

# MAURITIUS TIMES

• "What the new year brings to you will depend a great deal on what you bring to the new year." -- Vern McLellan



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## 2022 - A Restive Year Ahead

**O**pposition parties are bracing for a restive and possibly turbulent year ahead. The Labour Party parliamentary leader, Arvind Boolell, says 2022 is going to be the year of 'tous les combats'. On its part, the MMM, which has successfully nipped the budding challenge to the leadership of Paul Berenger following yet another debacle at the last general elections, is now inviting former MMM members - who it says stand by the same values embraced by the party - to come back to the fold, presumably with a view to bolstering the party's firepower for the battles that will be waged in the months ahead.

Outside Parliament, Rama Valayden, Dev Sunnassy and Bruneau Laurette are coming together to form a political party. If it's unlikely that Valayden and his newfound political comrades will seek any future political arrangement with the ruling party, it remains to be seen whether, despite their success in pushing the government to the wall with the Kistnen murder revelations and the Kistnen Papers relating to electoral expenses suspected to exceed the ceiling imposed by the law, they will be able to migrate from the edges of the political playing field and become a significant force in our local politics. To do so it can be assumed that they would be fishing in more or less the same electoral basin as the PMSD and the MMM while establishing their own identity and specificities.

This leaves us with the old and so-called traditional parties - the Labour Party, PMSD and MMM. If the latter parties had initially set great store by a successful legal challenge of the elections of a number of MSM candidates at the last general elections, the Supreme Court judgement, delivered in Aug 2021, which dismissed the petition of Ezra Jhuboo, an unelected candidate in Constituency No 14, Savanne/Black River, seems to have set a trend: it would appear that the other 10 or so electoral petitions are likely to be dismissed. Even if facts may be different in each case, argued Lex in the columns of this paper earlier this year, other judges would not lightly overlook the reasoning given in the Jhuboo judgment, adding that 'possibly all the petitions asking for a recount on the same grounds as that of the Jhuboo petition may be thrown out by the other divisions of the court'.

Moreover, opposition both inside and outside Parliament has not been able to challenge and put a brake to the MSM's questionable governance of the country, fully protected as it were by the institutional dysfunctions that have put the governance system in the country under lock. To wit, the failures of effective

police investigations, a complacent ICAC, a perceived bias of communication and internet regulatory authorities, and an overbearing Speaker in Parliament.

Notwithstanding the inability by the opposition to effectively challenge the government, the way out of the present rut can only be political: the need for an effective opposition in our democratic set-up cannot be stressed enough as a major tool for the checks and balances required in governance especially in the face of a government that gives the impression that it will soldier on, undeterred by civil society, media and opposition condemnations of its governance. Fundamentally, it is our parliamentary democracy that has been the key instrument that has led the country to its current state. It is the main political instrument that we have at our disposal to give overall orientation to the polity and to the affairs of the country, and to help us reach the goals that we would wish for a better collective future.

The MSM has chosen its adversary for the next elections: Navin Ramgoolam, convinced that he would constitute the Achilles' heel in an enlarged opposition alliance. It seems that the MMM leader earlier shared the same view, with his insistence for an opposition "pas à n'importe quelle condition". However, the LP president Patrick Assirvaden has been saying lately that, in the eventuality of an opposition alliance, it's Navin Ramgoolam who will have to be presented as a 'Premier ministre de transition' - and the Secretary General of the MMM Ajay Gunness has recently accepted that tenet on air. Navin Ramgoolam has himself revealed in an earlier radio interview that he would like to soldier on -- for 'just one more' term as Prime Minister next time round, probably in a bid to redeem his honour after the public humiliation he was subjected to in 2015. He will hopefully put the party's interest above his own, the more so since the times demand that parties which want to survive - and win elections - should abide by a higher internal democratisation process.

Fostering internal debate and adopting clear rules of governance - that is the level of internal reordering which is absolutely necessary to cope with an external environment which is becoming increasingly complex by the day. We hope that such a process of furthering internal democratic functioning will get under way sooner rather than later in the parties which may still be concerned with the current state of affairs in the country and are genuinely committed to furthering the overall national interest.

## Oh! Micron



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

**W**hat's in a name? - is a well-known expression. An online check informs us that it is a reference to English playwright Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, wherein is found the line 'that which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet.' The implication is that what someone or something is called or labelled is not important compared to their or its intrinsic qualities.

Where the coronavirus causing the current pandemic



“Locally, we are just out of the traumatizing wave that came in the wake of the multi-holiday first week of November, allied to the opening of schools, which most health professionals had warned about and anticipated. Now we just keep our fingers crossed for the scenario that may hit us towards the second week of January 2022. Unless we decide to shun crowded venues and be very observant of the well-known sanitary precautions that have been repeatedly stressed upon...”

is concerned, however, giving it an acceptable - politically correct? -- name became a matter of weighty concern for the WHO, which has a committee to decide on such issues. WHO's best practices for naming disease suggest avoiding causing offence to 'cultural, social, national, regional, professional or ethnic groups.' Thus, in some quarters, it was believed that the name SARS-COV-2 was specially chosen to eschew any mention of Wuhan so as not to cause 'offence' to superpower China.

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### Mauritius Times

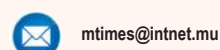
Founder/Editor: Beekrumsing Ramlallah - Aug 1954-Sept 2000

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

This epaper has been produced with the assistance of

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A Very Warm Thank You

to all our readers, business associates and well-wishers for their support and good wishes during the year.

Season's Greetings  
and

Best Wishes for the New Year

Kindly note that our office will be closed for the end-of-year festive season as from today 31 December 2021. We will resume work on Monday 10 January 2022

Mauritius Times





Mrinal Roy

**Goebbels was in favour of free speech for views he liked. So was Stalin. If you're really in favour of free speech, then you're in favour of freedom of speech for precisely the views you despise. Otherwise, you're not in favour of free speech.**

-- Noam Chomsky

**T**he textbook description of our democracy extolled in official speeches in international fora is such a far cry from the democratic reality of the country. Democracy is more and more fettered and shackled by government overbearing control over state institutions, state companies and key posts of the state decision-making machinery through nepotism, cronyism and the appointment of the coterie and party faithful. This is certainly not the democratic Mauritius our parents fought for during the battle for the independence of the country.

When one surveys the present state of the Mauritian democracy, it is blatantly evident that the high-handed manner parliamentary democracy is being curbed and the decried manner the national public broadcaster financed from public funds is misused by government as an abject instrument of daily partisan propaganda fail to meet the benchmark of free speech of the Noam Chomsky quote. There is instead a patently Goebbels approach towards free speech by government.

### Democratic milestones

A vibrant democracy is always in a state of flux and is constantly evolving and expanding the democratic space, not curbing it. The history of democracy shows that people are consistently fighting for new democratic rights to further expand and stretch the frontiers of the democratic space with the same verve and determination of those who fought for our fundamental rights and game changing democratic milestones such as decolonization, women voting rights or the end of apartheid in South Africa on 4 May 1990, etc.

These fundamental rights *inter alia* include the right to self determination, the right to liberty and privacy, the right to due process of law, the right to freedom of movement, the right to freedom of thought, the right to freedom of expression, freedom of religion and peaceful

# Is this the democratic Mauritius our parents fought for?

*Change can only come from the people. We above all need to cut loose from the shackles and trappings of a banana republic*



**“The very essence of freedom of speech is to allow those with opposing views to be given a fair opportunity to voice them. A true democracy is also about listening to the voice of dissent. It is when such democratic opportunities are not given to those who do not agree by the national broadcaster or the authorities to express their opinion that people have recourse to alternative media platforms to voice their views and argue their case...”**

assembly and the right to freedom of association. They are protected from government encroachment.

In the United States, despite the American Revolution and the Bill of Rights in 1791 guaranteeing fundamental rights to people, it is only on August 18, 1920 that the 19th amendment granting women the right to vote was ratified by the US Congress. Even though all Americans had gained the right to vote, many southern states very often required coloured voters to take literacy tests which were confusing and nearly impossible to pass. It is thanks to the civil rights movement during the 1950s and 1960s which fought to gain equal rights for Black Americans under the law in the United States that the Voting Acts law passed on August 6, 1965 banned all voter literacy tests. In France, although all men above the age of 25 who paid a quantum of taxes were given the right to vote in 1791, women had to wait until 1944 before they were granted the right to vote.

### ‘Kangaroo’ courts

In contrast, instead of expanding the democratic space in the country, amendments are being voted and new laws are being enacted to restrict it by broadening the powers of regulators and a plethora of ‘Authorities’ and confer to them in-house the right to subjectively pass judgement, sanction and fine, etc. There are serious risks of abuse by these ‘kangaroo’ courts. These encroach on the prerogatives of the judiciary and are in the teeth of the sacrosanct principle of separation of powers (and responsibilities) of the three branches of government, namely legislative, executive and judicial to ensure that the government is effective and citizens’ rights are protected. All those responsible for such abuses must be made accountable.

What is also galling is that those unfairly penalised have to seek redress at their costs in the courts.

What can be more tell-tale of plummeting standards of democracy in the country than the hegemonic control of government over the national broadcaster financed from public funds. Prime time news aired by national broadcasters in democratic countries such as, for example, the BBC provide a comprehensive review of topical issues and events. The government views through the Prime Minister or government ministers as well as those of leaders of opposition parties are regularly sought on controversial and all other issues to provide a balanced view to the people to allow them who remain the ultimate arbiter to form their own opinion.

### One-sided

In a democracy, a national broadcaster cannot be an insidious instrument of indoctrination providing one-sided government views on controversial matters and contested policies without giving the opportunity to those not in agreement to expose their views. The very essence of freedom of speech is to allow those with opposing views to be given a fair opportunity to voice them. A true democracy is also about listening to the voice of dissent. It is when such democratic opportunities are not given to those who do not agree by the national broadcaster or the authorities to express their opinion that people have recourse to alternative media platforms to voice their views and argue their case.

Prime time news on national TV should, as is the case in the top news channels in the democratic world, provide a balanced review and analysis of topical local and international issues of the day. Prime time news must above all be informative and objective as mainstream citizens watch news to be objectively informed on what is happening locally and in the world.

People certainly do not want to be subjected to rehashed verbatim extracts of the Prime Minister’s speeches and declarations or government diatribes tediously recycled several times sometime over days whilst the press conferences of opposition parties are treated summarily.

People watch other international news channels every day to be *au fait* with what is happening in the world and daily realize that the particular format and brand of prime-time news dished out daily by the national broadcaster is anathema in the democratic world. Such partisan misuse of the national public broadcaster financed from public funds is unprecedented.

### Shifting allegiance

Members of Parliament have a crucial role in a democracy. They are elected by the people and their loyalty must be towards the people and their concerns. This is what happens in the best democracies of the world. For example, in the UK, Boris Johnson won a landslide in the 2019 general election with a 80-strong majority.

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Anil Madan

# 2022 And Beyond - Predicting Unknown Unknowns

Some weeks ago, a friend and I had a discussion about what, over the past 20 years, had been the most significant or impactful developments, inventions, changes, forces, events. In short, without limiting the discussion, we challenged each other to pick the top five. Then the question was: "Would you have predicted this twenty years ago?" We then turned to making five such predictions for the next twenty years.

For me, hands down, the Internet and all that it has meant has been the most significant and impactful development of the past twenty years. Embraced within the concept of the Internet is everything from communication, to search engines, access to information, e-commerce, the Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, and so on. The near total demise of printed newspapers and magazines has been an unintended casualty.

My other picks, in no particular order, are:

- The rise of China and the decline of the US and Europe;
- The impact of climate and weather-related events; and population growth and stresses on the earth, including water, housing and food shortages;
- Developments in medicine and biotechnology. Covid is a significant development but it remains to be seen if it endures or fades; and
- The rise of authoritarianism, and associated crises of refugees and immigration.

Would I have predicted these twenty years ago? The Internet, yes, and in broad strokes, the rise of China but not so much the rapidity of America's decline. The rest, in broad strokes yes, but not necessarily that countries would have allowed immigration pressures to spiral out of control due to lack of enforcement. The refugee crisis and unchecked population growth were obvious. The rise of authoritarianism has been an ongoing problem for humanity but the brazenness with which it took hold over the last twenty years has been stunning and sobering.

As we look forward to the next twenty years, what can we expect? It is difficult to limit oneself to five picks so I'll take the licence of creating broad categories.

## Geopolitics, China and the US

The ongoing rise of China and slipping of the US will continue to be the dominant story of the next twenty years. China's triumph does not have to be inexorable. I have previously written that if we were to start a race between the US and China today, I would pick the US provided I could also pick the jockey. Unfortunately, regardless of who the current or future jockey might be, the danger is that one half of the US population will try to knock that person off the horse rather than cheering on a win. And sadly, for a country of 335 million, there are very few inspiring jockeys.

Although there are limits to what China can achieve due to internal and external constraints, in many respects, the stark rise of China vis-a-vis the US is a direct consequence of America's self-imposed retrenchment and of distractions at home leading to incoherent policies.

I see China over the next twenty years presenting itself in four major aspects:

(a) China will continue to be a maverick nation, along with Russia, showing no regard for an international rules-based order. These two nations have been willing to use force both to oppress their own people and, as well, to gain territorial advantage. China continues to treat the US with disdain, convinced that its authoritarian, centrally managed governance system is the better model than the fractured "democracy" of the Western countries.

To a large extent, one can hardly blame China. As the US faltered in Vietnam, Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan, China's aggressive bullying tactics have faced little resistance other than condemnatory words from around the world. Russia's annexation of Crimea likewise engendered mere whimpering and bleating. And now Putin challenges the US and Europe to give him iron-clad guarantees to get him to back off invading Ukraine.



**“Just as the defeat of the Soviet Union did not mean that Russia's power had dissipated, regardless of how much China succeeds, the US will remain a formidable economic and military power for decades to come and one not so easily cabined by China. As well, the Chinese Communists who have parked much of their wealth in US assets, are not likely to want to destroy that value or the billions of dollars of positive cash flows that the US sends to China every year...”**

One is urged by some pundits to treat China as an existential threat to the US but although China will dominate many areas of competition with the US, it is unlikely to be such a high level of threat. Unless there is a major course correction, the US is on a path to destroying its own infrastructure and even its Democracy. The US does not need China's help.

Just as the defeat of the Soviet Union did not mean that Russia's power had dissipated, regardless of how much China succeeds, the US will remain a formidable economic and military power for decades to come and one not so easily cabined by China. As well, the Chinese Communists who have parked much of their wealth in US assets, are not likely to want to destroy that value or the billions of dollars of positive cash flows that the US sends to China every year.

Those dollar flows have allowed China to make the investments in its economy that got it where it is and the investments in its military, in space ventures, technology and artificial intelligence that will take it where it wants to be. China cannot afford to lose the US market which is both a buyer of its manufactured goods and the source of much of its technological advancement (even where that knowhow is stolen). Nor is such a loss of the American market necessary as America's corporate CEOs are all in on preserving their access to China's low-cost labour and manufacturing.

Russia will re-emerge as a formidable power mainly from supplying energy to the EU nations. I don't see a Russia-China alliance that is more than a fleeting thought. But Russia will be capable of making trouble in Eastern Europe and in the Middle East.

(b) China will become the dominant power in space and perhaps even the dominant naval power in the world. It already has the largest naval flotilla. The diminished and vanishing US investment in both these areas will be felt soon but the loss of control and its meaning, realized too late.

A digital currency will possibly displace the US Dollar as the reserve currency of the world. Whereas China may be able to accomplish this by fiat, that is by decreeing that all trade will be transacted in a China-sponsored digital currency, most likely the Eurozone nations will join with China and perhaps Russia to bring this about. As Europe becomes more and more dependent on China for its commerce and on Russia for its energy supply, the US will find European countries more focused on their own economic well-being than on preserving the Western alliance. The preservation of Western culture in Europe will not be a pressing concern. Indeed, one might argue that battle has already been lost.

(c) Geopolitically, China will continue its overreaching domination of the South China Sea and its aggressive efforts to encircle and pressure India as well as surrounding nations. China is not necessarily quite ready to invade Taiwan just yet, but that is not a bet I would take. More likely, China will continue to encroach on Taiwanese air and sea lanes and exert enough pressure to isolate Taiwan from the world. Effectively, Taiwan will be a vassal state of China whether or not there is an actual physical invasion. But make no mistake, we cannot rule out a Chinese invasion.

Just this month, we have seen more evidence of China's disdain for a rules-based order and basic fairness. Jimmy Lai\* at age 73 has been sentenced to 14 months in prison. And the offices of *Stand News* were raided with about 200 police officers participating. Six directors were arrested and the outlet's funds of several million dollars were frozen. *Stand News* has announced that it is shutting down.

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\* Lai Chee-ying, also known as Jimmy Lai, is a Hong Kong entrepreneur and activist. He founded Giordano, an Asian clothing retailer, Next Digital, a Hong Kong-listed media company, and the popular newspaper *Apple Daily*. He is one of the main contributors to the pro-democracy camp, especially to the Democratic Party.



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The Chinese Communist Party leaders are seemingly threatened by a 73-year-old man and a small web-based news outlet and brook no criticism of their brutal rule.

If this is how they treat their own people, why should the world expect that they will treat outsiders any better? The world needs to wake up to the fact that we have a rogue nation afoot. But it probably will not wake up.

(d) The dependence of the US on China for manufactured goods will continue to grow and China's dominance of supply lines to the US will present it with an ever-increasing ability to shape the fortunes of American businesses. And all this will be done with the complicity of the American CEOs who put profit first. Simply put, the US economy is as dependent on China. The only question is what price will China exact and for how long?

However, I do not expect this to continue for all of the next twenty years. Robotics in manufacturing will make unit cost manufacturing in the US as competitive as it is in China. Certainly, real estate costs in China are less than in the US for now and overall plant costs lower but again prices in China are unlikely to remain static or to remain low over the next twenty years. Moreover, relocating manufacturing to the US with robotics will become a political and strategic necessity.

## Climate, weather and food

Notwithstanding the declarations of good intentions at



**“Notwithstanding the declarations of good intentions at COP26 to avoid a global temperature increase of 1.5° C, the road to climate change hell is paved with coal. If you are looking for carbon emissions to fall to zero, the next 20 years will disappoint you unless there is a dramatic technological breakthrough that produces enough clean energy to meet the world's needs. Don't hold your breath...”**

COP26 to avoid a global temperature increase of 1.5° C, the road to climate change hell is paved with coal. If you are looking for carbon emissions to fall to zero, the next 20 years will disappoint you unless there is a dramatic technological breakthrough that produces enough clean energy to meet the world's needs. Don't hold your breath.

