

# MAURITIUS TIMES

• "Facing the pandemic, is not what happened matters, it is how we respond."— Napz Cherub Pellazo

## Covid Island: Grim Realities



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### The Pandemic

**I'm fully vaccinated but feel sick – should I get tested for Covid-19?**



By Arif R. Sarwari, West Virginia University

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# In Denial?

**F**ew people would today think the government is handling the recent upsurge in Covid-19 cases well, a situation made more complicated with the Delta variant. Thus, the increase in the number of deaths, and those infected or suspected to be infected as can be seen in the long queues at the testing centres these last few days. There are also indications that many cases and deaths are going undetected or unreported, or about which information is not being communicated to the public.

The reopening of our borders and the relaxed attitude towards the pandemic of so many of our citizens in public places, especially at beaches, have only made matters worse. Medical opinion is that Covid-19 is at full-blown epidemic stage in the country, that is, the disease is now widespread in the community amongst young and old. With the arrival of tourists, the risk of further spread is definitely going to increase, as has been observed in other countries where there has been a general relaxation of Covid restrictions.

It would appear that the government had been in denial mode for quite some time, concerned more with the economy, in particular the tourism industry, than with the health of the population. What was widely suspected about the prevalence of Covid cases has now been finally acknowledged by the Prime Minister in his address to the nation last night, since he announced new Covid restrictions that will come into force as from today, Friday 12 November. These restrictions will cover activities in fitness centres; places of worship; religious events & ceremonies; weddings and funerals. The measures include limits on the number of people attending these venues, control of entry and exit, and recommendations as to vaccination and social distancing. The closure of educational establishments is already in place, and the number of attendees at social, religious and professional events has been brought down.

While it is true that panic must be avoided by being alarmist about the situation, the fact is that this package amounts to rather timid measures, and falls short of what is really needed to curb the further spread of the epidemic. In fact, paradoxically, many people were rather anticipating some stronger measures that could be more effective. For example, there was an anticipation if not actual expectation by a broad cross-section of the population - genuinely concerned about the worrying turn that the disease is taking - that there would be a return to shopping by alphabetical order at the supermarkets. It was even heard that this ought to have continued from the last time it was implemented - people had got quite accustomed to the pattern. The other expectation was the imposition of a curfew night-time till early morning, as well as closure on Sundays. These, it is felt, would have sent the right signals and be more effective in controlling the situation.

But, 'government is government, and government decides.' Government has decided. The least that one can expect now is that it does a closer monitoring and gives full support to those responsible for overseeing the enforcement of the measures to be implemented.

## The Conversation

# Two worlds talked past each other – or never even met

*At COP26 in Glasgow everyone was committed to saving the planet, but there were highly divergent views about how to do it*



**A**t the 2021 UN climate change conference in Glasgow, moving between the corporate slickness of the official "Blue Zone" (a UN-managed space which hosts the negotiations) and the wider fringe was quite a disconcerting experience for me. These were two different worlds. Everyone was committed to saving the planet, but there were highly divergent views about how to do it.

A welter of announcements on everything from coal to methane to forests dominated the opening days. Large numbers were discussed and ambitious targets were set. The bottom line was keeping alive the Paris agreement to pursue efforts to limit global warming to 1.5°C, while assuring a 'transition' to a low-carbon future.

The contradictions were all too apparent at this year's conference, known as COP26. The hired exhibition spaces in the conference centre were hosted by fossil fuel polluting countries and sponsored by large corporations. Corporate spin, also known as greenwash, abounded. There were a few African delegations with their own space and a vanishingly few civil society voices in the main venue.

Meanwhile, the discourse was very different in parallel fora. Here the talk was of inequality, climate justice and reparations. The focus was on radical transformations of systems of production and consumption. Many were critical of business-led and market-based solutions to climate change.

There was passion, commitment and a real

sense of anger and frustration about the main conference. Huge suspicion around the corporate takeover of the climate agenda swirled, with much commentary on the double standards of the UK hosts, still proposing a new coalmine and oilfield as part of a so-called 'transition'.

Unlike a decade ago, there was no climate scepticism on show. But how to address the underlying causes of climate change in capitalism remains the big, unaddressed challenge.

### Pastoralists' perspectives

As a researcher working on pastoralism as part of a European Research Council funded project, I was at the COP together with a delegation of pastoralists from different parts of the world, all linked to the World Alliance for Mobile Indigenous Pastoralist Peoples. We were definitely on the fringe of the fringe.

We hosted a photo exhibition exploring pastoralists' own perceptions of climate change and uncertainty from across the world. We engaged in a dialogue with Scottish farmers and food groups, focusing on the future of livestock production under climate change. And our 'sheep for the climate' action brought a group together to discuss why livestock are not always bad for the planet, together with some fine rare breed sheep.

*Ian Scoones, Professorial Fellow, Institute of Development Studies*

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Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

# Covid Island: Grim Realities

*We cannot think of vaccines as panacea. No. Sanitary protocol is still mandatory, for self-protection as well as for community protection*

**A** guest who was present at a marriage said that he walked away in disgust because there were nearly 300 people, none of them wearing mask and not observing social distancing at all. One video posted on social media shows a woman shouting at a policeman who had asked her to wear her mask. She was challenging the officer to book her – saying that she had already done prison and couldn't care less.

Another video shows police officers embattled with a woman of a certain age, possibly a tourist or an expatriate, who was without a mask in a parking. She was probably walking to her car, and when requested by a policeman to wear a mask she first shouted and then pushed him on the chest, rushing to get into the car. As she sat in the driver's seat, a lady police-woman approached her, and probably asked for her licence and for her to wear the mask, and she became more abusive. She came out and physically assaulted the lady officer, who tried to restrain her, at which she became even more aggressive and started to scream.

Other videos show flocks of people in close proximity at the beaches, not all using masks.

The police officers were only doing their job. In the case of the local person, we are more or less used to such scenarios. But as regards tourists, it is clearly impossible to anticipate individual behaviour and reactions or that such unpleasant incidents would arise. Herein lies a responsibility with the hotels, to brief their foreign guests about the gravity of the local situation, and the absolute need for their own sake to start with to strictly follow sanitary protocols which are in place in the country – whether or not they do so in their own countries. For we know that in several of these source countries, there is resistance about wearing masks amongst other things.

What price the opening of frontiers? Hoteliers have been expressing satisfaction at bookings and occupancy rates, and are looking forward to even more arrivals as the end of year approaches. However, the onus of such unintended consequences as the one described above will fall squarely on the authorities who took the decision to open up, never mind where the pressures were coming from, and whose management of the deteriorating



**“The most ominous feature of this Delta variant is that it is largely asymptomatic. Bluntly, this means that anyone who is infected and is going about, especially without complying with the sanitary protocol – is a walking live superspreader of the virus. That is because its reproductive or R0 number is 5: that is, that is one person spreads the bug to 5 others, who each spreads it to 5 more, making 25, then 125, then 625: an exponential progression. Within a short time, it's at least from 1 to 625 infected people in a crowd...”**

Covid situation is already under heavy scrutiny and criticism from many quarters, both inside and outside Parliament.

The contradicting views expressed from the government bench in Parliament – the latest one being about the situation in schools, besides the many other earlier ones about e.g., real Covid-figures, etc. - have been the subject of comments by other parliamentarians and politicians, to wit that there seems to be a lack of internal communication or coordination, and citizens will have their own take on these.

But the undeniable fact is that the lived realities on the ground are hugely concerning, tragic and confirm the apprehensions that had been expressed about the possible fallouts of reopening of borders *unless* all the necessary measures had been taken to prevent them. The events on the ground are telling a different story, where they are compounded by crowd misbehaviours as regards sanitary measures.

The most ominous feature of this Delta variant is that it is largely asymptomatic. Bluntly, this means that anyone who is infected and is going about, especially without complying with the sanitary protocol – is a walking live superspreader of the virus. That is because its reproductive or R0 number is 5: that is, that is one person spreads the bug to 5 others, who each spreads it to 5 more, making 25, then 125, then 625: an exponential progression.

Within a short time, it's at least from 1 to 625 infected people in a crowd. And if this is in a closed space such as a cinema hall – where people are neither wearing masks nor sitting away from each other – then a jump in

infections is the natural outcome. Multiply this scenario several fold across the country, and we get the kind of numbers that we are witnessing currently. Unless we course correct, things are only going to get worse. Indeed, that's already been happening.

We have already reached a stage where almost everyone knows or is aware about some friend, family, relative, neighbour, or even stranger who in turn knows one or more persons in these categories who have been infected, are either in self-isolation, in isolation ward at hospital, in ICU at ENT Hospital – or have already succumbed. And many of them have gone to a rapid death with few warning symptoms or following a brief but severe illness. Worse: all age groups are involved.

There is no silver lining in this dark cloud.

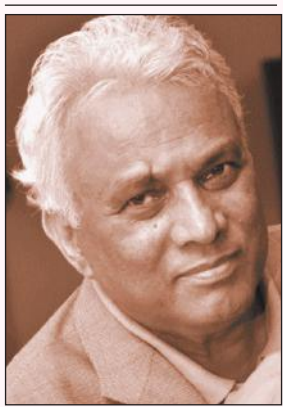
We had pinned our hopes on vaccines, and according to initial data they seemed to be effective. But that was quickly belied by new data showing that efficacy waned by six months, necessitating booster doses. More so, the argument went, because breakthrough infections, that is infections in those already fully vaccinated (two doses) were being recorded in a significant proportion of them, across several countries that had already achieved a comfortable level of control when they were first hit, such as Singapore, Israel, etc.

It had been surmised that vaccines would be the panacea, when viewed in light of experience with the known infectious diseases caused by viruses (e.g., polio, measles). However, not only is Covid-19 a possibly tweaked natural virus, the fact is that there has not been enough time to field test the vaccines on the large numbers that are required as for previous vaccines. It is no secret that genetic technology aiding, the new vaccines have been developed in record time, and that may be part of the problem. In other words, vaccines efficacy is a work in progress and the final word on the issue may well be a matter of years away.

However, as for all medical problems, it is usually a combination of modalities that is required for solving them. So too is the case with Covid-19. We cannot think of vaccines as panacea: because I have had my vaccine, I can do whatever. No. Sanitary protocol is still mandatory, for self protection as well as for community protection. And medicines will come when they will come, for they too are still in the early stages of clinical use, and much more experience is required.

But there are also considerations of supplies, availability and cost – in which regard rich countries and those with manufacturing capacity will have a clear advantage over poorer ones. In a panel discussion on Indian TV two nights ago, this matter was under consideration, and it was pointed out by one of the experts present that for the drug from Merck – Molnupiravir – as soon as the regulatory bodies in India (final call; DCGI or Drug Controller General of India) gave clearance, the country could very quickly swing into production, at a cost of around Rs (Indian) 3-4000 per course of five days, but that would come down fairly rapidly with because of more demand and more supplies.

As far as we are concerned, though, we must brace ourselves up for harder times ahead.



Mrinal Roy

# COP26: Courting disaster

*The battle is not over yet. The onus is on the world leaders to urgently get their act together*

As the climate summit COP26 comes to an end today, the overriding question in the minds of people across the world is whether the world leaders and governments have lived up to the expectations of humanity and in particular the young in taking the determinant actions necessary to limit global warming within the threshold of 1.5 degree Celsius to save our planet from a climate change catastrophe.

There have been some positive initiatives but commitments from key polluting countries have fallen short. Much more needs to be done. The caucus of world leaders therefore stand guilty in the eyes of the young. The COP26 draft agreement remains an unfinished business. Despite the havoc wreaked by the adverse impact of climate change and a growing number of extreme weather events across the world in recent years, the world does not seem to have woken up to the crying reality that climate change and Covid-19 are serious existential threats to humanity that we can only overcome through unequivocal solidarity and by working together with a common resolve and strategy.

Too many countries which are the worst polluters and prime users of highly polluting coal and fossil fuels or highly dependent on industries and activities which belch large quantities of carbon emissions in the atmosphere are yet to cut their carbon emissions to the extent required. There is also an urgent need to mobilise the scale of funds required and assure the transfer of technology necessary to enable developing and emerging countries to adapt and shift to clean and green energy production.

## Pledges

COP26 first major deal was the pledge by more than 100 world leaders (representing countries having more than 85% of the world's forests) to end and reverse deforestation by 2030. Brazil, where stretches of the Amazon rainforest have been cut down, was among the signatories on this agreement. Tropical rainforests are often called the 'lungs of the planet' because they absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen. The Amazon produces 20% of the oxygen in our planet's atmosphere. Deforestation contributes to climate change.

Secondly, 105 countries have joined the United



**“Despite pledges made at COP26, the world is still nowhere near its goals on limiting global temperature rise, according to the Climate Action Tracker. It calculates that the world is heading for 2.4C of warming which is far more than the 1.5C limit nations committed to. The UK's Met Office warns that a billion people could be affected by fatal heat and humidity if the global average temperature rises by 2C above pre-industrial levels...”**

States and the European Union to cut down emissions of the potent greenhouse gas methane by 30% by 2030 from 2020 levels. Cutting methane emissions which is the main greenhouse gas after carbon dioxide can have a rapid impact in reining in global warming. These countries represent nearly half of global methane emissions and 70% of global GDP.

