

MAURITIUS TIMES

● "Climate change is the environmental challenge of this generation, and it is imperative that we act before it's too late." - John Delaney

Code of Ethics for Barristers

Me Domingue vs Me Basset:

"The test is whether the administration of justice would be undermined by the continued appearance of Me Basset in the case..."

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Dr Shameem Z. Jaumdally - Senior Research Scientist
Centre for Lung Infection and Immunity, Department of Medicine
& UCT Lung Institute, University of Cape Town



"Vaccines remain the most clinically effective and cost-effective biomedical intervention to mitigate the impact of the epidemic"

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Opinion

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What do these geopolitical shifts harbingers for our own strategic interests in the Indian Ocean? Any reshuffle of some magnitude, presents risks but also opens opportunities

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Proper information, Proper communication

This is a world dominated by information, loads of it streaming 24/7 often live and in real time from all sorts of sources. This truism has been most prominent ever since the Covid pandemic exploded on the global scene at the beginning of 2019. If anything, the volume of facts and figures, opinions, reports from the ground by journalists and the press, the public on social media, postings of videos recording debates and discussions that purport to help sift the wheat from the chaff – all these constitute a veritable ongoing tsunami which baffles lay persons. They are already confused by the controversies and uncertainties that surround every aspect of the Covid-19 phenomenon – for that's what it is indeed – and are avid to get the proper information, properly communicated by the competent authorities so as to be guided as to how to cope in the right way.

It goes without saying that fake news and rumours find their way into this pot-pourri of information overload to further confuse and complicate matters for the common man who does not have the necessary knowledge to make out right from wrong. Hence the importance of reliable information from those responsible for managing the epidemic at country level: and that means the government. Because, as we have seen – in all countries – whatever is wrong or lacking with the handling of the crisis is laid at the door of the government, which receives little thanks not to say kudos for whatever it does. And that's all the more reason for governments to have a clear-cut and pragmatic strategy of dispensing the right information in a timely manner and continuously both so as to guide and reassure the people as well as to maintain its credibility – upon which is built the trust of the people, and which facilitates government's task upfront. In this way there is then no need to defend *post facto* decisions taken in good faith by the authorities.

A case in point is the issue of availability of medical oxygen. In a post on social media, the Prime Minister is seen to be explaining that the request to the French government for supplying oxygen is in fact being done to make advance provision for future needs, that is, to beef up preparedness. Had such information been communicated before, on the basis of ground intelligence which the government should have about the public's apprehension based on whatever source of information, then the question would not even have arisen and needed such an explanation from the head of government.

Currently another matter which is posing as one of much concern to the public is that of the booster doses of vaccines, which are being dispensed at multiple outlets throughout the country. At different vaccination centres, there were long queues, and people were being turned away. Obviously, they were not happy about it after a long wait. When someone enquired at one such centre from an official, he was told that only 500 doses had been received for that centre, and he could not do anything about it.

It stands to logic that any centre will receive a fixed number of doses. But this must be made clear at the outset, and people given numbers though a phone-in system or when they reach so that other lining up can then be informed accordingly and re-booked, or re-directed.

Surely this is not rocket science?

This may seem a matter of detail – but as the saying goes, both God and the devil are in the detail. And addressing effectively such gnawing problems which matter enormously to the public makes all the difference for roll out of the booster programme as well as the image and credibility of government. There can be no short-cut to proper information that is properly communicated in a timely manner.

Mauritius Times

Founder/Editor: Beekrumsing Ramlallah - Aug 1954-Sept 2000

Editor-in-chief: M. Ramlallah / Senior Editor: Dr RN Gopee

This epaper has been produced with the assistance of

Doojesh Ramlallah, Sultana Kurmally and Kersley Ramsamy

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The Conversation

A Pandemic of Armchair Experts

How we decide who and what to believe

Holding contrarian views - despite a lack of personal expertise - is just part of being human. Here's the psychology behind what we choose to believe



Pic - Neil Hall/EPA-EFE

We appear to live in an age of misinformation.

Certain broadcasters and social media celebrities openly promote fake facts or misrepresentations of science and data to their audience, many of whom do not seem to care whether they are right or wrong, as long as they are hearing what they want to hear.

The promotion of misinformation can be caused by an over-inflated belief in their own judgment and knowledge, or often, they simply relish the chance to proclaim their own contrarian or ideological views. Sometimes, it's just about self-interest.

Many of us have at least a few controversial beliefs. We might believe that the death penalty deters crime, or that raising the minimum wage decreases unemployment, or that raising business taxes will reduce innovation.

We might even believe that women are not as good at maths as men, or that the Earth is flat.

Some of these beliefs we will hold strongly.

But when we attempt to justify our beliefs, we often find the evidence pool is very shallow.

Researchers have identified a chronic illusion of explanatory depth, in that we overestimate our understanding of the world.

We can discover this by trying to justify our pet beliefs. To illustrate, when I interrogate myself about why I believe the death penalty is not a deterrent, I find there is not a lot there except for consensus beliefs among my peer group – some of whom I hope have

looked into the evidence – some intuition, and vague memories of looking at some blog posts or newspaper articles. This is not a lot. But it is perhaps not surprising: we simply don't have time to be experts on everything.

Sometimes people are described as having fallen prey to the Dunning-Kruger effect, or even as "having" Dunning-Kruger. Donald Trump was one such person.

The Dunning-Kruger effect, however, is a population-level effect, so no individual can "have" it. It primarily means that just because someone is confident doesn't mean they are right. In fact, there are individual differences in confidence, with some people being absurdly sure of themselves, and others quite diffident.

But the confidence of highly confident but wrong people comes not from their ignorance, but from the fact that they are inherently confident about everything. Some researchers have described it as arrogance.

If he knew more, would Trump have been less confident? I doubt it; Trump was (or is) simply full of bluster, and his confidence was simply unrelated to his knowledge.

What determines the beliefs we adopt when we have a choice?

Scientific evidence can help, but often we believe what we want to believe anyway.

Daniel Read, Prof of Behavioural Science, Warwick Business School, University of Warwick

Biden's Africa policy & EU Global Gateway Initiative

*What do these geopolitical shifts harbinger for our own strategic interests in the Indian Ocean?
Any reshuffle of some magnitude, presents risks but also opens opportunities*

Jan Arden

According to a recent analysis of the Observer Research Foundation (August 2021), China has, since the nineties, emerged as Africa's biggest bilateral trading partner, its biggest bilateral lender, as well as one of the biggest foreign investors in the continent. "Chinese companies have entered almost all African markets. Today there are more than 1000 of them operating in Africa; some one million people of Chinese descent reside in the continent..."

At a time when multilateral and Western institutions were either reticent or too conditional on a variety of non-financial and governance issues, Chinese investments, private or from State Owned Enterprises, came with few strings and found easy takers. Dozens of articles and papers from various Western foundations have this century raised alarm bells about debt diplomacy, "Chinese neocolonialism", a "naked raw material grab", but these were often seen as peeved reactions from those chaffing that the "preserves" of former colonial powers were turning increasingly to Beijing for aid and assistance on scales that would have been unheard of from more other traditional sources.

Over the recent decades, leaders of some 54 African countries had then tended to regard with sympathy China as a country that had itself only recently emerged from the economic backwaters of the 20th century and was willing to use its formidable treasure-chest to help kindred brothers desperate for the massive infrastructure of roads, railways, ports and airports required to begin placing Africa on the radar of world trade and economic development.

In return, those economic ties provided welcome allies and a useful clout to China in international instances, particularly when the former US President Donald Trump went into anti-NATO rants or demoralizing anti-Europe spins that left a gaping vacuum for the West in international spheres and instances which many tried to exploit. That capital of sympathy, carefully nurtured, was particularly valuable to support or avoid backlash at China's own regional designs over Taiwan and the South China seas disputes, its expansive military and naval build-up, its flagship Belt and Road Initiative and the not-so-subtle attempts at



"EU President Ursula von der Leyen announcing the EU Global Gateway Initiative during her State of the Union speech on September 15. Pic - Balkan Insight"

"If the US diplomat's expression "Africa is the future" signals that the continent will no longer be ignored by the US, dovetailing with the EU Global Gateway branding exercise, what do these geopolitical shifts harbinger for our own strategic interests in the Indian Ocean where we bond with other allies like India and France? Any reshuffle of some magnitude, presents risks but also opens opportunities..."

bullying neighbourly states like Vietnam, Philippines or India in the Himalayan regions.

To come back to our African realities, Africa was for long in a geopolitical division of work, clearly left to European capitals, notably Paris, London and enlarged later to the EU Commission, to represent and defend Western influence and interests. As for the USA, beyond the AGOA trade preference agreement, whose real impact many analysts say has been globally modest, Africa remained below the radar, when it was not the object of the most derisive comments from Donald Trump.

Tribute must be paid to the EU's first attempt to have a coherent global diplomatic, investment and economic partnership strategy in place since 1975 with the largely successful preferential trade agreements known as the EU-ACP Lome accords, reviewed every five years and the broader successor agreements signed in Cotonou about 2000 and updated in 2005 and 2010. It has been extended to November 2021, unless the pandemic has changed deadlines.

In parallel, the European Development Fund has now been restructured this year, as our diplomats will be aware, regrouping under one umbrella the various instruments of financial assistance over the 2021-2027 period, with some 30 billion

Euros to be earmarked for projects in sub-Saharan Africa.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) channels enormous funds on its side to private firms in the African region. According to the same Observer Research Foundation paper, the EIB handed out almost as much in grants between 2013 and 2018 as China did in loans for Belt and Road Initiative projects (414 billion euro vs. 434 billion euro).

It would be difficult therefore to contend that the combined scales of EU financial assistance and investment to the African

"Africa was for long in a geopolitical division of work, clearly left to European capitals, notably Paris, London and enlarged later to the EU Commission, to represent and defend Western influence and interests. As for the USA, beyond the AGOA trade preference agreement, whose real impact many analysts say has been globally modest, Africa remained below the radar... Tribute must be paid to the EU's first attempt to have a coherent global diplomatic, investment and economic partnership strategy in place since 1975..."

continent was far below the scales of their Chinese counterparts. If there were competitive issues to be addressed, they might be more about branding the EU investments and global partnership outreach to Africa and, secondly, make those investments more coherent within a strategic framework.

That seems to be the double rationale behind the announcement by the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen during her State of the Union speech on September 15 of an EU Global Gateway Initiative. Although short on specifics, the thrust was clearly spelt out: "We are good at financing roads," von der Leyen said, "but it does not make sense for Europe to build a perfect road between a Chinese-owned copper mine and a Chinese owned harbour. We have to get smarter when it comes to these kinds of investments."

In other words, the EU needs to start thinking more strategically about its presence and investments in the African continent, taking account of the achievements and occasional difficulties encountered by the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative with its 20-year headstart.

A parallel event took place this past week that dovetails with the EU realisation, the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken embarked on a first important American dignitary visit to several key African states, beginning with Kenya and ending in Nigeria and Senegal. This marks a noticeable shift in US policy under the Biden-Harris administration towards Africa, no longer delegated to EU and no longer below the radar.

In unveiling the Biden administration's Africa policy, Mr Blinken said the US will focus its engagement on five key areas: enhancing trade; dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic; climate change; promoting democracy and peace and security. At a key speech on US-Africa policy to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Abuja, Nigeria, the top US diplomat announced that the United States will host a summit of African leaders to further deepen ties with the continent.

If the US diplomat's expression "Africa is the future" signals that the continent will no longer be ignored by the US, dovetailing with the EU Global Gateway branding exercise, what do these geopolitical shifts harbinger for our own strategic interests in the Indian Ocean where we bond with other allies like India and France?

Any reshuffle of some magnitude, presents risks but also opens opportunities. Our foreign and diplomatic services, although deprived of a full-time Minister, should be hard at work deciphering the Western intents and find useful avenues to advance our objectives on issues that matter most to us, from Chagos sovereignty to Indo-Pacific security, the exploitation of our marine resources while participating meaningfully in the global environment initiatives.



Anil Madan

Putting COP26 in Perspective

The most charitable assessment is that at best, COP26 should be remembered as FLOP26

For all the fanfare about the hoped-for promise of COP26, the most charitable assessment is that at best, it should be remembered as FLOP26.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres' comments convey the sentiment of failure. Referring to the agreed texts as a "compromise," he said: "They reflect the interests, the conditions, the contradictions and the state of political will in the world today." In other words, a flop. Then, trying to put the best spin on things while not succumbing to the temptation to fabricate a narrative of success, he said the stated goals mark important steps forward "but unfortunately the collective political will was not enough to overcome some deep contradictions."

Some perspective on the gap between reality and necessity is in order. The UN says current plans would allow emissions to rise 13% by 2030 compared with 2010. Scientists believe that emissions must fall 45% to hit the target of a 1.5°C global temperature increase set by the Paris accord. By this metric alone, COP26 is a massive failure.

Even that may overstate the extent of the problem.

First, the agreed texts call on governments to increase their emission reduction targets by next year to meet the goal of the 2015 Paris Climate accord to keep the global temperature rise under 2°C and close to (but just above) 1.5° C.

