

# MAURITIUS **TIMES**

• "Challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful." -- Joshua J. Marine



Qs & As

## "The President of the Republic must uphold the Constitution and the rule of law"

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## Lorenz butterflies and the scarlet listing of Mauritius



The mingling of messaging destined to the local tribesmen with international diplomacy, can indeed have tricky and unpredictable consequences but nobody can venture that they have had a bearing on French and EU travel advisories

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## Omicron - A Greek Tragicomedy

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# The Seeds of the Future

**S**o much time and energy are being expended in discussing and commenting on what's gone wrong with the management of the Covid situation in the country as well as with regard to other issues - the government's suspect (and ill-advised) actions to curtail free speech through the amendments brought to the IBA Act, the earlier inclusion of our jurisdiction onto the FATF grey list and the recent inclusion of Mauritius by France in its 'scarlet' category of high-risk Covid destination gleefully commented by local commentators as a 'well-deserved slap' to the country's boasts about its Covid-safe status, etc - that we seem to be losing sight of the fundamental priorities of the country.

The end of the year, just three weeks away, is usually the time when we should be reflecting on where we stand and which course we might best steer for the benefit of the population in the years ahead.

The seeds of the future are very often sown in the present, and it may take years of dogged policy pursuits, not a single one, to define the grounding on which our development should rest. Development not equated only with sheer GDP growth, which is a poor indicator in any case, but that which ensures that the fruits of our common efforts are shared in an equitable manner across the entire population in the matter of access to housing, food, education, healthcare, etc. One of the key expectations from any government is that it ensures through its key policy decisions a good balance so that we do not end up pandering to the unlimited demands for comfort of the few who are well off, neglecting those for whom even the daily struggle for a decent standard of living is too tough. The focus should therefore be on equitable development more than on growth.

If there is another fundamental change that we need to promote, it's a strong dose of governance in small matters as in big. Absence of governance is evident from the scandals that have littered our recent history, as well as various irresponsible statements which persons in authority, make in public on political platforms or in Parliament, as if the mere fact of wielding some form of power gives them the licence to drag down those not in their camps to the lowest levels. We need to groom up future leaders of society who have the brains and the wisdom to tolerate differences instead of wielding insult on every other occasion they are contradicted. This will give our society a poise and balance that we all deserve.

We have been accumulating serious deficits in various domains and hence putting ourselves at a disadvantage when it comes to taking a serious leap into the future. Politicians will no doubt concentrate on how best to preserve themselves in power or to catapult themselves onto the power platform. The bigger imperative for the country is to keep its head above water when it comes to its economic survival. Maintaining our competitiveness, sustaining employment, reducing poverty and stabilising prices should therefore override political quests for power and such things which are peripheral to those central economic and social pursuits.

## The Conversation

# Better to be safe (and quick) than sorry

*How we should manage uncertainty is not a scientific issue but an ethical issue*



Pic - Artur Widak/Nur via Getty Images

**O**n discovering the omicron variant, many countries moved quickly to impose travel restrictions and other public health measures, such as compulsory mask wearing. But, given the lack of data, is this the best course of action?

These measures have tangible costs, and some have argued that they are an over-reaction. Critics of the travel ban claim that new measures will not significantly prevent the spread of the variant. Indeed, World Health Organization (WHO) officials have urged countries not to hastily impose travel curbs, instead advocating a risk analysis and science-based approach.

Others suggest that the harms of the variant should not be overplayed, given the reports of relatively mild illness so far. Still, scientific advisers in the UK warn that omicron may require a "very stringent response".

Throughout the pandemic, policymakers have been confronted with the issue of how to manage uncertainty. The emergence of the omicron variant is yet another example of this.

One problem with the WHO's suggestion of adopting a solely science-based approach to policy in this area is that our

scientific understanding is currently limited. There is still significant uncertainty about the impact the variant will have on infections and hospitalisations, as well as the effectiveness of current vaccines, tests and treatment.

Although trials are underway to investigate these matters, gathering evidence will take time. At the moment, it is difficult to precisely quantify the risks we face.

Policymakers face a dilemma. If they choose to wait for further data so they can make a fully evidence-based decision, it may be too late for any imposed policies to have a significant benefit.

If they choose to impose restrictions now, their policies have more chance of mitigating the harm of a variant. But such an approach may be accused of lacking a solid evidence base, and we may later find that the restrictive policies were unnecessary if the variant is not as bad as first feared.