China announced a target date of 2060 and India followed with its own target date of 2070 for achieving net zero carbon. Both dates are so far off as to be meaningless. There is a substantial body of scientific opinion that

reducing carbon consumption to zero immediately will not be enough to deal with the effect of the carbon already released into the atmosphere and oceans. Whether that is so or not, the incidence and frequency of severe to catastrophic climate and weather events seem inevitable.

Every new severe or catastrophic event will bring pressure to channel massive additional expense and effort directed to mitigation and adaptation. Whether entire cities can have their buildings raised to deal with floods or be retrofitted with adequate drainage systems remains to be seen. If indeed, sea level rise becomes a reality to the point of flooding coastal cities, the prospect of displacement of millions, even billions of people worldwide will force governments to change their priorities.

A good chunk of the world's resources will be directed to dealing with the effects of hurricanes and cyclones, tornadoes, massive rain and snow storms, wildfires, and intense heat. Whether these efforts will spawn useful new technologies to deal with the types of devastating effects we have already seen, remains to be seen. Certainly, entire neighbourhoods, towns, and even cities may have to be rebuilt.

Water shortages in sub-Saharan Africa, India, China, and the western United States will become matters of urgent concern. Rainwater harvesting and desalination technology will be rapidly deployed where nations are willing and able to commit the resources. In Africa and India, the possibility of catastrophe from water shortages looms. This has been a problem in the making for decades. The fact that it has been left festering so long is an indictment against governments the world over. Israel, Saudi Arabia and Dubai are far ahead of the rest of the world in desalination solutions.

Food shortages around the world will pose a huge challenge for the next twenty years. China cannot produce enough food to feed its population. Sub-Saharan African countries have persistent problems of famine and drought. The world is said to produce enough food for all, but income inequality, lack of resources, and seemingly endless wars and conflicts, result in severe breakdown of food supplies and distribution.

The UN World Food Programme has a hunger map showing that almost a billion people do not have enough food on a regular basis. The Global Report on Food Crises 2021 notes that at least 155 million people face acute hunger attributable to extreme weather, conflict and other economic shocks including the dramatic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Technology

The Internet and its potential for expanding the way we interact with each other and the world, and how we conduct business, will continue to expand and amaze. The advent of 5G, 6G and Artificial Intelligence (AI), advanced robotics and automation will bring profound changes and with them, the challenge of finding gainful employment for people. At a mundane level, robots will be bank tellers where interaction beyond conducting transactions with an ATM is necessary and different robots will cook burgers and fries at McDonald's or perform the functions of baristas at Starbucks. Robots will refuel aircraft and monitor patients in hospitals.

The melding of AI and augmented reality will open new worlds for cooperation between experts notwithstanding



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that they are on a different continent, even on opposite sides of the world. For example, skills used in performing surgery or repairing a jet engine can be demonstrated via such technologies. The knowledge gap between so-called advanced nations and others will shrink and could possibly be completely bridged.

Will we see autonomous vehicles in the next twenty years? Unless we are ready to create dedicated lanes for them, mixing autonomous and driver-operated vehicles on the same road will be a non-starter. Simply put, people are too unpredictable. On the other hand, the sheer number of vehicles and attendant snarls and traffic jams will demand a sea change.

If we are going to maintain traffic flows by using artificial intelligence and robotics, we will have no choice but to switch to autonomous vehicles. This will have two added benefits. Electric vehicles with low battery power remaining will be removed from flowing traffic and recharged, and the ability to call an autonomous vehicle on demand as the need arises or on a pre-programmed basis will reduce the number of privately owned vehicles in favour of a shared fleet.

Electric vehicles will be de rigueur at least in cities, if only to reduce air pollution from emissions. There are hints that a quantum leap in battery technology is in the offing. Obstacles include finding cost-effective ways to acquire cobalt or find an acceptable substitute. Rapid-charge technologies will be part of the answer. If that happens, the world's fossil fuel powered vehicle fleet can be transitioned to EVs. The process may take all of twenty years and beyond. Even if we could deliver twenty or thirty million EVs per year, replacing 1.3+ billion vehicles around the world is a daunting undertaking.

Universities have learned that they can provide courses online at the same price as in-person classes. Look for online learning to become the default. The fact that “lectures” and classes once recorded can be recycled reduces the need for a large faculty. In turn, education will become less personal, more mechanical, and the humanities will lose some of their humanity. But higher education will become even more of a business.

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## Health

I don't see the Covid crisis lasting for more than another year or two before the world learns to live with it. The rapid spread of the Omicron variant may be a means to gaining herd immunity. If not, available vaccines and the rapid increase in producing enough to vaccinate most of the world, lie within our grasp. Of course, this is not a given and there is always the possibility of another more lethal variant.

We can anticipate dynamic changes in healthcare and



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the delivery of treatment modalities. Active monitoring of important markers of health will become an everyday phenomenon, accepted as much as wearing a watch or a smartphone have become. Early intervention, gene therapy, and the ability to make tailored drugs to suit individual needs seem but a step away.

Advances in biotechnology will be the story of healthcare for the future.

We have not heard the last of the mRNA vaccines or of mRNA technology. Look for a vaccine against malaria using this technology and for new and innovative ways to cure cancer and other diseases. mRNA technology also holds promise for overcoming neurological disorders including Multiple Sclerosis.

## Miscellaneous

The continued rise of authoritarian governments will remain at crisis levels for the foreseeable future. China, Russia, Turkey, Belarus, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and a host of African countries are unlikely to change their views and suddenly adopt democratic values. If the US perchance upends its Democracy, the consequences are unthinkable.

**Refugees and immigration:** The worldwide twin crises of immigration (mostly unwelcome) and refugee flows (decidedly unwanted) will continue to haunt

the world. This is nothing new, but not to expect this is to ignore history. As of this writing, the world has failed ever to bring to account those governments and dictators who generate conditions that spawn refugees and fleeing emigrants. The world will come to grips with this problem over the next twenty years as we realize that there is no place to put the immigrants and refugees without generating huge and probably unsustainable costs.

**Brexit:** Britain will realize that Brexit was a major blunder but it remains to be seen if its leaders will acknowledge that leaving a massive market without alternatives, was not the smartest decision. True, much of the decision was driven by concerns over immigration and open borders, but a future British statesman will have to find a creative solution.

**Nuclear proliferation:** Threats of nuclear proliferation remain high. It seems unlikely that the US or anyone else can secure disarmament of North Korea or ensure that Iran does not get a nuclear weapons capability. Perhaps the Israelis can handle this latter situation. Perhaps not.

The earth is in a fragile state. It is within our power to realize that we are on earth for a short time and that by cooperation, we can increase the chances for all 8 billion of us to have a better life. Will that happen over the next twenty years? That is one question I can answer with confidence and the answer is NO.

Happy new year. Let's hope that, at a minimum, 2022 is better than 2021. But don't hold your breath.

Cheerz...  
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# Shades of Grey

**As we all emerge from the difficulties and pains of year 2021, a year that seems to have been marked by shades of grey: positive notes on some fronts, which the authorities would like us to latch on, and a flurry of affairs that belie an “all is well and under control” official messaging, where might 2022 lead us to?**

Jan Arden

## The Pluses

**O**n the positive front, works on the rapid transit system (Metro Express) are certainly progressing apace from Rose-Hill through Quatre-Bornes and onto Curepipe, linking the main urban agglomerations and these look set to be completed for the most part by end 2022 while the extension link between Rose-Hill junction and Reduit/Ebene could well be on track to delivery. While such works carry their lot of temporary inconveniences, and the financial sustainability of the project, including annual public subsidy levels, has yet to be independently assessed, few will deny its socioeconomic importance and strategic contribution to local commuter transport. It will undoubtedly constitute a feather in the cap of the authorities that will be waved across all sympathetic platforms government can rely on.

We could add to that aura of official comfort, the final removal of the country after two years of joint efforts from private and public bodies, from the IMF/FATF “grey list” and, within weeks we trust, from the EU blacklist. Celebrations from the Financial Services sector were naturally muted as nobody in higher government spheres would want reminding the public how we sank into the pit in the first place.

On a somewhat similar note government will be relieved to have circumnavigated the Wakashio maritime disaster and oil-spill of such international impact. The Court of Investigation has concluded its hearings in December this year with charges and convictions limited, as we understand it, to the ship captain and his second, both pleading guilty, sentenced to 20 months, about to be or already released and repatriated to India and Sri Lanka respectively. With the allowance paid out this week to those most affected, the authorities can feel relieved, end of story!

Barring the tragic Sir Gaetan tug twist, but then nobody really expected the Wakashio Court, which is not a Commission of Inquiry, to delve into the multiple levels of failings that allowed the vagrant vessel with unknown cargo to end up beached onto the sensitive coral reefs of Pointe d'Esny and was allowed to wallow there until it was belly up and belched out its tons of heavy fuel.

## The Tedium

It is earnestly hoped that some effective lessons have been drawn regarding our capacities to continuously and professionally manage our coastal and economic zones, keep the southern “safe passage” under scrutiny and revamp our National

although we have yet to see the outline of a master-plan.

We will refrain to add to those grey shades many other important factors and even the lesser ones. Economists, accounting and banking specialists will watch closely the state of the economy and in particular, the inflation in pharmaceuti-



**“Government will be relieved to have circumnavigated the Wakashio maritime disaster and oil-spill of such international impact. The Court of Investigation has concluded its hearings in December this year with charges and convictions limited, as we understand it, to the ship captain and his second, both pleading guilty, sentenced to 20 months, about to be or already released and repatriated to India and Sri Lanka respectively. With the allowance paid out this week to those most affected, the authorities can feel relieved, end of story!”**

Security and Coast Guard Services during 2022. Or about the selection and experience, capacities and professionalism of square peg political appointees overseeing and managing personnel, equipment, resources and contingency plans for such major sectors of our country as the port.

If none of these above events had any causative link with the Covid pandemic, the latter will provide its broad shoulders to help government steer the conversation away from political appointee ineptness in dwindling Air Mauritius (MK) fortunes since 2019, when its finances dipped into the red after ill-timed brand-new aircraft purchases had to be leased out. The Covid-related travel industry crisis that started early 2020 did the rest and MK, as many other imprudent airlines, spiralled into voluntary administration, avoiding bankruptcy through a severe hair-cut accounting exercise accompanied by the creation of the mega-structure Airport Holdings Limited, controlling everything related to the airport and airline sector, including MK. Year 2022 should see some positive rebound for our fabled carrier despite the pandemic uncertainties

and imported food prices hitting the low and middle classes, the true state of the national reserves at the Central Bank or the slide of our currency against our trading partners during 2022.

As mentioned by Cardinal Piat in an extract of his end of year message, *“De plus, le coût de la vie monte en flèche pendant que la roupie dégringole. Notre économie, déjà fragilisée, doit composer avec un avenir incertain...”* before wishing the faithful that Christmas brings cheers, joys and hope *“au milieu de toute cette détresse”*.

Nothing there that ordinary Mauritians are not feeling in their pinched pockets and lifestyles while they read weekly columns on the “largesses” towards the *nomenklatura*, yet this passage amongst others was censored and left out on the national broadcaster version of the Cardinal's season's greetings, a first in MBC annals. Most observers suspect such a censorship could only happen under instructions from higher quarters, which takes us to the more dismal perspectives for 2022.

## The Shocking

And here, how can we avoid mentioning the naked fraudulent purchases which have taken place at Health during 2021 as in 2020, under the supervision of the same Minister, senior cadres, a High-Level Committee, astute advisors and various pharmaco-vigilance committees? After the shocking revelations of 2020, how can the Molnupiravir drug purchase saga, being investigated by our anti-corruption agency, with new twists revealed in the press, have taken place under such strict vigilance, wonders the layman.

Or has the corruption rot developed systemic and organic roots, known to insiders, even if a couple of high echelon civil servants are ultimately made to carry the can? For the sake of governance and transparency, will the authorities consider

issuing a press release concerning all vaccines ordered/received and amounts paid for since 2020?

The other major area where the nation could hope for evolution during 2022 concerns the authoritarian drift of the regime which has already manifested itself in a number of police provisional charges or in new legislations curbing private radio stations and internet users under the impulsion, it seems, of the same spirit that has led to the censorship of the Cardinal's telecast Christmas message. It would sadly be a triumph of hope against experience. There is ample evidence that the regime intends soldiering on, marching under the banner of its *Sol Invictus*, undeterred and undistracted by grumbings and rumblings which it feels it can easily reabsorb at the appropriate time, with the appropriate handouts.

Nevertheless, we trust everybody, having endured so much already, whatever the glitz, glamour and razzmatazz, keeps as safe as necessary to see 2022 through.



## As Omicron spreads, WHO chief scientist's take on Covid-19 vaccines

**W**HO chief scientist Dr Soumya Swaminathan has said vaccines are still proving to be effective against coronavirus disease as she pointed out its "severity has not surged to a new level" even though infections are going up exponentially in many countries due to the Omicron variant, reports Hindustan Times.

Dr Soumya Swaminathan also stressed the Omicron variant is infecting both vaccinated and unvaccinated people worldwide and urged everyone to get the jab against Covid-19.



WHO chief scientist Soumya Swaminathan talked about the effectiveness of Covid-19 vaccines against Omicron. Pic - cloudfront-us

Swaminathan said information about Omicron is still emerging and it would still be premature to conclude definitely but studies are pointing towards a reduction in neutralisation capacity. Vaccinated people and those who have had prior infections are still getting breakthrough infections with Omicron, she added.

"That is why the numbers that we are seeing around the world today are extremely high because these infections are occurring in both vaccinated and unvaccinated people. However, it appears that vaccines are proving to be still protective because even though the numbers are going up exponentially in many countries severity of the disease has not surged to a new level," she added.

Stressing that hospitalisations and even within hospitalised people the need for ventilation and critical care has not gone up proportionately, Swaminathan said this is a good sign and it shows previous immunity is either due to vaccines or in some cases due to natural infection by the virus.

Swaminathan also talked about factors that account for a vaccine's effectiveness against Covid-19 at the WHO's press briefing. She said its effectiveness varies a little bit between vaccines though the majority of all of the WHO Emergency Use Listing jabs actually have very high rates of protection against severe disease and death at least till the Delta variant.

She also said that there are biological factors also that decide a vaccine's effectiveness. "It includes age, underlying illnesses and we know and proved it with all the variants that the older you are the more the underlying illnesses and co-morbidities the more vulnerable you are to get the disease," she said.

Referring to the third factor which decides the effectiveness of the vaccine, Swaminathan said, "It is the time since vaccination and the waning of the immunity and we know that there is some amount of meaning," she said.

## 'Tsunami' of Covid cases may lead to collapse of health systems, says WHO chief

**A** "tsunami" of Omicron and Delta Covid-19 cases will pile pressure on health systems already being stretched to their limits, the World Health Organisation (WHO) warned on Wednesday.

The WHO said the Delta and Omicron variants of concern were "twin threats" that were driving new case numbers to record highs, leading to spikes in hospitalisations and deaths.

The WHO said new global cases had risen by 11 percent last week, while the United States and France both registered record daily case numbers on Wednesday.

"I am highly concerned that Omicron, being more transmissible, circulating at the same time as Delta, is leading to a tsunami of cases," said WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

He said the pressure on health systems was not only due to new coronavirus patients, but also large numbers of health workers falling ill with Covid, reports AFP.

The WHO reflected on the fight against Covid-19 in 2021 and hoped that next year would see an end to the acute stage of the pandemic -- but warned that it would rest on greater vaccine equity.



Nurses tend to a Covid-19 patient at a hospital outside Paris. Pic- AFP

The WHO wanted 40 percent of the population in every country fully vaccinated by the end of the year and has a target of 70 percent coverage by the middle of 2022.

Tedros announced that 92 of the WHO's 194 member states were going to miss the 40 percent target.

"This is due to a combination of limited supply going to low-income countries for most of the year and then subsequent vaccines arriving close to expiry and without key parts like the syringes," he said.

## Booster dose not enough? Omicron sparks debate around 4th shot of vaccine



People line up to receive test kits to detect Covid-19 in New York. Pic - AP

**T**he Omicron variant of coronavirus has put additional strain on healthcare systems across the world, as doctors have to deal with its increased mutation and higher transmissibility. That is why, there are debates happening around a fourth shot of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) vaccine.

A fourth shot -- in effect a second booster dose. Israel is leading the efforts in this direction, approving a study on Monday into whether a second round of boosters will help contend with the fast-spreading Omicron variant.

The study is being done at a hospital in Israel where a test group of health workers is being administered fourth Covid-19 vaccine doses.

Results of the trial, likely to be closely watched internationally, will be submitted to Israel's health ministry in about two weeks, said a spokesperson for Sheba Medical Centre near Tel Aviv.

Concerned about the risk of a sudden surge in hospitalisations in Israel due to Omicron spread, a ministry expert

panel last week recommended offering a fourth jab to medical workers and those over 60 or with compromised immune systems, reports Amit Chaturvedi of Hindustan Times.

Medical professionals are talking about administering a fourth Covid-19 shot to people to control the spread of a variant which is believed to be more resistant to existing lot of vaccines.

A few weeks ago, Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla said that people might need a fourth Covid-19 shot sooner than expected due to the Omicron variant. The statement came days after Pfizer and BioNTech released results of a study which showed that a third shot of the vaccine is effective against Omicron, but a two-dose regime saw its ability to protect dropping significantly against the heavily-mutated virus.

Those who have received both the doses are, however, prevented from getting severely sick.

Germany's health minister Karl Lauterbach also favoured giving a fourth shot to maintain protection against the Omicron variant.

But in the United States, the worst affected country, Dr Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said that it's too early to discuss a potential fourth dose of Covid-19 vaccine.

Global Covid-19 infections hit a record high over the past seven-day period, according to news agency Reuters, as the Omicron variant raced out of control and governments tried to contain its spread without paralysing fragile economies. Almost 900,000 cases were detected on average each day worldwide between December 22 and 28, Reuters reported.



# China warns of 'drastic measures' if Taiwan provokes on independence

China will take "drastic measures" if Taiwan makes moves towards formal independence, a Beijing official warned on Wednesday, adding that Taiwan's provocations and outside meddling could intensify next year.

China claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory and in the past two years has stepped up military and diplomatic pressure to assert its sovereignty claim, fuelling anger in Taipei and concern in Washington.