A total of 190 countries including at least 23 countries who joined the group during the COP26 summit, pledged to phase out and not build or invest in new coal power plants over the next decades.

The United States and China, the world's two largest emitters of carbon dioxide, unveiled a deal to enhance cooperation tackling climate change through *inter alia* the reduction of methane emissions, protecting forests and phasing out coal. China uses 50.5 % or the lion's share of the coal used in coal-fired plants in the world. The US, UK, France, Germany and EU said they would dedicate \$8.5 billion to help South Africa decarbonize its coal-heavy energy system. What is the detailed plan of the Mauritian pledge to eliminate coal by 2030?

25 countries including the US, UK, Denmark, Canada, Italy and the European Investment Bank have agreed to end public financing of overseas oil, gas and coal projects by the end of 2022. Is Mauritius still bent on drilling for fossil fuels in our pristine maritime zone?

Pledges made by governments before and during COP26 must now be urgently translated into detailed and concrete action plans.

## Adaptation fund and technology transfer

This week, the European Commission committed an additional 100 million euros to the Adaptation Fund to support climate adaptation objectives of developing countries. This is the biggest funding pledge for the

Adaptation Fund made by donors at COP26. This funding will be available in priority to Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States. Vulnerable nations must get more help to cope with the dire impacts of global warming.

There is also the imperative need for a transfer of technology to produce competitive and affordable renewable and green energy to enable developing countries to bypass fossil fuels and move directly to renewables and clean energy such as solar, wind, hydrogen, biomass, wave, geothermal, etc. According to the International Energy Agency, the world will need to invest around \$4 trillion a year by 2030 in clean energy to hit net zero by mid century. This is four times the current level of investment.

## Higher targets

It is therefore not surprising that in the draft agreement published at the COP26 climate summit this week, countries are being urged to significantly increase their carbon-cutting targets by the end of 2022 and submit long-term strategies for reaching net-zero by the end of next year. The Agreement also recognises that more finance is needed for developing countries beyond the long-promised \$100 bn a year by 2020, which will not be delivered until at least 2022. The Agreement calls on countries to accelerate the phasing out of coal and subsidies for fossil fuels.

The UN secretary general Antonio Guterres has therefore been asked to convene world leaders in 2023 to monitor and assess whether efforts to reach targets for 2030 are on course. Critics have said the draft agreement does not go far enough. The draft agreement will have to be negotiated and agreed by countries attending the summit.

## Under par

Despite pledges made at COP26, the world is still nowhere near its goals on limiting global temperature rise, according to the Climate Action Tracker. It calculates that the world is heading for 2.4C of warming which is far more than the 1.5C limit nations committed to.

The UK's Met Office warns that a billion people could be affected by fatal heat and humidity if the global average temperature rises by 2C above pre-industrial levels.

The world still has a lot more to do. The battle is not over yet. The onus is on the world leaders to urgently get their act together.

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## The Country Under Siege

*The present situation is untenable. Everyone feels at risk of being infected as the virus seems to be everywhere*

Government's daily spin doctoring and propaganda on national TV extolling, with the complicity of fawning sycophants, everything it does aims at creating the illusion that all is well in the country. Has it been caught up in its own contrived narratives and delusions that it is culpably blind to the crying ground realities of Covid-19 in the country?

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## WHO looking forward to '2nd gen' vaccines in form of nasal, oral shots



A researcher manipulates proteins in a laboratory as part of a project to develop a Covid-19 nasal spray vaccine that could protect against the coronavirus disease. Pic-Reuters

The World Health Organization's chief scientist said Tuesday she was looking forward to the "second generation" of Covid-19 vaccines, which could include nasal sprays and oral versions.

Soumya Swaminathan said such vaccines could have advantages over the current crop as they would be easier to deliver than injections and could even be self-administered.

Swaminathan said there were 129 different candidate vaccines that have got as far as clinical trials – being tested on humans – while a further 194 are not yet that advanced in their development and are still being worked on in laboratories, reports AFP.

"This covers the entire range of technologies," she told a live interaction on WHO social media channels.

"They're still in development. I'm sure some of them will prove to be very safe and efficacious and others may not.

"There could be advantages to some of the second-generation vaccines... clearly if you have an oral vaccine or an intra-nasal vaccine this is easier to deliver than an injectable. Ultimately we'll be able to choose the ones that are most appropriate. If not for Covid, we're going to use these platforms for other infections in the future."

Swaminathan explained the advantages of a vaccine being sprayed into the nose, as happens in some countries with influenza vaccines.

"If there's a local immune response then it will take care of the virus before it even goes and establishes itself in the lungs and starts causing a problem," she said.

The WHO has only given emergency use authorisation to seven Covid-19 vaccines: those created by Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, Sinopharm, Sinovac, and last week Bharat Biotech.

"None of the vaccines are 100 percent. Nobody has ever claimed that the vaccines are going to be 100 percent protective. But 90 percent is a wonderful amount of protection to have, compared to zero," Swaminathan said.

"Till now, with the vaccines that we have approved, there has not been any signal which has been so worrying that we need to say, well, we need to re-think this vaccine."

## France has entered the 5th wave of Covid-19, warns minister

France is experiencing the beginning of the fifth wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the country's health minister Olivier Veran said on Wednesday, triggering fresh worries for those who were hoping to see an imminent end to the infection. During an interview with the TF1 television, the French minister confirmed that his country is now at the beginning of the fifth wave of the pandemic, much like "several [other] neighbouring countries", adding that the circulation of the virus was accelerating.

"Several neighbouring countries are already in a fifth wave of the Covid epidemic, what we are experiencing in France clearly looks like the beginning of a fifth wave," Veran was quoted as saying by the Reuters news agency.

France's health ministry registered as many as 11,883 new Covid-19 cases on Wednesday, the second day in a row that the new case tally has remained over 10,000. New coronavirus cases have also seen double-digit percentage increases week-on-week since around mid-October, reports Joydeep Bose of Hindustan Times.



France's health ministry registered as many as 11,883 new Covid-19 cases on Wednesday, the second day in a row that the new case tally has remained over 10,000. Pic - c.ndtvmg.com

Warning that Covid-19 infection rates are climbing again in the country, French president Emmanuel Macron said earlier this week that those aged 65 and above in the country will need to show proof of a Covid-19 booster jab to be able to visit restaurants, attend cultural events, and take intercity trains.

Macron also urged the six million

people eligible for the vaccine in France who have not yet even received the first dose to come forward and get the jab. Warning that the pandemic isn't over yet, the French president said that all barrier gestures that protect people from both Covid-19 and other contagious winter diseases should be given more attention at this time.

## Chinese president Jinping Xi warns against 'Cold War' in Indo-Pacific

Chinese president Jinping Xi warns against 'Cold War' in Indo-Pacific

Chinese President Xi Jinping warned Thursday against letting tensions in the Indo-Pacific cause a relapse into a Cold War mentality.

His remarks on the sidelines of the annual summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum came weeks after the US, Britain and Australia announced a new security alliance in the region which would see Australia build nuclear submarines. China has harshly criticised the deal.

Xi spoke in a pre-recorded video to a CEO Summit at APEC, which is being hosted by New Zealand in a virtual format. Xi is scheduled to participate in an online meeting with other Pacific Rim leaders including US President Joe Biden on Saturday, reports AP.

In his speech, Xi said attempts to draw boundaries in the region along ideological or geopolitical lines would fail. "The Asia-Pacific region cannot and should not relapse into the confrontation and division of the Cold War era," Xi said.

Xi also said the region should make sure to keep supply lines functioning and to continue liberalising trade and investment.



Chinese President Xi Jinping. Pic - www.24newshtd.tv

In all, APEC members account for nearly 3 billion people and about 60 per cent of the world's GDP. But deep tensions run through the unlikely group of 21 nations and territories that include the US, China, Taiwan, Russia and Australia.

China claims vast parts of the South China Sea and other areas and has moved to establish a military presence, building islands in some disputed areas as it asserts its historic claims.

Both Taiwan and China have applied to join a Pacific Rim trade pact, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-

Pacific Partnership, with Beijing saying it will block Taiwan's bid on the basis that the democratically governed island refuses to accept that it's part of communist-ruled China.

And it remains unclear whether all APEC members will support a bid by the US to host the 2023 round of APEC meetings.

New Zealand's Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta said Wednesday that APEC was founded on consensus and that there was not yet a confirmed host for 2023.

\*Contd on page 6



Nelson Mandela (R) greets then South Africa's President F. W. De Klerk. Pic - AFP

## Ex-South Africa president FW de Klerk, who freed Mandela, has died aged 85

**T**he last white South African president Frederik Willem (FW) de Klerk died on Thursday morning at his home in Cape Town, the FW de Klerk Foundation said in a statement. He was 85 years old.

"Former President FW de Klerk died peacefully at his home in Fresnaye earlier this morning following his struggle against mesothelioma cancer," the statement said.

He is survived by his wife Elita, his children Jan and Susan and his grandchildren, reports Hindustan Times.

FW de Klerk was the last president of segregated South Africa, and Nelson Mandela, the apartheid revolutionary, was freed during his regime. Following Mandela's release, the two politicians worked together to bring an end to the policy of racial segregation.

Mandela went on to become the first Black head of state in South Africa.

De Klerk was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983 for his "work for the peaceful termination of the apartheid regime, and for laying the foundations for a new democratic South Africa."

## Nasa, SpaceX launch 'Crew 3' astronauts on flight to International Space Station

**N**asa and SpaceX, the private rocket company of Elon Musk, launched four more astronauts on a flight to the International Space Station late on Wednesday, including a veteran spacewalker and two younger crewmates chosen to join Nasa's forthcoming lunar missions.

The SpaceX-built launch vehicle, consisting of a Crew Dragon capsule perched atop a two-stage Falcon 9 rocket, climbed into the night sky from Nasa's Kennedy Space Center in Florida, as its nine Merlin engines roared to life at about 9pm (0200 GMT Thursday).

Live Nasa video footage showed the four crew members strapped into the pressurized cabin of their gleaming white SpaceX Crew Dragon capsule, wearing their helmeted white and black flight suits in the final minutes before launch, reports Reuters.

The three American astronauts and their European Space Agency crewmate were due to arrive at the space station, orbiting some 250 miles (400km) above the Earth, on Thursday evening following a flight of about 22 hours.

The flight marks the third "operational" space station crew sent to orbit aboard a Dragon capsule since Nasa and SpaceX teamed up to resume space launches from American soil last year, following a



European Space Agency (ESA) astronaut Matthias Maurer of Germany gestures while departing the crew quarters for launch aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket on a mission to the International Space Station at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida, US. Pic - Reuters

nine-year hiatus at the end of the US space shuttle program in 2011.

It is the fourth crewed flight overall in 17 months under Nasa's public-private partnership with SpaceX, the rocket company founded in 2002 by Musk, the billionaire chief executive of electric car maker Tesla Inc

The first was a two-astronaut trial run to the space station in May 2020, followed by the maiden Nasa-SpaceX operational "Crew 1" in November of that year.

"Crew 2" was launched to the space station in April of this year, and just returned safely to Earth on Monday night with a splashdown

capping a record 199 days in orbit.

The latest mission also follows a flurry of recent high-profile astro-tourism flights, including the SpaceX launch in September of "Inspiration 4", the first all-civilian crew sent to orbit without a professional astronaut on board.

Earlier this month, 90-year-old actor William Shatner, famed for playing Captain James T Kirk on the original 1960s "Star Trek" TV series, made headlines riding aboard a rocketship launched by billionaire Jeff Bezos's company Blue Origin to become the oldest person to fly in space.

## US becomes part of India-led International Solar Alliance

**T**he US on Wednesday became the 101st member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), an inter-governmental organisation formed by India and France to accelerate the global adoption of solar power.

The US special envoy for climate, John Kerry, announced at the COP26 in Glasgow that the US has joined the ISA as a member country after signing the framework agreement, reports Hindustan Times.

"It has long been coming and we are happy to join the International Solar Alliance, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi took the lead in making. We worked out the details and this is a process we are pleased to be a part of. This will be an important contribution to more rapid deployment of solar globally," Kerry said.

The ISA's framework, which was first circulated in 2016 to obtain backing from other



Union minister Bhupender Yadav (right) and US climate envoy John Kerry at COP26 on Wednesday. The US became the 101st member of International Solar Alliance. Pic - indiatvnews.com

countries, emphasises on delivering local benefits to all countries through collaborations. The ISA's key interventions focus on enabling activities, risk mitigation and innovative financing instruments to facilitate the deployment of solar technologies.

ISA is building a solar project pipeline of nearly 5 GW installed capacity in order to achieve a vision of interconnected global grids, which was jointly launched as the "Green Grids Initiative - One Sun One World One Grid" during the world leaders' summit

of COP26 in Glasgow on November 2 by the UK and India.

Earlier at COP26, the US joined the steering committee of the "One Sun One World One Grid" initiative that includes Australia, France, the UK and India.

The launch of ISA was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and then French president Francois Hollande on November 30, 2015, at COP21 in Paris.

ISA has a global mandate to catalyse solar growth by helping reduce the cost of financing and technology. It helps large nations scale global commitments while assisting economically vulnerable nations to establish a self-sustaining energy alternative that reduces trade dependency and drives job creation.

