

MAURITIUS TIMES

• "Optimism is the one quality more associated with success and happiness than any other." -- Brian Tracy

Risky Gamble

With Covid-19 currently rampant in Mauritius, this is the time for rational decision making. At stake is the socio-economic recovery of the country. We cannot afford to make the wrong call

By Mrinal Roy See Page 4



Lockdowns have been enforced across the east coast, including Australia's three largest cities – Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane

Ganesh Chaturthi

Getting the right message



By Dr R Neerunjun Gopee See Page 3

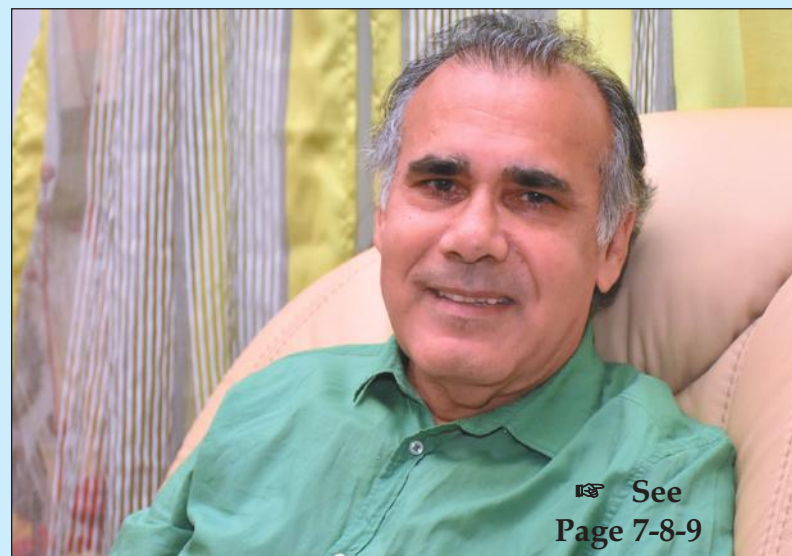
Climate change: ditch 90% of world's coal and 60% of oil and gas to limit warming to 1.5°C

By Daniel Welsby, James Price & Steve Pye, University College London See Page 2

Dr Teeluck Bhuwanee, Educationist

"You don't fire-fight in education."

Covid-19 could have been a real opportunity to bring about a total paradigm shift



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The MRA & Tax Collections

It is known that the world over, countries which fail to achieve their full potential are those which are least able to collect necessary taxes. Their governance system is so unruly that few comply with tax rules and pay up their fair share to the public exchequer. This is typical of countries which are torn by various sorts of strife and lawlessness making it nigh impossible for the tax agencies to enforce rules and collect all the fiscal dues rigorously.

In such places, the black economy thrives and corruption of all sorts proliferates. A country like Nigeria, one of the largest oil and gas producers in Africa, has one of the highest rates of poverty on the continent. Maldistribution of the country's earnings from this major source holds back its huge development potential. In cases like this government fails to fully undertake its principal responsibility to redistribute – by means of an equitable tax system – national wealth fairly among the country's citizens.

In other places, the domestic tax regime becomes so oppressive and complicated as to encourage tax evasion and avoidance. High tax rates coupled with complex tax reporting and assessment systems not only make it difficult for citizens to be fully tax compliant. They end up discouraging the undertaking of economic activities in the home jurisdiction. Complicated tax systems tend to be accompanied by corruptions of different sorts which could easily discourage the brightest and the best.

When they are tired of it all, capable individuals quit and go to other jurisdictions which apply clearer and more predictable rules of fiscal and other accountabilities. It has been observed that citizens of certain countries with inefficient and oppressive tax systems have thrived exceptionally well in business in countries they have emigrated to. This represents opportunity foregone for their home countries.

The Director-General of the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA), Sudhamo Lal, stated at a press meet, last Friday, that as in previous years, the tax authority has kept vigilance on several fronts to fulfil its duties of collecting revenues for the government. If in previous years tax collections have been on the rise thanks to various facilitations and enforcement measures adopted - including e-filing of tax returns, amnesties, dealing with tax frauds, bringing new taxpayers into the fold, carrying out regular tax audits, chasing perpetrators of the drugs trade, etc -, it has unfortunately been a difficult year for tax collection with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic,

resulting in a fall in tax revenues: from Rs 93.7 bn for financial year 2019/20 to Rs 89.3 bn in 2020/21. There were major shortfalls in tax receipts from value added tax, excise duties from petroleum products and motor vehicles and gambling. This is quite understandable in light of the impact of the pandemic on most sectors of economic activity since March last year.

What has distinguished the MRA, however - and this deserves recognition - is the significant evolution in the role of the institution from that of a tax collector to a payer of allowances, on behalf of Government, to registered employees, self-employed and informal sector workers, as pointed out by Mr Sudhamo Lal. 'The implementation of the Wage Assistance Scheme (WAS) and the Self Employed Assistance Scheme (SEAS) during the COVID-19 has revolutionised the way the MRA has been working over the last 14 years. It has challenged our capacity to fast track the Work-from-Home concept, tested the aptitude of our IT professionals to operate and modify the IT system remotely and assessed the adaptability of MRA staff in a completely new environment.

'By the end of this financial year, the MRA was able to effect payment of the WAS and the SEAS, directly or indirectly, to some 500,000 workers and self-employed individuals for an amount of slightly more than Rs 10 billion. All applications for WAS and SEAS were made electronically by the general public, which in itself is unprecedented, as the beneficiaries are mostly the lower income groups. Similarly, payments of these allowances were made directly into the bank account of the applicants – another exceptional achievement.'

All this shows that a well-coordinated revenue authority - which employs all the information it has access to, with the help of technology and especially commitment - can not only raise additional revenues for the public exchequer but also evolve to fulfil an altogether different role outside its mandate with efficiency and promptness.

That said, in light of the government's increasing trend in spending, it is important that the MRA be able to track down all due but unpaid taxes. Unless the gap is bridged reasonably, the effect will be to increase government indebtedness. Moreover, a tax system which manages to collect from as wide a base of taxpayers as possible is fair towards those who dutifully pay up their tax dues to the last rupee. This should be encouraged and implemented in a **fair** manner towards all stakeholders.

The Conversation

Climate change: ditch 90% of world's coal and 60% of oil and gas to limit warming to 1.5°C

New study reveals how tight the world's remaining carbon budget is



Fossil fuels still provide most of the world's energy. Pic - Shutterstock

Global mean surface temperatures reached 1.2°C above the pre-industrial average in 2020, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned in its recent report that Earth could hit 1.5°C in as little as a decade. The 0.3°C separating these two temperatures make a world of difference. Scientists believe that stabilising our warming world's temperature at 1.5°C could help avoid the most serious effects of climate change.

Fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas are the source of just over 80% of the world's energy. Burning them accounts for 89% of human-derived CO2 emissions. To avert catastrophic warming, the global community must rapidly reduce how much of these fuels it extracts and burns. Our new paper, published in *Nature*, revealed just how tight the world's remaining carbon budget is likely to be.

In order to hold global warming at 1.5°C, we found that nearly 60% of global oil and fossil gas reserves will need to remain in the ground in 2050. Almost all of the world's coal – 90% – will need to be spared from factory and power plant furnaces. Our analysis also showed that global oil and gas production must peak immediately and fall by 3% each year until mid-century.

Even meeting these stringent limits may not be enough on its own to stabilise global warming at 1.5°C, however.

That's because we based our estimates on a carbon budget compatible with just a 50% probability of limiting warming to 1.5°C. Our model simply could not be pushed to a greater chance of achieving the 1.5C target because it was already at its limit, given our projections of fossil fuel demand in the near future.

Our analysis also relies on the large-scale deployment of technologies capable of removing CO2 from the atmosphere sometime in the future. By 2050, our scenario expects around four gigatonnes a year will be being captured by so-called negative emission technologies. There remains a lot of doubt about whether it is even possible to sufficiently scale these technologies up in time.

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Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

In the course of interviews by MBC-TV reporters on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi in the past, I have heard 'pandits,' answering in Creole, saying that during this 'festival' there is *chanter*, *danseur* *ek l'amusement*. Taken too literally, these terms may wrongly be perceived as having the same meanings commonly assigned to them in the local vernacular, and therefore convey the wrong message about the many religious celebrations in the Hindu calendar, especially because festivals imply entertainment. Their correct significance is expressed by Swami Tejomayananda, former Spiritual Head of the Chinmaya Mission Worldwide:

'The Sanskrit word for entertainment, *mano ranjana*, means delighting the mind, entertaining the mind... Recognizing this need for change and entertainment, the Hindu religion provides special occasions, festivals of a religious nature called *utsava*. No religion can last very long if it does not understand the common needs and desires of people, insisting only on strict discipline at all times. Aside from fasting there must also be feasting, singing (*sangeet*), dancing (*nritya*), and joyous celebration.'

He goes on to explain that the purpose of these festivals is not only to 'give us occasions for merrymaking, but they also give us a noble, divine vision and inspire us to raise our mind to the heights of that great goal' – namely, communion with the divine and meditation upon the Hindu vision of the fundamental unity of existence as expounded by our rishis (sages). This is a tradition which teaches that we are all part of a whole that includes living and non-living things, and that we owe it to ourselves and to the rest of creation to conduct our lives in such a way as not to cause harm to each other.

Thus, each such occasion is defined by a rich symbolism which expresses one or several aspects of that vision of unity as well as the ideas and concepts associated therewith. Just as a photograph or a sculpture is only a representation of the person, in a similar manner, whenever we want to represent ideas, concepts or principles, we use symbols. For example, the symbol for infinity in mathematics is a double interlocking loop. The objective of symbolism is to facilitate understanding of the profound truths and abstract concepts by means of forms and

Ganesh Chaturthi

Getting the right message



“The other animal associated with this occasion is the mouse which lies at the feet of Ganesha. The mouse represents fickle minds, wherein every moment thoughts are darting hither and thither – like the mouse. Many of these thoughts are desires which are endless, and which gnaw at us – like the mouse keeps gnawing at objects -- until they are fulfilled, and are then followed by others in an endless stream. Like Ganesha who keeps the mouse under control under his feet, so too must we learn to rein in our excessive desires and steady our mind, and yoke it to the higher goal...”

objects which are more or less familiar.

Symbols that are more frequently used are either geometrical forms, such as the triangle, the circle, the dot, or natural objects from the world of plants and animals. It is a fact that the latter possess characteristics which can be similar to, different from or even surpass those of man.

The elephant is an example of a very powerful symbol, and is associated with Lord Ganesha, of whom it forms the upper half of the body. Lord Ganesha is worshipped first in any puja as the remover of obstacles. It is indeed an apt symbol of this power because as it moves forward, it has the capacity to remove everything on its way almost effortlessly, using its trunk and sweeping it to the left and to the right, lifting the object and bodily throwing it away. Whoever has watched an elephant in action will have a better appreciation of this faculty.

Besides its enormous strength, the elephant has other adorable characteristics. In spite of its size, it is a very gentle creature; it loyally responds to man's requests for its services without ever complaining, granting its favours without discrimination. It does not kill other creatures for its pleasure or for eating, making one wonder whether it is because it has innate sentiments for the welfare of and in fairness to other creatures that it is a herbivore? It is known to have a very good memory, and it allows children and even adults who are so inclined to play with it without getting irritated or angry, displaying an almost infinite patience.

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they are fulfilled, and are then followed by others in an endless stream. Like Ganesha who keeps the mouse under control under his feet, so too must we learn to rein in our excessive desires and steady our mind, and yoke it to the higher goal as pointed out above.

That is what we must keep in... mind, as we also partake of some more mundane *amusement* to gratify the senses with good food and sweetmeats (*ladoos* and *modaks*, like *panchagam* too on the occasion of Ugadi), for they also are needed to maintain the body's health.

By the same token, *chanter* is about the chanting of prayers, bhajans and mantras, and *danseur* is *nritya*, in which the bodily movements and the gestures express and reflect that unitary worldview of existence.

Aum Ganeshayanamah...

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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Risky Gamble



Mrinal Roy

With Covid-19 currently rampant in Mauritius, this is the time for rational decision making. At stake is the socio-economic recovery of the country. We cannot afford to make the wrong call

A sustained boost in tourists inflows in the country is capital to the economic recovery of Mauritius and to provide relief to strapped government finances. From the figures presented by the Mauritius Revenue Authority last week, MRA revenue as at 30 June 2021 has registered a deficit of Rs 4.4 billion compared to last year owing to the adverse impact of Covid-19 on the economy. The TVA collected from the higher prices of goods and cost of consumer spending resulting from the devaluation of the Rupee and questionable measures such as the reduction of import duty on cars to boost sales despite acute road congestion in the country have been unable to make good declining government revenue.

Government has also had to spend tens of billions of Rupees in various support schemes to help people and companies tide over the adverse socio-economic fallout of Covid-19. The costly consequences of last year's Wakashio oil spill have also put additional stress on strapped government finances. Government is therefore patently desperate to reboot the economy and in particular the tourism sector given its key importance in the national economy.

High stakes

In its 2021 Budget Speech in June 2021, the Minister of Finance has tabled on the arrival of 650,000 tourists over the next twelve months and allocated Rs 420 million to the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) to promote Mauritius. The stakes are high for government and the economic actors of the tourism sector who have been forced into inactivity owing to the pandemic over more than a year.

There are however growing apprehensions that government is rashly rushing to reopen our borders to welcome fully vaccinated tourists with no restrictions as from 1 October without first taking robust actions to drastically

contain the spread of Covid-19 in the country and cut down the daily tally of new cases of coronavirus infection which has jumped to three digits since August.