China was willing to try its utmost to seek peaceful reunification with Taiwan but would act if any red lines on independence were crossed, Ma Xiaoguang, spokesman of the Taiwan Affairs Office, told a media briefing.

The Council reiterated its call for dialogue on an equal basis and said it has maintained a policy of "not provoking" to safeguard peace across the Taiwan Strait and in the region, reports Reuters.

Taiwan has emerged as a key factor in strained relations between Taiwan and the



A military honour guard holds a Taiwanese national flag as he attending flag-raising ceremony at Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall, in Taipei, Taiwan March 16, 2018. Pic - Reuters

United States, the island's most important international backer and arms supplier despite the absence of formal diplomatic

ties. Taiwan says it is an independent country and vows to defend its freedom and

democracy.

China regularly describes the island as the most sensitive issue in its ties with the United States.

Ma said provocation by pro-independence forces and "external intervention" could grow "sharper and more intense" in coming months.

Beijing has sent repeated air missions over the Taiwan Strait in recent months to pressure Taiwan. It has said it will not give in to threats.

While the United States recognises only one China, it is required by law to provide Taiwan with the means to defend itself and has long followed a policy of "strategic ambiguity" on whether it would intervene militarily to protect Taiwan in the event of a Chinese attack.

The defeated Republic of China government fled to Taiwan in 1949 after losing a civil war with the Communists, who established the People's Republic of China.

## Taliban should ensure women's liberties: Pak media



An Afghan man along with Burqa clad Afghan women ride on a vehicle along a road in Mazar-i-Sharif. Pic - AFP

A recent communique by the Taliban which put limitations on the movement of Afghan women is a grim reminder that Taliban-2.0 governance is gradually slipping in a deja vu mode.

The Express Tribune, in an editorial, advised the group to lower the guard on civil liberties and allow women to become part of the enterprising Afghan public life.

According to new directives by the Taliban, women seeking to travel longer distances must be accompanied by a close male relative, and likewise, restrictions were slapped on showing dramas and soap operas on national television, reports ANI.

Last but not least, the mandatory wearing of the hijab, curbs on higher education of girls and a ban on playing music are other aspects that hint at adopting stricter regulations, especially pertaining to women's liberties and restricting their movement at ease.

This will certainly cast the Taliban rulers in a bad light as far as the West is concerned, and also bring them under pressure even from their friends and admirers, said the editorial.

Taliban, who are desperate to seek international recognition, and have time and again been reminded that release of their legal foreign assets and humanitarian aid is indispensable to keep them going has not completed a single parameter to get the recognition.

Respect for women and human rights, establishing inclusive government, not allowing Afghanistan to become a safe haven of terrorism are the preconditions for the recognition set by the international community.

The Taliban are still longing for a de jure status in the comity of nations. This could be one factor of irksome behaviour as Taliban try to adopt a more theocratic approach in-state business visible in the latest instructions and policy guidance from the group, wrote The Express Tribune.

Enabling girls to get an education and drive vehicles and giving them permission to work in offices and perform daily chores will be appreciated, and is a must in today's interdependent lifestyle where men and women together help families to make ends meet. The Saudis have led from the front in reforming their society, and the Taliban should take a cue from them, added the editorial.

## Omicron ravages US, Europe but Asia manages to slow the spread. Here's how

The Omicron variant of the coronavirus has been wreaking havoc in many parts of the world, especially the United States and Europe. In the US and the United Kingdom, it is already the dominant strain, overthrowing Delta.

The US recorded more than 500,000 cases in a single day on Tuesday, the highest single-day spike since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020. The total cases have exceeded 54 million.

Europe too has been grappling with rising Covid-19 cases due to fast-spreading Omicron variant. The heavily-mutated strain is believed to be more resistant to existing vaccines, reports Hindustan Times.

But Asia has been able to keep Omicron at bay so far.

### How has it managed to do so?

Strict quarantine rules for arrivals and widespread mask wearing have helped slow the spread of the highly contagious variant in Asia. Countries such as Japan, South Korea and Thailand quickly reinstated entry and quarantine restrictions in recent weeks after relaxing them in the fall.

Thailand has 700 cases, South Korea has more than 500 and Japan, over 300. China, which has some of the strictest virus controls in the world, has reported at least eight.

Only four cases have been reported in the Philippines, where people flocked to shopping malls ahead of Christmas and to Mass in the biggest Roman Catholic nation in Asia.

Taiwan, where wearing a face mask is



People wearing face masks to protect against the spread of the coronavirus walk under decorations for new year in Tokyo. Pic - AP

near universal in major cities, has started to offer booster shots of the Moderna vaccine and is urging people get a third shot before an expected influx of people returning home for Lunar New Year at the end of January.

### The situation in India

In India has been getting back to normal after a devastating Covid-19 outbreak earlier this year. Though the Omicron cases are rising in the country, it is still below the alarming levels in other parts of the world. So far, more than 700 Omicron cases have been reported in the country of nearly 1.4 billion people.

Like other Asian countries, India too has implemented strict measures to check Omicron's spread. National capital Delhi has banned large gatherings for Christmas and New Year's, and many other states have announced new restrictions, including curfews and vaccination requirements at stores and restaurants.



## The Constitution & Parliamentary Majority

# Will mass resignation of Opposition MPs allow the government to amend the Constitution? Highly plausible

Following the proposal mooted in some quarters that all Opposition MPs resign from Parliament to somehow impose general elections, there would be no compulsion weighing on the ruling regime and, in fact, the latter may well use its absolute numbers in the House to suit its agenda, including amending the Constitution. The latter remains vague on the exact interpretation to be given to the words “no less than three-quarters of all Members of the Assembly”, those present at that sitting or the totality of those voted in. Lex comments on the hypothetical proposal.



By LEX

\* In the wake of the call for the mass resignation of Opposition MPs made by both Roshi Bhadain and Rama Valayden, Opposition leaders have taken the view that such an initiative would only serve the interest of the Government, since their resignation will allow the government to amend the Constitution on the strength of the resulting three-quarters majority of MPs present in Parliament. Does this sound plausible?

Of course it's highly plausible, as this depends on the interpretation that will be given to the words 'all Members of the National Assembly'. Nothing will prevent the government from giving its own interpretation to these words. The government may well say that 'all Members' mean all members present at the time a Bill is being debated.

\* The National Assembly website informs us that the 'President cannot withhold assent to a Bill which amends the Constitution and is certified by the Speaker as having complied with S 47 of the Constitution which lays down that certain amendments must, at the final voting, be voted by not less than three quarters of all the Members of the Assembly or of two thirds of all the Members, as the case may be'. Does this mean three quarters or two

“A literal and a logical reading of S 47 of the Constitution would lead one to conclude that 'all Members of the National Assembly' would surely mean all those who were elected at an election. But as the Constitution is not clear on these speculative terms, interpretations will run wild...”

**thirds of Members elected or present in the Assembly at the time the vote is taken?**

A literal and a logical reading of S 47 of the Constitution would lead one to conclude that 'all Members of the National Assembly' would surely mean all those who were elected at an election. But as the Constitution is not clear on these speculative terms, interpretations will run wild.

\* Section 53 of the Constitution in relation to how 'voting shall be conducted in the Assembly, specifies in subsection (1) that 'Except as otherwise provided in this Constitution, all questions proposed for decision in the Assembly shall be deter-

mined by a majority of the votes of the members present and voting...' Doesn't it therefore logically follow that any Bill that requires a majority of either three quarters or two thirds requires the presence of that specified majority of Members for the Bill to go through?

A normal piece of legislation that does not relate to the Constitution requires a simple majority of the Members of the Assembly. You will notice that section 53 uses the term “members present and voting” whereas section 47 uses the terms “all members of the National Assembly”. Would “all Members” have the same meaning as in section 53? That remains to be seen.

**\* Abstentions and absences are excluded in the calculation of a two-thirds vote - or a three quarters or even a simple majority vote for that matter. This as well requires Members to be present at the time the vote is taken, right?**

There have been instances in the past when Bills have been passed with Members present even if their number was less than the number of returned candidates at an election. The majority party may well argue, insofar as section 47 is concerned, that 'all Members of the Assembly' means Members present at the time of voting.

**\* Why is it that the highest office in the**

land - the President of the Republic - is voted into or suspended from office, as prescribed by Section 30(2) of the Constitution, by a simple majority and thereafter a tribunal instituted for investigations – the same holds true for the proclamation of a state of emergency in case 'democratic institutions in Mauritius are threatened by subversion' – whereas a 'Bill... to prescribe the offences related to terrorism or drug offences [Section 5 (a) - Protection of right to personal liberty] or to amend or repeal such an Act' as well as 'with regard to the keeping of a custody record and video recording in respect of the detention of any person for a drug offence' requires 'not less than three quarters of all the Members of the Assembly'? We seem to be more mindful about drugs and terrorism than the

“The framers of the Constitution rightly provided that matters concerning fundamental rights should not be played with. Can you imagine if matters relating to fundamental rights, the office of the DPP, the judiciary could have been amended by a simple majority, what chaos that would have brought to the country? Today we would be finding ourselves in an official dictatorship...”

**President of the Republic, isn't it?**

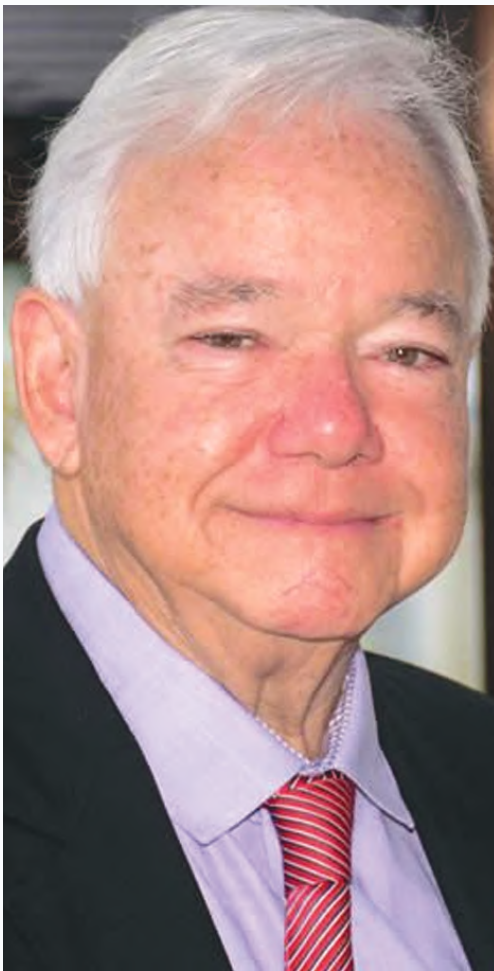
The framers of the Constitution rightly provided that matters concerning fundamental rights should not be played with. Can you imagine if matters relating to fundamental rights, the office of the DPP, the judiciary could have been amended by a simple majority, what chaos that would have brought to the country? Today we would be finding ourselves in an official dictatorship.

As regards the election of the President or Vice President by a simple majority, this is an aberration. Both should be elected by a two-thirds majority.

**\* Is there a case for a review of the specified level of support required for the passing of laws by our Parliament?**

Not really. The Bills that require a weighted majority are already specified in the Constitution. If all Bills require a weighted majority, there may well be a breakdown in the workings of the government machinery.





Prof Serge Rivière

## “Only in Mauritius, did I experience the feeling of being whole

In Scotland, I had been 75% myself; in Australia 80% myself and in Ireland, no more that 70% myself”

**P**rofessor Serge Rivière was a laureate of RCC in 1965, and has had a long and distinguished academic career, after his studies in Scotland, teaching French and Latin and researching several subjects before he came back to settle in Mauritius, where he feels 'whole.' He has been passionate about the French thinker Voltaire since his student days.

This comes through amply in his interview, but he also shares his insightful views on education, culture and intercultural relations and his hopes for the country's future. Prof Rivière has just published his academic memoirs entitled *Travels with Voltaire* that covers his fifty-year career and in which he narrates and reviews his academic, research and community activities at James Cook University, as well as the investigations and research that went towards 36 books published to date.

\* Your academic memoirs (*Travels with Voltaire: Academic Memoirs*), which, we understand, retrace your career and the research that has gone into the publication of the 36 books you have published so far will be coming out soon. Did you mean it to be an extension of the teaching you have been involved in these last 50 years or is it one more conversation, mostly inspirational, with the younger generation?

My first book came out in Queensland, Australia, in 1988 and concerned Utopias and Utopianism. Since then, Research, Administrative duties and Teaching have occupied me in various universities: the University of Mauritius (2003-2005), University of Limerick (1996-2008), and once I came back to Mauritius, at MGI, the Université des Mascareignes and the Open University.

From the very start in February 1966, two days after winning what was then named the 'English Scholarship', with my friend Dan Callikan, on the Arts side (both of us on the Arts side were from RCC), I was asked by Lucien Pouzet to take up a teaching position at Curepipe College in February 1966.

As soon as I stepped into that classroom for a Latin class, I realised that I had found my true vocation; for over 50 years, I have been on a mission: to change the "common way of thinking" (as the philosopher Denis Diderot once wrote), but among young people, to entrust to them the task of consolidating and reforming society, wherever I travelled – be it in Canada, Scotland, Europe, Australia, Ireland and Mauritius - by instilling civic and humanitarian values in my students through reflection on Literature and Culture.

So, yes, teaching was my first love, and

the vocation of a teacher is as close as one can get to that of a dedicated priest who seeks to "make a difference".

However, at the University of Aberdeen in 1966, when I started my tertiary studies in French and English, I discovered in myself the researcher, and I embarked on a quest of other cultures

Voltaire's plays, such as *Zaïre*, in the style of Jean Racine, to whom we had been introduced by our inspired and inspirational French teacher, Daniel Koenig at RCC in the 1960s. I saw Racine's *Mithridate* on RCC's stage, with Karl Mülnier in the main role, and theatre became, and has been, another passion of mine to this day.

But Voltaire was more than a *raconteur*, an essayist and a dramatist; he embodied total commitment to a cause and lived in

“I read the full report of the Truth and Justice Commission in awe of the hard work and important research that had gone into it. Yet, today, the nation is entitled to ask the million-dollar question: When will the recommendations be implemented? After so much effort and at such expense, as well as the involvement of so many, is it to remain in a drawer somewhere? Is 'Reconciliation' a vain word?”

through reading, archival work and writing out conference papers which presented the results of my investigations. This passion for knowledge (*libido sciendi*) had, in fact, always been there at RCC in the 1960s.

*Travels with Voltaire* is, indeed, an extension of my teaching over the last 50 years, as I invite my readers, young and less young, to reflect on life, through such messages as "Tolerance", Intercultural Fusion, Education as opposed to Instruction, being open to the Culture of Others and the importance of preparing our youths to be the leaders of tomorrow.

In the book, I often address the reader directly through such expressions as "Dear Reader". In the end, the writer of an autobiography can only speak intimately to the one person who peruses his book; hence, my book is, in many places, a private conversation with that person.

\* Besides your books on the Enlightenment, cultural history, travel literature, it seems you have 'travelled' with Voltaire — the French Enlightenment writer, historian, and philosopher famous for his wit as well as his advocacy of freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and separation of church and state— ever since Cyclone Carol in February 1960, and he seems to have remained your constant companion to this day. What is it that's so fascinating about Voltaire?

Thank you for asking about Voltaire, the patriarch of the French, if not the European, Enlightenment, at least from the 1740s to his death in 1778. I became fascinated, in the first instance, by Voltaire's elegant style and the art of the *raconteur*, in his *Contes*, especially *Candide* (1759). But at Aberdeen University in 1967, whenever I had time, I read his biographies written by such great scholars as Theodore Besterman, René Pomeau, André Maurois and Jean Orieux. I was also captivated by

self-imposed exile, as I did, for nearly 50 years, because he believed in the values of humanism, tolerance, truth and justice. I subsequently discovered that he was a social historian; he composed a history that stretched from Charlemagne to the 18<sup>th</sup> century (*Essay on Manners*, 1753), in which he wrote: "History is nothing more than a tableau of crimes and misfortunes."

How could one resist such a clear, logical and erudite thinker who gave us as many well-known sayings as Shakespeare: "I disapprove of what you say but I will defend to the death your right to say it", he once wrote to fellow-philosopher and the author of *De l'Esprit*, Helvétius, in 1759.

There is so much that our parliamentarians and Speakers could learn from Voltaire's wit, intelligence and tolerance; perhaps it is time to shout out: "Au secours Voltaire!" Thus, early on, I became a disciple of the great man; I did a doctorate on the *Siècle de Louis XIV* (1752) in the 1970s and have devoted close to 50 years of my life to this slippery and protean, yet pragmatic, *philosophe*.

\* Besides your books in French and English, there is a long list of refereed articles in international journals on, besides Voltaire, Australian, German and Irish history, travel literature, Mauritian history and Francophone literature, and the writings and biographies of great men, the Irish Presence in Isle de France/Mauritius, and on the 'Codes Noirs' dealing with slavery. What would you say have been the most intellectually stimulating?

During my term of office as a Lecturer in French at James Cook University of North Queensland (1986-1996), I pressed on with my research on Voltaire thanks to a well-stocked library which contained the Complete Works (often referred to as Kehl, 1784-89). I was able to publish a number of articles on Voltaire Historian in the prestigious *Studies on Voltaire* (Oxford, The Voltaire Foundation).

• Cont. on page 12



# 'Are we working towards preparing a new generation of leaders who will ensure the socio-economic and political regeneration of our country?'

• Cont. from page 11

But Dame Fortune plays an important part in the life and career of a researcher. Having travelled from Mauritius to Scotland, to Canada, back to Scotland, and thence to Australia, I became a lover of travel and made my way down the East Coast of Australia to the National Library of Australia in Canberra. It ranks as one of the very best libraries in the world, and it was there that I discovered "Travel Literature" as a genre in 1989 – a most stimulating area of research for me at the time.

I began transcribing, editing and analysing the travel logs of French explorers to the Pacific who stopped in Mauritius and reached Port Jackson (Sydney) on their circumnavigations of the globe. During one such research trips in 1992, I came across the *Journal of Madame Rose de Saulces de Freycinet* (1817-1820). It was love at first sight and I shall refer your readers to my *Academic Memoirs* for further details on Rose.

Subsequently, I visited the Baron de Freycinet in 1994 near Bordeaux. The following morning, nursing a severe headache after quite a few brandies, he allowed me to make photocopies of Rose de Freycinet's corrected Journal (though not the original) and her correspondence. He was fond of Mauritius where he had sojourned previously in the 1960s and had taken part in a hunt; hence his generous hospitality.