• Compiled by Doojesh Ramlallah

## Interview: Dr P. Chitson - Physician

# “We are now facing the third wave with the Delta variant”

*‘A daily count of more than 2 deaths per million puts us in the highest category!’*

**D**r P. Chitson, Specialist in Internal Medicine, is a physician with wide experience in the public and private healthcare spheres in Mauritius for nearly 40 years. He was instrumental in setting up the NCD Unit (1987) in the Ministry of Health and was responsible with the overseas teams of experts for the organisation and conduct of the several surveys that have been carried out since. He has been following very closely the Covid-19 pandemic from its very beginnings and keeping up to date with the latest all aspects of the disease. He shares with our readers his views on the evolving situation.



**Mauritius Times:** Despite all the global efforts that have been underway ever since Covid-19 burst on the world scene, it would appear that the virus remains undaunted in its march. Are we winning or is Covid winning?

**Dr P Chitson:** In the past, humanity had faced many pandemics which decimated many human societies, especially isolated indigenous populations like in the Americas where more people died from viruses than armed conflicts. With natural selection and ‘some form of herd immunity’ most pandemics became endemic over time, after many years.

Humanity had managed to eliminate only a few viruses, notably the smallpox. In a way we have been lucky that with molecular technology we have been able to identify quickly the gene sequence of the virus and that vaccines have been produced in record time. In a war there are always casualties but if the world had a more unified approach in the fight against the virus especially more equity in vaccine distribution, the Covid-19 pandemic would have been more rapidly controlled.

Rich countries will eventually control the virus but what will happen in poorer countries is the great unknown as we still don’t know if the virus will become more lethal or peter out.

**\* Right from the beginning of the pandemic there have been controversies about its origins, treatments and then about vaccines. The only constant has been the sanitary measures. As things are at present, have we gained more clarity about the various modalities proposed to contain the pandemic? What will help us gain such clarity?**

The way the virus is evolving and adapting to many hosts suggests that the virus has been around for some time now in the past in the animal or human kingdom, probably since some years! Initially it was thought that the main mode of transmission was through droplets and direct contact but with the Delta variant aerosol (through tiny droplets in the air) transmission might be the more important factor, thus the need for proper ventilation of

closed spaces, like public transport, offices, restaurants, crucially our own home and crowds where people talk and sing!

To the chagrin of many countries, especially in Europe (Denmark, UK), which only stopped sanitary measures a few months ago, another wave is in the making and WHO is giving dire warnings that with winter approaching, by next year half a million people may die in Europe.

Too much hope was put on vaccines; even the supposedly best ones (mRNA) started to lose their real-life effectiveness after 3-4 months, their effectiveness against catching infection for the Delta variant is only 50% and effectiveness against mortality is less than 70%. So, a booster dose will be needed for ALL vaccines.

Mauritius started immunization in February this year and now we are seeing another wave due to the Delta variant and waning immunity of the vaccines. In Mauritius, because the absolute number of deaths from people who have had Sinopharm (inactivated vaccine like Covaxin, both approved by WHO) is higher, the tendency is to think that this particular vaccine is less effective against death than the Western ones.

However, this might not be the case – there are more absolute number of deaths from people who took Sinopharm simply because the population inoculated with Sinopharm is much larger than the population inoculated with other vaccines. On a relative basis, it is possible that the mortality rates for both vaccines are not too far apart.

Real life data from Chile and other countries in South

**“ Covid fatigue has set in especially among the healthcare personnel. Perception of risks has changed for the worst with Mauritians not following proper sanitary measures and poor communication from the authorities. There is inadequate health information and education targeting the public at large. Already schools have been closed, but we need more targeted restrictions...”**

**“ We should not forget that health is feeling well physically, emotionally and spiritually! A happy, fit and properly nourished person has been shown to have excellent immunity to diseases. Harmful habits like smoking, excessive alcohol intake, lack of exercise and obesity are risks factors for severe Covid complications...”**

America which used mainly Sinopharm suggest that a third dose of the vaccine is having good success. Similarly, Israel which started vaccination late last year had another wave after 5-6 months despite two doses of mRNA vaccine and resorted to boosting their population with a third dose of Pfizer vaccine, again with marked decline in infection and mortality. Singapore is facing a similar situation with around 4000 cases per day.

We don’t know yet whether a fourth dose would be needed and it seems that mixing vaccines gives better results. Fortunately, more types of vaccines, nasal spray or oral vaccines might be available in the future. Theoretically nasal spray vaccine would be better as it stops entry of the virus through the nose and other mucous membranes and thus prevents the virus from reaching the lungs where the most damage is done.

Monoclonal antibodies and drugs have now been shown to be effective in controlling the virus but again poor countries might not benefit from these expensive drugs anytime soon and the virus might also develop drug resistance.

**\* Why is there so much variation in the outcomes to response in various countries? Does this point to the need for a more uniform approach globally, or is this a utopian goal?**

Vaccine diplomacy, lack of consensus even within countries (antivax fake news), unwillingness of Big Pharma in sharing technology and political factors are the main stumbling block.

● Cont. on page 8

# 'We don't know yet whether a fourth dose would be needed and it seems that mixing vaccines gives better results'

● Cont. from page 7

Cultural cohesion and good governance help. Finally, some people especially the elderly and people with comorbidities don't respond well to vaccines, and it has also been found that genetic factors also play a role in mortality from Covid-19. However scientific publications will guide medical interventions, are more reliable and peer reviewed.

**\* Can we expect an end to the pandemic as was the case for influenza H1N1? How long do you expect that this can take?**

The H1N1 virus type was already here many years ago – this means that the elderly had some immunity and that was why young people were most affected. After a few years, with vaccination and 'herd immunity' the virus had become less lethal and is now endemic in the world but all the known viruses should be under surveillance.

I suspect the same will happen to Covid-19, but more importantly I think trade in wild animals should stop and that countries should work together in preventing new pandemics that could be just around the corner.

**\* Is it going to be vaccines only, treatments only, sanitary measures only – or a balanced mix of these? Who or what will help to achieve this balance, if this is the way forward?**

A bit of humility will help scientists, politicians and academics in the 'science' of Public Health. We need all the above measures mentioned in your question, but we should not forget that health is feeling well physically, emotionally and spiritually! A happy, fit and properly nourished person has been shown to have excellent immunity to diseases. Harmful habits like smoking, excessive alcohol intake, lack of exercise and obesity are risks factors for severe Covid complications.

**\* There is no denying that the local situation, with the surge we are currently being assailed by, is almost dire. Are we today in a crisis situation?**

We are now facing the third wave with the Delta variant and a daily count of more than 2 deaths per million puts us in the highest category!

**\* Is it likely to be worse than what we endured during the first and second waves of the pandemic in the country?**

It is already worse with the high mortality and with the health system under stress.

**\* How have we reached here?**

The surge in the UK came with the opening of schools and I suspect that's what happened in Mauritius,

**“In Mauritius, because the absolute number of deaths from people who have had Sinopharm (inactivated vaccine like Covaxin, both approved by WHO) is higher, the tendency is to think that this particular vaccine is less effective against death than the Western ones. However, this might not be the case – there are more absolute number of deaths from people who took Sinopharm simply because the population inoculated with Sinopharm is much larger...”**



**‘Already schools have been closed, but we need more targeted restrictions’**

plus the declining immunity due to passage of time, the Delta variant and the slow acceptance of the population for booster shots. Some form of public restrictions must be put back.

**\* What are some of the factors or forces that are impacting our perceptible loss of control over the spread and virulence of the virus?**

Internationally there have been two extremes, one like China with zero Covid policy, and others with variable opening up policies. Viruses mutate and the world is still under siege from the Delta variant. Future mutations are difficult to predict and will be facilitated in countries with low immunization and surge in cases, and even in rich countries a substantial proportion of their population is not yet fully vaccinated with 2 doses, let alone 3 doses.

**\* What needs to be done urgently to reduce infections and deaths?**

We are on the rising curve. In a way Mauritius has been lucky in receiving enough vaccines and the public should be encouraged to have booster doses. I think some choice must be given to the public regarding mixing the booster vaccine if there is no shortage.

However, Covid fatigue has set in especially among the healthcare personnel. Perception of risks has changed for the worst with Mauritians not following proper sanitary measures and poor communication from the authorities. There is inadequate health information and education targeting the public at large. Already schools have been closed, but we need more targeted restrictions.

**\* Do we have to devise new strategies and protocols, especially with regard to self-isolation in the home?**

I think we need to have a telemedicine desk with trained personnel to advise people who are self-isolating at home. Most people can use WhatsApp. These patients need to self-monitor their oxygen level, just like those suffering from diabetes and hypertension. Adequate access to those medical devices must be urgently provided as they are not that expensive and are user friendly.

**“The H1N1 virus type was already here many years ago – this means that the elderly had some immunity and that was why young people were most affected. After a few years, with vaccination and 'herd immunity' the virus had become less lethal and is now endemic in the world but all the known viruses should be under surveillance. I suspect the same will happen to Covid-19, but more importantly I think trade in wild animals should stop...”**

Proper guidelines must be circulated to the public for those who should need hospital care. We should not forget that Covid-19 increases the risk for other conditions like heart attack, strokes, renal complications and clotting problems, apart from lung complications and these should be checked for.

**\* As regards local resources, what more is required and how best can they be deployed and utilized?**

Mauritius is one of the few countries where rapid antigen tests are sold to the public on a wide scale and are being used more and more at home, being more convenient and with less risk of contamination at Health Centres.

These tests have good specificity - meaning that if a test is positive there is more than 99% chance that the person is infected with Covid. A negative test may not rule out infection yet and a repeat test may turn out positive the next day. Already many patients have been self-isolating on their own when the test is positive.

PCR (molecular test) tests are expensive and time consuming and need to be used in specific contexts, but rapid antigen test can be used at schools, work places, health institutions and even at home as preventive measures.

**\* Some government institutions and private companies, both locally and outside Mauritius, are seriously considering going back to the hybrid model with home and office working. In light of the recent Covid-19 upsurge, what would you recommend?**

With modern communications, work place might even become obsolete, but humans are social beings, and the office will still be important as human behaviour is quite complex. Face to face contact, body language and other aspects of human communication can only occur when we meet each other -- hopefully on a positive note! But with the worse to come, work from home and 'zoom' meetings would be necessary to avoid a worsening health crisis.



# Two worlds talked past each other – or never even met

● Cont. from page 2

When I managed to find a few events in the Blue Zone (not an easy task) relating to our research, they were mostly extremely disappointing. There were parallel conversations going on. If climate change is genuinely a shared challenge for all of humanity, dialogue between different viewpoints is vital.

Within the main conference, there was much talk about trees and 'nature-based solutions' across multiple sessions, for instance. The mainstream media hailed the agreement on deforestation, but a significant part of this simply replicates the failed programmes of the past. Under such programmes, forest protection in the global south is used as carbon offsets for large polluting companies and rich, consuming publics in the north.

The huge ecosystem restoration efforts being proposed potentially cause real problems for pastoralists. This is because large areas of open rangelands are earmarked for tree planting and biodiversity protection through exclusion. These so-called nature-based solutions are frequently new forms of colonialism, opening the gates to 'green grabbing', where land and resources are appropriated in the name of environmental conservation.

Methane was also a hot topic. The huge reductions in emissions proposed under the Global Methane Pledge have major implications for livestock production. Yet a session I attended was obsessed only with technical solutions — feed additives, methane-reducing inhibitors and vaccines, seaweed supplements, even face masks for cows.

Once again, livestock systems were lumped together, without differentiating between highly polluting industrial systems and more climate-friendly extensive systems, such as African pastoralism. Indeed, many of the solutions proposed are already being practised in extensive



marieclaire.com.au

grazing systems. The problem I guess is that these practices could not be patented and sold by agribusinesses.

## Climate and capitalism

So how do these two worlds intersect? Everyone is keen on nature, no-one wants catastrophic climate change, but why are the solutions so divergent? At root, the two camps (and many in between) have different views on the role of capitalism in climate change.

For those in the Blue Zone, a long-term shift from reliance on fossil fuels is (largely) accepted. But capitalism in its new green guise, many argue, can save the day through technology investment and market mechanisms — and notably through the plethora of offsetting schemes that make up the net-zero plans.

By contrast, critical civil society and youth voices argue that capitalism is the root cause of the problem, together with its handmaiden colonialism. The only solution therefore is to overhaul capitalism and dismantle unequal global power relations. But how, through what alliances?

In a recent paper — climate change and agrarian

struggles — we explored the challenges of 'eroding capitalism' to create structural transformation and climate justice. However, in Glasgow I missed these crucial, political debates about ways forward. Are new styles of multilateral negotiation possible? Can genuine inclusion occur, going beyond the performance of participation where an 'indigenous' person or 'community' leader is co-opted? Can a true dialogue emerge about our common future?

I of course had very limited exposure to the thousands of simultaneous events. But my sense was that there was little meaningful interchange between different positions. Two worlds talked past each other or — because of restricted access, problems with visas and the high costs of attending — never even met.

Ian Scoones, Professorial Fellow, Institute of Development Studies

## 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.

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# Are you more likely to tell a lie online or in person?

