

# MAURITIUS TIMES

• "There are darkneses in life and there are lights, and you are one of the lights, the light of all lights." -- Bram Stoker, Dracula

Interview: Jean-Claude de l'Estrac

## "La clé de la prochaine alternance est entre les mains du Parti Travailleiste"

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### The secret to South Korea's COVID success?



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By Dr R Neerunjun Gopee ☞ See Page 3



## Better Be Safe than Sorry

**A**s we were preparing today's edition it was announced that the technical committee of World Health Organization (WHO) granted Emergency Use Listing (EUL) to made-in-India **Covid-19** vaccine **Covaxin**, a move that will allow people inoculated with Covaxin to travel abroad without restrictions. India has administered well over 100 million doses of Covaxin to date. With over one billion doses of anti-Covid vaccines given so far, the number of new Covid cases and deaths from the disease has dropped significantly in India, which is now averaging about 15000 cases per day, with about 200-300 deaths for its population nearing 1.4 billion.

Unfortunately, it is the opposite that is happening in our country: relative to the size of its population of about 1.3 million, the rise in the number of both cases and deaths is disproportionately high according to medical experts. It is also to be noted that the official figures may not be reflecting the real situation, because the current surge is linked to the Delta variant which is more virulent and more transmissible, but is largely asymptomatic initially. The variant may have entered the country early this year, but there can be no two opinions about the fact that the opening of borders on 1st October is the reason for the surge that we have been witnessing.

It was an open secret that there was pressure on the government from several lobbies to lift travel restrictions so as to get the economy running again. But, given the rapid and seemingly unstoppable spread of the disease in the community, citizens have been asking whether the country had really prepared itself to face such a crisis – because crisis is what we seem to be facing now. For example, has the capacity at the Covid-specialised ENT hospital to cope been upgraded? It has been under strain right from the beginning, and any number of shortcomings there have been ventilated.

Under the circumstances, namely the incapacity of the services to adequately handle the rising incidence of cases, it falls on the population to ensure its safety by rigorously implementing the sanitary and other measures that have been repeated *ad nauseam* but that are being followed more in the breach than in their observance. The crowds at the beaches and the malls during the weekend and the ensuing public holidays where laxity as regards sanitary measures was all too evident have raised apprehensions that we are approaching a peak that may well touch up to hundreds of cases per day, according to medical experts. As it is, the services and infrastructure are overwhelmed. Burial grounds and crematories are tragically stretched. Warnings were issued by virologists and epidemiologists that the Delta variant, far more infective and potent, would be the major risk by mid-November with cases shooting through the roof. We dare not speculate on what awaits us should their dire projections were to materialize.

There are two worrying trends in the current phase: it is predominantly younger and fitter people who are being infected, and deaths amongst them are more frequent too. The other is that we are witnessing what are called breakthrough infections – that is, people who have already received their two doses are falling prey to the virus. All the resources of the country put together, so it would seem, are not going to be enough to protect us from getting infected. No one is safe – young or old, vaccinated or not vaccinated.

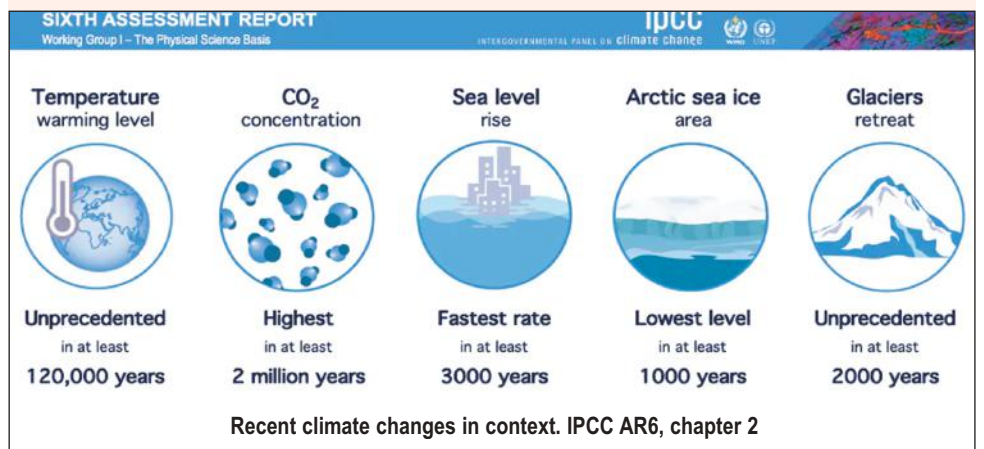
We must not be lured by the fact that we can behave as if everything is normal because restrictions have been largely lifted. It is best to avoid public places and take all sanitary precautions rigorously when compelled to frequent them, such as the workplace or schools and shopping for food.

It is best to prepare ourselves mentally for a low-key end of the year. Pray for better days ahead but prepare for the worse. Better be safe than sorry.

### The Conversation

## Humanity is compressing millions of years of natural change into just a few centuries

*What climate changes in the distant past can tell us about the near future*



**M**any numbers are swirling around the climate negotiations at the UN climate summit in Glasgow, COP26. These include global warming targets of 1.5°C and 2.0°C, recent warming of 1.1°C, remaining CO<sub>2</sub> budget of 400 billion tonnes, or current atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> of 415 parts per million.

It's often hard to grasp the significance of these numbers. But the study of ancient climates can give us an appreciation of their scale compared to what has occurred naturally in the past. Our knowledge of ancient climate change also allows scientists to calibrate their models and therefore improve predictions of what the future may hold.

Recent work, summarised in the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), has allowed scientists to refine their understanding and measurement of past climate changes. These changes are recorded in rocky outcrops, sediments from the ocean floor and lakes, in polar ice sheets, and in other shorter-term archives such as tree rings and corals. As scientists discover more of these archives and get better at using them, we have become increasingly able to compare recent and future climate change with what has happened in the past, and to provide important context to the numbers involved in climate negotiations.

For instance one headline finding in the IPCC report was that global temperature (currently 1.1°C above a pre-industrial baseline) is higher than at any time in at least the past 120,000 or so years. That's because the last warm period between ice ages peaked about 125,000 years ago – in contrast to today, warmth at that time was driven not by CO<sub>2</sub>, but by changes in

Earth's orbit and spin axis. Another finding regards the rate of current warming, which is faster than at any time in the past 2,000 years – and probably much longer.

But it is not only past temperature that can be reconstructed from the geological record. For instance, tiny gas bubbles trapped in Antarctic ice can record atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations back to 800,000 years ago. Beyond that, scientists can turn to microscopic fossils preserved in seabed sediments. These properties (such as the types of elements that make up the fossil shells) are related to how much CO<sub>2</sub> was in the ocean when the fossilised organisms were alive, which itself is related to how much was in the atmosphere. As we get better at using these "proxies" for atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>, recent work has shown that the current atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentration of around 415 parts per million (compared to 280 ppm prior to industrialisation in the early 1800s), is greater than at any time in at least the past 2 million years.

Other climate variables can also be compared to past changes. These include the greenhouse gases methane and nitrous oxide (now greater than at any time in at least 800,000 years), late summer Arctic sea ice area (smaller than at any time in at least the past 1,000 years), glacier retreat (unprecedented in at least 2,000 years) sea level (rising faster than at any point in at least 3,000 years), and ocean acidity (unusually acidic compared to the past 2 million years).

**Dan Lunt, Prof of Climate Science, University of Bristol & Darrell Kaufman, Prof of Earth and Environmental Sciences, Northern Arizona University**

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Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

**I**t is perhaps a salutary coincidence that the COP26 pow-wow on Climate Change that has just concluded in Glasgow has come a few days before the Hindu festival Deepavali. It is no secret that practically all Hindu festivals entail abstention from meat-eating for several days – and perhaps just as well that the Hindu calendar is one full of festivals all the year round.

As it is, comparatively a larger proportion of Hindus are vegetarians (and its variations such as the new-fangled vegan, etc.) than those belonging to other faiths. However, amongst the latter too there has been growing awareness about the need for less meat in our diet, and more and more of them are adopting some version – not to say variant! – of vegetarianism. And this is since not only the Rio Conference in 1992 about making the environment sustainable, but also in the wake of medical research which continues to adduce valid evidence about the deleterious impact on human health (the non-communicable diseases) that results from a predominantly meat-based diet, that has led to greater health consciousness. Which is a good thing, isn't it?

One may ask: can we afford to eat less meat, perhaps even to eliminate it from our diet altogether? The answer is yes – because from an evolutionary standpoint, we will not evolve any more biologically. The fundamental issue is the size of our brain, proportionately the largest among vertebrates. According to the evolutionists, meat as an energy-rich protein source played an essential part in our evolution. Our modern brains require a lot of energy, and it is held that meat played a role in boosting our energy intake, helping our brains evolve to be bigger and more complex.

But now that they have, and are not going to go further *biologically*, we surely can afford to reduce our consumption of meat – both from an evolutionary and an environmental point of view. Besides, there are many farsighted sages such as Sri Aurobindo who have argued convincingly, and shown by their own way of living too, that the only future evolution of man desirable and possible is spiritual.

An online source helps us to better understand the multiple aspects of meat consumption that are cause for worry. There are arguments for and against eating meat, but there is no denying that overall, it is bad for our health and our environment. In modern times, it can be found in abundance around the world. For example, in 2019 alone,

an estimated 325 million metric tons of meat was produced.

No doubt diets based on animal products are popular, but there is a rising number of those who choose not to eat meat, fish, dairy and eggs. Thus, in the UK alone, data from 2018 showed that there were 600,000 vegans in the country, up from around 150,000 in 2006.

There are several concerns that go against meat consumption: health risks; animal welfare; sustainability – animal livestock uses a disproportionately large amount of land, about 77% of agricultural land. Besides, livestock production methods are considered one of the main drivers of environmental damage, including climate change and biodiversity loss, issues which are now increasingly urgent. There is also deforestation of vast swathes of land in the Amazon Forest which are being cleared of habitat for cattle farming and the production of soybean for animal feed. 'Often, deforested areas are cleared using fire. This burning releases huge amounts of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) into the atmosphere while also removing a CO<sub>2</sub> sink.'

There is also biodiversity loss, many habitats being destroyed or impacted, with species facing extinction or coming under threat due to the destruction of natural environments. Further, meat consumption is responsible for releasing greenhouse gases such as methane, CO<sub>2</sub>, and nitrous oxide. These gases contribute global warming which is in turn responsible for climate change.

On the other hand, it takes a lot of water to produce meat, and beef is the most water-intensive food. It requires two times more water to produce beef than pork and four times more than alternative protein sources such as lentils. The issue is further compounded because soybean farming (for animal feed) is relatively inefficient when it comes to water usage. Livestock production also contributes to water pollution around the world because manure contaminates watercourses.

## Climate Change

# Unless we drastically reduce meat consumption...



**“The inescapable conclusion is that eating meat is bad for the environment at the scale and intensity we collectively are consuming it. By damaging ecosystems and releasing greenhouse gases, the global meat industry is contributing to climate change. What's more, with the world's population predicted to continue growing, we will need to feed more and more people. The impact of meat on the environment is not currently sustainable...”**

As raising animals often requires a lot of grazing land, the intensive nature of this grazing can lead to bare soil, which is then often lost due to wind or rain. As a result, fertile lands become barren, waterways become clogged, and there is an increased risk of flooding. Soil is also a large reservoir for carbon, absorbing it as plants and trees die. As soil is lost, it releases that carbon as CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere. Animal agriculture, deforestation, and other land-use changes that reduce soil have been the second-largest contributors to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions globally.

Ultimately, all the above factors lead to climate change. It is no surprise therefore that several reports and studies, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report on climate change and land, recommend reducing meat consumption.

The inescapable conclusion is that eating meat is bad for the environment at the scale and intensity we collectively are consuming it. By damaging ecosystems and releasing greenhouse gases, the global meat industry is contributing to climate change. What's more, with the world's population predicted to continue growing, we will need to feed more and more people. The impact of meat on the environment is not currently sustainable.

By reducing the amount of meat, we eat and striving for a more sustainable diet – and there plenty of nutritious and very palatable alternatives – we can each help to reduce the damage to the environment. And, while there are pros and cons of eating meat, more people are choosing to cut it out entirely. As new technology and legislation are introduced, we can all make a difference in protecting the planet with our dietary choices.

Just think: an individual decision to cut down on meat eating multiplied several billion times can have the force multiplier effect to save the planet. Isn't it worth considering seriously?



# The secret to South Korea's Covid success?

*Combining high technology with the human touch*

According to the recent House of Commons report on the UK's pandemic response, one of the government's key failings was to assume that the success of countries like South Korea in controlling the virus couldn't be replicated in Britain. This decision to ignore approaches that were proving successful elsewhere was one of the UK's biggest oversights early in the pandemic.