My book, *A Woman of Courage: The Journal of Rose de Freycinet [...]* became in 1996 a bestseller in Australia, and a second edition appeared in 2003. Travel literature has enabled me to appreciate better the development of small island states in the Pacific, publish more than twelve books and allowed me to teach Cultural Studies. As Voltaire once said, again in *Candide*: "Il est certain qu'il faut voyager."

**\* What's also interesting is that you had been chief editor of the report of the Truth and Justice Commission. How did you live that experience? Was it painful and liberating in some way?**

Having spent two happy years (2009-2011) at the Institut Cardinal Jean Margéot, which I helped to set up at the request of the Diocese, I was invited by the Commissioners of the Truth and Justice Commission to edit and verify the English text of the Report about to be printed. This was an arduous task which took nine months, but which taught me a lot about the history of indentured labour and slavery in Mauritius. I contributed my own Report on the 'Coloured Population' which became a small part of the massive Report.

On the whole, I was an observer and a bystander, as I watched many anxious individuals waiting to make their case in front of a benevolent and sympathetic Commission. I read the full Report in awe of the hard work and important research that had gone into it. Yet, today, the nation is entitled to ask the million-dollar question: When will the recommendations be implemented? After so much effort and at such expense, as well as the involvement of so many, is it to remain in a drawer somewhere? Is 'Reconciliation' a vain word?

On a personal level, what my work for the Commission did was to rekindle my passion for research; a new area of enquiry led to a critical re-edition of the *Code Noir ou*

*Recueil des Règlements rendus jusqu'à présent* (Paris: Prault, 1767), a very rare document, which was found in the Adrien d'Epinay Collection of the Carnegie Library (*Codes Noirs*, Osman 2009). The researcher was back on track and on home soil.

**\* Do you think we have made progress in terms of improving the lives of all those affected by that painful and complicated history?**

In my Introduction to *Codes Noirs*, I raise a question about the "silence" of such philosophers as Voltaire and Diderot on slavery. Moreover, the book contains a chronology of slavery from 1441 to 2006, compiled with the help of James Stevens Augustin, Librarian at the Evêché de Port-Louis at the time of publication in 2009.

**“Like so many travellers since Herodotus in the Mediterranean (circa 460-445 BC) or Marco Polo in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, in my more modest travels, I have been attracted by the concept of how one mediates between things “familiar” and things “foreign”, as one encounters the culture and traditions of the “Other”. I gradually became, like Voltaire exiled from France, a “citizen of the world”. It is in this mediation with other cultures that the real process of learning occurs...”**

**“Are we working towards preparing a new generation of leaders who will ensure the socio-economic and political regeneration of our beloved country, and how this is to be done? Obviously, through the updating and revamping of our education system, through a real reform, not just the creation of mixed Academies that prolong the elitist concept of Instruction (so says a laureate in 1965), rather than Education in the broadest sense possible...”**

I leave it to readers of *Codes Noirs* and *Academic Memoirs* to seek out the main conclusions of my presentation in the introduction and editorial notes. This book chiefly aims to make more accessible to a general public a document which is vital to the understanding of the most horrific blot on the history of man in a small island, where the beauty of nature decried the "cruelty of Man to Man", as the poet William Blake (1757-1827) exclaimed in 'A Divine Image' (1794): "Cruelty has a human heart [...]"

Shall we ever make reparations to those descendants of slaves who lost so much? The recent disappearance of standard-bearers for Reconciliation such as the Late Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the passing of time must not deter us from one of the main objectives of the Truth and Justice Commission: "To determine appropriate reparative measures to be extended to descendants of slaves and indentured labourers [...]"

I shall only quote a contemporary writer admired by Voltaire, Alexander Pope: "Hope springs eternal in the human breast." (*Essay on Man*, 1733)



**\* You have seen places, it would also seem, having as a young undergraduate and postgraduate student studied at and later worked as an academic in various universities in Canada, Scotland, Australia, Ireland and parts of the EU. Has travelling changed your perspective - the way you view the world, the way you view others, how you approach life — as well as about your home country?**

As I have said earlier, "Travel broadens the mind". I left Mauritius on a French *paquebot*, a naïve *Candide*, the first in a large family to venture abroad. During the journey, of course, there was a culture shock which put to the test my self-esteem and resilience, not just because of sea-sickness, but French sailors came back at Aden with flesh wounds as there was, so we were told, a civil war raging.

Any journey is also one of introspection; I missed my family a lot for 30 days; in Aberdeen on the first Christmas (1966), I shed many tears, but I grew stronger and my passion for learning saved me from utter desolation. I discovered that I was able to attune to other cultures.

Like so many travellers since Herodotus in the Mediterranean (circa 460-445 BC) or Marco Polo in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, in my more modest travels, I have been attracted by the concept of how one mediates between things "familiar" and things "foreign", as one encounters the culture and traditions of the "Other". I gradually became, like Voltaire exiled from France, a "citizen of the world".

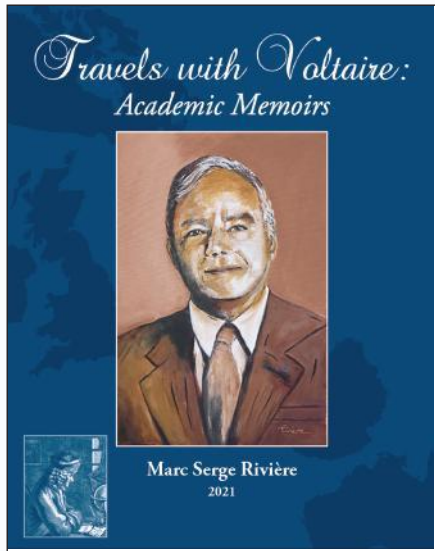
It is in this mediation with other cultures that the real process of learning occurs, and this learning for me will not end, so long as I am able to teach, interact with, and listen to, students or speakers at conferences, academic or otherwise. But it requires a certain degree of humility as the chief prerequisite; one should never say: I know it all; rather like Montaigne and Voltaire, one should always be willing to admit: "Que sais-je?"

As one travels, one learns about other cultures, one's own and oneself.

• Cont. on page 13



# “The future belongs to the young” in Mauritius, but our young people do not seem willing to come home...



“I stress that “the future belongs to the young” in Mauritius, but our young people do not seem willing to come home after their studies abroad – I did so after 42 years! Ensuring jobs for highly-qualified engineers and doctors or educators or scientists, such as epidemiologists, would be an essential pre-condition for the return of our prodigal sons and daughters...”



• Cont. from page 12

**\* With an impressive CV in light of your academic qualifications and having spent the better part of your career in prestigious universities, you could have chosen to settle down in one of the developed countries in the West like so many thousands of the Diaspora have done in countless countries all over the world. What pulled you back to Mauritius?**

It was a rational decision on my part at the age of 60; I wanted my son to grow up on the island where his father had passed from childhood to adulthood, and I aimed earnestly to give back to my country the values (academic or cultural) and the knowledge which I had acquired in Scotland, several countries of the EU, Canada, Australia and Ireland.

Moreover, like Robert Edward Hart, I wanted to develop a sense of true *appartenance*. I always felt that in Scotland, I had been 75% myself; in Australia 80% myself and in Ireland, when all is said and done, no more than 70% myself, if one can measure ‘belonging’ to a nation or community in this way. Only in Mauritius, during my visits in 2003-2005, 2006 and 2007, did I experience the feeling of being whole.

Robert Edward Hart had written: “*Ici je suis moi-même.*” This has proved to be so very true in my case.

**\* You have been away for a long time, more than 40 years or so, from home. We all are aware about the gains, mostly economic achieved during that time, but what struck you about the country when you came back in terms of losses?**

When I returned to Mauritius, I was humble enough to start learning again, for Mauritius had evolved greatly in some respects since Independence, which I missed by months (I visited in July-August 1968).

Had my native land changed? Undoubtedly; there were major developments in terms of infrastructures, roads, hotels, buildings at Ebène, for example. Had the people changed? Yes; there had been a large exodus of the “Gens de Couleur” in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as others, such as the young generation of gifted and brilliant Chinese students, two of whom were laureates on the Science side in 1965 and had sailed with me in 1966, and the quaint and colourful “boutiques chinoises” had closed or were in the process of closing down. [J.F. Guimbeau and I wanted to pay homage to the Chinese Shopkeepers

in *Boutiques chinoises de l’Île Maurice* (2018).]

Was the architectural landscape evolving for the better? As a member of SOS Patrimoine since 2008, I can only deplore the needless sacrifice of old venerable buildings such as La School and urge the Government to preserve our cultural heritage. Yet, we need to proceed as fast as possible to preserve our written heritage, with the new building that will house the National Library and Archives at Réduit/Moka and bring to fruition the vital project of the *Musée de l’Esclavage*.

Another vital question is: Are we working towards preparing a new generation of leaders who will ensure the socio-economic and political regeneration of our beloved country, and how this is to be done? Obviously, through the updating and revamping of our education system, through a real reform, not just the creation of mixed Academies that prolong the elitist concept of **Instruction** (so says a laureate in 1965), rather than **Education** in the broadest sense possible.

Again, I stress that “the future belongs to the young” in Mauritius, but our young people do not seem willing to come home after their studies abroad – I did so after 42 years! Ensuring jobs for highly-qualified engineers and doctors or educators or scientists, such as epidemiologists, would be an essential pre-condition for the return of our prodigal sons and daughters.

So, my vision of Mauritius on my return in 2008, was, and remains, that we need to put people first and protect our beautiful natural God-given environment; pulling down trees and replacing them with concrete in the name of progress is certainly not “Nature to advantage dressed” (Alexander Pope), but Nature defaced.

**\* What would you say you would expect more - and less - of from the people and the politicians?**

Priding myself in being apolitical, or simply “a philosophe ignorant”, I would not be as bold as to give advice either to my compatriots or to well-versed and long-standing politicians. Rather, once again when all else fails, I shall resort to quoting Voltaire who, in his *Treatise on Tolerance* (1763), rather surprisingly, inserted as his conclusion a « Prayer to God »; the last paragraph reads in translation:

“May all men remember that they are brothers! May they abhor the tyranny wielded over souls, as they ever execrate the violent theft of the fruits of hard work and

peaceful industry! If the scourge of war is inevitable, let us not hate each other; let us not tear each other apart when we are at peace. Let us spend the brief moment of our existence blessing, together and in a thousand different languages, from Siam to California, your goodness in bestowing on us this moment.” (<https://books.openedition.org/obp/2951?lang=en>)

I have always set great store by this plea for tolerance, mutual respect between nations, among people and political parties within nations. The words of the Apostle of Tolerance ring so true especially today 259 years later, and I can only hope that, on our small island in the sun, we shall pay heed!

## MAURITIUS TIMES To Our Readers

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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.

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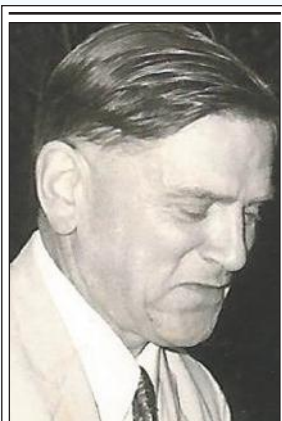
5th Year No 180

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 17 January, 1958

• Few mortals are so insensible that their affections cannot be gained by mildness, their confidence by sincerity, their hatred by scorn or neglect. — Johann Georg Ritter von Zimmermann

# Mauritius In The News



Peter Ibbotson

Most readers will probably be familiar with the disgraceful article about Mauritius which appeared in the London monthly magazine 'Clubman' under the title 'Is This The World's Worst City?' Thanks to a certain weekly the article has been reprinted in its entirety in Mauritius; the reason for the reprinting being, apparently, so that the editor could make a dirty crack about me.

The article originally appeared in 'Clubman' in November 1956; a year before it was reprinted in Mauritius. Of course, the article abounds in misstatements; but 'Clubman' only accepted it for publication after the agents of the author (Bill Wharton) had assured the editor that the article could be authenticated. Yet it contains the amazing statement that "the island wants a larger population" - which is manifestly untrue. The island wants a smaller population unless economic misery and distress in excess of that presently afflicting the workers is to be avoided.

Again, the article cites "a survey taken in 1955 by the World Health Organisation" in which, it is alleged, it is stated that the quantity of aphrodisiacs used in Mauritius in one month exceed the quantity used in Canada and USA together in two years. The same survey is said to reveal the existence of many irregular sexual unions between parents and children and brother and sister. On this, the World Health Organisation has this to say: "No survey of the nature... has been undertaken by WHO, as assistance to the Mauritius health service in 1955 was limited to fellowships in public health administration, nursing, health education and sanitation". When I wrote to WHO about the article, they said, in addition, "We would be most interested to see the article supposedly quoting a WHO survey of Mauritius, as the facts contained in your letter seem to call for some action on our part".

After the disgraceful article in question, it is pleasing to be able to record the publication in London recently of two articles by Dr Burton Benedict who with his wife spent two years in Mauritius as a sociological research officer doing anthropological field work. One of his articles has appeared in the 'British Journal of Sociology' for December 1957 (published by Routledge and Kegan Paul at 12s 6d). It deals with 'Factionalism in Mauritian Villages' and is one of a symposium of five articles dealing with factions among Indians in India and overseas (Uganda and Fiji are the other territories concerned where Indians abroad were studied). Dr Benedict's observations are based on a study of two villages, one in the north and one in the south, which he does not name but calls by the fictitious appellations of La Vallée (in the south) and Beaumont (in the north).

Both villages are about the same size; their populations being 2,259 and 2,869 respectively. There is a handful of Chinese (46 and 52) in each village, and rather more Creoles: 226 in La Vallée and 125 in Beaumont. In



Mahebourg the 1950s. Pic - vintagemauritius.org.

Beaumont, Dr Benedict found only 292 Moslems, about 10 per cent of the population; and in that, the village is not typical of Mauritius, for Hindus outnumber Moslems by three to one for the island as a whole. In La Vallée, on the other hand, Dr Benedict found the Moslems in a majority over the Hindus - and indeed over all other races combined - since they formed over 50 per cent of the total population.

In view of these different demographic backgrounds, Dr Benedict found factionalism taking different aspects. Factionalism is, of course, the formation of factions; that is, of groups inside a larger unit working for the advancement of particular persons or policies. "Factions," he says, "arise in a struggle for power particularly in competition for office or unofficial influence."

In the particular context of Beaumont and La Vallée, Dr Benedict studied factionalism as it arose with regard to the Village Councils. In Beaumont he found that a Moslem (whose community numbered 10 per cent of the total) was elected to the VC in 1952 but was unsuccessful in 1955 on both occasions receiving Hindu as well as Moslem support. A Creole nominated to La Vallée VC in 1952 and again in 1955 has supported one Indian faction against another; but in 1952 the Creole candidate in the VC elections received the support only of his own community and was not elected.

In brief, Dr Benedict's studies have led him to the conclusion that "In both La Vallée and Beaumont Islam is a basis of alignment, but in Beaumont Moslems take their place in the context of existing Hindu factions, and there is little question of Hindu-Moslem rivalry. In La Vallée, with its large Moslem population, Hindu-Moslem rivalry is a dominant feature of village politics."

Whereas many factions have so far been ephemeral, shifting with the issues concerned, Dr Benedict finds that certain more permanent factions have begun to spring up. He cites at length a dispute between rival Moslem factions in La Vallée, one led by the local head teacher (also chairman of the VC) and the other led by a big planter who is also the local

mutawali. "The two factions of La Vallée have become solidified to the extent that many disputes are structured in terms of them and that a great number of villagers of all ethnic, religious, and economic categories must align themselves in terms of them," says Dr Benedict - in other words, politics are beginning to over-ride considerations of race or religion as the sole (or main) reason for supporting one or other local leader.

This is all to the good. Democracy will flourish when Mauritians of diverse races and colours and creeds learn that policies are more important than sectarianism at elections, and between elections. The establishment of the VC as a local political unit gives more opportunity for the local politicians to get training in a smaller council, and to make a mark there, before rising to the District Council, or Legislative Council even. Earlier, an aspiring would-be politician had to go to the towns; now he can make a start in the VC. Dr Benedict also finds the existence of regular elections insignificant. No longer does a village leader assume leadership on account of wealth or caste or education. He must now be able to command popular support. Once again, this is an aspect of dawning democracy; and the dawn of democracy also demands a higher standard of education - Western education. The traditional leader, represented by the *sirdar* and the *baitka*, represents one set of values; the Western-educated teacher or civil servant represents another. Though Dr Benedict does not say so, he gives the impression that the latter is slowly ousting the former.

The whole impression of Dr Benedict's article, which ought to be widely studied, is that Mauritius is a community divided by many considerations, but aware of those divisions and aware too of the need to lessen their number if democracy is to make much headway. And the whole article, revealing the extent of possible racial and religious rivalries, is useful ammunition against any form of proportional representation or party lists one has only to read Dr Benedict and consider how P.R. would exacerbate the divisions he describes.

The second article by Dr Benedict is a short article in the January 1958 issue of 'News of Population and Birth Control', published by the International Planned Parenthood Federation, relating how he and his wife assisted in the formation of a Family Planning Association last October. It is very interesting to note the racial co-operation between Moslems and Hindus in the setting-up of this FPA; a happy augury indeed.



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● Cont. from page 2

When variants were discovered in other countries and they were prefixed by the name of the country, WHO decided that instead the Greek alphabet would henceforth be used to label them and any future ones.

And the same logic was applied to the new variant Omicron: in a statement WHO said it passed over 'nu' to avoid confusion (too easily confounded with 'new') and 'Xi' was not used because it is a common last name. Again, some observers pointed to the WHO avoiding anything resembling allusion to the name of the Chinese President.

**“Paying more for less is likely to be an ongoing reality we will have to reckon with, and therefore adjust accordingly as regards our needs. This applies especially to those who are struggling at the lower rungs of the social ladder, though the middle class also has been no less impacted. Sure, there are external factors as regards the supply chain, but in these difficult times that are likely to last for an indeterminate duration, a sense of solidarity must prevail. And the state must also come in support of citizens and lighten their burden through the regulatory and other mechanisms at its disposal...”**

However, this doesn't end there, for I found a... variation on the theme a few days ago when I was listening to a coverage of the surge in France on France 24. I was somewhat amused to hear the TV anchor pronouncing Omicron as 'Omicronne.' Given the debates that have taken place about naming, I was led to wonder whether this pronunciation was chosen because the 'micron' if pronounced in the usual French way would be but a brush away from the French President's name. Interesting.