Second, NASA, the US National Aeronautics & Space Administration, an agency charged with tracking and monitoring climate data, warns rather dolefully that:

"Humans have caused major climate changes to happen already, and we have set in motion more changes still. However, if we stopped emitting greenhouse gases today, the rise in global temperatures would begin to flatten within a few years. Temperatures would then plateau but remain well-elevated for many, many centuries. There is a time lag between what we do and when we feel it, but that lag is less than a decade."

In other words, we really are not in a position to undo the damage already done.

NASA offers an even more sobering assessment:

"While the effects of human activities on Earth's climate to date are irreversible on the timescale of humans alive today, every little bit of avoided future temperature increases results in less warming that would otherwise persist for essentially forever. Without major action to reduce emissions, global temperature is on track to rise by 2.5°C to 4.5°C (4.5°F to 8°F) by 2100, according to the latest estimates."

Needless to say, climate scientists tell us that a 2.5° C



rise in temperatures will produce catastrophic weather events.

So, at best if we are to believe NASA's assessment, the warming that is already baked in will last forever and the best we can do is avoid additional temperature increases. At COP26 we did not come close to even this much.

Abject failure

Since COP26 wound down, three stories have underscored the abject failure of the world's nations to address in any meaningful way the proposition that curbing the burning of fossil fuels is absolutely essential. NASA's commentary may suggest a certain futility to the effort, but certainly at the political level, no serious world leader has spoken out against the proposition since Donald Trump pooh-pooed the very idea of climate change.

One story is that, as *The Wall Street Journal* reports, coal power plants in parts of Europe are running at full tilt and enjoying massive profitability as prices of natural gas soar and there is still not enough electricity available. With power shortages, utility companies able to bring online their dirty coal-burning power plants stand to make enormous profits.

A second story, as I mentioned in my previous comments on COP26 is the enormous increase in coal consumption by China to increase power production as power shortages have disrupted industrial activity and cold weather imposed more demands for home heat. China and India account for about 12.5 million tonnes of coal consumption per day in "normal" times but as I mentioned, China alone ramped up coal mining to a level of 12 million tonnes per day recently.

This tells us that there is no appetite for cutting coal consumption notwithstanding the language of the COP26 statements. A unit of Bloomberg reported that China and India account for 95 per cent of the new coal-fired power plants brought online over the last decade — 444.2 gigawatts (GW) in China, and 113.7 GW in India. The next three countries on the list — Indonesia, Vietnam, and South Korea — added 54 GW among them. In short, coal remains an integral part of China's and India's power needs for decades to come. And it may well remain indispensable for other Asian countries.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian was reported to have explained Beijing's stance at a media

briefing: "In many developing countries, not everyone has access to electricity. Energy supply is not adequate," he said. "Before asking all countries to stop using coal, consideration should be given to the energy shortfall in these countries."

This tells us that China is not ready to cut any more than is the U.S. as John Kerry made clear in comments I quoted in my previous article.

The third story was that New Delhi faces threats of a lockdown, not because of the coronavirus, but because of pollution.

Schools in New Delhi and its environs were shut indefinitely while area coal-power plants were ordered temporarily to cease operations. Air pollution, already at one of the highest levels in the world, was reaching intolerable levels.

New Delhi recorded Fine Particulate Matter pollution at a level of 379, last week, putting it in the hazardous range. The safe level for the fine, poisonous particles according to the World Health Organization is around 25. A neighbouring industrial area near Delhi recorded a level of 454 last week, the worst in the city. Prolonged exposure to such hazardous levels of particulate matter is believed to cause lung cancer and respiratory ailments.

These events tell us that economic activity is the driver of energy consumption and human comfort is a secondary, but perhaps as important driver. One cannot shut down industrial activity and home heating indefinitely.

Meaningful twist

COP 26 had one meaningful and promising twist, the possibility that businesses will be incentivized to find solutions. Solar and wind energy development continues apace. Research on fusion is ongoing. Hydrogen and particularly green hydrogen show promise as answers to our energy needs. Electric vehicles promise less polluted air in core city areas. Advanced nuclear power technologies are being pushed by a strong nuclear power lobby.

It does not take a genius to figure out that the solution to reducing emissions and hoping that such a reduction will indeed be the answer to the climate change crisis is to find new technologies for releasing energy without concomitant carbon release, or finding economical and durable carbon removal and carbon capture means and methods. Work along these lines proceeds feverishly, but breakthroughs are just glimmers for now.

A recent article in *The Wall Street Journal* tries to address the write-downs that will have to be taken by industry as we transition to alternative energy sources and transition away from fossil fuels. It mentions, almost as an aside, an estimate that it will cost \$131 trillion to reduce global warming. That is a subject for a future exploration but it should be sobering that at COP26, poorer nations upped their ask for support from richer nations to \$1 trillion per year, up from the previous request of \$100 billion per year. If the true cost is anywhere near \$131 trillion, even over a ten- or twenty-year period, it is doubtful that the world can afford it. On the other hand, the world cannot afford not to do it.

Cheerz...
Bwana

Code of Ethics for Barristers

Me Domingue vs Me Basset: 'The test is whether the administration of justice would be undermined by the continued appearance of Me Basset in the case...'

“Are members of the legal profession (solicitors, attorneys and barristers) held to a Code of Ethics and if so, how are these applied and enforced by their respective professional associations and councils? Lex provides the legal insight and comments on situations of potential or alleged conflict-of-interest, as is the case with the submission of Me Antoine Domingue challenging the appearance of another senior barrister, Me Desire Basset, on behalf of his client Mr Pravind K. Jugnauth on grounds that have been mentioned in the press.”



chaired by Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury in 2007, a combination of integrity, honesty, courage, commitment, common sense, and perseverance are required, as well as skills and talents including analytical skills, intellect, persuasiveness, organizational skills, good judgment and language fluency.'

In the English court case of Wingate & Anor- Austin v Solicitors Regulation Authority in 2018, one Judge said: "Integrity connotes moral soundness, rectitude and steady adherence to an ethical code... lack of integrity and dishonesty are not synonymous. A person may lack integrity even though not established as being dishonest..."

LEX

* We have heard a lot since quite some time about conflict-of-interest situations in different sectors. What is it all about, and are there different types of conflicts of interest?

According to Wikipedia: "A conflict of interest is a set of circumstances that creates a risk that professional judgement or actions regarding a primary interest will be unduly influenced by a secondary interest."

Primary interest refers to the principal goals of the profession or activity, such as the protection of clients, the health of patients, the integrity of research, and the duties of public officer.

Secondary interest includes personal benefit and is not limited to only financial gain but also such motives as the desire for professional advancement, or the wish to do favours for family and friends. These secondary interests are not treated as wrong in and of themselves, but become objectionable when they are believed to have greater weight than the primary interests.

* How do you identify conflict of interest?

There are a number of situations whereby a person can find himself in a situation of a conflict of interest. It is difficult to identify a situation of conflict on interest in a vacuum or in isolation. One must place oneself in the appropriate context.

Briefly, the conflict would arise when the person concerned has his judgment clouded on account of any relationship he may have with a person when it comes to making a decision. It may also arise where financial interests are at stake.

* Is conflict of interest a criminal offence?

Under the Prevention of Corruption Act, the offence is provided in section 13 which reads:

*1. Where -

a. a public body in which a public official is a member, director or employee proposes to deal with a company, partnership or other undertaking in which that public official or a relative or associate of his has a direct or indirect interest;

and

b. that public official and/or his relative or associate hold more than 10 per cent of the total issued share capital or of the total equity participation in such company, partnership or other undertaking,

that public official shall forthwith disclose, in writing, to that public body the nature of such interest.

2. Where a public official or a relative or associate of his has a personal interest in a decision which a public body is to take, that public official shall not vote or take part in any proceedings of that public body relating to such decision.

3. Any public official who contravenes subsection (1) or (2) shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to penal servitude for a term not exceeding 10 years.

Whenever a person places himself in a situation where he participates in a decision in which he or his associate or relative may have an interest, that puts him in a situation of conflict of interest.

* Are lawyers bound by a code of ethics?

Definitely. The Code of Ethics for Barristers was published as General Notice 1702 of 1997. There is also one for attorneys or solicitors prepared by the Council of The Mauritius Law Society under Section 17 (1) of The Mauritius Law Society Act.

* What are the guiding principles of the code of ethics for lawyers, and what are they designed for?

In the foreword to the Code of Ethics, Mr Varma, then Attorney General summed up the situation as follows:

'The Code of Ethics contains the written standards of professional conduct to be observed by barristers. The general purpose of this Code is to provide standards of conduct applicable to barristers appropriate in the interests of justice. Observance of the provisions of the Code is not confined to inside the court room. It extends to all aspects of the barrister's work and in some respects to behaviour beyond work as a barrister.'

'The qualities needed for a career at the Bar comprise attributes both of temperament and of talent. As highlighted in the report of the Entry to the Bar Working Committee

ty and dishonesty are not synonymous. A person may lack integrity even though not established as being dishonest..."

“There are a number of situations whereby a person can find himself in a situation of a conflict of interest. It is difficult to identify a situation of conflict on interest in a vacuum or in isolation. One must place oneself in the appropriate context. Briefly, the conflict would arise when the person concerned has his judgment clouded on account of any relationship he may have with a person when it comes to making a decision. It may also arise where financial interests are at stake...”

* We would like to think that lawyers, attorneys and notaries would all be guided by the same principles of Integrity, Objectivity, Professional competence and due care, Confidentiality, and Professional behaviour. What's the rationale for these legal professionals to have each a separate code of ethics?

The Code of Ethics for Attorneys states: 'An Attorney shall on taking the oath of office, endeavour to maintain the tradition, high integrity, honour and dignity of the profession and encourage other Attorneys to act similarly, in the practice of his profession and his private life, refrain from conduct which is detrimental to the profession or may tend to discredit it.'

This is not a far cry from the ethical standards expected of a barrister.

Traditionally we have followed the British model of having two branches of the profession: attorneys and barristers. In England it is the solicitor who interviews clients and takes instructions from them and advise them on necessary courses of legal action. In so doing he must act with integrity and honesty. The solicitor then briefs the barrister who appears in court.

Given the difference in the duties of an attorney and barrister, it is more practical to have two sets of ethical rules.

● Cont. on page 12



Demonstrators hold flags and placards as they gather to protest against the coronavirus disease measures in Vienna, Austria. Pic - dailynews.lk

Despite Covid spike, Europe sees protests against lockdowns, vaccine mandates

Even as Europe has been witnessing a rising number of coronavirus disease cases across the continent, lockdowns have met with protests in the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland on Saturday. All of these nations, including Germany and Russia, which are seeing record infection levels, are imposing lockdown-like restrictions and banning unvaccinated people from venues, leading to riots and protests.

Soon after the Austrian government announced that it would impose a lockdown starting Monday and mandated

its entire eligible population to get vaccinated within February, protesters took to streets in Vienna. The protests were spearheaded by right-wing political outfit Freedom Party who have vowed to oppose the new restrictions.

The Austrian lockdown will remain in place for 10 days following which the authorities will take a call on whether to extend it for another 10 days. Vaccinations in Austria are one of the lowest in western Europe and at least 66% of Austria's 8.9 million people are vaccinated.

The Netherlands' Rotterdam saw violence as police were forced to fire bullets at protesters on Friday. Police arrested 51 anti-lockdown protesters on Saturday and said that a hunt is on for more instigators.

"Fifty-one people were arrested during the major disturbances on Friday evening and night on Coolingsingel (street) in Rotterdam. About half of them were just underage," Rotterdam Police said. The police also said that two of these protesters were also hit by a bullet when the police allegedly fired at protesters to disperse them. Ahmed Aboutaleb, Rotterdam mayor, called the protests an 'orgy of violence', news agency Reuters reported.

Hundreds of protesters also took to the streets of Amsterdam on Saturday to protest against the partial lockdown imposed by Dutch authorities.

A news report by AP says that protests are also expected to take place in Switzerland, Croatia and Italy against lockdown measures despite Europe seeing a rise

in the number of cases, which health officials have attributed to not taking vaccines and not following Covid-19 preventative measures.

New Zealand to adopt new virus-fighting system from Dec

New Zealand will adopt a new system of living with the virus from Dec. 3, which will end tough coronavirus measures and allow businesses to operate in its biggest city, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said in a statement on Monday.

The country has been unable to beat an outbreak of the highly infectious Delta variant of Covid-19 centred in Auckland, forcing Ardern to abandon her acclaimed elimination strategy and switch to a system of treating the virus as endemic.

Its biggest city Auckland has been in lockdown for over 90 days, although some measures were eased recently.

"The hard truth is that Delta is here and not going away, but New Zealand is well set to tackle it because of our high vaccination rates and our latest safety measures including the traffic light system and Vaccine Pass," Ardern said.

In the new system, regions will be put into a red, orange or green setting depending on their level of exposure to Covid-19 and vaccination rates. Auckland, which is the epicentre of the outbreak, will start at red.

Ardern said about 83% of eligible New Zealanders are fully vaccinated now and if all those people who are due for their second shot get it, that number would rise to 88%.

New Zealand enforced some of the tightest pandemic restrictions among OECD nations that has helped limit the spread of Covid-19 so far and helped the economy bounce back faster than many of its peers.