*Communication scholars have long wondered not just who lies the most, but also whether people tend to lie more online, in person or over the phone*

Technology has given people more ways to connect, but has it also given them more opportunities to lie?

You might text your friend a white lie to get out of going to dinner, exaggerate your height on a dating profile to appear more attractive or invent an excuse to your boss over email to save face.

Social psychologists and communication scholars have long wondered not just who lies the most, but where people tend to lie the most – that is, in person or through some other communication medium.

A seminal 2004 study was among the first to investigate the connection between deception rates and technology. Since then, the ways we communicate have shifted – fewer phone calls and more social media messaging, for example – and I wanted to see how well earlier results held up.

## The link between deception and technology

Back in 2004, communication researcher Jeff Hancock and his colleagues had 28 students report the number of social interactions they had via face-to-face communication, the phone, instant messaging and email over seven days. Students also reported the number of times they lied in each social interaction.

The results suggested people told the most lies per social interaction on the phone. The fewest were told via email.

The findings aligned with a framework Hancock called the “feature-based model.” According to this model, specific aspects of a technology – whether people can communicate back and forth seamlessly,



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whether the messages are fleeting and whether communicators are distant – predict where people tend to lie the most.

In Hancock’s study, the most lies per social interaction occurred via the technology with all of these features: the phone. The fewest occurred on email, where people couldn’t communicate synchronously and the messages were recorded.

## The Hancock Study, revisited

When Hancock conducted his study, only students at a few select universities could create a Facebook account. The iPhone was in its early stages of development, a highly confidential project nicknamed “Project Purple.”

What would his results look like nearly 20 years later?

In a new study, I recruited a larger group of participants and studied interactions from more forms of technology. A total of 250 people recorded their social

interactions and number of interactions with a lie over seven days, across face-to-face communication, social media, the phone, texting, video chat and email.

As in Hancock’s study, people told the most lies per social interaction over media that were synchronous and recordless and when communicators were distant: over the phone or on video chat. They told the fewest lies per social interaction via email. Interestingly,

though, the differences across the forms of communication were small. Differences among participants – how much people varied in their lying tendencies – were more predictive of deception rates than differences among media.

Despite changes in the way people communicate over the past two decades – along with ways the Covid-19 pandemic changed how people socialize – people seem to lie systematically and in alignment with the feature-based model.

There are several possible explanations for these results, though more work is needed to understand exactly why different media lead to different lying rates. It’s possible that certain media are better facilitators of deception than others. Some media – the phone, video chat – might make deception feel easier or less costly to a social relationship if caught.

Deception rates might also differ

across technology because people use some forms of technology for certain social relationships. For example, people might only email their professional colleagues, while video chat might be a better fit for more personal relationships.

## Technology misunderstood

To me, there are two key takeaways.

First, there are, overall, small differences in lying rates across media. An individual’s tendency to lie matters more than whether someone is emailing or talking on the phone.

Second, there’s a low rate of lying across the board. Most people are honest – a premise consistent with truth-default theory, which suggests most people report being honest most of the time and there are only a few prolific liars in a population.

Since 2004, social media have become a primary place for interacting with other people. Yet a common misperception persists that communicating online or via technology, as opposed to in person, leads to social interactions that are lower in quantity and quality.

People often believe that just because we use technology to interact, honesty is harder to come by and users aren’t well served.

Not only is this perception misguided, but it is also unsupported by empirical evidence. The belief that lying is rampant in the digital age just doesn’t match the data.

By David Markowitz, Assistant Professor of Social Media Data Analytics, University of Oregon

# I’m fully vaccinated but feel sick – should I get tested for Covid-19?

Imagine last night you developed a little runny nose and a sore throat. When you woke up this morning you started coughing and had a fever. In the past year, your mind would have immediately jumped to Covid-19. But if you are already fully vaccinated, you might wonder: Should I still get tested for Covid-19?

As an infectious disease physician, I am often asked this question. The answer is yes. If you have symptoms of Covid-19, you should get tested for Covid-19 even if you are fully vaccinated. You won’t be at high risk for hospitalization or severe disease, but if you are infected you may pass the virus to an unvaccinated person, who could then get very sick.

## Vaccines work but aren’t 100% effective

Researchers have developed some amazing Covid-19 vaccines over the past year. The high efficacy of these vaccines in the closely controlled environment of clinical trials matches their effectiveness in real life. The mRNA vaccines made by Pfizer

and Moderna remain over 90% effective in preventing hospitalization or death.

That does not, however, mean that you have the same degree of protection from getting infected.

The latest research estimates that the mRNA vaccines offer 70% to 85% protection from getting infected at all. It’s impossible to know whether a person is fully protected or could still develop a mild case if exposed to the coronavirus.

If you did happen to get infected, you could still spread the virus. And that’s why testing is still important.

## What is a breakthrough case?

When a person gets infected with the coronavirus after being fully vaccinated, this is called a breakthrough case. Breakthrough cases demonstrate a basic principle of infectious disease – whether or not a person gets infected depends on the balance between two factors: intensity of exposure and immune competence.

Intensity of exposure relates to how close an uninfected person is to a highly infectious individual spewing virus while talking and how long the two people are in contact. Immune competence relates to the body’s inherent protection against Covid-19. Unvaccinated individuals who’ve never been infected with the coronavirus have no protection – this is a completely new virus after all – while fully vaccinated people will be much more protected.

According to the CDC, as of April 30, 2021, there had been a total of 10,262 known SARS-CoV-2 vaccine breakthrough infections in U.S. states and territories. These are usually asymptomatic or only mildly symptomatic cases, and most don’t result in hospitalization. Breakthrough cases will continue to occur, and though these people are less likely to spread the coronavirus to others than are unvaccinated individuals, they still probably can.

And what about the SARS-CoV-2

variants? Well, the world has been fortunate that the mRNA vaccines in particular afford significant protection against all major variants that have emerged so far. But it is entirely possible that at some point a coronavirus strain could mutate and partially or fully escape the protection from vaccines. This is yet another good reason to get tested if you are feeling sick.

As vaccination rates rise and daily case counts fall in the U.S. and other countries, it is also important to keep a close eye on the coronavirus. Covid-19 testing allows officials to keep track of how much virus is in a community, and positive test results can help people quarantine before unknowingly spreading the virus to others. So, yes, please get tested if you have concerning symptoms, even if you are fully vaccinated.

By Arif R. Sarwari, Physician, Associate Professor of Infectious Diseases, West Virginia University

● Cont. from page 4

Driven by the mantras that the country 'must learn to live with the virus' and adapt to this 'new normal' government seems to be blind to the fact that Covid-19 infection is rampant in the country. This is attested by the fact that new cases of coronavirus infection are being detected everyday at the place of work, in hospitals, at school among students and teaching staff and in the community in random locations across the country amidst a rising death toll.

This alarming situation begs so many burning questions.

Does the new normal mean a quantum jump in the number of new Covid-19 cases from some 4,400 to more than 19,000 in the last three months as compared to 341 cases of coronavirus infection in 2020?

Does the new normal mean a rising Covid-19 related death toll of more than 400 compared to 10 in 2020?

Has government rashly underestimated the extent and dynamics of Covid-19 infection in the country fuelled by the highly contagious Delta variant and proximity at the place of work and at schools?

Can economic expediency callously mean treating increasing cases of Covid-19 infection and a rising death toll in the country as expendable collateral casualties?

# The Country Under Siege

*The present situation is untenable. Everyone feels at risk of being infected as the virus seems to be everywhere*



Beyond the rhetoric and self congratulatory kudos disconcertingly echoed by some diplomats, is the Covid-19 pandemic being judiciously and competently managed?

### Lives matter

All lives matter. Every life lost to

Covid-19 is a death too many. A Covid-19 death is not a mere statistic divulged in government press briefings. Sanitary protocol makes it an even more painful and traumatic moment for the bereaved family and close ones. Is it ethical to explain deaths of Covid infected patients by divulging their general health conditions?

The plain truth is that all these deaths would not have occurred had they not been infected by Covid-19. It is the Covid-19 infection which sadly shortened their lives.

The present situation is untenable. Everyone feels at risk of being infected as the virus seems to be everywhere. The country seems under siege. Unless absolutely necessary no one, especially the elderly, wants to take the risk of going out. Is this the new normal? Mauritius is a small island. Its situation cannot be compared to countries in Europe where there is a current surge of cases of Covid-19 infection which tends to peak with the advent of winter.

### Putting people's safety first

Schools have judiciously been closed. The government must therefore review its Covid-19 strategy and take all corrective actions necessary to contain the spread of Covid-19 in the country and break its chain of transmission to assure first and foremost the safety of the people.

Mrinal Roy



## Programme des Courses

### 32<sup>e</sup> journée samedi 13 novembre 2021

#### 1 THE HANDICAP PLATE 1400 m -- Valeur [0-15] -- 12h30

1	Crushing Force	SPN	5-4-2-6-9	62(-4)	I.Taka	3	650
2	Valerin	CD	6-5-3-4-6	58.5(-3)	M.Sonaram	5	800
3	Xanthus	PM	5-2-2-9-3	58.5	R.K.Chumun	2	370
4	Kali's Champ	CR	6-7-7-8-8	58	P.Mogun	6	2500
5	Greatfiveeight	CD	9-2-1-10-5	55.5(-3)	A.Roy	4	500
6	Northern Rebel	JMH	1-8-5-7-6	55.5	K.Ramsamy	7	900
7	Special Force	SPN	4-8-10-2-3	54	R.Hoolash	1	270

#### 2 THE BONA FIDE PLATE 1365 m -- Valeur [0-26] -- 13h05

1	Manetheren	SN	5-7/1-2-1	61.5	D.Bheekary	5	250
2	Ticket To Cairo	SPN	6-4-6-3-1	61.5	R.Vaibhav	6	700
3	Quest For Good	P	0-0-6-9-8	61	K.Kalychurun	1	4000
4	Spry	RM	0-0-2-3-1	61	P.C.Orffer	7	200
5	Alpirod	SM	0-0-8-6-9	60	K.Ramsamy	3	2500
6	Walnut	CR	nouveau	60	P.K.Horil	4	2500
7	Masterofallisurvey	P	0-0-6-7-3	59	O.Sola	2	700

#### 3 THE SNIPER PLATE 1850 m -- Valeur Benchmark 36 -- 13h40

1	G I Joe	SM	1-3-2-2-5	61.5(-3)	A.Roy	2	290
2	Canary Island	VA	1-4-1-3-2	60	R.Joorawon	4	260
3	Nimitz	SJ	3-1-6-2-5	60	B.Woodworth	7	700
4	Protea Paradise	RG	5-8-8-9-5	60	B.Sooiful	3	2000
5	Stageworld	P	0-6-2-1-1	60	G.D.Aucharuz	5	500
6	Lit	G	1-7-7-6-7	56.5	S.Bussunt	1	2000
7	Mr Green Street	RM	3-1-6-7-3	56.5	S.Rama	6	900

#### 4 THE YVON FELIX JEAN CHALLENGE CUP 1500 m -- Valeur Benchmark 46 -- 14h15

1	Captain Flynt	GR	7/1-2-3-7	61.5(-3)	A.Roy	3	330
2	Pop Icon	SPN	10-6-9-7-6	61.5	G.D.Aucharuz	2	1200
3	Juniper Lane	SM	2-2-1-5-7	61	D.Bheekary	5	600
4	Silver Heritage	RM	4-1-3-3-1	60.5	P.C.Orffer	6	350
5	Gimmetherain	SJ	4-5-2-4-6	59.5	B.Woodworth	7	450
6	Hakeem	AS	5-2-4/8-9	59	S.Rama	1	1600
7	Sockeroo	G	R-3-7-3-4	58.5	R.Joorawon	4	900

#### 5 THE NUNDKISHORE GUJADHUR CUP 1365 m -- Valeur Benchmark 56 -- 14h50

1	Master Of Illusion	CD	0-4-7-7-7	60(-3)	M.Sonaram	2	2500
2	Colour My Fate	AS	2-1-2-3-1	59.5	S.Rama	1	160
3	Tower Of Wisdom	GR	4-3-2-3-2	59.5	B.Sooiful	7	530
4	Huyssteen	RG	1-3-5-6-4	59(-3)	A.Roy	6	1200
5	Prince Of Persia	G	3-2-4-2-4	59	R.Joorawon	4	1600
6	Your Pace Or Mine	SN	0-0-0-0-4	59	D.Bheekary	3	450
7	Arabian Air	CR	5-6-8-5-1	58.5	P.K.Horil	5	1400
8	Footy Goal	RM	0-3-2-3-9	58	P.C.Orffer	8	1800

#### 6 THE MAURITIUS TURF CLUB CUP- 1500 m Valeur Benchmark 66 -- 15h25

1	Wall Tag	VA	1-3-5-2-5	61(-3)	A.Roy	7	2000
2	Trippi's Express	RG	2-5-3-2-2	59.5	K.Ramsamy	3	400
3	Marshall Foch	GR	10-11-10-9-8	59	B.Sooiful	1	5500
4	Padre Pio	SJ	1-6-2-5-6	58.5	B.Woodworth	4	650
5	Ehsaan	G	1-3-7-4-7	58	S.Bussunt	5	2500
6	Nourbese	RM	0-0-0-1-1	57.5	P.C.Orffer	2	150
7	Stream Ahead	CR	7-1-2-6-7	57(-3)	M.Sonaram	8	1400
8	We Light The Fire	CD	0-7-4-8-7	54.5	P.K.Horil	6	9900