However, this little digression by way of infotainment notwithstanding, it does not detract from the fact that the continuing and rapid spread of Omicron is inevitable, as it has been confirmed in nearly 120 countries. The numbers of Delta and Omicron variants being detected are rising every day. The countries with the

highest daily numbers as of date are the USA (265,000), England (156,000), and France which crossed the 100,000 mark for the first time.

What is very concerning, more so in the USA, is the increase in the number of children under 12 that have been infected and a growing percentage of them needing admission, especially in New York, from where during the first wave last year there was the first report of about 200 children displaying an inflammatory condition known as 'Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C).' Though most of them recovered, a few did not, succumbing to

inflammation of the heart or myocarditis. Nearly 300,000 children have had Covid in the US, and there have been 28 deaths.

The major worry expressed by medical professionals in all countries is that their already overstretched health systems may be overwhelmed by the sheer numbers that will require admission, out of whom inevitably there will be those requiring oxygen support or admission to ICUs. The situation is compounded by the fact that many medical, nursing and health personnel are themselves falling sick, and this naturally impacts patient care.

Different countries are adopting their own versions of restrictions, from none (England) to full lockdown. Every country is fearing and bracing for the surge that is going to follow the festive days ahead.

Locally, we are just out of the traumatizing wave that came in the wake of the multi-holiday first week of November, allied to the opening of schools, which most health professionals had warned about and anticipated. Now we just keep our fingers crossed for the scenario that may hit us towards the second week of January 2022. Unless we decide to shun crowded venues and be very observant of the well-known sanitary precautions that have been repeatedly stressed upon.

For Christmas, we did show the restraint that had been appealed for by various stakeholders: not to explode firecrackers out of respect for the loss of so many of our citizens during that wave, a loss that we have felt collectively and more so the suffering and grieving that it has caused. Let us hope and pray that the same spirit will prevail for New Year, and that on 31st December 2021 midnight there will not be a deafening burst of explosives and the skies set aflame.

On the other hand, the increase in the price of fuel that came into force two days ago does signal a continuation of the trend of rising costs across the board which began shortly after the pandemic became established last year. We don't need to be financial wizards to know from firsthand experience that we are getting less for the rupee than what we could get at the same time last year.

Paying more for less is likely to be an ongoing reality we will have to reckon with, and therefore adjust accordingly as regards our needs. This applies especially to those who are struggling at the lower rungs of the social ladder, though the middle class also has been no less impacted. Sure, there are external factors as regards the supply chain, but in these difficult times that are likely to last for an indeterminate duration, a sense of solidarity must prevail. And the state must also come in support of citizens and lighten their burden through the regulatory and other mechanisms at its disposal.

It is difficult to sustain hope or to be optimistic, for just as we thought we were gaining control over the Delta variant, along has come variant Omicron which now is dominant the world over. There are likely to be more variants. But this time next year, I pray that I will be able to wish a full-throated Happy New Year. Until then, we will need plenty of courage and resilience.

Dr Gopee

## Is this the democratic Mauritius our parents fought for?

● Cont. from page 3

This majority has been eroded by dissent and MPs voicing the opposition of their constituents to new restrictive measures to fight the Covid-19 Omicron variant surge which were envisaged by the UK government during the Christmas period. Press reports put the tally of Conservative rebels at more than 70 which threatened to put the government majority in peril. The government was forced to review its proposals.

This type of rebellion by MPs against contested policies and legislations tabled by the government basically never happens in the country. The only example one can recall is the resignation of PMSD from L'Alliance Lepep in December 2016 to scuttle the widely contested government proposals to hobble the constitutional powers of the DPP.

**“The very essence of freedom of speech is to allow those with opposing views to be given a fair opportunity to voice them. A true democracy is also about listening to the voice of dissent. It is when such democratic opportunities are not given to those who do not agree by the national broadcaster or the authorities to express their opinion that people have recourse to alternative media platforms to voice their views and argue their case...”**

The principal bane of our democracy is that once elected by the people, the loyalty of elected MPs shifts to a blind allegiance to the ruling government and its leader. This begs so many questions. Do the elected MPs not have a moral duty to gauge and discuss controversial policies and contested legislations with their constituents before voting? Are they not taken aback by the array of scandals rocking the government? Are they not jolted by the inordinate delay taken to get to the bottom of so many pending investigations involving grave allegations of wrongdoing levelled against Ministers and others?

What particularly riles the people is that some MPs even stitch up nondescript speeches fawning over widely contested legislation to justify the unjustifiable. Are MPs fighting for the concerns of their constituents or assuring their creature comforts?

### Cutting loose

Against such a deplorable backdrop, we need as a nation at the dawn of a New Year to mull over the state of our democracy and the disarray of the opposition parties as this is not a viable and tenable situation for the future and the prospects of the young. Change can only come from the people. We therefore above all need to cut loose from the shackles and trappings of a banana republic. We also need to reignite and re-establish the seminal values, principles and ethos our parents wanted our democracy to be built on during their battle for the independence of the country. Our sacrosanct freedom of speech must be the detonator of a paradigm shift in governance. The present shameful travesty of democracy must end forthwith.

Mrinal Roy



# Finding balance is imperative -- and the sooner you can do it, the better

-- Dina Smith,  
Harvard Business Review

**W**ho doesn't love to achieve their goals? Accomplishments can be a source of energy and strength. With drive and determination, people who are motivated by success often deliver great results and are exceptional in their fields.

But there is also a dark side to achievement. Over time, a relentless drive to excel can create substantial imbalance in your life, cause you to neglect the needs of you or your loved ones, and lead to physical and mental health problems. If you don't want to burn out — or end up an over-achieving boss — you need to start building better habits now. Finding balance is imperative — and the sooner you can do it, the better.

## Begin here

To be clear: Your need or desire to achieve is not the problem. It has likely helped you get to where you are today — and perhaps you're happy and fulfilled with continually striving for the next goal. However, a time may come when the costs are too high. For many, overachievement stems from feelings of insecurity and inadequacy. In a job market fraught with competition, task accomplishment offers a sense of self-worth and relief, and so rather than savouring achievements, you immediately move on to the next task and raise the bar higher. This creates a vicious cycle of insatiable striving with little sense of purpose. And it may be why, despite feeling burned out, you continue to grind away while enviously watching others enjoy a more balanced existence.

It can be hard to unwind this chronic cycle and regain balance and wellbeing. But the tendency to overachieve is made, not inherent. It's imminently possible to shift — so long as you're willing to look under the hood.

## Take time for self-reflection

Overachievement often starts as early as childhood, through experiencing psychological, physical, or financial insecurity.

Do some self-reflection. Ponder when your pattern of overachievement began. How did you attain love and attention when you were young? Was it through high performance in school, sports, or your community?

As we grow up, we develop our identity and beliefs. When you've been consistently rewarded for stellar performance and accomplishment, it's easy for your identity and self-worth to get hooked on that.

The fact is that your behaviours were adaptive and served a purpose. So, be patient and self-compassionate as you now work to overturn decades of programming.

## Challenge your assumptions

Have you previously set goals around greater work-life balance or self-care, but failed to attain them? Thirty years of



research by Harvard professors Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey suggests that we often fail to attain our goals due to an internal conflict between our intention to change and our unconscious thoughts and desires. To overcome this immunity to change, you have to examine and free yourself of limiting assumptions.

Let's do a quick exercise. Take a paper and a pen and answer this question:

- Instead of continually striving, what if I were to take my foot off the gas?
- What are you afraid might happen? Are you worried you might fail? Let people down? Look weak or incompetent?



Now let's uncover the assumptions you're making. For each worry you listed, ask yourself: If my fear comes to pass, what will be the dreadful consequence? What's at risk? List out all the bad conclusions you think will happen. Circle or underline the two or three most powerful assumptions you've uncovered — the ones where you feel a sense of "aha, now I see why I'm stuck," even if you can see that your belief is flawed or questionable.

It's human instinct to protect ourselves from our fears. But our fears are typically based on faulty assumptions. Left unexamined, these assumptions can keep us stuck.

Only by challenging your assumptions can you determine whether your self-protective behaviours are actually helpful — or counterproductive.

## Redefine success

What does success mean to you? For example, in addition to advancing in your career, do you want to nurture a strong relationship with a significant other? Travel the world? Dedicate time to your favourite hobby?

Growing up, you internalized a definition of success based on your family, schooling, and culture. But it's likely narrow, and importantly, not wholly yours.

Write your definition of success by pushing away fear of judgment and answering these questions in as much detail as possible:

- What does meaningful work look like for you?
- What is success in terms of your health and wellbeing, your family, and your social life?
- How about in terms of hobbies, finances, and community?

The top regrets of the dying include living a life that wasn't true to themselves and working too hard. After nearly 20 years of willingly sacrificing everything to advance her career, Ellen realized that success also now meant taking care of her health and family.

Look at your answers. What shifts do you need to make so that you don't feel this end-of-life regret? Channel this potential regret into productive action now by setting a couple reasonable goals and actions that will move you in the direction of your vision of success.

## Start small

The most effective way to create change or new habits is to start with behaviour changes that are so small they're easily accomplished.

For example, if you want to improve your fitness, commit to exercise 10 minutes per day. If your actions aren't laughably easy, lower the bar.

Once you're on a roll and consistently completing your initial action, you can build up the intensity. Plan when and where you'll take your next step and set a reminder.

## Celebrate

Research shows that pausing to celebrate progress and small wins boosts mood, relationship quality, and motivation — for you and the people you work with.

At the end of every week and month, look back individually and with your team. What went well? What was particularly satisfying? Apply this reflection to both your progress at work and the actions you chose to rebalance your life.

Did your team make progress towards an important milestone? Did you complete those five-minute yoga sessions three times last week? Yes, celebrate that! Celebration wires in the changes you want to make.

*Dina Smith is an executive coach and the owner of Cognitas, a boutique leadership development firm.*

## Work Smarter

### Mitigate the risk of burnout as your team returns to the office

**T**here's a lot of stress about returning to work. Add that to the anxiety that many employees were already feeling after the last year and a half and you've got a recipe for burnout. If you want to help your team make it through this transition without suffering, there are several things you can do.

For example, be mindful of how much socializing you're asking employees to do in the early days of returning to the

office. Start off by scheduling smaller group meetings before getting the entire company together. And be sure to factor in time for people to recover between social events.

One of the downsides of in-person work is interruptions. Make time and space for deep work. You might carve out certain days or hours where you hold "quiet hours" — meeting-free periods where people can focus uninterrupted. Give more "mental health" days so people have time to rest and recover. Remember, the long-term impacts of burnout outweigh the short-term costs of giving workers more time off.

*This tip is adapted from "Don't Let Returning to the Office Burn Out Your Team," by Rahaf Harfoush - Harvard Business Review*



# Ancient traditions: Why we make new year resolutions

As many of us start to think about our New Year's resolutions (or breaking them), we may not realize that the tradition of making promises on the first day of the year is a custom started by Romans.

"Rome's highest officials made a resolution to remain loyal to the republic and swore oaths to the Emperor on 1st January," said Professor Richard Alston, from the Department of Classics at Royal Holloway University.

"A grand ceremony marked the occasion, where the Roman legions would parade and sacrifices were made on the Capitoline Hill. This annual event renewed the bonds between citizens, the state and the gods."

New Year's Day offered all Roman citizens an opportunity to reflect on the past and look to the year ahead. People would exchange sweet fruits and honey, greet each other with blessings for the coming year and the

courts only worked in the mornings, so they had a half day holiday.

"On 1 January, our Roman ancestors celebrated Janus, the god of new beginnings who had two faces -- one looking into the past and another looking to the future," Professor Alston added. "Janus represented doors and thresholds and the Romans named the month of January in his honour."

"Janus also symbolized the values of home, family, friendship and civilization, and the doors of his temple were closed when Rome was at peace and thrown open in times of war, as if the god was no longer present. Just like we do today, we also know that the Romans celebrated a mid-winter festival in which they met with friends, exchanges gifts and had a good time before the start of the year ahead."



## How to be happier in 2022



Image credit: istockphoto.com/vladans

So you want to look trimmer, be smarter, and successful next year? You strive to exercise and call your friends more, and spend less? You are not alone. Does it even make sense to set such lofty goals for the new year, hoping anew each January first that this time really is the charm?

Richard Ryan, an international expert on motivational research and professor emeritus of psychology at the University of Rochester says: "The evidence shows that most of the time people aren't successful at them."

But don't throw in the towel quite yet. Ryan, who is also a clinical psychologist, says that any occasion that gives us an opportunity to reflect on our lives is ultimately a good thing. It doesn't have to be on New Year's. "Whenever that happens, if it's really a reflective change -- something that you put your heart behind -- that can be good for people."

And he has another tip: what proves most satisfying, and may also be what's most needed as the COVID-19 pandemic rages on, are goals that involve giving to others.

"Think of how you can help," says Ryan. "There's a lot of distress out there: If we can set goals that aim to help others,

those kinds of goals will, in turn, also add to our own well-being."

His advice is grounded in decades of research. Developed by the duo over nearly 40 years, the theory has become one of the most widely accepted frameworks of human motivation in contemporary behavioral science. Its starting point is the idea that all humans have the natural -- or intrinsic -- tendency to behave in effective and healthful ways.

According to Ryan, acts of willingly helping others satisfy all three of the basic psychological needs identified in SDT research: the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy in this context means that you can engage in activities in which you feel true volition and find personal value. Competence means feeling effective and having a sense of accomplishment. Finally, relatedness means working with and feeling connected to others.

"If you want to make a New Year's resolution that really makes you happy, think about the ways in which you can contribute to the world," says Ryan. "All three of these basic needs are fulfilled. The research shows it's not just good for the world but also really good for you."

## Prevent Cancer, Use Olive Oil

If you want to avoid developing cancer, then you might want to add eating more olive oil to your list of New Year's resolutions. In a study published in the January 2007 issue of 'The FASEB Journal', scientists from five European countries describe how the anti-cancer effects of olive oil may account for the significant difference in cancer rates among Northern and Southern Europeans.

The authors drew this conclusion based on the outcomes of volunteers from Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, and Spain, who consumed 25 milliliters (a little less than a quarter cup) of olive oil every day for three weeks. During this time, the researchers examined urine samples of the subjects for specific compounds known to be waste by-products of oxidative damage to cells, a precursor to cancer. At the beginning of the trial, the presence of these waste by-products was much higher in Northern European subjects than their Southern European coun-



terparts. By the end of three weeks, however, the presence of this compound in Northern European subjects was substantially reduced.

Another interesting finding in the study is that the researchers found evidence that the phenols in olive oil are not the only compounds that reduced oxidative damage. Phenols are known antioxidant compounds that are present in a wide range of everyday foods, such as dark chocolate, red wine, tea, fruits, and vegetables. Despite reducing the level of phenols in the olive oil, the study's subjects still showed that they were receiving the same level of health benefits.

"Every New Year people make resolutions that involve eating less fat to improve their health," said Gerald Weissmann, MD, Editor-in-Chief of The FASEB Journal. "This academically sound, practically useful study shows that what you eat is just as important as how much you eat. No wonder Plato taught wisdom in an olive grove called Academe."







## The Ashtons

A woman goes to the local benefits office to claim her family allowance, and tells the officer that she has 8 children.

"Wow, what are their names?" says the clerk.

"Ashton, Ashton, Ashton, Ashton, Ashton, Ashton, Ashton, Ashton."

The man looks at her dubiously, and asks: "Really, so what if you want them to come from playing ground outside?"

"That's easy -- I just says Ashtons and they all come running," answers the lady.

The clerk is not convinced. "And what if you want them to come for dinner?" he asks.

Again, the lady says "I just shout -- dinner is ready.

"But wait a minute, what if you just want one of them to do something?" says the clerk.

"That's more difficult, then I have to use their last names", says the woman nodding.

\*\*\*

Two guys are sitting in a pub. Bored the first man says to her friend: "Right, let

us play a game. When we get home tonight, we have to obey our wives." They agree, and they both decide to meet the next evening to discuss their experience.

When they meet in the pub, the first guy tells his friend, "When I got home my wife was cleaning in the kitchen, so decided to help her. I started drying the dishes and I dropped one." 'That's right, smash the place up!' she shouted. So, I looked for a sledgehammer and destroyed the kitchen, now she is filing a divorce. and I am charged with malicious destruction."



"You do not know my misfortune, when I got home, I fell asleep on the sofa, dropped a fag and scorched the carpet. My wife came in and said, 'Oh, good, burn the whole house down.' So I set fire to our house. My wife is suing me for divorce and I'm also up for arson."

\*\*\*

### A woman goes to a fortune teller

As they sat there in the candlelit tent,

the mystic waved their hands around the crystal ball, divining the woman's future. Suddenly, the soothsayer's hands went to their face and a gasp of horror escaped their mouth.

"I don't know how to tell you this, so I'll be blunt," the fortune teller says. "You need to prepare yourself to become a widow. Your husband will be murdered in a manner most gruesome before the year is done."

The woman was petrified, unable to process the information that's been given to her. Her hands began to shake and her throat felt like a desert as she barely managed to croak out the question on her mind.

"Will I be acquitted?"

\*\*\*

Someone once told me that taking money out of your savings account is stealing from your future self.

Well luckily for me, my future self won't be able to afford a lawyer to press charges against me.

\*\*\*

### The baby that could see the future

A baby is born and during its christening, mutters "God bless Mummy, god bless Daddy, god bless Grandma, goodbye Granddad" and the next day the Granddad suddenly dies.

A few weeks pass and the baby speaks up again, babbling "God bless Mummy, god bless Daddy, goodbye Grandma" and sure enough the next day,

Grandma dies.

A couple months pass, and the dad overhears the baby talking to itself again, saying "God bless Mummy, goodbye Daddy" and Dad goes to work the next morning absolutely petrified. Yet, he manages to survive the whole day.

At the dinner table, he asks his wife how her day was, and she responds... "Oh, it was terrible! The postman died on the doorstep!"

\*\*\*

### "What do you wish to do in the future?" asks the teacher.

Pete: "I want to be a pilot."

Tommy: "I want to be a doctor."

Margaret: "I want to be a good mother"

Frank: "I want to help Margaret!"

\*\*\*

A man with 12 kids visits his Dr, asking for advice on how to prevent future pregnancies...

"Have you tried condoms?" asks the Dr.

