

# MAURITIUS TIMES

• "Develop success from failures. Discouragement and failure are two of the surest stepping stones to success." -- Dale Carnegie



Interview: Rabin Bhujun, Journaliste

## "Ramgoolam s'est aSAJi"

'Le rapprochement PTr/MMM/PMSD est possible avec Ramgoolam transformé en PM de transition puis Mentor'

\* 'Nous sommes à trois ans des prochaines législatives. Tant de choses peuvent arriver d'ici là...'

🔊 Voir Page 7-8-9

## The Omicron Wakeup Call



*It is only a fully vaccinated and united world that can stem Covid-19 and thus be better prepared to aptly counter and overcome the next pandemic*

By Mrinal Roy 🔊 See Page 4

## Preparedness for our Future Security



*We can never be the Singapore of the Indian Ocean as we often boast. But let us learn from them and apply at least some lessons*

By Dr R Neerunjun Gopee 🔊 See Page 3



## Covid-19 Impact on Health Staff

**T**wo days ago, a third doctor fell victim to Covid-19 infection, adding to the list of medical staff and nurses, mostly young, who have already left their loved ones prematurely by succumbing to the disease too. They fell in the line of duty, bravely fighting to save the lives of the patients they were caring for, inadvertently getting infected in their own turn and not being able to save themselves or be saved by their colleagues.

The death toll we are witnessing in this current wave is a tragedy on a scale hitherto unseen in recent times, for which the health services were taken unawares. But aside from the deaths of their colleagues, shortages in staffing have also been caused by others falling ill and needing to self-isolate, or doing so after posting in the Covid wards, as well as having to take time to recuperate in the normal course of duties. In other cases, nursing and auxiliary staff have had to bear episodes of anger from distressed and anguished families seeking information about their loved ones. They are not responsible for protocol or communication deficiencies, nor for ambulance or hotline ones. Overall, therefore the nurses and doctors who are the ones in closest contact with the patients they are treating have been under pressure from overwork – but they are also humans like all of us, with families and children to care for. They naturally have the same fears and apprehensions as regards the safety of the latter, and this is bound to impact on their work.

Seeing patients and colleagues die affects them emotionally, psychologically and mentally, because of the helplessness they have felt as they saw their efforts failing.

On the other hand, there are not enough nurses to man the Covid wards and ICU as per norms, and this too impacts the quality of care. The accounts of those who have had to be admitted for treatment and who have been fortunate enough to get over the disease confirm this fact. Besides, staff have described the discomfort felt in the prolonged use of face masks and the PPE, which is cumbersome at the very least.

The authorities have announced that personnel from abroad will be recruited, but they are yet to be seen. This paper has made suggestions about the recourse to local resources, such as the deployment of final year nursing students to relieve the pressure on the limited staff in the wards, the resort to doctors nearing completion of their pre-registration training to help in monitoring in the ICUs or even Covid wards. They would need to be given a strong enough incentive – this could take the form of compensating them by giving them upfront marks in their exit exams. Relatives also could be roped in to dispense personal care according to a protocol which they will surely willingly follow.

Another idea is the use of telemedicine, which would mean having about 40-50 doctors available 24/7 to give

advice to any caller – and there are enough of them around. All these measures can be implemented more rapidly than recruiting foreigners, but even if the latter scheme materializes, using local resources in the manner outlined is still a valid option that can be continued with as long as the pandemic requires. Further, the fact that the number of admissions is diminishing does not alter the reality that bedside care, both general and nursing, and monitoring are intensive tasks that primarily require manpower.

Unlike other countries, we have not done a survey to find out the problems of frontline health workers, as has been done in Australia, for example. This has been described in an article by Sara Holton, Senior Research Fellow et al of Deakin University, published on December 7, 2021 – ‘6 ways to prevent a mass exodus of health workers’.

They write about frontline health workers who are bracing for a potential summer surge in Covid cases and hospitalizations, and are concerned about the potential impact of the new variant, besides apprehending the summer surge would put even more pressure on health workers who, as their research shows, are already experiencing high levels of distress. As they assert, ‘Health workers often experience high levels of stress as a result of working long hours or shift work, providing emotional support to patients and their families, and patient deaths. The pandemic has increased this stress.’

Undoubtedly, all that they have said holds true for all countries who are battling with Covid. At least elsewhere, the health staff who decide to quit can have other opportunities. These do not exist in our small island – which is all the more reason for the authorities to act decisively and promptly to support the frontline health workers. Otherwise, the tragedy will only swell further. On the contrary, instead of giving them encouragement, they are being further stressed by deducting their periods of mandatory isolation from their sick and vacation leaves, and there is no insurance coverage to provide for their families in case they succumb to Covid. The times ask for a more humane approach to their plight. Their appeal should be heard.

Supporting the frontline health workers does not necessarily imply monetary compensation but public recognition from highest levels of their immense contribution during this prolonged pandemic, can go a long way to ease the pressure while means are found to increase their availability and improve their work conditions. As we go to press, we understand this is precisely what the PM has acknowledged in his Thursday evening address. The address also included a renewed appeal for vaccination and to adhere strictly with all sanitary precautions during the coming shopping season, a welcome caution that we are not out of the woods yet. This is no time to let down our guards with such a mutating invisible threat.

### The Conversation

## Wealthy nations starved the developing world of vaccines. Omicron shows the cost of this greed

*The new variant is a warning: unless we take urgent action to correct global vaccine inequities, we risk the emergence of further variants, some of which may evade vaccines.*



A BioNTech vaccine production facility in Marburg, Germany.  
Michael Probst/AP

**W**e don't yet know how dangerous the new Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2 will turn out to be. Early evidence suggests it may be more transmissible than other variants, and the World Health Organization has raised concerns about its potential to spark another global surge in infections.

If currently available vaccines continue to protect us from severe disease and death, which seems likely at this stage, vaccinated people in developed countries should be able to breathe a sigh of relief.

But with a yawning gap between vaccination rates in high- and low-income nations, Omicron could present a major problem for the world. It could cause a further wave of preventable disease and premature death in developing countries, and exacerbate poverty in parts of the world that are already struggling with the pandemic.

And unless governments take urgent action to correct these inequities, we risk the emergence of further variants, some of which may evade vaccines.

### Inequities in access to Covid-19 vaccines

By the end of November, around 54.2% of the global population had received at least one Covid-19 vaccine dose. For low-income countries, however, the rate was just 5.8%.

The gap in vaccination coverage between high-income and upper-middle-income countries on one hand, and low-income countries on the other, is particularly stark.

Vaccination rates in Africa are particularly concerning. About 40 or so countries still have less than 10% of their populations fully vaccinated, the vast majority of which are in Africa.

Experts have warned about the inequitable distribution of Covid-19 vaccines since the beginning of the pandemic, so why is there still a problem?

### Failure of COVAX to realise its promise

First, COVAX, the global program for purchasing and distributing Covid-19 vaccines, has struggled to secure enough vaccine doses since its inception.

Deborah Gleeson

Associate Professor in Public Health, La Trobe University

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## Mauritius Times

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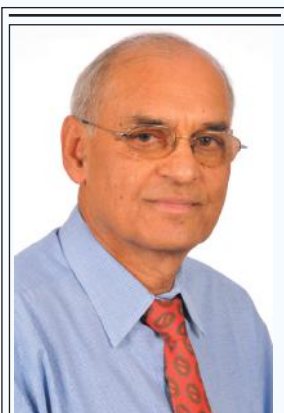
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# Preparedness for our Future Security



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

*We can never be the Singapore of the Indian Ocean as we often boast. But let us learn from them and apply at least some lessons*

**A**s prepared as we are for cyclones: to my mind, we have learnt to face cyclones very well post the two devastating ones of 1960, Alix and Carol, and Gervaise in 1975. By then I was working in the health services, based at SSRN Hospital, and in the dead of the night there was an emergency to attend to in the Labour Ward. Walking from the quarters and climbing over a fallen tree to get into the waiting ambulance – which couldn't reach our doorstep because of the big trunk lying across the road – is an experience that can never be forgotten.

I remain convinced that our preparedness for cyclones is probably one of the best and a prototype to be emulated when it comes to other catastrophic risks. The early warning system from Class 1-4 has ensured that all sectors know exactly what they have to do at each level, and this includes precautions which people as individuals and families too have to take. Certainly, in the health sector we have honed the system almost to perfection, with specialists on call staying in hospital and all other service arrangements made, ready to deal with any emergency.

That is why, over the years, there have been hardly any deaths during cyclones except the few which took place because of negligence by the persons concerned. By the same token, the SMF is deployed to clear roads and help with restoration of power, and similarly water supply is attended to with promptness, an exercise that continues in the immediate aftermath of the cyclone. In parallel, the authorities get shelters ready for the fewer and fewer numbers of people who need them temporarily.

In contrast, however, we have not been as prepared to respond to other major events carrying significant risks to our security. At the end of the day, when we talk of security, the central concern is about *human security* – whether lives will be lost, and even a single avoidable one is one too many, so precious do we value human life.

To the list of known risks such as those associated with climate change over which we have little control, there are others where our actions may have contributed to the aggravation of the impact. Thus, topographical changes in the surrounding sugarcane fields are presumed to have played a role in the flash floods at Ilot, Pamplemousses in 2007, and wild urban and suburban sprawl without respect for building norms and the proximate environment could go some way in explain the extent of the damage caused by the floods that overtook the Caudan basin in 2011. There is also the clogging of waterways by solid waste dumped into them, and unfortunately with my own eyes I witnessed this but a couple of weeks after the Caudan floods at the Jardin de la Compagnie. Yet, repeated advice was being given against such practices.



**“To the list of known risks such as those associated with climate change over which we have little control, there are others where our actions may have contributed to the aggravation of the impact. Thus, topographical changes in the surrounding sugarcane fields are presumed to have played a role in the flash floods at Ilot, Pamplemousses in 2007, and wild urban and suburban sprawl without respect for building norms and the proximate environment could go some way in explain the extent of the damage caused by the floods that overtook the Caudan basin in 2011. There is also the clogging of waterways by solid waste dumped into them...”**

We have been unprepared for the Wakashio shipwreck, which has looked more and more like a manmade disaster, and ill-prepared for the Delta wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. After over a decade of hearing about billions spent to repair leaking age-old pipes, we are still at practically back to square one about water security. Our water reservoirs have, once more, filled up to capacity during the very rainy winter we have been through, but already there are rumbles about rationing supply as the summer rolls out, not to speak of localities where water shortage is an endemic problem.

We are not done with the pandemic yet, and the devastation of lives and morale that has overwhelmed the health services continues unabated. It is no consolation that other countries too have fared similarly, some at the very beginning of the pandemic, and as has been noted elsewhere (a comment to the 'Year in Review' by Bill Gates on Dec. 7):

'There's definitely a lot to unpack regarding what nations learned from the pandemic.

Unfortunately, the news on preparedness for future pandemics from the Global Health Security Index isn't encouraging.

The Index prepared by Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, the Nuclear Threat Initiative, and the Economist Intelligence Unit reviews 6 categories, 37 indicators, and applies 171 questions in scoring each country.

Six categories include (1) Prevention; (2) Detection and reporting; (3) Rapid Response; (4) Health Systems; (5) Commitment to Improving National Capacity, Financing, and Global Norms; (6) Risk Environment.'

This would be a good starting point to estimate our own Index, and build on that to consolidate our current response and plan our future one.

In fact, these categories could well apply, perhaps with suitable modifications, to other sectors as well, because at the end of the day as mentioned above, all risks end up impacting human lives – and the health systems which have the responsibility of saving them.

As a small island state, our activities are unlikely to have any impact at global scale on the environment, but definitely even locally there is a correlation between geographies and human security. Amongst other things, for example, we are '*betonising*' our soil coverage with almost wild abandon, and the future generations will bear the consequences. Let us think about their future at least.

We talk a lot about Singapore. They are light years ahead of us, and we can never be the Singapore of the

Indian Ocean as we often boast. But let us learn from them and apply at least some lessons, and be thus better prepared for our future security.

## A Note from the Mauritius Times

**R**eaders will recall that the *Mauritius Times* shifted from its print edition to the digital platform since March 2020 with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. We believed that two editions per week could be sustainably maintained, offering our readership a diverse and valuable palette of views and opinions. To make those Tuesday and Friday editions available to our readers, we have had recourse to such IT tools as WhatsApp and email; we have also made them available for free download on our website ([mauritiusiustimes.com](http://mauritiusiustimes.com)). We are happy that the *Mauritius Times* is now, thanks to technology, reaching thousands more readers, both locally and abroad, especially amongst the diaspora, than ever before.

The response of our readers has been broadly positive - the only reservation being that two editions every week were stretching their ability to ingest the material, given the unique character of the paper in the Mauritian media landscape. We know from the response of our readers that it usually takes more than a day to read, reflect and digest the *Mauritius Times'* take on local and international issues, and many of them have conveyed their regret of missing out on one of the two editions for lack of time and suggested that we shift back to the one only Friday edition for their weekend reading.

With the benefit of experience acquired with the double issue, it is undoubtedly clear that such a re-orientation would also enable us to better focus and coordinate our energies, inputs and contributions towards what we hope will provide a more rewarding experience to our readers.

We are therefore proposing to go forward with a single consolidated edition of the paper, to come out, as in the past, on Fridays as from next week. We trust that we will continue to have our faithful readers' support which is vital in maintaining the *Mauritius Times* afloat on more steady grounds as a media enterprise. We will be, as usual, looking forward to your views and any constructive suggestions as the weekly digital issue starts to clock in during the early part of 2022.





Mrinal Roy

**D**elivering the Richard Dimbleby lecture this week, Dame Sarah Gilbert, professor of vaccinology at Oxford University, who is one of the creators of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, warned that the next pandemic could be even more lethal than Covid-19. The world must therefore learn from the array of mistakes made during the management of the Covid-19 pandemic and elaborate a global response plan to better counter and stem a future pandemic. She said: 'This will not be the last time a virus threatens our lives and our livelihoods. The truth is, the next one could be worse and could be more contagious or more lethal or both.'

The latest Omicron variant has exposed the fragility and vulnerability of the world's Covid-19 response strategy. Despite the fact that very few scientific data were available to determine the precise severity of the Omicron variant, a wave of panic spread over the world as more and more countries from Europe to India, China, Indonesia, Australia, the United States, Canada and Brazil banned flights from and closed their borders with South Africa and seven other countries in southern Africa, namely Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Mozambique, Eswatini (Swaziland), Malawi and Lesotho deemed as a high-risk region as well as countries where the Omicron variant has been detected. Across the world counties are closing their drawbridges to protect themselves. For a few days, even Mauritius became the collateral victim of this paranoia.