Across the world from Germany to Australia or New Zealand, whenever there is a sudden surge of Covid-19 infection, lockdowns or similar restrictive measures are immediately imposed to first stop its spread in the community so as to prevent the situation from getting out of hand. Such radical measures have been found to be very effective in drastically cutting down cases of coronavirus infection.

What if?

The reality is that Covid-19 is currently rampant in Mauritius as evidenced by hundreds of cases of infection detected every day and their extensive footprint across the country. This situation puts undue pressure on health services and Covid-19 treatment centres. If robust measures are not taken to stem the spread of the virus and break its chain of transmission in the country, we will expose tourists to the risk of being infected during their stay in the country. This could adversely affect the classification of Mauritius as a Covid-safe tourist destination and the sustained inflow of tourists in the country. Such a situation would undermine the prospects of the tourism sector and a wide range of economic activities depen-

dent on it as well as stall socio-economic recovery. There is also the risk of the deadly Delta variant being imported in the country through incoming passengers despite all precautions taken to rigorously screen and isolate infected travellers. We must above all prevent a double whammy.

We must remember that in a context of extensive coronavirus Delta variant infection in the world, countries are taking every precaution necessary to prevent any risk of a third wave of infection in the coming winter. These precautions include listing out countries considered to be Covid-safe and opening their frontiers only to travellers from these safe countries. Their borders are also closed to nationals of countries classified as risky in terms of Covid-19 infection.

Against such a backdrop, how can the government take such a risky gamble on such an important sector of the economy in a context when the present state and spread of infection in the country is fraught with serious risks? The rising death toll is also of grave concern to people. Amidst the opacity which shrouds a broad range of crucial and telltale information, we were told last week that the death toll related directly or indirectly to Covid-19 was 57. Six more deaths have been reported this week. Why can't there be a transparent daily sharing of information on the death toll and explicit data on the state of coronavirus infection in the country?

Every Covid related death is a collateral casualty of the pandemic and a traumatic moment for the bereaved family. People and in particular the elderly are justifiably scared to go out. The crisis management of the current surge of infection by the government is far from reassuring.

Transient herd immunity

The new government leitmotiv is herd immunity. It has staked its strategy of conjuring the pandemic on the panacea of herd immunity. It must however be flagged that herd immunity is transient and dependent on the period of protection of Covid-19 vaccines which is yet to be established on the basis of human experience. Despite the fact that a majority of people across the world have not received a single dose of vaccine, a plethora of principally rich countries from Austria to France, Germany and the United Kingdom are set to offer a booster third dose to the elderly and vulnerable groups within their population. Israel is offering a booster vaccine dose to anyone aged at least 50 years old and people at risk of severe illness from coronavirus. The US Administration has recommended a booster dose eight months after completing the first round of vaccination. Herd immunity would presumably be eroded without Covid-19 vaccine booster dose protection.

Will Covid-19 vaccination become an annual feature of our lives at a time when a large share of the world population is yet to be vaccinated. The world is still groping in the dark. The jolting reality is that the battle against Covid-19 will be very long drawn one.

Ghastly

The enduring risks associated with Covid-19 focuses attention on the treatment facilities available in the country. The grapevine is buzzing with firsthand testimony of the substandard healthcare, broken toilet doors, lack of basic amenities and the awful state of hygiene and cleanliness of the ENT Covid-19 treatment centre. It is shameful and deplorable that the state-of-the-art ENT Hospital financed by the Indian government which was inaugurated in October 2019 and converted last year into a Covid treatment centre has been allowed to slump into such an appalling state of disrepair and neglect in about a year.

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People wait in line outside a COVID-19 vaccination clinic in the Bankstown suburb during a lockdown to curb an outbreak of cases in Sydney, Australia, August 25, 2021
Pic - Loren Elliott - Reuters

“Across the world from Germany to Australia or New Zealand, whenever there is a sudden surge of Covid-19 infection, lockdowns or similar restrictive measures are immediately imposed to first stop its spread in the community so as to prevent the situation from getting out of hand. Such radical measures have been found to be very effective in drastically cutting down cases of coronavirus infection...”

Mauritius incident was world's first major spill of Very Low Sulfur Fuel Oil

A year after bulk carrier MV Wakashio ran aground in an environmentally sensitive area off Mauritius, Curtin University-led research has identified the incident as the first known spillage involving a new type of marine fuel oil.

Dr Alan Scarlett, lead author from the WA Organic and Isotope Geochemistry Centre in Curtin's School of Earth and Planetary Sciences, said the ship reportedly spilled 1000 tonnes of fuel oil but, until now, no chemical analysis of that oil had been published.

"Since the grounding of the Wakashio on a coral reef, there has been much speculation in the media about what oil was spilled, including headlines about so-called 'Frankenstein fuels', so we wanted to obtain a sample for research and analysis," Dr Scarlett said.

"We obtained a sample of oily residue from the Mauritius coastline about eight kilometres from the grounded vessel, along with a sample of the Wakashio's fuel oil, and using a suite of sophisticated chemical and isotopic analyses, were able to confirm the spilled oil originated from the fuel tanks of the Wakashio.

"We also found that this was a new class of marine fuel



Wakashio spill - first known spillage involving a new type of marine fuel oil. Pic - splash247.com

termed a Very Low Sulfur Fuel Oil, which were made mandatory by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) from January 2020 to reduce harmful emissions from typically sulfur-rich heavy fuel oils."

In conjunction with researchers at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the Curtin team was also able to obtain a unique signature of the spilled oil, which will help with tracking the oil in the future and distinguish it

from past and future spills of oil around the island nation.

Dr Scarlett said because very little was known about the behaviour and toxicity of the new class of oils, the potential impacts of a spill on the marine ecosystem could not be assessed prior to this research.

"Our analyses revealed the quantities of components known to be toxic to marine organisms in the spilled ship's oil were less than in typical heavy fuel oils. Therefore, the impacts on marine organisms from exposure to toxic compounds in the oil may be less severe than with previous spills that involved older types of marine fuel oil," Dr Scarlett said.

"Unfortunately, oil spills from ships continue to be a frequent occurrence, so it is likely we will see further spills involving Very Low Sulfur Fuel Oils. In turn, many countries, including Australia, will be re-evaluating their oil spill response strategies. Our results will help these countries and their maritime safety agencies develop new strategies."

Will Indians socialise this festive season? Here's what this survey found



A scene from Delhi's Sarojini Nagar market. Pic - static.theprint.in

relatives, friends, neighbours and colleagues have been frequenting their homes and vice-versa. Many have also been getting back their domestic helps or service providers for repairs and services which they had to earlier postpone due to the second wave in April-June," the report, released on Wednesday, stated.

Here's what the survey found:

(1) 80% Indians to leave home: 17% respondents said they will visit their relatives, while 8% were of the opinion that they will leave home to visit friends or associates. 22% said they might recall domestic helps, or visit service providers. Overall, from across 80% households, one or more respondents were willing to leave home during festivals.

(2) 59% to visit relatives or friends: 23% respondents said they to go to meet their relatives, while 11% opined they will meet friends, neighbours or associates. 5% responded that they will meet someone else, if not relatives or friends. Overall, respondents from 59% households said they will visit relatives, friends or others.

(3) 48% ready to celebrate festivals: The number of those who said they will celebrate every festival stood at 18% while 7% each said they will attend functions such as birthday celebrations, anniversaries or work-related events. Overall, 48% looked ready to celebrate the upcoming festivals.

Amid fears over a potential third wave of the coronavirus pandemic, the Indian government, last month, directed states and Union territories to tighten curbs ahead of the upcoming festive season. Many festivals have already passed, while several others will be celebrated in the coming days and months.

While most people stayed at home during the festive season last year, as the first wave of Covid-19 swept through the country, a recent survey has found that this year, many people intend to socialise during the festive season despite concerns of a possible fresh wave. The poll was conducted by online platform LocalCircles among 27,000 respondents from 12,000 households in 312 districts spread across the country. 67% of those surveyed were men, while 33% were women, reports Hindustan Times.

"Thousands of citizens on our platforms have been reporting since early August that family,

India and Russia to secure Central Asia against Taliban radicalisation



With the US out of Afghanistan, the Central Asian Republics are also willing to reciprocate the Indian overtures and are firmly with the Russian Federation. Pic - HT

India and Russia have decided to join hands to firewall Central Asian Republics bordering Afghanistan from spill-over of radicalisation and jihad from Taliban-ruled Kabul. The security of Central Asian Republics was discussed in India-Russia NSA level consultations between Ajit Doval and Nikolay Patrushev on Wednesday. The meeting was attended by intelligence chiefs from both sides, reports Hindustan Times.

According to those aware of developments, there are firm indications that Turkey and Pakistan are trying to get a foothold in these republics through NGOs with Ankara providing technical support.

While the security of Central Asian Republics was discussed in the Doval-Patrushev meeting, the Russian interlocutors conveyed that situation in these republics was under control, but the threat

will mount once the Taliban under mentorship of Pakistan will get ambitious to spread their cult across the Amu Darya.

In this context, Russia and India have decided to work together for engaging the Central Asian Republics with the Modi government ready to step up bilateral ties with each of these countries including Turkmenistan. India has close ties with Tajikistan with a strong element of defence and security.

With the US out of Afghanistan, the Central Asian Republics are also willing to reciprocate the Indian overtures and are firmly with the Russian Federation. Their immediate concern, however, is spill-over of jihad from Afghanistan with the Taliban refusing to disavow Al Qaeda and its affiliates, who have tasted blood in Kabul.

*Contd on page 6

No water, milk in London: Grocery shelves go empty, Covid is one of the reasons



Empty shelves at a Tesco supermarket in central London. Pic - WSJ

The British economy has plunged into a major supply chain crisis, with a wide range of businesses suffering shortages for several months in the UK now. The worst hit by this are the grocery stores which are seeing empty shelves for things as basic as water and milk, multiple news agencies have reported. "Last week I ran out of Coca-Cola. I haven't had large bottles of Evian for three weeks," the news agency quoted Satyan Patel, owner of a convenience store, as saying.

"We had already decided to reduce our stock because of Covid... but now we're finding it hard to get some products as well because they're just not available," Patel said.

The coronavirus pandemic severely disrupted the global supply chain, but Britain's exit from the European Union late last year has further exacerbated the problems. The UK withdrew from the European Union in January 2020 after 47 years of having been a member state of the EU and its predecessor, the European Communities (EC), reports Hindustan Times.

Following the exit, shops in the UK are not getting products delivered to them, as the deal between the country and EU has made it harder to hire EU citizens. This has led to a drastic shortage of lorry drivers. Meanwhile, many people have not yet returned to the UK after going back to their home countries during the Covid-induced lockdown last year.

Co-op, a cooperative supermarket group, said it was "impacted by some patchy distribution" to its deliveries but it was working with suppliers to re-stock quickly. The group said it was recruiting 3000 temporary workers "to keep depots working to capacity and stores stocked as quickly as possible". At another major supermarket in southeast London, water bottles were sparse and milk was missing from shelves.

According to recent estimates, the UK currently faces a shortage of about 100,000 lorry drivers, AFP has reported.

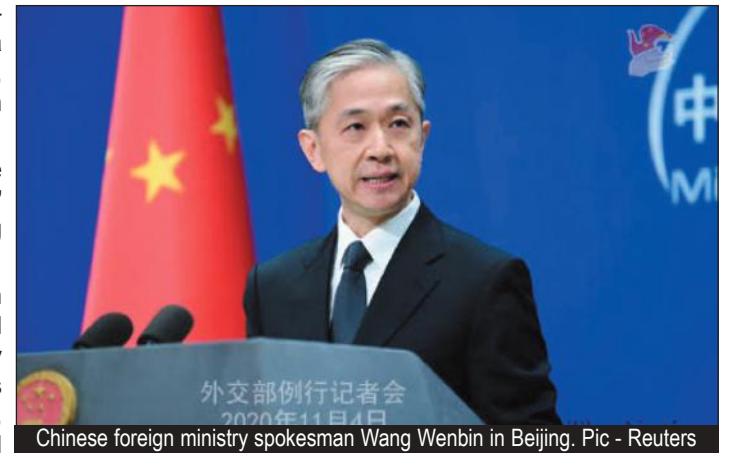
China to remain in touch with Afghan govt

China on Wednesday said the formation of a caretaker Taliban government in Afghanistan was a "necessary step" in pursuing post-war reconstruction, adding that it is ready to maintain communication with the country's new leaders.

It is a "necessary step for Afghanistan to restore domestic order and pursue post-war reconstruction," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson, Wang Wenbin, told CGTN.

Wang Wenbin made the same comment when asked to respond to a query on whether Beijing will recognise the new government in Kabul at a ministry briefing. "We hope the new Afghanistan authorities will listen broadly to people of all races and factions, so as to meet the aspirations of its own peoples and the expectations of the international community," reports Hindustan Times.

China announced on Wednesday that it would donate 200 million yuan (\$31 million) worth of aid, including grains, winter supplies and coronavirus vaccines to



Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin in Beijing. Pic - Reuters

Afghanistan.

State councillor and foreign minister Wang Yi announced the donation in a meeting held by video link with counterparts and senior diplomats from Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

Unvaccinated employees to face unpaid leave or termination, warn 2 airlines

Amid the rise in number of Covid-19 cases across the world, two major airlines have made it mandatory for their employees to get vaccinated. Canada-based WestJet and United Airlines in the US have said employees who fail to get themselves vaccinated will face termination of employment.



A United Airlines passenger jet takes off at Newark Liberty International Airport, New Jersey. Pic - s.abcnews.com

WestJet has asked all employees to get their vaccination status attested by September 24, or get fully vaccinated by October 30. The Onex Corp-owned airline said a full vaccination status would be mandatory for all future employees hired by the airline.