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

1	Courtroom Magic	P	0-2-1-1-2	61.5	G.D.Aucharuz	6	650
2	Clouded Hill	JMH	5-6-9-7-6	61	R.Joorawon	3	9000
3	Star Of Zeus	PM	5-4-3-2-7	60.5	R.K.Chumun	9	1700
4	Stockbridge	SM	5-3-2-1-2	60.5	P.K.Horil	1	430
5	Do Or Dare	SPN	2-3-R-8-9	60	R.Vaibhav	5	3500
6	Free To Win	SH	4-4-1-2-4	60	I.Santana	8	450
7	Kalgoorlie	G	4/2-2-3-3	60	B.Sooiful	4	750
8	Smuts	AS	0-7-3-3-1	60	S.Rama	10	700
9	Travelin Man	RM	4/3-4-2-3	60	P.C.Orffer	11	1100
10	James Peter	SN	1-6-5-6-6	59.5	D.Bheekary	2	650
11	Keiko [EA]	SJ	2-4-5/6-2	61.5	-----	7	-----

#### 8 THE ACCUPA PLATE 1650 m -- Valeur [0-25] -- 16h35

1	Why Wouldn't Yew	RM	5-4-4-4-3	61	P.C.Orffer	2	350
2	Nikhils Inn	SM	2-11-6-2-6	60.5	K.Ramsamy	9	800
3	Red Rock Canyon	SPN	10-10-8-8-7	60	R.Vaibhav	7	8000
4	Allsakhra	G	3-8-3-5-3	59.5	B.Sooiful	8	650
5	Arnica Montana	SN	0-7-R-3-5	59.5	D.Bheekary	1	350
6	Silver Song	CD	1/5-5-11-7	59.5(-3)	M.Sonaram	4	2000
7	The Hitman	SH	0-0-0-9-9	59.5	I.Santana	6	1400
8	Tiger's Bond	P	4-1-1-3-4	58.5	G.D.Aucharuz	5	800
9	Secret Circle	SJ	6-7-6-9-3	57	B.Woodworth	3	600

## Selections

1. Special Force, Xanthus, Valerin
2. Spry, Manetheren, Masterofallisurvey
3. Canary Island, G I Joe, Stageworld
4. Captain Flynt, Silver Heritage, Gimmetherain
5. Colour My Fate, Your Pace Or Mine, Tower of Wisdom
6. Nourbese, Trippi's Express, Padre Pio
7. Free To Win, Stockbridge, Courtroom Magic
8. Allsakhra, Why Wouldn't Yew, Secret Circle



**Brooke Schedneck**

Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Rhodes College

# What the world can learn from the Buddhist concept loving-kindness

*On World Kindness Day, a scholar of Buddhist studies explains its idea of compassion and the diverse ways to think about and express kindness*

**A**s the world deals with the trauma caused by Covid-19, World Kindness Day, observed on Nov. 13 annually, is a good opportunity to reflect on the healing potential of both large and small acts of kindness. Indeed, it was the kind acts of essential workers that helped save many lives.

As a scholar of Buddhist studies, I have researched the ways in which Buddhist monks talk about kindness and compassion toward all beings.

The Dalai Lama has famously been quoted as saying “My true religion is kindness.” Although there is more to Buddhism than just kindness, Buddhism’s teachings and exemplary figures, I believe, have much to offer to a world experiencing intense suffering.

### *Loving-kindness teachings*

Some of the earliest Buddhist teachings developed in India – which are recorded in the Pali canon, the collection of scriptures in the Pali language – emphasized the idea of “metta,” or loving-kindness. One teaching from this collection of scriptures is the “Karaniya Metta Sutta,” where the Buddha exhorts the good and wise to spread loving-kindness by making these wishes toward all beings:

*In gladness and in safety,  
May all beings be at ease.  
Whatever living beings there may be;  
Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,  
The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,  
The seen and the unseen,  
Those living near and far away,  
Those born and to-be-born —  
May all beings be at ease!*

In order to put these words into practice, several Buddhist teachers from North America teach meditation practices meant to develop one’s own metta, or loving-kindness.

During meditation sessions, practitioners can visualize people and chant wishes of loving-kindness using variations of phrases based on the Karaniya Metta Sutta. A commonly used version is from a well-known Buddhist meditation teacher, Sharon Salzberg.

*May all beings everywhere be safe and well.  
May all beings everywhere be happy and content.  
May all beings everywhere be healthy and strong.*



*May all beings everywhere be peaceful and at ease.*

Practitioners spread this kindness toward themselves, people close to them, people they do not know – even distant people or enemies – and finally all beings throughout the world. After visualizing this attitude of loving-kindness, practitioners find it is easier to radiate kindness toward others in real life.

In addition to metta, Buddhists also practice compassion (karuna), sympathetic joy (mudita) and equanimity (upekkha) for a peaceful state of mind.

### **Cultivating compassion**

Later forms of Buddhism in East Asia and Tibet developed the idea of compassion further through the figure of the bodhisattva.

The bodhisattva is a practitioner who has vowed to work selflessly for the enlightenment of other beings. The development of this state of mind is known as “bodhicitta.” Bodhicitta provides the motivation and commitment to this difficult path of putting others before oneself.

One practice for cultivating bodhicitta is exchanging self for others. In this practice, those on the bodhisattva path would regard the suffering of others as if it were their own and would offer help to others as if helping oneself.

As the Indian Buddhist monk Santideva writes in his classic eighth-century work on the path of the bodhisattva, “The Bodhicaryavata,” one should meditate with this sentiment in mind: “all equally experience suffering and happiness. I should look after them as I do myself.”

### **Many bodhisattvas and their meanings**

The Buddhist figure most focused on kindness is the bodhisattva of compassion, known originally as Avalokiteshvara, who became popular in India by the sixth century A.D. A popular way to depict Avalokiteshvara is with 11 heads and 1,000 arms, which he uses to benefit all sentient beings. Tibetan Buddhists believe that all Dalai Lamas are manifestations of this bodhisattva.

This bodhisattva is known by various names across Asia. In Nepal, the bodhisattva is known as Karunamaya, and in Tibet as Lokeshvara and Chenrezig. In China, the bodhisattva is a female figure called Guanyin and portrayed as a woman with long, flowing hair in white robes, who holds a vase tilted downward so she can drop the dew of compassion upon all beings.

Throughout East and Southeast Asia this is a popular figure. People make offerings to seek help, especially in regards to success in business and starting a family.

With practices that urge people to practice compassion toward others and with figures who can be asked to bestow it, Buddhism offers unique and diverse ways to think about and express kindness.

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## A marriage invitation

I received a marriage invitation. At the bottom of the card was printed: 'Your presence itself is a gift. We don't want any gifts at the marriage'.

I read it again and again, and I was getting more and more confused... Finally I came to the conclusion that I am not invited, and decided not to attend.

English is a language which must be carefully handled; otherwise, it may lead to convey the opposite meaning to that intended.

\*\*\*

### Getting older

An 82-year-old man is having a drink in Harry's Bar. Suddenly a gorgeous girl enters and sits down a few seats away. The girl is so attractive that he just can't take his eyes off her.

After a short while, the girl notices him staring, and approaches him. Before the man has time to apologise, the girl looks him deep in the eyes and says to him in a sultry tone: "I'll do anything you'd like. Anything you can imagine in your wildest dreams, it doesn't matter how extreme or unusual it is, I'm game. I want \$400, and there's another condition."

Completely stunned by the sudden turn of events, the man asks her what her condition is.

"You have to tell me what you want me to do in just three words."

The man takes a moment to consider the offer from the beautiful woman. He pulls out his wallet and puts

\$400 dollars into her hand. He then looks her square in the eyes, and says slowly and clearly: "Paint my house."

Our needs change as we get older, and we tend to look for bargains.

\*\*\*

### Disappointed Coca Cola Salesman



A disappointed salesman for Coca Cola returns from his Middle East assignment.

A friend asked, "Why weren't you successful with the Arabs?"

The salesman explained, "When I got posted in the Middle East, I was very confident that I would make a good sales as Coke is virtually unknown there. But, I had a problem; I didn't know to speak Arabic. So, I planned to convey the message through three posters with the following messages..."

First poster: A man crawling through the hot desert sand... totally exhausted and panting.

Second poster: The man is drinking Coke, and third poster: our man is now totally refreshed.

Then these posters were pasted all over the place."

"That should have worked," said the friend.

The salesman replied, "Well, not only did I not speak Arabic, I also didn't realize that Arabs read from right to left..."

\*\*\*

### An old, blind cowboy wanders into an all-girl biker bar...

"An old, blind cowboy wanders into an all-girl biker bar by mistake..."

He finds his way to a bar stool and orders a shot of Jack Daniels.

After sitting there for a while, he yells to the bartender, "Hey, you wanna hear a blonde joke?"

The bar immediately falls absolutely silent.

In a very deep, husky voice, the woman next to him says, 'Before you tell that joke, Cowboy, I think it is only fair, given that you are blind, that you should know five things:

1. The bartender is a blonde girl with a baseball bat.
2. The bouncer is a blonde girl with a 'Billy-Club'.
3. I'm a 6-foot tall, 175-pound blonde woman with a black belt in karate.
4. The woman sitting next to me is blonde and a professional weight lifter.
5. The lady to your right is blonde and a professional wrestler.

'Now, think about it seriously, Cowboy... do you still wanna tell that blonde joke?'

The blind cowboy thinks for a second, shakes his head and mutters, 'No ... not if I'm gonna have to explain it five times'...

A guy had just returned from two weeks of vacation. He asked his boss for two more weeks off to get married.

"What!" shouted the boss?  
"I can't give you more time now. Why didn't you get married while you were off?"

"Are you nuts?" he replied.  
"That would have ruined my whole vacation."



## Life's Lessons

### Drinking from My Saucer

Do you remember older generations drinking from their saucer? Grandpa always did and I thought it was because his coffee was too hot. Then today I came across this poem that made me feel there was symbolism to the coffee ritual.

By John Paul Moore

I've never made a fortune and it's probably too late now. But I don't worry about that much, I'm happy anyhow.

And as I go along life's way, I'm reaping better than I sowed.

I'm drinking from my saucer, 'Cause my cup has overflowed.

I don't have a lot of riches, and sometimes the going's tough.

But I've got loved ones around me, and that makes me rich enough.

I thank God for his blessings, and the mercies He's bestowed.

I'm drinking from my saucer, 'Cause my cup has overflowed.

I remember times when things went wrong, my faith wore somewhat thin.

But all at once the dark clouds broke, and the sun peeped through again.

So God, help me not to gripe about the tough rows that I've hoed.

I'm drinking from my saucer, 'Cause my cup has overflowed.

If God gives me strength and courage, when the way grows steep and rough.

I'll not ask for other blessings, I'm already blessed enough.

And may I never be too busy, to help others bear their loads.

Then I'll keep drinking from my saucer, 'Cause my cup has overflowed.

### Joke of the Day

"Do you believe in life after death?"

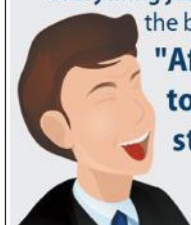
the boss asked one of his employees.

"Yes, Sir," the new recruit replied.

"Well, then, that makes everything just fine,"

the boss went on.

"After you left early yesterday to go to your grandmother's funeral, she stopped in to see you."



## Food for Thought

1. We care more for the dead than we do for the living!
2. We spend more to bury a person than we do to save their life.
3. We will not travel to go see a sick relative but will travel to bury/cremate him/her.
4. People will rarely respect you while alive but will want to "pay their last respects" to your casket.
5. A person may NEVER receive roses in their entire life but they will get lots placed on their casket!
6. We will spend a night at a neighbour's death wake and it will be our first time to see the inside of their house!
7. No one cares to know you and your family. But, when you die, they will all fill several vehicles to "escort" your corpse.
8. In preparation for a funeral, we will take the dead to a house of God, knowing full well they had nothing to do with worship while alive.
9. We might not have granite tops in our kitchens but we use granite in the graveyard!
10. A person may never afford a limousine ride when alive but will be driven in one when dead!

## Health Matters

# Living with sleep apnea



**W**hen you have sleep apnea, it can interfere with your life. You may feel tired, have a lack of motivation, or otherwise not feel all that well. It's important to take the time to look after yourself when you have this condition. Here are some things that may help you manage your life so you feel better.

**Eat well:** A good diet is essential to help you feel your best when you have sleep apnea. Make sure to avoid processed foods, drink water, and eat plenty of vitamin-rich food. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats should be staples. It may also be a good idea to take a high-quality multivitamin. A good diet makes you feel good, and this will

allow you to get better quality rest at night.

**Exercise:** Make sure you exercise whenever possible as this will improve your mood and relax your body so you can get to sleep quickly. It doesn't have to be strenuous. Something as simple as walking or other light activity like lifting weights a couple of times a week or going for walks can be beneficial.