Australia to reopen to fully vaccinated foreign visa holders from December 1



Australia shut its international border in May 2020 and allowed only restricted numbers of citizens and permanent residents to enter. Pic - Reuters

Australia will allow foreign visa holders to enter the country from the start of December, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said on Monday, the latest step to restart international travel and support its economy.

Australia shut its international border in May 2020 and allowed only restricted numbers of citizens and permanent residents to enter in a bid to curtail the spread of Covid-19.

The rules were relaxed in recent weeks to allow foreign family members of citizens to enter, and Morrison said this will be scaled up from Dec. 1 to allow vaccinated students, business visa holders and refugees to arrive.

"The return of skilled workers and stu-

dents to Australia is a major milestone in our pathway back," Morrison told reporters in Canberra. Australia will also allow in vaccinated tourists from South Korea and Japan from Dec 1, he said.

The return of foreign students, who are worth about \$25 billion a year to the Australian economy, will be a major boost for the education sector.

More than 235,000 foreigners, including about 160,000 students, held visas for Australia at the end of October, government data showed.

Many Australian universities have come to rely on foreign students, who make up about 21% of total enrolments, and the border closure led higher education facilities to lay off hundreds of staff.

China's hypersonic missile shows Xi's interest in launching orbital strikes

China fired a missile from a hypersonic weapon as it approached a target during a test in July, the Financial Times reported, adding the Pentagon was surprised because no nation was known to have the capability.

The top U.S. military officer, General Mark Milley, has provided the first official U.S. confirmation of a Chinese hypersonic weapons test that military experts say appears to show Beijing's pursuit of an Earth-orbiting system designed to evade American missile defenses, reports Bloomberg.

A hypersonic glide vehicle launched by China fired the projectile over the South China Sea while moving at five times the speed of sound, the newspaper reported, citing people familiar with the intelligence.

Some military experts believe an air-to-air missile was fired, the newspaper said. Others thought it was a countermeasure that could hurt the ability of missile defense systems to knock out the hypersonic weapon, which can carry a nuclear warhead, in a battle.

The Financial Times reported last month that China conducted hypersonic weapons tests on July 27 and again on Aug. 13, raising concern in Washington about Beijing's advancing military capabilities.

China's Foreign Ministry said in



China's Foreign Ministry said in October the nation had tested "a routine spacecraft". Pic - UAE Bulletin

October the nation had tested "a routine spacecraft" to see if it was reusable, an assertion ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian repeated Monday at a regular press briefing in Beijing.

In an apparent effort to dismiss the idea the spacecraft launched anything, Zhao added: "After separating from the spacecraft before its return, the supporting devices will burn up when they are falling in the atmosphere."

If China's tests of hypersonic weapons are confirmed, it would suggest that President Xi Jinping may be exploring orbital strikes as a way to counter American advancements in shooting down ballistic missiles before they can threaten the US homeland. Last year, the US Navy successfully intercepted a mock intercontinental ballistic missile.

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"Do not sing for the murderers of my beloved Jamal," Hatice Cengiz wrote. Pic - i1.wp.com

Jamal Khashoggi's fiancée urges Justin Bieber to cancel Saudi performance

The woman who was engaged to marry Jamal Khashoggi has asked singer Justin Bieber to cancel his scheduled Dec. 5 performance in Saudi Arabia's second-largest city Jeddah, urging him to not perform for the slain Saudi journalist's "murderers."

Hatice Cengiz wrote an open letter to the singer published on Saturday in the Washington Post in which she urged Bieber to cancel the performance to "send a powerful message to the world that your name and talent will not be used to restore the reputation of a regime that kills its critics."

President Joe Biden's administration released a U.S. intelligence report in February implicating Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Khashoggi's 2018 murder in Istanbul but spared him any direct punishment. The crown prince denies any involvement, reports Reuters.

Bieber, who is Canadian, is among a group of artists scheduled to perform as Saudi Arabia hosts the Formula One Saudi Arabian Grand Prix in Jeddah.

Human rights groups have urged the performers to speak out against human rights issues in the kingdom.

"Saudi Arabia has a history of using celebrities and major international events to deflect scrutiny from its pervasive abuses," Human Rights Watch said on Wednesday.

Khashoggi, a Saudi-born U.S. resident who wrote opinion columns for the Washington Post critical of the Saudi crown prince, was killed and dismembered by a team of operatives linked to the prince in the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul.

US lawmakers urge Katherine Tai to look for a deal during India visit

A bipartisan group of 75 US lawmakers have urged US Trade Representative (USTR) Katherine Tai to work towards a framework deal during her talks in New Delhi to quickly reinstate India's benefits under an American preferential trade programme that allows tariff-free entry for imports from selective countries.

But only if, they added, progress is made at the upcoming meeting of the Trade Policy Forum (TPF), the high platform for trade talks between the two sides, on the longstanding US demand for more access to Indian markets, reports Hindustan Times.

The scheme - Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) - lapsed in December 2020; a replacement legislation to reform and modernise it is currently working its way through US Congress.

But India's benefits were suspended by the Trump administration much before in June 2019 after failing



US trade representative Katherine Tai will meet her Indian counterpart union minister for commerce and industry Piyush Goyal on November 23. Pic - republicworld.com

to get India grant US businesses to its markets.

The letter was initiated by House of Representatives members Suzan DelBene, a Democrat, and Brad Westrup, a Republican. A total of more than 40 Democrats and 30

Republicans signed the letter.

Tai meets her Indian counterpart union minister for commerce and industry Piyush Goyal on November 23. The TPF is meeting for the first time in four years.

On Joe Biden's birthday, Former US President Obama calls him 'friend', 'brother'

Former US President Obama on Saturday took to Twitter to wish President Biden a happy birthday. "Happy birthday to my friend and my brother, @POTUS!" Obama tweeted, reports ANI.

Biden had served as Obama's vice president during his eight years in office. They both have worked together for years in their political careers

In his tweet, Obama highlighted the passage of the bipartisan infrastructure bill that is seen as a major win for the Biden administration.

"Thanks for giving all of us the gift of better infrastructure. Grateful for all you're doing to build this country back better," Obama added.

Biden got the infrastructure bill passed and has turned his attention



Obama-Biden photos show their bromance. Pic - Business Insider

to the Build Back Better Act, The Hill reported.

The bill is not expected to have Republican support, the report added.

On Thursday, the Congressional Budget Office released a cost estimate of Biden's plan, saying it would increase the country's deficit by \$367 billion over 10 years.

China downgrades diplomatic ties with Lithuania over Taiwan office opening

China on Sunday downgraded its diplomatic ties with Lithuania, expressing strong dissatisfaction with the Baltic state after Taiwan, which Beijing claims as a breakaway region, opened a de facto embassy in capital Vilnius.

The Chinese foreign ministry also issued a "stern warning" to Taiwan, saying it is "never a country".

China views Taiwan, a self-ruled democracy, as its territory and opposes any kind diplomatic ties with a third country.

On November 18, Lithuania, a nation of around 2.8 million people, brushed aside China's protests, to allow Taipei to set up a "Taiwanese Representative Office in Lithuania" in Vilnius, reports SutirthoPatranobis of Hindustan Times.

"The Chinese side expresses its strong indignation and protest against this move, and decides to



In this file photo released by the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Eric Huang, newly appointed director to the representative office, third from right, poses with other staffers outside the Taiwan Representative Office in Vilnius. Pic - AP

downgrade its diplomatic relations with Lithuania to the chargé d'affaires level," the Chinese foreign ministry said in a statement on Sunday.

Lithuania, according to agency reports from Vilnius, expressed regret over China's move but defended its right to expand cooperation with Taiwan while respecting Beijing's "One China" policy.

The Chinese foreign ministry, meanwhile, also warned Taiwan, saying it belongs to China. "We also have this stern warning for the Taiwan authorities: Taiwan is never a country. No matter how "Taiwan independence" forces try to misrepresent facts and confound black and white, the historical fact that the mainland and Taiwan belong to one and the same China cannot be changed."

Dr Shameem Z. Jaumdally - Senior Research Scientist

Centre for Lung Infection and Immunity, Department of Medicine & UCT Lung Institute, University of Cape Town

“Vaccines remain the most clinically effective and cost-effective biomedical intervention to mitigate the impact of the epidemic”



Senior Research Scientist Dr Shameem Jaumdally, based in South Africa, makes a detailed overview of the current Covid-19 situation, covering all aspects from prevention to treatment. Importantly, echoing other voices too he makes a plea for preparedness in view of further waves that are expected, and lays stress on the need for cross-cutting institutional collaboration and for basing policy decisions on scientific evidence. Read on...

little who was patient zero. The most likely scenario for the introduction of the Delta variant in the community would have involved hotel staff who had interactions with infected tourists/returning citizens coming to our shores during the resort quarantine period.

It is also important to highlight that tourists and returning residents are actually the least risky group, given that they are tested prior to travel, at arrival and a further few days into their stay in the country. We should not fall into the trap of believing that tourists are the reason of what we are experiencing now. The likelihood of a community transfer was always higher from a returning citizen who interfaces with the community at a higher frequency.

severe disease in people it infects. The higher casualty rate is merely linked to the greater number of cases. Mutations in the genome of the Delta variant do however confer a better resistance to vaccines, where vaccine efficacy against both infection and the progression to severe disease is rendered lower.

*** A threshold of 700,000 persons vaccinated had been set for the country to achieve herd immunity. Almost 70% of the population have been fully vaccinated, and about 42,000 have received the booster shot. But now we are told that vaccines, though vital, are not a “perfect panacea”. How do you react to that?**

Because we are dealing with an epidemic caused by a novel virus, the targets have always remained moving ones. The sheer spread of the virus around the globe has led to the emergence of several mutants.

At the initial stage of vaccines roll out, the hope was that we would have vaccines that provide sterilising immunity, which is protection against infection. Waning vaccine immunity over time, especially in a more at-risk population (older age and comorbidities) also complicated the attainment of this now elusive herd immunity. Global vaccine efficacy has however remained very high, well in excess of 90% against death due to Covid-19.

At the moment, vaccines remain the most clinically effective and cost-effective biomedical intervention to mitigate the impact of the epidemic.

*** But if vaccines remain vital for self and community protection, what do we know about the efficacy of the vaccines available in Mauritius against the Delta variant, and what would you recommend for the booster shot?**

The vaccination program in Mauritius is unique in the sense that we have made use of a variety of vaccines. As known from the get-go, inactivated vaccines (Sinopharm and Covaxin) have a lower efficacy than the viral vector-based systems (AstraZeneca/Covishield, J&J, Sputnik). mRNA jabs with the highest efficacy, in this case Pfizer, have been rolled out for teenagers and will now be made available as a booster for more vulnerable population and highly exposed healthcare workers, and also for pregnant women.

*** The local Covid situation appears to be extremely serious, as evidenced by the current wave with increasing numbers of people becoming infected and the number of deaths, among both young and old alike, on the rise. What’s your assessment of the situation as a virologist?**

In the absence of a reliable report on the number of daily new cases, the next best indicators we are left with to get an understanding of where we are in the current wave remain our hospital admission and death rates. The trends show that we have now reached our peak in the number of daily cases. However, a lag of 7-10 days from infection to hospitalisation, and a further 4-7 days until demise, are indicative that both these statistics will increase in the coming days. A decline in both is expected in early December. The heterogeneity in the profile of casualties (young and old, urban and rural residents) points to a widespread distribution of cases across the island.

*** When the first wave hit last year, it was known who was “patient zero”. This time round, it would seem the authorities may be at odds about what led to the resurgence of the disease, and more specifically, who is “patient zero”. What are your views thereon?**

Past a successful dissemination of the virus across the island and the establishment of regional clusters, it matters

“A recent breakthrough in treatment in the form of the drugs Molnupiravir and Paxlovid is welcome news to palliate for vaccine failures in the most vulnerable group. The administration of a therapy is far less challenging than a vaccine program. But we should remind ourselves that Covid-19 leaves behind long term sequelae even in young otherwise healthy individuals and a vaccine works best...”

*** Is this wave due only to the rapid spread of the Delta variant or are there other factors involved?**

A combination of Delta’s increased transmissibility (on account of an up to 100-fold higher viral load) and a lack of effective restrictive measures have, in my view, led to an exponential rise in community transmission. This translated in the expected steep rise in hospitalisation and death due to Covid-19 that we are experiencing now.

*** How does the Delta variant compare with the first Covid-19, and are there likely to be other more deadly variants?**

The Delta variant has not been found to cause more

• Cont. on page 9



Cont. from page 8

Vaccines modulate the immune system in different ways. One component of this, the level of neutralizing antibodies in the systemic circulation, is thought to be central to protection against both infection and severe disease. This level goes down over a period of 6-8 months and that is why a booster shot is recommended for the more at-risk individuals to guarantee optimal protection on exposure.

Real life efficacy measured through epidemiological outcomes and laboratory assessment have confirmed that efficacy against Delta has only marginally decreased compared to the wild type strain (original Wuhan virus against which vaccines were developed), but efficacy against transmission has gone down significantly on account of the changes mutations have conferred to the different variants.

“On the vaccine front, the most likely scenario right now is the design and regular (yearly) update of a polyvalent vaccine generated against a cocktail of the most prevalent strains at the time, as we have for seasonal flu. Vaccine designs are being improved to minimize the occurrence and severity of side effects and increase vaccine efficacy...”