United, on the other hand, has set September 27 as the deadline for its employees to get vaccinated. However, those whose bids for exemptions based on medical reasons or religious beliefs are denied will get five more weeks to get vaccinated, the airline said.

After that, it added, they will face termination or unpaid leave, reports Hindustan Times.

United said requests for medical exemptions will be judged by medical staffers including nurses, while requests for waivers based on religious beliefs will be handled by personnel-office employees.

Workers who routinely come in contact with passengers, such as flight attendants, gate agents and pilots, and whose exemptions are approved will face indefinite unpaid leave starting October 2. They won't be allowed back on the job until the pandemic "meaningfully recedes," according to one of the memos circulated by the Chicago-based company.

Shouldn't become sanctuary for terror groups to attack others: Brics on Afghanistan

The Brics grouping on Thursday asserted Afghanistan's territory shouldn't become a sanctuary for terror groups to mount attacks on other nations and called for an inclusive intra-Afghan dialogue to ensure stability and peace in the war-torn country following the Taliban takeover.

The Delhi Declaration issued after a virtual summit of Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (Brics) expressed concern at developments in Afghanistan and made a call for "refraining from violence and settling the situation by peaceful means". The grouping highlighted the importance of fighting terror and upholding human rights, including those of women and minorities.

The strongly worded joint statement came two days after the Taliban unveiled an interim setup in Kabul led by Mohammad Hasan Akhund and dominated by 17 leaders sanctioned by the UN Security Council. Despite recent remarks by Taliban leaders that they would form an inclusive government, the new regime comprised mainly members of the group's old guard and top military commanders such as Sirajuddin Haqqani.

The Delhi Declaration, issued at the conclusion of the summit, said: "We underscore the priority of fighting terrorism, including preventing attempts by terrorist organisations to use Afghan territory as terrorist sanctuary and to carry out attacks against other countries, as well as drug trade within Afghanistan."

While calling on all parties to refrain from violence and to settle the situation through peaceful means, the declaration added, "We stress the need to contribute to fostering an inclusive intra-Afghan dialogue so as to ensure stability, civil peace, law and order in the country."

The Brics members condemned the terrorist attacks near Kabul airport on August 26 that resulted in the death of more than 180 people, mostly Afghans and 13 US military personnel. They also emphasised the need to address the humanitarian situation and to "uphold human rights, including those of women, children and minorities", the declaration said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin was the only one of the five leaders to raise the situation in Afghanistan in the televised opening remarks, saying all members of Brics do not want Afghanistan to remain a threat to its neighbours, or Afghan soil to be a source of drug trafficking and terrorism.

Dr Teeluck Bhuwanee, Educationist

"You don't fire-fight in education. Covid-19 could have been a real opportunity to bring about a total paradigm shift"

Based on his comprehensive experience in the education sector, Teeluck Bhuwanee shares his views, in today's issue, on various aspects of how Covid-19 has impacted teachers and students' learning, and makes suggestions that he thinks can help to enhance the student experience as well as performance. Teeluck Bhuwanee holds a PhD holder in Educational Management and is a UNESCO Consultant. He retired as a UNESCO Head of Office, after having been the first Registrar of the UTM, Senior Lecturer at the MCA, Lecturer at the MIE and Rector in state secondary schools since 1975.

Mauritius Times: Given the uncertainty about Covid-19, its duration and whether or not and when we'll get back to the previous normal, what are the big questions that government, in particular education leaders, should address?

Teeluck Bhuwanee: Before I answer your question regarding the big questions, let us consider the different types of uncertainty and the "new normal" that we are all facing, irrespective of profession. The present uncertainty is one that was and is unimaginable and nobody is sure of what tomorrow will look like.

Every day, every week and every month reputable medical and other journals are publishing articles and studies that would not have been either published or acceptable by the community at large in the past. Previously, we would have expected these articles and studies to go through a rigorous review by peers before publication. Nowadays, these publications are themselves often so contradictory, that each scientist or researcher is faced with different other and often contradictory reviews that give rise to other debates, thus confusing the general public even further.

Every policy decision is often justified or supported by those articles or research or reviews that suits the proposed policy's purpose. World Health Organisation (WHO), already and often questioned because of its regular change in recommendations, is no more a reference. The uncertainty, therefore, is likely to remain with us for a very long time, and the virus and its different variants will continue to affect us. We are also at the mercy of large pharmaceutical companies that are heavily investing in researchers and research to produce vaccines that will bring them the maximum profit within the minimum of time, thus the multiplicity of vaccines on the market, notwithstanding their different efficacy levels.

In such a situation, educationists and true pedagogues (not teachers, heads of schools, lecturers or union spokespersons who are called as such) must be very steady and steadfast in their utterances and educational recommendations that will affect generation of students.

Heads of schools and teachers (who have all the documentation of their students and their families based on the application forms that they fill in when they join the school) must be made to develop this awareness in conjunction with the desire to act for social justice. **Compassionate pedagogy emphasizes the ability to empathize with others, teaches students to be socially and culturally engaged agents of change.**

Unfortunately, by stressing the fact that students who do badly at exams (the 5 credits debate and the students that don't make enough effort), we are doing a disservice to

large sections of the student population. These attitudes do not keep in mind that many students' brains are already formed and developed before they even reach primary school, based on their physical conditions that include nutrition, social status and upbringing at the time of birth and their ongoing development. I was hoping that nutritionists, neurological experts and biology teachers could provide enough evidence for a compassionate approach to schooling and education in Mauritius.

I am not sure whether heads of schools and teachers have seriously considered the impact of Covid-19 from the perspective of a student (when the schools were closed, the population confined and media as the only source of knowledge and understanding) and their experience with being on lockdown while studying.

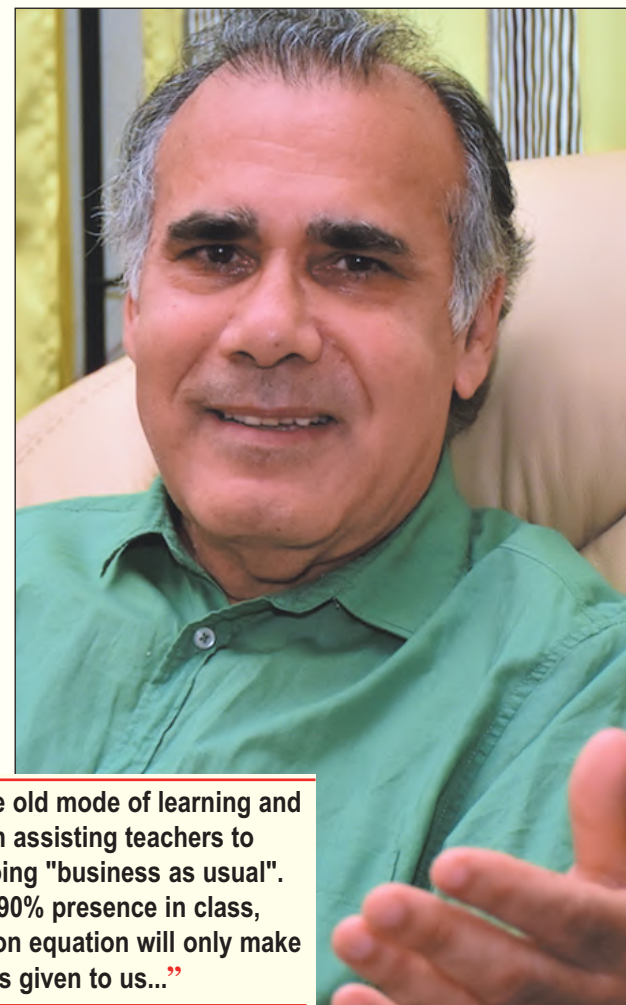
"I was hoping that rather than continue in using the old mode of learning and teaching, the authorities would concentrate on assisting teachers to develop more student-centred strategies than doing "business as usual". The insistence on reducing the debate to 5 credits, 90% presence in class, making time the most important variable in the education equation will only make us lose another opportunity that Covid-19 has given to us..."

Institutions such as the MRIC, local Universities, the MIE and similar institutions should have been encouraged to highlight the vulnerability felt by students in their studies, both psychologically and physically, and the need for connection versus connectivity in an online setting, and to alert primary and secondary school stakeholders to understand students' increased vulnerability at this time.

*** Although the education authorities are understandably preoccupied with immediate problems resulting from the pandemic, for instance the application of sanitary measures, including social distancing in schools, the realignment of curriculum and academic terms and the recent issue concerning SC Credits, is it also time to revisit education goals and discuss long-term reform?**

Certainly, there should have been a reconsideration of the whole present curriculum, which was designed to be delivered in a particular mode (primarily face to face). There is a need to view digitally networked learning environments in comparison to studio-based pedagogy and the inherent barriers of switching from studio pedagogy to education online. Delivery of all curricula requires student feedback. That is normally done via homework, classroom teaching and correction, regular tests and face to face explanations.

When the mode of delivery changes, there is a need for idea exchange, feedback and direct collaboration and most

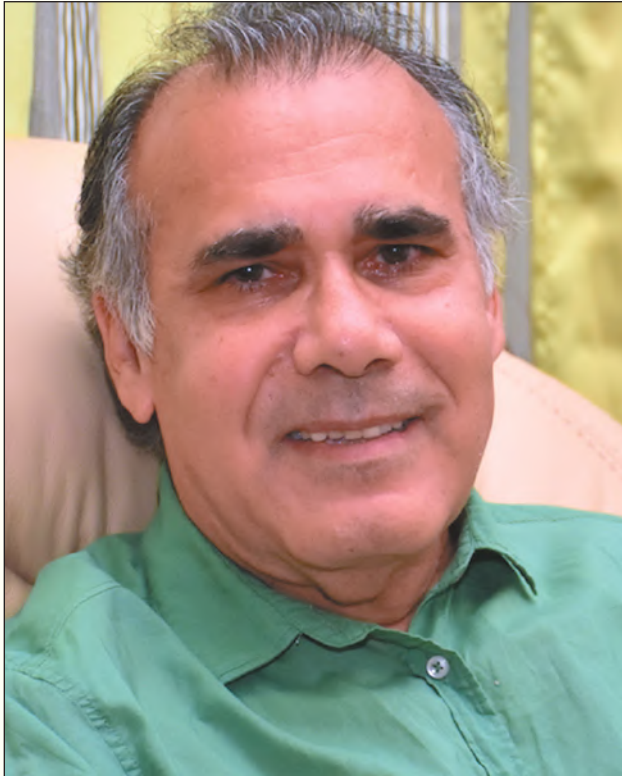


importantly - a sense of class community and connection. When we shift from one type of curriculum delivery to another, it requires a social constructivist thinking to support students. Teachers must map out a format for knowledge exchange between the individual student, the group and object of study. They must use learning management systems with multiple communication channels to build both independent and interdependent learning through relationships and community learning.

Now, this requires training of school staff in a different type of education delivery. Not all teachers can produce online content or delivery. Not all teachers have been taught the complexities of the technical requirements to carry out a Teams/Zoom teaching or other way of talking to students.

Policy makers need to identify the key factors and attributes specific to studio-based pedagogy that have been effected by the switch to online platforms, such as the need for collaborative peer learning and material exploration, their use of technological platforms and tools, as well as experiences working from home. Teachers need to be trained to understand the needs of students to integrate their learning goals with external lives in navigating new digital learning environments.

'Examinations still dominate the system, elitism continues to remain the basic motivation of all educational efforts, the laureate system is still very much alive'



● Cont. from page 7

Learning patterns have changed since we have entered the digital age affecting the way students experience learning. Educators must prepare students to be life-long learners through shifting environments by encouraging students to be agents in their own learning, with focus on the pursuit for knowledge instead of adapting to set conditions and relying on what they already know. Connectivism begins with the reflection of the individual and extends to their surrounding network, to learn through relationality in evolving communities of learning, understanding and living as a whole.

*** All this is very nice in theory, but the policy makers are presently faced with a current crisis. What can they do to settle the present challenges?**

That is exactly the point I wanted to make. You don't fire-fight in education. You don't wait for the problems to occur in order to find solutions. Covid-19 could have been a real opportunity to bring about a total paradigm shift in our response to learning, teaching. We have already had a window of opportunity when the reform of education was initiated after 2014.

That was the best opportunity to rethink the whole system, review the complete education paradigm, take courageous measures to provide the coming generations with a new educational package that would have prepared the children to study pro-actively.

I still remember having mentioned in an interview that I gave to this paper in 2014, the opportunity was ripe for bringing about a consensual with the assistance of so many ex-Ministers of Education (Parsuramen, Gokhool, Pillay, Bunwaree, and Obeegadoo) under the joint chairmanship of the then President Gurib Fakim (with her university experience) and the present Minister of Education.

Unfortunately, the reform took the shape of a nine-year schooling, later renamed 9-year continuous basic education, even though legally all Mauritian students are supposed to have been in school for 11 years. Unless reform meant RE-FORM the same with the same ingredients - CPE replaced by PSAC, Form 3 examination by NCE,

admission to Form 1 (rebaptised Grade 7) based on grade 6 grades.

Except for all students of Grade 6 to be automatically promoted even if they do not get the basic pass mark, I do not see any major reform. Examinations (including Cambridge) still dominate the system, elitism continues to remain the basic motivation of all educational efforts, the laureate system is still very much alive although we have so many universities in Mauritius and even prepare our doctors in our country.

All this because we have not looked at the basic principles that should determine the future of education in a society that is becoming increasingly technological with Multiple Intelligences and Artificial Intelligence becoming increasingly the new mantra in modern society.

“All teachers and certainly educationists know that the system needs fundamental transformation to serve current and future students. Transformation is survival from all points of view. The Covid-19 has provided every teacher with the opportunity to rethink how the present and next generation needs to be taught. If we properly use this moment for the better, it could mean improved education for more students...”