**Community:** It's important to talk to others about your concerns or fears about your condition. If you have a lot of anxiety, a good support group can help. You'll feel a lot better when you express your feelings about your condition. Community sites such as CPAP talk can help you

work out your issues or discuss sleep apnea in general with others.

**Education:** Make sure you educate yourself about sleep apnea. The more you know about it, the easier it will be to live with it. There are plenty of resources online. Make sure you understand your CPAP equipment if you use this sort of therapy.

**Use your CPAP regularly:** A lot of people struggle to use their CPAP machines. You need to use this every night to treat your condition properly. Make a point to always use it even if you don't want to, because they're designed to help you sleep better. Some people may use other treatments, so use those as intended for the best results.

**Sleep routine:** Try to establish a sleep routine. You want to go to bed at the same time every night and relax as much as possible before you put on your CPAP mask. By establishing a routine, you'll get the quality sleep you need. Try to aim for 7-8 hours of quality sleep each night to feel refreshed in the morning.

**See your doctor often:** See your sleep therapist or regular doctor often. These professionals can help you understand and manage your condition. Don't be afraid to ask them questions about your sleep apnea.

Brian Lamacraft, WebMD

## Small acts of love that keep the spark alive

**I**n relationships, big, elaborate details don't define a person's love for their partner. But, it's actually all about the little things. There are small, random acts of love and kindness that profess your love for your partner and make them feel appreciated as well. The trick to keeping the spark alive in a relationship that's way past the honeymoon stage is to keep surprising your partner with lovable and genuine acts...

### Surprise them with favourite meals

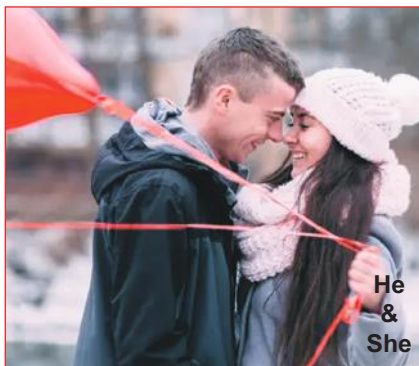
Your partner will surely light up if you present them with their favourite home-cooked meals after they have had an exhausting, long day. Remembering the nitty-gritties of whether they like their pasta to be spicy or want their rice to be coloured, is very important as it'll make them feel loved.

### Show your gratitude

Randomly start saying thank you's because these two magical words have the power to cheer anyone up and show them that their effort doesn't go unnoticed. Acknowledge the things your partner does and don't stop showing them gratitude for their effort in the relationship.

### Plan surprises

Book a table at a restaurant or gift your partner something special anytime. Don't wait for an occasion to gift them something, instead, turn a normal day into a memorable one for the rest of your lives.



He  
&  
She

### Hold hands in public

Inwardly, everyone loves this! Having your hand held in public gives you a sense of security, safety and love, with just the right amount of possessiveness. If you go out with your partner, hold their hand when they're least expecting it and watch them blush all over again!

### Sometimes, let them win an argument

It is only understandable that couples be mature while fighting and arguing over the regular stuff. Coming to a justified decision is very important, but at the same time, letting go of grudges once in a while will help your partner to relax and not feel burdened while being in a relationship.

### Be interested in their TV shows

Even if it's TV serial or some crappy crime show, support your partner by being interested in watching their TV shows. Comment on the story plot, or curse the characters with them to show that you are genuinely interested in their preferences as well. You'll find your partner cooing up to you the next time you watch a show you like.

### Plan exciting activities

Don't slop around, it can be really unattractive at times. Plan sudden volunteering activities, a road trip on a weekend, or even a cooking class together! You can also try unfamiliar activities that may seem scary at first but will be a blast once you both get the hang of it.

### I love you' notes

Get some sticky notes from the nearby stationery shop and start sticking these notes with I love you's anywhere. Let's say, you stick one on your partner's lunch box to help them feel elevated in their workplace. It's a gentle reminder that you're with them at all times.

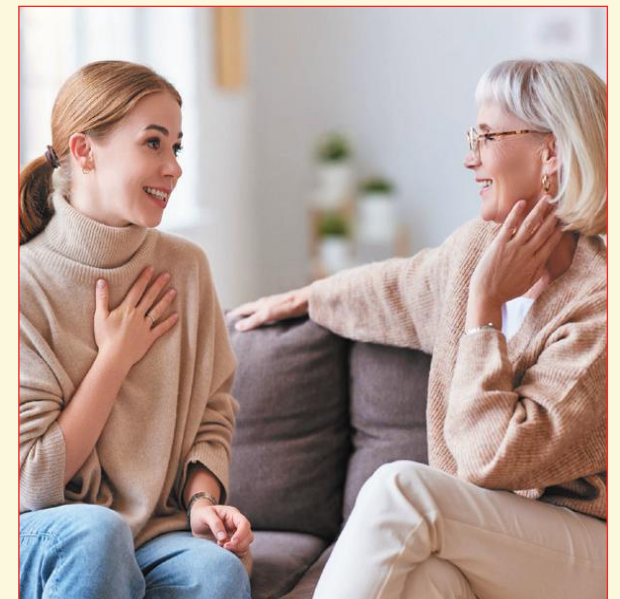
## Relationships

# Smart ways to deal with your mother-in-law

**E**veryone wants a loving, affectionate and cooperative mother-in-law but unfortunately, that's not always the case. One has to tread very cautiously around your mother-in-law because one wrong move and hell hath no fury! In account of this, Times of India suggests some clever ways to deal with your mother-in-law.

### Give her assurance

Your mother-in-law will always think that you've replaced her as the primary woman in her son's life. This can create huge rifts between you both. What you need to do is reassure her of the power and place she holds in her son's life, despite your presence. You would be surprised to know that with age, what all women want is some reassurance of their identity and position.



### Communicate with her about everything

This might sound exhausting but it can help you in the long run. Talking to her about every little thing will help you to sort out issues with her that have been troubling you for a while. The more you try to talk to her, the more honest you can be about your feelings. Sometimes, you can just pretend to agree with her, to get on her good side!

### Behave smartly when it comes to fights

If ever any fight or argument gets way out of hand between you and your mother-in-law, then you have to calm down, no matter what. At such a time, fake an urgent phone call and leave the situation to be diffused.

### Celebrate her special days

Nothing is better than to celebrate and make your mother-in-law feel appreciated and cared for. Despite the regular mocks and taunts, help her feel better about herself, by taking her along with you on small trips, spa dates and celebrate her anniversaries, birthdays with a blast!

### Don't involve your spouse

When you start telling on your mother-in-law to your spouse, it can anger her even more. Not only will she feel threatened by you, but also will try to badmouth you in front of your spouse. Always try to cool down the situation by talking to her, and if she doesn't listen, give her space. You both shouldn't have to involve others in your personal fights as you both should solve it maturely.

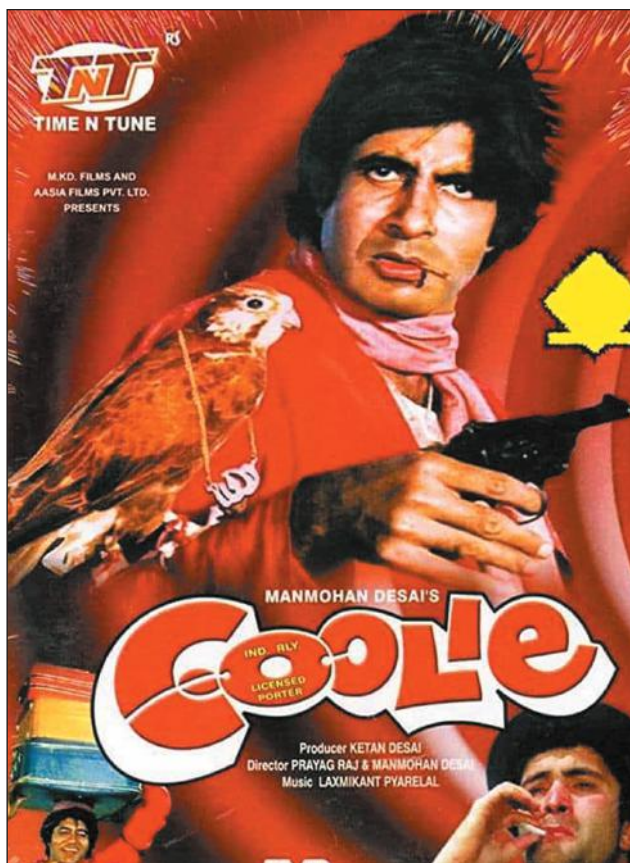
## Putting the Big 'B' in Bollywood

Amitabh Bachchan is probably the only actor that people in other countries think of when they imagine the exotic world of Bollywood. He is also the only actor through which the younger generations of this age can get a cultural understanding of their father's era. This is because the powerhouse actor that is Amitabh Bachchan continues to act in a galore of films even today.

Apart from a huge filmography and a number of accolades, his personality, determination, willpower and grit has made him immortal in the film industry. Hailing from a well-known family, born to the famous poet Harivansh Rai Bachchan and Teji Bachchan, his career would begin with a soul-crushing failure. Initially, Amitabh Bachchan wanted to work for the radio station but he was rejected because of his deep baritone voice of all things imaginable.

He quickly shrugged off his failure and tried his luck in films, even here he went through the toughest of times before the industry could understand his true potential. He could not match up to the industry's obsession with fairness and delivered 13 flops which includes films like *Birju* and *Parwana*.

It was only during the 1970s that the "Angry Young Man" of Bollywood got his due recognition in films like *Don*, *Deewar*, *Sholay* and *Coolie*. His cultural imprint on the fabric of Indian society is so prominent that there have



been numerous studies that dissect his roles. These critiques point out that Bachchan portrayed in his films the

reflection of the frustrated and angry youth of that era who were in the midst of the rubble that was developing in India without proper employment or rights. These sentiments have been brilliantly portrayed in his path-breaking film – *Coolie*.

Big B was always known for his professional and punctual attitude on set. He valued his fame and did not let success get the better of him. In an era of Bollywood where Rajesh Khanna, Rishi Kapoor and other contemporaries would be hours late to the set because of their late-night parties and frivolities, Amitabh Bachchan would turn up even before his co-actors. He worshipped his work.

His career went through yet another period of hardship when he almost went bankrupt because of the losses incurred by his production house. He was about to sell his beloved house "Jalsa". Engulfed by all odds, he begged Yash Chopra for an iconic role in *Mohabbatein* after which the then 57-year-old actor again rose to deliver smash hits like *Paa*, *Pink*, and *Piku*.

He is the first Asian actor to get his wax statue at Madame Tussauds, London.

Amitabh Bachchan's success is omnipresent in the industry's history, more than the numerous awards which include Padma Bhushan, he has left a cultural footprint in the hearts of many. Even with such great achievements, he is the most humble, grounded and professional person who does not have an iota of the arrogant aura that most contemporary actors have.

This was story was first published on This Day.app.

### BollyBytes

#### Kangana Ranaut hints at having a special someone in her life

Kangana Ranaut is in love and the actress hinted at the same recently in an interview. The 'Queen' star also added that she saw herself married and having babies in the next five years.

Kangana told Times Now in an interview, "I definitely want to be married and have babies. I see myself as a mother five years down the line and as a wife, and of course as someone who is actively participating in the vision of new India."

When she was further asked if she is working on the project of being a mother and a wife in five years, Kangana responded with a 'Yes'. On asking about her partner, she added, "You will know soon." Elaborating further, Kangana stated that although there is no such



place in love but yes, she is kind of in it. The actress also added that people will know about it very soon.

Kangana was recently honoured with Padma Shri award. Sharing a picture of herself, receiving the prestigious honour from the hands of President Ram Nath Kovind, Kangana wrote on Instagram, "Long ago when I started my career .... A question bothered me ... I asked myself some want money, some want fans .... some seek fame and some just want attention .... What do I want? Deep down I always knew as a girl child I wanted to earn respect and that is my treasure. Thank you, India, for this gift."

Meanwhile, on the work front, she will next be seen in '*Dhaakad*' which will also star Arjun Rampal and Divya Dutta in lead roles. Apart from this, she is also a part of '*Tejas*' where she will be seen essaying the role of an Air Force pilot.

#### Angelina Jolie opens up on trying her hands at Bollywood films

Angelina Jolie is one of the top actresses in Hollywood and there is no denying that she could give younger actresses a run for their money even in her late forties. The actress' recent outing is the Marvel Cinematic Universe flick *Eternals*. The film sees Angie essaying the role of Thena – an elite warrior who can form any weapon out of cosmic energy.

In a recent conversation with Hindustan Times, the actress got candid about many things including her love for India, its culture, never feeling like an outsider during her visits and most importantly – joining Bollywood.

Angelina Jolie was asked if she ever wishes to enter Bollywood. To this, the 46-year-old star said, "I don't know how good I would be at it. But we all loved that angle (in *Eternals*). We were so excited when he (hinting at actor Kumail Nanjiani, who will be seen bringing this filmy touch to the story) was doing [his scenes]. It was this exciting part of the film and we thought it was so cool. We used to love when he used to

practise. It is a great and exciting addition to the film."