However, the report itself falls into a similar trap. It regards South Korea's pandemic response as exceptional due to its advanced use of digital technology, ignoring the fact that the country also relied a lot on old-fashioned social interventions – contact tracing, quarantine and isolating cases – aided by boots on the ground.

To combat Covid and future pandemics, governments need to heed the lessons of these social interventions and not just the technological ones. South Korea teaches us that high-tech solutions can help protect against disease, but these work together with social interventions – interventions that the UK has not used as effectively.

## What a world-beating system looks like

The UK government had the ambition of creating a "world-beating" test-trace-isolate system. Yet the House of Commons report concludes that England's system has produced little effect, despite great expense. Other countries too have not been able to contain Covid sufficiently without resorting to draconian lockdowns. However, South Korea has been regularly cited as an exception.

While South Korea has had to introduce some control measures to limit the spread of the virus – there have been curfews for businesses and limits on the size of gatherings in 2021 – it has avoided full lockdowns and border closures while keeping cumulative confirmed Covid



Pic - ID4D

cases relatively low. It's worth remembering that South Korea is one of the world's most densely populated large countries.

Key to this has been quarantine measures for travellers arriving in the country, which were introduced very swiftly, and the country's highly effective test-trace-isolate system. This carefully designed process provides local support for those in isolation, while monitoring them and sanctioning non-compliance.

Yes, mobile phone data and other forms of surveillance have been used to trace people who might have the virus. But once a positive case is confirmed, it is human intervention that ensures those people don't spread the virus further.

A case officer from the local council is assigned to work with affected households. They communicate with infected people throughout the self-isolation period. After initially making contact over the phone to inform people of the need to self-isolate and the guidelines to follow, case officers then deliver a stay-at-home kit as discreetly as possible to protect the person's privacy.

This local council-funded kit contains essentials that prevent the person from needing to go out. They receive food, drink, bin liners, a thermometer for monitoring their condition, and face masks and hand sanitiser to help prevent further infection. Kits can also be tailored, for instance, to include certain foods or medications – and even pet food.

The case officer is the infected person's primary point of contact, providing advice and support over the 14 days of self-isolation. Again, technology plays a role here. A smartphone app can be used by the case officer to monitor the person's self-reported symptoms and to make sure (via GPS) they aren't breaking quarantine. But its influence shouldn't be overstated. The app is mandatory, but those who don't own a smartphone are still able to get support via phone calls and text messages.

People self-isolating can contact their case worker when extra support is needed, for instance, with urgent daily business such as banking or pet care. Because the relationship works both

ways, this encourages compliance through the creation of a social bond. The comprehensive and individualised support given to those isolating primarily ensures compliance by removing barriers rather than punishing infractions.

The need to address the loss of income that self-isolating people face was also identified early on, with modest payments of up to \$US374 (£270) made easily available.

The effectiveness of these interventions is clear: published data suggests non-compliance with self-isolation rules has been extremely low in South Korea throughout the pandemic. Those who do break the rules risk losing the financial support that the government provides.

Not breaking the rules has also been encouraged as a social norm through daily reporting in the media on the number of people not adhering to isolation. Generally, this is no more than four people a day – in a country of 55 million.

## Lessons as yet unlearned

The South Korean experience reveals just how effective locally delivered and individually tailored self-isolation systems can be. But rather than seeking to replicate South Korean success, politicians, experts and the media in the west have repeatedly suggested that this performance is based on intrusive data-surveillance techniques enabled by a compliant national culture that cannot be replicated in their countries.

The House of Commons report suggests that if the UK were to try to emulate South Korea, the lessons to be learned concern the use of high-tech surveillance systems and comprehensive digital contact tracing. This misses out many of the core elements of South Korea's pandemic response that help make sure people isolate and quarantine as needed.

Focusing on technologies to adopt in the future ignores the more immediately transferable lessons on how to break chains of infection in a fast-moving pandemic. It is about time we acknowledged that comprehensive, "shoe-leather" public health systems should be the bedrock of containing current and future disease outbreaks. Much of what has worked in South Korea is exceptional only in that other countries – such as the UK – have made no effort to replicate it.

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## At COP26, India & UK launch Green Grids Initiative to offer clean power to world

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his United Kingdom's counterpart Boris Johnson jointly launched a new flagship international initiative late on Tuesday night at the COP26 World Leaders' Summit in Glasgow, backed by over 80 countries, to dramatically accelerate the global transition to clean powered world.

Jointly led by India and the United Kingdom, the new initiative, called 'Green Grids Initiative - One Sun One World One Grid' (GGI-OSOWOG), is aimed at accelerating the development and deployment of interconnected electricity grids across continents, countries and communities, and improve energy access of the poorest through mini-grids and off-grid solutions, reports Avik Roy of Hindustan Times.

It features as one of the leading initiatives under the Glasgow Breakthroughs also launched at the clean innovation and technology event, part of a new joint plan that will see countries and businesses coordinate and strengthen their climate actions every year in polluting sectors to dramatically scale and speed up the deployment of clean technologies and drive down costs globally.

Apart from India and the UK, Australia, France and the United States are also part of the steering committee of the 'Green Grids Initiative'.

Modelled on the UK's recent net-zero strategy, the Glasgow Breakthroughs will see countries and businesses coordinate and strengthen their climate actions every year in each sector to dramatically scale and speed up the deployment of clean technologies and drive down costs. The aim is for clean technologies to become the default choice this decade globally in each polluting



sector and to catalyse the growth of a new economy built around new green industries and jobs globally.

In launching the GGI-OSOWOG, the two Prime Ministers unveiled the 'One Sun Declaration' setting out a shared vision of harnessing the full potential of clean power globally through the much greater interconnection of electricity grids across continents, countries and communities, including mini-grids and off-grid solutions to ensure no one is left without access to energy.

To meet the goals of the Paris Agreement and limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the world will need to transition to clean power, increasing the global reliance on renewable energy, like solar and wind power. Transitioning to this clean powered future will require

developing an electricity infrastructure that is capable of coping with far greater shares of variable renewable energy, while meeting growing power demands securely, reliably and affordably.

Speaking after the launch, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the 'One Sun One World One Grid' and 'Green Grids Initiative' is "an idea whose time has come."

"If the world has to move to a clean and green future, these interconnected transnational grids are going to be critical solutions. I congratulate the International Solar Alliance and the UK COP Presidency for bringing it nearer to implementation," Modi said.

The GGI-OSOWOG will help make this happen, by bringing together a global coalition of energy grid stakeholders, including governments and businesses, to accelerate the expansion of energy grids across regions and continents and create the foundations for universal access to sustainable energy. This will ensure the infrastructure is in place for the whole world to be powered by renewable energy, as part of the global push to realise the clean energy transition.

Echoing his Indian counterpart, UK's Prime Minister Boris Johnson said his country is working hand in hand with "friends in India to transform the future of the power sector" and ensure clean and reliable electricity is accessible everywhere by the end of this decade.

"It's fantastic that over 80 countries have backed our newly launched Green Grids Initiative, whose collaboration will not only see greater growth, jobs and investment in our global green future but also make sure no one is left without access to energy," Johnson said.

## US gives final approval of Pfizer's Covid vaccine for children aged 5-11

Atop US health agency granted final approval on Tuesday to Pfizer-BioNTech's paediatric vaccine against Covid-19 for 5 to 11 years old, clearing the way for inoculating 28 million children starting "as soon as possible".

President Joe Biden called Pfizer's approval by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) a "turning point" in the battle against Covid-19, saying, "It will allow parents to end months of anxious worrying about their kids, and reduce the extent to which children spread the virus to others. It is a major step forward for our nation in our fight to defeat the virus."

The CDC said the vaccination of children could begin "as soon as possible". Distribution of the paediatric vaccine has already begun and plans afoot to scale up to full capacity starting on November 8, CDC said, adding that vaccines will be available at multiple locations, including paediatric health care provider offices, pharmacies, Federally Qualified Health Centers (HRSA).

"Together, with science leading the charge, we have taken another important step forward in our nation's fight against the virus that causes Covid-19," said CDC head Rochelle Walensky. "As a mom, I encourage parents with questions to talk to their paediatrician, school nurse or local pharmacist to learn more about the vaccine and the importance of getting their children vaccinated."



Pfizer's paediatric vaccine was nearly 91% effective in preventing Covid-19 among children aged 5-11 years in clinical trials, same as for the vaccine for adults and adolescents. Vaccine side effects were mild, self-limiting, and similar to those seen in adults and with other vaccines recommended for children, CDC said. The most common side effect was a sore arm, reports Yashwant Raj of Hindustan Times

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had cleared the paediatric vaccine earlier. It's the same Pfizer vaccine but the dosage is a third of what is administered to adults and teens. It will be administered in same regimen: two shots three weeks apart, but using a smaller needle.

Covid-19 cases among children are known to result in hospitalizations, deaths, MIS-C (inflammatory syndromes) and long-term complications, such as "long Covid," in which symptoms can linger for months, the CDC has said.

## 'When Biden wakes up tomorrow...': Trump Jr. mocks US President over Election Day results

Donald Trump Junior, the son of former US President Donald Trump, on Wednesday mocked his father's successor, US president Joe Biden, as exit polls projected victories for Trump's Republicans over Biden's Democrats in gubernatorial elections for Virginia and New Jersey.

Taking to Twitter, Trump Jr. said that the Democrats had collapsed under President Biden.

"When Biden wakes up tomorrow afternoon, somebody's gonna have to tell him he is officially presiding over the collapse of the Democrat Party," the 43-year-old businessman tweeted, as exit polls projected victory for Glenn Youngkin in Virginia and Jack Ciattarelli in New Jersey over Terry McAuliffe and Phil Murphy, respectively.

While Youngkin is projected to comfortably defeat former Virginia governor McAuliffe, the race between Ciattarelli and incumbent Phil Murphy in New Jersey is expected to be close, with a slight edge to the former, reports Hindustan Times.

The New Jersey and Virginia gubernatorial elections, which, along with several other polls, constituted November 2's 'Election Day,' were held in the backdrop of the United States' chaotic military exit from Afghanistan, with American forces



leaving the war-torn nation on August 30, nearly 20 years after arriving on the Afghan soil in 2001. Biden faced severe flak for the execution of the pullout, though he said there was "never a good time to withdraw US forces."

\*Contd on page 6



# 93 cases in 24 hours: How Covid-19 is rearing its head again in China

The spread of coronavirus disease continues unabated in China, from where the disease believed to have emerged. The highly-infectious delta variant is hurtling across the country in latest round of spike despite the increasingly aggressive measures that local officials have enacted in a bid to thwart it.

On Wednesday, China recorded 93 fresh cases of Covid-19, setting another daily record. Local infections have been found in 19 of 31 provinces. Eleven asymptomatic infections were also reported, according to National Health Commission, which are not added to the official tally, reports Amit Chaturvedi of Hindustan Times.

This is up from 54 a day earlier and the highest daily count since August 9 at the peak of China's last major outbreak. Beijing reported nine new local infections, the most since January 19.

Three more provinces detected cases - central Chongqing, Henan and Jiangsu on the eastern coast.



People line up outside a vaccination centre in Beijing after the city started offering booster shots of Covid-19 vaccine. Pic - Reuters

The fresh outbreak has so far been concentrated mostly in northern China. With the latest daily caseload, China has recorded 631 cases of Covid-19 between October 17 and November 2.

Meanwhile, officials in China said they are committed to maintaining the zero-tolerance Covid policy despite the flare-ups that are coming faster, spreading further and evading many of the measures that previously controlled it.

Temperature screening has been set up at entrances of shopping malls, supermarkets, hotels, cinemas and subway stations in Beijing, while a legion of personnel on the ground check the health codes of visiting individuals on their mobile phones.

More than 33,000 visitors inside Shanghai's Disneyland were allowed to leave on Sunday only after their Covid test results came negative as one confirmed patient had visited the resort on Saturday.

As of November 2, mainland China had 97,423 confirmed cases.

## James Bond's salary hasn't kept up with French restaurant costs, shows study



A cafe terrace in Paris. Pic - Shutterstock

James Bond's "license to kill" is famous. His dining-account purchasing power less so, at least until a recent study released by the National Bureau of Economic Research.

"He dined often and very well," as revealed in the series of novels and short stories launched by Ian Fleming and continued by a number of successors, economists Lee A. Craig, Julianne Treme and Thomas J. Weiss wrote in an NBER working paper.

The economists constructed data sets for both Bond's estimated salary and the cost of meals at French restaurants that he went to. Analysis shows that the British secret agent's purchasing power depreciated over time -- especially since the 1999 introduction

of the euro, which has climbed versus the pound, reports Bloomberg.