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# Lorenz butterflies and the scarlet listing of Mauritius

*The mingling of messaging destined to the local tribesmen with international diplomacy, can indeed have tricky and unpredictable consequences but nobody can venture that they have had a bearing on French and EU travel advisories*

Jan Arden

The Omicron variant has certainly sent many countries onto some knee-jerk, if not panic reaction mode, particularly when the bare minimum was known about the variant's origins, its capacity to spread, its resistance to vaccines or upcoming drugs and how lethal a threat it is. So much the better if the authorities jump into action rather than let another wave send our public health system and frontliners, still reeling under the Delta phase, into more prolonged disarray. But we might have expected a modicum of communication and coordination between agencies, Air Mauritius and the airport health or security for decisions impacting locals and travellers. After all, we have been under siege for well over 18 months!

And so it was that after the Cabinet decision to ban incoming flights and visitors from southern Africa as from Monday 29th November, sanitary and quarantine protocols were ramped up by the High-Level Covid-19 Committee on Saturday "with immediate effect", leaving flight MK 852 passengers abandoned to officials who had no answers for 5 hours of stress, a situation that has been widely circulated on social media. I guess the MTPA must have expressed regrets individually to all stranded families (locals, residents and visitors) at our knee-jerkism, our airport management misfirings and the stress they had to endure upon arrival.

In a charitable spirit we could ignore the MBC's role in rehashing the official line for weeks on end that all was well and under control as relayed by the health authorities. Or the ill-timed sortie of the Minister of Tourism on 17th November to an MTPA-invited parterre of select international operators that the pandemic situation was improving and we would soon be back to pre-pandemic levels of activity. Or the weekly charade of statistics and vaccination rates that have become the hallmark of the Ministry of Health's communication.

It was on the 3rd of December, while the Minister of Tourism had sauntered to the Madrid Tourism Conference, that the



Pic - Top Santé

“All chancelleries read news dispatches, watch social media, have personal networks and are fully attuned to the National Assembly proceedings, the attempts to curb press and media freedoms or to the sad stories making the headlines week after week. The foreign chancelleries, and in particular, the French embassy have not recently discovered how important French, Reunion or European tourists are for the national economy either. The appeal, while necessary in the after-shock, brings unfortunately nothing new to the table...”

PM decided to switch tack and recognise that Mauritius was in the middle of cyclonic conditions, referring one imagines to both pandemic and socio-economic management. One can feel some empathy for the No.2 in government who has been doing his best on BBC, TV5, CNN to hail our worldwide success of our public health situation and the safety of our "resort bubble" for incoming tourists, but to be so publicly out of synch with other major ministries, Education, Health or PMO, must have been galling.

To make matters worse for a government that seemed to run on such multipolar wheels, came the shock announcement on 1st of December that the French government had extended its list of high-risk southern Africa countries by adding Malawi, Zambia and Mauritius to a "scarlet-red" grouping which meant drastic flight and traveller restrictions to prevent the spread of the Omicron virus. We could hardly blame others for similar

knee-jerkism we had ourselves stoutly embraced a few days earlier against southern African states, so the only recourse were the desperate pleas from the MTPA, AHRIM and higher spheres of government that France show some consideration for our already damaged tourism sector and its impact on the economy. The French ambassador was urgently plead locally while it befell on the Minister of Tourism in Madrid to engage the French Minister counterpart and other European representatives/partners that our alleged successes in pandemic management did not justify such a rap on the knuckles.

Unfortunately, for a Minister who has often been out of synch with hard and real information about the pandemic situation underlying the PM's assertion of a cyclone, we can feel pretty confident that the French authorities, ambassador, Health and Tourism Ministers included, know far more about the stark ground

reality here than our honorable Minister and will be primarily concerned about the health risks of Reunion and French visitors in the peak season of November to January in an island that has a few weeks previously sent desperate entreaties for supplies, oxygen, ventilators and specialist medical and nursing teams.

All chancelleries read news dispatches, watch social media, have personal networks and are fully attuned to the National Assembly proceedings, the attempts to curb press and media freedoms or to the sad stories making the headlines week after week. The foreign chancelleries, and in particular, the French embassy have not recently discovered how important French, Reunion or European tourists are for the national economy either. The appeal, while necessary in the after-shock, brings unfortunately nothing new to the table.

There has been some speculation in a couple of press interviews whether other factors than the purely health and pandemic management risks could have contributed to our mishaps on the international scene and today's scarlet rating. One sector professional wondered whether there might have been some geopolitical fallout from other events that have taken a toll on the "blue-eyed" success story island in the Indian ocean. Those are hypothetical disputations.