From my experience, I highly recommend that all people who are at greater risk of developing severe disease get their booster shot.

*** Government has come forward two weeks back with some measures to stop the spread of the virus in the country. Do you think these are sufficient given that the Delta variant could be more aggressive and much more transmissible than previously circulating strains?**

The pace of transmission and its widespread nature over the last weeks have demonstrated that these measures were clearly not sufficient. I feel that the Mauritian population at large still struggles to grasp the basic concept of what leads to increased transmission potential. Citizens were told that outdoor events were safer, and soon after we saw them camping on the beach in large

‘The C.1.2 variant is almost undetectable in South Africa...

it has very quickly been swept aside in by his Delta ‘cousin’ which proved to be much fitter to take hold in community spread’

groups, dropping mask wearing, devoid of a proper access to water or sanitizer, and crowding in tents at night time. This was one of the many examples that provided the perfect breeding ground for the superspreading of Delta. Gatherings of up to 50 people, while permissible, also contributed to an unchecked spread of the virus.

The population needs to understand that in a time when the positivity rate is so high (20%+ if you consider rapid testing alone) the risk is more than real! Any event that involves the sharing of a meal is one that is at heightened risk of transforming into a superspreading meeting. Gathering of over 50 means that people from different households will meet. Nobody will convince me that all of these indoor events (*de facto* behind closed doors and away from public scrutiny/legal enforcement) will have all the proper sanitary measures to guarantee a safe environment.

The biggest fallacy of this new set of measures was the size of gatherings. Every measure we put in place to curb spread should have this target as a premise. And these should be applied consistently across the new protocol. It confused people and sent the wrong signal when only 10 congregants were permitted at places of worship and yet grouping of up to 50 were permissible for social reasons. The temporary closure of schools was a good measure. It upsets me to hear people use the rhetoric of allowing full capacity in public transport as an excuse to meet up in smaller groups for social reasons, claiming they are at lower risk of exposure. It highlights the fact that they do not understand much about the transmission of this virus!

Don't get me wrong, I am not saying that having packed buses is ok at the peak of a wave with a respiratory virus, but in a reduced capacity, with proper aeration, a non-negotiable wearing of mask and effective sanitization, we can safely allow for the provision of this essential part of around half a million people's life, daily users commuting for work mostly. This counts as an essential part of our economic continuity and survival.

*** What else do you think should be done in order to bring the current situation under control as rapidly as possible?**

In South Africa, where I am based, our restrictions are tailored to fit what research has taught us regarding transmission. For instance, epidemiological research has highlighted that settings involving the consumption of liquor are at greater risk of being superspreading sources for Covid-19. Based on this knowledge, it was decreed that the sale of liquor from Friday to Sunday would be banned across the country. This measure was also in line with freeing up more beds in ICUs to deal with an increasing Covid-19 hospital burden instead of being used by a victim of alcohol related trauma such as drunk driving, homicide, or gender-based violence, all societal issues rampant across the rainbow nation.

What I am saying is that measures need to fit the desired change in behaviours that we expect, because lest we forget, Covid-19 is very much a behaviour dependent epidemic. My first suggestion is the instauration of a curfew

from sunset to the early hours of the morning for the right period, started at the right time. This will allow essential movement for economic activities to continue while keeping in check the unnecessary gathering of people during the different waves we will experience.

Work from home should be prioritized for people at risk. A durable strategy for work/study from home should be established and I emphasize the ‘durable’ aspect because we will need to switch to this mode everytime we go through a resurgence in cases. Businesses like food outlets and bars/pubs should operate with a limited seating capacity. Very strict sanitary protocols should at all times be enforced in these spaces to allow for a tangible operational framework, and one that can work!

“Most countries that have navigated through this Covid-19 storm have chosen right from the beginning that their reaction to the epidemic will be guided by science and research. Without a proper understanding of what the situation is on the ground, no effective war plan can be devised. This intel can only be garnered through the mass collection of data and rigorous analysis and data mining...”

I appeal to people to adopt a pray-at-home option when necessary and I remind them that our different faiths have made provision for this. It is holy to protect oneself and those around us. Every effort matters, big or small. Finally sports and leisure group activities, even when practised in outdoor settings should be avoided.

*** In view of the evolving characteristic of the coronavirus, what do you think should be undertaken to equip the country and its health authorities face any future strains of the virus?**

We are at war against an enemy that we do not understand fully. It displays characteristics that makes it fitter as it evolves. It is invisible, it can infect incognito and further remain incognito (asymptomatic status) while being transported around for its next strike. But concerted efforts from the research community across the world, a focused effort on deciphering the characteristics of this novel virus and large scale sharing of data and experience in the fight against this microbe have contributed to providing more effective strategies, biological or otherwise.

Most countries that have navigated through this Covid-19 storm have chosen right from the beginning that their reaction to the epidemic will be guided by science and research. Without a proper understanding of what the situation is on the ground, no effective war plan can be devised. This intel can only be garnered through the mass collection of data and rigorous analysis and data mining. Professionals with the right training and experience should be invited to come on board for this.

● Cont. on page 10

'I highly recommend that all people who are at greater risk of developing severe disease get their booster shot'

Cont. from page 9

The biggest stakeholder that comes to mind in this case is our research community across the multiple universities and comparable institutions on the island. Insurance companies have access to big data for their medical aid holders and a team of highly trained actuaries. Let's use all these resources!

I have no doubt that, if called upon, all these people will not think twice to take their spear and head to war. The best way to mitigate the impact of this epidemic is developing a capacity to predict and plan. Forecasts are reliant on the generation of high-quality data and its rigorous analysis. The independence of this process is key to establishing a solid 'rapport de confiance' with the population.

*** If we are going to learn to live with the coronavirus as well as keep updated with its variants circulating in different countries, does it also mean that we would likely have to get a booster vaccine at regular intervals in the future?**

It is known from the Israel experience, four months ago, that the holy grail of herd immunity is unachievable. Vaccines have their limits while still providing a high level of protection against severe disease and death. Covid-19 is here to stay. It will become endemic in the next two years. This means it will be like the seasonal flu and possibly come with similar challenges, such as constant mutations in its genome.

On the vaccine front, the most likely scenario right now is the design and regular (yearly) update of a polyvalent vaccine generated against a cocktail of the most prevalent strains at the time, as we have for seasonal flu. Vaccine designs are being improved to minimize the occurrence and severity of side effects and increase vaccine efficacy.

A recent breakthrough in treatment in the form of the drugs Molnupiravir and Paxlovid is welcome news to palliate for vaccine failures in the most vulnerable group. The administration of a therapy is far less challenging than a vaccine program. But we should remind ourselves that Covid-19 leaves behind long term sequelae even in young otherwise healthy individuals and a vaccine works best



“The population needs to understand that in a time when the positivity rate is so high (20%+ if you consider rapid testing alone) the risk is more than real! Any event that involves the sharing of a meal is one that is at heightened risk of transforming into a superspreading meeting. Gathering of over 50 means that people from different households will meet. Nobody will convince me that all of these indoor events will have all the proper sanitary measures to guarantee a safe environment...”

with its avant-garde mechanism of action.

*** It's unlikely that a silver bullet may be in the pipeline any time soon, right?**

As a trained virologist I will state that the only weapon that will fulfil the potential of a silver bullet will be an effective antiviral. We are seeing rapid progress in that endeavour. Until these medicines are accessible, we need to stick to what is known to work. Preventive measures, mostly self-imposed, are the best strategies right now.

We talk about the new normal, but it is evident that the population is not going about it academically and pragmatically. Academically: are we changing our behaviours effectively, pragmatically in the sense of practicality and durability? A new normal means learning to live when case counts are low and likewise when they go up. The implementation of a graded warning system, driven by evidence and attached to grade-dependent set of restrictive measures would go a long way in helping the population transition into this new normal. They need to be educated, provided with a clear rationale of why restrictions are being implemented. Practical choices, such as having a wedding when one wishes to, should rather be dictated by when it is safest to have them.

We will need to learn to make use of the reprieve we get between waves of Covid that will hit us. Global experience is warning us that we will experience at least two of these every year for at least two more years. We have been warned. It is time to act accordingly.

*** In the meantime, there's another challenge that will have to be overcome in the fight against the pandemic: inaccurate, or misleading information, false rumours, and gossip, like the one presently circulating on social media presently in Mauritius about "a new highly mutated variant" of the Covid-19 virus having been identified in South Africa — the C.1.2 variant, which would be already active in seven other countries across Africa, Asia and the Pacific regions. Is that indeed the case, and would it be more severe than the Delta variant?**

Along with the viral epidemic that we are experiencing, a parallel epidemic of fake news and disinformation has slowly but surely garnered support, and the wave has been

unabating for this mostly epistemological problem. A lot of this emanates from antivaxxers or anti-lockdown anarchists who have a sinister agenda to push forward.

In the case of the C.1.2 variant, while it was in the news around three months ago for being the most mutated variant of the virus, it has very quickly been swept aside in South Africa by his Delta 'cousin' which proved to be much fitter to take hold in community spread on account of its higher transmissibility. Now, this variant is almost undetectable in South Africa. This shows how quickly things evolve during an epidemic of this nature and why it is important to constantly update ourselves with the most recent findings.

MAURITIUS TIMES To Our Readers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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“Measures need to fit the desired change in behaviours that we expect, because lest we forget, Covid-19 is very much a behaviour dependent epidemic. My first suggestion is the instauration of a curfew from sunset to the early hours of the morning for the right period, started at the right time. This will allow essential movement for economic activities to continue while keeping in check the unnecessary gathering of people during the different waves we will experience...”

From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

5th Year No 178

MAURITIUS TIMES

Saturday 4 January 1958

• Society does not in any age prevent a man from being what he can be. -- Thomas Carlyle

Our Problem Boys

By H.D. Rughoo

How many of our boys are there in London? No one seems to know for sure. There must be quite a lot of them though for I used to come across them everywhere, in Trafalgar Square, at Piccadilly, Russell Sq., YMCA, India House, at the Scala during Indian shows, British Museum, Hyde Park and Hammersmith Palais. They seemed to be as ubiquitous as the Jamaicans but not as numerous and certainly enjoying a better reputation with Londoners. Some of them work to provide for their families. Others are working part time and studying at night.

But it is not on this group that I wish to write today. There is another batch, scattered all over London: the student class.

There are a few who would be a credit to their community anywhere they'd go. These will surely return to shine later in life and be a tower of strength for the up-and-coming youths. We know them and wish them well. But there are others, our problem boys.

There is S... He will never show his face again here. He has been studying Law for the last decade and never could jump the last hurdle. There are X and Y, boys of well-known families who live somewhere off Russell Sq. They also have been tacking sails to ease around the Law Finals for the past eight years. I could cite dozens of such cases. The tragedy is that parents cannot check boys attend at Grey's and Lincoln's Inns, no principals to control students. Most of these students drag their feet and become a pathetic lot. But the most tragic case is that of Z... a medical student for the past fourteen years.

I first met Z... in one of those Soho cafes, low lights, sky-rocketing music. He was beating time violently to the violent music. I could see that he was more than half drunk. He looked at me with his glassy, drunk eyes and finally came out rather aggressively with: "You must be a Mauritian, I can smell the breed a mile off."

"What's the particular smell, fangourin," I said, trying to cheer him up. "Nothing so sweet," he rejoined. He sounded bitter. He looked bitter. A few more drinks, loosened his tongue and I could do nothing to stop the flood of incoherent words, the tears, the sniffing. I thanked our luck for the low lights. In the early hours of the morning, I had to dump him in his bed-sitter, promising to phone his landlady and assume the blame on myself.

Z's childhood days were not very easy. He had to get up early, help in the fields. After his preliminary schooling, he was thrown at the mercy of one of those "colleges" mushrooming by the scores throughout the island. The price of sugar went up, money started coming in and there was even a concrete house and a brand-new limousine for the family. Life assumed more savoury proportions. But the ambiance in which he was brought up, how to change that? That was an impossibility. Then the blow fell. The neighbour's son left for UK to study medicine. Z's father felt dejected. Said he: "Why not my son, after all, by God's grace, I too can spend a few thousands on my son's education." Z... anxious to escape the world of his father, sugared the old man along this motion and so it was that he left to study medicine with only three passes in GCE: French, Mathematics & Hindi. He lost three years in London to

complete his university entrance requirement studies which he should have finished in Mauritius. He was literally taken by the scruff of his neck, jerked out of his own, narrow world and dumped on the toughest, most sophisticated city in the world to fend for himself. His European student friends were years younger than himself, well-polished, self-confident. Z... found the going hard; he started slipping down. His father, like many uneducated fathers, had crushed the spirit of combativeness, self-confidence, in his son, Z... never thought of putting his back to the wall and fight. He had always thought that money and a stay in London could secure him a medical degree.

* * *

Our last reunion was a nightmarish phantasmagoria composed of beer, raucous music, sentimental reminiscences and tears. "I had something here," he kept repeating, banging his forehead on the edge of the bar, "I feel that I had something upstairs, but it's all gone dry now. I am sure I'd have made a good manager on my father's estate. How to face my friends without a degree. Better death, death".