Had we made even a start we would not have been facing emergency remote teaching and learning. We would have been ready to provide support and resources for teachers and their well-being from the "secondary trauma" and "compassion fatigue" felt from supporting student trauma. The Open University should have been made to play a more active role in this reform thrust. Unfortunately, we missed the train then. Can we afford to miss the train again when we know that Covid-19 is not likely to go away soon and a NEW NORMAL is being ushered in.

*** Do you consider then that Covid-19 requires a totally different approach to all the problems we are facing now?**

Absolutely. Look at what is happening. We are still struggling to decide whether we go for full face to face or whether there will be a blended mode. How to make sure the syllabus is covered so that students can sit for the examinations? Which part of the curriculum to be de-loaded and who will decide that?

As long as we remain closed in our present systemic box, we will not be able to get out of the trauma, forcing parents to live in constant fear. If school is not closed but one class only where a Covid positive student is detected, what guarantee do parents have that their own child is not affected, with so many media mis-communicating regarding what is symptomatic, what is not, when to self-isolate and when to go to a medical centre.

*** Social distancing, already a headache for 25-30 children or more in a classroom, will probably continue for another one year or more, and it's likely that the shift away from traditional schooling practices will be maintained or even hastened. What are your thoughts on this question?**

Covid-19 and post-Covid conditions will require us to consider at least four factors while we adjust. Policy makers must work along two parallel lines: operational activities for schools to get going and strategic policy thinking with a view to producing a new educational paradigm.

For operational matters, I suggest the ministry should provide greater autonomy to schools by making better use of the zonal system already in place. The operational dimensions of the day to day running of schools should be done at the regional level keeping in mind the specificities of each region, its socio-economic dimensions and greater collaboration between the zonal Directorate and the stakeholders - not trade unionists.

In this connection, I almost daily hear the president of a primary schools' union coming on the media, acting almost as a spokesman of the ministry to justify decisions taken regarding policies of operations.

The zonal Director should be empowered to handle his/her region and in a consensual manner deal with matters pertaining to the running of classes with the school heads, teachers, parents and other stakeholders. That should leave time to the Directors at the Ministry to work together in developing national policy, based on the evidence provided by the zones and on research on the following four issues:

1. Rethinking and Restructuring time

Covid-19 has provided us with the one imperative that matters most: moving away from a system where time is the constant and learning is the variable to one where learning is the constant and time is the variable. Educationists seem to believe that time is the most essential element (length of the terms, number of days students go to school, number of days students missed, completing the syllabus before examination time etc.).

“Educationists seem to believe that time is the most essential element (length of the terms, number of days students go to school, etc). In fact, the emphasis should have been on the learning dimension, not schooling mainly. By focusing on time, our schools and systems are flawed because they are based on fixed ideas about the school day and the school year...”

In fact, the emphasis should have been on the learning dimension, not schooling mainly. By focusing on time, our schools and systems are flawed because they are based on fixed ideas about the school day and the school year. School systems still run on adult-driven priorities and we all the time hear of so-called pedagogues and others saying that "in the past, it was like this, it was like that... that is the way it should be done because we are a product of that rationale of having always done it this way."

With Covid-19, schools are forced to figure out how to simultaneously serve students and accommodate social distancing, and parents, administrators, legislators, and health professionals exploring new time solutions, such as reduced class size, staggered arrival/drop-offs and flexible hours in its school reopening guidelines.

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'For a very long time, examinations results have been seen as the only measure of achievement.'

Those who pass are seen as champions and those who fail as lazy and not hard working'

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Now with a de-loading of the syllabus, we may be re-evaluating the length of individual lessons or units, use of weekends, and whether to hold class year-round as well as rethink the time when students enroll and when the school year begins and ends. The inherent illogic in time-based education systems is teaching to test scores and not mastery of the knowledge that is required

2. New models of learning and teaching that are student-centred

The way we teach in both primary and secondary schools in Mauritius made teachers rely on batch-mode, factory, industrial, or similar models, that do not sufficiently acknowledge the unique traits, weaknesses, or disparities students experience, so that social status influences all student outcomes whereby better-off students come out ahead compared to disadvantaged students and other students start behind and fall further behind.

Throughout the world, Covid-19 is forcing everyone (those who want to see, of course) to acknowledge variations among students like never before, such as within the basic ability to access the Internet for distance learning and home space and time and space available for homework.

This requires them to search the different approaches that are working in other countries (such as Rwanda and parts of Kenya, in the UK, in California and Westminster School District in Colorado), more knowledge and cooperative action. We are living in a world where experience sharing has become the norm with the widespread use of the internet and help us move to a true 21st-century educational approach. Groups such as KnowledgeWorks and Aurora provide the support schools need to help them shift to models that educate more students more fully.

The old model of the school teacher is still seen as the only way the new school teacher should be and often still being imposed by old Presidents of teachers unions that believe that educational online programmes can be produced by anyone with some 2 weeks training. I still recall my own days when we produced live educational programmes on educational television from 5 to 6 p.m. of 20 minutes duration. When I compare the programmes that we produced and that the old MCA disseminated with the present programmes, I cannot see major change from the programmes of the 1970s and the ones of 2020, except for some minor cosmetic changes in settings and better use of the media, including graphics and design.

Even after Covid-19 the teacher typically serves as the main resource for their students, by insisting on the lecture approach in which the teacher stands in front of the class or the camera and delivers information to students, who are expected just to accept the data and sit for written examinations. Data, information, theories are readily available at

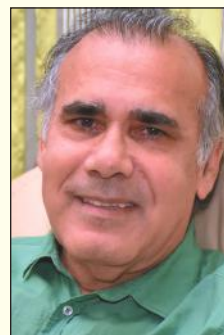
“Unfortunately, the reform took the shape of a nine-year schooling, later renamed 9-year continuous basic education, even though legally all Mauritian students are supposed to have been in school for 11 years. Unless reform meant RE-FORM the same with the same ingredients - CPE replaced by PSAC, Form 3 examination by NCE, admission to Form 1 (rebaptised Grade 7) based on grade 6 grades...”

our fingertips via smartphones and computer screens.

Knowledge is readily available on the internet and rather than data transmission, teachers should promote skills acquisition, including the ability to think logically, research quickly and efficiently, and more. Students require many new skills that will help them to navigate the flood of information and misinformation available, and to make correct decisions in the new world of rapid change. Policy makers must devise strategies for teachers to focus not on being a resource by themselves but on providing whatever resources are necessary for both individual students and the group to learn best and to look at new ways of observing students and learning about them to ensure a good resource-to-student match.

* The theme of Teachers' Day 2021 is 'Teaching: Leading in crisis, re-imagining the future'. Whether in the classroom or remotely, teachers will remain a fundamental pillar in education. The older generation recalls with nostalgia their teachers of yesteryears. How is the present generation of teachers doing?

“You don't fire-fight in education. You don't wait for the problems to occur in order to find solutions. Covid-19 could have been a real opportunity to bring about a total paradigm shift in our response to learning, teaching. We have already had a window of opportunity when the reform of education was initiated after 2014. That was the best opportunity to rethink the whole system, review the complete education paradigm...”



In many ways, Covid-19 has wreaked havoc on our stability and way of living - and we aren't done. It isn't behind us. But the challenges of these times offer an outstanding opportunity for us to transform what we do in the classroom or in front of a camera or a computer screen, for the betterment of all.

All teachers and certainly educationists know that the system needs fundamental transformation to serve current and future students. Transformation is survival from all points of view. The Covid-19 has provided every teacher with the opportunity to rethink how the present and next generation needs to be taught. If we properly use this moment for the better, it could mean improved education for more students.

Those students could emerge with knowledge, skills, and abilities we've only dreamt of being achieved broadly. The working models are there, the thought leaders are there, and we have the ability to transform all of our schools. Society will benefit, but more importantly, we will be more prepared than ever to help every student reach their fullest potential.

* In such situations how can authorities make sure that learning is actually taking place. Generally, it is assumed that pass mark in examinations is such an indication. Many recently praised the system, with an obvious rise in examination results at SC and even at

the PSAC. Do you consider that our system, in spite of its imperfections, is actually delivering?

For a very long time, examinations results have been seen as the only measure of achievement. So much so that, those who pass are seen as champions and those who fail as lazy and not hard working. It is true that we have seen a 15% increase in SC passes and we have seen this as a cause for satisfaction. Others have even been very complacent about how well we are doing.

I do not believe passing examinations is the only measure of success. When examinations results have been steadily increasing or decreasing with a + or - 2-5%, it is worrisome for one year to see a sudden increase of 15% passes. We do not have all the detailed results to make a proper systemic analysis. However, we don't yet fully understand the effects of social isolation, inconsistent structures, and personal trauma on student engagement. What we do know is that student engagement remains important to learning and achievement, and it's likely that teachers will need to find new ways to motivate and engage their students constantly if Covid-19 continues to affect us.

According to educational neuroscience expert Dr David Sousa, student engagement can be defined as "the amount of attention, interest, curiosity, and positive emotional connections that students have when they are learning, whether in the classroom or on their own". Student-driven engagement is more effective than any other motivation in education.

I was hoping that rather than continue in using the old mode of learning and teaching, the authorities would concentrate on assisting teachers to develop more student-centred strategies than doing "business as usual".

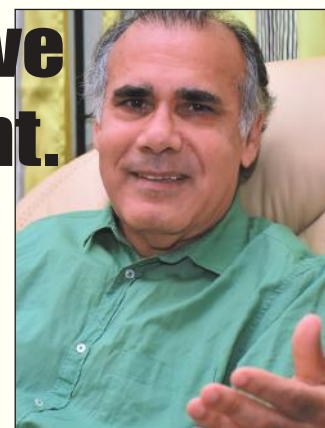
The insistence on reducing the debate to 5 credits, 90% presence in class, making time the most important variable in the education equation will only make us lose another opportunity that Covid-19 has given to us.

Your final thoughts?

During Covid-19, many private schools were able to innovatively develop low-tech and blended-learning solutions to ensure continuity of learning in the short-term. However, given the uncertainty in school reopening, the possibility of intermittent closures, and the pressing need to remediate for learning loss, it is of vital importance that school operators and supporting organizations develop blended learning tools that can serve as an effective medium- to long-term teaching approach.

Along with the delivery of multimodal learning, it is critical to track learning outcomes to ensure the effectiveness of solutions and support schools in scaling their blended learning methods. Currently, tools and methods that can meet this more long-term need have only been developed as stop-gap measures, and little is known about the effectiveness of these blended learning solutions, both factors that prevent their adoption at scale.

I will end by asking everyone to adopt a flexible and compassionate attitude and seek evidence from the schools and classrooms based on the interconnected principles of critical thinking, self-knowledge and empathy.



Why are we seeing more COVID cases in fully vaccinated people? An expert explains

'Breakthrough' infections can happen because of waning immunity or high viral doses. But our vaccines are still excellent at preventing severe disease and death

Many people are worried about reports of "breakthrough" Covid-19 infections overseas, from places like Israel and the United States.

A breakthrough infection is when someone tests positive for Covid after being fully vaccinated, regardless of symptoms.

The good news is most breakthrough infections usually result in mild symptoms or none at all, which shows us that vaccines are doing exactly what they're supposed to do - protecting us from severe disease and death. Vaccines aren't designed to protect us from getting infected at all (known as "sterilising immunity").

People with breakthrough infections can go on to infect others. Preliminary evidence indicates immunised people can have high levels of virus in the nose, potentially as high as unvaccinated people.

However, if you're vaccinated you'll clear the virus more quickly, reducing the length of time you're infectious and can pass the virus on.

Here's why breakthrough cases are happening, and why you shouldn't worry too much.

Waning immunity

Two studies from the United Kingdom suggest the immunity we get from Covid vaccines wanes over time, after about four to six months.

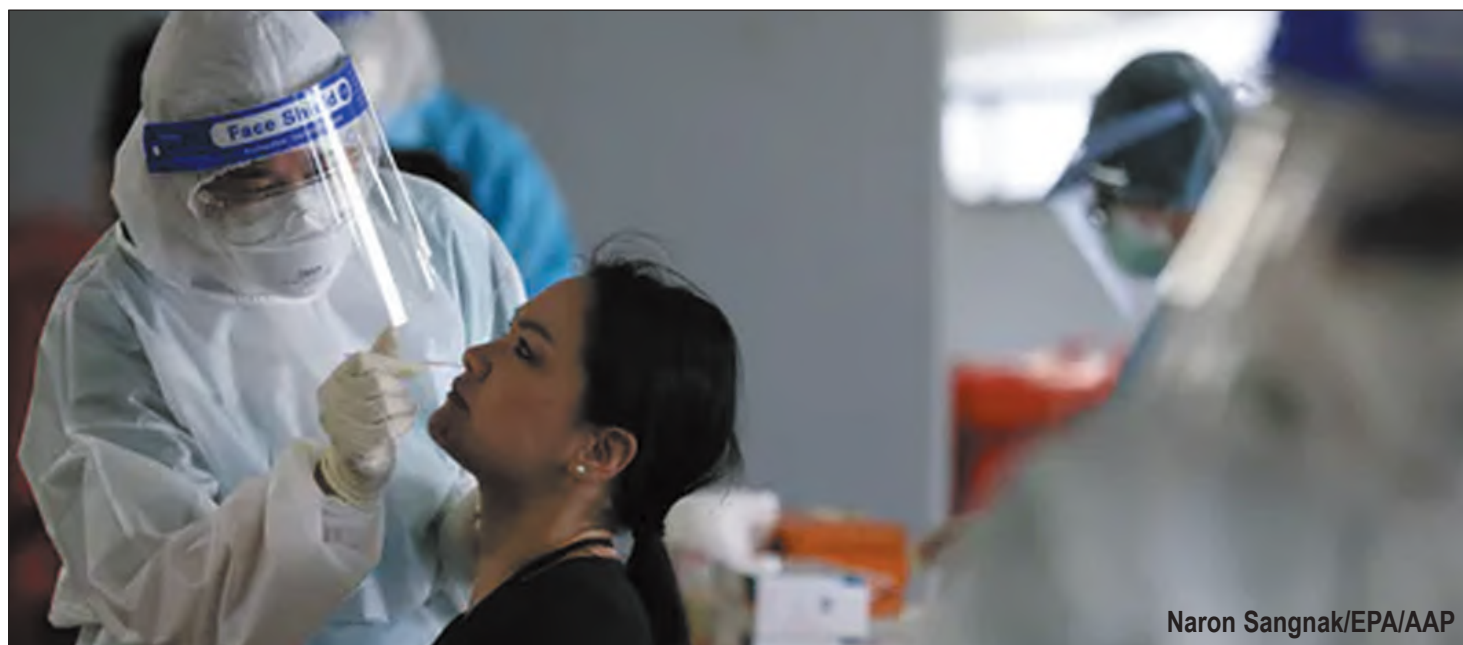
While the more-infectious Delta variant continues to circulate, waning immunity will lead to more breakthrough infections.