"As measured by a luxury basket of goods that included a weekly dinner and wine for two at a French restaurant, Bond, early on in his career, i.e. during the Fleming era of the 1950s and 1960s, would have spent 18% (using current exchange rates) of his salary," the economists said.

During the euro era, that share would have climbed to 26% on average. By about 2019, Bond "would have needed a third of his salary to dine well regularly in France," they wrote.

To compile the estimates, the economists

scoured the Bond books for names of restaurants -- 23 of which were in France, and all but two of those were included in the Michelin Guide. They then used Michelin Guide prices to cost out Bond's meals.

The sample includes a variety of restaurant types, ranging from two of the most highly rated restaurants in France -- Oustau de Baumaniere, located in Les Baux de Provence, and Grand Vefourn in Paris, both of which had 3 stars -- to bistros like Le Galion in Menton, Chez Andre and Terminus Nord in Paris, and La Rotonde de Montparnasse as well as La Rotonde in Nice.

The authors said it was possible to chart the price of a typical meal for a sample of some 18 of the French restaurants going back to 1953.

As for Bond's salary, Fleming revealed in "Moonraker" in 1955 that he earned 1,500 pounds a year, nearly 3.5 times the average annual earnings in the U.K. at the time. A subsequent salary was estimated "based on that of someone in the same Civil Service grade as Bond," which would have risen 6.3% annually on average through 2019 -- roughly keeping pace with meal prices, the working paper showed.

A second series was estimated under the scenario that Bond might have earned a "risk premium," or extra increases for his years in service.

"Even at that higher salary, he would still have had to spend 21% of his income at current exchange rates on dinner for two in the 2002-19 period," the authors wrote. "While that may seem a little too steep for many of us, perhaps not for a bon vivant like Bond, who, after all, was not saving for his children's orthodontia or education."

## Facebook to shut down its facial recognition system

Facebook is shutting down its facial recognition system, its parent company said Tuesday, a change that will impact over a billion users and which comes after serious concerns over privacy, reports Hindustan Times.



Facebook last week changed its name to Meta Platforms Inc to reflect its focus on building the "metaverse". Pic - i1.wp.com

"More than a third of Facebook's daily active users have opted in to our Face Recognition setting and are able to be recognized, and its removal will result in the deletion of more than a billion people's individual facial recognition templates," parent company Meta said in a statement.



Interview: Jean-Claude de l'Estrac

# "La clé de la prochaine alternance est entre les mains du Parti Travailleiste"

*'Ramgoolam a, là, l'occasion de se poser en homme d'Etat s'il prend la bonne décision. Un homme d'Etat est celui qui sait quand son tour est passé'*



**L**es chiffres indiquent que la Covid-19 est toujours parmi nous et tout porte à croire que la population mondiale aura encore à souffrir de cette pandémie pendant plusieurs longs mois. Personne n'est capable de dire si les hôpitaux de notre pays sont préparés pour faire face à une crise sanitaire d'envergure. Il semblerait que les Mauriciens, eux, sont satisfaits de la réouverture des frontières et célèbrent ce semblant de retour à la normalité. Pourtant, d'autres problèmes indiquent plusieurs difficultés à venir dans le sillage de la pandémie. Laissons la parole à Jean- Claude de l'Estrac, qui nous parle aussi de la chose politique...

hydroalcoolique. Mon observation personnelle est que le Mauricien n'utilise pas systématiquement le gel alors qu'il est un outil indispensable pour freiner la circulation du virus et pas plus qu'il ne respecte les gestes barrières.

Dépendant de cette circulation du virus, il ne faudra pas s'étonner que le gouvernement impose, à juste raison, des restrictions ponctuelles et ciblées en même temps que doit s'accélérer la campagne de vaccination de la troisième dose.

**\*Quelle opinion faites-vous de la relance de l'économie depuis la réouverture complète de nos frontières? Sans un ensemble de mesures de relance de l'économie, mises en œuvre très rapidement, les choses risquent de se compliquer durant les prochains mois, surtout avec le montant de la dette publique déjà trop élevé, et cela, couplé avec la charge financière que le PRB va engendrer...**

La réouverture des frontières a été une véritable bouffée d'oxygène et un booster psychologique. Mais l'euphorie qu'elle provoque n'empêche pas les Mauriciens de se poser de graves questions sur la capacité économique du pays à soutenir, durablement, une politique qui consiste à distribuer l'argent public et à puiser dans les réserves de nos petits-enfants pour satisfaire les appétits d'un électorat, mais aucun effort n'est exigé de sa part en retour.

Ce n'est pas de l'économie, c'est de la politique.

Et, c'est très inquiétant. C'est une gestion assez semblable qui a mené le pays à passer sous les fourches caudines du Fonds monétaire international (FMI) dans les années 80 après deux dévaluations successives de la roupie.

**\* Le Gouvernement dispose-t-il, selon vous, de l'expérience, des têtes pensantes pour sortir le pays de la crise actuelle ? Il s'est montré peu réceptif à l'idée de rechercher le soutien du secteur privé dans cette optique...**

Le point clé, c'est que le gouvernement est persuadé qu'il fait ce qu'il convient, qu'il n'a besoin d'aucun conseil extérieur. Mais à l'inverse de ce que vous dites, je note que le Premier ministre parle de plus en plus souvent de la nécessité d'une bonne coopération entre le gouvernement et le secteur privé. Et l'on a vu récemment quelques illustrations positives de cette entente.

La retombée négative de cette relation, par ailleurs profitable au pays, c'est que le secteur privé a perdu son sens critique.

● Suite en page 8

**Mauritius Times :** Avec les cas de contamination et de décès notés ces derniers jours, il semble qu'avec le variant Delta, représentant aujourd'hui au moins sept personnes infectées sur dix, la situation va se détériorer durant les premières semaines de novembre au point de devenir une véritable crise sanitaire. En somme, le pire est à venir, paraît-il. Voyez-vous les autorités capables de gérer cette crise?

**Jean-Claude de l'Estrac:** Gardons-nous de projections péremptoires. Ce virus et sa circulation instable, les comportements indisciplinés des populations, ont souvent bafoué les prédictions des scientifiques. Mais une chose est certaine, la Covid-19 n'est pas prête à disparaître. Les prévisions les plus optimistes envisagent un repli en 2022 sinon en 2023.

Il faut donc s'organiser pour y faire face ; en attendant un bien plus grand nombre de vaccinés partout dans le monde, et le médicament dont on nous annonce l'arrivée sur le marché à la fin de l'année, toute l'attention des autorités publiques devra se porter sur la capacité d'accueil des hôpitaux et la disponibilité des équipements critiques, notamment les ventilateurs, et des médicaments.

C'est désormais sur ces questions que le gouvernement doit rassurer la population. Le pays ne dispose pas de données suffisantes, à ce stade, pour mesurer l'état des dispositifs de préparation de nos hôpitaux

publics.

**\* Les frontières ont été réouvertes complètement, avec les risques que cela comporte. Les spécialistes dans le domaine médical soutiennent qu'une diminution du taux de transmission et de la propagation passera nécessairement par l'imposition de nouvelles restrictions touchant les rassemblements, l'accès aux commerces, et aussi une révision du calendrier scolaire, etc. Est-ce trop peu pour faire face à la crise qui s'annonce?**

Il est évident que l'on ne peut pas envisager un nouveau confinement même si des risques existent. Partout dans le monde, y compris dans des pays où le taux de contamination est bien supérieur au nôtre, l'on apprend à vivre avec le virus. Et il n'y a pas dix mille solutions : il faut que la population redouble de vigilance, porte le masque, respecte les gestes barrières, utilise le gel

**“ On sait par expérience que la situation économique n'est pas le seul facteur déterminant d'une élection. Il est probable que dans trois ans Pravind Jugnauth, médiatiquement surexposé, commencera à souffrir de l'usure du pouvoir. Toutefois, sans un challenger crédible, l'Opposition ne profitera pas de ces circonstances favorables...”**



# 'Dans trois ans Pravind Jugnauth, médiatiquement surexposé, commencera à souffrir de l'usure du pouvoir'

## • Suite de la page 7

Il n'a plus rien à dire sur les dérives économiques du pays, il s'en accommode, et chacun espère tirer son épingle du jeu. Mais, c'est vrai, tout le monde n'est pas Maurice Paturau... Pas plus que tous les Premiers ministres ne sont pas Anerood Jugnauth.

\* Certaines initiatives gouvernementales, par contre, dont des projets de loi comme 'The Offshore Petroleum Bill', à la veille de la tenue de la conférence mondiale sur le changement climatique COP26, sont surprenantes. Pour avoir été membre du gouvernement durant des années, et en tant qu'ancien secrétaire-général de la COI, vous savez que ce dossier est d'une extrême complexité au regard des différents intérêts en jeu dans de tels 'deals' et aussi dans la région, n'est-ce pas ?

C'est certain, ce dossier est d'une grande complexité. Nous aurons l'occasion d'en débattre mille fois. Mais, dans l'immédiat, le gouvernement doit gérer une énorme contradiction. A Glasgow où Pravind Jugnauth, représente le pays à la COP 26 sur le changement climatique, le Premier ministre a entendu l'exhortation du secrétaire général des Nations unies. Antonio Guterres s'est écrié : *«Le moment est venu de dire : Ça suffit! Détruire la biodiversité? Ça suffit! Jeter la nature à l'égout? Ça suffit! Brûler, forer et excaver toujours plus profond? Ça suffit!»*

Et que fait le gouvernement de Pravind Jugnauth? Proposer de forer! Creuser notre propre tombe, affirme le secrétaire général des Nations unies. Mais gageons qu'on nous fera rêver de cette manne inattendue même si on connaît bien les dégâts de toute nature que la découverte du pétrole a provoqué dans de nombreux pays.

Quand j'y pense, j'ai presque envie de souhaiter qu'on n'en trouve pas. Je ne sais si le gouvernement a bien mesuré ce dans quoi il s'engage et qu'on a appelé la « malédiction du pétrole ». C'est le fait que les recettes d'exportation du pétrole, quand on le découvre, provoquent des dislocations et des distorsions économiques qui poussent les pays exportateurs à la monoproduction d'exportation tuant les autres secteurs de l'économie. Nous n'en sommes pas encore là mais le sujet mérite un débat national.

**« Nous sommes en principe une démocratie parlementaire mais dans la pratique nous fonctionnons comme un régime présidentiel parce que le Premier ministre, qui concentre tous les pouvoirs, se conduit comme un président. Du coup, nos législatives sont, au fait, largement, le choix d'un homme à qui l'on va confier les pouvoirs... »**

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\* Même si on soutient que le déclin du pétrole est inévitable en raison de la diminution progressive des gisements conventionnels et par la prise de conscience du réchauffement climatique, les pays développés sont toujours à prospecter les gisements de pétrole. Qu'est-ce qui doit primer dans notre cas: l'économie ou l'environnement?

L'environnement, bien sûr ! La protection de notre environnement, une saine gestion de nos ressources naturelles est le plus sûr moyen de développer l'économie de manière durable. C'est ce qu'on n'a pas arrêté de se dire autour de la table à la COP 26 ; mais l'on tarde toujours à agir alors que les crises liées au changement climatique - provoqué par l'homme - se manifestent avec violence presque quotidiennement.

\* L'autre projet de loi - le 'Cyber Crime Bill' - fait aussi l'objet de contestation, car perçu comme une menace à la liberté d'expression, et anticonstitutionnel. Faut-il quand même un cadre légal pour empêcher les abus divers sur les réseaux sociaux?

Bien sûr qu'il importe de légiférer pour sanctionner d'éventuels abus sur les réseaux sociaux!

En vertu de quel raisonnement, les réseaux sociaux qui sont des instruments de communication de masse, devraient échapper aux réglementations qui encadrent les autres moyens de communication, l'audiovisuel, la presse écrite ?

Ce qu'on ne pourra pas contrôler cependant, c'est l'incommensurable bêtise de certains internautes. J'ai dit «encadrer», et non pas «contrôler». Ce gouverne-

ment se fait si souvent juge et partie que les Mauriciens, naturellement, s'en méfient.

\* Par ailleurs, on a vu le Premier ministre multiplier ses sorties publiques et prendre position contre l'opposition et quelques titres de presse ces derniers temps. On ne sait pas s'il se trame quelque chose, mais force est de constater que c'est le leader du MSM, pas l'Opposition, qui est en train de 'set the agenda'. Votre opinion?

C'est clair que le leader du MSM cherche à profiter de la désunion de l'Opposition pour avancer son agenda. Il est essentiellement politique.

Cette opposition paraît si faible que le gouvernement préfère concentrer ses tirs contre des titres de presse trop critiques à ses yeux. Même s'il est vrai que quelques journalistes peuvent outrepasser leur rôle, nous devons beaucoup de notre respiration démocratique à la vigilance des organes de presse.