Then he would jerk himself out of his monologue and exclaim:

"But we have lots of people like me here, wasting their real talents after a degree, wasting their father's money, their own life. Look, Harry, you're returning to that lost island, couldn't you do something to stop this ridiculous **Moutons de Panurge** race. There are so many fields of activities open to our youth, we need a few more attorneys, notaries, educators, agronomists, mechanics, (how many Indian-owned repair shops in proportion to the number of vehicles we own). And what about trade? For how much longer will we allow others to exploit us? Why this pathetic craze for doctors and lawyers? Don't you feel the tragedy



Passage to England in the 1950s... in search of a better life.

Pic - Wordpress

of the whole farce, Harry? Couldn't we force our people's eyes to new horizons? And, if they have to send their sons, at least equip them with sufficient educational qualifications so that they don't have to mark time and get lost in the vastness of life here."

He spoke all this and more and the volume of his words, the weight of his arguments, the depth of his own tragedy left me empty.

But a solution there must be. It is appalling to see so much waste of our money, the energies of our youth, in futile endeavours. And how our community needs the money, the energies of our young blood!

But what single solution to offer? I personally feel that all responsible people in this island should make contributions towards the solving of this problem. After all, the future of this community should be of interest to us all. It is no use simplifying the issue and pontificating on it. The question is far too important and strikes at the very roots of our community here.



1956-2021



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Me Domingue vs Me Basset: 'The test is whether the administration of justice would be undermined...'

● Cont. from page 5

*** What does it mean when a lawyer has a conflict of interest, and what does the law provide in the circumstances where a lawyer is perceived to be in a situation of conflict?**

On conflict of interest the Code of Ethics for barristers states: *A barrister shall not advise, represent or act on behalf of two or more clients in the same matter if there is a conflict or a significant risk of a conflict between the interests of those clients. He shall, in such a case, cease to act for both clients and he shall further cease to act whenever there is a risk of a breach of confidence or where his independence may be impaired.*

But there are other considerations that also come into play like integrity, and whether counsel was in a situation where he obtained information that would pit him a more advantageous situation especially where there is no disclosure.

*** Senior Counsel Antoine Domingue has taken objection to Me Desire Basset taking up the legal defense of Hon Pravind Jugnauth in the matter of the Private Prosecution lodged by Mr Suren Dayal against the MSM leader for allegedly swearing a false affidavit in connection with his election expenses. Me Domingue considers Me Basset to be in a situation of conflict of interest for having been a member of the ESC during those elections and even in January 2021 when Ashok Subron of *Rezistans ek Alternativ* had asked the ESC to carry out an investigation in this matter. What's your take on that?**

It all depends to what extent Me Basset was involved in the referral of the case to the police and how deep he delved in the ramifications of the allegations made by *Rezistans ek Alternativ*. Only Me Basset can enlighten us on that.



“There are a number of situations whereby a person can find himself in a situation of a conflict of interest. It is difficult to identify a situation of conflict on interest in a vacuum or in isolation. One must place oneself in the appropriate context. Briefly, the conflict would arise when the person concerned has his judgment clouded on account of any relationship he may have with a person when it comes to making a decision. It may also arise where financial interests are at stake...”

*** From what we hear, it's the Bar Council which should have looked into this matter, but our understanding is that the latter party has decided not to intervene and left it to Me Basset to take any action that he would deem fit. That seems reasonable, isn't it, especially when the parties involved are senior members of the Bar?**

The Code of Ethics for Barristers has this to say with regard to disputes amongst barristers:

Where a barrister considers that a colleague has acted in breach of a rule of professional conduct, he shall draw the matter to the attention of his colleague.

Where any personal dispute of a professional nature arises amongst barristers, they shall, if possible, first try to settle it in a friendly way.

A barrister shall not commence any form of proceedings against a colleague on matters referred to above without first informing the Bar Council so that the latter might have an opportunity to assist in reaching a settlement.

Did the Bar Council apply this rule? We hear that the Supreme Court has now summoned the Bar Council to come explain their stand. Let us wait and see.

*** Me Basset has countered Me Domingue's argument by referring to the judgement of Kjell Tore Sklevsland v Gevevan Trading Co Ltd. What is this about, and how does that judgement help give guidance in this matter?**

In that case, objection was taken to a counsel appearing in a case on the ground that he might have obtained information from the wife of a litigant against whom counsel was appearing. The court dismissed the objection.

As to the question of personal embarrassment, the court stated that if the embarrassment undermines the case of the client, it is for the client to take appropriate action.

As regards the objection to Me Desire Basset taking up the legal defense of Hon Pravind Jugnauth in this particular case, the test is whether the administration of justice would be undermined by the continued appearance of Me Basset in the case.

The Conversation

● Cont. from page 2

These beliefs might be “chosen” through indoctrination. They might be the result of self-interest or strongly held ideology, such as wealthy people believing taxes rob people of initiative. Or they might be required to fit into a social group.

How do specific beliefs become linked to specific social groups? In some cases, the link is quite clearly defined.

Strongly religious people generally do not believe in evolution, and atheists are not creationists. Partisanship also produces dispositions to belief. The moral values of conservatives involve different issues – such as respect for authority – than those on the left, who put more weight on harm prevention. Liberals tend to be more drawn to seeking out change and novelty, both personally and politically, while conservatives, in contrast, have a stronger preference for things that are familiar, stable and predictable.

Often, simply knowing a belief is endorsed by a member of “their” side is enough to get people to support it.

Many current controversies have this

flavour, such as whether COVID vaccines or masks should be required, or whether nuclear power is good for the environment. We look to our peers, and to the authorities and ideologies we respect, and follow their lead.

We are also more likely to follow those who are highly confident, even though confidence is a poor predictor of accuracy. And, of course, those we follow, being human just like us, are probably doing the same thing.

Armchair experts are just behaving normally

Let's return to those high-profile broadcasters, social media celebrities and armchair experts who have been wilfully spreading an avalanche of misinformation.

They are really no different from everyone else.

If it is natural to believe things based on little evidence, and to believe things because they fit with our social group and partisan preferences, it should not surprise us that some hold beliefs quite at variance with ours.

Or that they apparently do so despite, as it appears to us, overwhelming contradictory evidence – from their perspective we are doing the same thing. We should not be surprised if a TV reporter or Twitter celebrity is just as likely as anyone else to believe things based on flimsy evidence.

As individuals, we may have fallen on the side of accepted scientific wisdom (where the bulk of the evidence and experts sit) during the pandemic, but there will probably be other situations where we too have beliefs that are based on our own misjudgements, ideologies or personal gain.

The American writer and political activist Upton Sinclair famously wrote: “It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends upon his not understanding it!”.

Even a scientist, when hired directly by a pharmaceutical company to evaluate the efficacy of a new blockbuster drug, might be disposed to find evidence of the drug's effectiveness.

Conversely, there are probably reasons

why a small – but prominent – number of scientists have taken a distinctly outlier stance regarding the pandemic, or other issues, such as climate change.

We need go no further than this to understand why there will be armchair experts proposing all possible positions, and when they gain attention and celebrity for doing so, they will stick with those positions.

To give up their position will be to lose all the attention, all the celebrity, and all their credibility. Imagine what would happen to Donald Trump if he were to come down on the side of poor refugees. Imagine what would happen to the radio hosts who have built up a larger following based on their unwavering libertarian views if they suddenly declared they had changed their minds about masks.

Once committed to a set of beliefs, the armchair expert is in it for the long run.

Daniel Read, Prof of Behavioural Science, Warwick Business School, University of Warwick

A Pandemic of Armchair Experts

Practise negotiating every day

It's time to start using everyday encounters to practise, so you can build your confidence and competence for higher-stakes negotiations in your business and everyday interactions. Pic - Shutterstock

— Suzanne de Janasz

During a workshop for mid- to senior-level career women, I posed the following scenario:

While in your favourite department store, you spot a very attractive pair of "professional" shoes. You happen to know that starting tomorrow, all ladies' shoes will be 30% off. What would you do?

Anne raised her hand confidently and responded, "I'd come back tomorrow." Pivoting quickly, I asked, "What if you're leaving tomorrow morning for a week-long business trip?" She then responded with "Um... maybe I'd see if I could order them online tomorrow at the sale price?"

It's true, not everyone is motivated by a sale price. Similar low-stakes negotiations — like asking for a discount when offering to pay cash — may sometimes not seem worth the effort. However, what if the discomfort you feel around asking for a discount is just the tip of the iceberg? What if the fear of rejection — of the request itself or of you personally — is keeping you from negotiating for anything in the first place? And what if ignoring or avoiding most low-stakes negotiation opportunities is keeping you from feeling confident and competent when approaching more high-stakes negotiations?

If fear is keeping you from negotiating, it's time to start using everyday encounters to practise, so you can build your confidence and competence for higher-stakes negotiations in your business and everyday interactions.

Recognizing opportunities to negotiate

Most books and articles about negotiation focus on how to prepare for a negotiation, or offer strategies for engaging effectively. What these guides fail to address is whether individuals recognize negotiation opportunities in the first place. The ability to recognize an opportunity depends on your perspective and your experience, as well as your culture, role models, and goals. When shopping in a department store, most consumers

see prices as fixed — not open for bargaining. That's less the case when shopping in a flea market, where many items don't have price tags and sellers expect that some shoppers will attempt to haggle for a better price.

Beyond commercial opportunities (since not all negotiations involve money/services/goods), what exactly is a negotiation opportunity? It can range anywhere from a disagreement with a neighbour, to the allocation of household chores, to your eligibility for a bonus at work. Consider asking yourself the following questions about situations you encounter in your everyday life:

- * Is this situation fair? Are others being offered better compensation, or do they benefit from fewer responsibilities, more resources, a bonus, or a better (cheaper, faster) deal?
- * Do I deserve a better or more fair outcome than I have been offered? If someone were to offer this to me now, would I hesitate to accept it?
- * Am I feeling uneasy or hesitant about the situation or offer? Would a more confident version of me make a request to get a better or more fair outcome?

Tactical advice about negotiating isn't useful if you fail to recognize or engage in negotiation opportunities.

Evaluating whether to engage in a negotiation

Keep in mind that not all opportunities are worth engaging in. The costs versus benefits calculus (relative to both the situation and the relationship) simply might not add up. Going back to the shoe example: if the shoes are \$100, with the potential for a \$30 savings, you might think, "Hmmm, I can come back tomorrow and save \$30, or I can pay the \$100 now, and not have to ask the salesperson an uncomfortable question (such as, "Excuse me, but is there a way you can give me the 30% discount today? I'm heading out of town tomorrow, and it would be great to get these shoes for the price that others will pay for them in less than 24 hours.") In this evaluation,

avoiding the discomfort — and the time such a conversation might take — might be worth \$30 for some people. But note that in this example, one is considering the negotiation and making a choice about it, as opposed to avoiding the situation altogether.

Evaluating non-monetary issues can be a bit more complicated. Imagine that you share an apartment with a close friend, and from the beginning, you gravitated toward doing most of the cleaning, cooking, and laundry. When the two of you moved in, you assumed that she would look after herself. She would thank you from time to time, but her perceived laziness has resulted in your growing resentment. You choose not to say anything, afraid of stirring up trouble, but continue doing the majority of the housework. Hints don't work, and the occasional request is met with defensiveness or empty promises to help.

You ask yourself: Is this fair? Is this a negotiation opportunity? Or is this the way things are and I'm going to have to accept this inequitable situation until the lease ends or I move out?

Factoring in individual preferences and comfort levels, one might choose not to negotiate... even when doing so could make a positive difference. Perhaps it's due to a fear of failure or a fear of rejection, but the more you ignore conflictual situations that could be improved with negotiation, the more you give such conflicts power over you.

That chore allocation discussion you avoided today might evolve into next week's avoided promotion/raise discussion. The first missed opportunity may result in the degradation of a relationship; the second may result in a serious loss of future earnings. When you consider that a \$7,000 starting salary difference over a 43-year career (ages 22-65) adds up to \$649,000 (assuming a 3% annual increase), I'm guessing you'll conclude that it's very worthwhile to negotiate.

By being mindful about recognizing and evaluating potential negotiation opportunities — weighing the financial, emotional, moral, or psychological trade-offs — you not only put yourself in a position to strategically approach how to negotiate for what you deserve (e.g., money, recognition, equitable treatment), but you also open the door to even better outcomes. You'll learn to improve relationships by working through conflicts. And you'll build a stronger "negotiation muscle" that will serve you well in higher-stakes negotiations.

Suzanne de Janasz is Professor of Management and Conflict Analysis & Resolution at George Mason University. This tip is adapted from "We Often Overlook Opportunities to Negotiate," by Suzanne de Janasz - Harvard Business Review

Work Smarter

Back out of a commitment gracefully

Have you ever said "yes" to something — taking on a new project, leading an internal committee — and later wished you had said "no"? It's not always possible to back out, but, when done gracefully, you may be able to uncommit in a way that keeps your reputation intact and your relationships strong. Here are some strategies to keep in mind.

- Consider the cost. Before you deliver the news, make sure that backing out is the right decision. Maybe the opportunity would have enough upside that it would be worth it even if it means working flat out for a period of time. However, if the costs outweigh the benefits (such as the impact on your personal life or your current projects), then it's better to withdraw.
- Be diplomatic but truthful. When you deliver your message, be direct, thoughtful, and above all else, honest. But resist the temptation to overexplain. For example, you might say: "When I said I could join the committee last month, I fully believed I had enough bandwidth to do a great job. After taking a closer look at my calendar, I realized I've overextended myself. This means I won't be able to participate."
- Offer an alternative. Don't leave the person high and dry. If possible, propose a different timeline, reschedule the commitment to a new date, or say that you'd love to collaborate on a future project (assuming you do). This will help you preserve the relationship, even after saying "no."