### Vaccine access divide

The most decried aspect of the global response to the Covid-19 pandemic has been that the world has failed to provide equal and equitable access to coronavirus vaccines to all countries. Despite the fact that in a record-breaking public health achievement, more than 7 billion doses of vaccines have so far been administered, the vaccination rate in some countries is less than 10 percent. The world is now divided in two. Thus, a number of countries whose adults are fully vaccinated are receiving their booster doses while vaccines are being administered to children as young as 5 years old. In contrast, people in a majority of countries are left vulnerable with very little or no vaccines to protect themselves against Covid-19 and its deadly variants.

# The Omicron Wakeup Call

*It is only a fully vaccinated and united world that can stem Covid-19 and thus be better prepared to aptly counter and overcome the next pandemic*



Pic - bsmedia.business-standard.com

**“The discovery and ownership rights of lifesaving Covid-19 vaccines and treatment drugs by pharmaceutical corporations in a few developed countries have been responsible for the patently unequal access to vaccines in the world. In a situation of pandemic, which has already caused more than 5 million deaths in the world, the priority should be to save lives instead of safeguarding the billions of dollars of profits that can be amassed from these path breaking discoveries...”**

In the race and scramble for vaccines, developing and poor countries have been sidelined and basically left out. There is therefore a chronic lack of vaccines, treatments and adequate healthcare in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Every day, about 10,000 people die because of the pandemic. What are the world leaders of the major countries of the world who have the power and authority to change this appalling situation waiting for to take the necessary actions to remedy this deplorable state of affairs?

The world must also realize that no country can return to a modicum of normality as it continuously remains at risk of a surge of infection from a new Covid-19 variant in a context when the majority of countries in the world continue to be denied access to the vaccines required to protect their population and contain the spread of the virus.

The discovery and ownership rights of lifesaving Covid-19 vaccines and treatment drugs by pharmaceutical corporations in a few developed countries have been responsible for the patently unequal access to vaccines in the world. In a situation of pandemic, which has already caused more than 5 million deaths in the world, the priority should be to save lives instead of safeguarding the billions of dollars of profits that can be amassed from these path breaking discoveries. This is a time for world solidarity, sharing and concerted global actions to save lives and urgently stem the coronavirus pandemic.

### Jolting reminder

The Omicron variant is a jolting reminder that the world will only be able to overcome and stem Covid-19 if we vaccinate and eliminate the virus from the whole world.

The longer the world is divided into the countries that have access to vaccines and those that do not, the longer the pandemic will drag on with the risk that deadlier new variants could develop causing more deaths and distress in the world.

The Omicron variant is therefore a timely warning to the world that despite the financial resources to buy all the vaccines required and a high rate of vaccination, no country is safe from a new variant emerging from countries which largely do not have access to vaccines and are mostly unvaccinated. We can only win the battle against the pandemic when all countries of the world are provided with the required vaccines to vaccinate their population and the treatment drugs necessary and are united to fight the pandemic together as one.

### Change tack

It is not too late for the world to change tack and overhaul its fundamentally flawed Covid-19 response strategy. The most important bottlenecks in the world's battle to overcome the pandemic are availability and access to vaccines. There are not enough vaccines being produced to meet global demand in order to fully vaccinate all the eligible world population. However, what is particularly galling is that despite the blatantly unequal access to vaccines, rich countries have ring fenced according to a People's Vaccine Alliance report, issued last October, an inordinately large volume of vaccines compared to the real vaccine requirements of their population. Shouldn't they immediately redistribute their excess vaccines well before these doses expire to low and middle-income countries whose vaccination coverage lag behind?

More importantly, governments in countries where pharmaceutical corporations have discovered Covid-19 vaccines approved by WHO and have intellectual property rights to produce them must endorse the TRIPS Waiver supported by more than 100 countries at the World Trade Organization and share the know-how to produce Covid-19 treatment drugs so as to enable the production of vaccines and treatment drugs in approved production facilities according to rigorous quality norms in locations in the world closer to the demand for vaccines and drugs in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

It is only a decentralized production of vaccines in agreement with the pharmaceutical corporations which hold intellectual property rights that we can boost production to satisfy world demand for vaccines and overcome the logistical and distribution challenges of delivering the vaccines requirements of countries across the world which have received scant or no vaccines.

It is also evident that the emphasis put on vaccines and vaccination programmes as the panacea to stop the pandemic has overshadowed research carried out to establish treatment protocols covering the various stages of Covid-19 infection using low cost and easily available medicine. It is therefore imperative to codify a treatment dashboard to beef up the arsenal of measures available to stem the pandemic,

### United

Omicron is therefore a timely wake up call for the world to urgently recast its Covid-19 response strategy to ensure that the whole world and in particular the developing and poor countries are fully vaccinated at the earliest as it is only a fully vaccinated and united world that can stem Covid-19 and thus be better prepared to aptly counter and overcome the next pandemic.



# Pfizer, BioNTech say 3 doses of Covid-19 vaccine neutralise Omicron variant



Pfizer-BioNTech said that an Omicron-specific Covid-19 vaccine, if needed, could be delivered by March 2022, pending regulatory approvals. Pic - i.yimg.com

Covid-19 vaccine makers Pfizer and BioNTech on Wednesday said that three doses of their shot was found to neutralise the much feared Omicron variant (B.1.1.529) of the coronavirus disease, following an initial laboratory study.

Further, the companies also said that two doses of the vaccine was found less effective in protection against the Omicron variant while a booster dose increased the

neutralising antibodies by 25 times.

"Although two doses of the vaccine may still offer protection against severe disease caused by the Omicron strain, it's clear from these preliminary data that protection is improved with a third dose of our vaccine," Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla said. "Ensuring as many people as possible are fully vaccinated with the first two dose series and a booster remains the best

course of action to prevent the spread of Covid-19," he added.

BioNTech CEO said, "Our preliminary, first dataset indicates that a third dose could still offer a sufficient level of protection from disease of any severity caused by the Omicron variant."

Meanwhile, the companies also said that a Omicron-specific Covid-19 vaccine, if needed, could be delivered by March

2022, pending regulatory approvals.

However, a study from the Africa Health Research Institute in South Africa has found that the variant can partially escape the protection offered by the two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. "There is a very large drop in neutralisation of Omicron by BNT162b2 immunity relative to the ancestral virus," tweeted Alex Sigal, a professor at the research institute.

## Queensland detects new version of Omicron

Australia's Queensland state has found a new Omicron lineage in a traveller who arrived from South Africa, health authorities said on Wednesday.

The new lineage has about half the gene variations of the original and can't be detected with typical screening, the state's acting chief health officer Peter Aitken told reporters. It was found in a traveller who had arrived from South Africa and tested positive for the coronavirus on Saturday, he said.

The new lineage has enough markers "to be able to classify it as Omicron, but we don't know enough about it as to what that means then as far as clinical severity, vaccine effectiveness", Aitken said.

"We now have Omicron and Omicron-like."

The discovery comes as the World Health Organization said on Wednesday that the Omicron variant has been reported in 57 nations and the number of patients needing hospitalisation is likely to rise as it spreads, reports Agencies.

"Even if the severity is equal or potentially even lower than for Delta variant, it is expected that hospitalisations will increase if more people become infected and that there will be a time lag between an increase in the incidence of cases and an increase in the incidence of deaths," the WHO, in its weekly epidemiological report, said.

## 'Grieving together with India': World mourns CDS Bipin Rawat's sudden demise

Condolences poured in from across the world over the sudden death of Indian chief of defence staff General Bipin Rawat in a chopper crash in Tamil Nadu. The CDS, his wife Madhulika Rawat and 11 others died when an Indian Air Force (IAF) chopper crashed near Coonoor in Nilgiris district of the southern state, reports Hindustan Times.

US secretary of state Antony Blinken in a tweet extended his condolences. "My deep condolences on the deaths of Indian Chief of Defense Staff General Rawat, his wife, and colleagues who perished in today's tragic accident. We'll remember Gen. Rawat as an exceptional leader who served his country and contributed to the US-India defense relationship," said Blinken.

Russian envoy to India Nikolay Kudashev said he is grieving with India at this time of crisis. "With deepest regret learnt about the sudden demise of Gen Bipin Rawat, Mrs Madhulika Rawat & 11 other officers in the helicopter crash today. India has lost its great patriot and dedicated hero," Kudashev said in a tweet.

"Russia has lost a very close friend, who played a big role in pro-



CDS General Bipin Rawat. Pic - img.republicworld.com

motion of our bilateral special and privileged strategic partnership. Grieving together with India. Goodbye, friend! Farewell, commander!" he further added.

British high commissioner Alex W Ellis said Rawat was a wise man, a brave soldier and a pioneer. "Tragic news. Gen Rawat was a wise man, a brave soldier, a pioneer & a generous host to me only weeks ago. We mourn his death and that of his wife, and all killed in this terrible accident," Ellis tweeted.

Japanese envoy Satoshi Suzuki said he was deeply saddened by the news. "Deeply saddened by the tragic demise of Gen Bipin Rawat, Chief of Defence Staff, his wife and 11

Armed Forces personnel in an unfortunate accident at Sullur, Tamil Nadu. I extend my deepest condolences to the bereaved family members of the people killed in the accident," Suzuki said in a tweet.

Among others who also extended their condolences was former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "I was deeply saddened to learn about the deadly helicopter crash that killed India's Chief of Defence Staff, General Bipin Rawat, his wife and 11 others in Tamil Nadu. My thoughts and prayers are with the families of the victims. May they rest in peace," the former Israeli prime minister said in a tweet.

## Putting US troops on ground in Ukraine is 'not on table': Biden

US President Joe Biden said on Wednesday putting American troops on the ground in Ukraine to deter a potential Russian invasion was "not on the table" and he hoped to announce a meeting with Russia and other NATO countries by Friday.

Speaking to reporters as he left the White House, Biden said he had made it clear to Russian President Vladimir Putin during his nearly two-hour virtual meeting on Tuesday that there would be economic consequences like none before if Russia invades Ukraine, and he is confident Putin got the message, reports Reuters.

Biden said he hoped that by Friday there would be an announcement of high-level meetings with Russia and at least four major NATO allies to "discuss the future of Russia's concerns relative to NATO writ large" and whether or not accommodations could be worked out as it related to "bringing down the temperature along the eastern front."

Biden said the United States had a moral and legal obligation to defend NATO allies if they are attacked, but that obligation did not extend to Ukraine.



\*Contd on page 6



## Omicron may change course of Covid-19 pandemic, WHO warns



The WHO has been pushing for countries to hold off on boosters to make more vaccines available to poorer countries where inoculation rates are low.  
Pic - Medical News Today

The World Health Organization said the omicron variant of the coronavirus may change the course of the pandemic. It called on countries to vaccinate as fast as possible and keep measures in place to protect people from infection.

"We can prevent omicron becoming a global crisis," WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said at a briefing on Wednesday. "This virus is changing, but our collective resolve must not."

The organization also said while there's early evidence that omicron is milder than the delta strain, it's too early to be definitive.

"Certain features of omicron, including its global spread and large number of mutations, suggest it could

have a major impact on the course of the pandemic," Tedros said.

Asked about a new study from Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE on how their vaccine works against omicron, Kate O'Brien, director of immunization and vaccines, said the WHO is aware and will look at the findings, reports Bloomberg.

Earlier on Wednesday, Pfizer and BioNTech said initial laboratory studies show a third dose of their vaccine may be needed to neutralize the omicron variant, an analysis that will accelerate booster-shot drives around the world.

The WHO has been pushing for countries to hold off on boosters to make more vaccines available to poorer countries where inoculation rates are low. But governments may be less likely to do that if evidence from tests continues to show that third shots are needed to protect against omicron.

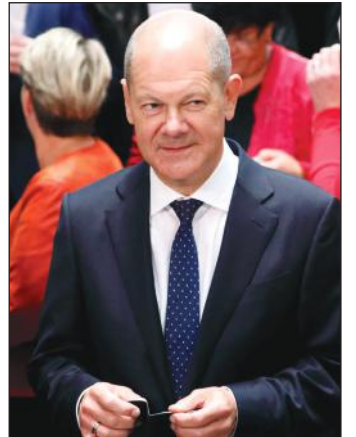
The variant has now spread to 57 countries, and it appears to be more transmissible than previous virus strains.

## Scholz takes over as German chancellor

Olaf Scholz became Germany's new chancellor on Wednesday after 16 years with Angela Merkel at the helm, pledging his centre-left-led coalition would offer a "new beginning" for Europe's top economy.

Scholz was officially named the country's ninth post-war leader by President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who urged him to "ensure that the pandemic does not keep us firmly in its grip for another year" as a fourth wave of the coronavirus outbreak rages.

The former finance minister, who won 395 of the 707 votes cast in the Bundestag lower house, has vowed broad "continuity" with the popular Merkel while making Germany greener and fairer. "It will be a new beginning for our country," Scholz pledged as he officially assumed the office from Merkel and thanked her for her lengthy tenure. "I will do everything to work towards that."



Merkel wished Scholz luck as chancellor, urging him to "take this office and work in the best interest of our country". She then left office by motorcade for the last time as her staff looked on, applauding.

Scholz led his Social Democrats from a deep poll deficit to victory in the September 26 election. The 63-year-old, who turned emulating Merkel in style and substance into a winning strategy, forged Germany's first national "traffic light" coalition with the ecologist Greens and the liberal Free Democrats, nicknamed after the parties' colours, reports Agencies.

Their four-year pact sealed late last month is called "Dare for More Progress", a hat tip to Social Democratic chancellor Willy Brandt's historic 1969 pledge to "Dare for More Democracy".

The alliance aims to slash carbon emissions, overhaul decrepit digital infrastructure, modernise citizenship laws, lift the minimum wage and have Germany join a handful of countries worldwide in legalising marijuana.

The new foreign minister, Annalena Baerbock, has pledged a tougher line with authoritarian states such as Russia and China after the business-driven pragmatism of the Merkel years.

Greens co-leader Baerbock is one of eight women in Germany's first gender-balanced cabinet. "That corresponds to the society we live in - half of the power belongs to women," Scholz, who describes himself as a "feminist", said this week.

Scholz and his team promise stability just as France braces for a bitterly fought presidential election next year and Europe grapples with the enduring aftershocks of Brexit.

However, a vicious fourth Covid wave has already put the incoming coalition to the test.

More than 103,000 people have died with coronavirus in Germany while new infections have surged since the weather turned cold, filling intensive care units to breaking point.

Scholz has thrown his weight behind making jabs mandatory to get the pandemic under control, as Austria has done, as experts say the worst is still to come for the country's struggling clinics.

## Nations launching diplomatic boycott of Olympics will 'pay the price': China

China on Thursday said that the United States and the three other Western nations which joined it in a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Beijing Olympics will "pay the price".

China's foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said, "The US, Australia, Britain, and Canada's use of the Olympic platform for political manipulation is unpopular and self-isolating, and they will inevitably pay the price for their wrongdoing."