Il ne faut pas s'étonner des relations conflictuelles presse-pouvoir, il en est ainsi dans toute démocratie.

\* Si le rapport de forces paraît être nettement en faveur de l'alliance gouvernementale ces temps-ci, le sentiment qui prend de l'ampleur de plus en plus, et même au sein de certains proches de l'Opposition, c'est que cela va durer jusqu'aux prochaines législatives. On parle même du fait que Pravind Jugnauth aurait toutes les cartes en main pour un renouvellement de son mandat. Partagez-vous ce sentiment ?

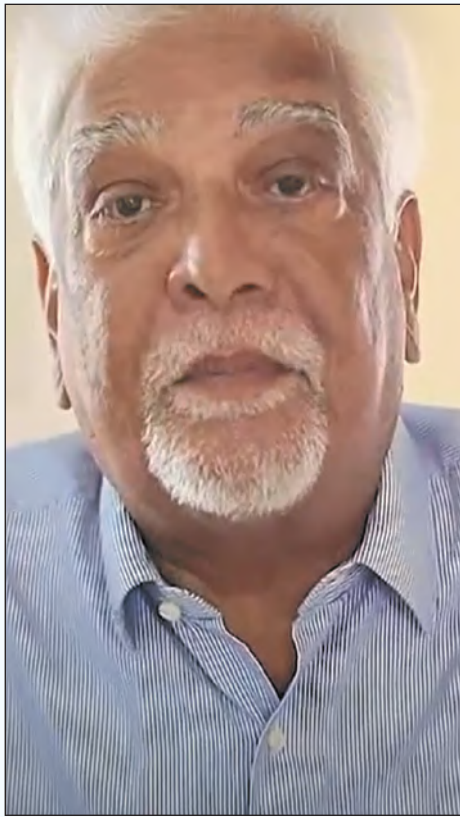
**« C'est clair que le leader du MSM cherche à profiter de la désunion de l'Opposition pour avancer son agenda. Il est essentiellement politique. Cette opposition paraît si faible que le gouvernement préfère concentrer ses tirs contre des titres de presse trop critiques à ses yeux. Même s'il est vrai que quelques journalistes peuvent outrepasser leur rôle, nous devons beaucoup de notre respiration démocratique à la vigilance des organes de presse... »**

A trois ans des prochaines échéances, c'est effectivement le sentiment que l'on peut avoir; pas tant parce que l'alliance au pouvoir mobilise une majorité des électeurs, mais en raison de l'incapacité de l'Opposition de présenter une alternative crédible.

On peut penser que ce rapport de forces pourrait évoluer lorsque l'on abordera la deuxième partie du mandat législatif.

• Suite en page 9





● Suite de la page 8

C'est alors que l'attention des chefs de parti se focalisent sur la prochaine joute. Peut-être que l'Opposition ne sera pas

## 'Une saine gestion de nos ressources naturelles est le moyen le plus sûr de développer l'économie de manière durable...

Que fait le gouvernement de Pravind Jugnauth? Proposer de forer!

masochiste au point d'aller aux élections en ordre dispersé, battue d'avance.

**\* Mais il est fort probable que toute reprise de l'économie profitera à Pravind Jugnauth. Les gens, pour le meilleur ou pour le pire, ont la mémoire courte. Qu'en pensez-vous?**

La mémoire courte, absolument! Mais, par ailleurs, on sait par expérience que la situation économique n'est pas le seul facteur déterminant d'une élection. Il est probable que dans trois ans Pravind Jugnauth, médiatiquement surexposé, commencera à souffrir de l'usure du pouvoir.

Toutefois, sans un challenger crédible, l'Opposition ne profitera pas de ces circonstances favorables. Cette considération est capitale: nous sommes en principe une démocratie parlementaire mais dans la pratique nous fonctionnons comme un régime présidentiel parce que le Premier ministre, qui concentre tous les pouvoirs,

**“ Je note que le Premier ministre parle de plus en plus souvent de la nécessité d'une bonne coopération entre le gouvernement et le secteur privé. Et l'on a vu récemment quelques illustrations positives de cette entente. La retombée négative de cette relation, par ailleurs profitable au pays, c'est que le secteur privé a perdu son sens critique. Il n'a plus rien à dire sur les dérives économiques du pays...”**

se conduit comme un président. Du coup, nos législatives sont, au fait, largement, le choix d'un homme à qui l'on va confier les pouvoirs.

**\* Lors de la dernière conférence de presse de "l'Alliance de l'Espoir", Paul Bérenger a déclaré que si l'Alliance est**

en faveur d'une unification... ce ne sera "pas sous n'importe quelle condition". Il sera sans doute en meilleure position de dicter son ou ses conditions suivant les résultats des prochaines élections municipales - si elles ont lieu. Tout comme Navin Ramgoolam?

Je fais abstraction des élections municipales dont on ne sait pas encore si elles vont bien se tenir.

Je ne suis pas sûr que le MMM d'aujourd'hui soit en mesure de dicter quoi que ce soit au Parti Travailleurs. Or, la clé de la prochaine alternance est entre les mains du Parti Travailleurs de Navin Ramgoolam.

Qu'on le veuille ou non, c'est Ramgoolam qui dictera les termes d'une unification de l'opposition si elle doit avoir lieu. Ramgoolam a, là, l'occasion de se poser en homme d'Etat s'il prend la bonne décision. Une énorme responsabilité pèse sur ses épaules. Un homme d'Etat est celui qui sait quand son tour est passé.

## Remembrance: Somdath Bhuckory

**M**onday 1st November 2021 marked the 100th birth centenary of late Somdath Bhuckory, a fervent and active supporter of the causes that led to the founding of the *Mauritius Times* and that have sustained its publication to this day. A long-time friend and comrade-in-arms of Beekrumsing Ramlallah since their childhood days in Montagne Longue, it was in 1953 during the holding of the World Overseas Indian Conference, organised by Dr K.D. Kumria, in London, that Somdath Bhuckory, Sewgobind Sharma and Beekrumsing Ramlallah shared their thoughts on the most effective way to counter the vilification campaign of Noël Marrier d'Unienville against the pro-independence movement led by the Mauritius Labour Party - and everything Indian.

It was during those late-night discussions, which lasted till the early hours of the morning (as related to Yvan Martial by the founder of this paper and published in *l'express* on 13 June 1991) that the idea of launching a newspaper that would go beyond the boundaries that the Labour Party's *Advance* daily paper had set for itself took shape. It fell upon Beekrumsing Ramlallah to set the ball rolling the following year with the publication of the first issue of the paper on 14 August 1954 with the support of numerous intellectuals of his generation. And, as it was to be expected, on his return from the UK for his law studies,

Somdath Bhuckory joined the *Mauritius Times* team that played a prominent role in the ideological battles in favour of Independence (without becoming the mouthpiece of the Labour Party, it was at times even highly critical of the party's policies) and in shaping the development agenda of a free, just and inclusive society as advocated by the paper since its inception.

The tone had been set in the leading article by BR in the paper's first issue, titled 'About This Venture' -- forceful without being disrespectful of any adversary whether in the political or religious field or from any opposition emanating from the economic citadels of those days. That tone has been maintained to this day; it was also evident in Somdath Bhuckory's leader-articles, which he penned for a number of years, beginning as from July 1955 -- a tone which also stands as a testimony of the culture and bearing that characterised the man. He was after all a man of letters, poetry and literature, having published four collections of poems in Hindi, totalling 200, and 16 books as well as several newspaper and literary articles. After his demise in June 1991, a collection of 40 of his poems, which he had himself translated in French, was published. He was also very active in the promotion and dissemination of Hindi, through the Hindi Pracharini Sabha, and he was awarded the World Hindi Prize by the Government of India in 1978 for his contribution to the promotion of Hindi. He also



wrote books on the Constitution of Mauritius and on Local Government, trilogues on India and China, etc.

Drawing from his acquaintance with the difficult struggle of the common man to earn a decent living and respect in Mauritian society of those days, Somdath Bhuckory wrote on a wide range of subjects for the *Mauritius Times*, as our readers would have taken cognizance from the current reproduction of articles published 60 years ago, relating to Politics, Education, Constitutional Talks and Electoral Reform, Family Planning, Civil Service, Food Prices, etc.

After a short stint in politics - he stood as a candidate for the Labour Party at the general elections of 1959, but was narrowly defeated -, he was appointed Town Clerk of Port Louis in 1960 and stayed in office until 1980. He also made his mark in local government, and that was duly recognised when he was made an OBE in 1972 for services rendered in that field, besides earning the title of Honorary Freeman conferred on him by the Municipality of Port Louis in 1979, and his appointment as Chairman of the City's Administrative Commission in 1982.

Somdath Bhuckory was married to Chandranee Boolell, who sadly passed away a few days before his birth centenary, and with whom he had three children - Manjula, Sanjay and Sadhna. She was herself a wonderful personality, sister of late Sir Satcam, devoted to serving the government and society at large with dignity and flair for novel ideas. She was notably recognised for the national competition 'Fleurir l'Ile Maurice', motivating families to grow flowers, clean and embellish their yards. It was a national effort roping in district councils, municipalities, villages and ordinary citizens, a remarkable success due in no small measure to her personal qualities. She was also very active in the social field and devoted a lot of her time to managing the Gayasingh Ashram, run by Arya Sabha Mauritius.

We are here deeply indebted and attached to the memory of Somdath as we remember those trying times and share the sadness of the Bhuckory family with the departure of Chandranee late October.



# Where, or what, is the metaverse?

*The metaverse is science fiction, but a lot of people in Silicon Valley are working to make this interconnected virtual reality a, well, reality*

The metaverse is a network of always-on virtual environments in which many people can interact with one another and digital objects while operating virtual representations – or avatars – of themselves. Think of a combination of immersive virtual reality, a massively multiplayer online role-playing game and the web.

The metaverse is a concept from science fiction that many people in the technology industry envision as the successor to today's internet. It's only a vision at this point, but technology companies like Facebook are aiming to make it the setting for many online activities, including work, play, studying and shopping. Facebook is so sold on the concept that it is renaming itself Meta to highlight its push to dominate the metaverse.

Metaverse is a portmanteau of meta, meaning transcendent, and verse, from universe. Sci-fi novelist Neal Stephenson coined the term in his 1992 novel "Snow Crash" to describe the virtual world in which the protagonist, Hiro Protagonist, socializes, shops and vanquishes real-world enemies through his avatar. The concept predates "Snow Crash" and was popularized as "cyberspace" in William Gibson's ground-breaking 1984 novel "Neuromancer."

There are three key aspects of the metaverse: presence, interoperability and standardization.

Presence is the feeling of actually being in a virtual space, with virtual others. Decades of research have shown that this sense of embodiment improves the quality of online interactions. This sense of presence is achieved through virtual reality technologies such as head-mounted displays.

Interoperability means being able to seamlessly travel between virtual spaces with the same virtual assets, such as avatars and digital items. ReadyPlayerMe allows people to create an avatar that they can use in hundreds of different virtual worlds, including in Zoom meetings through apps like Animaze. Meanwhile, blockchain technologies such as cryptocurrencies and nonfungible tokens



facilitate the transfer of digital goods across virtual borders.

Standardization is what enables interoperability of plat-

forms and services across the metaverse. As with all mass-media technologies – from the printing press to texting – com-

mon technological standards are essential for widespread adoption. International organizations such as the Open Metaverse Interoperability Group define these standards.

## Why the metaverse matters

If the metaverse does become the successor to the internet, who builds it, and how, is extremely important to the future of the economy and society as a whole. Facebook is aiming to play a leading role in shaping the metaverse, in part by investing heavily in virtual reality. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg explained in an interview his view that the metaverse spans nonimmersive

platforms like today's social media as well as immersive 3D media technologies such as virtual reality, and that it will be for work as well as play.

The metaverse might one day resemble the flashy fictional Oasis of Ernest Cline's "Ready Player One," but until then you can turn to games like Fortnite and Roblox, virtual reality social media platforms like VRChat and AltspaceVR, and virtual work environments like Immersed for a taste of the immersive and connected metaverse experience. As these siloed spaces converge and become increasingly interoperable, watch for a truly singular metaverse to emerge.

By Rabindra Ratan, Associate Professor of Media and Information & Yiming Lei, Doctoral student in Media and Information, Michigan State University



## COMMUNIQUE

### LIST OF WINNERS OF THE TAXPAYER SATISFACTION SURVEY (TSS) 2021

The draw of the online Taxpayer Satisfaction Survey (TSS) 2021 was effected at the Head Office of the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA), Port Louis, on Friday 29 October 2021, under the supervision of the Gambling Regulatory Authority (GRA).