"I did, and it resulted in 3 kids!" said the man.

"Have you tried birth control?"

"I did! And it resulted in another 3 kids!"

"Have you tried IUD (intrauterine implants)?"

"I did! And it resulted in 3 kids!"

Confounded, the Dr says bluntly, "Well, have you tried not sleeping with your wife?"

"I did! And it still resulted in 3 kids!"

## Life's Lesson

### A Wedding Gift

She married him today. At the end of the wedding party, her mother gave her a newly opened bank savings passbook, with Rs100,000 deposited in it.

She told her, "My dear daughter, take this passbook. Keep it as a record of your married life. Whenever something happy and memorable happens in your new life, put some money in. Write down what it's about next to the amount. The more memorable the event is, the more money you can put in. I've done the first one for you today. Do the others with your husband. When you look back after many years, you will know how much happiness you've both shared."

She shared this with him after getting home. Both of them thought it was a great idea and couldn't wait to make the next deposit!

This is what the passbook looked like after a while:

7 Feb: Rs 1000, his first birthday celebration after marriage.

1 Mar: Rs 3000, she gets a salary raise.

20 Mar: Rs 200, vacation.

15 Apr: Rs 20,000, she's pregnant!

1 Jun: Rs 10,000, he gets the big promotion and so on...

However, as the years went by, they began fighting and arguing over trivial things. They didn't talk much. They regretted that they had married the most nasty person in

the world. There was no more love.

One day she talked to her mother. 'Mom, we can't stand it anymore. We have decided to divorce. I can't imagine how I decided to marry this guy!'

Her mother replied, 'Sure, that's no big deal. Just do whatever you want, if you really can't stand it. But before that, do one thing. Remember the savings passbook I gave you on your

wedding day? Take out all money and spend it first. You shouldn't keep any record of such a poor marriage.'

She agreed with her mother. So she went to the bank, and was waiting in the queue to withdraw the money.

While she was waiting, she took a look at the passbook record. She looked, and looked, and looked. Then the memory of all the previous joyful moments came back to her. Her eyes were filled with tears.

She left and went back home. When she got there, she handed the passbook to her hubby and asked him to spend the money before getting divorced.

So the next day, he went to the bank, and was waiting in the queue to cancel the account. While he was waiting, he took a look at the passbook record. He looked, and looked, and looked. Then the memory of all the previous joyful moments came back to him. His eyes were filled with tears.



He left and went back home. He gave the passbook back to her. She found a new deposit of Rs 50,000. And a line next to the record: 'This is the day I realized how much I've loved you throughout all these years. How much happiness you've brought me.' They hugged and cried, putting the passbook back into the safe.

Marriage is not a game, it's not easy but it's beautiful. You will fight and argue, this is normal, because both of you come from different backgrounds, different homes and you both were raised by different parents, beliefs and moral. So you cannot expect that everything you say will be accepted by your spouse without their opinion being tendered first. So before you give up, think back to the good times and to what brought you together in the first place.



## Healthy Living

## Things to keep in mind in case you eat out this Holiday season



**T**he holiday season means family dinners, restaurant hoppings and ordering foods. After all, what is a holiday without a warm plate of food and the company of your loved ones? But when you are in a holiday mood it is easy to get swayed away and overeat. This act of overindulgence and poor food choices may lead to bloating and weight gain due to water retention. It can also wreck your healthy eating plans. By this, we do not mean that you should not enjoy the end of the year or eat anything from outside. We just recommend you stay cautious and make healthy choices. Cheating on your diet and caving in to your cravings once or twice is fine, anything more than that is not a healthy practice. Here are some things to keep in mind when eating out this Holiday season.

### Do not starve yourself

When you know that you have to go out for dinner, do not starve yourself throughout the day. Many people think that it is better to not eat anything or eat less throughout the day when you have plans of eating out in the evening. The truth is that it does not help you maintain the calo-

rie count, rather it would make you overeat. You may not even realize and consume more than a regular amount of food, which may make you feel bloated and uncomfortable afterwards.

### Eat something before going out

If you want to stay on track, eat something before stepping out. It should not be something heavy like a proper meal but filling enough to prevent you from overindulging in the food. A fruit, a bowl of curd rice or yoghurt are some healthy food options to nibble on before your big meal of the day.

### Stay hydrated

Another major reason for overeating is insufficient water intake in a day. Drinking water prevents you from overeating and helps to make healthy choices when ordering food. When you are dehydrated, your mind confuses it as a sign of hunger. It leads to overeating, even though it just means that you are thirsty.

### Be cautious when adding food to your plate

It is alright to order your favourite food, just make sure you eat in limit and along with that you also order some healthy options. Add everything to your plate in an adequate portion, so that you do not feel guilty later for eating unhealthy foods or wrecking your eating plan. Greens, protein, healthy, fibre, your plate should comprise of all those things.

### Relish your food

It is the taste that is satisfying when it comes to food. So, rather than rushing into ordering or trying different foods, relish the one you like the most. It can be one dish or two dishes, not more than that. Eat slowly and enjoy every single bite, rather than gulping and missing most of the pleasure. When you will be satisfied with your food, you will not crave more and will easily put down your forks when you are full.

## Five diets that you shouldn't try in 2022



**N**ew Year is almost here and most of us are ready with our New Year Resolutions that circle around fitness, health and growth. As a part of these regimes, people follow different diets that promise weight loss in short periods or at times, in the best of ways. However, not all of these prove to be as beneficial as they promise to be. In fact, the U.S. News & World Report evaluated the best diets and found that diets that ranked the highest in their reports were easy to follow and nutritious, while those that ranked low on the list were quite difficult to follow. We bring to you five diets, as reported by Times of India, that you should stay away from in the upcoming year so that you can manage sustainable weight loss.

**Acid alkaline diet:** This diet proscribes foods that promote acid production in the body. The diet recommends alkaline food items or neutral ones because if we keep eating acid-producing foods in our body, then our systems will be occupied with removing acid from the body so that optimum health can be maintained. As a part of the diet, food items like grains, poultry, meat and dairy should be eliminated and fruits, legumes and vegetables should be included as much as possible.

**Fertility diet:** As the name itself suggests, the diet aims at improving fertility in women and optimizes overall reproductive health by increasing the consumption of good fats and whole grains and limiting

carbohydrates. Since the diet is low-carb, it leads to weight loss but there isn't enough evidence to support that it increases fertility.

**Glycaemic-index diet:** Choosing foods based on your blood sugar levels is recommended by this diet. Foods that are higher on the glycaemic index scale are rich in carbohydrates. Since this diet cuts out high sugar foods it does help weight loss for sure but many healthy fruits are on the higher end of the glycaemic index scale but are good for health. In addition to this, there is no actual proof of losing weight through this diet as calories play no role in this diet.

**Anti-inflammatory diet:** The diet isn't specific but mostly focuses on reducing inflammation in the body. The belief on which this diet is based is that what we eat is linked directly to inflammation levels. Eating a diet that is rich in healthy fats like fish, fruits and vegetables can lower inflammation levels in the body.

**Paleo diet:** This diet has gained immense popularity in recent times and states that eating foods that were only available to cavemen would help them lose weight. Foods like meat, fish, vegetables are preferred whereas other foods like refined sugar, grains, dairy and legumes aren't considered to be suitable. This diet restricts the consumption of whole grains and is therefore not recommended.

## Relationships

## Here's what everyone wanted to know - Most-Googleed Questions of 2021

**D**ue to the pandemic, most of our relationships have undergone some major tests, ups and downs. Many searched the internet looking for different solutions to different problems. So here is a list of some of the most googled relationship-based questions in the world in 2021, that are not very surprising as most of us were on the same boat...

### What are the best dating apps?

According to several database websites, this question has been the most Googled one. From Bumble to Tinder to matrimonial websites, people all over the world had their dating life jeopardized. Many people locked down in their homes became lonely and so the need to interact with a sweetheart became imperative.

### How to kiss?

It is interesting and good to know that people do not

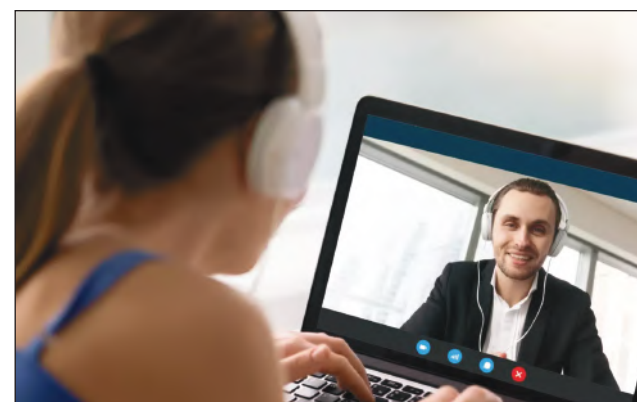
want to let their partner down in the arena of kissing. This question is the second most popular one and there are several answers to this question. From tips to the right technique, people have worked on their kissing skills for sure.

### Does he/she like me?

Since we have been home bound, and everything has become too virtual, guessing someone's feelings for you has become quite difficult. Hence, keeping in mind how he or she responds to them, the frequency of the text messages and calls have made many to ask Google whether he or she likes them or not.

### How to make a long-distance relationship work?

Long distance relationship is no joke especially if it has several restrictions attached to it. Many couples went under the trial thanks to Covid- 19 where some came out



with flying colours while others sadly went poof! For fear of losing their love, people had to question and find a solution to making their long-distance relationships.



# These fit TV celebs gained weight post Covid-19

Here's what they are doing to get back to their fab selves

Several popular TV celebs, who are big into fitness, talked about weight gain post recovering from Covid-19. They gained several kilos due to medications, resting and other factors. However, they are now back to their fitness routines. There are some who also talked about the importance of acceptance, self-love and prioritizing mental health when needed. Take a look at some of them who put on weight but are now getting back to their fab selves.

## Rubina Dilaik



Rubina Dilaik opened up about her weight gain after getting infected with Covid-19 not once but twice. In her first post, the actress was candid enough to reveal she put on some 7 kg in her Covid recovery phase which made her feel uncomfortable and low on confidence. She added she found it hard to get back to her usual 50 but couldn't. She continues to keep up with her running and yoga routine. In her latest post, Rubina slammed trolls for their hate messages about her physical appearance. While the actress is determined to lose the extra kilos, she has

talked about the importance of self-love and acceptance for better healing.

## Hina Khan



In October, Hina Khan, who lost her father earlier this year and got infected with Covid-19, talked about prioritizing her mental health over physical health. She shared that she put on kilos 'for obvious reasons' in a post on social media. She added, "My mental health was way more important and I just wanted to be, wanted to do things that make me happy. Sometimes let yourself be, enjoy the little things, do what you like without thinking much about what people will say or how I am looking. After all, one needs to be in the right frame of mind to do anything in life. And I chose mental health, my well-being over my physical appearance. Now here I am, back in action." The actress, who is a fitness freak, is now back to her usual workouts.

## Shrenu Parikh

Ishqbaaz fame Shrenu Parikh tested Covid-19 positive in July last year. She gained weight which was also highlighted by her fans. The actress, however, couldn't be bothered

less. She told TOI she was not in any rush to lose weight as there were chances of a relapse.

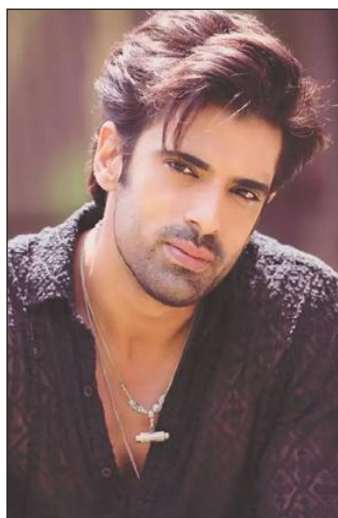
Cut to August 2020, she began with her weight loss journey. She said, "I started with yoga and basic workout sessions. In September, I travelled to Mumbai for an ad shoot and that is when I started working out regularly. I started with my online classes, which included high-intensity workout sessions including aerobics and Zumba. Working out for about an hour daily works fine for my body. I also try to go for an evening walk whenever I can. I also took a lot of care about my diet. Today, I feel happy to be back to my fit self."

## Aly Goni



Bigg Boss fame Aly Goni revealed in one of his Instagram stories that he put on 12 kgs due to Corona. The actor and his girlfriend Jasmin Bhasin had tested positive earlier this year. In one of the videos where he was talking to the paps, the actor shared that he was working on his body and had taken a break from work to get back to fitness and his regular workouts.

## 'Be it a father figure or a doting lover, there has only been variety for me to play with': Mohit Malik



Mohit Malik was recently awarded the most promising TV actor of the year. Mohit, who is ecstatic on receiving such a prestigious honour feels that the kind of content he has been a part of on television has always given him an upper edge as an actor.

"I feel lucky to have gotten a chance to experiment with a variety of genres over the years, which the audiences have always loved and appreciated. In each of my shows I have been given the chance to not only play my character as it is, but I have been able to experiment with various avatars of my characters be it angry or romantic, be it a father figure or a doting lover, there has been only and only variety for me to play with, which as an actor there is nothing better that I could ask for. Being on a TV show set, there has always been something new to discover and explore with every single day, and I am truly grateful for all the learnings that I have acquired, and eagerly awaiting the new learnings to come along with any project that I now take up," concludes Mohit.

Mohit, who is currently enjoying the fatherhood space was last seen in *Lockdown Ki Love Story*.

## YOUR STARS

### Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

You'll be torn between the desire to act, to forge ahead, and the fear of failure. Nothing really serious should come to thwart your plans; but this won't be a reason for taking excessive risks.

**Lucky Numbers:** 3, 9, 14, 16, 20, 21

### Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

Always a risk of excessive nervousness and overwork; you've an exaggerated tendency to trespass your limits. In your professional activity as well as in your family life, you'll multiply projects while greatly favouring team spirit.

**Lucky Numbers:** 16, 17, 27, 30, 31, 40

### Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

You'll probably suffer from insomnia even though you lead a sufficiently relaxed life; don't worry: all you'll have to do will be to eat lightly in the evening and to drink a good hot camomile or orange flower tea before going to bed

**Lucky Numbers:** 6, 7, 9, 12, 15, 20

### Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

You'll this time have your heart torn between stability and the need to live new amorous adventures; you'll find it most difficult to find your centre of gravity. Your mate or near ones might reproach you for your fickleness.

**Lucky Numbers:** 17, 21, 33, 36, 39, 40

### Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

If you must make intellectual efforts this time, you'll be very much favoured by the astral influxes. Your mind will have the capacity to devote itself successfully to numerous different domains without losing its efficiency for that much.

**Lucky Numbers:** 14, 20, 21, 26, 30, 36

### Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

You're encountering financial difficulties presently? Don't count on the stars for none of them seems to be ready to get you out of the quagmire; the only solution that remains will be to make severe savings.

**Lucky Numbers:** 3, 4, 15, 18, 21, 23

### Gemini: May 21 - June 20

There'll be an aspect of exceptional chance, of optimism and happiness, which must be materialized by successes and money entries. The love life of many of you will take on a very concrete turn.

**Lucky Numbers:** 4, 8, 9, 14, 30, 32

### Cancer: June 21 - July 22

Your family life will be rather quiet: not boring, but without hitches, and this is what suits you best. Trips will favour sentimental encounters of single people. It's possible that you'll finally meet the person who suits you.

**Lucky Numbers:** 3, 7, 9, 12, 23, 24

### Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

There'll be troubles in your family life; you won't feel sufficiently loved and supported. Careerwise, it's routine that'll prevail. Avoid all decision that wouldn't be maturely thought.

**Lucky Numbers:** 1, 9, 20, 21, 24, 26

### Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

You'll find the means to increase your gains or to get returns on your resources; however, don't indulge in dubious financial operations; wait some more time before trying your luck with some degree of chance.

**Lucky Numbers:** 1, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16

### Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

The attitude of those whom you love will seem very negative to you; it will be difficult for you to find an area of understanding or harmony. Risks of sentimental storms, perhaps even a rupture; but this won't be totally negative.

**Lucky Numbers:** 3, 14, 16, 20, 23, 26

### Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

You'll evolve with pleasure in an atmosphere of good understanding with your great family. For many natives, the heart will be inclined to a form of love-coloured comradeship. Don't be too confident in the achievement of your projects.

**Lucky Numbers:** 10, 11, 15, 20, 23, 30



From Akshay to Ajay...

## Bollywood's Older Men will continue to Romance much Younger Women

We have seen the leading male actors — the likes of Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan and Akshay Kumar — romancing female actors on screen for years. And now that these actors have spent almost three decades in the industry, they are still doing the same but with way younger women.

In the upcoming film, *Atrangi Re*, Akshay Kumar will feature as Sara Ali Khan's love interest. The former is one of the contemporaries of Sara's father, Saif Ali Khan. The two actors have an age gap of 28 years. And we are not supposed to feel comfortable watching them romance on-screen with all that information in our head?

If the script requires, like it did in *Cheeni Kum* or *Nishabd*, the age-gap seems appropriate. However, Bollywood doesn't abide by the script when it comes to casting the male actors. In the year 2022, too, we will see the phenomenon continue, reports scoopwhoop.com.

### 1. Akshay Kumar and Manushi Chhillar in *Prithviraj*



Akshay Kumar is one such actor who has been 'leading' this trend. Besides being paired with Sara Ali

Khan, who is 26, he will soon be seen opposite the debutant Manushi Chhillar in *Prithviraj*. Chhillar (24) will play the role of Sanyogita, one of three wives of Prithviraj Chauhan.

### 2. Ajay Devgn and Rakul Preet Singh in *Runway 34*



This won't be the first time we will watch Ajay Devgn and Rakul Preet Singh play each other's love interest. Previously, the co-stars, who have an age gap of 21 years, featured in *De De Pyaar De*.

### 3. Prabhas and Pooja Hegde in *Radhe Shyam*



Even though the age gap here is comparatively lesser than the others, it's still not unnoticeable. Prabhas (42) and Pooja Hegde (31), have been cast to star in the upcoming period sci-fi romantic drama.

### 4. Prabhas and Kriti Sanon in *Adipurush*

This year, Prabhas will be seen in the Hindu mythological film *Adipurush* alongside Kriti Sanon. And they, too, have an age gap of 11 years.

### 5. John Abraham and Jacqueline Fernandez in *Attack*



The trailer of the film, *Attack*, drops a hint about the pairing of John Abraham and Jacqueline Fernandez. We would surely see Abraham romancing the actress who is 12 years junior to him. Although Rakul's role is still under the wraps, it won't come as a surprise if she plays John's love interest.

