.15 Serial: Les Copains Carlins  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Local Prod: Gata Rahe Mere...  
19.30 Le Journal  
20.10 Local: Groov'in  
21.10 Film: Danger One  
Avec: Tom Everett Scott, James  
Jurdi, Angélica Celaya

07.00 Film: Shankar Shambhu  
10.00 Local Prod: Shrawan Mass  
11.00 Serial: Oru Kai Osai  
11.22 Serial: Santoshi Maa  
12.00 Film: No Problem  
Stars: Anil Kapoor, Sanjay Dutt,  
Akshaye Khanna  
14.32 DDI Magazine  
15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek  
15.22 Serial: Mooga Manasulu  
15.49 Serial: He Mann Baware  
16.12 Apoorva Raagangal  
17.05 Mahakali  
17.51 Kisna  
18.30 Local: Tipa Tipa Nu Avance  
19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol  
20.05 Serial: Mann Mein Vishwas..  
20.50 Serial: CID  
21.36 Serial: Naagin Season 2  
22.17 Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki  
22.53 DDI Live

06.00 Mag: Amazing Gardens  
06.26 Doc: Troubled Treasures  
06.52 Mag: Vue D'en Haut  
07.46 Doc: Fresh Fruit Fakers  
10.20 Doc: The Atom And Us  
11.06 Doc: Amazing Gardens  
11.56 Mag: Vue D'en Haut  
12.23 Mag: Check In  
14.35 Doc: Taste Hunters  
17.38 Mag: Magnifique  
18.06 Doc: Builders Of The Future  
18.31 Doc: Garden Party  
18.58 Mag: Trend Book  
19.28 Doc: Empires Of Silver  
20.30 Local Prod: News (English)  
20.40 Doc: Comme Une Envie De..  
21.32 Doc: Youth-Inducing Yogurt  
22.14 Doc: Scent Of Freedom  
22.57 Mag: Magnifique  
23.24 Doc: Builders Of The Future  
23.49 Doc: Garden Party

01.34 Film: Legacy  
03.08 Serial: Midnight  
03.46 Film: Les Heures Sombres  
05.49 Tele: Tanto Amor  
06.31 Serial: Dynasty 2  
07.11 Film: A Doggone Adventure  
08.38 Serial: Mike Hammer  
09.25 Film: Les Heures Sombres  
11.25 Film: Monstre Sur  
Commande  
12.55 Serial: Midnight, Texas  
13.37 Serial: The Magicians  
15.29 Tele: Amanda  
16.22 Tele: Muneca Brava  
17.01 Serial: Dynasty 2  
17.45 Serial: Midnight, Texas  
18.30 Serial: Rich Man, Poor Man  
19.17 Mag: Ultimate Countdown  
20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones  
20.30 Serial: Pure Genius  
21.15 Film: Ophelia

00.35 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak  
02.20 Bhakharwadi  
04.04 Chupke Chupke  
06.01 Pavitra Rishita  
08.00 Motu Patlu  
08.11 Ikyawann  
10.00 Jaana Na Dil Se Door  
11.35 Piya Albela  
14.00 Agniphera  
16.29 Punar Vivaah  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Film: Ammaa Ki Boli  
Starring: Sanjay Mishra,  
Hrishiata Bhatt, Zakir  
Hussain  
20.25 Entertainment: Dance  
21.15 Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
23.10 Serial: Piya Albela

## MBC 2

Samedi 28 août

- 21.00

Stars: Rajkummar Rao, Kangana Ranaut



Samedi 28 Août

- 18.30

Stars: Farhan Akhtar, Vidya Balan, Vir Das







Nita Chicooree-Mercier

**W**e have been used to hearing about Mauritians migrating to more developed and prosperous countries for economic reasons and job prospects: the one-way out of Mauritius is the norm. We hardly give a thought to why people from other countries would like to make a far-flung island in the Indian Ocean their home. What is likely to motivate them?

This is not about people who are so desperate that they would cling to the wheels of Air Mauritius planes in a frantic desire to flee from hopeless gloom and doom situations. Nor is it about the paradisiacal islands of innocent and candid natives living in lush natural surroundings, a vision that defines the imaginary 'other' of Europeans inherited from Rousseau's 18th century view of faraway tropical places. The idealistic perspective has lingered on till modern times, though. An English lady I met abroad in the 1980s went lyrical about Mauritius during a conversation. Her parents lived in Mauritius during the colonial era. Fond memories made her say: 'I would like to die in Mauritius one day.' What a bizarre idea, another person observed, if you like the place, then you should rather wish to live and enjoy life there and then lie down under the ground for ever. Never mind.