This tip is adapted from "How to Say 'No' After Saying 'Yes'," by Melody Wilding - Harvard Business Review

Appartement à louer - long terme



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Flu and heart disease: The surprising connection that should convince you to schedule your shot

If you have heart disease or risk factors for heart disease, you already know about the increased risk of heart attack and stroke. But did you know that coming down with the flu can substantially increase the risk of a serious or even fatal cardiac event? Or that getting the influenza vaccine can substantially reduce that risk, even if you do wind up contracting the seasonal virus?

It's well-known that the flu can lead to significant respiratory symptoms such as pneumonia, bronchitis and bacterial infection of the lungs. The virus' effects on the heart have historically been harder to parse out, in part because many patients already have a known predisposition to cardiac events and in part because the cardiac event often occurs weeks after the onset of the flu.

But here's what recent research has shown:

- Cardiovascular deaths and influenza epidemics spike around the same time.
- Patients are six times more likely to experience a heart attack the week after influenza infection than they are at any point during the year prior or the year after the infection.
- In one study looking at 336,000 hospital admissions for flu, 11.5%



experienced a serious cardiac event.

- Another study looking at 90,000 lab-confirmed influenza infections showed a strikingly similar rate of 11.7% experiencing an acute cardiovascular event.
- One in eight patients, or 12.5%, admitted to the hospital with influenza experienced a cardiovascular event, with 31% of those requiring intensive care and 7% dying as a result of the

event, another study found.

The reason influenza stresses the heart and vascular system so much has to do with the body's inflammatory response to the infection.

Inflammation occurs when your body's "first responders" -- white blood cells and what they produce in order to protect you - convene in an area and get to work fighting an infection, bacteria or virus. When you're sick, you can typically feel the

effects of these "combat zones" in the swelling, tenderness, pain, weakness and sometimes redness and increased temperature of your joints, muscles and lymph nodes.

The increased activity can also cause a traffic jam of sorts, leading to blood clots, elevated blood pressure and even swelling or scarring within the heart. The added stressors make plaque within your arteries more vulnerable to rupture, causing a blockage that cuts off oxygen to the heart or brain and results in heart attacks or strokes, respectively.

Additionally, non-cardiac complications from the viral illness, including pneumonia and respiratory failure, can make heart failure symptoms or heart arrhythmia much worse.

In short, the added stress on the cardiovascular system could be overwhelming to an already weakened heart muscle.

Because influenza viruses are constantly mutating, scientists alter the vaccine each year to match the likely prevalent strands. On average, it's effective at preventing infection 40% of the time. While that might not sound great -- especially in comparison to the highly effective mRNA Covid-19 vaccines -- it's enough to significantly lower the risk of severe illness in most people.



How old is my pet in dog years or cat years? A veterinarian explains

“Just how old do you think my dog is in dog years?” is a question I hear on a regular basis. People love to anthropomorphize pets, attributing human characteristics to them. And most of us want to extend our animal friends' healthy lives for as long as possible.

It may seem like sort of a silly thing to ponder, born out of owners' love for their pets and the human-animal bond between them. But determining a pet's "real" age is actually important because it helps veterinarians like me recommend life-stage specific healthcare for our animal patients.

There's an old myth that one regular year is like seven years for dogs and cats. There's a bit of logic behind it. People observed that with optimal healthcare, an average-sized, medium dog would on average live one-seventh as long as its human owner – and so the seven "dog years" for every "human year" equation was born.

Not every dog is "average-sized" though so this seven-year rule was an oversimplification from the start. Dogs and cats age differently not just from people but also from each other, based partly on breed characteristics and size. Bigger animals tend to have shorter life spans than smaller ones do. While cats vary little in size, the size and life expectancy of dogs can vary greatly – think a Chihuahua versus a Great Dane.

Human life expectancy has changed over the years. And vets are now able to provide far superior medical care to pets than we could even a decade ago. So now we use a better methodology to define just how old rule of thumb



that counted every calendar year as seven "animal years."

Based on the American Animal Hospital Association Canine Life Stages Guidelines, today's vets divide dogs into six categories: puppy, junior, adult, mature, senior and geriatric. Life stages are a more practical way to think about age than assigning a single number; even human health recommendations are based on developmental stage rather than exactly how old you are in years.

Dog breed and its associated size is one of the largest contributors to life expectancy, with nutrition and associated weight likely being the next most important factors for individual dogs.

But this still doesn't answer the question of how old your individual animal is. If you're determined to figure out if Max would be graduating from high school or preparing for retirement based on how many "dog years" he's lived,

these life stages can help. Lining up canine and human developmental milestones over the course of an average life expectancy can provide a rough comparison.

In a similar manner, the joint American Association of Feline Practitioners-The American Animal Hospital Association Feline Life Stage Guidelines also divide cats into six categories: kitten, junior, prime, mature, senior and geriatric. Since most healthy cats are around the same size, there's less variability in their age at each life-stage.

Figuring out how old Buddy is in dog years or Fluffy is in cat years allows a veterinarian to determine their life-stage. And that's important because it suggests what life-stage-specific health care the animal might need to prolong not just its life, but also its quality of life.

Physicians already apply this very concept to human age-specific health screenings. Just like a normal human toddler doesn't need a colonoscopy, a normal puppy doesn't need its thyroid levels checked. An adult woman likely needs a regular mammogram, just like an adult cat needs annual intestinal parasite screenings. Of course these guidelines are augmented based on a physician's or veterinarian's examination of the human or animal patient.

And as is the case for people, your pet's overall health status can influence their "real age" for better or for worse. So next time you take your pet to the veterinarian, talk about your animal's life stage and find out what health recommendations come with it. Watching out for health abnormalities and maintaining a healthy weight could help your cat live long past the literal "prime" of its life.

Jesse Grady, Clinical Instructor of Veterinary Medicine

Mississippi State University

Men's Health

10 health rewards men are losing out on

When it comes to being healthy, women tend to do a lot of things better. See how to close the gap and possibly even lengthen your life, as suggested by Jennifer Robinson, MD of WebMD.

Catch more ZZZs: Women usually get more sleep than men. Many log at least 8 hours of shut-eye on weeknights. Both genders need between 7 and 9 hours a night. To help you nod off, make sure your room is dark and cool, and leave devices like phones, tablets, and TVs in another part of the house.

Keep up with your buddies: Looking for a reason to get a group of guys together for poker night? How about this? It could add years to your life. Women tend to have more friends. Having a group of pals you can have fun with and trust can be quite healthy.

Kick the habit: About 20 out of every 100 adult men smoke, while only 15 of 100 adult women light up. Whether you go through a couple of packs a day or only smoke every once in a while, it's time to talk to your doctor about how to stop.

Back away from the bar: Ladies know when to say no better than guys do. They're only half as likely to abuse alcohol as men. That's not the only bad news -- dudes are also more likely to binge and to stay drunk longer.

Play it safer: Guess which gender takes more risks. Guys are usually the ones who don't wear seat belts or drive too fast. Slow down and think twice before you act.

Keep your skin safe: Men spend more time in the sun. But they're less likely to use sunscreen correctly, if at all. Use enough to fill a shot glass, and reapply every 2 hours.

Watch what you eat: The healthy eating award goes to the gals. Guys eat



more meat, while women eat more fruits and vegetables. Men are more likely to eat runny eggs, raw oysters, etc. The fact is, some guys just don't want to eat their veggies. Don't be that guy.

Wash your hands: Don't touch that bathroom door handle. Way more women wash their hands more often (and better) than men -- especially after they use a public restroom. That gets rid of germs that can cause disease. Plus, women are much more likely to use soap than men. Bottom line: If you don't want to catch a cold, the flu, or something worse, scrub down!

Get checked out: One way to stay healthy: Go to the doctor. Men are about twice as likely as women to say they haven't seen a doctor in the past year. Don't tough it out. Ask the doc how often you should come in and what tests they suggest for someone your age. Then make an appointment and get it over with.

Keep your mind healthy: While women may be more likely to get depressed, there's also a better chance they'll get help for it. Guys, the first step to shaking off the blues is to see a doctor or a mental health expert. The sooner you get started, the faster you'll feel better.

How to overcome from a broken relationship

This column has been written by Dr Kajal Mugrai, Occult Scientist and Psychotherapist.

The main problem that peoples today are facing is relationship issues. No matter what age they are, they are dealing with problems in relationships like lack of understanding, higher expectations, unusual fights, mismatched opinions & above all broken relationships. But how does one overcome these issues? Dr Kajal Mugrai, Occult Scientist and Psychotherapist offers some advice:

When two people come into a relationship, they carry a baggage of expectations and a lot of emotions. When their partner does not meet that expectation level, they feel disappointed. This later turns into massive fights, unnecessary accusations, lots of emotional drama and hurt. It gets even worse when one partner is either possessive or completely careless. Both the situations are alarming that sooner or later turns into splitting apart as a couple. Whether it is coming out of a bad marriage or bad love affair.

People really feel shattered after the break ups. More than physically they are hurt emotionally. And the emotional baggage they carry is not of one day but of days, weeks, months and years spent together. Some people are strong and they work on themselves and move on. But there are people who ruin their life because of some person who was actually not meant to be in their life and was not worthy. Emotionally damaged people can be male or female. Because it can affect anyone irrespective of their gender.

It is really easy to come out of break ups and lead a normal happy life. As we say, "It's okay to be NOT OK". So first of all, one needs to accept that they are not okay with that certain situation and they really need to come out of that situation, that person. And "it's okay" to take professional help if required. Because sometimes we don't know how to move forward



and all the emotional hurt is stored in the subconscious mind, that cannot be released by yourself.

So, if you are going through the same phase, you can follow these steps:

1. Start meditating: It is difficult in the beginning but you can start with 5 min and then increase the time. The key is to focus on breath and release negative thoughts from mind. You can also take help of guided meditations that are available on you tube

2. Positive Affirmations: Start doing positive affirmations in present tense. E.g. I am feeling happy. I am strong. I am moving forward in my life, etc.

3. Forgive: Forgiveness is actually the first thing. You need to forgive a person to let yourself go. Hatred is a slow poison that you are drinking yourself and expect other people to die. So, forgiveness is important.

4. Focus on your hobby: Do something that makes you happy. Instead of hearing sad songs, hear party songs. This will definitely change your mood.

And if you think nothing is working then take help of a psychologist or a healer. Take expert help, there is nothing wrong with it.

Health

How breastfeeding can improve blood sugar levels?

Around 9 per cent of women develop resistance to insulin during pregnancy, called gestational diabetes. Women suffering from gestational diabetes have a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes in life. But you will be happy to know that there is one thing that can lower this risk - breastfeeding.

Women suffering from diabetes are encouraged to breast-feed their babies as breastfeeding may help lower blood glucose levels.

Benefits of breastfeeding for women

Breastfeeding is the best way to care for a baby and to create that mother-child bond. Breastfeeding reduces the chances of developing various health conditions in women including osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, post-pregnancy weight loss, breast cancer, uterine cancer and ovarian cancer.

Not just the physical advantages, breastfeeding also plays an important role in managing anxiety post-childbirth. Breastfeeding releases happy hormones called oxytocin, which uplifts a mother's mood and lowers the risk of depression post-childbirth in new moms.

How breastfeeding can affect diabetes management and blood sugar?

Breastfeeding is one real workout for new mothers. It also helps suppress the return of periods (menstruation) and is relaxing. The reduced stress can also improve control of blood sugar level and a woman's quality of life after childbirth.

When the baby begins to breastfeed first, some women with diabetes may experience low blood sugar. Thus, it's best to keep glucose nearby while nursing the baby.

Breastfeeding with diabetes can be challenging as women can develop inflammation in their breasts, the condition is called mastitis. Mothers should ensure to feed their babies from both breasts to avoid developing inflammation of breasts.

These women must also keep a check on their blood sugar levels. Increased blood sugar can affect milk quality. It can also

affect one's ability to produce milk.

Effects of breastfeeding on newborns

For neonates, breastfeeding offers them protection against both undernutrition and overnutrition during early childhood. It can also reduce the risk of obesity, hypertension, diabetes and cardiovascular disease later in life.

How breastfeeding can lower blood glucose levels?

Breastfeeding helps lower blood sugar levels by utilising glucose from the blood to produce breast milk. It lowers blood sugar levels by burning extra calories, which increases insulin sensitivity.

Ways to ease breastfeeding experience in women with diabetes:

- Have a snack before or while breastfeeding
- Monitor blood sugar levels at least once a day
- Keep an emergency snack, like a pack of biscuits or a fruit nearby while breastfeeding the baby
- Avoid taking stress and check of inflammation in the breast
- Stay hydrated

LAUGHTER is the best medicine

Kashmir

An ingenious example of speech and politics occurred in the United Nations Assembly that made the world community smile.