### 6. Ajay Devgn and Priyamani in *Maidaan*

In the biographical sports film, *Priyamani* (37), has been cast opposite the leading actor Ajay Devgn (52). And that brings the age gap between them to 15 years.

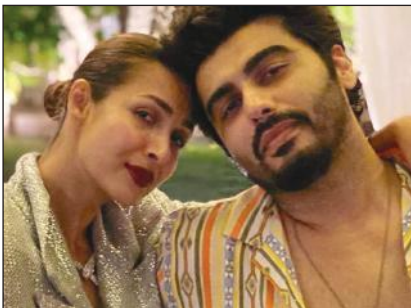
Since we are focusing on upcoming projects, the list seems shorter. Even if we pick the Bollywood films from past few years, we will surely find massive age gaps between the leads. Though there isn't a shortage of female leads with immense experience and talent, our filmmakers have somehow made a younger lead actress a mandatory factor lately.

While actors such as Akshay keep landing younger roles, the same rule doesn't apply to female actors in the industry. Case in point, in the remake of *Tip Tip Barsa Pani* made after 27 years, Raveena was replaced by Katrina but Akshay still remains the hero.

## Alia Bhatt-Ranbir Kapoor to Malaika Arora-Arjun Kapoor

5 Bollywood couples who might get married in 2022

Weddings of Bollywood celebrities are always a grand affair and fans eagerly wait to see their favourite duo tie the knot. There are quite a few couples in B-town who have kept everyone guessing as to when will they be tying the knot. Here's a look at 5 B-town couples who might tie the knot in 2022 as reported by Pinkvilla...



### Arjun Kapoor and Malaika Arora

Arjun and Malaika made their relationship official in 2019, and ever since then, fans have been waiting for them to take the next step. Arjun once

shared that whenever he plans to get married, he will not hide it from his fans.



### Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor

The much-in-love couple Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor might get married next year. The couple made their relationship public when they arrived together at Sonam Kapoor's wedding reception in 2018.

### Athiya Shetty and KL Rahul

Athiya Shetty and KL Rahul might be the next to get married. Their cute captions and comments for each



other on social media always leave fans in admiration. The two may get married by next year.

### Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra

Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra have been dating for several years now. The on-screen chemistry between the two in *Shershaah* won millions of hearts. Ever since they shared the screen together, fans can't wait to see them get married. Now the wait is for the lovebirds to make it official.



## Appartement à louer - long terme



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## BMW SPECIALIST GARAGE

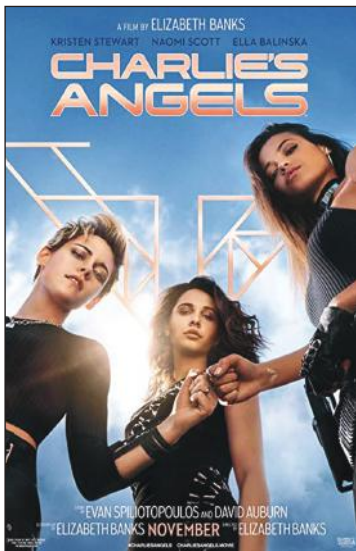
Servicing & General Repairs  
Mechanical & Electrical Problems  
Diagnosis & Coding & Programming  
Engine Overhaul/Oil &  
Water Leakages/Suspension





**CINE 12**

vendredi 31 décembre - 21.15

**CINE 12**

samedi 1 janvier - 21.00

**CINE 12**

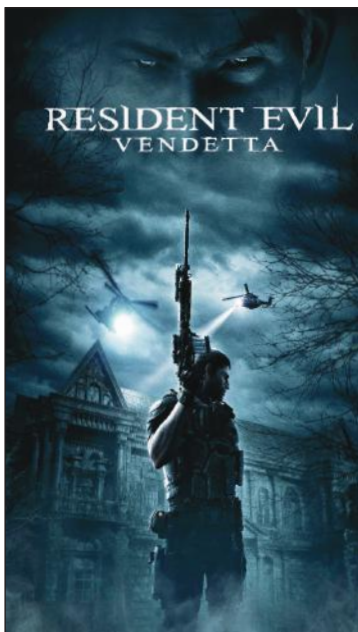
dimanche 2 janvier - 21.15

**Programme TV****SERIAL**

	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
<b>vendredi 31 décembre</b>	07.00 D.Anime: The Hive 09.00 Film: The Swan Princess 10.19 D.Anime: Astrology 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 13.00 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous? 14.30 Serial: Harvey Girls Forever! 14.52 D.Anime: Booba 15.20 D.Anime: The Adventure Of... 15.45 Film: Cranston Academy 17.05 Serial: My Perfect Landing 17.30 Mag: Human Nature 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Surya Pura 18.55 Serial: Jag Jaanani Maa Vaishnodevi 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.29 Local: Revelations 2021 22.30 Local: Come On Let's Dance 00.30 Local: Lambians Banane Avek Grup Sega Metisse	07.00 DDI Live 10.00 Bisaat-E-Dil 11.01 Tawaan 12.00 Film: Joshi Ki Kamble Starring: Devyani Deshmukh, Amita Khopkar... 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.20 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.42 Serial: Bommarillu 16.07 Serial: Sondha Bandham 16.25 Serial: Juda Na Hona 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 19.26 Serial: Radha Krishna 19.58 MBC Best Bollywood Clips 21.00 Local: Bhojpuri Masala 22.00 Local: Masti Bhari Raat	07.00 Mag: Border Crossing 07.20 Mag: Tomorrow Today 07.46 Doc: Snapshots 09.00 Doc: Extreme Tourism 09.48 Doc: Riding The Rails... 14.03 Doc: Comme Une Envie De... 14.46 Doc: Extreme Tourism 15.28 Doc: Riding The Rails... 17.22 Mag: Eco India 17.48 Mag: Shift 18.00 Doc: Tanzania Transit 18.47 Mag: World Stories 19.30 Mag: Euromaxx 20.05 Doc: Volcano Stories 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.45 43rd International Circus 22.45 Doc: Taste Hunters 23.38 Doc: Guardians Of The Desert 00.20 Doc: Neuschwanstein 01.30 Doc: Tanzania Transit	01.02 Film: Fast & Furious 7 03.13 Serial: S.W.A.T 03.54 Film: Adventures Of Dally... 05.15 Tele: Muneca Brava 05.57 Serial: Elementary 06.39 Film: Fast & Furious 7 09.45 Tele: Teresa 10.35 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 11.00 Serial: S.W.A.T 12.00 Film: Adventures Of Dally 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: Fast & Furious 7 16.53 Serial: Pure Genius 17.33 Serial: Elementary 18.15 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: Timeless 21.15 Film: Charlie's Angels Avec: Kristen Stewart, Naomi Scott...	07.00 Film: Genius 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 13.55 / 22.30 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.30 / 23.00 - Main Maikhe Chali Jaungi Tum Dekhte Rahiyo 15.00 / 21.46 - Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 15.25 Film: Total Dhamaal Starring: Ajay Devgn, Anil Kapoor, Madhuri Dixit, Riteish Deshmukh 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 19.00 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 19.31 Bhakharwadi 20.00 Siddhi Vinayak
<b>samedi 1 janvier</b>	06.02 D.Anime: Invention Story 06.29 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill 06.53 D.Anime: Booba 07.01 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis... 07.45 D.Anime: All Hail King Julien 08.10 Film: Go Fish 09.30 Mag: Human Nature 10.00 Local Prod: Zafan Nou Zil 12.00 Le Journal 12.35 Tele: Teresa 14.40 Serial: Les Copains Carlins 15.20 Film: Kung Fu Panda 15.45 Film: Dina Dana 17.05 Serial: Hank Zipzer 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Local: Special New Year Prog 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.00 Local: Message Du Premier Ministre 20.25 Local: Autour Des Valeurs 21.40 Film: Let's Dance 23.30 Local: Le Journal	07.00 Film: Sorry Daddy 09.21 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 12.45 Serial: High School 13.02 Annakodiyum Ainthu Pengalum 13.35 Anu Pallavi 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.25 Film: Golmaal Starring: Ajay Devgn, Arshad Warsi, Sharman Joshi, Tusshar Kapoor, Rimi Sen 18.10 DDI Magazine 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.06 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha 21.00 Film: Laxmii Starring Akshay Kumar, Kiara Advani	06.00 Doc: Tanzania Transit 06.42 Mag: World Stories 06.55 Mag: Our Voices 07.50 Doc: Volcano Stories 09.08 Guardians Of The Desert 10.37 Doc: On Route 7 Into The... 11.19 Doc: Southern Japan By Rail 12.10 43rd International Circus 14.05 Doc: Tanzania Transit 14.48 Mag: World Stories 18.33 Mag: Trend Book 19.04 Mag: In Good Shape 19.26 Mag: Check In 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.45 Doc: Tree Stories 22.21 Doc: Tresors Oublies De La Mediterranee 22.48 Doc: Northern Lights 23.30 Mag: Future Mag 23.59 Mag: Trend Book 00.21 Mag: In Good Shape 00.47 Mag: Check In	01.43 Film: Charlie's Angels 03.42 Serial: Seal Team 04.22 Beauty And The Beast 05.44 Tele: Tanto Amor 06.27 Serial: Timeless 06.51 Serial: Blacklist 08.30 Serial: Macgyver 09.22 Beauty And The Beast 10.03 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 10.45 Film: Charlie's Angels 12.44 Serial: Seal Team 13.30 Serial: S.W.A.T 15.05 Tele: Muneca Brava 17.45 Film: The Little Mermaid 18.35 Serial: Rich Man, Poor Man 19.34 Mag: Cinemag 20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana 20.30 Series: Timeless 21.15 Film: Spider-Man: Far From Home Starring: Tom Holland, Samuel L. Jackson, Zendaya	04.05 Radha Krishna 04.36 Anupamaa 05.03 Mere Sai -- Shradha Aur... 05.33 Agnihera 06.00 Yeh Teri Galiyan 06.20 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: Arjun Patiala Star: Diljit Dosanjh, Kriti Sanon, Varun Sharma 20.12 Motu Patlu 21.05 Serial: Namah 21.26 Serial: Naagin Season 3
<b>dimanche 2 janvier</b>	06.02 D.Anime: Invention Story 06.29 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill 06.53 D.Anime: Booba 07.00 D.Anime: Rev & Roll 09.00 Film: Kung Fu Panda 10.00 Local: Zafan Nou Zil 11.00 Local Production 12.00 Le Journal 12.40 Tele: Teresa 13.50 Local: Elle - No 170 15.20 Film: Dragons: Dawn Of The... 15.45 Film: The Angry Birds Movie 17.20 Serial: Hank Zipzer 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Local: Yeh Shaam Mastani 19.30 Le Journal 20.30 Local: Leave The Door Open With Arantia & Friends 21.50 Film: Cup Of Love Stars: Anna Hutchison, Taliana Vargas, David	07.00 Film: Ijaazat 10.00 Local Prod 11.00 Serial: Azhagu 11.24 Jag Jaanani Maa Vaishnodevi 12.10 Film: Dil Bechara Stars: Sushant Singh Rajput, Sanjana Sanghi, Saif Ali Khan 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.20 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 15.45 Serial: He Mann Baware 16.12 Serial: Sondha Bandham 17.03 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 18.00 DDI Magazine 18.30 Local: Tipa Tipa Nu Avance 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol 20.05 Serial: Mann Mein Vishwas... 20.48 Serial: CID 21.33 Serial: Naagin Season 2 22.19 Serial: Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki	06.00 Mag: Future Mag 06.29 Magazine: Trend Book 07.16 Mag: Check In 09.07 Les Montagnes Du Monde 09.51 Doc: Tresors Oublies De La Mediterranee 10.17 Doc: Northern Lights 11.32 Mag: Trend Book 11.54 Mag: In Good Shape 12.20 Mag: Check In 12.46 Doc: Garden Party 14.54 Doc: Tresors Oublies De... 18.33 Mag: Future Mag 19.00 Magazine: The Inside Story 19.33 Doc: Comme Une Envie... 20.30 Local Prod: News (English) 20.45 44th International Circus 22.45 On Route 7 Into The Heart 23.28 Doc: Northern Lights 00.10 Doc: Youth-Inducing Yogurt 00.52 Mag: Magnifique	01.08 Film: Spider-Man: Far From Home 03.58 Film: Let's Dance 05.39 Tele: Tanto Amor 06.20 Serial: Timeless 07.02 Film: A Doggone Adventure 08.30 Serial: Macgyver 09.19 Film: Spider-Man: Far From... 11.28 Film: The Little Mermaid 12.18 Serial: Dynasty 2 13.30 Serial: S.W.A.T 15.32 Tele: Muneca Brava 17.02 Serial: Timeless 17.42 Serial: Dynasty 2 18.30 Serial: Deux Flics A Miami 20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana 20.30 Serial: Les Proies 21.15 Film: Little Women Avec: Susan Sarandon, Winona Ryder, Kirsten Dunst 23.09 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir	01.00 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak 02.38 Bhakharwadi 04.31 Anupamaa 06.15 Pavitra Rishta 08.00 Motu Patlu 08.11 Ikyawann 10.00 Jaana Na Dil Se Door 12.00 Piya Albela 13.32 Agnihera 16.29 Punar Vivaah 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Naagin Season 3 19.12 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 20.30 Film: Dabangg 3 Starring: Salman Khan, Sudeep, Sonakshi Sinha
<b>lundi 3 janvier</b>	06.00 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 06.27 Mag: Eye On SADC 06.55 D.Anime: The Hive 07.12 D.Anime: The Twisted... 09.05 Film: Surf's Up 2 10.15 Film: Dragons 10.40 Serial: Superstore 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 14.00 Local: Zafan Nou Zil 14.30 D.Anime: Harvey Girls For... 15.20 Film: Kung Fu Panda 15.45 Film: Brightheart 17.20 Serial: My Perfect Landing 17.45 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous? 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Namah 19.30 Le Journal 20.40 MBC Production 21.10 Film: Origine Inconnue Star: Katee Sackhoff, Steven Cree...	09.00 Serial: Selfie With Bajrangi 09.22 Serial: Tik Tak Tail 09.29 Serial: Inspector Chingum 10.00 Serial: Kundali Bhagya 12.10 Film: Satyam Shivam Sundaram Stars: Shashi Kapoor, Zeenat Aman 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.30 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.52 Serial: Bommarillu 16.15 Serial: Sondha Bandham 16.34 Serial: Juda Na Hona 16.56 Serial: Imtihaan 17.34 Serial: Vandhal Sridevi 18.03 Serial: Colourful Bone 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.31 Film: Maara - Tamil Starring: Madhavan, Shradha Srinath	06.00 Mag: Magnifique 06.55 Magazine: The Inside Story 07.21 Mag: Comme Une Envie... 09.00 Doc: On Route 7 Into The... 11.09 Doc: Taste Hunters 14.05 Mag: Magnifique 14.32 Mag: Future Mag 15.27 Doc: Comme Une Envie... 17.05 Doc: Northern Lights 18.03 Mag: Eco@Africa 18.30 Mag: Destination Culture 19.00 Mag: Africa 54 19.30 Mag: In Good Shape 20.01 Local: Encounter 20.30 Local Prod: News (English) 20.45 Doc: Builders Of The Future 21.37 Mag: Washington Forum 22.01 Documentary 00.07 Mag: Eco@Africa 23.52 Mag: Destination Culture	01.56 Film: Cup Of Love 03.24 Serial: S.W.A.T 04.04 Film: Little Women 05.47 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.35 Serial: Les Proies 07.19 Film: Cup Of Love 09.00 Serial: Pure Genius 09.45 Tele: Teresa 10.39 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 11.00 Serial: S.W.A.T 11.47 Film: Little Women 13.40 Serial: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: Cup Of Love 16.45 Serial: Pure Genius 17.26 Serial: Les Proies 18.08 Tele: Teresa 19.00 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana 20.30 Serial: Blacklist 21.15 Film: Soul Surfer Avec: AnnaSophia Robb, Helen Hunt, Dennis Quaid...	08.00 Film: Khiladiyon Ka Khiladi 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 - Main Maikhe Chali Jaungi Tum Dekhte Rahiyo 15.00 / 21.46 - Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 15.21 Film: Rishrey Starring: Anil Kapoor, Karisma Kapoor, Shilpa Shetty 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 19.00 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 19.31 Serial: Bhakharwadi 20.30 Film: Tumhari Sulu



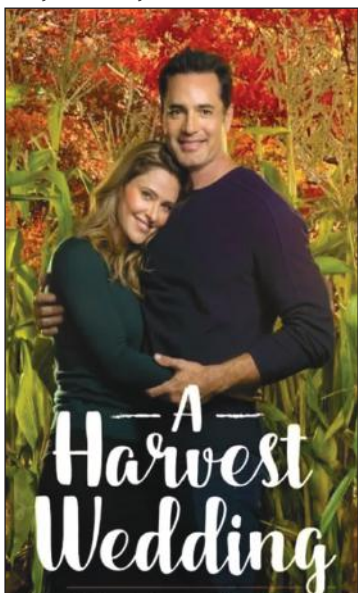
**mbc:1**  
mardi 4 janvier - 21.10



**mbc:1**  
mercredi 5 janvier - 21.15



**mbc:1**  
jeudi 6 janvier - 21.15



# Programme TV



SERIAL



mardi 4 janvier

## MBC 1

06.00 Local: Rodrig - Akoustic  
07.00 D.Anime: The Hive  
07.26 D.Anime: Splash And Bubble  
09.00 Film: Fish School 2  
10.00 Film: Kung Fu Panda  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.30 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir  
12.55 Local: Banane 2022  
14.30 D.Anime: Harvey Girls...  
14.50 D.Anime: Booba  
15.22 D.Anime: The Adventures...  
15.50 Film: Space Boy  
17.30 Serial: Creeped Out  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain  
18.55 MBC Production  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.15 Local: Generations J  
21.10 Film: Resident Evil - Vendetta  
Starring: Kevin Dorman, Matthew Mercer, Erin Cahill