Enjoying life here is what many European retirees do for six months of the year. Sunny weather, white sandy beaches, drinks with other fellow retirees at the nearby bars and occasional group trips around the island; the cool attitude of locals makes life good for them. In January 2018 at Mon Choisy beach a group of young men were relaxing under a tree with a crate of beer besides them. They invited an Englishman in his sixties to join them; in fact, we were all invited. The visitor could not believe his ears. Never, he said, do young men in Britain invite elderly persons or strangers for a drink. It was January 1st, and the Mauritian lads could not go home and celebrate with their families as they were working at a hotel nearby. 'Come on, have more drinks, let us celebrate, they merrily invited us. We sat down, celebrated and chatted for a while.' The Englishman and his wife were deeply moved and got emotional. Tears welled up in his eyes every time he evoked those moments during his stay. 'It is a unique experience I will never forget,' he said. What we take for granted may appear as a high human

# The Mauritian Dream



“Today there is a more nuanced view of greener pastures on the other side of the fence. The way out to other places for better opportunities especially during uncertain times pops up as an inevitable alternative to ambitious career-minded qualified young adults. So is the case in other countries as well. The bigger picture is that Mauritius has a number of assets that make life here attractive...”

quality to others.

Economic development in the 1990s drew highly qualified young men to try a work experience in Mauritius. Their professional background and know-how gave a boost to newly set-up local companies. In some cases, once the companies started to thrive and prosper, the foreigners were unscrupulously thrown out by their Mauritian employers and partners. They left Mauritius in bitter disappointment. Others who wished to settle permanently took a fancy to local girls and embarked on matrimonial plans. Something which prompted the erstwhile Prime Minister Jugnauth Snr to remark ironically in Parliament: 'Mauritian girls have suddenly become attractive!'

As from 2003 South Africans gladly took advantage of Integrated Resort Schemes and other real estate projects to sell away property in South Africa and invest here. Insecurity, economic instability, rampant crime, anti-White violence alienated them from their homeland. Mauritius looks like a peaceful haven to them. Last year in the early morning at La Cuvette beach, a South African national was wading in the water with his child. "You can never do this in South Africa," he said. 'It is too risky and unsafe there.' The climate, foreign-run private English language schools, a peaceful multi-ethnic society with cleavages which allows them to live separately and socialize with their own kind like the local Whites, the French touch and fairly modern amenities are all that appeal to them. Student visa is another means for young South Africans to fulfil their Mauritian dream and stay in Mauritius till they find jobs.

However, you do meet foreigners who figure out the security issue before inves-

ting and living here. Insecurity in Mauritius makes them opt for Reunion. A successful French businessman who invested and set up business found that the employees working on computers were apathetic and lacked initiative. The maid took showers in his bathroom in the Rs 120,000 bungalow he rented by the seaside. She told him straightaway that it was normal for her to do so. He decided Mauritius was not his cup of tea. He closed down business and left. Not to mention regular visitors to Mauritius who vow never to go back after being robbed in their rooms.

Conversely, besides the 15% tax incentive on companies, other foreigners are put off by the mindset of workers like in France, for example, where employees suddenly resign and leave employers in the lurch, knowing that immediate unemployment benefits keep them going without working. Security and peace are other reasons. owing to terrorist attacks in Belgium, France and Germany. They are put off by the disruption of social harmony, religious fundamentalism, incivility in public places and transport, drug sales and petty crimes among migrant youths in broad daylight and such ills plaguing European societies. A quick search on internet gives little hope to Europeans with no inflated bank accounts to live and work in Mauritius.

In the region, Madagascans would gladly move here if doors were open to them. Some of them who work in factories in Mauritius are degree holders. Those you meet around doing ordinary jobs are very happy to enjoy a decent life. Moneyed people in Reunion buy apartments to escape property tax, and also to settle after retirement. A predominant presence of people of Indian origin and their culture in Mauritius appeals to Tamilians and Muslims of Gujrati origin who quite like life

in towns like Beau Bassin, Rose Hill and Quatre Bornes. There is no doubt that the atmosphere of an oriental culture widely prevailing in Mauritius is what they miss in Reunion. But the strict requirements of Mauritian laws are obstacles to settle in Mauritius.

Needless to say that not only economic reasons but modernity and safety prompt Bangladeshi workers to try and stay here for longer periods. Illiteracy, backwardness and violence prevailing in their native land are no incentives for a voluntary return. Some of them seek to contract 'white marriages' with Mauritian women to get the right to live here. Nepalese and Sri Lankans blend in effortlessly; there are far too few of them. You do meet Indian workers who find life boring in Mauritius. Others dream of staying longer, mainly for economic reasons. Indian doctors and engineers are well integrated in society. A common opinion is that people who are lucky to be born and to live here must have a good karma. Young Africans working in construction business, private companies and small hotels from Nigeria, Congo or South Africa seem to appreciate the opportunities given to them. Surely, many others would like to come in greater numbers.

Locals might think otherwise during hard times. Today there is a more nuanced view of greener pastures on the other side of the fence. The way out to other places for better opportunities especially during uncertain times pops up as an inevitable alternative to ambitious career-minded qualified young adults. So is the case in other countries as well. The bigger picture is that Mauritius has a number of assets that make life here attractive to outsiders who wait to fulfil their dream of living in the island.