Nevertheless, we have just been let out of the notorious IMF and EU listings after two years of pain and hard work by all agencies. Have we somewhere, somehow, naively accumulated gaffes and errors that are proving costly? Was it wise to threaten France from the pulpit of the National Assembly that Tromelin would follow suit after the Chagos victory at the United Nations while we are asking for urgent and high-priority medical assistance from the French?

Have we been too smug and dismissive in pushing a narrative that suits some local aficionados, that of a triumphant hero who had taken on the UK and was about to do the same to France? The mingling of messaging destined to the local tribesmen with international diplomacy, can indeed have tricky and unpredictable consequences but nobody can venture that they have had a bearing on French and EU travel advisories and scarlet listing of Mauritius. We would still recommend the story of Lorenz butterflies\* as bedside reading for high-level political advisers.

*\*The term is closely associated with the work of mathematician and meteorologist Edward Lorenz, who dubbed his discovery "the butterfly effect": the nonlinear equations that govern the weather have such an incredible sensitivity to initial conditions, that a butterfly flapping its wings in Brazil could set off a tornado in Texas.*

# "The President of the Republic must uphold the Constitution and the rule of law"

**T**he President of the Republic became the nominal guardian of our Constitutional rights when the Republic of Mauritius was founded, yet the vestigial assent of the Sovereign through the appointed Governor-General before an Act becomes law, has not been scrapped.

As guardian, his powers and room for action when uncomfortable with a piece of legislation or with some nominations that require his formal assent, are limited. Lex delves on these and other questions.

## LEX

**\* It has not taken long for the President of the Republic, Prithviraj Roopun, to give his assent to the Independent Broadcasting Authority (Amendment) Bill. Could he have done otherwise?**

The assent was done with lightning speed as if the House was on fire. According to the Constitution, the President must uphold the Constitution and the rule of law. Upholding the Constitution means upholding the fundamental rights embodied in the Constitution.

**\* In what circumstances can the President of the Republic refuse to give his assent to a Bill submitted to him?**

It is always open to the President - as a matter of convention and not law - to ask Parliament to review a piece of legislation submitted to him for his assent. How he does it and when he does it, is up to him. If he asks Parliament to review the legislation and the Bill is submitted again to him in its original version, he has two choices: either he gulps down the reservations he had down his throat and gives his assent and thus keeps his job or he refuses to give his assent and resigns. If he does not, then he may be removed by Parliament. His refusal may be viewed as an act of misconduct or a violation of the Constitution.

**\* Former President Cassam Uteem resigned in February 2002, after refusing to give his assent to the anti-terrorism bill, PoTA. The former President and the Executive were clearly not on the same wavelength as regards the issue of terrorism and how to deal with it. But it also points to the supremacy of Parliament over other institutions of the State. Is that correct?**

It is a fallacy to talk of the supremacy of Parliament in Mauritius. In the United Kingdom, Parliament is supreme as there is no written Constitution to check its powers except for the provisions of the Magna Carta.

In contexts where a written Constitution exists, Parliament may make laws subject to the Constitution. In other words, no law should infringe the Constitution. This is why in a written Constitution we talk of constitutional supremacy and not parliamentary supremacy.



**“**The Constitution says that no civil or criminal proceedings shall lie against the President or the Vice-President in respect of the performance by him of the functions of his office or in respect of any act done or purported to be done by him in the performance of those functions. What is the extent of that immunity remains to be seen until a court of law gives some guidance on this issue...”**”**

**\* What's the rationale of requiring the President of the Republic - one not elected by popular vote - to give his assent to a piece of legislation submitted by the Executive to Parliament, and from where do we draw that tradition?**

It is as a result of blindly copying the Westminster model of government notwithstanding the fact that we have a written Constitution. In the United Kingdom there is constitutional convention that requires that a Bill passed by Parliament must be assented to by the Sovereign. This is all part of the historical evolution of government in the United Kingdom.

When the United Kingdom granted independence to her former colonies, these newly independent States were given a written Constitution with a Prime Minister and a Governor General (as representative of the Sovereign). That representative had to give his assent to a Bill voted by Parliament; the tradition has been perpetuated with the advent of the Republic with the President replacing the Governor General.

**\* There are instances where the law requires the President of the Republic to act "on the advice" of, and in other instances "after consultation" with the Prime Minister. What are the implications of and the rationale for these two constitutional provisions?**

This is what the Constitution says:

*"In the exercise of his functions under this Constitution or any other law, the President shall act in accordance with the advice of the Cabinet or of a Minister acting under the general authority of the Cabinet except in cases where he is required by this Constitution to act in accordance with the advice of, or after consultation with, any person or authority other than the Cabinet or in his*

*own deliberate judgment."*

As far as the requirement of 'advice' is concerned, the President is bound to follow that advice though he may ask Cabinet to reconsider the advice.