Notably, Canada is the latest country to join the diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympics, first initiated by the United States. The two other countries are Australia and the United Kingdom.

Canada's prime minister Justin Trudeau on Wednesday cited repeated violation of human rights by the Chinese government as the reason for not sending any diplomatic representation to the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games this winter.

Similar reasons have been cited by the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom, too, as the allies foster a growing discord with China over a slew of issues that have plunged relations into the most serious crisis since the Tiananmen Square crackdown in 1989.

The athletes from all these countries would still be able to participate in the 2022 Winter Olympics since the boycott is only limited to the level of diplomatic representation, according to the Olympic committees of the respective nations.

Reacting to Australia's diplomatic boycott of the Olympics, a Chinese embassy spokesperson had earlier indicated that accountability for fixing the current predicament in diplomatic ties lies squarely with the Western side.

"Mountains cannot stop the river from flowing into the sea," the spokesperson of the Chinese embassy in Australia had said, noting that success at a multi-sports event such as the Olympics depends on the performance of athletes and not on the attendance of officials.



China warns nations' diplomatic boycott of Olympics' will pay the price.'  
Pic - singapore.on-24.com



Interview: Rabin Bhujun, Journaliste



**Mauritius Times : On avait l'impression, il n'y a pas si longtemps, que le rapport de forces était en faveur de l'alliance gouvernementale, malgré d'incessants scandales de corruption alléguée depuis le début de son mandat, et on se disait que Pravind Jugnauth aurait toutes les cartes en main pour un renouvellement de son mandat, vu l'incapacité de l'opposition à se présenter comme une alternative crédible et forte face au gouvernement. Selon des échos provenant de la base depuis un certain temps, il semble que le vent serait en train de tourner. Est-ce conjoncturel, à votre avis?**

**Rabin Bhujun :** En 2011, quand le MSM a quitté le gouvernement, qui pensait que Navin Ramgoolam allait mordre la poussière en décembre 2014 ? Qui croyait, alors, que le MSM allait connaître une victoire éclatante trois ans plus tard ?

Le rappel n'est pas inutile : nous sommes à trois ans des prochaines législatives. Tant de choses peuvent arriver d'ici là. Toute analyse sur les chances de victoire ou de défaite des uns et des autres est donc forcément conjoncturelle, à ce stade.

Toutefois, il faut reconnaître que le pouvoir est pris dans des vents de travers et est aussi malmené dans l'opinion publique. Entre le nombre alarmant de décès liés à la Covid-19, l'inflation des cas d'infection, le carton *"rouge écarlate"* puis *"rouge"* administré par la France à notre secteur du tourisme, et enfin l'amendement de l'*Independent Broadcasting Authority Act*, le gouvernement ne fait rien pour notre indulgence. C'est à croire qu'il n'y a plus que les *diehards* du MSM qui soutiennent l'action récente du gouvernement. Je dis bien *diehards*, parce que même des membres du gouvernement sont mal à l'aise avec la performance actuelle de Pravind Jugnauth et de son équipe.

**\* En effet, peu de Mauriciens seraient d'avis que le gouvernement est en train de bien gérer la recrudescence de la Covid-19. L'affaire de l'étiquette «rouge écarlate», heureusement passée au «rouge» ce mardi, corse les choses. Quelle lecture faites-vous de tout**

# “Ramgoolam s'est aSAJi”

## ‘Le rapprochement PTr/MMM/PMSD est possible avec Ramgoolam transformé en PM de transition puis Mentor’

**A**utrefois considérée comme une des plus grandes démocraties de l'Afrique, la République de Maurice peine à conserver ce statut aujourd'hui. Reporters sans Frontières, par exemple, dresse un portrait peu reluisant de ce qui se passe dans le paysage médiatique mauricien. Cet organisme évoque une dichotomie avec l'existence de deux catégories de reporters mauriciens : ceux qui font de la propagande en faveur du gouvernement en place et ceux qui sont mis à l'écart, boycottés, donc réduits au silence par le pouvoir. Étant donné la dégradation constante perçue et décriée dans les médias traditionnels et sur les réseaux sociaux, l'organe de régulation en prend un coup. Dans ce contexte, Rabin Bhujun nous explique les raisons pour lesquelles la sérénité doit revenir afin que la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme de 1948 soit totalement respectée. Mais il pose aussi la question importante de la déontologie qui marquerait les limites nécessaires à l'intérieur de toute démocratie tout en assurant le fonctionnement efficace des médias.

cela?

Remettons les choses dans leur contexte. Durant trois semaines, la situation sur le front de la Covid-19 est apparue chaotique aux yeux des Mauriciens et de ceux qui nous regardent de l'étranger.

Les journalistes qui exercent à Maurice ou qui sont correspondants auprès de médias étrangers ne se sont pas livrés au jeu de la divination. Ils ont rapporté des statistiques, des faits alarmants et des drames humains au moment même où l'Etat demandait de l'aide à nos voisins réunionnais.

Puis est arrivé le variant Omicron qui a déclenché une panique – qui semble aujourd'hui injustifiée – dans de nombreux pays, y compris en France. Dans ces circonstances, quand un passager ayant transité par Maurice est testé positif à ce variant à la Réunion, les autorités mauriciennes ont un devoir d'information et de collaboration.

**« Les organisations de la société civile sont nécessaires et occupent un espace politique que les partis traditionnels de l'opposition ont du mal à conquérir, vu la défiance d'une frange de Mauriciens à l'égard des partis politiques installés. Toutefois, nous avons affaire à un ensemble très hétéroclite, fourre-tout et attrape-tout... »**

Or, la stratégie d'en dire le moins, comme on la pratique ici, peut provoquer des retours de manivelle. Ainsi, de ce que j'ai compris, c'est d'abord à cause d'un déficit de collaboration et d'échange d'information de Maurice, en temps et en heure, que la France a pris cette décision.

Heureusement que le tir a été rectifié relativement vite. Néanmoins, cet épisode démontre, une énième fois, à quel point certaines administrations sont gérées avec une imprévision et un amateurisme déconcertant.

**\* L'affaire de l'étiquette « rouge écarlate » nous rappelle la dépendance de notre industrie touristique sur le marché touristique européen, mais aussi la vulnérabilité de notre économie aux mesures de rétorsion des grands pays...**

Je pense que vous allez vite en besogne et confondez l'attitude de la France, qui reste un pays ami, et celle du Royaume Uni, beaucoup plus perfide.

Lors du vote sur les Chagos aux Nations Unies, le 22

mai 2019, la France a eu l'élégance de s'abstenir de voter contre Maurice, alors que l'Australie ou nos voisins des Maldives ne se sont pas retenus de voler au secours du duo Etats-Unis et Grande Bretagne.

J'ai vu passer une analyse sommaire à l'effet que c'est la référence de Pravind Jugnauth sur la souveraineté de Maurice sur Tromelin au Parlement, la semaine dernière, qui a déclenché ce tir de semonce.

C'est une vision étriquée de la géopolitique par des esprits encore colonisés, car la France a certainement d'autres moyens de faire pression sur Maurice.

D'ailleurs, ce serait une manière étrange de faire pression que de placer notre pays sur la liste *«rouge écarlate»* et de le déclasser deux jours plus tard!

Je penche plutôt en faveur de l'explication suivante : c'est une mauvaise communication des autorités mauriciennes et leur manque de prévoyance qui nous ont valu ce carton rouge.

Sous d'autres cieux, quelqu'un en assumerait les conséquences. Ici, on nous répondra *«kot mo finn fote?»*

**\* Beaucoup pourront se demander pourquoi le gouvernement est en train de se tirer une balle dans le pied avec toute une série d'initiatives - Press Council, l'Offshore Petroleum Bill, et la dernière, ce sont les amendements votés à l'Independent Broadcasting Authority Act. Qu'en pensez-vous?**

J'enlèverai l'*Offshore Petroleum Bill* de ce lot. Il faut éviter de faire le jeu des politiciens qui mélangent des problématiques distinctes avec des raccourcis faciles afin de s'opposer au gouvernement et tenter de rallier le soutien populaire à travers la couverture que leur donnent les médias.

Le fait est que l'*Offshore Petroleum Bill* est en préparation depuis début 2020. Son vote a été retardé à cause de l'enchaînement des événements liés à la Covid-19 depuis l'an dernier. Aujourd'hui, nous n'en sommes qu'à l'étape de la prospection, ce qui nécessite l'élaboration d'un cadre juridique permettant de définir comment celle-ci se déroulera.

Les opposants sont hypocrites, car s'ils avaient été au gouvernement, ils n'auraient jamais craché sur la gigantesque manne financière que représente un éventuel gisement rentable d'hydrocarbures ou de gaz dans nos eaux territoriales.

● Suite en page 8



# 'Nous sommes à trois ans des prochaines législatives. Tant de choses peuvent arriver d'ici là...'

● Suite de la page 7

Cette nouvelle ressource permettrait au pays et à ses citoyens d'accéder à un nouveau palier de développement très rapidement.

Certes, il y a des questions à se poser sur la gouvernance, l'attribution d'un éventuel contrat d'exploitation, la sauvegarde de l'environnement marin, etc... si jamais on trouve des gisements exploitables. Mais on n'en est pas encore là.

A écouter certains opposants, on a toutefois l'impression que les multinationales du pétrole sont dans les *starting blocks* pour se faire des milliards de dollars dès l'année prochaine sur le dos du citoyen mauricien, tout en décimant nos fonds marins.

**\* Et les critiques sur l'amendement à l'IBA Act et la mise sur pied d'un Press Council ?**

A ce sujet, je suis comme vous et de nombreux autres



« En 2011, quand le MSM a quitté le gouvernement, qui pensait que Navin Ramgoolam allait mordre la poussière en décembre 2014 ? Qui croyait, alors, que le MSM allait connaître une victoire éclatante trois ans plus tard ? Le rappel n'est pas inutile : nous sommes à trois ans des prochaines législatives. Tant de choses peuvent arriver d'ici là... »

Mauriciens : je peine à comprendre pourquoi il fallait amender l'IBA Act de toute urgence et sans aucun dialogue préalable. Je ne comprends pas non plus la raison pour laquelle le gouvernement se borne à consolider son image de fossoyeur de la liberté d'expression en encourageant la *Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC)* à initier un débat sur la question d'un *Press Council*.

J'ai participé à ce débat à la MBC, il y a deux semaines. J'étais le seul à défendre un dialogue avec les médias et l'élaboration d'un Code national de Déontologie et d'un éventuel *Complaints Commission* à la condition expresse de trouver un consensus avec les professionnels de l'information sur ce que j'appelle un *new deal* de l'espace médiatique mauricien.

Cette réforme d'envergure comprendrait

- l'élaboration d'un Code national de Déontologie pour les journalistes,
- la mise sur pied d'une institution indépendante pour en assurer le respect,
- une loi de type *Freedom of Information Act* (une loi sur la liberté de l'information),
- une réforme du mandat actuel du *Media Trust*,
- le toilettage de la *MBC Act*,
- ainsi qu'une forme juridique nouvelle afin que des entreprises de presse à but non lucratif puissent se financer à travers des dons déductibles des impôts d'individus et d'entreprises.

L'humeur, à entendre les voix au gouvernement et la soupe propagandiste anti-journaliste que sert quotidiennement la MBC, est à la mise au pas des médias qui n'encensent pas le pouvoir.

Rien dans les discours récents des hauts responsables du gouvernement ne permet de déceler une quelconque volonté d'apaisement ou de dialogue. C'est une pente dangereuse sur laquelle s'engage le gouvernement : celle de l'autoritarisme.

**\* S'il y a, à la base, une stratégie de diversion de certaines initiatives, par contre neutraliser la force de frappe des radios privées, cela en vaut probablement la chandelle pour l'Alliance gouvernementale, paraît-il ?**

Ironiquement, ce mercredi, l'IBA a fait exactement ce qu'on s'attendait d'elle: elle a renouvelé le permis d'opération de la radio dont on disait qu'elle était la victime expiatoire désignée de l'IBA Act amendée.

Je vois déjà les affidés du pouvoir défilier pour affirmer que ce renouvellement démontre que cette radio n'était pas visée et qu'on a injustement intenté un procès d'intention au gouvernement.

C'est un peu court comme argument car ni cette radio, ni les autres – non sponsorisées indirectement par le système MSM – ne sont hors de danger tant que l'*Independent Review Panel* de l'IBA disposera de son nouvel arsenal répressif, et ce, sans avoir l'obligation de suspendre l'application d'une sanction en cas de contestation devant la justice.

Permettez-moi de faire une parenthèse sur la question des sources. Je pense que vu l'affirmation du Premier ministre à ce sujet, notre Cour suprême tranchera en faveur des journalistes si jamais l'IBA leur demande de divulguer leurs sources.

Après les déclarations solennelles de Jugnauth et de ses ministres, l'intention du législateur de sauvegarder le principe de la confidentialité des sources a été clairement énoncée. A l'avenir, si la Cour suprême doit rechercher l'intention du législateur afin d'interpréter cette disposition de la loi, celle-ci sera claire.

A mon sens, toutefois, par pudeur ou par gêne, les médias ont oublié d'évoquer un autre amendement qui pourrait être utilisé contre certaines radios.

**\* A quoi faites-vous allusion ?**

A l'article 29A, qui prévoit qu'une «*administrative penalty*» ou une sanction administrative maximale de Rs 500,000 peut être infligée au détenteur d'une licence, notamment si celui-ci est suspecté d'avoir commis un délit financier.

A première vue, pourquoi inclure des délits financiers dans une loi gouvernant le fonctionnement des radios ? Le ministre Bobby Hurreeram a été le seul membre du gouvernement à évoquer ouvertement le raisonnement derrière cette disposition.

Lors de son intervention sur le projet de loi à l'Assemblée nationale, il s'est demandé comment font certaines radios pour rester à flot, sans soutien bancaire, tout en continuant à encourir leurs frais de fonctionnement alors qu'ils accumulent des pertes grandissantes. Ce faisant, il a lancé le pavé du financement dans la marre des radios.

Depuis quelque temps, certains au gouvernement veulent démontrer que des entreprises de presse sont financées de manière occulte par des hommes politiques locaux ou des expatriés officiellement ruinés. D'ordinaire, une entreprise de presse est financée par des emprunts bancaires, des injections de capitaux d'actionnaires ainsi que des revenus publicitaires ou des ventes.

Ne minimisons pas ce qu'un exercice de *forensic audit* rigoureux pourrait trouver comme financement louches. N'oublions pas les conséquences financières et l'impact sur l'image que ce type de découverte pourrait avoir sur certaines radios.