Talking about India, loving its culture and not feeling like an outsider during her visits here, Angelina Jolie said, "I don't know if it's the density of the population [or something else], but there is this [feeling of [humanity which is very present (in India)]. Because of the nature of (the country), be it on the trains or in the streets, you feel right [when you are] together."

The 46-year-old Oscar-winning actress visited India for the first time in 2006 to shoot her film, *A Mighty Heart*. During that time, she indulged in some touristy activities including an auto-rickshaw ride and meeting refugees from Afghanistan and Burma. Stating that she never felt like an outsider during her visit, Jolie said, "I felt a part of the country. I felt the energy, the intensity and the humanity. I would like to come back again soon. You learn from so many different places. I feel that I certainly made many great friends when I was in India."



## 'I have made mistakes in my marriage': Amit Tandon

A journey filled with highs and lows, both on the personal and professional fronts, Amit Tandon has come a long way. He entered showbiz with the inaugural season of *Indian Idol* in 2004 and was later seen in TV shows like *Kaisa Ye Pyaar Hai*, *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi*, *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein* and *Kasam Tere Pyaar Ki*. While he is content with the way his career has shaped up, he has had to work hard on his marriage that was on the verge of falling apart.

Amit Tandon and Ruby, a dermatologist by profession, tied the knot in 2007 and have an 11-year-old daughter. However, cracks developed in their relationship and the two announced their separation in August 2017 citing compatibility issues. Things took an unexpected turn when Ruby was arrested in Dubai for misbehaving with *DHA (Dubai Health Authorities)* and released 10 months later. The crisis got the estranged couple together again and Amit called off the divorce after which the two decided to give their marriage a second chance. Neha Mahesh of *Hindustan Times* spoke to Amit about the difficult phase in their lives and how they managed to sail through it. Excerpts:

### What went wrong in your marriage with Ruby?

Look, we knew something was amiss. Neither of us was happy and we even discussed it. We stopped making efforts to save our marriage. What we don't realise is that separation and divorce don't just affect you, but also your child and your respective families and friends. To be honest, I tasted success at a young age and felt invincible (smiles!). I felt that I could do anything. I have made mistakes... I have done things I am not proud of.

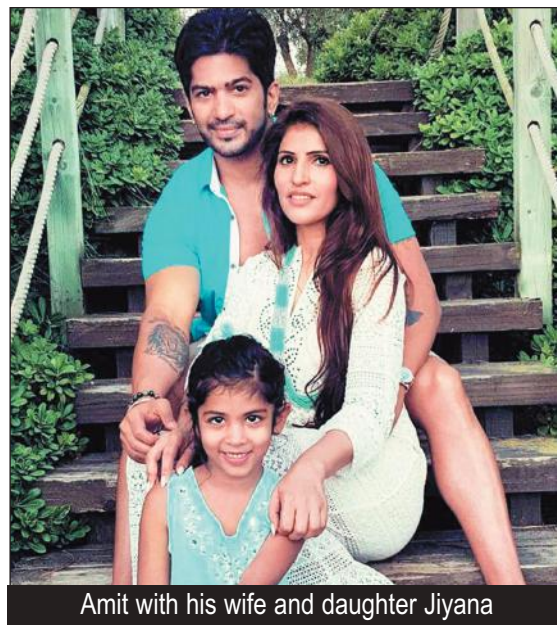
Looking back, I feel all those mistakes were taking my wife away from me. Ruby came to me with complete love... she had left everything to be with me. I won't say I didn't value it, but I feel that we got married at an early age. I got married at 27. I wasn't mature then. The maturity set in six years later when I started to realise the importance of family, especially after the birth of my child.

### Eventually, you and Ruby patched up and called off the divorce. What led to a change of heart?

When Ruby and I decided to file for a divorce, a lot of things had happened between us. But a bigger incident occurred in 2017 (her arrest in Dubai), which renewed our perspective towards life. There was a time when she was emotionally broken. Some people, who claimed to be our best friends, abandoned us. But everything changed between us when she saw me standing by her as family.

### So, how did the two of you get back together?

At first, the thought was to make things work for our child. We love our daughter, but to resurrect our marriage just for her didn't seem right. How do you do that until you address issues with the relationship, understand each other better, be more appreciative and give each other time? That wasn't the case earlier. So, we made sure to bring about some changes in ourselves to be able to live with each other. We realised that the issues in our marriage had to be sorted or else there was no way out. But all's well that ends well. We are happy



Amit with his wife and daughter Jiyana

together now.

### What are these changes that you have made to strengthen your relationship?

To be honest, I was more wrong than Ruby when the marriage was falling apart. I wasn't ready to give her the emotional support she was expecting from me. I've always been in love with the idea of being in love, but I have found it difficult to build an emotional connection and that includes my previous relationships, too.

Eventually, there came a point when we wanted to rebuild the connection, but both of us had drifted apart. I was selfish in a way, but I realised it before it was too late. I feel fortunate that my life came back in order.

Nothing in life is perfect, but we have reached a stage where we address our issues and come together to resolve them. *Main abhi bhi galti karta hoon*, but I won't repeat the mistakes I made then. I am a changed man today and have worked hard to save our marriage. Am I a natural flirt? Yes. But the Amit Tandon of today knows where to draw the line. I don't wish to lose people who really matter or else I would be living a shallow life.

### Appartement à louer - long terme



Appartement meublé de 3 c.a.c, climatisé, cuisine équipée, piscine et parking, sécurité (24/24) à Trou aux Biches - Complexe Fleury sur Mer  
Tel: 57809413 - 57530881

### To Rent

Fully furnished and air conditioned 3-bedroom apartment at Fleury sur Mer Complex, Trou aux Biches for long-term.  
Parking and 24 hour security, swimming pool  
Tel: 57809413 - 57530881

## YOUR STARS

### Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

Don't kill yourself in preparing your future, think of enjoying the benefits of the present. You'll lead an active and gratifying social life. You'll brutally feel the weight of your responsibilities; don't persist in mulling over your concerns; try to amuse yourself by all means.

**Lucky Numbers: 6, 9, 11, 24, 30, 34**

### Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

In love, the intensity of your emotions will hardly leave room for reason! Family life will be pleasant and sweet. You'll be very generous and exuberant: your close ones and friends will be quite surprised!

**Lucky Numbers: 1, 4, 7, 11, 37, 40**

### Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

You'll multiply your marks of affection toward your children and they'll be very sensitive to them. It's simple reunions, family activities, in the company of good friends or neighbours, that will bring you the most satisfactions.

**Lucky Numbers: 1, 9, 19, 35, 37, 39**

### Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

You'll need to have more sleep so as to preserve your nervous balance. Don't dramatize too much the lack of loyalty of one of your friends. Single folks, you'll know how to profit by your charm, which will be greatly highlighted.

**Lucky Numbers: 5, 8, 15, 16, 19, 35**

### Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

If you live in couple, try to avoid provocative words. Good physical form; digestive disorders and chronic troubles will leave you in peace for the time being. Resist the tendency to see everything in black, to emphasize what's disagreeable.

**Lucky Numbers: 4, 5, 16, 19, 23, 27**

### Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

The misunderstandings between you and your beloved one will be quickly dissipated and your amorous sky will become very sunny again. Luck will smile to you and, as by magic, you'll succeed in finding funds which will save you from disaster.

**Lucky Numbers: 2, 22, 23, 29, 31, 32**

### Gemini: May 21 - June 20

You'll be strongly inclined toward disorderly amorous bursts; beware of disappointments! Events seem to be evolving in a manner which will be favourable to you; thus, it will not be the time to despair.

**Lucky Numbers: 1, 5, 15, 24, 26, 30**

### Cancer: June 21 - July 22

Make a small effort at being more sociable and open; you'll win in this way. You'll like to go out with your friends; you'll meet new faces; but you won't be able to refrain from arguing with vehemence.

**Lucky Numbers: 10, 21, 30, 32, 34, 35**

### Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

You'll be subject to pessimism, dissatisfaction, and fear for your future; pamper yourself a little and try to change your ideas. An interesting real estate affair should present itself and allow you to change residence.

**Lucky Numbers: 3, 7, 9, 21, 29, 31**

### Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

Beware of food intoxication by salmonella and also of infectious diseases. In love, you'll show yourself somewhat of a killjoy and severe. If you've committed yourself, do the necessary to keep your promises.

**Lucky Numbers: 10, 17, 20, 23, 26, 36**

### Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

Think to organize your succession as of now, you'd thus prevent numerous family dissensions later. Excellent influxes in the friendship field; your friends will surround you with affection; but don't let yourself be suffocated.

**Lucky Numbers: 1, 9, 12, 27, 30, 32**

### Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

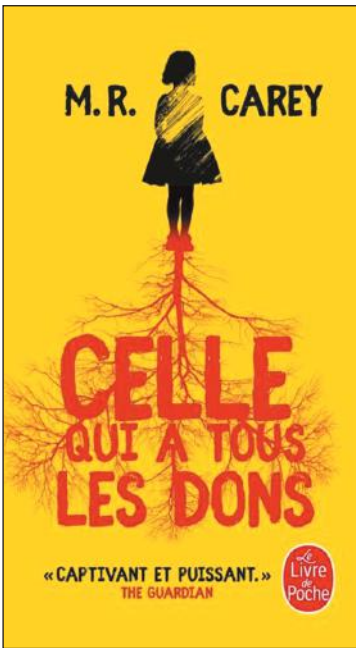
You'll easily find the necessary supports to bring your projects to success. Be of extreme vigilance in your relations with others. Your relationships with your family circle will be placed under the sign of détente and well-being.