## MBC 2

07.00 DDI Live  
10.00 Serial: CID  
12.00 Film: Aashiq Hoon Baharon  
Starring Rajesh Khanna, Zeenat Aman  
15.00 Live: Samachar  
15.20 Aamhi Doghi  
15.43 Bommarillu  
16.07 Sondha Bandham  
16.25 Juda Na Hona  
16.49 Serial: Imtihaan  
17.10 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala  
17.31 Serial: Premabhishekam  
18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone  
18.30 Local: DDI Magazine  
19.00 Zournal Kreol  
19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna  
20.06 Local: Tamil Programme  
20.30 Film: Sangam  
Starring Raj Kapoor, Vyjayantimala, Rajendra Kumar

## MBC 3

06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa  
06.26 Mag: Destination Culture  
07.47 Doc: Builders Of The Future  
09.00 Documentary  
11.24 Mag: Destination Culture  
13.37 Mag: Washington Forum  
15.57 Mag: Eco@Africa  
16.23 Mag: Destination Culture  
18.30 Mag: Healthy Living  
19.00 Mag: Check In  
19.30 Mag: Made In Germany  
20.30 Local Prod: News (English)  
20.45 Mag: Happiness Is On The...  
21.11 Mag: Close Up  
21.39 Local: Klip Seleksion  
23.01 Documentary  
23.45 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto...  
00.11 Mag: Healthy Living  
00.26 Mag: Red Carpet  
00.41 Mag: Check In

## Cine 12

01.28 Film: Soul Surfer  
03.14 Serial: S.W.A.T  
03.36 Film: Origine Inconnue  
05.01 Tele: Muneca Brava  
06.08 Serial: Blacklist  
06.53 Film: Soul Surfer  
09.00 Serial: Pure Genius  
09.45 Tele: Teresa  
10.35 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You  
11.01 Serial: S.W.A.T  
12.00 Film: Origine Inconnue  
13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava  
14.17 Mag: Cinemag  
14.45 Film: Soul Surfer  
16.41 Serial: Pure Genius  
17.22 Serial: Blacklist  
18.05 Tele: Teresa  
19.00 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You  
20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana  
21.15 Film: The Mummy  
Avec: Brendan Fraser, Rachel Weisz

## Bollywood TV

07.35 Film: Tumhari Sulu  
Cast: Vidya Balan, Neha Dhupia  
11.30 / 19.27 - Radha Krishna  
11.59 / 20.57 - Anupamaa  
12.30 / 21.27 - Mere Sai  
13.09 / 22.07 - Agniphera  
13.30 / 22.37 - Yeh Teri Galiyan  
14.00 / 23.07 -  
Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
14.30 / 21.59 - Main Maike Chali  
Jaungi Tum Dekhte Rahiyo  
14.53 / 22.25 -  
Yeh Hai Mohabbatein  
15.25 Kundali Bhagya  
16.00 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein  
16.28 Bhakharwadi  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Film: Zindagi Na Milegi  
Dobara  
Starring: Hrithik Roshan, Abhay Deol

mercredi 5 janvier

06.30 Local: Encounter  
07.00 D.Anime: The Hive  
07.15 D.Anime: The Twisted...  
07.55 D.Anime: Gummibar & Friends  
09.00 Film: Ribbit, Prince Malgre...  
10.25 Mag: Human Nature  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.25 Local: Autour Des Valeurs...  
12.30 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir  
12.55 Mag: Lle Saviez-Vous  
13.10 Local: Leave The Door Opon...  
14.30 D.Anime: Harvey Girls...  
14.54 D.Anime: Booba  
15.20 D.Anime: The Adventure...  
15.50 Film: Boonie Bears  
17.30 Serial: Creeped Out  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain  
18.55 MBC Production  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.30 MBC Production  
21.10 Film: Blade Runner 2049

07.00 DDI Live  
10.00 Pyar Ka Dard Meetha...  
12.00 Film: Humrahi  
Starring Rajendra Kumar, Randhir Kapoor, Tanuja...  
14.35 DDI Magazine  
15.00 Live: Samachar  
15.23 Aamhi Doghi  
15.46 Bommarillu  
16.07 Sondha Bandham  
16.25 Juda Na Hona  
16.49 Serial: Imtihaan  
17.10 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala  
17.31 Serial: Kulvadhu  
18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone  
18.30 Local: DDI Magazine  
19.00 Zournal Kreol  
19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna  
20.06 Programme In Marathi  
20.30 Film: Party  
Marathi film  
22.21 DDI Live

06.00 Mag: Rev: Global Auto...  
06.26 Mag: Healthy Living  
07.25 Mag: Made In Germany  
07.51 Magazine  
09.13 Local: Klip Seleksion  
11.48 Mag: Healthy Living  
14.40 Local: Klip Seleksion  
15.22 Doc: Iran From Above  
16.49 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto...  
17.24 Mag: Check In  
18.00 Mag: Motorweek  
19.00 Mag: Arts.21  
19.30 Mag: The Inside Story  
20.30 Local: News (English)  
20.45 Doc: Olivia's Garden  
21.11 Mag: Business Africa  
21.37 Mag: Focus On Europe  
23.27 Mag: Motorweek  
23.53 Mag: Vous Et Nous  
00.20 Mag: Arts.21  
00.46 Mag: The Inside Story  
01.12 Mag: Trend Book

01.05 Film: La Momie  
02.55 Serial: S.W.A.T  
03.36 Film: Du Mauvais Cote De...  
05.14 Tele: Muneca Brava  
05.52 Serial: Blacklist  
06.34 Film: The Shallows  
09.10 Serial: Pure Genius  
09.45 Tele: Teresa  
10.35 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You  
11.01 Serial: S.W.A.T  
12.00 Film: Du Mauvais Cote De...  
13.38 Tele: Muneca Brava  
14.46 Film: The Shallows  
16.40 Serial: Pure Genius  
17.20 Serial: Blacklist  
18.08 Tele: Teresa  
19.00 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You  
20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana  
20.30 Serial: Elementary  
21.15 Film: L'Homme De La Plaine  
22.59 Tele: Muneca Brava  
23.38 Serial: Pure Genius

07.00 Film: Zindagi Na Milegi  
Dobara  
Star: Hrithik Roshan, Abhay Deol, Farhan Akhtar  
11.31 / 20.06 - Radha Krishna  
11.51 / 20.26 - Anupamaa  
12.23 / 20.02 - Mere Sai - Shrad..  
12.47 / 20.46 - Agniphera  
13.29 / 21.09 - Yeh Teri Galiyan  
13.51 / 21.50 -  
Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
14.32 / 22.15 - Main Maike Chali  
Jaungi Tum Dekhte Rahiyo  
14.47 / 21.46 -  
Yeh Hai Mohabbatein  
15.25 Film: Dream Girl  
Ayushmann Khurrana, Nushrat Bharucha, Annu Kapoor  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Kundali Bhagya  
19.00 Ishaaron Ishaaron...

jeudi 6 janvier

06.00 Local: Klip Seleksion  
06.40 Local: Fee Main  
07.15 D. Anime: The Twisted...  
09.00 Film: Fish School  
10.55 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.30 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir  
14.00 Local: Crime Watch  
14.33 D.Anime: Harvery Girls...  
15.20 D.Anime: The Adventures...  
15.45 Film: Time Toys  
17.20 Serial: Creeped Out  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain  
19.30 Le Journal  
20.10 Local: Autour Des Valeurs...  
20.15 Film: Sadhe Saat Phere  
Cast : Juhi Chawla, Irfan Khan, Manoj Pahwa  
23.00 Le Journal

07.00 DDI Live  
09.00 Serial: Selfie With Bajrangi  
10.10 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki  
Rahasya Gatha  
12.00 Film: Shagoon  
15.00 Live: Samachar  
15.20 Serial: Aamhi Doghi  
15.43 Serial: Bommarillu  
16.04 Serial: Sondha Bandham  
16.27 Serial: Juda Na Hona  
16.48 Serial: Imtihaan  
17.05 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala  
17.30 Local: Amrit Vaani  
18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone  
18.30 Serial: Ghar Pahucha Da...  
19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna  
20.04 Local: Les Grandes Lignes  
20.33 Local: Mots & Ecrits  
21.09 Film: A Harvest Wedding  
With Jill Wagner, Victor Webster

06.00 Mag: Motorweek  
06.26 Mag: Vous Et Nous  
07.19 Mag: The Inside Story  
07.49 Doc: Trend Book  
09.00 Mag: Focus On Europe  
09.31 Doc: The Memory Illusion  
13.44 Mag: Business Africa  
15.15 Doc: High-Speed Internet  
16.01 Mag: Motorweek  
16.27 Mag: Vous Et Nous  
18.00 Mag: Eco India  
19.00 Mag: Border Crossing  
19.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today  
20.30 Local: News (English)  
20.45 Comme Un Envie De  
Jardins  
21.36 Doc: Sos Amazon  
22.18 Doc: Beethoven's Ninth  
23.01 Doc: The Expanding Desert  
23.25 Mag: Eco India  
23.51 Mag: Shift

00.20 Film: Blade Runner 2049  
03.37 Film: L'Homme De La Plaine  
05.51 Tele: Muneca Brava  
05.55 Serial: Elementary  
06.35 Film: Blade Runner 2049  
09.15 Serial: Pure Genius  
09.55 Tele: Teresa  
10.35 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You  
11.00 Serial: S.W.A.T  
11.52 Film: L'Homme De La Plaine  
13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava  
14.11 Film: Blade Runner 2049  
16.51 Serial: Pure Genius  
17.31 Serial: Elementary  
18.05 Tele: Teresa  
19.00 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You  
20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages...  
20.30 Serial: Elementary  
21.15 Serial: Rich Man, Poor Man  
22.03 Tele: Muneca Brava  
22.44 Serial: Pure Genius

07.30 Film: Dream Girl  
Ayushmann Khurrana, Nushrat Bharucha, Annu Kapoor  
11.27 / 19.54 - Radha Krishna  
11.56 / 20.11 - Anupamaa  
12.25 / 20.32 - Mere Sai  
12.58 / 21.09 - Agniphera  
13.28 / 21.24 - Yeh Teri Galiyan  
13.54 / 21.50 -  
Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
14.30 / 22.15 - Main Maike Chali  
Jaungi Tum Dekhte Rahiyo  
15.00 / 21.46 -  
Yeh Hai Mohabbatein  
15.21 Film: Badmashiyaan  
Star: Sidhant Gupta, Suzanna Mukherjee, Gunjan Malhotra  
18.00 Samachar  
18.30 Kundali Bhagya  
18.59 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein  
19.29 Bhakharwadi



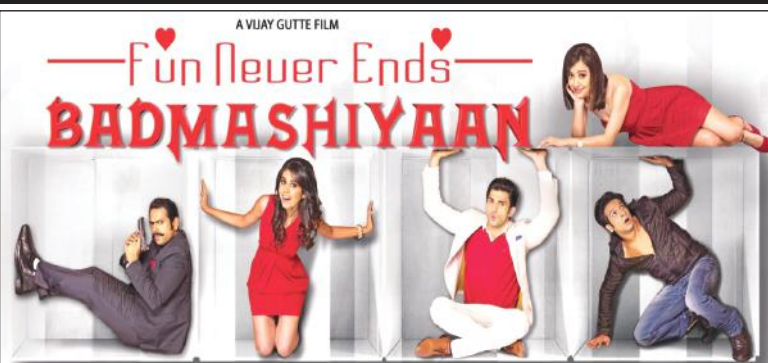
Jeudi 6 janvier - 15.30

Star: Sidhant Gupta, Suzanna Mukherjee, Gunjan Malhotra



Jeudi 6 janvier - 20.35

Stars: Juhi Chawla, Irfan Khan, Manoj Pahwa





# The Whimpering Flamboyant



Dr Rajagopal Soondron

I have been there for decades, standing alone by a footpath on the fringe of a sugarcane field; generations of labourers have walked by to their work in the early morning, sometimes enjoying my summer shade. But for years I have been witness to those people, bent on social changes to improve their lot, going about building roads, highways and dual carriageways not far away. And even malls.

My luck was that some young kind-hearted environmentalist landscaper had insisted that I be spared the axe. Now I am the proud permanent guest of a wonderful modern mall – not far from its busy parking plot.

Come November -- my undying faithfulness becomes apparent, always spreading my green veil on while simultaneously prompting out my buds so that everyone passing by would stop for a minute to have a hearty peep at my blossom. I would reciprocally enjoy that hidden smile behind their lips and moustache; and many a kid would happily show off their new mobile – while snapping some immortal pictures of my wonderful colours. I am the hero of that festive time.

I would see cars rushing in and out day and night – while the dazzling weekend fun from that mall would warm up my heart. Yet December's glorious atmosphere is unparalleled: it stands apart. I would giggle at the happiness on the children's faces as they walk, run and laugh raucously below my panoply after happily giving their school a long miss. Surprisingly, their parents look more relaxed and contented as they themselves surreptitiously capitalize on their children's relief to slide into a jolly mood, while secretly playing Santa Claus and stepping into the end-of-the year activities.

I have envied the wonderful play of light going on in the mall, how my cousins' trunks in the main alleys have been dressed up in serpentine strings of led bulbs to the amazement of those kids as they jump around freely and carelessly much to the parents' concern. Where I am, I even have a free sniff of the aroma coming from the cuisine's menu being scooped out in the numerous restaurants, courtesy my pal the Breeze as it blows downhill over the mall to bring all those



evanescent goodies to me. He keeps me posted on how, inside the mall, the youngsters would roam about, peeping and window shopping in the background musical atmosphere of the festive season. Small business people have capitalized on the occasion to set up shop to peddle all sorts of novel gadgets, succulent food, crystalized sweetmeats, latest toys and flashy decorations.

This has been going on year in and year out for as long as I could remember – so much so that my ageing years had gradually eroded my spontaneity that I have failed to renew at the end of 2021.

But that sleepiness and blasé attitude of mine have suddenly taken a jolt since last year, shaking me awake again. I suddenly discover the irrational, hesitating behaviour of the people walking by. I am befuddled as I notice that men and women no longer give me that December adoring look and light-hearted laugh. Funny, now they talk less; in fact, they have barricaded their mouth and nose behind a queer contraption; they rarely hug – they keep distancing themselves from others as if they are leprous. 'What's going on?' I ask myself.

## December 2020-2021

So, I felt a pang of unhappiness and worry as I miss the jolly old feelings that should have gripped mid-December. I look around and feel alone; of course, I have sensed a sort of moroseness, of moodiness and lack of enthusiasm in the past months. Heavy-hearted people have walked by in a pensive mood fortunately, my pal the Breeze would finally come to murmur in my ears about serious depressing tidings. All my enthusiasm to generate so much greenery and colourful blossoms seems to peter out. I hear again about the nasty virus-causing panic in the population, leading grown-ups and young ones to lose their jobs, their health and even life: no wonder parents have been keeping away from the mall. Now I understand why I had seen less of those tots' mirth, smile and galloping steps.

So gloomy! The Breeze, shaking my shoulders, would whisper to me that the music goes unheeded and no one seems to waltz around with Tino Rossi's unforget-

table Christmas songs, which lingers on with just a glancing attention from the grown-ups, not even willing to rake up their own childhood memories of their fantastic yester-years.

I feel like weeping. If only the rain would come, I would weep with her to hide my tears.

Yet I keep doing my best, still enveloping myself in the most luxuriant mantle of flowers and bloom, going to the extent of sacrificing my greenery to the maximum, to make place for more of my

ever changing coloured petals from whitish to pink, to saffron, to reddish yellow and even to "rouge scarlate" ... but to no avail. I can hardly elicit some flamboyant smile, hope and happiness in those people walking by or racing away in their berlines. I am crestfallen; but my friend the Breeze is more optimistic; it travels around and gathers more news about the health risks existing in the country. It sustains my hope by saying that it is just a peak in that Covid infection; soon will come the plateau and then it will taper off. But I said – meanwhile many will have to pay dearly with their lives; and the breeze gives a sigh of sadness what with human folly, virological research or deforestation setting a virus free and stirring a lot of heart-rending sadness.

Why Pal, tell me? Oh, this is the law of Mother Nature dear; don't forget the pesticides, insecticides and dusts you are subjected to; in winter you look a dry, dead skeleton of a dud. Fortunately, like a Phoenix, you cyclically rise magnificently out of the ashes to entertain us with your November blossoms.

What moroseness! What tragedy! I feel naked this 2021 in spite of all the attire of colourful explosive colours Mother Nature has dressed me in. The children would miss the most wonderful moments of their tender life. The adults, putting a bold face, are trying to abide to new sanitary rules and restrictions; to adapt to the new challenge – to learn about that backlash of Nature, and to build a new way of life: the new normal – the latest axiom!

Don't despair my Flame, soon Homo Sapiens would rush back and crowd the place again; it's not in their genes to withstand chronic stress. Soon they would invade the food courts and will not give a damn about Covid. But won't there be a price to pay, dear? Definitely. They would soon turn emotional yet again and negligently bypass all sanitary precautions – you just see -- yonder car parking would soon be packed like an egg. Let's just compare notes next December pal. Bye-bye -- time to race round the world.

Thank you again for your faithful, wonderful unflinching blossom. You are my only hope.



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor

## Finding Your Next Step in Life

It is when you are willing to listen to yourself and be fearless, that figuring out your next step becomes easy

Our lives are made up of a complex network of pathways that we can use to move from one phase of life to the next. For some of us, our paths are wide, smooth, and clearly marked. Many people, however, find that they have a difficult time figuring out where they need to go next. Determining which "next step" will land you on the most direct route to fulfillment and the realization of your life purpose may not seem easy.

There are many ways to discover what the next step on your life path should be. If you are someone who seeks to satisfy your soul, it is vital that you make this inquiry. Often, your inner voice will counsel you that it's time for a change, and it is very important to trust yourself because only you know what is best for you.

Personal growth always results when you let yourself expand beyond the farthest borders of what your life has been so far. When figuring out what your next step will be, you may want to review your life experiences. The choices you've made and the dreams you've held onto can give you an idea of what you don't want to do anymore and what you might like to do next.

It is also a good idea to think about creative ways you can use your skills and satisfy your passions. Visualizing your perfect future and making a list of ways to manifest that future can help you choose a logical next step that's in harmony with your desires. Meditation, journal writing, taking a class, and other creative activities may inspire you and provide insight regarding the next step in life that will bring you the most satisfaction.

It is when you are willing to listen to yourself and be fearless that figuring out your next step becomes easy. Beneath the fear and hesitation and uncertainty lies your inner knowing that always knows which step you need to take next. If you can allow the taking of your next step to be as easy as putting one foot in front of the next, you'll notice that your next step is always the one that is right in front of you. All you have to do is put one foot forward and on the ground.