**\* Par ailleurs, à la question de savoir si les radios privées peuvent représenter une menace pour les hommes et les femmes politiques, Navin Ramgoolam doit en savoir plus que quiconque, cela suivant son histoire de 'katori' racontée en pleine campagne électorale en 2019. Cette histoire avait été reprise et commentée par Somduth Dulthumun le lendemain dans les bulletins d'information de la MBC... avec le résultat qu'on connaît. Les hommes au pouvoir en pensent autant probablement, non ?**

C'est la MBC qui avait monté en épingle l'histoire du «*katori*» de Ramgoolam, ne l'oublions pas. Pour en revenir à votre question, aucun gouvernement ne sort indemne d'une confrontation directe et prolongée avec les médias. En ce moment, à l'exception de quelques médias intimement liés au pouvoir, l'ensemble de la presse semble opposée à la manière de faire du gouvernement aussi bien par rapport à l'IBA qu'à la proposition, dans ses contours actuels, d'un *Press Council*.

Malgré toutes leurs dénégations, il est évident que les têtes pensantes au gouvernement cherchent à faire taire les critiques et, plus généralement, ceux qui s'opposent à eux sur les réseaux sociaux, dans les journaux et les radios. Ils pensent ainsi pouvoir gouverner en paix.

Toutefois, l'erreur majeure de diagnostic du gouvernement me sidère. Les ministres, députés et nommés politiques communiquent mal, voire pas du tout, et pratiquent communément de la rétention d'information.

Comment peuvent-ils espérer se faire bien entendre, si déjà, au départ, ils ne se donnent pas les moyens d'être bien entendus ? Ils ne se rendent même pas compte de cette évidence. A chaque fois que je vois Kailesh Jagatpal bafouiller et se perdre, je repense à cela.

**\* Dans le sillage des relations très tendues avec les médias, l'opposition et les activistes de la société civile, le gouvernement avait grandement besoin d'un «alibi» pour justifier son action par rapport à l'IBA ou au 'cyber-crime', et il l'a eu avec cette rumeur non-fondée quant à la présence de la fille de Steven Obeegadoo sur le vol en provenance de l'Afrique du sud, laquelle avait échappé à la quarantaine selon les pourvoyeurs de cette rumeur. Même si on n'en parle presque plus sur les réseaux sociaux et dans la presse, cela mérite une réflexion, non ?**

Cet incident est symptomatique de nouvelles pratiques insidieuses chez les «journalistes».

● Suite en page 9



# 'Aucun gouvernement ne sort indemne d'une confrontation directe et prolongée avec les médias'

● Suite de la page 8

On range au placard les méthodes établies de collecte d'information pour s'appuyer sur ce qui est dit et montré sur les réseaux sociaux afin de traiter un sujet qui fait le buzz. D'abord, le cafouillage lors de l'arrivée de ce vol avait fait le buzz sur les réseaux sociaux. Puis, un aspect de cette actualité a été monté en chandelle, sans aucune vérification dans des médias *mainstream*. Ils ont dû rectifier l'information... sans remords ni regrets.

Je ne sais pas si cet incident sera utilisé comme alibi, mais il illustre en tout cas un manque de rigueur et une méconnaissance des principes de base en journalisme. Le problème c'est que cette dérive ne date pas d'aujourd'hui. C'est la raison pour laquelle le débat à propos de la mise sur pied d'un Code national de Déontologie, et l'ensemble de ce *New Deal* que j'évoque, doit avoir lieu. Mais, pour cela, il faut un climat apaisé.

Or, que constate-t-on? D'une part, il y a un gouvernement ouvertement hostile et menaçant envers la presse. D'autre part, des responsables de l'opposition se posent en termes de grands défenseurs de la liberté d'expression et de soutiens indéfectibles des journalistes... Toutefois, il n'y a pas si longtemps, ils menaçaient et sévissaient aussi contre les médias quand ils étaient à la place occupée par Pravind Jugnauth aujourd'hui.

L'appel à l'apaisement doit aussi être lancé aux journalistes pour qu'ils ne réagissent pas, non plus, de manière corporatiste et qu'ils évitent de s'acoquiner aux responsables de l'opposition qui ne leur offrent qu'un soutien intéressé et purement conjoncturel.

La question fondamentale ne doit pas être perdue de vue: au nom de quel principe, le journalisme à Maurice serait-il le seul corps de métier majeur n'ayant aucun code de conduite connu de tous et qui lui est opposable?

A ce sujet, j'ai lu la missive d'un journaliste respecté apostrophant une élue du gouvernement après son discours médiocre sur l'amendement à l'*IBA Act*. Le journaliste a tancé la députée en lui expliquant que la Déclaration des devoirs et des droits des journalistes, élaborée à Munich par

nalistes devant leurs responsabilités et les rappeler à l'ordre quand cela s'avère nécessaire.

Ce n'est pas un luxe dans un contexte où de nombreux journalistes sont obsédés à l'idée d'enregistrer des *likes*, *shares*, *comments* et *views* – devenus des unités de mesure de la valeur de leur travail. Certains feraient passer au second plan le devoir d'éclairer le public en donnant du sens à une information fiable, traitée de manière équilibrée et distanciée.

**\* Je vous disais au début de cet entretien que le vent serait en train de tourner selon les échos qui nous parviennent. Reste à savoir si l'Opposition va tirer parti de cette nouvelle situation si elle se confirme. Votre opinion?**

Paul Bérenger et Xavier Duval, ont, au fil des dernières semaines, clairement indiqué leur volonté de réunifier l'opposition. Si les législatives ne sont pas pour demain, par contre, les municipales pourraient bien se tenir dans les six mois à venir.

Dans ce contexte, les principaux responsables de l'opposition ont tout intérêt à ranger leurs egos respectifs et à se concentrer sur ce qu'ils peuvent accomplir au sein d'une plateforme unie face à Pravind Jugnauth.

Arracher plusieurs villes – voire toutes les villes – à un MSM qui avait tout raflé lors des municipales de 2015 pourrait permettre à l'opposition de bénéficier d'un second souffle salutaire. Ces résultats seraient susceptibles de l'amener à se réorganiser et à engranger le soutien d'électeurs des régions rurales car ces derniers suivraient l'exemple fourni par nos cinq municipalités. Pour en arriver là, la raison doit primer sur les egos. C'est facile à dire, mais très difficile à réaliser en politique.

**\* Lors d'une de ses conférences de presse hebdomadaires, Paul Bérenger a déclaré une nouvelle fois que si l'Alliance de l'Espoir est en faveur d'une unification, ce ne sera toutefois «pas sous n'importe quelle condition». Et, récemment, Navin Ramgoolam déclarait à Radio Plus son souhait de se retrouver au PMO «une fois encore». Ce sera difficile de réconcilier ces deux conditions, non?**

J'ai observé un certain nombre de changements chez Navin Ramgoolam depuis sa maladie. Se confronter à la possibilité que tout s'arrête mène sans doute un homme à se réévaluer et à revoir ses priorités ainsi que la place qu'il compte occuper quand il ne sera plus là.

J'ai noté que Ramgoolam a perdu de sa véhémence envers Pravind Jugnauth. Il y a quelques semaines, il est allé jusqu'à blâmer

l'entourage du Premier ministre pour les mauvaises décisions du gouvernement. S'il s'emportait à l'évocation d'un rapprochement MSM-Parti Travailleurs (PT) après un échange mondain avec Jugnauth il y a quelques mois, le leader des rouges ne s'agace plus quand on le questionne à ce sujet.

Récemment, quand il a critiqué l'action du gouvernement au sujet de l'IBA, il n'a pas rejeté tout le blâme sur le Premier ministre, pourtant ministre de l'Information.

Pour faire un jeu de mots facile, je dirai que Ramgoolam

« Les opposants sont hypocrites, car s'ils avaient été au gouvernement, ils n'auraient jamais craché sur la gigantesque manne financière que représente un éventuel gisement rentable d'hydrocarbures ou de gaz dans nos eaux territoriales. Cette nouvelle ressource permettrait au pays et à ses citoyens d'accéder à un nouveau palier de développement... »



s'est aSAJi. Comme Sir Anerood Jugnauth avant lui, il soupèse peut-être plus prudemment ses options. Le rapprochement PTr/MMM/PMSD est possible avec Ramgoolam transformé en Premier ministre de transition puis Mentor en dehors du gouvernement.

Sur l'autre front, ne nous en étonnons pas si, tout comme SAJ et Ramgoolam avaient enterré la hache de guerre à partir de 2008, le même dégel ne s'engage entre les leaders du PTr et du MSM. Les hommes se parlent, les femmes aussi, depuis quelques temps.

En se rapprochant du MSM, Ramgoolam pourrait préparer plus sereinement l'après dans le confort du pouvoir. Et il pourrait officiellement adouber un poulain ambitieux mais encore trop vert pour lui succéder si jamais le PTr demeure coincé dans l'opposition.

Je suis persuadé que Ramgoolam a désormais deux options politiques. Il choisira celui qui lui convient le mieux au moment venu, sachant que la conjoncture des municipales peut l'amener à une stratégie et celle des législatives, à un autre choix.

**\* En attendant, ce sont toujours les organisations de la société civile qui prennent les initiatives visant à contrer le gouvernement en place, l'opposition des partis dits traditionnels n'arrivant toujours pas à mobiliser les grosses foules. Ce sont toujours les mêmes qui organisent le rallye contre l'IBA Act ce vendredi. Qu'est-ce que cela signifie pour vous?**

Des restrictions sanitaires sont toujours en vigueur, et les principaux partis de l'opposition sont assez responsables en n'appelant pas leurs partisans à manifester en masse. Reconnaissons-leur la sagesse de ne pas attiser des feux qu'ils auraient du mal à éteindre, vu le contexte sanitaire actuel.

Par ailleurs, les organisations de la société civile que vous évoquez sont nécessaires et occupent un espace politique que les partis traditionnels de l'opposition ont du mal à conquérir, vu la défiance d'une frange de Mauriciens à l'égard des partis politiques installés.

Toutefois, nous avons affaire à un ensemble très hétéroclite, fourre-tout et attrape-tout. On voit mal cet ensemble rester uni et solidaire à l'approche des échéances électorales. D'une part, il y a un nombre limité de tickets disponibles au sein de toute plateforme électorale commune. D'autre part, au-delà des sujets spécifiques sur lesquels ils se mobilisent conjointement, ces mouvements n'ont que peu d'affinités avec les partis politiques installés de l'opposition, dont ils combattent les dérives, par ailleurs. Cela signifie donc que l'entente cordiale d'aujourd'hui n'a pas vocation à durer.



« Que constate-t-on? D'une part, il y a un gouvernement ouvertement hostile et menaçant envers la presse. D'autre part, des responsables de l'opposition se posent en termes de grands défenseurs de la liberté d'expression et de soutiens indéfectibles des journalistes... Toutefois, il n'y a pas si longtemps, ils menaçaient et sévissaient aussi contre les médias... »

la Fédération européenne des journalistes en 1971, s'applique aussi aux professionnels mauriciens. Il faudrait encore savoir si les journalistes locaux connaissent l'existence de ce code et s'ils adhèrent à ce code!

Prenons une analogie. Même si la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme est un traité international qui consacre des droits importants, chaque pays doit transposer ces principes dans son droit national et les faire respecter par des institutions locales. Il en va de même pour la déontologie. Il nous faut donc un code national et une institution respectable et respectée pouvant placer les jour-



## Book Review

# C. Dukhira's 'Pioneers of Private Secondary Schools' & 'Nation mauricienne souveraine'



Chit Dukhira

**T**wo books of late Chit Dukhira were launched posthumously by the family of the author last month - 'Pioneers of Private Secondary Schools in Mauritius' and 'Nation mauricienne souveraine: Survol historique'. The ceremony was held at Hennessy Park Hotel in the presence of former Vice President Raouf Bundhun, Global Rainbow Foundation and former Education minister Armoorgum Parsuramen and with Finlay Salesse as master of ceremonies, all of whom have known Chit Dukhira from close quarters and in different capacities.

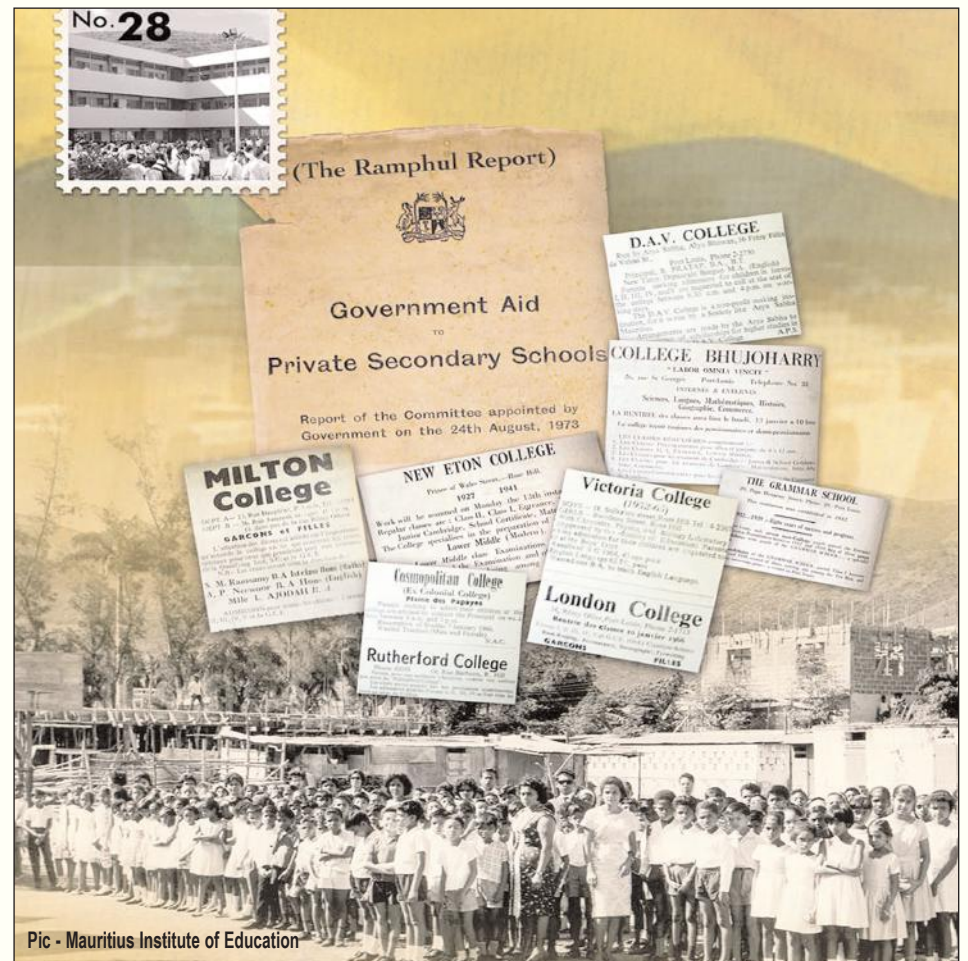
Interest in Mauritian history has been growing over the years, both locally and amongst academics in different universities worldwide. An online search will quickly reveal the number of academic articles, penned by American, British, Indian, French scholars and so many others in other foreign universities on different aspects of our history. 'Nation mauricienne souveraine: Survol historique' is a valuable addition to the body of research seeking to understand what has gone into the making of the Mauritian nation, the political battles as well as the social and cultural fault lines that existed in Mauritian society, some of which persist to this day. Besides thorough and time-consuming research dedicated to the writing of this book, Chit Dukhira must have drawn from his exposure to local government administration, having himself been a Town Clerk, and previously written four books on local government and one on the history of Mauritius - 'Experiments in Democracy', and been closely involved in social and political activities for most of his active life.