On certain matters, the President should act 'after consultation', but that provision in the Constitution is either ridiculous or is of no effect. In fact, notwithstanding the fact that this provision is present in the Constitution, whether the President has indeed acted in consultation with anybody or not cannot be questioned in court. So, what is the point of such a provision?

On some matters, the President can in the exercise of his functions act 'in his own deliberate judgment'. In other words, he does not have to act on the advice of or after consultation with any person or authority other than the Cabinet. But behind the scene, it is unlikely that a President will not seek advice before acting albeit in his own deliberate judgment.

**\* Our Constitution, coming in the wake of the divisive political battles prior to Independence, is said to have been cut to ensure the dominance of the Prime Minister over the affairs of the State, the cumulative effect of which can result in damage to good governance, growing politicisation of the civil service, etc. Are there sufficient checks and balances on the powers of the Prime Minister?**

The first question one has to address is whether this has served the interests of the country well. The answer to that question is: Yes and No. Giving absolute executive powers to a Prime Minister and making him an omnipotent ruler may guarantee stability in the government as he can, as a result, wield his authority over his troops and pre-empt any temptation by his troops to blackmail him. That presupposes that he has a comfortable majority in the House.

The only check on the powers of the Prime Minister is Parliament in that backbenchers on the government side may try to check and curtail the powers of the Prime Minister. This is not likely to happen in Mauritius, especially in the present political context where backbenchers are seen to be blindly following the Prime Minister. In any case, should backbenchers rebel against the Prime Minister, they will surely pay a heavy price by being denied a ticket at the next elections.

The other check on the powers of the Prime Minister may come from the Opposition... but we know that these days the Opposition is totally powerless what with the Speaker's actions and conduct perceived to be suppressing any dissent from the Opposition benches.

● Cont. on page 6



Anil Madan

The latest hot topic in the seemingly never-ending saga of the Covid-19 pandemic is the emergence of the latest variant known as Omicron. Although new information comes to light every day, much remains unknown.

South Africa was the first country to report on November 24, the detection of a new variant of the SARS-CoV-2 (or Covid-19) virus to the World Health Organization (WHO) which gave it the designation "Omicron." The WHO which has been using letters of the Greek alphabet to designate variants of the virus, later explained that it skipped the Greek letters Nu and Chi or Xi that would have been next in line had it followed the alphabet in sequence because the Greek letter Nu could have been confused with "new" and because Xi is the name of you know who. No, it certainly would have been unseemly to name what has already been called a "novel" coronavirus a "Nu novel" virus or to call a virus that originated in Wuhan, the Xi virus. Who knew?

Following the report that this variant was spreading rapidly in southern African countries, President Biden imposed a travel ban from eight African countries. Soon, Canada, Britain and European countries followed suit with travel bans of their own.

President Joe Biden explained his decision to restrict travel from countries in southern Africa applied to countries that have seen "significant" numbers of cases of the Omicron variant. However, he conceded that the restrictions will not stop the variant from coming into the United States but would slow it down and his approach would give people who have not had the booster shot of the Covid-19 vaccination, as well as those who have not been vaccinated at all, time to get a shot. President Biden acknowledged that it would take at least a couple of weeks for scientists to figure out how deadly the Omicron variant is, how transmissible it is and whether existing vaccines are effective against it.

The travel bans were met with loud protests from President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa and in a written opinion by the Chair of the South African Medical Association, Dr Angelique Coetzee. Their complaints amount principally to assertions that the travel bans are arbitrary and unfair and that South Africa is being punished for being responsible about reporting the detection

# Omicron - A Greek Tragicomedy

*We have probably not seen the last of the mutations and variants of the Covid-19 virus. Perhaps the world got a lucky break with Omicron. Perhaps not*



Pic - Getty Images

“So far, people infected with the Omicron variant have presented with mild symptoms and no deaths have been reported. The Delta variant has been the predominant mutation causing infections in the US and presumably in Europe and most of the world. If the Omicron variant can beat out all other existing virus variants and supplant the Delta variant, the possible plus is that SARS-CoV2 may have been reduced to a milder virus...”

of the Omicron variant. Others have chimed in with laments about inequities in the worldwide distribution of vaccines and some have even called the bans a new form of apartheid. The last claim is easily dismissed since the US has in the past imposed travel bans on Canada as well as European countries.

Dr Coetzee's lament is, in my view, illogical, filled with contradictions.