But the reduction isn't large currently. Vaccine effectiveness is very high to begin with, so incremental reductions due to waning won't have a significant effect on protection for some time.

Israeli data shows some vaccinated people are becoming ill with Covid. But we need to keep in mind Israel's vaccine roll-out began in December 2020, and the majority of the population were vaccinated in early 2021. Most are now past six months since being fully vaccinated.

Given most people in Israel are vaccinated, many Covid cases in hospital are vaccinated. However, the majority (87%) of hospitalised cases are 60 or older. This highlights what's known about adaptive immunity and vaccine protection - it declines with age.

Therefore we'd expect vulnerable groups like the elderly to be the first at risk of disease as immunity wanes, as will people whose immune systems are compro-



Naron Sangnak/EPA/AAP

mised. Managing this as we adjust to living with Covid will be an ongoing challenge for all countries.

What would be concerning is if we started seeing a big increase in fully vaccinated people getting really sick and dying - but that's not happening.

Globally, the vast majority of people with severe Covid are unvaccinated.

We'll probably need booster doses

Waning immunity means booster doses will likely be needed to top up protection, at least for the next couple of years while the virus continues to circulate at such high levels.

Our currently approved vaccines were modelled on the original strain of the virus isolated in Wuhan, not the Delta variant, which is currently dominant across most of the world. This imperfect match between vaccine and virus means the level of protection against Delta is just a little lower.

Because the level of effectiveness is so high to begin with, this small reduction is negligible in the short term. But the effects of waning over time may lead to breakthrough infections appearing sooner.

mRNA vaccines in particular, like Pfizer's and Moderna's, can be efficiently updated to target prevalent variants, in this case Delta. So, a third immunisation based on Delta will "tweak", as well as boost, existing immunity to an even higher starting point for longer-lasting protection.

We could see different variants become endemic in different countries. One example might be the Mu variant, currently dominant in Colombia. We might be able to match vaccines to whichever

variant is circulating in specific areas.

The dose makes the poison

Your level of exposure to the virus is likely another reason for breakthrough infections.

If you're fully vaccinated and have merely fleeting contact with a positive case, you likely won't breathe in much virus and therefore are unlikely to develop symptomatic infection.

But if you're in the same room as a positive case for a long period of time, you may breathe in a huge amount of virus. This makes it harder for your immune system to fight off.

This may be one reason we're seeing some health-care workers get breakthrough infections, because they're being exposed to high viral loads. They could be a priority for booster doses.

Might unvaccinated kids be playing a role?

It's unclear if children are contributing to breakthrough infections.

Vaccines aren't approved for young children yet (aged under 12), so we're seeing increasing cases in kids relative to older people. Early studies, before the rise of Delta, indicated children didn't significantly contribute to transmission.

More recent studies in populations with vaccinated adults, and where Delta is the dominant virus, have suggested children might contribute to transmission. This requires further investigation, but it's possible that if you're living with an unvaccinated child who contracts Covid, you're likely to be exposed for many, many hours of the day, hence you'll breathe in a large amount

of virus.

The larger the viral dose, the more likely you'll get a breakthrough infection.

Potentially slowing the number of breakthrough infections is one reason to vaccinate 12 to 15 yearolds, and younger children in the future, if ongoing trials prove they're safe and effective in this age group. Another is to protect kids themselves, and to get closer to herd immunity (if it's achievable).

A silver lining

Breakthrough infections likely confer extra protection for people who've been fully vaccinated - almost like a booster dose.

We don't have solid real-world data on this yet, but it isn't surprising as it's how our immune system works. Infection will re-expose the immune system to the virus' spike protein and boost antibodies against the spike.

However, it's never advisable to get Covid, because you could get very sick or die. Extra protection is just a silver lining if you do get a breakthrough infection.

As Covid becomes an endemic disease, meaning it settles into the human population, we'll need to keep a constant eye on the interaction between vaccines and the virus.

The virus may start to burn out, but it's also possible it might continually evolve and evade vaccines, like the flu does.

Nathan Bartlett

Associate Professor, School of Biomedical Sciences and Pharmacy, University of Newcastle

Risky Gamble



Pic: European Commission

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The new health protocol requires that doubly vaccinated 65 years old+ seniors who are tested Covid-19 positive are sent for treatment at the ENT. No elderly citizen would be willing to go there for treatment under the present ghastly conditions. Why can't 65 years old + seniors without conditions of comorbidity be also allowed to self isolate

“Despite the fact that a majority of people across the world have not received a single dose of vaccine, a plethora of principally rich countries from Austria to France, Germany and the United Kingdom are set to offer a booster third dose to the elderly and vulnerable groups within their population. Israel is offering a booster vaccine dose to anyone aged at least 50 years old and people at risk of severe illness from coronavirus. The US Administration has recommended a booster dose eight months after completing the first round of vaccination...”

in the comfort and security of their homes? Not all senior citizens can afford or have medical insurance cover to be treated in private clinics, let alone be treated abroad.

Gold standard

The onus is therefore squarely on the authorities to audit and benchmark the standard of healthcare, services,

amenities, hygiene and cleanliness at the ENT and other Covid-19 treatment centres in the country to those prevailing in the public hospitals of the UK National Health Service (NHS). The fully vaccinated hospital and cleaning staff must be educated not be scared of infection while diligently carrying out their healthcare duties, cleaning and other professional responsibilities as is the case for front line workers in hospitals across the world. It is equally important to ensure that ICU services and beds are not overwhelmed.

At a time when government is claiming to uphold benchmarks of excellence in the teeth of its policy of appointing the coterie or the party faithful to key government posts, as ambassadors and at the head of important institutions and state-owned companies, they should be reminded that the UK NHS should be the gold standard on which the standard of healthcare, services, general hygiene and cleanliness of our hospitals should be benchmarked on. These benchmarks must become the norm applicable in all hospitals in the country at a time when billions of Rupees are being invested in new specialized hospitals such as the New Flacq Teaching Hospital.

The country is thus facing a grim situation. This is therefore not the time for risky gambles but for rational decision making. At stake is the socio-economic recovery of the country. We cannot afford to make the wrong call.

Mrinal Roy



Pic - Evgenii Parilov/Alamy Stock

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So, to aim for a better chance of achieving the Paris Agreement's goal and to lower the risk of relying on as yet unproven technologies, we argue that our estimates of how much of the world's fossil fuels cannot safely be extracted should be treated as cautious underestimates. The world may need to be even more ambitious.

Fossil fuel rationing

We estimated how much fossil fuel production in each region must fall and how fast based on a global energy system model. We allocated the remaining shares of fossil fuel production allowed within the budget based on the costs and carbon intensity of producing different oil and gas assets, and how cheap low and zero-carbon technologies are in different parts of the world.

Our analysis showed that total fossil fuel production is limited by a global carbon budget. Production growing in one region of the world will require a decrease in another to keep the global trajectory pointing downwards. A mechanism such as the Global Fossil Fuel Registry – a public database of all known reserves – could provide the necessary transparency for an international effort, with the cooperation of governments and fossil fuel producers.

The US and Russia sit on half of the world's coal but must leave 97% of it in the ground. Australia, which recently pledged to keep producing and exporting coal beyond 2030, would need to keep 95% of its reserves underground. Oil-producing states in the Middle East must not extract around two-thirds of their reserves, while most of Canada's tar sand oil must not be burned, along with all of the fossil fuel buried beneath the Arctic.

Climate change: ditch 90% of world's coal and 60% of oil and gas to limit warming to 1.5°C

Our analysis suggests that many countries will need to move out of fossil fuel production relatively quickly, which raises concerns about how the transition can be managed fairly. Countries such as Iraq and Angola have a high dependency on fossil fuels for government revenues. They will need support to diversify their economies in a managed way – including financial and technological assistance to develop new low-carbon industries – and to decarbonise domestically to reduce their own reliance on fossil fuels.

The necessary energy transformation highlighted in this research will require a range of policy levers, including measures that drive down fossil fuel consumption, such as banning petrol cars or promoting renewable electricity generation, and those targeting production itself, including

restrictions on new fossil fuel extraction licenses.

Alliances between countries are also likely to be important to build political support for reducing fossil fuel production. The Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance, formed by Denmark and Costa Rica, has pressured other countries to halt investment in new oil and gas projects.

Phasing out global fossil fuel production at the rate suggested in our study is possible, but it will rely on some of the measures we've described expanding and gaining the support of large producing countries and companies – those which have benefited most from the fossil fuel era.

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Obituary

Bala Chetty

Dawood Auleear

Bala Chetty, aka Bala Long, not to be confused with his maternal cou-sin Bala Milate, passed away on Friday 13 August after a long illness leaving behind numerous friends and admirers to mourn his departure.



Bala was the eldest child of Kathan Chetty, a well-known big planter, in fact the only big planter of Grand Bay.

Bala was a lively character, a sympathetic young man, an avid listener, a ready to help individual. His main occupation was to look after his father's plantation, do the round of the fields on his BSA motorcycle. The motorbike was an impressive status symbol at that time with Grand Bay having in all three owners of this two-wheeled locomotive.

His apparent wealth and the charismatic nature attracted many people to seek Bala's help for all and sundry. He would settle quarrels between feuding groups and would be propelled to the front line to start social and sports activities. He was thus an important architect in the creation of Model Youth football club. At a time when regional football was prospering and regional tournaments were drawing crowds of thousands in village stadiums on Sunday afternoons, Model Youth club was competing and hoping to win the Cup. They did not achieve their ambition to be regional champions but Model Youth did become a nursery supplying several players to the national team.

Bala was also enthusiastic about politics; he fought, and won village council elections several times. In the national legislative elections, he stood as a candidate for the PMSD but he was not successful. However, he did not give up his ideal of what politics should be - service to the people. His participation in active social and political activities diminished through old age and illness until he passed away peacefully. Alas, because of the constraint imposed by the hated Covid-19, attendance at his funeral was limited to close relatives and neighbours.

Aatmashantya dayotatam, dear Bala.



COMMUNIQUE

e-Appointment Assistance for e-filing of Income Tax / CSG Returns

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) wishes to inform the public that it has put in place an **e-Appointment system** to help taxpayers get assistance through a **WhatsApp Video Call** to file their individual income tax / CSG returns.

The e-Appointment system is available on the MRA website: www.mra.mu and allows taxpayers to reserve a time slot on a particular day, at their convenience.

Assistance will be provided through a **WhatsApp Video Call** on the day and time of the appointment.

The following simple steps should be followed for an appointment.

1. Go to MRA Website on www.mra.mu
2. Click on "**e-Appointment**";
3. Insert your TAN (user ID) or NID / NCID and your mobile number;
4. Choose a time slot for an available date on the calendar; and
5. Confirm the reservation of your slot with the One Time Password (OTP) sent on your mobile number.

On the day of the appointment, the taxpayer will receive an SMS with a WhatsApp link on his mobile number. He should click on the WhatsApp link to start the video call with the MRA Officer. Taxpayers are advised to ensure that they have all the documents and information ready prior to making the interactive session with the MRA officer.

The MRA strongly recommends taxpayers to avail themselves of the e-Appointment facility for assistance to file their returns electronically and to kindly avoid calling, in person, to the MRA Customer Service Centre, given the actual Covid-19 pandemic prevailing in Mauritius.

For further details, kindly visit the MRA website: www.mra.mu or phone the MRA Helpdesk on **207 6000** during working hours or send an email at headoffice@mra.mu.

MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY

09 September 2021

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



Laughter
is the **BEST**
Medicine



Innocence at its best...

A small boy parks his bicycle nearby the Parliament House and walks on...

A police constable stops him and asks: 'Why did you park your bicycle here? Don't you know about this road? Many MPs, sometimes even President and cabinet ministers and politicians pass from here...'

The boy replied innocently: 'Don't worry, I have locked my bicycle.'

* * *

Reviewing History

The teacher said, "Let's begin by reviewing some History. Who said: 'Give me Liberty, or give me Death?'"

She saw a sea of blank faces, except for Little Akio, a bright foreign exchange student from Japan, who had his hand up: "Patrick Henry, 1775," he said.

"Very good! -- Who said, 'Government of the People, by the People, for the People, shall not perish from the Earth?'"

Again, no response except from Little Akio: "Abraham Lincoln, 1863."

"Excellent!" said the teacher continuing, "Let's try one a bit more difficult"

Who said, 'Ask not what your country

can do for you, but what you can do for your country?'"