'Pioneers of Private Secondary Schools in Mauritius' comes at an opportune time when many of these private educational institutions are facing uncertain times and indeed threat of closure. It should be of particular interest to the pioneers who contributed to make the future of this country brighter than what it might have been by setting up private secondary schools in the country at a critical stage of its economic and social development as well to students of history with a particular interest in the educational development afoot in the country since the 1950s and much earlier. This was an effective tool of social and economic empowerment for vast numbers of Mauritians at a time when the economy was still narrow-based, and who had no

opportunity to pursue any meaningful activities other than menial work in the fields, in commerce and as artisans.

The past generation of masons, fishermen, mechanical apprentices in factories, workers in factory electrical units, *tabagie*-owners, labourers, handy men of all sorts, small shop owners and planters of a primarily agricultural society, looked upon education as the route that would spare their offsprings the life of hardships and vicissitudes that had been theirs. However, besides the Catholic and other Christian denomination secondary schools which were designed originally to provide formal secondary education to their own specific pools of students, both boys and girls, there were not as many public schools providing secondary education to children in those days. It is in this context that we need to assess the key role played by secular private secondary schools towards the real uplift of this country. The work they have done to comprehensively uplift the majority of the population, along with the public and confessional elite schools, has been remarkable.

The pioneers who established private secondary schools were men and women of some character and strong dedication, who took the risk to fill up the void in which those who had been left behind by the elitist public and confessional schools, were finding themselves. They were the Obeegadoos of Trinity College, the Bhujoharrys of Bhujoharry College, the Pattens of Patten College, the Balgobins of Eden College, the Roys of Mauritius College, the Venkatasamys of New Eton College, the Jeetahs of Prof Bissoondoyal College, the Khadaroos of Darwin College, the Chan Lam of London College, the Bolakees and Chamroos of Universal



Pic - Mauritius Institute of Education

College, the Sanmukhiyas of Modern College, the Bunwarees of Ideal College, the Napals of Cosmopolitan College, the Chellappoos, Bhugalooos, Luchmuns, and many others.

Sadly, many of the educational establishments which saved a full generation of Mauritians by imparting education when the latter had nowhere else to go to are now extinct. Some private establishments are still around despite the era of free education at the secondary level which came into play from 1976 and the competition

that now obtains from the better equipped state secondary schools. It can be said however that private secondary schools of the 1950s and the 1960s have played a critical role to help this country reap fully the benefits of our education system, and this must be what inspired Chit Dhukira to pay tribute to their dedicated promoters.

'Pioneers of Private Secondary Schools in Mauritius' and 'Nation mauricienne souveraine: Survol historique' are both a valuable contribution to local history and should be read as widely as possible.



1956-2021



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## ● Cont. from page 2

Nearly 100 low-income nations are relying on the program for vaccines. COVAX was initially aiming to deliver 2 billion doses by the end of 2021, enough to vaccinate only the most high-risk groups in developing countries. However, its delivery forecast was wound back in September to only 1.425 billion doses by the end of the year.

And by the end of November, less than 576 million doses had actually been delivered.

This predictable failure is largely due to wealthy countries mopping up more than half of the first 7.5 billion vaccine doses developed through pre-purchase agreements, leaving only crumbs for COVAX.

Chronic under-investment in COVAX (in terms of both doses and funds), and further hoarding of vaccine doses in wealthy nations for boosters, have continued to starve COVAX of supplies to distribute to those most in need.

#### Failure to deliver on promised vaccine donations

Wealthy countries have been shamed into making pledges to donate large numbers of doses to low- and middle-income countries. But few of these pledges have yet translated into vaccines in arms.

By October 25, more than 1.3 billion vaccine doses had been pledged, but only around 10% had

## Wealthy nations starved the developing world of vaccines. Omicron shows the cost of this greed

been delivered.

Meanwhile, many high-income countries have ignored pleas from the WHO to hold off on providing booster vaccinations until the rest of the world catches up. Even after boosters have been administered, Médecins Sans Frontières estimates that ten high-income countries will be sitting on more than 870 million excess doses by the end of the year.

Take Australia as one example. It has pledged 60 million doses for developing countries in the Indo-Pacific region, but so far, less than 9.3 million have been delivered. None of these doses are slated for equitable distribution through COVAX, however, and none are currently committed for Africa.

Meanwhile, the Australian government has invested more than A\$8 billion (US\$5.7 billion) in pre-purchase agreements for 280.8 million vaccine doses for Australians. This is equivalent to more than 10 doses per person.

#### Failure to agree on temporary changes to trade rules

Some wealthy countries have also continued to oppose a proposal to temporarily suspend trade rules that protect the monopolies of

pharmaceutical companies on Covid-19 health products and technologies.

Initially proposed by India and South Africa in October 2020, the so-called TRIPS waiver would enable companies around the world to freely produce Covid-19 products and technologies without fear of litigation over possible infringements of intellectual property rights.

It is now co-sponsored by 63 countries and supported by well over 100 of the World Trade Organization's 164 member states. The US signalled its support for a waiver in May (limited to vaccines), but it hasn't formally co-sponsored the proposal. The European Union, the UK and Switzerland continue to oppose it, with Germany a particularly staunch opponent.

The TRIPS waiver, if adopted in the form sponsored by the 63 countries, would cover all health products and technologies needed for preventing, treating and containing Covid-19, including vaccines, treatments, diagnostic tests, medical devices and personal protective



A shipment of COVAX vaccines arrives in Madagascar, which still remains one of the least-vaccinated countries in the world. Alexander Joe/AP

equipment.

It would waive rules in the WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) that apply to patents, undisclosed information (such as information submitted to regulatory agencies or protected as trade secrets), copyright and industrial designs. And it would last for at least three years from the date the waiver is adopted, and then be reviewed annually.

However, more than a year after the waiver was proposed, discussions at the WTO remain deadlocked.

The EU insists it will be sufficient to tweak existing provisions in the TRIPS Agreement that allow for compulsory licensing - exploitation of the subject matter of a patent without the permission of the patent

holder. This, however, doesn't cover undisclosed information, which is needed for manufacturing vaccines.

Many countries, including the UK, EU, China and Australia, are now supporting a separate proposal at the WTO which addresses other trade-related issues, such as export restrictions and customs procedures. However, it fails to lift the intellectual property rights that maintain monopolies on '19 products.

To delay matters even further, the emergence of the Omicron variant has resulted in postponement of the WTO ministerial council meeting this week, where these proposals were to be discussed. While debate will continue in the TRIPS Council in December, momentum to reach a decision in the near-term may have been lost.

#### Urgent action is needed

Wealthy countries have hoarded vaccines, starved COVAX of funds and doses, released promised donations at a slow dribble, and stalled agreement on a global agreement to lift barriers to wider manufacturing of vaccines in the developing world.

We must do better. The Omicron variant illustrates that clearly the world can't afford to wait any longer.

Deborah Gleeson, La Trobe University

## Programme des Courses

### 1 THE EMPIRE STATE PLATE

1850 m - Valeur [0-20] - 12h30

1 Heart of Darkness	SN	8-4-6-2-4	60.5(-4)	I.Taka	8	650
2 Supreme Elevation	SH	9-6-9-5-6	60.5	G.D.Aucharuz	1	600
3 Desert Thief	RG	3-3-1-6-1	59.5(-4)	N.S.Batchameah	5	290
4 Dreamforest	CD	4-6-4-6-8	59(-3)	M.Sonaram	2	650
5 Italian Way	VA	5-6-10-8-8	59	P.Mogun	9	2500
6 Midnight Oracle	SPN	4-1-3-6-7	58	N.Marday	7	1400
7 Blunderbuss	CR	10-5-5-1-4	56.5	R.Hoolash	3	450
8 Nightingale Lane	CR	8-9/5-4-3	55.5	K.Ramsamy	4	600
9 Starsky	CD	9-4-7-6-8	55	K.Kalychurun	10	3000
10 Slightly Scottish	AS	8/7-1-9-5	53.5	R.Beeharry	6	1600

### 2 THE BIG SKY PLATE

1450 m - Valeur [0-26] - 13h05

1 James Peter	SN	5-6-6-2-8	62(-4)	N.S.Batchameah	6	300
2 Al Jazeera	CR	4-1-7-7-2	61.5	K.Ramsamy	7	550
3 Amandla	JMH	1-3-1-8-7	61.5(-3)	A.Roy	3	700
4 Well Connected	VA	6-1-10-3-6	61	D.Bheekary	4	550
5 Moon Jumper	G	0-0-6-5-3	60.5	S.Bussunt	1	250
6 The Gypsy King	SPN	10-5-8-8-5	58	G.D.Aucharuz	8	1600
7 Rochester	JMH	5-5-5-5-9	53.5	B.Sooiful	5	1600
8 Greatfiveeight	CD	2-1-10-5-7	52(-3)	M.Sonaram	2	2000

### 3 THE SENOR VERSACE PLATE

1400 m - Valeur Benchmark 31 - 13h40

1 Massimo	SM	0-0-5-3-1	60	D.Bheekary	1	180
2 Desert Boy	P	6-1-2-7-3	59	G.D.Aucharuz	3	270
3 Taranaki	GR	1-9-7-5-1	59	N.Teeha	2	670
4 High Voltage	AS	10-9-6-5-6	58.5	S.Rama	4	2500
5 Straight	SPN	1-4-5-4-9	58.5	J.Allyhosain	5	2500
6 San Andreas	SJ	3-8-8-2-1	58	B.Sooiful	6	450

## 37è journée samedi 11 décembre 2021

### 4 THE POLAR ROYALE TROPHY

1365 m - Valeur Benchmark 41 - 14h15

1 Alameery	SJ	2-1-2-4-1	60	N.Teeha	7	1000
2 Captain Garrett	GR	2-2-1-2-6	60	B.Sooiful	5	900
3 Swagger Jagger	SM	1-4-5-5-2	60(-4)	N.S.Batchameah	4	1000
4 Go Jewel	VA	1-2-1-3-10	59.5	D.Bheekary	3	1000
5 Liquid	RM	0-0-0-5-4	59.5	P.C.Orffer	6	2000
6 Emblem Of Hope	SH	0-1-1-1-2	58	P.K.Horil	1	160
7 Jet Stream	AS	10-6-8-3-8	58	S.Rama	8	2500
8 Donnan	SN	4/3-2-4-2	57	J.Allyhosain	2	480
9 Ninotto[EA]	RG	5-5-2-2-3	58	-----	9	-----

### 5 THE CASEY'S FLIGHT CUP

1450 m - Valeur Benchmark 46 - 14h50

1 All About The Bass	AS	3-4-4-3-5	60	S.Rama	8	1200
2 Culture Trip	AN	1-7-7-7-5	60	J.Allyhosain	2	600
3 Juniper Lane	SM	2-1-5-7-2	60(-4)	N.S.Batchameah	5	700
4 Pop Icon	SPN	6-9-7-6-7	59.5	R.Vaibhav	6	3000
5 Watch Me Dad	GR	3-2-1-7-2	59.5	N.Teeha	3	400
6 Al Aasy	RM	0-0-6-4-7	58.5	P.C.Orffer	9	2000
7 Thomas Henry	G	1-3-1-2-1	58.5	S.Bussunt	4	200
8 Bold Phoenix	SJ	5-5-4-1-2	58	B.Sooiful	1	700
9 Chapter And Verse	SH	0-5-2-R-4	58(-3)	M.Sonaram	7	1200

### 6 THE ALFRED GELLE CUP

1850 m - Valeur Benchmark 56 - 15h25

1 Tsitsikamma Dance	RM	1-4-4-2-3	61	P.C.Orffer	9	550
2 Red Mars	SJ	5-3-1-4-6	60.5	N.Teeha	10	1200
3 Hellofaride	G	0-0-0-7-4	60	S.Bussunt	4	800
4 Consul Of War	CD	4-6-1-6-5	57.5(-4)	N.S.Batchameah	8	900
5 Royal Italian	P	4-5-3-5-3	57	G.D.Aucharuz	2	1200
6 Lunafacation	SM	0-0-6-1-1	56.5	D.Bheekary	6	900
7 Paddingtons Luck	GR	10-1-6-1-1	56	B.Sooiful	3	1200
8 Rock The Night	SM	0-6-6-9-4	56	R.Joorawon	5	1200
9 Absolutist	AS	1-2-4-2-6	55	S.Rama	1	400
10 Pforzheim	SH	5-1-1-1-2	53(-3)	M.Sonaram	7	330

### 7 THE HIGHLAND SOLDIER PLATE

1365 m - Valeur [0-15] - 16h00

1 Fairbanks	VA	4-5-6-6-4	61.5	D.Bheekary	7	1000
2 Dunzie	CD	2-4-5-2-2	61(-3)	M.Sonaram	5	220
3 Barak Lavan	SN	5-3-8-9-8	58	J.Allyhosain	1	650
4 Seven Colours	SN	6-6-9-9/6	58	R.K.Chumun	8	3300
5 Valerin	CD	5-3-4-6-5	58(-4)	N.S.Batchameah	4	800
6 Arctic Flyer	SPN	7-8-3-6-2	57	R.Vaibhav	6	700
7 Special Force	SPN	8-10-2-3-1	56.5	G.D.Aucharuz	2	300
8 Northern Rebel	JMH	8-5-7-6-4	55	B.Sooiful	3	1000

### 8 THE CROWNED KING PLATE

1600 m - Valeur [0-25] - 16h35

1 Arnica Montana	SN	R-3-5-2-1	61.5(-4)	N.S.Batchameah	2	300
2 Eagles Vision	SPN	1-2-6-3-1	61	J.Allyhosain	5	550
3 Million Dollar Man	CR	7-2-7-1-1	60	K.Ramsamy	3	400
4 Alssakhra	G	8-3-5-3-3	59.5	S.Bussunt	6	700
5 Master Mariner	SPN	7-8-7-8-3	59	R.Vaibhav	4	1400
6 The Hitman	SH	0-0-0-9-8	59	R.Joorawon	8	1600
7 Silver Song	CD	5-5-11-7-9	58.5(-3)	M.Sonaram	9	1600
8 Tiger's Bond	P	1-1-3-4-5	58.5	G.D.Aucharuz	7	750
9 Man From Seattle	RG	5-6-6-4-3	58	D.Bheekary	1	550

## Selections

- Desert Thief, Blunderbuss, Heart of Darkness
- Moon Jumper, James Peter, Amandla
- Massimo, Desert Boy, San Andreas
- Emblem Of Hope, Donnan, Captain Garrett
- Thomas Henry, Watch Me Dad, Bold Phoenix
- Pforzheim, Tsitsikamma Dance, Absolutist
- Dunzie, Special Force, Valerin
- Arnica Montana, Million Dollar Man, Man From Seattle



# Diet and exercise aren't enough to get you to 100

*Many centenarians haven't lived healthy lives, so are they genetically different?*

A 35-year-old man only has a 1.5% chance of dying in the next ten years. But the same man at 75 has a 45% chance of dying before he reaches 85. Clearly, ageing is bad for our health. On the bright side, we have made unprecedented progress in understanding the fundamental mechanisms that control ageing and late-life disease.