First, she claims that she announced the presence of the Omicron variant in one of her patients due to her public-facing role. But she also asserts that "We've become accustomed here to new Covid variants emerging," meaning in South Africa, and when South African scientists confirmed the discovery of another, no one made a huge thing of it and many didn't even notice. But it is fair to ask why she reported what she now downplays. To her credit, her reporting was probably based on the fact that she noticed that this particular variant had significantly more mutations than previous variants and, in this case, about the spike protein as well as elsewhere in the virus structure. Saying that no one made a huge thing of it and many didn't even notice seems disingenuous. Indeed, South Africa continues to track and report surging infections with this variant.

Second, she says we don't know anywhere near enough about Omicron to make judgments about flight bans, masking and quarantines. But that is precisely the problem. The entire purpose of early reporting of outbreaks is to allow imposition of preventive measures while we try to gather information. The failures to take early and decisive action against the original outbreaks of Covid-19 in 2020 and perhaps as early as 2019, should not be repeated.

Third, on the subject of gathering information, she offers only anecdotal evidence of mild cases in her first

patient and five others she has since seen. Missing entirely from her commentary is any mention of the surge in cases in South Africa—in fairness, she probably wrote the piece before the latest numbers were announced. However, shortly after Dr Coetzee wrote her opinion piece, it was reported that cases in South Africa surged to some 8,500 almost double the previous day's 4,300 and the country's institute of communicable diseases reported that more than 70% of all virus genome variants sequenced in the last month have been of the Omicron variety. See *Omicron drives major surge in S. Africa Covid cases* ([msn.com](https://www.msn.com)).

Since then, the numbers have increased astronomically. Last Friday, South Africa's National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) reported: "Today the institute reports 16,055 new Covid-19 cases that have been identified in South Africa... This increase represents a 24.3% positivity rate." On Thursday, the NICD also revealed that some of the new cases were people who had previously had Covid-19 and had been reinfected with the Omicron variant. The variant appears to be highly transmissible.

## Vaccine inequities

The charges of inequities in vaccine distribution come not only from some South Africans but also from the top levels of the WHO. But these too are, in context, misplaced. While there is no question that the richer western nations have more plentiful and easier access to vaccines, this is hardly the result of a sinister plot to deprive African nations and other poor countries of vaccines.

The *New York Times* reported recently that just days before scientists discovered the Omicron variant, South Africa's government asked Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer not to make some planned deliveries of their Covid-19 vaccines. The country already had more doses in storage than it could use — about 16 million, in a country of 60 million people — and officials were worried that further supplies would spoil before they could be used. The NYT went on to describe vaccine skepticism and vaccine hesitancy in South Africa as major factors leading to such situations.

The WHO set a target of trying to get at least 40% of the world's population vaccinated by the end of 2021. That means vaccinating 3 billion people. If the WHO's goal was two shots per person, that would mean a total of 6 billion doses; if one shot, it would mean 3 billion doses of a one-shot vaccine. We know that the world simply did not have that much production capacity at the beginning of 2021. Going forward, there is likely to be a significant ramp up of vaccine production and the WHO's goals may be met and exceeded in 2022. But the key is that vaccinating 40% of the world's population is not the panacea that would have stopped Omicron. Nor would meeting such a goal stop the evolution of future variants. But there is no question that a more concerted effort to vaccinate frontline healthcare workers in Africa is a priority.

The Omicron variant has the greatest number of mutations yet seen in the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes Covid-19.

● Cont. on page 6

# 'Once the President is appointed, he is not accountable except if he is mindful of public opinion'

● Cont. from page 4

So, at the end of the day, the Prime Minister is the one who holds absolute power.

\* At one time, the Prime Minister could direct the then Governor-General through advice to grant his assent to legislation, to dissolve and prorogue Parliament, to call elections and to make government appointments, which the Governor-General would follow according to convention and the law. There is not much that has been modified after Mauritius has become a parliamentary republic and that renders the PM less powerful, isn't it?

Nothing has changed. The Prime Minister is still all powerful through the advice he tenders as well as with regard to appointments and the dissolution of parliament.

\* What about the President of the Republic? Is he is sufficiently accountable to the people and to the Parliament that nominated him?

Once the President is appointed, he is not accountable except if he is mindful of public opinion. The only restriction is that he can be removed for misconduct or violation of the Constitution. But that would be very difficult to establish.