Once again, Akio's was the only hand in the air and he said: "John F. Kennedy, 1961."

The teacher snapped at the class, "Class, you should be ashamed of yourselves, Little Akio isn't from this country and he knows more about our history than you do."

She heard a loud whisper: "F---k the Japs."

"Who said that? -- I want to know right now!? she angrily demanded.

Little Akio put his hand up, "General MacArthur, 1945."

Now furious, another student yells, "Oh yeah? -- Suck this!"

Little Akio jumps out of his chair waving his hand and shouts to the teacher, "Bill Clinton, to Monica, 1997!"

The teacher fainted. As the class gathered around the teacher on the floor, someone said, "Oh shit, We're screwed!"

Little Akio said quietly, "The people of Mauritius... in 2019!"

* * *

The 9 pounds of gold

Enjoy this dialogue with double entendre...

A husband and wife were very happy over the nine pound baby boy that

was born to them.

Mr Brown who could not conceal his delight, called up the editor of

a famous newspaper and reported that he had become the proud owner of

a nine pound nugget of gold. The editor upon hearing seemingly

extraordinary news, sent his star reporter to interview Mr Brown.

When the reporter came, Mr Brown was away and his wife was alone at home....

Reporter: Does Mr Brown live here?

Mrs Brown: Oh! yes.

Reporter: Is he in?

Mrs Brown: No, he went somewhere.

Reporter: Is it true that he owns a nine pound nugget of gold?

Mrs Brown: (Realising the joke) Yes! Indeed.

Reporter: Can I see the place where it was found?

Mrs Brown: I'm afraid not because Mr Brown objects in as much as

it is strictly private.

Reporter: Is the place far?

Mrs Brown: No, it is quite near and convenient.

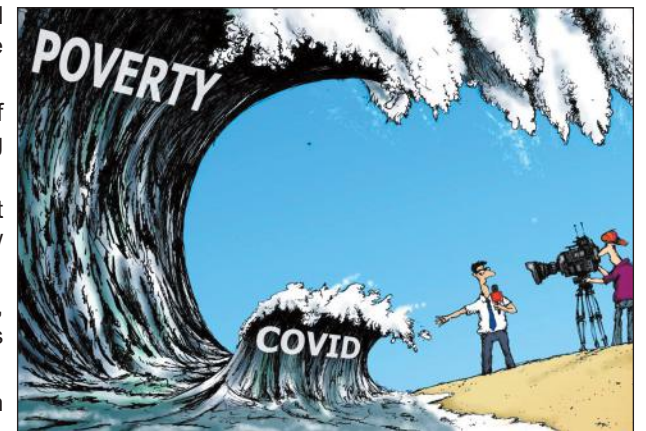
Reporter: Is the hole deep?

Mrs Brown: Quite so...

Reporter: Does he work hard on it?

Mrs Brown: You bet....and how he perspires.

Reporter: Is Mr Brown the first to dig?



Mrs Brown: He thought he was...

Reporter: How do you know there was someone ahead of him?

Mrs Brown: I'm in good position to say so, because I own the place.

Reporter: Oh, I see, but did you sell the place to Mr Brown?

Mrs Brown: No, but for the present he has the legal title to the site.

Reporter: Has Mr Brown any helper when he works?

Mrs Brown: Yes, I work under him....

Reporter: Do you think Mr Brown will sell the place?

Mrs Brown: I don't think so because he enjoys working on it.

Reporter: Can I see the nine pound nugget of gold?

Mrs Brown: Yes, certainly...

(She showed him the nine pound baby boy...)

The reporter: ???

Thought to live by



My wife suddenly changed

My wife felt exhausted. She was irritable and grumpy, until one day, suddenly, she changed.

One day when I said to her: 'I'm going to have a few beers with friends.'

She replied: 'Okay.'

My son said to her: 'I'm doing poorly in all subjects in college.'

My wife replied: 'Okay, you will recover, and if you don't, you repeat the semester, but you pay the tuition.'

My daughter said to her: 'I smashed the car.'

My wife replied: 'Okay, take it to the car shop & get it fixed.'

All of us were worried to see these reactions coming

from mom. We suspected that she had gone to the doctor and was prescribed some pills called 'I don't give a damn'. We then proposed to do an "intervention" with my wife to remove her from any possible addiction she had towards some anti-tantrum medication.

But then she gathered us around her and explained:

'It took me a long time to realize that each person is responsible for their life. It took me years to discover that my anguish, anxiety, my depression, my courage, my insomnia & my stress, do not solve your problems but aggravate mine.

'I am not responsible for the actions of anyone and it's not my job to provide happiness. Therefore, I came to the conclusion that my duty to myself is to remain calm and let each one of you solve what corresponds to you.

'I have taken courses in yoga, meditation, miracles, human development, mental hygiene, vibration and neuro-linguistic programming and in all of them, I found a common denominator.

'I can only control myself; you have all the necessary resources to solve your own problems despite how hard they may be. My job is to pray for you, love you, encourage you, but it's up to you to solve them and find your happiness.

'I can only give you my advice if you ask me and it depends on you to follow it or not. There are consequences, good or bad, to your decisions and you have to live with them.'

Everyone at home was speechless.

From that day on, the family began to function better because everyone in the house knew exactly what it is that they needed to do!

Who is a Happy Soul?

Following is written at a Buddhist monastery in Lamayuru, a small hamlet on way to Leh. Understanding it isn't easy at all, but certainly, implementing it is life changing!

1. A happy soul stops trying to change others, but instead focuses on changing self.

2. A happy soul is one who accepts people for who they are.

3. A happy soul is one who understands that everyone is right in one's own perspective.

4. A happy soul is one who learns to "let go".

5. A happy soul is one who is able to drop expectations from every relationship and gives for the sake of giving.

6. A happy soul is one who understands that whatever we do, we do it for our own peace.

7. A happy soul is one who stops proving to the world, how intelligent one is.

8. A happy soul is one who does not seek approval from others.

9. A happy soul is one who stops comparing with others.

10. A happy soul is one who is at peace with oneself.

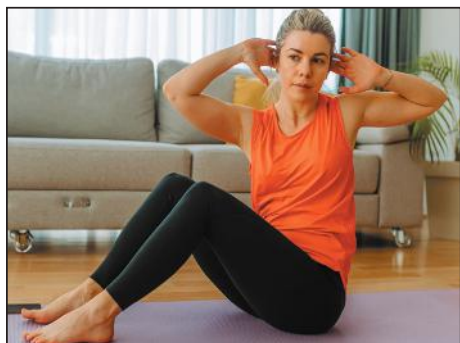
11. A happy soul is one who is able to differentiate between "need" and "want" and is able to let go of one's wants.

12. A happy soul is one who stops attaching "happiness" to material things.



How these nighttime habits affect your days

Is what you do at night making your morning better or worse? Here's how to give yourself an advantage.



Exercise

In general, hitting the gym helps you sleep better and get to sleep quicker. But when you work out, your body makes more cortisol. That's a hormone that helps make you more alert. That's good when you're trying to wake up for work. But it's not so good when you're trying to get to sleep. If you must exercise in the evening, try to finish at least 3 hours before bed.

Packing lunch -- at night

Then you can just grab it from the fridge on your way out the door tomorrow. It saves time and stress in the morning, and it guarantees decent nutrition to get you through the day.

Late-night eating

That cheesesteak in the wee hours isn't a recipe for a restful night's sleep. You're more likely to wake rested and ready for the day with a lighter dinner -- less fat, salt, and calories -- several hours before bed. If you're hungry later, snack lightly on easy-to-digest foods like toast or yogurt.

Ignoring your teeth

If you don't brush and floss in the evening, you might notice a thicker coating (bacteria) on your teeth in the morning. Swishing with mouthwash also might help prevent this buildup of bacteria. In just a day or two, it starts to harden into a cement-like "tarter" that can lead to cavities and gum disease. Only your dentist can remove tartar.

Staying up late

Not only does it sap your energy, but it can trigger your body to make more cortisol. It can also make you crave higher-fat, high-sugar foods the next day. That's why you tend to have more body fat if you sleep less than 6 hours a night. That extra body fat makes you more likely to get things like diabetes and heart disease. So, if you have to be up for work, it helps to go to bed early enough to get at least 8 hours of sleep.



Drinking alcohol

At first, it might make you sleepy. But after a few hours, it has the opposite effect.

And the quality of sleep you do get may not be as good. Plus, it makes you pee more, which means more up and down to the bathroom. All this might leave you dragging the next day. Consider keeping it to 1 to 2 drinks per day, and try not to drink in the 3 hours before bedtime.

A late jolt of caffeine

It's in tea, coffee, chocolate, and many energy drinks. Even in normal amounts, it can make it harder to fall asleep or make the sleep you get less effective, especially as you get older. Even if you have caffeine 6 to 8 hours before bedtime, it could give you that unrested feeling the next day.

Napping

A nap of any length in the late afternoon or evening can lead to an unfortunate cycle that disrupts your normal sleep routine and makes it hard to get up in the morning.

Your busy mind

It can be hard to relax when your mind is racing with the million things you need to do. But if you take just a few minutes to organize your thoughts, you can create a mini-plan for the next day -- a "to-do" list, if you will. It will help you lessen your stress level the next morning by giving you a ready-made guide for how to attack the day.

Being digital after dark

Too much artificial light after the sun goes down can mess up your internal clock. The "blue light" given off by your smartphone, laptop, and other electronics can

cut down the amount of melatonin that your body makes, which can make winding down difficult. Specialized glasses or screens can filter out the light, and some devices have "nightshift" settings that help remove it. But the best solution is to put the electronics down early.



Washing your face

You don't want to overwash your face or scrub it too hard, especially if you have dry skin. But you should wash off the dirt, grime, sweat, and makeup at the end of the day. By keeping germs off your face, you'll keep pimples away and you might even prevent eye infections. Plus your moisturizer, if you use one, will work.

Get a sleep routine

Ease the path to bedtime with a soothing evening routine. Read a book or listen to calming music. A hot bath or shower can promote sleepiness, as can some light stretching. Avoid difficult or stressful discussions late in the evening, which can trigger hormones that keep you up.

WebMD

9 'healthy' habits that can backfire on you

You have a lot of options when you're trying to eat right, but not all choices are what they seem. You may be doing some things that seem healthy -- like drinking bottled water or taking a lot of supplements -- but that can actually cause problems. See if you're making any of these mistakes.

Drinking diet soda

While cutting down on sugar is good for you, artificial sweeteners may cause different issues. Studies show that people who drink diet soda tend to eat more, especially more high-calorie foods. They also usually have a higher body mass index (BMI). Your healthiest choice is always water. You can always add some flavour with things like raspberries, cucumber, mint, lemon, or lime.

'Catching Up' on sleep

Sleeping in on the weekends sounds great, but it doesn't make up for not getting 7 to 9 hours a night during the week. It can actually mess with your body clock and make you feel groggy. You also might have trouble focusing or reacting. The best way to get back in rhythm is to go to bed earlier and wake up about the same time every day.

Drinking Red Wine

This popular choice has antioxidants called polyphenols that are thought to be good for your heart. In fact, no

study has shown any definite health benefits of drinking red wine. You can still enjoy it in moderation -- one 5-ounce glass a day for women, two for men. But there's no reason to start drinking it if you don't already. And overdoing it with alcohol has been linked to heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, and certain cancers.

Cutting out carbs

Carbohydrates are a macronutrient -- they give you energy and serve as fuel for your muscles and your brain. So, getting rid of them completely, as with the keto diet, may not be a good idea -- and it's not easy to give them up forever. It's a better idea to establish good habits you can stick with for the long haul, like having more carbs when you're active and fewer when you're not.

Juice cleanses or detoxes

These might sound like a good way to lose weight and give your digestive system "a break," but most of the weight loss is water. What's more, it deprives you of vital nutrients, like proteins and fats. Your lungs, liver, and kidneys are designed to remove toxins from your body, so the best eating plan is one that gives you the vitamins and minerals you need to keep those organs healthy.

Looking for 'healthy' labels

Just because a food is called "all natural" or "healthy" doesn't mean it's good for you. There's no official definition for either term, so both are open to interpretation. To truly

understand how good (or bad) something is for you, read the nutrition facts label and the ingredients list. That's the only way to know what you're getting.

Relying on supplements

Your body needs a lot of different vitamins and minerals to work the way it should. It might seem easier to get them all in a pill. Some dietary supplements, like calcium, can help fill in gaps, but they're not meant to replace good nutrition. Your body can use several of those nutrients better if you get them through food.

Using hand sanitizer too often

Estimates say the convenience of making your hands germ-free without soap and water has helped make hand sanitizing a \$200 million business in the U.S. The alcohol base does prevent the spread of some germs, like *Staphylococcus aureus* (staph). But it's best to use it only when you need to. Studies show that the widespread use of it has led certain germs to grow stronger and, in some cases, make the sanitizers less effective.

Drinking bottled water

Studies have shown that bottled water isn't any better for you than tap water. In fact, government standards are higher for tap water. And some impurities, like microplastics, can reach the water from the plastic in the bottles themselves. What's more, 86% of water bottles aren't recycled and America's annual demand for those bottles takes about 17 million barrels of oil.

**Reviewed by Melinda Ratini,
DO, WebMD**

TellyBytes

Gaurav Khanna:**'everybody would love to have someone like Anuj in their lives'**

Anupamaa has turned into a massive hit amongst the audience. The show has earned a loyal fanbase. A refreshing new entry is all geared up to set the screens on fire with Gaurav Khanna as Anuj Kapadia. He has been preparing for the role and also shares some interesting facts with Tellychakkar on how he bagged the show.