The winners of the TSS 2021 are:

Prizes	Name	Amount (Rs)
1 <sup>st</sup>	POOKON VIDHYA	25,000
2 <sup>nd</sup>	GOOMANY AVISH KUMAR	15,000
3 <sup>rd</sup>	BEERJOO SATYAM	10,000

The winners are kindly requested to contact the **Taxpayer Education & Communication Department (TECD)** on **207 6000** for the collection of their respective prize. Moreover, the MRA seizes the opportunity to thank all the taxpayers who participated in the TSS 2021.

*Congratulations to the winners!*

MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY

29 October 2021

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





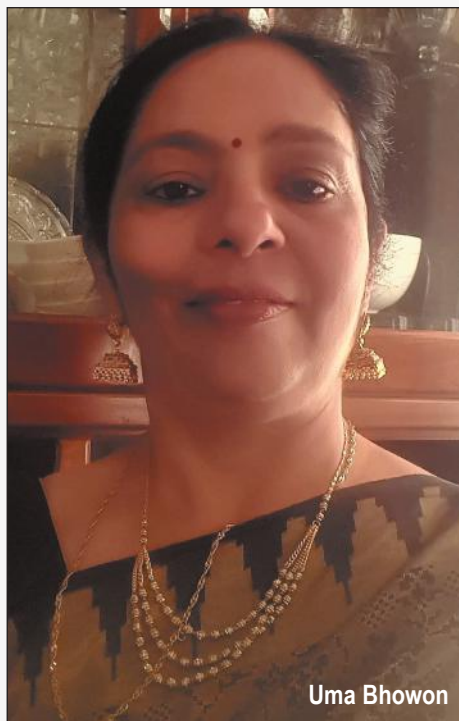
# Tribute to Uma Bhowon

Vina Ballgobin

**P**rofessor Uma Bhowon, an embodiment of *la force tranquille*, wore her learning lightly and touched the lives of so many people with kindness, humility and grace. Sadly, she left this world too early on Saturday 10 July 2021 at the age of 57. Although she had not been feeling too well since April 2021 after receiving her vaccine, her sudden departure was unexpected. She passed away very peacefully early in the morning at her home in Camp Fouquereaux, with her husband and her two sons by her side.

Uma Bhowon was born in India to Mr and Mrs Lakhtakia, a progressive family. After her schooling at Fatima Convent Kumari Udyan Vidyalaya in Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh), she proceeded to do her PhD in Psychology from the Indian Institute of Technology (ITT), Kanpur. She married Sundeep Kumar Bhowon, and her two sons were born in Mauritius.

She had that beautiful accent when she would try to speak Mauritian Creole. She hardly dared to utter any word in French but she understood it perfectly. Because of her innate sense of justice and fairness, she never chose between India and Mauritius as she considered both countries as her home, and looked forward to meeting with her loved ones in either, just as she would appreciate the food and delicacies of both places. She



Uma Bhowon

would watch her TV serials or cinema movies as a person who embraced multiculturalism.

Uma Bhowon was an extremely organised person, and her priority was to have a proper work-life balance, hastening to be at home as soon as she was done with her daily commitments at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (FSSH) at the University of Mauritius (UoM).

She served as Dean of the FSSH from 2014 to 2017. Depending on the context, she would be intuitive, but also

an independent observer, a critical brainstormer, or a neutral confidante. She tried to get the best out of each one, leading by example and not by force. Perhaps owing to her field of expertise, she had an exceptional capacity to listen and understand staff and students. During the numerous faculty meetings that she chaired, she displayed genuine openness to staff views and opinions in shaping solutions to problems at hand and taking informed decisions.

During her deanship, she made it a point to promptly clear all pending administrative tasks. She dealt with empathy with all her staff, holding several meetings if need be to sort out issues so that no staff should feel aggrieved about any decision taken - she knew that it would never be possible to satisfy one and all. She inspired younger staff members through her dedication, kindness, availability and mentoring which contributed significantly to creating a supportive work environment within the faculty.

A bright and quiet academic, she became a professor at a relatively young age in the Mauritian context and was always ready to help others to move forward, urging and encouraging younger FSSH staff members to engage in research work. Recalls Elvin Murday, who became Officer in Charge of the Department of History and Political Science during her deanship: *"On a more personal note, as Dean, Pr Bhowon regularly encouraged me to explore new avenues to pursue higher studies. Even long after the end of her mandate as Dean, she would regularly ask me about*

*my studies."*

Prof Uma Bhowon was an innovator. She was very keen on starting the first Music Programme at the FSSH, considering that arts was a most important component of education. She was passionate about her individual research work; her team research projects as well as her teaching sessions. She processed applications for MPhil/PhD students as quickly as possible. Her research interests included acculturation, identity, family conflict and balance, among others.

Uma Bhowon was not only a remarkable researcher but also a passionate teacher. *"She was strongly and enthusiastically committed to her teaching. She would schedule regular meetings with her students in her office,"* remembers Assoc. Prof Vijaya Teelock whose office was located close to hers. She would try to trigger and stimulate the same passion for learning in her students and develop their intellectual curiosity about human psychology. A few quotes on Facebook by her students after the sad news run as follows: *"RIP Madam... One of the best lecturers", "She was one of my favorites too... always smiling, RIP", "A very polite and cool person, An excellent Dean",...*

Life is not always fair. The departure of Prof Uma Bhowon to the Camp Fouquereaux crematorium on Sunday 11 July 2021 in the context of the Covid-19 sanitary measures made it as private as she liked. She was one of those amiable persons who brought an extra sparkle to any one in her presence. Dear Uma, you will be missed by one and all.

## Humanity is compressing millions of years of natural change into just a few centuries

● Cont. from page 2

In addition, changes predicted by climate models can be compared to the past. For instance an "intermediate" amount of emissions will likely lead to global warming of between 2.3°C and 4.6°C by the year 2300, which is similar to the mid-Pliocene warm period of about 3.2 million years ago. Extremely high emissions would lead to warming of somewhere between 6.6°C and 14.1°C, which just overlaps with the warmest period since the demise of the dinosaurs – the "Paleocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum" kicked off by massive volcanic eruptions about 55 million years ago. As such, humanity is currently on the path to compressing millions of years of tem-

perature change into just a couple of centuries.

### Distant past can help predict the near future

For the first time in an IPCC report, the latest report uses ancient time periods to refine projections of climate change. In previous IPCC reports, future projections have been produced simply by averaging results from all climate models, and using their spread as a measure of uncertainty. But for this new report, temperature and rainfall and sea level projections relied more heavily on those models that did the best job of simulating known climate changes.

Part of this process was based on each individual model's "cli-



Many mammals, like these horse-ancestors 'Eohippus', first appeared after a sudden warm period 55 million years ago. Daniel Eskridge / shutterstock

mate sensitivity" – the amount it warms when atmospheric CO2 is doubled. The "correct" value (and uncertainty range) of sensitivity is known from a number of different

lines of evidence, one of which comes from certain times in the ancient past when global temperature changes were driven by natural changes in CO2, caused

for example by volcanic eruptions or change in the amount of carbon removed from the atmosphere as rocks are eroded away. Combining estimates of ancient CO2 and temperature therefore allows scientists to estimate the "correct" value of climate sensitivity, and so refine their future projections by relying more heavily on those models with more accurate climate sensitivities.

Overall, past climates show us that recent changes across all aspects of the Earth system are unprecedented in at least thousands of years. Unless emissions are reduced rapidly and dramatically, global warming will reach a level that has not been seen for millions of years. Let's hope those attending COP26 are listening to messages from the past.

**Dan Lunt, Prof of Climate Science, University of Bristol & Darrell Kaufman, Prof of Earth and Environmental Sciences, Northern Arizona University**



# You know how to identify phishing emails - a cybersecurity researcher explains how to trust your instincts to foil the attacks

*Weirdness is a clue about fraudulent email messages. But it takes more than a sense that something's wrong to get people to investigate*



**Rick Wash**

Associate Professor of Information Science & Cybersecurity, Michigan State University

An employee at MacEwan University got an email in 2017 from someone claiming to be a construction contractor asking to change the account number where almost \$12 million in payments were sent. A week later the actual contractor called asking when the payment would arrive. The email about the account number change was fake. Instead of going to the contractor, the payments were sent to accounts controlled by criminals.

Fake emails that try to get people to do things they wouldn't normally do, such as send money, run dangerous programs or give out passwords, are known as phishing emails. Cybersecurity experts often blame the people who receive such messages for not noticing that the emails are fake.

As a cybersecurity researcher, I've found that most people are good at almost all of the skills that computer security experts use to notice fake emails in their inboxes. Making up the difference comes down to listening to your instincts.

## How the pros do it

In earlier research, I found that when cybersecurity experts received a phishing email message, they, like most people, assumed the email was real. They initially took everything in the email at face value. They tried to figure out what the email was asking them to do, and how it related to things in their life.

As they read, they noticed small things that seemed off, or different from what would typically be in similar email messages. They noticed things like typos in a professional email, or the lack of typos from a busy executive. They noticed things like a bank providing account information in an email message instead of the standard notification that the recipient had a message waiting for them in the bank's secure messaging system. They also noticed things like someone uncharacteristically emailing them without mentioning it in person first.

But noticing these signs isn't enough to figure out the email is a fraud. Instead, the experts just became uncomfortable with the email message. It wasn't until they saw something in the message that reminded them of phishing that they became suspicious. They would see an anomaly like a link that the email was trying to get



Fake emails that try to get people to do things they wouldn't normally do are known as phishing emails. Pic - Hacker Combat

them to click. In their minds, these are commonly associated with phishing emails.

Combined with the uncomfortable feeling about the email message, this reminder prompted the experts to recognize that phishing might explain the weird things they noticed. They became suspicious of the message and investigated to figure out if it was a fraud.

## Good instincts

If that's how experts do it, then what do regular people do? When I interviewed people without computer security experience, I found a similar process. Most people noticed things that seemed off, became uncomfortable with the email, remembered about phishing and investigated.

My research found that people are good at the first two steps: noticing things in the email that seem weird, and becoming uncomfortable. Almost everyone I talked to noticed multiple problems when they saw a fake email, and told me about feeling uncomfortable with the message.

And if people thought about phishing, they were also good at investigating. Instead of looking at technical details, though, most people either contacted the sender or asked others for help. But they were still able to correctly figure out whether an email message was a phishing attack.

## Phishing stories

Most phishing training teaches people to look for problems in email. But for most people, the hard part about phishing isn't noticing the weird things in an email message. People often deal with weird but real emails. Many messages feel a little bit off. Sometimes your boss is having a bad day, or the bank changes its policies. No email message is perfect, and people are often attuned to that.

The challenge for most people was remembering that phishing exists, and recognizing that phishing might explain those weird things. Without that awareness of phishing, the weirdness in phishing messages can be lost in everyday email weirdness.

Most people I interviewed know about phishing in general. But the people who were good at noticing phishing messages reported stories about specific phishing incidents they had heard about. They told me about a time when someone at their organization fell for a phishing email, or about a news story of an incident like the one at MacEwan University.

Familiarity with specific phishing incidents helps people remember phishing generally and recognize that it might explain the weird things they notice in an email. These stories are key to people going from "something's fishy" to "is this phishing?"

## 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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*The Editorial Team*

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## Laughter is the BEST Medicine



### Two guys are in a bar complaining how they can't pick up any woman

When one points at a man sitting alone at the table. "Look at that ugly mug. We are both better looking, have nicer clothes and more money. Yet every night he takes a woman home, sometimes two at the same time."

"True that!" agrees his friend, "we try to talk to girls, get them interested in us. He does none of that, he just sits there entire evening, licking his eyebrows."

\*\*\*

### Putin visits Estonia

Immigration officer says: "Name?". "Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin".

"Address?" "Kremlin, Moscow, Russia".

"Occupation?" "No, this time just visiting".

\*\*\*

Call a girl beautiful 1000 times and she won't think twice...

Call a fat girl once and she'll always remember.

Because elephants never forget.

\*\*\*

### A cheating husband decided to write a letter to his wife.

"My Dear Wife,

You will surely understand that I have certain needs that you, as a 54-year-old, can no longer satisfy. I'm very happy with you and I value you as a good wife. However, after reading this letter, I hope you will not wrongly interpret the fact that I will be spending the evening with my 18-year-old secretary at the Comfort Inn. Please don't be upset, I shall be back before midnight."

When the man came home late that night, he found a reply to his letter on the dining room table:

"My Dear Husband,

I received your letter and thank you for your honesty about my being 54 years old. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that you are also 54 years old. I would like to inform you that, while you read this, I will be at the Hotel Fiesta with Michael, one of my students, who is also an assistant tennis coach. He is young, virile and, like your secretary, he is 18. You, being a successful businessman with an excellent knowledge of math, will understand that we are in the same situation, although with one small difference - 18 goes into 54 a lot more times than 54 goes into 18!