A representative from India began: "Before beginning my speech, I want to tell you a very old story about Rishi Kashyap of Kashmir, after whom Kashmir is named. When he found a beautiful lake, he thought, 'What a good opportunity to have a bath.' He removed his clothes, put them aside on a rock and entered the water. When he got out and wanted to dress, his clothes had vanished.

A Pakistani had stolen them!"

The Pakistani representative in the Assembly jumped up and furiously shouted, "What are you talking about? The Pakistanis weren't there then."

The Indian representative smiled and said, "And now that we have made that clear, I'll begin my speech.

"And they (Pakistan) say Kashmir belongs to them".

Everybody laughed.

At the barber shop

A young boy enters a barber shop and the barber whispers to his customer. "This is the dumbest kid in the world. Watch while I prove it to you."

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

The boy takes the quarters and leaves.

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

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

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

The boy licked his cone and replied, "Because the day I take the dollar, the game is over!"

My wife where are you?

Husband: My wife, where are you?

Wife: At home, love.

Husband: Are you sure?

Wife: Yes.

Husband: Turn on the blender.

Wife: (turns blender on) reeereeeereeee

Husband: Ok my love, goodbye.

Another day

Husband: My wife, where are you?

Wife: At home, love.

Husband: Are you sure?

Wife: Yes,

Husband: Turn on the blender,

Wife: (turns blender on) reeereeeereeee

Husband: Ok my love, goodbye.

The next day, the husband decides to go home without notice, and finds his son alone and he asked him, 'Son where is your mother?'

Son: I don't know, she went out with the blender.

A married couple was in a terrible accident in which the man's face was severely burned.

The doctor told the husband that they couldn't graft any skin from his body

because he was too skinny.

So the wife offered to donate some of her own skin.

However, the only skin on her body that the doctor felt was suitable would have to come from her buttocks.

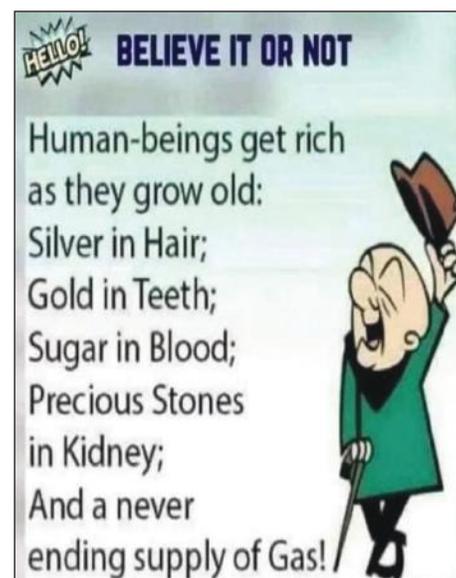
The husband and wife agreed that they would tell no one about where the skin came from, and they requested that the doctor also u their secret. After all, this was a very delicate matter.

After the surgery was completed, everyone was astounded at the man's new face. He looked more handsome than he ever had before! All his friends and relatives just went on and on about his baby face!

One day, he was alone with his wife, and he was overcome with emotion at her sacrifice.

He said, "Dear, I just want to thank you for everything you did for me. How can I possibly repay you?"

My darling," she replied, "I get all the thanks I need every time I see your mother kiss you on the cheek."



My mother-in-law fell down a wishing well. I was amazed, I never knew they worked.

I went to buy some camouflage pants the other day but I couldn't find any.

Teacher: "Anyone who thinks they are stupid may stand up!"

Nobody stands up

Teacher: "I'm sure there are some stupid students over here!"

Little Johnny stands up.

Teacher: "Ohh, Johnny you think you're stupid?"

Little Johnny: "No... I just feel bad that you're standing alone..."

Police: Where do you live?

Me: With my parents.

Police: Where do your parents live?

Me: With me.

Police: Where do you all live?

Me: Together.

Police: Where is your house?

Me: Next to my neighbour's house.

Police: Where is your neighbour's house?

Me: If I tell you, you won't believe me.

Police: Tell me.

Me: Next to my house

Boy: The principal is so dumb!

Girl: Do you know who I am?

Boy: No...

Girl: I am the principal's daughter!

Boy: Do you know who I am?

Girl: No...

Boy: Good!... and then walks away...

Inspiration

Be A Light Yourself

-- Elizabeth Gilbert

Some years ago, I was stuck on a crosstown bus in New York City during rush hour. Traffic was barely moving. The bus was filled with cold, tired people who were deeply irritated with one another, with the world itself. Two men barked at each other about a shove that might or might not have been intentional. A pregnant woman got on, and nobody offered her a seat. Rage was in the air; no mercy would be found here.

But as the bus approached Seventh Avenue, the driver got on the intercom. 'Folks,' he said, 'I know you have had a rough day and you are frustrated. I can't do anything about the weather or traffic, but here is what I can do. As each one of you gets off the bus, I will reach out my hand to you. As you walk by, drop your troubles into the palm of my hand, okay? Don't take your problems home to your families tonight, just leave them with me. My route goes right by the Hudson River, and when I drive by there later, I will open the window and throw your

troubles in the water.'

It was as if a spell had lifted. Everyone burst out laughing. Faces gleamed with surprised delight. People who had been pretending for the past hour not to notice each other's existence were suddenly grinning at each other like, 'is this guy serious?'

Oh, he was serious.

At the next stop, just as promised, the driver reached out his hand, palm up, and waited. One by one, all the exiting commuters placed their hand just above his and mimed the gesture of dropping something into his palm. Some people laughed as they did this, some teared up but everyone did it. The driver repeated the same lovely ritual at the next stop, too. And the next. All the way to the river.

We live in a hard world, my friends. Sometimes it is extra difficult to be a human being. Sometimes you have a bad day. Sometimes you have a bad day that lasts for several years. You struggle and fail. You lose jobs, money, friends, faith, and love. You witness horrible events unfolding in the news, and you become fearful and withdrawn. There are times when everything seems cloaked in darkness. You long for the light but don't know

where to find it.

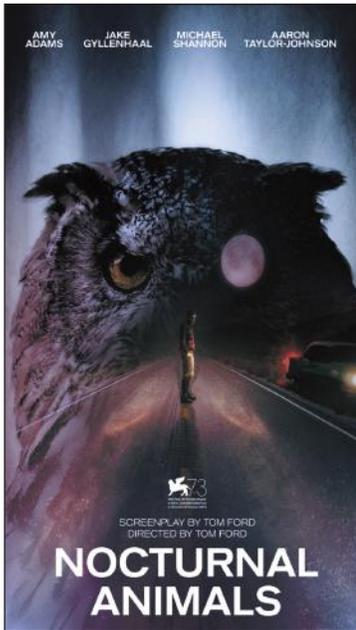
But what if you are the light? What if you are the very agent of illumination that a dark situation begs for? That's what this bus driver taught me, that anyone can be the light, at any moment. This guy wasn't some big power player. He wasn't a spiritual leader. He wasn't some media-savvy influencer. He was a bus driver, one of society's most invisible workers. But he possessed real power, and he used it beautifully for our benefit.

When life feels especially grim, or when I feel particularly powerless in the face of the world's troubles, I think of this man and ask myself: 'What can I do, right now, to be the light?' Of course, I can't personally end all wars, or solve global warming, or transform vexing people into entirely different creatures. I definitely can't control traffic. But I do have some influence on everyone I brush up against, even if we never speak or learn each other's name.

No matter who you are, or where you are, or how mundane or tough your situation may seem, I believe you can illuminate your world. In fact, I believe this is the only way the world will ever be illuminated, one bright act of grace at a time, all the way to the river.

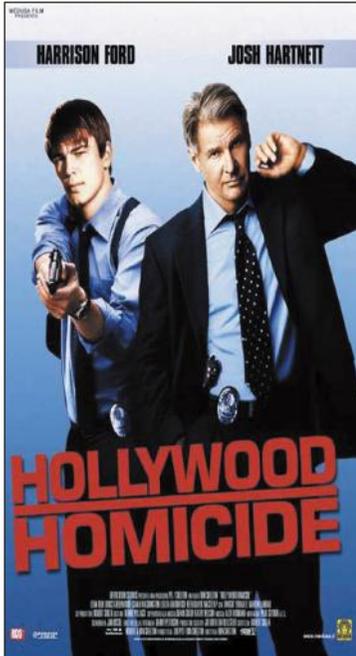
CINE 12

Mardi 23 novembre - 21.10



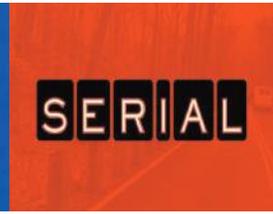
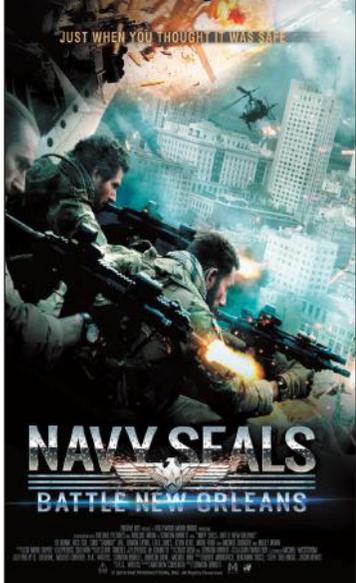
MBC 1