You will be working with Rupali Ganguly for the first time, she is well-known as Monisha from Sarabhai vs Sarabhai, did you ever imagine bagging a role opposite her?

My first shot was with Rupali, I have always seen her work onscreen and loved her performance in other shows. I feel she is a very talented actor, a very humble and down to earth person as well. She made me feel comfortable on my mock shoot schedule.

Right from the first scene, she understood my pauses and my punches, we really enjoyed working together. She is an avid animal lover and I could relate to it as my wife at home is also a very strict pet lover. Leaving one pet lover at home I found the other on the sets.

What can the viewers expect from your character Anuj in the show Anupamaa? Tell us something about your experience with the cast.

I can just say that everybody would love to have someone like Anuj in their lives. He is going to be a breath of fresh air in the current story. I am pretty sure that everyone will love Anuj's entry into Anupamaa's life.

What was your wife's and family's reaction when you were offered this character?

My wife and my family were very supportive and happy. In my house also, I have a lot of fans of Anupamaa. They were happy to know that I would have a pivotal role in their favourite star's onscreen life.

Rubina Dilaik:**'Be kind to your body'**

Rubina Dilaik, who is currently seen in *Shakti - Astitva Ke Ehsaas Ki*, recently opened up about gaining weight post her Covid-19 recovery. The actress had tested positive in May, reports Times of India.

She penned a note wherein she wrote, "M Learning to love myself again after realising, a perfect, lean body doesn't define who I am..."

She added, "I gained 7kgs post my Covid recovery which made me really uncomfortable and low on confidence! Struggled hard to get back to my usual 50 but ...So here is to my beautiful people a lil nugget (which I am currently practicing) ! Weight is all about having your health first and not your looks.... Be kind to your body."

Rubina was in her hometown, Shimla, when she tested positive for Covid-19.



She has shared in her post, "I always look out for silver lining!! I will be eligible for donating plasma after a month."

Shalini Kapoor:**Actors should not have to haggle for their remunerations**

Actress Shalini Kapoor has been part of several shows over the years, but is best known for her role in *Qubool Hai*. Talking to Times of India about the issues that she has been facing in the industry lately, she says, "I have been a part of showbiz since I was 18. This industry has given me a lot - it has given me an identity. But time and again actors have to go through these phases when sometimes we have a lot of work and suddenly, there is no work on hand."

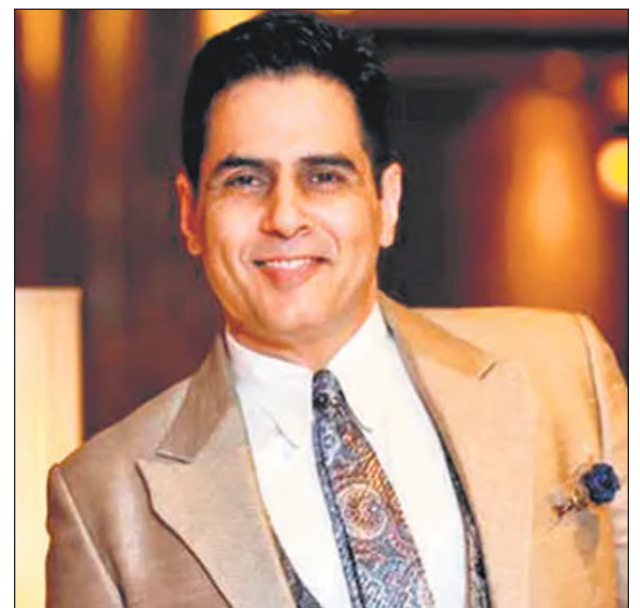
The pandemic hit the TV industry hard. From budget cuts to smaller teams and shows going off air within no time, it has been a tough time. Shalini says that she understands the situation where production houses have to cut down on budgets of actors and is ready to take a cut herself.

"I am ready for a pay cut, but giving me less than a half of my budget isn't fair. Recently, I was approached by a casting director and his words were, 'Ma'am aapne X amount quote kiya tha, mera budget uska half hai to aage baat karu ki phone kaat doon'. I was shocked. Why do actors have to keep haggling for remunerations? The industry needs to work on this. Acting is a premium job and we need to treat it that way," she ends.

Aman Verma:**Being in front of camera rejuvenates me**

After a career spanning over two decades, actor-anchor Aman Verma admits that it's his love for the camera and acting as a craft that sees him through even in the toughest phases of life.

"Things have never been easy in life. So, I have learnt to take things in the stride and let my craft make me forget all adversities that we get to face as human beings. Thankfully, I had my passion that kept me going. Whenever I am in front of the camera, I get all rejuvenated and that's my way of life," says the *Baghban*, *Babul* and *Andaaz* actor to Hindustan Times.



Verma, who has been part of several films and TV shows, says, "I enjoy it all, be it television or films because it makes me happy being an actor as well an anchor."

Verma has done a variety of roles playing a cop and feels it's all about portraying it differently each time. "Whenever I get to play a cop, I try doing it differently. Currently, I am shooting for the show *Mauka-e-Vardaat* yet again as a cop, but this time this character has a strong human angle to it and that's what makes it a lot more different."

BollyBytes

Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty to divorce Raj Kundra?

Reports claim Shetty intends to separate from husband linked in an adult film racket

Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty Kundra is reportedly planning to separate from her businessman husband Raj Kundra, who is in police custody for his alleged association with an adult film racket.

According to a report published by Bollywood Hungama, Shetty Kundra is planning to move out of her home in Mumbai, along with their two young children. A friend of Shetty Kundra has been quoted in the speculative article that claims their marriage is on the rocks, reports Gulf Times.

"Raj Kundra's troubles aren't going away in a hurry. On the contrary, they seem to be multiplying every week. The disclosure of Raj Kundra's alleged link with adult content came as much a shock to Shilpa. She had no clue that the diamonds and duplex were coming from nefarious resources," said the source to Bollywood Hungama.

Shetty's personal life has come under intense scrutiny when her husband - an industrialist and a former owner of a cricket team in the Indian Premier League - was arrested in July for being a part of an adult film production ring. Mumbai Police claim that Kundra and his allies used to force women to engage in explicit videos, but Kundra has denied any wrong doing. He's now



seeking bail.

Meanwhile, Shetty Kundra has returned to filming and judging the talent show 'Super Dancer 4'. Kundra and Shetty Kundra got married in a lavish manner in 2009 and their wedding was attended by several Bollywood A-listers and well-heeled guests.

Shetty Kundra has been posting cryptic messages about her situation on her social media handle. Her recent Instagram story post was an excerpt from a book that touched her deeply about making mistakes in life.

"We can't make our lives interesting without making a few mistakes here and there. We hope that they won't be dangerous mistakes or mistakes that hurt other people. But there will be mistakes. We can see our mistakes as things we'd like to forget or as our most interesting, challenging and stimulating experiences. Not because of the mistakes themselves but because of what we learned from them," the excerpt read.

She also made it clear that she is yet to comment on any controversy surrounding her husband's arrest.

Dino Morea & ex-girlfriend Bipasha Basu: "Still friendly"

Dino Morea, in an interview with *Hindustan Times*, talked about his current equation with his ex-girlfriend, Bipasha Basu, and said that they are "still friendly."

Dino Morea and Bipasha Basu dated from 1996 to 2002. They were seeing each other while filming the 2002 movie *Raaz* but they called it quits during the shooting for *Gunaah*, which also released in 2002. Talking about his present equation with the actress, who is now married to actor Karan Singh Grover, Dino Morea told *Hindustan Times*: "My equation with Bipasha Basu from *Raaz* to *Gunaah* had not changed. I don't think it changed ever. Yes, we were dating when we were shooting *Raaz*. Then we were not dating during *Gunaah*. But I think we were both professional actors and we both wanted to be professional on the sets and in the industry."

He added: "So, we did not let our personal relationship come in between our work. I think we both handled everything very professionally. We both respect each other and we both are still friendly, very friendly. In fact, we don't talk as much but we talk every now and then and there



are those cherished memories which were wonderful. So, the equation is great!"

YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

You'll savour the delights of love. But this should not prevent you from taking care of other sectors of your existence. Family concerns or uneasiness about the health of a near one will somewhat disturb your life.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 9, 16, 17, 30, 33

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

Important changes will take place in your career, and you'll have to adapt yourself to the circumstances. In friendship, you'll give much and will also receive much. Beware this time of gambling and speculative investments.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 8, 11, 12, 17, 30

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

An ideal week for carrying out financial or real estate transactions, prepare your retirement, assure the future of your dear ones. If you dream of an enthralling encounter, you are likely to be disappointed.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 9, 20, 26, 28, 30

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

You'll have the right to a happy surprise in your affective life. You'll do your best to create a climate of harmony in your home. You'll be right to try to profit best of the pleasures which life offers.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 9, 11, 28, 29, 30

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

Be very vigilant as far as your finances are concerned. At work, beware of envious and jealous people who turn around you! If you're confronted with problems, the support of your friends will provide you with great consolation.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 7, 8, 19, 20, 24

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

Your close ones will pamper you beyond your hopes. If you suffer from a chronic disease, try to find a new treatment; your chances to be cured will be excellent. You'll show yourself excessively jealous..

Lucky Numbers: 7, 14, 29, 29, 31, 36

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

A week marked with sheer luck; therefore, play at some money game. Beware of your credulity which might play havoc with your work. You'll find rest and peace within your family.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 7, 9, 14, 20, 36

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

Don't succumb to the temptation of easy money. Family relations will be a little difficult. Patience, don't rush events, otherwise you'd only spoil your chances of success.

Lucky Numbers: 15, 17, 29, 31, 36, 40

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

Try not to commit blunders for it will be very difficult for you to retract. Singles, you'll be very successful in your conquests; however, even though you play with hearts, you'll try to avoid complications.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 20, 23, 29, 30, 37

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

At work, don't take upon yourself too numerous or too heavy burdens. Everything will go for the better heart wise. But difficulties are to be expected on the financial front. In your family, don't let your anger flare up: you might say things which you would regret afterwards.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 17, 21, 26, 30, 31

Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

If you don't show tolerance, your home life will become unbearable. Try to be more reserved, more patient in your relationships with other people, otherwise you may complicate things by hurting the susceptibility of others.