See you in a week's time!"

\*\*\*

C'est deux juifs qui s'engrinent... Ne trouvant pas d'issue à leur problème ils décident d'aller voir le rabbin pour qu'il donne son avis.

If Adam and Eve had been Chinese, we would still be in Eden.



Le premier dit : "Rabbin, le blanc c'est une couleur?"

Le rabbin réfléchit : "Oui c'est ambigu... bon je te l'accorde c'est une couleur."

L'homme demande alors : "Mais alors Rabbin, le noir aussi c'est une couleur?"

Le rabbin se frotte puis dit: "Pff... on doit bien dire que oui, c'est une couleur."

Alors l'homme regarde le second et lui dit : "Alors tu vois ! c'est une télé couleur que je t'ai vendu !"

\*\*\*

Jean-Paul, enfin un homme d'âge mûr en pleine forme, faisait de la musculation selon ses capacités dans une salle de gym quand il remarqua une jeune femme très sexy.

Il demanda au moniteur le plus proche:

- "Quelle machine vous me conseiller d'utiliser pour impressionner cette charmante petite chose là-bas ?"

Le moniteur le toisa de haut en bas et lui répondit: "Vous devriez essayer le distributeur de billets dans le hall d'entrée."

\*\*\*

Trois hommes discutent :

Le premier dit:

Ma femme, avant d'accoucher elle lisait 'Les trois Mousquetaires' et elle a eu des triplés.

Le deuxième dit:

Moi ma femme lisait 'Les deux orphelines' et elle a eu des jumeaux.

Et là le troisième, affolé, part en courant et dit :

Excusez-moi, il faut que je me sauve, ma femme est enceinte et elle est en train de lire 'Ali Baba et les quarante voleurs'.

## Life's Lessons

### Trading in Kindness

When I was young, my mom used to buy vegetables for the household, from a lady vendor who came to our doorstep every day.

On a particular Sunday, the vendor brought bundles of spinach. Her quote was, I think, one rupee per bundle. My mom's counter-bid was exactly half that figure: however, she promised that she would buy four bundles at that price. For a while, both were harping on one's own figure. The vendor politely declared that she didn't even recover her cost at that price, loaded the basket on her head and walked away.

After taking four steps ahead, the vendor turned back and shouted, 'Make it 75 paise a bundle, and I will give it to you.' My mom shook her head and stuck to her original 50 paise, reiterating the theory of quantity discount. The vendor walked on.

The two of them precisely knew each other's strategies. The vendor turned around, came back to our house, while my mom was waiting at the doorstep with a smug smile on her face.

The deal was clinched at my mom's bid. The vendor was sitting there as if she was in a trance. My mom took her time checking each bundle by gently tossing it by her right hand and examining each with a

critical eye for quantitative and qualitative compliance.

From an initial short-listing of the bundles, she finally selected four bundles to her satisfaction, making that point clear to the fatigued vendor. She took the commodity and took her time and came out with the payment in a collection of coins of small denominations.

The vendor took the money without even counting. As she got up, she swayed due to apparent dizziness. My mom held her hands and asked whether she hadn't had any food in the morning. The vendor said, "No, Ma. With today's earnings only, I've to buy some rice, go home and make some."

My mom asked her to sit down, hurried inside and came back swiftly with a few chapatis & vegetables and offered to the vendor. Mom gave a bottle of water and started making some tea for the vendor. The vendor hungrily and gratefully ate the food, drank the water and finished the tea. Thanking my mom profusely, placed her basket on her head and went on to continue with her business.

I was puzzled. I told my mom, you were ruthless in bargaining for two-rupee stuff, but were generous in offering food of a much higher price to that vendor.

My mom smiled and said, "My dear child, there is no kindness in trading and there shall never be any trading in kindness."

## Changing Vision

There once lived a wealthy man who was bothered by severe eye pain. He consulted many physicians, but none could treat his ache. He went through a myriad of treatment procedures but his pain persisted with more vigour. He looked and for every available solution for his pain, and approached a wise monk, renowned for treating various illnesses. The monk carefully observed the man's eyes and offered a very peculiar solution.

The monk told the man to concentrate only on green colour for a few weeks and avoid any other colours. The man was desperate to get rid of the pain and was determined to go to any extent. The wealthy man appointed a group of painters and purchased barrels of green paint and directed that every object, his eye was likely to fall to be painted green.

After a few weeks the monk came to visit the man to follow up on the man's progress. As the monk walked towards the man's room, the appointed painter poured a bucket of green paint on the monk. The monk

could see that the whole corridor and the room was painted green. As the monk inquired for the reason for painting everything green, the wealthy man said that he was only following the monk's advice to look at only green.

Hearing this, the monk laughed and said: "If only you had purchased a pair of green spectacles, worth just a few dollars. You could have saved a large share of your fortune. You cannot paint the world green."

**Moral:** Let us change our vision and the world will appear accordingly.

### A man posted a message in a WhatsApp group





## Healthy Living

# A new reason to drink more coffee

**D**rinking more than three cups of caffeinated coffee a day is associated with fewer liver problems, according to a new study, the most rigorous look to date on the effects of coffee on liver health, reports Thomas R. Collins of WebMD.

The study was based on data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, US, which asked people about what they eat and drink.

Researchers looked at data from about 4,500 patients who had participated in the survey in 2017-2018. The participants were 20 years old or older, with an average age of 48; 73% were overweight, about the national average, said Elliot Tapper, MD, assistant professor of gastroenterology at the University of Michigan, and the study's senior author.



The researchers found no connection between coffee consumption and a measure of fatty liver. Those who drank more than three cups of coffee daily had a lower liver stiffness measure measured in what's known as kilopascals. Liver stiffness higher than 9.5 kilopascals is a sign of liver fibrosis, which can lead to cirrhosis.

Tapper said the data will be reassuring to doctors who suggest coffee-drinking to patients.

"There are hepatologists around the world who are actively recommending coffee - they'll feel empowered by these data," he said. "I would still like to see more ... data before I start spending our precious time counselling patients about coffee."

"For patients who are very interested in a natural supplement, to feel like they're taking an active role in the health of their liver, I will tell them to avoid carbohydrates and increase their exercise - and that it is OK to add coffee to their daily routine."

A study based on a United Kingdom database found that coffee appeared to protect against chronic liver disease, said Nathan Davies, PhD, professor of biochemistry at the Institute of the Liver and Digestive Health at the University College London.

# What are the possibilities of recurrent breast cancer, diagnosis, treatment and prevention

**B**reast cancer continues to rise globally, making up to 11.7% of all new cancer diagnoses. Since this disease poses a great threat to the patient's life, Dr Kanchan Kaur, Director of Breast Surgery, The Medicity Hospital, Gurgaon, gives various insights to Times of India pertaining to breast cancer symptoms, diagnosis, treatments and factors related to the recurrence.

## What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is an abnormal growth of the breast's tissue cells forming a painless lump in the breast with a change in the breast shape and size. These lumps which can be also found in lymph nodes located in the armpits may also indicate breast cancer. Almost 80% and more cases are detected when a person discovers such a lump with the fingertips.

Other indications of the cancer can be discharge from the nipples, inverted nipples, skin puckering or dimpling, a rash on or around a nipple.

## What is its diagnosis?

Breast cancers are quite easy to diagnose with a microscope analytical technique called biopsy of the affected region. There are two common types of screening methods. The first one is a physical examination of the breasts while for those who are asymptomatic, they're required to get a mammogram as a part of routine health check.

Mammogram detects tiny lesions in the breast that indicate the disease. "Most patients will need a combination of mammogram, ultrasound and MRI to diagnose the local extent of the disease which detects the number of cancer, the condition of the other breast, and lymph nodes in the armpit," said Dr Kanchan Kaur. She explained the needle biopsy technique which is done to confirm the diagnosis of the cancer which ultimately helps to plan the treatment of the cancer. The doctor mandated a PET-CT scan for the patients with advanced disease. This CT scan helps to recognise the intensity and the expansion of the cancer.

## What is its treatment?

Dr Kanchan highlighted the four different treatment stages of the cancer which includes surgery, chemotherapy, and radiotherapy and hormone therapy.

A combination of these treatments predominantly depends upon the nature of the disease. "For younger women with breast cancer, we importantly discuss the preservation of fertility, since the treatment process may



lead the patient infertile. However, there are certain techniques available to preserve fertility, so that at the end of the cancer treatment, a patient can embrace motherhood if she wishes to," she added.

She also suggested a gene test for the patients who have a family history of the disease. On the basis of this test certain risk reduction methods can be employed.

## What are the possibilities of recurrent cancer?

There are many fears related to cancer and one of them is its recurrence, i.e. coming back of the cancer to the same breast or in the other or even arising in any other body part. "It is likely to come back in the younger patients than in the patients who have crossed their 60's," she said. Dr Kanchan explicated on its possibilities such as a strong family history triggering the recurrence or the patients detected positive for breast cancer in the gene test. "Based on the type of breast cancer, lobular breast cancer has higher chances of recurrence than the normal breast cancer. Also, the aggressive forms of cancer such as the triple negatives are known to carry higher risks of reappearing," she added. In order to determine such possibilities, there are tailored follow-up monthly programs after the cancer treatment.

There are early breast cancer detection methods that can save the breasts yet some patients fear that if the breasts are saved, the chance of recurrence increases. While the doctor completely negated this belief, nowadays doctors only select such breast saving surgeries for their

patient, if it's suitable for them. However, after the removal of one breast during the treatment, most patients demand the removal of the other one but unless there are high risk lesions detected in the other breast or unless the patient is positive for the gene test or has a strong family history for the disease, there is no medical benefit of such an unnecessary removal of the organ.

## What are its preventative measures?

The doctor suggested certain lifestyle choices that a woman needs to make in order to reduce the risk of breast cancer. These are:

**Try to conceive babies on time:** Having babies and breastfeeding them for a longer period of time gives protection against breast cancer.

**Healthy diet:** High consumption of raw vegetables, fruits, whole grain, legumes and soy-based foods may reduce risk. High intake of citrus fruit has been associated with a 10% reduction in the risk of breast cancer.

**Wash your fruits and vegetables properly:** Washing fruits and vegetables properly with either vinegar or sodium bicarbonate removes the unsuitable chemicals pesticides and fertilisers present on it which are carcinogenic in nature.

**Say 'No' to plastic:** Plastic is found to be carcinogenic in nature.

**Say 'No' to alcohol:** Alcohol increases blood levels of estrogen, a sex hormone linked to the risk of breast cancer.

**Exercise daily:** High levels of physical activity reduce the risk of breast cancer by about 14%.



# No big Bollywood parties this Diwali? Here's what insiders tell us



Ananya Panday case has again put Bollywood under the scanner. Those close to the Bollywood party circuit reveal that the chance of any big parties happening is very low.

## Ekta Kapoor, Arpita Khan may host an intimate bash

Ekta Kapoor, who brings TV and film celebs together under one roof, might hold a small, intimate bash at her place, but that too is undecided. Leading fashion designer and another party favourite Manish Malhotra is also in two minds about hosting a party. Shilpa Shetty, who is dealing with a crisis at home after her husband Raj Kundra's involvement in an alleged

porn racket, too hasn't decided if she will party this Diwali.

Salman Khan's youngest sister, Arpita Khan, is planning to host a small intimate party for her family and friends at her newly renovated Bandra apartment in Mumbai. She has been busy doing up the house and overseeing the interior work of her high-rise apartment. Now that the house is ready to welcome guests, Arpita is planning to throw a small party. The family recently had a small birthday bash for Arpita's husband, Aayush Sharma, on October 26, the same day as the trailer launch of his and Salman's upcoming film, *Antim*.

Also, all eyes are on the big-ticket release of November 5 - Akshay Kumar and Katrina Kaif's *Sooryavanshi*. If the film fails to live up to box office expectations, there won't be much of a reason to celebrate.

**Aryan Khan:** Aryan Khan studied abroad Sevenoaks High School in London. After that, he went to the University of Southern California.

**Ananya Panday:** Bollywood actress Ananya did her schooling at Dhirubhai Ambani International School. Later, she did her graduation from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

**Khushi Kapoor:** Janhvi Kapoor's little sister Khushi also did her schooling at Dhirubhai Ambani International School. After that, she was enrolled in New York Film Academy for learning acting skills.

**Suhana Khan:** Shah Rukh Khan's daughter and Aryan Khan's little sister Suhana also did her schooling at Dhirubhai Ambani International School. Currently, she is pursuing a film studies course from New York University.

**Janhvi Kapoor:** Janhvi did her schooling at Dhirubhai Ambani International School. Later, she went to Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute, Los Angeles to pursue the acting course.