Mercredi 25 novembre - 21.15



MBC 2

Jeudi 25 novembre - 21.15



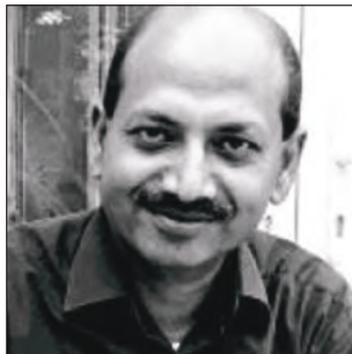
MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
<p>mardi 23 novembre</p> <p>06.00 Local: Rodrig - Akoustic 09.30 Local: Zanfant Nou Zil 11.10 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasionés 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Local: Les Grands Noms... 12.30 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.55 Local: Come On Let's Dance 14.00 Local: Bricolo Ecolo 14.30 D.Anime: Robot Trains 14.44 D.Anime: The Hive 15.20 D.Anime: Oum Le Dauphin... 15.32 D.Anime: The Twisted... 15.43 D.Anime: Les Triples 16.19 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 17.20 Mag: Human Nature 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 18.55 Local: Charcha 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.15 Local: Priorite Sante 21.35 Film: 55 Steps</p>	<p>mardi 23 novembre</p> <p>07.00 DDI Live 10.00 Serial: CID 10.45 Serial: Ye Vaada Raha 12.00 Film: Hai Apna Dil Toh Awara Star: Sahil Anand, Divya Chouksey, Sareh Far 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.20 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.43 Serial: Bava Maradallu 16.04 Serial: Sondha Bandham 16.27 Serial: Mera Maan Rakhna 16.48 Serial: Imtihaan 17.05 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.30 Telugu - Premabhishekam 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 DDI Magazine 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.04 Local: Programme In Tamil 20.30 Film: The Great Gambler Star: Amitabh Bachchan...</p>	<p>mardi 23 novembre</p> <p>06.00 Mag: The Global Auto... 06.54 Mag: Check In 07.51 Mag: Magnifique 09.00 Educa Prog: G5 11.30 Educa Prog: G8 15.11 Doc: Tsunamis 15.54 Doc: From Vogtland... 16.22 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto... 16.50 Mag: Healthy Living 18.30 Mag: Vous Et Nous 19.00 Student Support Prog - G7 19.30 Doc: Garden Party 20.02 Doc: Tresors Oublies... 20.30 Local Prod: News (English) 20.45 Doc: Zenith 21.11 Mag: Business Africa 21.37 Mag: Focus On Europe 22.02 Doc: Girls For Future 22.44 Doc: Southern Japan By Rail 23.27 Mag: Motorweek 23.57 Mag: Vous Et Nous</p>	<p>mardi 23 novembre</p> <p>01.35 Film: The Killer Downstairs 03.36 Film: The Baker 05.06 Tele: Muneca Brava 05.47 Serial: Absentia 06.54 Film: The Killer Downstairs 09.00 Serial: The Good Doctor 09.45 Tele: Teresa 10.35 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 11.01 Serial: Powers 12.00 Film: The Baker 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.17 Mag: Cinemag 14.45 Film: The Killer Downstairs 16.41 Serial: The Good Doctor 17.22 Serial: Absentia 18.05 Tele: Teresa 19.00 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana 20.30 Serial: Mad Dogs 21.22 Film: Nocturnal Animals 23.10 Tele: Muneca Brava</p>	<p>mardi 23 novembre</p> <p>07.38 Film: Angel Cast: Nilesah Sahay, Maddalsa Sharma, Aruna Irani, Manoj Joshi... 11.30 / 19.27 - Radha Krishna 11.59 / 20.57 - Anupamaa 12.30 / 21.27 - Mere Sai 13.09 / 22.07 - Agniphera 13.30 / 22.37 - Yeh Teri Galiyan 14.00 / 23.07 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.30 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan 14.53 / 22.25 - Sethji 15.25 Film: Naam Hai Akira Star: Sonakshi Sinha, Konkona Sen Sharma, Anurag Kashyap 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 19.00 Serial: Ishaaron Ishaaron... 19.30 Bhakharwadi</p>
<p>mercredi 24 novembre</p> <p>06.00 Local: Entrepreneuriat... 09.30 Local: Zanfan Nou Zil 11.10 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasionés 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Local: Autour Des Valeurs... 12.30 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.55 Mag: Green Touch 13.09 Local: Generations J 14.30 D.Anime: Robot Trains 14.44 D.Anime: The Hive 15.20 D.Anime: Oum Le Dauphin... 15.32 D.Anime: The Twisted... 15.43 D.Anime: Les Triples 16.19 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 16.53 D.Anime: Trollhunters 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 18.55 Magazine 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.30 MBC Production 21.25 Film: Hollywood Homicide</p>	<p>mercredi 24 novembre</p> <p>07.00 DDI Live 10.00 Pyar Ka Dard Meetha... 12.00 Film: Meet Mere Man Ke Star: Feroz Khan, Salma Agha, Prasenjit Chatterjee 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.26 Aamhi Doghi 15.46 Bava Maradallu 16.07 Sondha Bandham 16.25 Mera Maan Rakhna 16.49 Serial: Imtihaan 17.10 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.31 Serial: Kulvadhu 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 Local: Abhay Charan 19.00 Journal Kreol 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.06 Programme In Marathi 20.30 Film: Atithi Starring: Vijay Chavan, Milind shinde, Sanjay Khapre 22.11 DDI Live</p>	<p>mercredi 24 novembre</p> <p>06.00 Mag: Rev: Global Auto... 06.26 Mag: Healthy Living 07.25 Mag: Made In Germany 07.51 Mag: Magnifique 09.00 Educa Prog: Grade 5 11.30 Educa Prog: Grade 8 14.03 Mag: Close Up 14.29 Local Prod: Klip Seleksion 15.54 Doc: From Vogtland... 17.14 Mag: Check In 18.00 Mag: Motorweek 19.00 Student Support Prog... 19.30 Doc: Garden Party 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.45 Doc: Zenith 21.36 Mag: Focus On Europe 22.02 Doc: Girls For Future 22.44 Doc: Southern Japan... 23.27 Mag: Motorweek 23.53 Mag: Vous Et Nous 00.20 Mag: Arts.21 00.46 Doc: Garden Party</p>	<p>mercredi 24 novembre</p> <p>01.44 Film: Nocturnal Animals 03.32 Serial: Powers 04.12 Film: 55 Steps 06.01 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.37 Serial: Absentia 07.17 Film: An Emma Fielding Mystery 09.10 Serial: The Good Doctor 09.51 Tele: Teresa 10.35 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 11.01 Serial: Night Shift 11.43 Film: 55 Steps 13.38 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.46 Film: An Emma Fielding Mystery 16.40 Serial: The Good Doctor 17.20 Serial: Absentia 18.08 Tele: Teresa 19.00 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasionés 20.30 Serial: Elementary 21.15 Film: Lady Bird</p>	<p>mercredi 24 novembre</p> <p>07.00 Film: Naam Hai AKira Star: Sonakshi Sinha, Konkona Sen Sharma, Anurag Kashyap 11.21 / 20.06 - Radha Krishna 11.51 / 20.26 - Anupamaa 12.23 / 20.02 - Mere Sai - Shrad.. 12.47 / 20.46 - Agniphera 13.35 / 21.50 - Yeh Teri Galiyan 14.03 / 21.50 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.32 / 22.15 - Chhanchhan 14.47 / 21.46 - Sethji 15.25 Film: Champion Starring: Sunny Deol, Manisha Koirala, Rahul Dev 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 19.00 Ishaaron Ishaaron... 19.30 Bhakharwadi 20.00 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak</p>
<p>jeudi 25 novembre</p> <p>06.00 Local: Klip Seleksion 06.45 Local: Fee Main 07.15 D.Anime: Sissi, Jeune... 10.00 Local Prod: Elle - No 167 11.10 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasionés 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 14.00 Local: Crime Watch 14.30 D.Anime: Robot Trains 15.20 D.Anime: Oum Le Dauphin... 15.32 D.Anime: The Twisted 15.43 D.Anime: Les Triples 15.57 D.Anime: Cosmis Quantum... 17.20 Mag: Human Nature 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 19.30 Le Journal 20.10 Local: Message Of Hon (Mrs) Kalpan Koonjoo-Shah 20.35 Film: Chhapaak Stars: D. Padukone, Vikrant Massey</p>	<p>jeudi 25 novembre</p> <p>07.00 DDI Live 10.00 Karm Phal Data Shani 12.00 Film: Sharafat Starring: Ashok Kumar, Dharmendra and Hema Malini 15.25 Aamhi Doghi 15.47 Bava Maradallu 16.09 Sondha Bandham 16.26 Serial: Mera Maan Rakhna 16.51 Serial: Imtihaan 17.07 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.48 Local: Bhajan Sandhya 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 Serial: Ghar Pahucha Da... 19.00 Journal Kreol 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.06 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 20.32 Local: Retrovizor 20.59 Local: Profil 21.12 Film: Navy Seals: The Battle</p>	<p>jeudi 25 novembre</p> <p>06.00 Mag: Motorweek 06.26 Mag: Vous Et Nous 07.19 Mag: Garden Party 07.49 Doc: Tresors Oublies... 09.00 Educa Prog: Grade 5 11.30 Educa Prog: Grade 8 14.03 Mag: Business Africa 14.54 Doc: Girls For Future 15.36 Doc: Southern Japan... 17.14 Mag: Arts.21 18.00 Mag: Eco India 19.00 Student Support Prog... 19.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.45 Doc: Comme Une Envie... 21.36 Doc: Our Friend The Atom 22.18 Doc: Stolen Blood 23.01 Doc: Antarctica: A Message 23.44 Mag: Eco India 00.10 Mag: Shift 00.20 Mag: Sur Mesure</p>	<p>jeudi 25 novembre</p> <p>01.29 Film: Hollywood Homicide 04.02 Film: Lady Bird 05.32 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.15 Serial: Reef Doctors 06.59 Film: Hollywood Homicide 09.00 Serial: The Good Doctor 09.45 Tele: Teresa 10.35 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 11.00 Serial: French 12.00 Film: Lady Bird 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: Hollywood Homicide 16.37 Serial: The Good Doctor 17.22 Serial: Reef Doctors 18.05 Tele: Teresa 19.00 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana 20.30 Serial: English 21.15 Serial: The Bold Type 22.32 Tele: Muneca Brava 23.11 Serial: The good Doctor</p>	<p>jeudi 25 novembre</p> <p>07.00 Film: Champion Starring: Sunny Deol, Manisha Koirala, Rahul Dev 11.23 / 19.54 - Radha Krishna 11.53 / 20.11 - Anupamaa 12.27 / 20.32 - Mere Sai 12.59 / 21.09 - Agniphera 13.27 / 21.24 - Yeh Teri Galiyan 14.00 / 21.50 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.30 / 22.15 - Chhanchhan 14.41 / 21.46 - Sethji 15.30 Film: Dil Hai Tumhaara Starring: Rekha, Preity Zinta, Mahima Chaudhry, Arjun Rampal 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.59 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 19.29 Bhakharwadi 20.00 Siddhi Vinayak</p>

B TV Mercredi 24 novembre - 15.30 Star: Sunny Deol, Manisha Koirala, Rahul Dev

MBC 1 Jeudi 25 novembre - 20.30 Stars: Deepika Padukone, Vikrant Massey, Madhurjeet Sarghi



Why are Covid cases in India decreasing, despite the low double vaccination rate?



Rajib Dasgupta
Chairperson, Centre of Social
Medicine and Community
Health, Jawaharlal Nehru
University

Covid continues to slow down in India. The festival season, which includes Durga Puja and Diwali where large groups of Indians gather, did not lead to a surge in cases. Epidemiological modellers had earlier predicted a third wave peaking during October and November.

Daily new cases have dropped from a peak of more than 400,000 per day in May 2021 to currently below 10,000 cases a day.

And while antibody tests might give us a clue as to why, we can't get complacent about vaccination rates.

Signals from recent antibody tests

In India, "serosurveys" have been regularly conducted since the pandemic began. This is where blood is tested from large numbers of people to check for the presence of Covid antibodies – the things our bodies make after being infected with Covid or receiving a Covid vaccine.

The fourth national survey in July reported 67.6% of people across India had Covid antibodies present, providing them with a level of immunity against the virus. At that time 24.8% of people were immunised with a single dose of vaccine and 13% were fully vaccinated. This means a large proportion of those with antibodies had actually been infected with Covid.

Delhi reported 97% of people were positive for antibodies in October, including 80% of children. Some 95.3% of those immunised with the Indian version of the AstraZeneca vaccine Covishield had developed antibodies, as did 93% of those who received India's own vaccine Covaxin.

The state of Haryana's serosurvey in October found antibodies in 76.3% of adults, upwards of 70% among children, and negligible difference between urban and rural populations.

Kerala had the lowest sero-prevalence of 44.4% in the fourth national serosurvey in July, but in October it had risen to 82.6% among the general population and 85.3% among residents of urban slums.

A third wave in India is an unlikely scenario with these high levels of antibodies, and vaccination levels continuing to



rise.

It's now recognised those who become naturally infected with Covid and recover before vaccination develop better immunity than those who only have antibodies from vaccination. This is referred to as "hybrid immunity" – those with previous SARS-CoV-2 infection mount unusually potent immune responses to the Covid vaccines.

The Centers for Disease Control in the US notes that both the fully vaccinated individuals and previously infected groups have a low risk of subsequent infection for at least 6 months.

Results of the most recent national serosurvey in India reflect the seroprevalence during the third week of June 2021; the Delta-led second wave had bottomed out at that time. Though about 30% of the population remained susceptible, subsequent serosurveys and an absence of any post-festival surge confirm continuing high levels of protection.

"Patchwork vaccination" areas, where there are pockets of low coverage of vaccination among areas with high levels of coverage, run the risk of small outbreaks, but are unlikely to be large enough to be of any major epidemiological concern.

With high seropositivity among adults, many of the new cases can now be expected among children, particularly with the reopening of educational institutions. But high levels of immunisation among teachers (upwards of 90%) and the emerging evidence that reopening schools has not been associated with significant increases in community transmission, are reassuring.

The WHO's chief scientist said in late August that India seems to be "entering some stage of endemicity". Endemic refers to the constant presence or usual prevalence of a disease in a population within a

geographic area, where disease spread and rates are predictable.

Could a new variant, such as the Delta Plus subvariant first detected in India in April 2021 threaten the current relative stability? While it has been said it might be about 10–15% more transmissible than the Delta variant, the evidence from Europe suggests it has not yet been able to establish any dominance over Delta.

Is vaccination on track?

Of India's 1.4 billion people, 26.9% are fully vaccinated and 54.9% have received at least one dose so far. But 35 million fewer women have been vaccinated compared to men and independent analyses show tribal and rural districts continue to lag.

There are two current targets: achieving 90% coverage of the first dose by the end of November and timely administration of the second dose. While the first is likely to be achieved, there are widespread reports of complacency regarding the second dose. A campaign is underway to encourage people to complete the schedule.

Delivering the billion plus doses has convincingly demonstrated vaccine confidence. But convincing people to take a vaccine when for many it seems like the risk has passed is a difficult task. Prior infection-induced immunity protects against reinfection but this acquired immunity wanes over time. Hence the recommendation for Covid vaccination for all eligible persons, including those who have been previously infected.

Districts with relatively low vaccine coverage require greater outreach efforts to reduce prevailing inequities. India's immunisation program has demonstrated its strengths in polio eradication and measles-rubella elimination campaigns. We need to borrow some of those techniques to ensure all Indians are protected against Covid.



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor

Big Steps on Life's Path

There is freedom that comes with awareness, because with it comes the opportunity to make a choice.

Life is a journey comprised of many steps on our personal path that takes us down a winding road of constant evolution. And each day, we are provided with a myriad of opportunities that can allow us to transform into our next best selves. One moment we are presented with an opportunity to react differently when yet another someone in our life rubs us the wrong way; on another day we may find ourselves wanting to walk away from a particular circumstance but are not sure if we can. Eventually, we may find ourselves stuck in a rut that we can never seem to get out of. We may even make the same choices over and over again because we don't know how to choose otherwise. Rather than moving us forward, our personal paths may take us in a seemingly never-ending circle where our actions and choices lead us nowhere but to where we've already been. It is during these moments that awareness can be the first step to change.

Awareness is when we are able to realize what we are doing. We observe ourselves, noticing our reactions, actions, and choices as if we were a detached viewer. Awareness is the first step to change because we can't make a change unless we are aware that one needs to be made in the first place. We can then begin understanding why we are doing what we are doing. Afterward, it becomes difficult not to change because we are no longer asleep to the truth behind our behaviors. We also begin to realize that, just as much as we are the root source behind the causes for our behaviors, we are also the originator for any changes that we want to happen.

There is a freedom that comes with awareness. Rather than thinking that we are stuck in a repetitive cycle where there is no escape, we begin to see that we very much play a hand in creating our lives. Whether we are aware of them or not, our behaviours and choices are always ours to make. Our past and our present no longer have to dictate our future when we choose to be aware. We are then free to move beyond our old limits, make new choices, and take new actions. With awareness, our paths can't help but wind us forward in our lives while paving the way for new experiences and new ways of being. It is through awareness that we can continue to consciously evolve.