A few tightly linked biological processes, sometimes called the "hallmarks of ageing", including our supply of stem cells and communication between cells, act to keep us healthy in the early part of our lives – with problems arising as these start to fail. Clinical trials are ongoing to see if targeting some of these hallmarks can improve diabetic kidney disease, aspects of immune function and age-related scarring of the lungs among others. So far, so good.

Unfortunately, big, unanswered questions remain in the biology of ageing. To evaluate what these are and how to address them, the American Federation For Aging Research, a charity, recently convened a series of meetings for leading scientists and doctors. The experts agreed that understanding what is special about the biology of humans who survive more than a century is now a key challenge.

These centenarians comprise less than 0.02% of the UK population but have exceeded the life expectancy of their peers by almost 50 years (babies born in the 1920s typically had a life expectancy of less than 55). How are they doing it?

We know that centenarians live so long because they are unusually healthy. They remain in good health for about 30 years longer than most normal people and when they finally fall ill, they are only sick for a very short time. This "compression of morbidity" is clearly good for them, but also benefits society as a whole. In the US, the medical care costs for a centenarian in their last two years of life are about a third of those of someone who dies in their seventies (a time when most centenarians don't even need to see a doctor).

The children of centenarians are also much healthier than average, indicating they are inheriting something beneficial from their parents. But is this genetic or environmental?

## Centenarians aren't always health conscious

Are centenarians the poster children for a healthy lifestyle? For the general population, watching your weight, not smoking, drinking moderately and eating at least five servings of fruit and vegetables a day can increase life expectancy by up to 14 years compared with someone who does none of these things. This difference exceeds that seen between the least and most deprived areas in the UK, so intuitively it would be expected to play a role in surviving for a century.

But astonishingly, this needn't be the case. One study found that up to 60% of Ashkenazi Jewish centenarians have smoked heavily most of their lives, half have been obese for the same period of time, less than half do even moderate exercise and under 3% are vegetarians. The children of centenarians appear no more health conscious than the general population either.

Compared to peers with the same food consumption, wealth and body weight, however, they have half the



Centenarian buddies in Sardinia. Sabino Parente/Shutterstock

prevalence of cardiovascular disease. There is something innately exceptional about these people.

## The big secret

Could it be down to rare genetics? If so, then there are two ways in which this could work. Centenarians might carry unusual genetic variants that extend lifespan, or instead they might lack common ones that cause late-life disease and impairment. Several studies, including our own work, have shown that centenarians have just as many bad genetic variants as the general population.

Some even carry two copies of the largest known common risk gene for Alzheimer's disease (APOE4), but still don't get the illness. So a plausible working hypothesis is that centenarians carry rare, beneficial genetic variations rather than a lack of disadvantageous ones. And the best available data is consistent with this.

Over 60% of centenarians have gene-tic changes that alter the genes which regulate growth in early life. This implies that these remarkable people are human examples of a type of lifespan extension observed in other species. Most people know that small dogs tend to live longer than big ones but fewer are aware that this is a general phenomenon across the animal kingdom. Ponies can live longer than horses and many strains of laboratory mice with dwarfing mutations live longer than their full-sized counterparts. One potential cause of this is reduced levels of a growth hormone called IGF-1 – although human centenarians are not necessarily shorter than the rest of us.

Obviously, growth hormone is necessary early on in life, but there is increasing evidence that high levels of IGF-1 in mid to late life are associated with increased late-life illness. The detailed mechanisms underlying this

remain an open question, but even among centenarians, women with the lowest levels of growth hormone live longer than those with the highest. They also have better cognitive and muscle function.

That doesn't solve the problem, though. Centenarians are also different from the rest of us in other ways. For example, they tend to have good cholesterol levels – hinting there may several reasons for their longevity.

Ultimately, centenarians are "natural experiments" who show us that it is possible to live in excellent health even if you have been dealt a risky genetic hand and chose to pay no attention to health messages – but only if you carry rare, poorly understood mutations.

Understanding exactly how these work should allow scientists to develop new drugs or other interventions that target biological processes in the right tissues at the right time. If these become a reality perhaps more of us than we think will see the next century in. But, until then, don't take healthy lifestyle tips from centenarians.

## 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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The Editorial Team

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## NOTICE FOR PERMISSION FOR LAND USE

Take notice that we, **Mr & Mrs Mohammad Nasrullah Ab-d-al Bundhoo**, will apply to the **Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix** for a Building and Land Use Permit for a proposed Multi-Storey Building for office, store and Residential Purposes at Royal Road Mesnil.

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

Date: 10 December 2021





**Laughter**  
is the **BEST**  
**Medicine**

## Award winning poem

**G**oa Radio organised a competition for poems in which the first line must be romantic, but the second line should be the opposite. Below was the winning entry sent by Joao Caitan:

My darling, my lover, my beautiful wife,  
Marrying you messed up my life.

I see your face when I am dreaming,  
That's why I always wake up screaming.

Kind, intelligent, loving and hot;  
This describes everything you are not.

I love your smile, your face and your eyes,  
Damn, I'm good at telling lies!

My feelings for you, no words can tell,  
Except for maybe 'Go to hell.'

What inspired courage for this amazing rhyme?  
A bottle of Feni, little Salt n Lime !

\*\*\*

Kandasamy was playing a cricket match. When his individual score reached 35, he took his helmet off, pointed his bat at the stadium and looked at the sky.

His partner was surprised.

"You have not reached a fifty or a hundred, the team has not crossed a milestone, so why are you so excited at reaching 35?"

Kandasamy: "Only someone who always struggled in studies knows the importance of 35."

\*\*\*

'Scientists are calling for clinical trials to test growing

evidence that Viagra-type drugs could have a role in preventing or slowing the progress of Alzheimer's disease.

A study just published in 'Nature Aging' found that Viagra was associated with a substantial reduction in the risk of developing Alzheimer's, suggesting that repurposing the drug could potentially provide a new therapeutic option for the disease.'

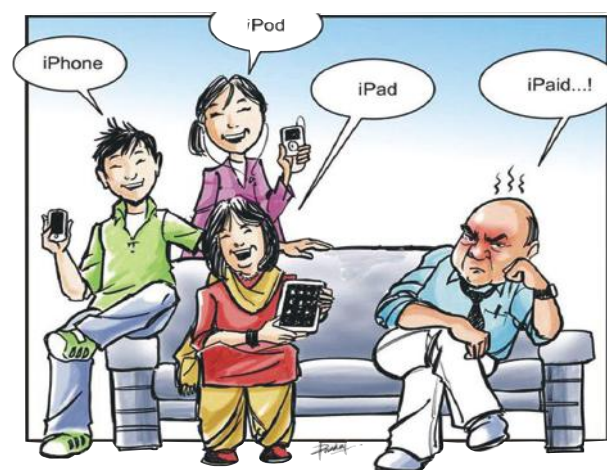
Don't ask me why I am taking the blue pill

\*\*\*

### Variants à Prévoir

(on est pas sorti de l'auberge)

- Le variant Travolta donne toujours de la fièvre, mais seulement le samedi soir.
- Le variant Suisse reste neutre, quel que soit le test PCR, antigénique ou sérologique.
- Pour le variant bordelais, pas de souci on a les Médoc.
- Le variant Belge serait redoutable, ça finit généralement par une mise en bière.
- Ne craignez plus le variant chinois, il est cantonné.
- Par contre, le variant SNCF arrivera plus tard que prévu.
- Contrairement aux apparences, le variant du Bénin serait grave voire dangereux.
- En ce qui concerne le variant Italien, vous en prenez pour Milan.
- De son côté, le variant écossais se tient à carreau.
- Apparemment, avec le variant japonais, il y a du sushi à se faire.
- On parle de l'émergence d'un variant colombien, mais il semblerait que ce soit de la poudre aux yeux.
- S'agissant du variant moscovite, c'est un méchant virusse.
- Pour sa part, le variant corse s'attaque au bouleau puisqu'il est transmis par l'écorce.
- Le premier symptôme du variant breton, c'est quand on commence à entendre le loup, le renard et la belette chanter.
- Le variant français de la Covid-19 existe déjà, mais



il est en grève !

\*\*\*

Sit for 10 mins before a drunkard - you will feel life is very easy.

Sit for 10 mins before sadhus & sanyasis - you will feel like gifting away everything in charity.

Sit for 10 mins before a leader - you will feel all your studies are useless.

Sit for 10 mins before a life insurance agent - you will feel that it is better to die.

Sit for 10 mins before traders - you will feel your earnings are too meagre.

Sit for 10 mins before scientists - you will feel the enormity of your own ignorance.

Sit for 10 mins before good teachers - you will feel like wanting to become a student again.

Sit for 10 mins before a farmer or a worker - you will feel you are not working hard enough.

Sit for 10 mins before a soldier - you will feel your own services & sacrifices are insignificant.

Sit for 10 mins before a good friend - you will feel your life is heaven!

*Last but best one:*

Sit for 10 mins before your wife - you will feel you are the most useless person on earth.

## Life's Lessons

### Drinking from My Saucer

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

#### Drinking from My Saucer by John Paul Moore

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

And as I go along life's way, I'm reaping better than I sowed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer, 'Cause my cup has overflowed.

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

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

I thank God for his blessings, and the mercies He's bestowed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer, 'Cause my cup has overflowed.

I remember times when things went wrong, my faith wore somewhat thin.  
But all at once the dark clouds broke, and the sun peeped through again.

So, God, help me not to gripe about the tough rows that I've hoed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer, 'Cause my cup has overflowed.

If God gives me strength and courage, when the way grows steep and rough.  
I'll not ask for other blessings, I'm already blessed enough.

And may I never be too busy, to help others bear their loads.  
Then I'll keep drinking from my saucer, 'Cause my cup has overflowed.

## 'C' has shot to prominence

**D**id you notice that the alphabet 'C' has shot to prominence in this Covid-19 era?

See the sea of change that this alphabet has brought!

Cough	(C)
Cold	(C)
Coronavirus	(C)
Covid-19	(C)
Case	(C)
Confirmed	(C)
Confinement	(C)
Contamination	(C)

Containment	(C)
Curfew	(C)

The two most serious Cs are: Cemetery and Cremation.

The beauty is, it started from China (C). But at the same time, God smiled, and said:

Cleanliness is the remedy.

Courage is the need of the hour.

Compliance with expert advice.

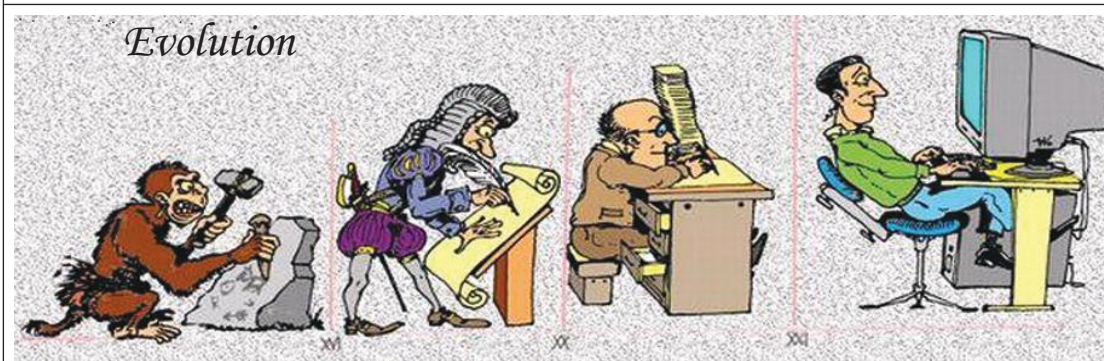
Clarity of thought.

Cooperation with the fellow beings.

Caring for the needy...

*and finally...*

Cure is definitely going to come, till then take Vitamin C.





## Healthy Living

# Can't find time for self-care?

*Carve out time for yourself in a way you never thought of before*

**W**e live in a world where it seems like everyone is doing the most. They're getting their work done, they're keeping their houses clean and they're seeing their loved ones — all while making time to practise self-care. Seeing others “mastering” balanced lives can feel defeating, particularly when you struggle to get through even two tasks on your to-do list.

This is where “habit stacking” comes in, a term created by author SJ Scott in his 2014 book on the topic, reports Alexandra Frost of HuffPost.

Habit stacking involves listing habits you already have — such as walking the dog or driving to work — that are already quite easy and routine for you, and attaching new self-care methods on top of them.

### Start by picking a small new habit

This can include anything you are hoping to improve on. It should be a self-care technique that makes you feel good, but not necessarily something you always have time to do.

Say you want to get some movement in, but just writing “exercise” on your to-do list seems like a lofty goal. Instead, add a workout move you're trying to master to the end of a habit you already do each day.

Diane Boden, author of “Minimalist Moms: Living & Parenting With Simplicity,” practices this each morning by adding pushups after the habit of brushing her teeth.

“If I already practise one behaviour, why not attach



another to it? The connectivity makes all the difference in maintaining new habits you'd like to develop,” she said, noting that eventually your new habit will become second nature. “Can you get yourself to a point where the habits you desire to cultivate become reflexive?”

### Write out a list of everyday habits you already do, then stack them together in a way that makes sense

Mentally roll through your normal routine and jot down the automatic behaviours you do each day, like Boden with brushing her teeth. Other options can include getting out of bed, brewing coffee, changing out of work clothes or getting into bed. Listing these on paper will help you realize the long list of possibilities and find the area of your

day that works best for you.

Other potential combinations could be something like meditate for just one minute while brewing your coffee, doing a few yoga poses immediately after changing out of your work clothes or journaling for five minutes when you get into bed.

Boden prefers to stack habits in categories, such as combining two health and fitness habits. For example, you could drink a glass of water before and after your daily walk, improving your health habits in multiple ways.

An example of habit stacking: If you want to drink more water, set a glass by your bed to drink when you first wake up before you get out of your sheets.

### Build up these combinations slowly for most success

The endgame here is for your brain to automatically associate one habit with another, so this won't happen overnight.