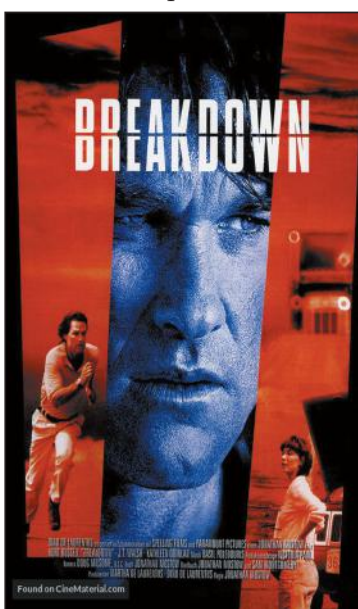
Lucky Numbers: 7, 9, 11, 20, 30, 31



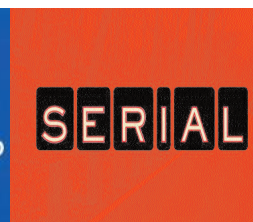
Vendredi 10 septembre - 21.15



Samedi 11 septembre - 21.20



Dimanche 12 septembre - 21.10



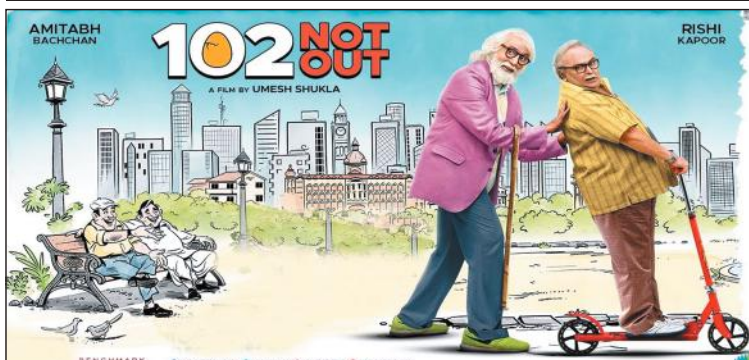
	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
vendredi 10 septembre	07.00 D.Anime: Twirlywoos 09.20 Film: Shopkins 11.10 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.50 Mag: Green Touch 13.50 Serial: Heidi, Bienvenida A... 14.40 D.Anime: Word Party 14.53 D.Anime: Where's Waldo 15.15 D.Anime: Splash And Bubble 15.40 Film: The Jungle Book 17.15 Serial: Dark Oracle 17.40 Mag: Sur Mesure 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.00 Local: Ganesh Chaturthi 20.30 Local: Tou Korek 21.55 Serial: 19-2 23.20 Le Journal	09.00 Serial: Vir: The Robot Boy 09.30 Serial: Motu Patlu 10.00 Ki Jaana Mein Kaun 12.30 Film: Sixer - Tamil 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 Local: Abhay Charan 19.05 Zournal Kreol 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.02 Serial: Aas 20.46 Local: Anjuman 21.09 Local: Urdu Programme 22.07 DDI Live	06.00 Mag: Eco India 06.26 Mag: Shift 06.38 Mag: Sur Mesure 06.52 Mag: Border Crossing 07.20 Mag: Tomorrow Today 09.00 Doc: 360 GEO 10.42 What Did The Big Bang... 14.32 Doc: 360 GEO 15.30 Local: Excerpts From Ganesh Murtee Sthapan 16.30 Live From Melrose Shri Gajanan Saraswati Mandir 18.03 Doc: Can Green Investment Change The World? 18.34 Local: Ganesh Chaturthi 19.00 Student Support Prog... 19.33 Mag: Euromaxx 20.05 Doc: Innovation On Board 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.40 Sos Animaux En Darger 21.31 Doc: Barbra Streisand...	03.09 Serial: Chicago Med 03.58 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive.. 05.23 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.03 Serial: Unforgotten 06.49 Film: Love: Space Time 09.00 Serial: When Calls The Heart 09.45 Tele: Teresa 10.37 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.00 Serial: Chicago Med 11.46 Film: Signed. Sealed, Delive.. 13.33 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: Love: Space Time 16.39 Serial: When Calls The Heart 17.18 Serial: Unforgotten 18.05 Tele: Teresa 19.00 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 19.35 Mag: Hollywood On Set 20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana 20.30 Serial: Dynasty 2 21.15 Film: Rendel - Les Origines 23.00 Tele: Muneca Brava	08.00 Film: Luv...Phir Kabhie Starring Saurabh Roy, Arijita Roy, Meghna Patel & Narendra Bedi 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: Geet Starring Divya Bharti, Avinash Wadhawan, Shakti Kapoor 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.52 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 19.14 Serial: Bhakharwadi 19.36 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak
samedi 11 septembre	06.00 D.Anime: The Hive 06.22 D.Anime: P'tit Cosmonaute 07.00 D.Anime: Kung Fu Panda 07.25 D.Anime: Sabrina 08.09 Film: Garfield Et Cie 08.45 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 08.58 D.Anime: Pet Alien 09.03 D.Anime: Volttron, Le Défenseur 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Tele: Teresa 15.11 D.Anime: Splash And Bubble 15.40 Film: Fishtales 3 16.50 Serial: Magic Mania 17.17 Serial: Les Copains Carlins 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Entertainment: Dance 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.15 Local: Autour Des Valeurs... 21.15 Film: Breakdown Avec: Kurt Russell, J.T. Walsh, Kathleen Quinlan	07.00 Film: Fifty Fifty 09.15 Mag: DDI Magazine 10.00 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 11.40 Serial: Bloody Romance 12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhyia Bhare 12.24 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 12.42 Serial: High School 13.11 Annakodiyum Aintu Pengalum 15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.25 Film: Vighnaharta Shree Siddhivinayak Starring: Ramesh Deo, Parmeet Sethi, Divya Dutta, Ashalata 17.30 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: Namak Halal	06.00 Doc: Legendary Hotels 06.42 Mag: Arts And Culture 06.55 Mag: Global 3000 07.47 Doc: Innovation On Board 09.08 Doc: Barbra Streisand... 10.00 Doc: The Forgotten Temple 11.16 Doc: Legendary Hotels 12.02 Mag: Global 3000 13.01 Doc: Sos Animaux Danger 14.45 Doc: The Forgotten Temple.. 17.30 Live From Swami Tyagaraja, MTMS, GRNW, - Shri Venkateshwara 20.00 Excerpts From Uttar Pooja Held at Melrose Shri Gajanan 21.00 Exerpts From Immersion Ceremony 23.30 Doc: Country Living From Beginners 23.56 Doc: Zenith 00.21 Mag: Check In	01.25 Film: Rendel 03.12 Serial: The Night Shift 03.53 Film: Brush With Danger 05.17 Tele: Tanto Amor 06.00 Serial: Dnyasty 2 06.38 Film: Cassidy Red 08.30 Serial: Mike Hammer 09.18 Serial: Brooklyn Nine Nine 10.04 Serial: Falling Water 10.43 Film: I Think My Babysitter's 12.24 Serial: The Night Shift 13.00 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: The Water Horse 19.35 Mag: Hollywood On Set 20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana 20.30 Series: Dynasty 2 21.15 Film: Equity 22.50 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 Rishta 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Film: 102 Not Out Star: Amitabh Bachchan, Rishi Kapoor 20.23 Serial: Motu Patlu
dimanche 12 septembre	06.00 D.Anime: The Hive 06.22 D.Anime: P'tit Cosmonaute 06.30 D.Anime: Sissi - The Young... 07.00 D.Anime: Kung Fu Panda 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: The Deep 15.21 D.Anime: Splash And Bubble 15.46 Film: Bobby The Hedgehog 17.15 Serial: Les Copains Carlins 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Local Prod: Gata Rahe Mere... 19.30 Le Journal 20.20 Local: Groov'in 21.15 Film: Ladies In Black Avec: Julia Ormond, Angourie Rice, Rachael Taylor	07.00 Film: Anjaam 10.00 Local Prod: Excerpts From Krishna Janmasthami 11.00 Serial: Oru Kai Osai 11.22 Serial: Santoshi Maa 12.00 Film: Khoobsurat Stars: Sanjay Dutt, Urmila Matondkar, Om Puri, Farida Jalal 14.30 DDI Magazine 15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.22 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 15.44 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.. 20.58 Serial: CID 21.43 Serial: Naagin Season 2 22.25 Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki	06.00 Mag: Amazing Gardens 06.26 Doc: Country Living For Beginners 06.52 Doc: Zenith 07.46 Femmes Pour La Planete 10.28 From Enemies To Friends 11.13 Doc: Amazing Gardens 11.39 Mag: Country Living For... 12.31 Mag: Check In 13.56 Doc: Tree Stories 17.40 Mag: Magnifique 18.14 Doc: Builders Of The Future 18.39 Doc: Garden Party 19.06 Mag: Trend Book 19.38 The Real Dr. Strangelove 20.30 Local Prod: News (English) 20.40 Doc: Comme Une Envie De.. 21.32 Doc: Margherita S 22.24 Doc: Iran From Above 23.06 Mag: Magnifique 23.36 Doc: Builders Of The Future	01.20 Film: Equity 02.53 Serial: Midnight, Texas 03.34 Film: Breakdown 05.25 Tele: Tanto Amor 06.10 Serial: Dynasty 2 06.51 Film: Brush With Danger 08.38 Serial: The Enemy Within 09.12 Film: Sox: A Family's Best... 10.35 Film: The Water Horse 12.25 Serial: Midnight, Texas 13.29 Serial: Chicago Med 15.28 Tele: Amanda 16.09 Tele: Muneca Brava 17.01 Serial: Dynasty 2 17.45 Serial: Midnight, Texas 18.30 Serial: Rich Man, Poor Man 19.35 Mag: Hollywood On Set 20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana 20.30 Serial: Pure Genius 21.15 Film: Nowhere To Run Avec: Jean-Claude Van Damme, Rosanna Arquette, Kieran Culkin	00.35 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak 02.09 Bhakharwadi 04.30 Chupke Chupke 06.07 Pavitra Rishta 08.00 Motu Patlu 08.11 Ikyawann 10.00 Jaana Na Dil Se Door 12.00 Piya Albela 14.00 Agniphera 16.29 Punar Vivaah 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Film: Kedarnath Starring: Sushant Singh Rajput, Sara Ali Khan, Nitish Bharadwaj 20.25 Entertainment: Dance 21.10 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 23.05 Serial: Piya Albela

MBC 2

Samedi 11 septembre

- 18.30

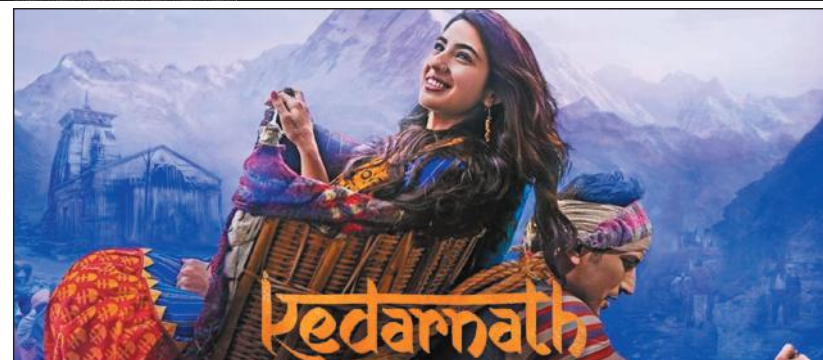
Stars: Amitabh Bachchan, Rishi Kapoor



Dimanche 12 septembre

- 18.30

Stars: Sushant Singh Rajput, Sara Ali Khan, Nitish Bharadwaj



2001-2021. Twenty years of Progress



Nita Chicooree-Mercier

Three simultaneous attacks carried out by nine Saudi and four Egyptian young men on American soil took the world by surprise on September 11th, 2001. The most spectacular one was by the two planes tearing into the World Trade Centre and engulfing it in smoke and fire. In no time the twin towers were razed to the ground. The incredible news rocked the world. How could the secret services of the world superpower not foresee these terrorist acts was the question that puzzled the world. The attacks reportedly took a heavy toll of 2500 to 3000 people who were working in the towers, including many foreigners, including Indian IT engineers.

America was devastated and humiliated. Six months earlier the newly-elected President George W. Bush Junior had announced that the US was distancing itself from the Palestinian-Israeli conflict - a decision which was said to be the last straw that pushed Al-Qaeda to take retaliatory measures on the highest scale. President Bush vowed to find the founder of Al-Qaeda in whichever cave he was hiding in Afghanistan.

Twenty years ago, an article carried in this column mainly depicted 9/11 as the boomerang effect of an ill-conceived dangerous strategy of using religious extremism to oust the Soviets out of Afghanistan. The attacks opened an era of insecurity worldwide as the ideology drew recruits motivated by the will to take up arms against perceived enemies. As early as in the 1990s, India and Afghanistan were at the receiving end of terrorism nurtured in Pakistan, irrigated with Saudi Arabia's funds, and blessed by US secret services throughout the 1980s.

August 2021

The Taliban's swift takeover of Kabul raised two baffling questions. First, US troops were equipped with sophisticated high-tech weaponry, armoured tanks, helicopters, fighter jets and drones, and yet they could not disarm and stop Taliban guerilla-style warfare. Did the US not want to be accused of mass killings in the first quarter of the 21st century? One may ask the question whether in recent years America has been more mindful of criti-



cisms and wary over its reputation in world opinion. Neutralising the Taliban would have meant not only the killings of thousands of Taliban fighters, but also the spread of terrorist cells seeking revenge in many countries, including Europe and America.

Second, was there a local Afghan resistance to undermine the Taliban? Logically, resistance should emerge from the ranks of the people themselves as happened during the two World Wars in Europe and anti-colonial liberation movements in Africa and Asia. In Afghanistan, the Northern Alliance led by slain general Massoud's son is still putting up strong resistance against the new rulers in Kabul. What about other Afghan civilians? Did they rely too much on the US to do the job for them? In all likelihood, for two decades they must have channelled their efforts towards taking advantage of opportunities created by the Afghan administration with the help of foreign aid and investments by countries which subscribe to US plan of modernizing the country.

The modernization of Afghanistan

It is believed that Taliban became more aggressive and confident after the Doha Agreement signed by the United States and the Taliban in February 2020. The US forces misjudged the capacity of Afghan forces to take over military defence to protect their country. Pakistani ISI supported the Taliban with loads of Pakistani recruits besides fighters from Algeria, the Middle East, Kosovo, Central Asia and Xinjiang province, among other places where the religion-inspired ideology and anti-western rhetoric flourish. Ruthless suicide bombings were meant to terrorize civilians and undermine the morale of government forces. It was not a victory by the so-called power of faith over foreign invaders; it was the victory of terrorism which drove out an elected government and took power by force.

Following the Taliban's refusal to

extend the delay of evacuation and the panic and chaotic rush witnessed at the capital's airport to flee the country, the buzzwords used by world mainstream media more or less echoed one another's criticisms of the US presence in Afghanistan: repeat of Vietnam, betrayal by western powers, abandonment of Afghans, shame, etc.

The bigger picture is that for twenty years US troops were committed to ensuring security to allow the development of Afghanistan at all levels - political, economic, educational and cultural. Foreign countries and NGOs opened schools, trained teachers and provided technical assistance in modern teaching methods. Other European countries opened schools for girls, women were empowered to improve skills and acquire entrepreneur spirit. It was not about western 'values' dumped on a different culture. It was about modernity made accessible to millions of Afghans. 20 years' of US presence stepped up the liberation of women from the shackles of a male-dominated, ultra-conservative oppressive system. Students were initiated to modern technology and robotics, areas of knowledge which are stimulating to young minds worldwide.

A modern administration was set up to run the country. Since 2001 governments made efforts to take on board representatives of different groups hailing from the post-civil war era, and convince them to work for common welfare. They received massive foreign aid to maintain the institutions and boost infrastructure to prop up the modernization of Afghanistan. Politicians in advanced countries occasionally resort to corruption whereas those in half-baked democracies are regularly tempted to adopt corrupt practices which undermine good governance. Burgeoning democracies cannot be expected to get rid of corruption overnight.

Twenty years is a short time in the life of a country. Broadly speaking, the US presence helped to realize the dreams of

early Soviet-backed Afghan rulers from Amanullah in 1923 to Daoud Khan in the late 70s and Dr Najibullah in the 1980s, till the withdrawal of Soviet troops: a secular government albeit more inclusive in the past 20 years, gender equality, modern infrastructure and education. A whole generation of Afghan women and men grew up under a Taliban-free rule for 20 years and enjoyed the benefits of modernity in every domain. It explains the desperate flight from the Taliban takeover by force. The latter's pledge to modern methods of administration and opposition to foreign intervention does not fall on deaf ears. Citizens in Kabul have been demonstrating against Pakistan; women too have been doing so, despite facing violence from the Taliban militia.

The legacy left by the US is unlikely to fade away in the coming years. Resistance by Afghans against barbaric rule and for the promotion of human dignity, freedom and rights will certainly need foreign moral and material support. Saying 'No' to intellectual and spiritual submission is the greatest legacy left behind to Afghans and their future lies in their own struggle and resistance against oppression.

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