“The WHO which has been using letters of the Greek alphabet to designate variants of the virus, later explained that it skipped the Greek letters Nu and Chi or Xi that would have been next in line had it followed the alphabet in sequence because the Greek letter Nu could have been confused with “new” and because Xi is the name of you know who. No, it certainly would have been unseemly to name what has already been called a “novel” coronavirus a “Nu novel” virus or to call a virus that originated in Wuhan, the Xi virus...”

\* Is the President entitled to absolute immunity from legal liability for civil damages based on his official acts? And does this also hold true for his personal acts?

The Constitution says that no civil or criminal proceedings shall lie against the President or the Vice-President in respect of the performance by him of the functions of his office or in respect of any act done or purported to be done by him in the performance of those functions. What is the extent of that immunity remains to be seen until a court of law gives some guidance on this issue?

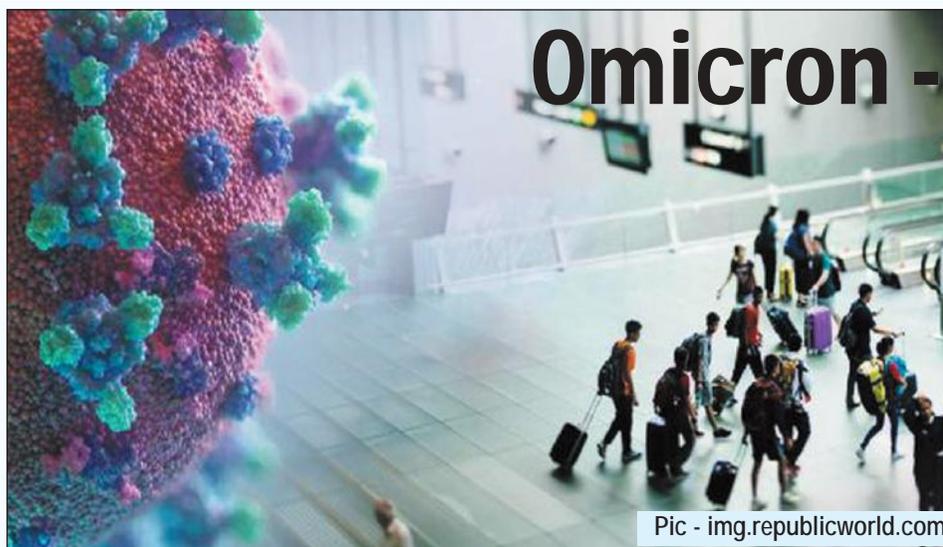
\* What about criminal offences?

It stands to reason that if a President commits a criminal offence, not related to his functions, and he would not be immune to prosecution. At any rate in such a situation he will have to resign

\* In other words, there is no reason as to why the President of the Republic should be above the law, right?

Certainly not. There are many decisions that he takes in the exercise of his functions that may affect individuals when he acts on the advice of the Cabinet. These should be amenable to the jurisdiction of the courts.

LEX



## Omicron - A Greek Tragicomedy

Pic - [img.republicworld.com](http://img.republicworld.com)

● Cont. from page 5

It has 50 mutations in total, with 32 mutations on the spike protein. The spike protein often depicted graphically as protrusions extending outward from the virus, allows the virus to latch on to human cells which allows it to enter the cell and replicate. The good news is that this same spike protein is used by the three major vaccines available in the US (Pfizer, Moderna, and J&J) and presumably by other vaccines to trigger the production of antibodies.

Whereas the extensive mutations found in Omicron could make it more con-

tagious or worse yet, more able to evade antibodies, the presence of a common target spike protein also suggests that the vaccines will continue to be effective. The Chairman of Moderna offered during a recent television appearance that the vaccine dosing might be increased to give greater protection against Omicron, or a more specific vaccine targeted at Omicron could be tweaked and ready within a few months.

So far, people infected with the Omicron variant have presented with mild symptoms and no deaths have been reported. The Delta variant has been the predominant mutation causing infections

in the US and presumably in Europe and most of the world. If the Omicron variant can beat out all other existing virus variants and supplant the Delta variant, the possible plus is that SARS-CoV2 may have been reduced to a milder virus. At this point, it is too early to say.

### Curbing travel

It is difficult to criticize the Biden administration for taking preventive measures such as a travel ban. But, in truth, the travel ban was probably too late. By the time the existence of the virus was reported, it had probably already travelled across the world. Recent reports of infections in the US, Canada, Britain and in some European countries confirm this. On the other hand, curbing travel may have reduced the extent of transmission of the virus.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notes that viruses like SARS-CoV-2, what we commonly refer to as Covid-19, continuously evolve as changes in the genetic code (genetic mutations) occur during replication of the genome. Replication occurs when people are infected and the virus makes copies of itself. A variant has one or more muta-

tions that differentiate it from other variants of the SARS-CoV-2 viruses. And as the CDC notes, we are all aware that multiple variants of SARS-CoV-2 have been documented in the United States and globally throughout this pandemic. In fact, scientists have been warning since the beginning of this pandemic that until the virus is brought under control by having people around the world vaccinated, the danger of mutations that may be resistant to existing vaccines remains an ever-present possibility.