And don't try to do too much at once, either. Say you have multiple self-care habits you want to try, like journaling and meditating. What you should not do is string all these habits together or try all the combinations in one day — hence the “stacking.” Focus on making the journaling a daily routine before jumping to that and meditation.

Try not to get discouraged if it takes a long time. “It's a lifestyle change, so people often don't see the results they want because they are productive in one aspect but they lose that productivity in another way,” said Andre Pinesett, a physician and student productivity and performance coach.

Also keep in mind that multitasking, which research shows can be inefficient and counterproductive, is not habit stacking and is not helpful, Pinesett added. Instead of trying to do these habits at the same time (can you brush your teeth while doing a pushup?), use one as a cue for the next one to start.

Keep at it, and you'll find it's easier to prioritize yourself than you thought.

## Diet & Weight Management

### Fruits that are lower in carbs

Fruit has natural sugars that add to your daily carb count. It also has vitamins and minerals your body needs. Use this guide to make every carb count.

**Yes, fruit has carbs:** Fruit has natural sugars that add to your daily carb count. It also has vitamins and minerals your body needs. This makes it one of the healthiest sources of carbs you can eat. Every 15 grams of carbs counts as one serving.

**Watermelon:** Here's a juicy tip: Cup for cup, fruits that are high in water or fibre have fewer carbs than other fruits. Watermelon, the sweet summertime treat, is 92% water and the lowest-carb fruit by far, with 7.5 carbs for every 100 grams. It also has lots of vitamins A and C. Enjoy one cup, or 10 watermelon balls if you're feeling fancy.

**Honeydew melon:** The sweetest of all melons, honeydew has about 9 grams of carbs for every 100 grams of fruit -- that's one cup or a small wedge and a half. Even better: It's packed with potassium, copper, and lots of vitamin C.

**Strawberries:** Eight medium strawberries, or one cup of slices, have just a little over 7 grams of carbohydrates - and almost as much vitamin C as an orange. They're also loaded with phytonutrients that are anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory, and protect your heart. As tempting as



it sounds, don't dip them in chocolate. It'll increase your carb count too much.

**Raspberries:** Raspberries go big on fibre -- 8 grams per cup -- which helps keep their carb count low. One cup of raspberries equals one serving of carbs. Try half a cup of raspberries and 8 strawberries for a full serving with a little variety and lots of vitamin C. They go bad within a day or two of purchase, so buy in small quantities and eat them right away.

**Blackberries:** Fresh or frozen, 20 small blackberries, or one cup, have less than 10 carbs. Their dark blue colour makes them highest in antioxidants that fight disease. Because they have lots of fibre and less fructose, blackberries -- and other berries in general -- are less likely to cause gas and digestive issues.

**Peaches:** One of the many benefits of low-carb fruit is that you get to eat more of it. Every 100 grams of peaches has 0.5 grams of fibre and a deliciously low 8 net grams of carbs -- a total you might not expect from something so sweet and juicy. One medium peach has 50 calories, 1 gram of protein, no fat, and 15% of your daily vitamin C. Pair it with cottage cheese for a high-protein, low-carb snack.

**Avocado:** The avocado, actually a single-seeded berry, is considered a fleshy fruit. It only has 8.5 grams of carbs for every 100 grams -- that's a little less than 1 cup of cubes or slices. Avocados are high in fibre, monounsaturated (or “good”) fats, and have more potassium than a banana.

**Pineapple:** A half-cup of pineapple, or 100 grams, has 11 grams of carbs. This tropical fruit is one of the best ways to get manganese, an essential mineral that affects your nervous system, hormones, blood sugar, and the way your body absorbs calcium. Pineapple is also a natural source of bromelain, an enzyme mix that digests protein.

**Plums:** A healthy addition to salads, yogurt, and smoothies, plums rank low on the carb count scale. Small but mighty, one medium plum only has 7.6 grams of carbs, but 100 milligrams of potassium to keep high blood pressure and strokes at bay. Steer clear of dried plums, also called prunes: The same 100 grams have a whopping 64 grams of carbs.

**The Canned Factor:** The natural juices or syrup in canned fruit have more sugar, which means more carbs. But you can work around that: Look for fruit packed in 100% juice or water, and drain and rinse excess juice off the fruit before you eat it.

M. Dansinger, MD - WebMD



## Katrina Kaif-Vicky Kaushal Wedding Update

*The couple celebrates haldi ceremony with family members; enjoys a poolside sangeet event with Bollywood music*

The wedding festivities of Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal have kick started in full swing. On Wednesday the couple had a gala time at their sangeet ceremony. A source informed ETimes that Katrina and Vicky had their haldi ceremony in the afternoon with 20-25 guests in attendance.

After wrapping the haldi ceremony, the guests headed for a mouth-watering lunch. The source further revealed that the couple's sangeet ceremony happened at the poolside area in Six Senses Fort Barwara and Bollywood songs were played out loud. The couple was expected to host almost 80-100 guests.

Earlier it was reported by a news portal

that the couple would be performing on 'Kala Chashma' and 'Nachde Ne Saare'. It was also being said that they would be doing a couple dance on the song 'Teri Ore'. Fans can't wait to see a glimpse of their favourite couple setting the stage on fire with their kickass performances.

Meanwhile, the sangeet evening was headlined by the Punjabi band, RDB. Since Vicky is a huge fan of Punjabi music, he has made sure to add the desi twist to his and Katrina's royal wedding.

On Tuesday, VicKat's close friends and family members were seen arriving at the Jaipur airport to grace their big day.



## What is the net worth of Bollywood's new power couple?

Katrina and Vicky will now join the list of power couples of the Bollywood. Both the actors have showcased impeccable talent on screen and have made a name for themselves. Apart from the film projects, the actors also endorse leading brands.

According to the Forbes India List 2019, which ranks celebrities based on their earnings and fame quotient, Katrina and Vicky are doing extremely well in their lives and have appeared in the Forbes top 100. According to the list, Katrina, in the year 2019, earned a total of Rs 236.3 million, while Vicky, too, had a profitable year with an earning of Rs 104.2 million.

Katrina Kaif is associated with big brands such as Tropicana, Nykaa, Reebok, Oppo and Xiaomi, among

others.

Vicky Kaushal, according to Google's reports, was the most searched celebrity in India in 2019. His film *Uri: The Surgical Strike* earned as high and made roughly Rs 3500 M at the box office. The list of brands that Vicky endorses includes biggies like Oppo, Reliance Trends, and Havells.

As far as films are concerned, Katrina Kaif has multiple projects in the pipeline. Her last movie was the multi-starrer *Sooryavanshi*. She will next be seen in *Phone Bhoot*, opposite Siddhant Chaturvedi, and the next movie in the *Tiger* franchise with Salman Khan.

Vicky Kaushal's last movie was *Sardar Udham*. The actor will next be seen in the biopic on Sam Manekshaw, titled *Sam*.

## Anushka-Virat, Katrina-Vicky, Priyanka-Nick: Check out the most expensive Bollywood weddings!



Bollywood celebrities have lavish lives and their extravagant taste evidently reflects in their grand weddings. When it comes to spending money, B-Town refuses to be frugal! International destinations, royal cuisines, designer couture, custom-made gifts and what not – Bollywood actors go to great lengths to design a wedding of their dreams. From Anushka-Virat to Katrina-Vicky and Priyanka-Nick, take a look at the costliest shaadis of Bollywood, as reported by Times of India!

### Anushka Sharma and Virat Kohli

This hush-hush wedding brought together two aces belonging to different worlds and can easily be touted as the most expensive affair! Anushka and Virat, who are one of the highest earning celebrities in their respective fields, went all out to splurge on a fairy-tale wedding. The couple got married in a picturesque setting at Borgo Finocchieto, an 800-year-old village-turned-villa in Italy. This Tuscany wedding and several high-profile receptions, reportedly cost Anushka and Virat a whopping Rs 1000 million.

### Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal

Everything about Vicky and Katrina's wedding is royal! The couple booked a 14th century fort for their nuptials and will be shelling out lakhs just for their stay at Six Senses Fort Barwara. Vicky and Katrina will be staying in the luxury hotel's most expensive suite – Raja Man Singh – for the cost of Rs 700,000 per night. Moreover, the couple has booked 15 other suites that cost Rs 400,000 each. Beyond the destination wedding, Vicky and Katrina have also roped in multiple designers to work on their

trousseau, have ordered organic Mehendi and are going to great lengths to keep their wedding under wraps.

### Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas

A royal palace turned into a wedding venue, extravagant fireworks and bespoke couture – Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas went all out to spend lavishly on their wedding in India. The couple had booked Umaid Bhawan Palace for week-long festivity which included sangeet, mehendi, haldi and two wedding ceremonies – one according to Hindu rituals and one Christian wedding. According to reports the couple spent around half a million (US) dollars on their lavish wedding.

### Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone

Bollywood's power couple Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone tied the nuptial knot against the picturesque backdrop of Lake Como. The couple has reportedly booked an entire luxury resort in Italy for their big fat Indian wedding and they shelled out close to Rs 20 M just for accommodation. According to reports, Ranveer and Deepika spent Rs 770 M on their lavish wedding, which included two wedding ceremonies in Italy and two receptions in India.

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Friday	10 Dec	- 13:15 - 20:15
Saturday	11 Dec	- 10:15 - 13:15 - 16:15 - 20:15
Sunday	12 Dec	- 13:15 - 16:15 - 20:15
Monday	13 to Thursday 16 Dec	- 13:15 - 20:15



## Bade Achhe Lagte Hain 2 first promo

# Nakuul Mehta and Disha Parmar analyse woes of being single



asks him about which stage he's standing at. He says he's between the second and third and she informs him that she is there as well. While she notices that the duo has something in common, viewers soon realise that their choice in food isn't one of the common traits.

"Shaadi ke baad, pyaar hote hote ho hi jata hai (Love just blossoms somehow after a wedding)," a voiceover follows, with the title track playing the background. The promo was shared by Ekta Kapoor on Instagram.

Before the release of the promo, Ekta shared a video to introduce the new Ram and Priya. Greeting the new Ram, Ekta told Naakul, "You are sweet, affable and have a different style. I wanted a hero who is a new age guy but also not so woke." Naakul told the producer that his mother was excited about the project. "My mom was like yeh karna hai, aur acche se karna hai (you have to do it, and do it well)," he said.

Introducing Disha as the new Priya, Ekta said that her character will have the 'gussa' that most girls today have. "Today's women have strong angst in them. Be it you or me, we always feel we got the raw end of the stick," she said.

*Bade Ache Lagte Hai 2* starts filming this week-end and premieres next month. Naakul and Disha had previously worked on *Pyaar Ka Dard Hai*.

The first promo of *Bade Achhe Lagte Hain 2* has been released and it features Nakuul Mehta and Disha Parmar as Ram and Priya, respectively. The new promo revealed that the leads are single and in their 30s.

The promo begins with Nakuul Mehta asking Disha Parmar why she is single, despite being 32. Taken aback by his question, Disha asks him why he was single at 38.

Nakuul then breaks down three stages of life. First, where you have numerous options but opt to wait for a better one. Second, when you want someone but they leave you heartbroken. Third, when you are ready to settle with anyone but there are no eligible candidates left.

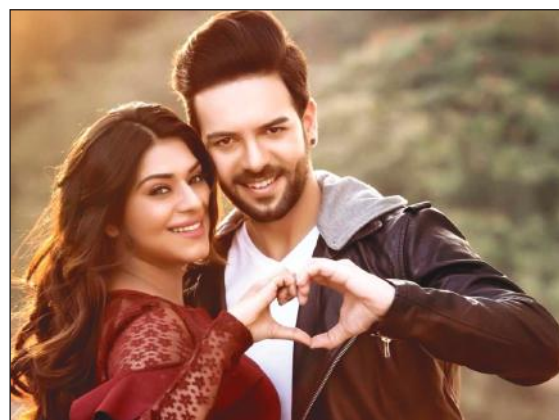
Impressed with his response, Disha further

## Sanjay Gagnani and wife Poonam talk about finally getting married

Actors Sanjay Gagnani and Poonam Preet Bhatia had a big fat Punjabi wedding in Delhi, on Sunday 28 November. While the main ceremony happened in a Gurudwara, the duo had organised a party for their family and friends, reports Hindustan Times.

"I feel graduation se post graduation ho gaya," laughs Sanjay as he speaks after the ceremony is over. "We have been living in together since more than nine years now, we had got engaged in February 2018. It has been almost three years since we got engaged, so *schooling se graduation hui* in the form of engagement, *aur post graduation ho gayi shaadi se. Bauhau achha lag raha hai.*"

The original plan, however, was not to get married so late. The pandemic struck, and all their plans went for a toss. The actor goes on to add, "Covid ki wajah se wait badh gayi. Otherwise, we would have got married one and a half years earlier. It feels really nice, we both feel blessed that



after waiting for such a long time, we have finally seen the light of this day."

Poonam chimes in and says this is exactly how she had envisioned her wedding to be like. "For me, it is like a dream come true, I always wanted the big fat Indian wedding. It was definitely worth the wait. I am super happy and glad it happened with the pandemic situation better now," she says.

Having said that, Sanjay asserts that they made sure to follow all protocols to ensure the safety of their guests.

"We wanted to make sure all the guests who are coming for our wedding, we don't put them at risk. Now since we are almost a fully vaccinated country, it was pretty safe to get married now," he ends.

## YOUR STARS

### Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

You are likely to get a big sense of relief as you regain control of a complicated situation at work. Those in love will find this period most fulfilling. It is also an opportune time to pay attention to spirituality to enhance mental toughness.

**Lucky Numbers:** 16, 18, 20, 23, 30, 32

### Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

Professionals will be able to prove their mettle in a competitive situation. Your attempts to turn things in your favour on the social front will succeed. A family youngster's health may be a cause of concern.

**Lucky Numbers:** 1, 3, 20, 26, 39, 40

### Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

Your social status is likely to attract people to you, whom you have not met in years. A property issue will require your consent before it is decided in anyone's favour. You are likely to enjoy your love life and even spring a surprise on lover.

**Lucky Numbers:** 4, 12, 19, 23, 26, 30

### Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

You are likely to sidestep a major responsibility simply by your convincing talk. Setting up a side business may also be on your mind. Care and concern for each other promise to strengthen your loving bonds with spouse.

**Lucky Numbers:** 2, 9, 16, 20, 27, 30

### Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

Avoid being in a rush while planning things for future on the professional front. A change of job is set to have a positive effect on finances for some. Do not forget to keep your promises on the love front or it may upset the lover otherwise.

**Lucky Numbers:** 1, 19, 23, 27, 31, 36

### Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

Lover may not be in a mood to compromise; think what else can be done about it. Any hasty decision on your part could hamper your business interests. Staying focused on your targets is going to benefit you overall.