**Sara Ali Khan:** Bollywood actress Sara did her schooling at Besant Montessori School in Mumbai. She completed her graduation in History and Political Science from Columbia University, New York.

**Navya Naveli Nanda:** Amitabh Bachchan's granddaughter Navya completed her schooling at Sevenoaks School in London. She graduated from Fordham University in 2020 with a major in digital technology and UX design.

# Diwali 2021: 6 outfit inspirations to draw from Bollywood divas

**Diwali 2021:** If you're looking for some style inspiration from your favourite celebrities, here we are with a list of their most popular avatar. A report by Koimoi...

**Diwali 2021:** The day is all about ethnic outfits and traditions. However, who stands out from the crowd is the main topic. So, if you're looking for some style inspiration from your favourite celebrities, here we are with a list of their most popular avatar, as reported by Koimoi.

Nowadays, the trend of sequin sarees is growing. Every now and then we see a celebrity adorning a sequin saree and looking gorgeous. Style yourself in a sequin saree like Malaika Arora and become the diva of the upcoming Diwali party.



## Colourful like Kriti Sanon

Why not try sunny and bright colours this Diwali. Style yourself like Kriti Sanon in a multi-coloured lehenga and let everyone go gaga over you.

Add some brocade

If you want to look simple yet sparkling then, brocade is one of the best options as it has an ethnic and vibrant touch. However, going for a banarasi print design like Tara Sutaria is adorning.

## Why not Monochrome

Monochrome is also quite trendy and will keep your look simple if you don't want to look too flashy. Style yourself in a beautiful monochrome attire like Alia Bhatt.

## Classy in Silk Saree



It is the best time of the year to take out that beautiful silk saree from your mother's closet that you're dying to try out. Take notes from Bhumi Pednekar and make your Diwali classy. However, beware of fire and crackers.

## Add Fusion to your style

This Diwali, try to add fusion to your outfit just like Sara Ali Khan. A blouse and skirt paired with a long jacket and minimal makeup are no less than an inspiration.



# Aryan Khan, Ananya Panday, Suhana Khan and more...

Check out the educational qualifications of some of the Bollywood star kids





# Ravi Dubey: Sargun and I have no such plan to go the family way in the near future

Actor Ravi Dubey talks about the speculations around him and wife Sargun Mehta going the family way and adds that every couple has a different definition of happiness

Actors Ravi Dubey and Sargun Mehta, who are happily married for eight years now, continue to set couple goals on social media for their fans. Personally, and professionally, they have managed to strike the right chord, which is why they do not feel the need for anything else, including expanding their family, reports Hindustan Times.

Dubey had some time back taken to social media to announce that something good is happening in his life and he cannot wait to scream it from the rooftops. Fans naturally started speculating that he is going to become a father. But that didn't turn out to be true. "There are no such plans. I love my fans and that they speculated out of joy. But somewhere, our wiring is a little off," he says.

As we probe further, the 37-year-old explains, "The moment we see a couple happy for something, our first instinct is to go in that direction. There are a billion reasons we have been ecstatic in the eight years of our marriage. Very seldom this thought of going the family way has crossed our mind. There is no such plan, I don't see it in the near future, and I don't know, even in the further future. We are going organically."

Filled with gratitude for everything they have been able to achieve, Dubey adds that as a unit, they want to "inspire" people around them. "If we are able to motivate them, our lives would be



worthwhile. Anything that is a socially accepted norm of joy may not be necessarily relevant to us," says the actor.

In an industry where it was thought earlier that getting married was akin to committing suicide, Dubey and Mehta very proudly went ahead. He says this thought didn't cross his mind "even for half a second".

He elaborates, "Us getting into a relationship was organic, and so was getting married. These are not things that you strategise. Marriages are the most fantastic institution. *Aap beeti bataun toh humein yeh phali thi, hai aur rahegi* (we prospered from it before, do now and will in the future too)."

## 'Kundali Bhagya' actress Isha Anand Sharma: 'Motherhood is truly a remarkable gift'

Isha Anand Sharma, who was last seen in *Kundali Bhagya*, has been blessed with twin boys. The actress delivered on October 29 in her husband Vasdev Singh Jasrotia's hometown, Jammu. An elated Isha tells us, "I always wanted to have a cute and happy family, which was also my mother's last wish. I'm sure she is elated and blessing us from heaven. I have so much more respect for all the mothers in the world because now I know that it's the most challenging and demanding job in the world. Our bodies undergo a lot of changes. Motherhood is truly a remarkable gift and a privilege, which I hold close to my heart."

She adds, "My husband is extremely excited and over the moon. He tells me it's God's way of saying buy and get one free, so we will have double the fun, happiness and blessings. He is shocked to see me transform from a carefree to a responsible person."

Not just their names, the couple has also zeroed in on their babies' nicknames. "We have named our sons Raayan Singh and Zian Singh. I will call them Ran and Zee at home (smiles)," she reveals.

The actress wants to focus solely on her kids at the moment. She shares, "It's a journey and I want to savour each and every moment of this bliss. I



am going with the flow. So, I believe it will be another six months before I return to Mumbai. I will start working out soon after my doctor allows me."

What about getting back to work? "Once I get back to my original shape, I am willing to work hard. But at the moment, my priority is my kids and spending quality time with them before I get back to acting probably after a year-and-a-half or two," she concludes.

## YOUR STARS

### Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

Excellent relations of understanding and complicity with your children. Profit quickly by the love which is within your reach, without losing a single crumb of it. An important financial transaction can be carried out well; you'll also make good investments.

**Lucky Numbers:** 5, 10, 12, 19, 20, 33

### Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

Good financial operations. The coming week seems very creative; major transformations will take place and the events will make you evolve profoundly, all to your advantage; you'll achieve large-scale projects.

**Lucky Numbers:** 1, 9, 10, 14, 20, 23

### Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

You'll make new encounters which will upset many of your ideas and beliefs. At work, luck will support your efforts but you'll have to remain realistic. On the material plane, take the maximum of guaranties and precautions in order to prevent bad surprises.

**Lucky Numbers:** 8, 14, 19, 20, 23, 29

### Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

Love affairs will tend toward certain stability; but this won't prevent you from living a more intense sentimental life. If you work in association, you'll try to impose your will on your partners. A propitious week for real estate transactions.

**Lucky Numbers:** 7, 9, 17, 20, 33, 39

### Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

Your life as a couple may go through an agitated period; show patience. This time you'll have a better understanding of your entourage. Don't make confidences, otherwise what you want to remain a secret will soon be an open secret.

**Lucky Numbers:** 9, 12, 15, 20, 21, 30

### Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

With your children, you'll obtain much better results by gentleness than by anger. Beware of a possible catastrophe on the financial front! Serious problems with your beloved one can be solved if you succeed in keeping your cool.

**Lucky Numbers:** 7, 18, 25, 29, 31, 38

### Gemini: May 21 - June 20

Refrain from involving your friends in your sentimental problems; confide only in persons whose function is to counsel. You'll be able to negotiate a difficult business deal or obtain a good contract. Your conjugal life may be very much agitated.

**Lucky Numbers:** 5, 9, 11, 13, 20, 29

### Cancer: June 21 - July 22

You'll succeed without much difficulty in making the most out of any situation. You'll try to eliminate all problems susceptible to perturb the family harmony. A very favourable week for your love affairs; the opposite sex won't be able to resist your charm.

**Lucky Numbers:** 7, 15, 19, 20, 27, 30

### Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

Much to do, dynamism on the decrease, and fluctuating morale; an evening spent with your friends will do you much good. Good news concerning your bank account. Show diplomacy in all your dealings. A rather calm week concerning your job; but remain vigilant: even though nothing happens, you'd better prepare yourself for the next changes.

**Lucky Numbers:** 8, 10, 15, 22, 24, 26

### Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

Some family problems, which demand to be solved with calm and method. Beware of your tendency to complicate the most simple facts. For the time being, it's necessary to keep a low profile and to pursue no large-scale projects.

**Lucky Numbers:** 18, 20, 25, 26, 30, 36

### Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

Your successes in the social and professional domains will be assured, but all impatience or negligence will be severely punished. Your affairs of the heart will be flourishing. Your sleep will be light; go without stimulants.

**Lucky Numbers:** 4, 9, 17, 20, 23, 39

### Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

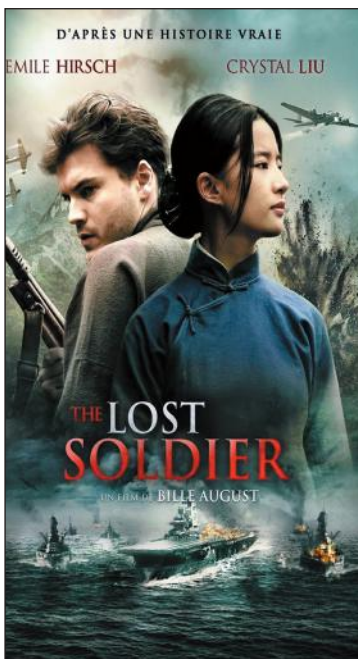
Your vitality will be good and faculties of recuperation excellent. Amorous adventures will be passionate but transitory. You'll know how to make the most out of the opportunities which will present themselves on more than one front.

**Lucky Numbers:** 1, 5, 11, 15, 23, 26



## CINE 12

Vendredi 5 novembre - 21.15



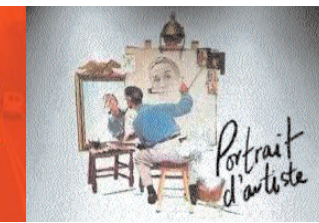
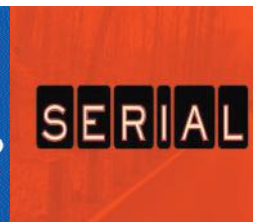
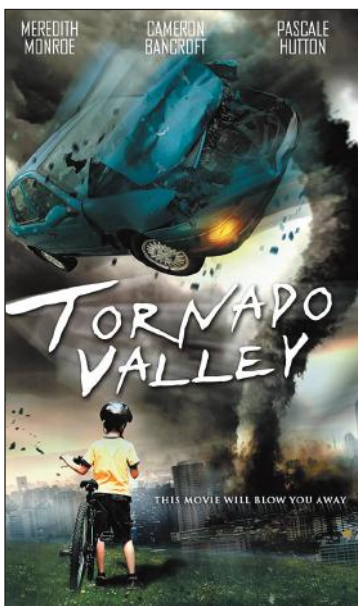
## CINE 12

Samedi 6 novembre - 21.20



## MBC 1

Dimanche 7 novembre - 21.15



vendredi 5 novembre

## MBC 1

07.00 Local: Les Grandes Lignes  
09.00 Doc: China's New Silk Road  
11.10 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.30 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir  
12.55 Local: Prod: Elle - No 39  
13.50 Serial: Heidi, Bienvenida A...  
14.40 D.Anime: Invention Story  
14.54 D.Anime: Oum Le Dauphin...  
15.06 D.Anime: Spongo, Fuzz And...  
15.27 D.Anime: Les Triples  
16.04 D.Anime: Kid Lucky  
17.15 Mag: Human Nature  
17.45 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous?  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.30 Local Prod: Come On Let's...  
21.25 Serial: 19-2  
23.00 Le Journal  
23.35 Mag: Eye On SADC

## MBC 2

07.00 DDI Live  
07.00 Educa Prog: Grade 3  
08.30 Educa Prog: Grade 4  
12.00 Film: Junga  
Starring Vijay Sethupathi, Sayyeshaa, Madonna Sebastian...  
15.05 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek  
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 Programe

## MBC 3

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...  
14.27 Doc: Soul Of The Icepack  
15.20 Doc: Back To Chernobyl  
17.23 Mag: Border Crossing  
18.00 Doc: Day Zero  
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...  
21.34 The Reverse Exploration  
22.25 Doc: The Volcano That...  
23.11 Doc: Dogs & Us  
23.53 Doc: Day Zero

## Cine 12

02.10 Serial: Mad Dogs  
02.52 Serial: Killjoys  
03.32 Film: Finding Altamira  
05.04 Tele: Muneca Brava  
05.43 Serial: Reef Doctors  
06.52 Film: Maudie  
09.45 Tele: Teresa  
10.35 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You  
11.00 Serial: Killjoys  
12.00 Film: Finding Altamira  
13.33 Tele: Muneca Brava  
14.45 Film: Maudie  
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: Last Resort  
21.15 Film: The Lost Soldier  
Avec Emile Hirsch, Liu Yifei, Shaoqun Yu