The CDC keeps track of viruses by lineage, mutation, and variant. The CDC states that a lineage is a group of closely related viruses, with a common ancestor. SARS-CoV-2 has many lineages; all cause Covid-19.

The lesson is that we have probably not seen the last of the mutations and variants of the Covid-19 virus. Perhaps the world got a lucky break with Omicron. Perhaps not. If the former, this tragedy may have a lighter ending. If the latter, a full-fledged Greek tragedy continues.

Cheerz...  
Bwana

## Taliban-ruled Afghanistan on brink of mass starvation as harsh winter sets in



Afghan boys in Kabul, Afghanistan.  
Pic - img.republicworld.com

After nearly four months since the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan, the war-torn country is on brink of mass starvation as more than half the population face acute hunger amid freezing temperatures. The United Nations World Food Program said in a report that Afghanistan's economy has been in freefall since the

Taliban took control of the country after ousting the Western-backed government.

The economic crisis and limited availability of cash have created a new class of hungry as, for the first time, urban residents are facing food insecurity at similar rates to rural communities, according to the UN agency. WFP chief David Beasley, who recently visited Afghanistan, said his team is in a "race against time" to avert a humanitarian catastrophe in the country.

"What's happening in Afghanistan is just horrific," said Beasley. "I met families with no jobs, no cash and no food, mothers who sold one child to feed another, and the lucky children who made it to the hospital. The world cannot turn its back as the Afghan people starve."

As harsh winter sets in, humanitarian organizations have warned that a million children could lose their lives. The New York Times reported that the food insecurity and impending mass starvation could be potentially damning for the new Taliban government as well the United States which has imposed economic restrictions while it measures the actions of the Sunni Pashtun group, reports Hindustan Times.

Mary-Ellen McGroarty, WFP's country director for Afghanistan, implored the international community to respond to the "tsunami of hunger".

## Myanmar's ousted leader Suu Kyi jailed for 4 years



Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi. Pic - salemreporters.com



Myanmar's junta jailed ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi on Monday for four years for incitement against the military and breaching Covid rules, a government spokesman told AFP, the first of a series of possible sentences that could see the Nobel laureate imprisoned for decades.

Suu Kyi, 76, has been detained since the generals staged a coup and ousted her government on February 1, ending the Southeast Asian country's brief period of democracy.

She has since been hit with a series of charges, including violating the official secrets act, corruption and electoral fraud, and she faces decades in jail if convicted on all counts.

On Monday Suu Kyi was sentenced to two years for incitement against the military and another two years for breaching a natural disaster law relating to Covid, said junta

spokesman Zaw Min Tun.

Former president Win Myint was also jailed for four years on the same charges, he said, but added they would not yet be taken to prison, reports AFP.

The incitement conviction related to statements her National League for Democracy party published shortly after the coup condemning the generals' takeover.

The Covid charge is linked to last year's election, which the NLD won in a landslide, but the details are not clear with the government imposing a gag order on the court proceedings.

Journalists have been barred from attending the special court hearings in Naypyidaw and Suu Kyi's lawyers were recently banned from speaking to the media.

In recent weeks, other senior members of the NLD have received long sentences. A former chief minis-

ter was sentenced to 75 years in jail this month, while a close Suu Kyi aide was jailed for 20.

Amnesty International immediately condemned the sentences against Suu Kyi. "The harsh sentences handed down to Aung San Suu Kyi on these bogus charges are the latest example of the military's determination to eliminate all opposition and suffocate freedoms in Myanmar," said Amnesty deputy regional director for Campaigns Ming Yu Hah.

The military, which has dominated life in Myanmar for decades, has defended its coup, claiming fraud allegations in last year's general election.

International pressure on the junta to restore democracy swiftly has shown no sign of knocking the generals off course, and bloody clashes with anti-coup protesters continue across the country.



Chinese President Xi: 'Efforts should be made to keep enhancing the recognition of the motherland, the Chinese nation, the Chinese culture...'

Pic - Deccan Herald

## China's Xi calls for sinicisation of religion

China is set to tighten control over religions practised in the country after President Xi Jinping stressed on the "sinicisation" of faith and uniting "believers" around the Communist Party and socialist values at a conference held in Beijing last week.