**Lucky Numbers:** 3, 4, 7, 12, 13, 15

### Gemini: May 21 - June 20

Good networking on the business front is likely to get you places. Cards assure that you face no financial worries. You are likely to find time to give a helping hand to spouse. An innocent encounter with some from the opposite camp may take the shape of full-fledged romance.

**Lucky Numbers:** 11, 17, 19, 20, 33, 34

### Cancer: June 21 - July 22

A period of bliss is here and will make you excel in all spheres of your life. Luck turns favourable and helps you make the right decisions at work. A new understanding with spouse will make for smooth sailing in the marital love boat.

**Lucky Numbers:** 15, 19, 20, 22, 24, 29

### Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

Someone can try to interfere in your love life. Better to use the opportunity to share as much time in each other's company to bring joy. Students should not be slow on the uptake on the academic front or may you may lag behind.

**Lucky Numbers:** 7, 8, 14, 19, 30, 32

### Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

An excellent opportunity comes your way at work that will help enhance your image on the professional front. You are likely to bounce back on the academic front and prove your mettle once again.

**Lucky Numbers:** 5, 7, 18, 22, 23, 27

### Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

Excellent work profile may bring added responsibilities for some on the professional front. Falling in love is foretold for those looking for a soul mate. Don't keep high expectations from someone on the social front, as you can end up disappointed.

**Lucky Numbers:** 4, 12, 15, 23, 25, 37

### Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

You are set to enjoy what your social life has to offer. There will be a lot happening on the family front. Students need some counselling to avoid facing difficulties in a project on the academic front.

**Lucky Numbers:** 6, 8, 11, 12, 35, 36



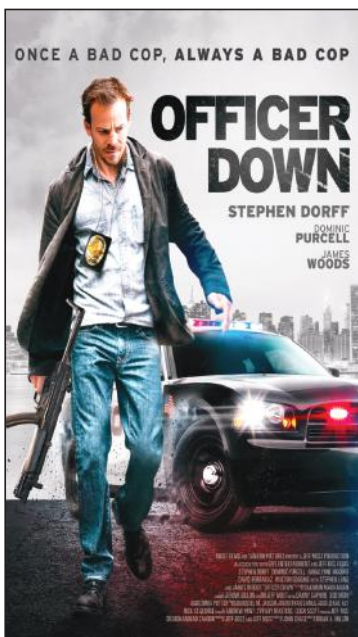
## CINE 2

Vendredi 10 décembre - 21.15



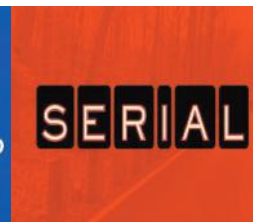
## CINE 2

Samedi 11 décembre - 21.20



## mhc 1

Dimanche 12 décembre - 21.25



vendredi 10 décembre	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
	07.00 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill 08.57 Mag: Happy Tales 11.10 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.55 Local: Elle - No45 13.55 Local: Glwar Dantan 14.21 MFDC Intercollege Film... 14.30 Serial: Les Copains Carlins 15.20 D.Anime: The Twisted... 15.42 D.Anime: Cosmic Quantum... 16.17 D.Anime: The Hive 17.20 Mag: Human Nature 17.50 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous? 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Surya Puran 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.29 Local Prod: Tou Korek 21.00 NRJ Music Award 2021 23.25 Le Journal 00.05 Mag: Eye On SADC	07.00 DDI Live 10.00 Bisaat-E-Dil 11.01 Tawaan 12.00 Film: Fun And Frustration Starring: Venkatesh, Varun Tej, Tamannaah Bhatia 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.26 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.46 Serial: Bava Maradallu 16.07 Serial: Sondha Bandham 16.31 Serial: Mera Maan Rakhna 16.47 Serial: Imtihaan 17.05 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.25 Serial: Chhanchhan 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 Mag: DDI Mag 19.05 Zournal Kreol 19.30 Serial: AAS (URDU Serial) 20.46 Local: Anjuman 21.11 Local: Urdu Programme - Noor-E-Iman	06.00 Mag: Eco India 06.26 Mag: Shift 06.51 Mag: Border Crossing 07.20 Mag: Tomorrow Today 07.46 Doc: Snapshots 09.00 Educa Prog: Grade 5 11.30 Educa Prog: Grade 8 14.03 Doc: Day Zero 14.46 Vincent Van Gogh Superstar 15.28 Doc: China's Gateway... 16.40 Mag: Shift 18.00 Doc: Abbas By Abbas 18.42 Mag: Arts And Culture 19.30 Mag: Euromaxx 20.05 Doc: Volcano Stories 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.40 MFDC Intercollege Film 21.48 Doc: Innovation On Board 22.14 Doc: Colonia Dignidad 22.57 Doc: Globesity 23.39 Doc: Abbas By Abbas	01.28 Film: The Wind And The Lion 03.20 Serial: S.W.A.T 04.02 Film: Fixer Upper Mystery 05.26 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.08 Serial: Elementary 06.49 Film: The Wind And The Lion 09.45 Tele: Teresa 10.35 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 11.00 Serial: S.W.A.T 12.00 Film: Fixer Upper Mystery 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: The Wind And The Lion 16.38 Serial: The Good Doctor 17.20 Serial: Elementary 18.10 Tele: Teresa 19.00 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 19.34 Mag: Cinemag 20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana 20.30 Serial: Last Resort 21.15 Film: Crypton Avec: Beau Knapp, Luke Hemsworth	07.00 Film: Beqabu Starring: Sanjay Kapoor, Mamta Kulkarni 11.30 / 20.30 - Radha Krishna 12.00 / 21.00 - Anupamaa 12.30 / 21.30 - Mere Sai 13.00 / 22.00 - Agnihera 13.33 / 22.03 - Yeh Teri Galiyan 14.00 / 22.30 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.30 / 23.00 - Chhanchhan 15.00 / 21.46 - Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 15.25 Film: Mohabbat Ki Arzoo Starring: Zeba Bakhtiar, Rakesh Bedi, Ashwini Bhawe 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 19.00 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 19.31 Serial: Bhakharwadi
	06.04 D.Anime: Robot Trains 06.42 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill 06.55 D.Anime: Booba 07.15 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis... 07.51 D.Anime: All Hail King Julien 09.30 Mag: Human Nature 10.00 Local: Zanfan Nou Zil 10.30 Local: Saveurs Plus 12.00 Le Journal 12.35 Tele: Teresa 14.45 MFDC Intercollege Film... 15.20 D.Anime: Pet Alien 15.31 D.Anime: The Twisted... 16.00 D.Anime: Cosmic Quantum... 16.20 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 17.13 Serial: Hank Zipzer 17.40 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous? 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 MBC Production 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.10 Local: Autour Des Valeurs 21.20 Film: The Baker	07.00 Film: Mela 09.29 Mag: DDI Magazine 10.00 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 11.03 Serial: Dikri Vahalno Dariyo 12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhyia Bhare 12.17 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 12.40 Serial: High School 13.02 Annakodiyum Ainthu Pengalum 13.27 Anu Pallavi 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.25 Film: Dharam Veer Starring: Dharmendra, Jeetendra, Zeenat Aman 17.36 DDI Magazine 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.06 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha 20.28 Entertainment: Dance+(Final) 22.45 DDI Live	06.00 Doc: Abbas 06.42 Mag: Arts And Culture 06.55 Mag: Our Voices 07.50 Doc: Volcano Stories 09.08 Doc: Innovation On Board 10.16 Doc: Globesity 11.00 Doc: Abbas By Abbas 11.56 Mag: Our Voices 13.20 Doc: Wedding The French... 15.25 Student Support Prog... 18.33 Mag: Science Ou Fiction 19.04 Magazine: Trendd Book 19.34 Mag: Check In 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.40 MFDC Intercollege Film 22.20 Doc: Raqqa 23.02 Doc: Muay Thai 23.44 Mag: Future Mag 00.13 Mag: Science Ou Fiction 00.40 Mag: Trendd Book 01.06 Mag: Check In	01.27 Film: Crypto 03.49 Serial: The Magicians 04.31 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 05.13 Tele: Tanto Amor 05.54 Serial: Last Resort 06.35 Serial: Absentia 08.04 Mag: Cinemag 08.30 Serial: Macgyver 09.17 Serial: The Magicians 09.59 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 10.40 Film: Crypto 12.15 Serial: French Series 13.32 Serial: Night Shift 15.05 Tele: Muneca Brava 16.27 Film: Chasseurs De Monstre 18.30 Serial: Rich Man, Poor Man 19.18 Serial: Last Resort 20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana 20.30 Series: Last Resort 21.15 Film: Officer Down Starring: Stephen Dorff, Stephen Lang, David Boreanaz	04.05 Radha Krishna 04.36 Anupamaa 05.03 Mere Sai -- Shraddha Aur... 05.33 Agniphera 06.00 Yeh Teri Galiyan 06.30 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 06.38 Chhanchhan 06.57 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 07.18 Siddhi Vinayak 08.02 Yeh Teri Galiyan 10.01 Motu Patlu 10.12 Siddhi Vinayak 12.01 Serial: Bhakharwadi 14.00 Anupamaa 16.00 Pavitra Rishta 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Film: The Zoya Factor Star: Sonam KapoorDulquer Salmaan Sanjay Kapoor 20.54 Serial: Namah 21.09 Serial: Naagin Season 3

Samedi 11 décembre

- 18.30

Stars: Sonam Kapoor Dulquer, Salmaan Sanjay Kapoor



Dimanche 12 décembre

- 18.30

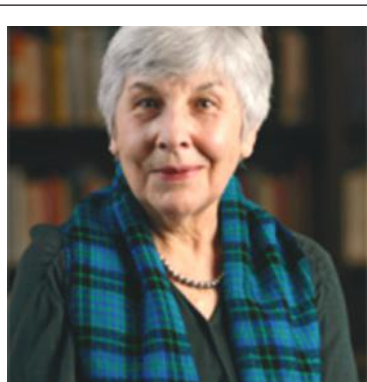
Stars: Ayushmann Khurrana, Bhumi Pednekar, Yami Gautam





# This December is the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Soviet Union – how does an empire collapse?

*“Who could have imagined that it would simply collapse?” It’s been 30 years since the Soviet Union dissolved in the wake of a bungled reform effort by Mikhail Gorbachev - here’s what went wrong.*



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Imagine that in 2023, in the fourth year of a pandemic that has exacerbated tensions and damaged the economy, after months of wrangling over internal borders and a sharp rise in the prestige of state premiers vis-à-vis the prime minister, the premiers of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia meet secretly and declare that the Commonwealth of Australia has effectively ceased to exist and the states will henceforth be independent nations.

(Western Australia, let us imagine, has already proclaimed its independent sovereignty, with Tasmania and Queensland not far behind.) While the US Ambassador has prior warning of the premiers’ move, the Australian Prime Minister does not. Within a few weeks, the PM has been forced to resign and the Australian flag is lowered for the last time in Canberra.

This isn’t exactly what happened in the Soviet Union as a result of the Belovezh Accords, signed by the leaders of three Soviet republics at a state dacha in Belorussia on 8 December 1991, but close enough.

It’s been 30 years since the Soviet Union dissolved in the wake of a bungled reform effort by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, elected General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party in 1985.

## The Soviet crisis of 1991

The Soviet Union, created by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, consisted of 16 constituent republics, named for their majority nationality (Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian and so on).

Despite some notorious episodes of repression, such as the deportation of Chechens from the Caucasus during World War II), ethnic discrimination was generally discouraged.

For all the vaunted centralisation of the Soviet system – run from Moscow by the



AP Photo/Boris Yurchenko

Politburo of the country’s sole political party, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, with branches down from republic to workplaces – Moscow in practice delegated substantial powers to its appointed republican leaders. Moscow had the power to fire, of course, but since the 1970s, it had been sparingly used.

The Soviet crisis of 1991 was brought on not by a pandemic but by Gorbachev’s “revolution from above”, which promised democratic openness (glasnost) and economic restructuring (perestroika) to stimulate initiative and make the top-down system more flexible.

Unfortunately, Gorbachev left the economy as the last priority and started with democratisation, which had the effect of stirring up waves of criticism that undermined authority and trust, and things quickly became shambolic.

By mid 1991, with the glue of the Communist Party coming unstuck, most of the republican leaders had stopped listening to Moscow and changed their title from first party secretary to republican president.

The Baltic states and Armenia had already claimed sovereignty when the three presidents of Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia met in the Belovezh forest (Gorbachev not invited) and voted for independence and an end to the Union. On 25 December, Gorbachev resigned the Soviet presidency, and the Soviet flag over the Kremlin came down.

Only the three Baltic states, a late incorporation into the Soviet Union never

fully accepted by the population, had well-developed popular independence movements, so there was urgent catching up to be done in the new successor states. Popular nationalism had to be stoked and national histories written, usually in terms of colonial oppression under Soviet (Russian) rule.

Western historians, who had not previously called the Soviet Union an “empire”, rushed to adjust their terminology: if a multinational state fell apart into national segments, what else could it be than a revolt of the colonies against imperial rule?

The term wasn’t even wholly inaccurate: Russia had been the largest and most populous republic, Moscow was the Union’s capital, and Russian its lingua franca.

At some times in Soviet history, the flow of resources (“economic exploitation”) had mainly been from periphery to centre, though latterly more often the opposite.

If the Soviet Union was an empire, however, it was an odd one. Leaving aside its revolutionary founders’ anti-imperial ideology, there was the fact that, fearing undue Russian dominance, they had given the Russian Republic fewer powers and prerogatives than other republics, and generally discouraged Russian nationalism.

## The Russian republic

Until Soviet career politician Boris Yeltsin fell afoul of Gorbachev and built up a power base in the Moscow party, the Russian republic had never played a

significant role in Soviet high politics.

But when Yeltsin was elected president of the Russian Republic, Moscow became home to two presidents, which was clearly one too many. Gorbachev lost the contest, and the collapse of the Soviet Union was an almost unintended byproduct.

The march of the republics out of the Soviet Union was not a result of popular unrest (the Baltics being something of a special case) but of decisions taken by the republics’ (Soviet) bosses, with Yeltsin, president of the putative “imperial” nation, leading the way.

## Shock and chagrin

If my imagined scenario ever took place in Australia, Australians would be plunged into a state of shock, surprise and confusion. That is exactly what happened to Soviet citizens, who until 1991 had assumed that, for better or worse, the USSR was an immutable fact of life.

Shock was the key word of 1990s Russia, accompanied by chagrin at losing superpower status and world respect. As Vladimir Putin said, anyone who didn’t regret the passing of the Soviet Union “had no heart” (though he added that those who sought to resurrect it “had no brain”), and sure enough, for years Russian opinion polls confirmed this.

The Soviet Union, its military and security services intact to the end, had seemed so armoured against change, so boringly solid. To give Putin the last word, “Who could have imagined that it would simply collapse?”