## Bollywood TV

07.00 Student Of The Year 2  
Starring Tiger Shroff, Tara Sutaria, Ananya Panday  
11.28 / 20.30 - Radha Krishna  
12.00 / 21.00 - Chupke Chupke  
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: Baar Baar Dekho  
Starring Sidharth Malhotra, Katrina Kaif  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Kundali Bhagya  
19.00 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein  
19.31 Serial: Bhakharwadi  
20.00 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak

samedi 6 novembre

06.00 D.Anime: Robot Trains  
06.27 D.Anime: The Hive  
07.00 D.Anime: Booba  
07.15 D.Anime: Kung Fu Panda  
07.37 D.Anime: Sabrina  
08.00 D.Anime: The Baby Boss  
09.35 Serial: Oh Yuck  
10.00 Local: Zafan Nou Zil  
10.30 Serial: Backstage  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.35 Tele: Teresa  
14.45 D.Anime: Invention Story  
14.58 D.Anime: Oum Le Dauphin...  
15.32 D.Anime: Les Triples  
16.20 D.Anime: The Hive  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Entertainment: Dance  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.10 Local: Autour Des Valeurs  
21.20 Film: Model Citizen  
Avec: Kevin Fonteyne, Shawn Pyfrom, Brytnee Ratledge

07.00 Film: Amar Shakti  
09.13 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 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek  
15.25 Film: Aatish  
Starring: Sanjay Dutt, Aditya Pancholi, Raveena Tandon  
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: Cookie  
Stars: Nabeel Ahmed, Amit Ashar, Bhavin Bhanushali

06.00 Doc: Day Zero  
06.42 Mag: Arts And Culture  
06.55 Mag: Our Voices  
07.50 Doc: Volcano Stories  
09.08 The Reverse Exploration  
10.00 Doc: The Volcano That...  
10.41 Doc: Dogs & Us  
11.27 Doc: Day Zero  
12.22 Mag: Our Voices  
13.14 Doc: Volcano Stories  
15.29 Student Support Prog...  
18.30 Mag: Science Ou Fiction  
19.00 Doc: Zenith  
19.31 Doc: Japanese Festival  
20.30 Local: News (English)  
20.40 Doc: Myopia Boom  
22.30 Doc: Dream Babies  
23.22 Doc: Rainforest Radio  
23.45 Mag: Amazing Gardens  
00.11 Doc: Science Ou Fiction  
01.01 Mag: Check In  
01.27 Doc: Japanese Festival

01.02 Film: The Lost Soldier  
03.09 Serial: Unforgotten  
03.46 Serial: The Magicians  
04.28 Serial: Hawaii Five-0  
05.10 Tele: Tanto Amor  
07.04 Serial: S.W.A.T  
08.30 Serial: Reckoning  
09.16 Serial: The Magicians  
09.56 Serial: Hawaii Five-0  
10.40 Film: The Lost Soldier  
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: Maudie  
20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana  
20.30 Series: Last Resort  
21.15 Film: Donnie Darko  
Starring: Jake Gyllenhaal, Jena Malone, Mary McDonnell  
23.10 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir

04.05 Radha Krishna  
04.36 Chupke Chupke  
04.48 Mere Sai -- Shraddha 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  
10.43 Siddhi Vinayak  
12.01 Serial: Bhakharwadi  
14.00 Chupke Chupke  
16.00 Pavitra Rishta  
18.00 Samachar  
18.30 Film: Hello! Hum Lallan...  
Star: Rajpal Yadav, Preeti Mehra, Makarand Anaspure  
20.31 Serial: Namah  
20.52 Yeh Payaar Nahi Toh Kya Hai

dimanche 7 novembre

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  
10.30 Local: Zafan Nou Zil  
11.00 Local: Nu Rasinn  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.40 Tele: Teresa  
14.10 Local: Elle - No 165  
15.05 D.Anime: Invention Story  
15.18 D.Anime: Oum Le Dauphin...  
15.48 D.Anime: Voltron, Le...  
17.17 Serial: Hi Opie!  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Local: MBC Prod  
19.30 Le Journal  
20.20 Local: Groov'in  
21.10 Film: Tornado Valley  
Starring: Meredith Monroe, Cameron Bancroft, Pascale Hutton

07.00 Film: Jaani Dushman  
10.00 Local Prod: Excerpts Of Deepa Luxmi Pooja  
11.00 Serial: Oru Kai Osai  
11.22 Serial: Santoshi Maa  
12.00 Film: Andhadhun  
Stars: Tabu, Ayushmann Khurrana, Radhika Apte  
14.13 DDI Magazine  
15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek  
15.22 Serial: Mooga Manasulu  
15.45 Serial: He Mann Baware  
16.12 Serial: Sondha Bandham  
17.05 Serial: Siya Ke Ram  
18.00 DDI Magazine  
18.30 Local: Tipa Tipa 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: Amazing Gardens  
06.51 Doc: Zenith  
07.16 Mag: Check In  
07.46 Doc: Japanese Festival  
08.39 Doc: Myopia Boom  
10.20 Doc: Dream Babies  
11.47 Doc: Amazing Gardens  
12.34 Doc: Zenith  
12.58 Mag: Check In  
14.21 Doc: Myopia Boom  
15.12 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...  
22.01 Doc: Car Wars  
22.46 Doc: Rewilding  
23.38 Mag: Magnifique  
00.05 Doc: Amazing Gardens

01.35 Film: Donnie Darko  
03.29 Serial: Midnight, Texas  
04.11 Film: Model Citizen  
05.37 Tele: Tanto Amor  
06.22 Serial: Last Resort  
07.02 Serial: Island Doctor  
08.33 Serial: Reckoning  
09.12 Film: Model Citizen  
10.39 Film: Custody  
12.19 Serial: Midnight, Texas  
13.30 Serial: Killjoys  
15.33 Tele: Muneca Brava  
17.01 Serial: Last Resort  
17.45 Serial: Midnight, Texas  
18.30 Film: Model Citizen  
20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana  
20.30 Serial: Pure Genius  
21.15 Film: Trash  
Avec: Rickson Tevez, Gabriel Weinstein, Martin Sheen  
23.04 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir

00.00 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak  
01.59 Bhakharwadi  
03.59 Chupke Chupke  
06.00 Pavitra Rishta  
08.00 Motu Patlu  
08.32 Ikyawan  
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: Happy Phir Bhag Jayegi  
Starring: Sonakshi Sinha, Diana Penty, Jimmy Sheirgill  
20.40 Entertainment: Dance  
21.21 Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
23.17 Serial: Piya Albela

## MBC 2

Samedi 6 novembre  
- 21.00

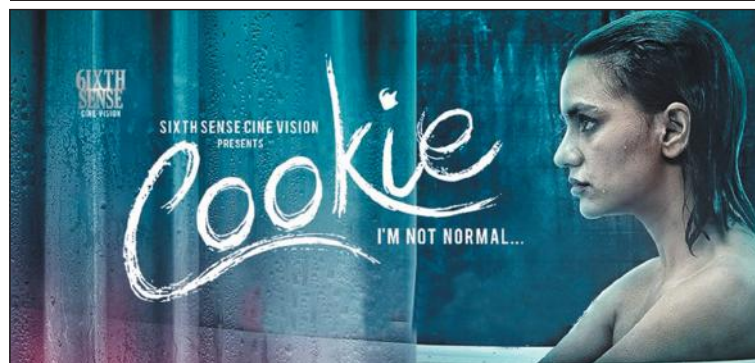
Stars: Nabeel Ahmed, Amit Ashar, Bhavin Bhanushali



Dimanche 7 novembre

- 18.30

Stars: Sonakshi Sinha, Diana Penty, Jimmy Sheirgill





# The many stories of Diwali share a common theme of triumph of justice

*Many Indian Americans will be celebrating the festival of Diwali this week. A scholar explains what this festival of lights means - especially in chaotic times*



**Natasha Mikles**  
Lecturer in Philosophy, Texas  
State University

**S**ometimes called the Indian festival of lights, Diwali is arguably the most important holiday of the year for South Asian families.

The festival, which is observed by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains, lasts five days in its entirety. Traditionally the third day is considered the most important. During this day, families gather to light candles, eat sweets and place lit lamps in their public-facing windows.

As a scholar of Asian religion and popular narratives, I'm interested in Diwali because it demonstrates how ancient tales in epics become part of religious practice.

## Popular stories from Hinduism

There are many stories around what exactly Diwali commemorates and why it is celebrated.

Among Hindu families, many claim the festival celebrates the defeat of the evil demon king Ravana by Rama - an incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu and the hero of India's Ramayana epic. In the most famous part of this epic tale, Rama's wife is abducted by the demon Ravana, and Rama must journey to the land of Lanka to save her with the assistance of his brother.

A different tradition states that the festival commemorates the defeat of the demon Narakasura by Lord Krishna. Like Rama, Krishna is an incarnation of the god Vishnu, who has come to assist humanity in its time of need.

Stories tell of Krishna's efforts to rid the world of demons. In this particular story, the King Naraka gains extraordinary abilities through a deal with a demon and becomes intoxicated with power.

Narakasura, as he is now called, destroys the kingdoms around him and eventually plans to assault even the heavens. Krishna appears and uses his



Diwali is the most important festival for the South Asian community. Photo By Cyrus McCrimmon/The Denver Post via Getty Images

divine powers to neutralize Narakasura's weapons, eventually beheading him with a multi-pronged discus.

Other traditions associate the festival with the birth of the goddess Lakshmi and her marriage to Vishnu. In the Hindu tradition, Lakshmi is worshipped as the goddess of wealth, while Vishnu is seen as the preserver of humanity.

While there are many stories of her birth, the most prevalent is that Lakshmi appeared during the churning of the divine ocean of milk from which the nectar of immortality comes during a fight between the gods and demons. After appearing, she chooses to marry Vishnu and to assist him in working for the benefit of humanity.

In southern India, Hindu families commemorate the defeat of the demon Hiranyakshipu by Narasimha, the lion-headed incarnation of Vishnu. Like many Indian stories, Hiranyakshipu is a demi-god who believes he is immortal after receiving a divine blessing from the Hindu creator-god Brahma that lists the conditions for his death.

According to the boon, he cannot be killed at day or at night, inside or outside, by human or by animal, by projectile weapons or by hand weapons, and neither on the ground nor in the sky.

In response to Hiranyakshipu's terrorizing of the heavens and Earth, Vishnu then incarnates as the lion-headed god Narasimha to kill the demon. He kills him at dusk, on the step of his house, as a chimeric lion with his claws as he lies on Narasimha's lap - all conditions that satisfy the elements of the boon.

The Diwali tradition is celebrated by Jains and Sikhs as well, who have their own interpretations of the festival. For Jains, Diwali celebrates the nirvana, or enlightenment, of Mahavira, the 24th spiritual teacher of the Jain path and the contemporary tradition's founder.

Sikhs consider Diwali a commemoration of the release of Guru Hargobind, the sixth of 10 spiritual leaders, and 52 other men who were imprisoned by the Mughal Empire that ruled the Indian subcontinent from 1526 to 1857.

After the public execution of his father by Mughal leaders, Guru Hargobind became increasingly passionate about forming an independent Sikh homeland through military action if necessary. He was eventually jailed by the Mughal Emperor Jahangir, but was released two years later on the day of Diwali.

Popular legends state that when he was freed, Guru Hargobind tricked the Mughal emperor into allowing him to bring out as many men as could hold onto the hem of his cloak and, in this way, helped release 52 other prisoners who held onto 52 threads coming off of his garment.

## Origins of Diwali

The multiplicity of interpretations for why Diwali is celebrated and questions regarding the festival's exact origins may have one potential answer: that the narrative of origins is an afterthought to rituals.

This problem is illustrated in a well-known episode of the sitcom "The Office," where the Dunder Mifflin team attends a Diwali celebration at a local Hindu temple. Before they go, they ask Kelly - the Hindu

office worker who is playing hostess - to explain the origins of the festival.

She demurs, stating "I don't know; it's really old, I think," before excitedly discussing the beautiful clothes everyone wears, the dancing and the food. Mindy Kaling, who plays Kelly and wrote the episode, explained that she based Kelly's cluelessness on her own, noting that - despite identifying as Hindu - she had to do significant research into her own religious tradition to write the episode.

In other words, while she was aware of and excited about the rituals, the narrative explanation was secondary to joining with her community in celebration.

But this does not mean that narrative may be inconsequential. It is important to think what these multiple narratives about Diwali's origins may be able to tell us about the Indian culture.

Asian religions scholar Robert Ford Campany suggests that narratives entail a subtle form of argument that "reveal, argue, or assume something significant about the world, about spirits, about relations between humans and other beings, or about the afterlife and the dead."

Perhaps these diverse origin stories of Diwali point to a shared argument that Indian culture is making about the world: that good - whether as one of the many avatars of Lord Vishnu, an enlightened Jain prince, or an imprisoned guru - will necessarily triumph over the evils of demons, injustice and ignorance.

Certainly that's an argument worth celebrating, especially in the chaotic times we live in today.