**Lucky Numbers: 8, 11, 17, 21, 33, 36**

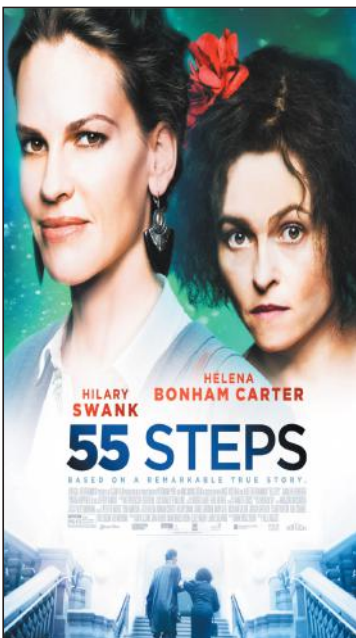




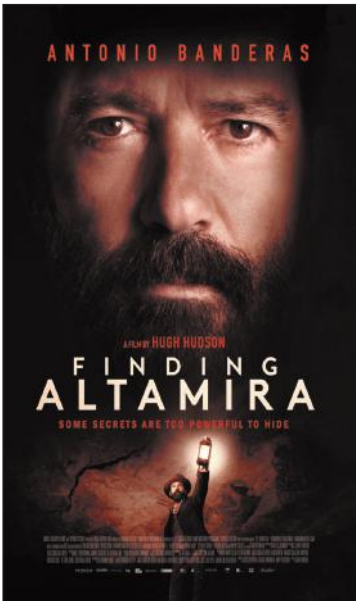
Vendredi 12 novembre - 21.15



Samedi 13 novembre - 21.20



Dimanche 14 novembre - 21.15



	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
<b>vendredi 12 novembre</b>	07.00 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 09.00 Doc: Legendary Hotels 11.10 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.55 Local: Prod: Elle - No 40 13.45 Serial: Heidi, Bienvenida A... 14.40 D.Anime: Invention Story 15.20 D.Anime: Oum Le Dauphin... 15.32 D.Anime: Spongo, Fuzz And... 15.43 D.Anime: Les Triples 16.19 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 17.20 Mag: Human Nature 17.50 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous? 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 21.00 Local Prod: Come On Let's... 21.55 Serial: 19-2 23.25 Le Journal 00.00 Mag: Eye On SADC	07.00 DDI Live 10.00 Bisaat-E-Dil 11.01 Tawaan 12.00 Film: Babu Bangaram Starring Venkatesh, Nayanthara 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.26 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.46 Serial: Bava Maradallu 16.07 Serial: Sondha Bandham 16.31 Serial: Mera Maan Rakhna 16.47 Serial: Imtihaan 17.05 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.25 Serial: Chhanchhan 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 Local: Abhay Charan 19.05 Zournal Kreol 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.02 Serial: Aas 20.46 Local: Anjuman 21.11 Local: Urdu Programme 22.06 DDI Live	06.00 Mag: Eco India 06.26 Mag: Shift 06.51 Mag: Border Crossing 07.20 Mag: Tomorrow Today 07.46 Mag: Science Ou Fiction 09.00 Educa Prog: Grade 5 11.30 Educa Prog: Grade 8 14.03 Doc: Comme Un Poisson... 14.55 Doc: Sculptrices.. 15.48 Guardians Of The Desert 17.23 Mag: Border Crossing 18.00 Doc: Tsunamis 18.42 Mag: Arts And Culture 19.30 Mag: Euromaxx 20.05 Doc: Volcano Stories 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.40 Doc: Wedding The French... 21.39 Doc: Comme Un Poisson... 22.32 Doc: Sauvages Au Coeur... 23.23 Doc: Good News From... 23.49 Doc: Tsunamis	01.28 Serial: The Bold Type 02.07 Serial: The Bold Type 03.27 Film: Drop Dead Gorgeous 05.04 Tele: Muneca Brava 05.51 Serial: Reef Doctors 06.52 Film: Tracktown 09.45 Tele: Teresa 10.35 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 11.00 Serial: French Series 12.00 Film: Drop Dead Gorgeous 13.33 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: Tracktown 16.45 Serial: The Good Doctor 17.28 Serial: Reef Doctors 18.10 Tele: Teresa 19.00 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 19.34 Mag: Cinemag 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: Powers 21.15 Film: Celle Qui A Tous Les Dons	07.00 Film: Imaandaar Starring Vikas Anand, Sanjay Dutt, Satyen Kappu 11.28 / 20.30 - Radha Krishna 12.00 / 21.00 - Anupamaa 12.30 / 21.30 - Mere Sai 13.02 / 22.00 - Agniphera 13.30 / 22.30 - Yeh Teri Galiyan 14.00 / 23.00 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.30 / 21.46 - Chhanchhan 15.00 / 22.20 - Sethji 15.25 Film: Helicopter Eela Starring: Kajol, Riddhi Sen, Tota Roy Chowdhury 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 19.00 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 19.31 Serial: Bhakharwadi 20.00 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak
<b>samedi 13 novembre</b>	06.00 D.Anime: Robot Trains 06.27 D.Anime: The Hive 07.00 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill 07.24 D.Anime: Booba 07.28 D.Anime: Kung Fu Panda 08.00 D.Anime: Sabrina 09.35 Serial: Oh Yuck 10.00 Local: Zanaf Nou Zil 10.30 Serial: Backstage 12.00 Le Journal 12.35 Tele: Teresa 14.45 Mag: Sur Mesure 15.40 D.Anime: Oum Le Dauphin... 16.03 D.Anime: Les Triples 16.20 D.Anime: Volttron... 17.20 Serial: Hi Opie! 17.40 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous? 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Entertainment: Dance 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.10 Local: Autour Des Valeurs 21.20 Film: 55 Steps	07.00 Film: Teesra Kaun 09.07 Mag: DDI Magazine 10.00 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 11.28 Serial: Bloody Romance 12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhya Bhare 12.17 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 12.40 Serial: High School 13.02 Annakodiyum Ainthu Pengalum 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.25 Film: Dil Tera Ashiq Starring: Salman Khan, Madhuri Dixit, Anupam Kher 17.29 DDI Magazine 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.06 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha 20.28 Serial: Bitti Business Wali 21.01 Film: Haunted Villa Lonavala Stars: Balraj Solanki, Rupa Banerjee	06.00 Doc: Tsunamis 06.42 Mag: Arts And Culture 06.55 Mag: Our Voices 07.50 Doc: Volcano Stories 09.08 Comme Un Poisson... 10.00 Doc: Good News From The... 10.29 Doc: Norwegian Riesling 11.00 Doc: Tsunamis 11.42 Mag: Our Voices 13.00 Doc: Wedding The French... 15.13 Student Support Prog... 18.14 Mag: Science Ou Fiction 18.40 Doc: Zenith 19.31 Doc: Japanese Festival 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.40 Doc: Rewilding 22.30 Doc: Bois D'ebène 23.16 Doc: Charles Pathé 00.08 Mag: Future Mag 00.37 Doc: Science Ou Fiction 01.28 Mag: Check In 01.54 Doc: Japanese Festival	01.02 Film: Celle Qui A Tous Les Dons 03.09 Serial: Unforgotten 04.02 Serial: The Magicians 04.45 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 05.27 Tele: Tanto Amor 06.11 Serial: Last Resort 06.53 Serial: Absentia 09.16 Serial: The Magicians 09.56 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 10.40 Film: SOX: A Family's Best... 12.15 Serial: Unforgotten 13.32 Serial: Killjoys 15.05 Tele: Muneca Brava 16.29 Mag: Cinemag 17.00 Serial: Last Resort 17.45 Film: NYC: Tornado Terror 20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana 20.30 Series: Last Resort 21.15 Film: The Killer Downstairs Starring: Cindy Busby, Marcus Rosner, Donna Benedicto	04.05 Radha Krishna 04.36 Chupke Chupke 04.48 Mere Sai -- Shradha Aur... 05.32 Agniphera 06.00 Yeh Teri Galiyan 06.30 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 06.38 Chhanchhan 06.57 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 07.18 Siddhi Vinayak 08.02 Yeh Teri Galiyan 10.12 Motu Patlu 10.01 Siddhi Vinayak 11.54 Serial: Bhakharwadi 14.00 Chupke Chupke 14.14 Anupamaa 16.00 Pavitra Rishta 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Film: London Dreams Star: Salman Khan, Ajay Devgn, Om Puri 20.57 Serial: Namah 22.00 Yeh Payaar Nahi Toh Kya
<b>dimanche 14 novembre</b>	06.00 D.Anime: Robot Trains 06.27 D.Anime: The Hive 06.41 D.Anime: P'tit Cosmonaute 07.00 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill 09.30 Serial: Oh Yuck 10.00 Local: Zanaf Nou Zil 11.00 Local: Nu Rasinn 12.00 Le Journal 12.40 Tele: Teresa 14.10 Local: Elle - No 166 15.20 D.Anime: Invention Story 15.33 D.Anime: Oum Le Dauphin... 15.48 D.Anime: Spongo, Fuzz and... 17.17 Serial: Hi Opie! 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Local: MBC Prod 19.30 Le Journal 20.20 Local: Groov'in 21.20 Film: Finding Altamira Starring: Antonio Banderas, Clément Sibony, Rupert Everett	07.00 Film: Vishwasghaat 10.00 MBC Prod 11.00 Serial: Oru Kai Osai 11.22 Mag: Yatra 12.00 Film: Bhoost And Friends Stars: TJackie Shroff, Ashwin Mushran, Aditya Lakhia... 13.54 DDI Magazine 15.22 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 15.45 Serial: He Mann Baware 16.12 Serial: Sondha Bandham 17.05 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 17.40 Kisna 18.00 DDI Magazine 18.30 Local: Tiba Tiba Nu Avance 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol 20.05 Serial: Mann Mein Vishwas.. 20.48 Serial: CID 21.33 Serial: Naagin Season 2 22.17 Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki	06.00 Mag: Future Mag 06.51 Doc: Zenith 07.16 Mag: Check In 07.46 Doc: Japanese Festival 08.43 Doc: Rewilding - L'Europe 20.30 Doc: Charles Pathé 11.51 Mag: Science Ou Fiction 12.17 Doc: Zenith 12.43 Mag: Check In 14.06 Doc: Rewilding 14.58 Doc: Comme Un Poisson... 18.02 Mag: Magnifique 18.30 Doc: Amazing Gardens 19.02 Doc: Garden Party 19.33 Doc: Comme Une Envie... 20.30 Local Prod: News (English) 20.45 Mag: Nouveau Look Pour... 21.55 Doc: La Vie Révée 22.46 Doc: Bois D'ebène 00.11 Mag: Magnifique 00.42 Doc: Amazing Gardens	01.35 Film: The Killer Downstairs 02.54 Serial: Midnight, Texas 03.35 Film: Model Citizen 55 Steps 05.24 Tele: Tanto Amor 06.05 Serial: Last Resort 07.02 Serial: Island Doctor 08.33 Serial: Reckoning 09.12 Film: 55 Steps 11.04 Film: NYC: Tornado Terror 12.31 Serial: Midnight, Texas 13.15 Serial: Powers 15.33 Tele: Muneca Brava 17.01 Serial: Last Resort 17.45 Serial: Midnight, Texas 18.10 Film: 55 Steps 20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana 20.30 Serial: Bite Club 21.15 Film: Hollywood Homicide Avec: Harrison Ford, Josh Hartnett, Lena Olin... 23.04 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir	00.00 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak 02.14 Bhakharwadi 03.59 Chupke Chupke 04.30 Anupamaa 06.00 Pavitra Rishta 07.54 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: Rock On 2 Starring: Albert Mawrie, Arjun Rampal, Farhan Akhtar, Shradha Kapoor

**MBC 2** Samedi 13 novembre - 21.00

Stars: Balraj Solanki, Rupa Banerjee



**Dimanche 14 novembre** - 18.30

Stars: Albert Mawrie, Arjun Rampal, Farhan Akhtar, Shradha Kapoor



# AI shop assistants: get ready for a world where you can't tell humans and chatbots apart

*You may not have heard of conversational commerce, but it's quietly appearing in more and more places*



**Shweta Singh**  
Assistant Professor, Information  
Systems and Management,  
University of Warwick

I regularly fly with KLM from Minneapolis to New Delhi, and always stop over in Amsterdam. I am frequently in Minneapolis for research and this is my route to go home to take a break from work. I have done the journey so many times that I know almost all the shops at Schiphol inside out. However, one time in summer 2019, the predictability was broken when I missed my connecting flight to New Delhi.

I was tired, hungry, sleepy, and the customer-service counter was closed. I had the choice to make the long walk to customer services at the next gate or use my iPhone, so I tried my phone.

I texted the KLM WhatsApp number and went back and forth with an assistant on my choices. Within minutes I was on the next flight, with the boarding pass on my phone. It was only later that I discovered that I had been dealing with next-generation artificial intelligence – in an example of the new field of conversational commerce.

If you haven't encountered it yet, you will soon. Certain supermarkets are providing voice-enabled shopping services to customers, for example. In the US, Walmart shoppers can ask Google Assistant to add certain things to their virtual shopping trolleys and to learn from their shopping habits.

Google has similar deals with two other supermarket giants – Target in the US and Carrefour in France – while Amazon provides voice-enabled shopping in the UK to online customers of Ocado. Not to be outdone, Walmart recently bought conversation-commerce specialist Botmock to expand its services in this area.

There are already more than a billion people interacting with businesses via either text or voice-based conversational tools. In 2021, conversational commerce is expected to account for total sales of US\$41 billion (£30 billion) worldwide, and is forecast to grow five-fold to nearly



'The customer is always real.' Octus\_Photography

US\$300 billion by 2025 – half of it from chatbots. So how is this market developing, and what does it mean for our shopping habits?

## Coffee diehards and hyper-personal shopping

If conversational commerce still feels under the radar, one reason is that most growth has been in China, Japan and South Korea. All the same, it is cropping up everywhere. If you are talking to your girlfriend or boyfriend on Facebook and suddenly want to send them flowers, you don't even have to break the conversation. You click on 1-800-Flowers.com, a conversational AI tool integrated with Messenger, and explain what you want. You don't even need to enter card details if you use Apple, Samsung or Google Pay.

Or maybe like me you are a die-hard coffee lover. I used to stand in a queue to get my morning latte, but not now. I just order from my couch from the chatbot on the My Starbucks Barista app, and my coffee is waiting when I reach my local store.

The AI underpinning these advances encompass are deep learning, sophisticated natural language-processing, voice recognition, and cognitive computing – which is a system for machine-thinking that emulates human thought. But the big selling point – besides ease, comfort and shopping anywhere at any time – is probably the potential to make a customer's retail experience much more personal.

If it lives up to expectations, customers might soon be able to interact with an AI who understands what they want in specific detail. We already see big retailers offering personalised products to attract customers – for example Nike and Adidas allowing people to design their own trainers.

But by using sophisticated AI, personalisation can move to a whole new level. Customers will receive personalised recommendations in their own language, easing the burden of choice and making the experience as enjoyable as possible. They might spend more money as a result – not because they are being manipulated, but because they almost feel like they are buying from a friend.

Meanwhile, businesses will gain new insights into people's shopping behaviour. Yes this raises privacy questions, but it will also help businesses to refine their offering. This should reduce returns and increase sales.

## Where it's heading

Conversational commerce reminds me of the 2013 movie *Her*, set in a near future where Theodore (Joaquin Phoenix) falls in love with Samantha (Scarlet Johansson),

an AI-based virtual assistant. The relationship eventually becomes unworkable when it emerges that Samantha is simultaneously having intimate friendships with thousands of men. She then combines with other AIs to perform an upgrade that leads to them withdrawing from human interaction.

We may be some way from falling in love with chatbots, but clearly there are questions about ethics here. The technology must not harm humans or pose any threat to their dignity. For instance, Microsoft recently restricted its voice mimicry technology because it makes it easier to create deep-fake videos.

Another issue is jobs. Automation is clearly a threat to the workforce, and conversational commerce could well be part of that. But unfortunately, businesses will not pay for so many support staff if AI can do the job at least as well. One consolation is that AI in its entirety might create more jobs than it destroys. For instance, the World Economic Forum predicted in 2018 that the net new jobs created by AI would be 58 million by 2022.

Looking further ahead, conversational commerce could become all the more prevalent in the metaverse, the virtual reality representation of the internet, with voice-enabled shopping potentially accounting for 30% of all ecommerce revenues by 2030. It seems foreseeable that we will be interacting with AI avatars in virtual reality stores, or talking to bots in real-life supermarket aisles via augmented reality glasses.

What may seem alien to our generation is likely to be second nature to the shoppers of tomorrow. There are pros and cons to this technology, but I suspect my little chat with the KLM chatbot at Schiphol airport will soon seem quaint compared to what comes next.



The day after tomorrow. Zapp2Photo