Religions in China should be developed in the Chinese context and active guidance should be provided for the adaptation of religions to the socialist society, he said.

Xi spoke during a two-day national conference on work related to religious affairs held in Beijing from Friday to Saturday. A similar conference was last held in 2016, giving direction to China's policies on religion for the next five years, reports Hindustan Times.

Similarly, last week's high-level conference is expected to set the parameters on how China's religious affairs will be developed in the next few years.

Xi's call for sinicisation of religions, which essentially means moulding religions according to Chinese socialist norms, comes against the backdrop of accusations that the government is oppressing Muslims and Buddhists in Xinjiang and Tibet respectively, and intermittently cracking down on Christianity, said to be the fastest developing religion in China.

"Efforts should be made to keep enhancing the recognition of the motherland, the Chinese nation, the Chinese culture, the CPC and socialism with Chinese characteristics among religious personages and believers," Xi said at the conference.

Xi highlighted the importance of adopting a holistic view of national security in religious work, and of "strengthening the management of online religious affairs", which, according to the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post (SCMP), is a step up from a 2018 regulation that restricted the distribution of religious information online.

China officially recognises five religions: Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Taoism and Islam.

In 2018, China released a "white paper" religion, directing the religious groups to support the leadership of the CPC and be subordinate to the interests of the nation and its people.

\*Contd on page 8

## US sees long queues in vaccination centres following Omicron scare

Omicron cases rising across the United States led to queues across vaccination centres across several states, news agency the New York Times reported. The nation has witnessed several debates about vaccines and inoculation mandates, with a section of people questioning the need for vaccines altogether.

The report pointed out that the demand for vaccines grew from an average of under-a-million doses a day to an average of 1.5 million a day in recent weeks, citing data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The report also highlighted that many among those queuing across vaccination centres are there for their first dose.

The Biden administration is planning to create hundreds of family-vaccination clinics, one-stop shops for first shots and boosters. The CDC also recommended booster shots in order to ensure that people in the US remain protected against Omicron and Delta variants.

The US pandemic advisor Anthony Fauci on Sunday said that early indications regarding the severity of the Omicron Covid-19 are 'encouraging'. "Omicron has a transmission advantage. Though it's too early to really make any definitive statements about it, thus far, it does not look like there's a great degree of severity to it. Thus far, the signals are a bit encouraging," Fauci said while speaking to CNN.



People wait in line outside a mobile vaccination bus in New York, US. Pic - Reuters

## 'Metaverse' hype fuels booming digital property market

The idea of spending millions on non-existent land may sound ludicrous -- but feverish predictions of a virtual reality future are pushing investors to bet big on digital real estate.

This week, New York-based company Republic Realm announced it had spent a record-breaking \$4.3 million on digital land through The Sandbox, one of several "virtual world" websites where people can socialise, play games and even attend concerts.

That came hot on the heels of a \$2.4-million land purchase in late November on a rival platform, Decentraland, by Canadian crypto company Tokens.com. And days before that, Barbados announced plans to open a "metaverse embassy" in Decentraland.

Such websites bill themselves as a prototype of the metaverse, a future internet where online experiences like chatting to a friend would eventually feel face-to-face thanks to virtual reality (VR) headsets, reports AFP.

"Metaverse" has been a Silicon Valley buzzword for months, but interest soared in October after Facebook's parent company renamed itself "Meta" as it shifts its focus towards VR.

The Facebook rebrand "introduced the term 'metaverse' to millions of people a lot faster than I would have ever imagined," said Cathy Hackl, a tech consultant who advises companies on entering the metaverse.

According to crypto data site Dapp, land worth more than \$100 million has sold in the past week across the four largest metaverse sites, The Sandbox, Decentraland, CryptoVoxels, and Somnium Space.

For Hackl, it's unsurprising that the market is booming, spawning an entire ecosystem around virtual real estate, from rents to land developers.



Facebook is now known as Meta as it bets big on the metaverse project that it sees as the future of the internet. Pic - i.hurimg.com

And while it may be some time before these sites operate as true metaverses, transporting us elsewhere with VR goggles, digital land is already functioning as an asset just like real land, said Hackl.

"They can build on it, they can rent it out, they can sell it," she said.

Luxury brands are already venturing into the metaverse -- a Gucci handbag sold on the Roblox platform in May for more than the real version -- and Kiguel hopes Fashion Street will become a shopping destination akin to New York's Fifth Avenue.

As for how the land could be used to make money, "it can be as simple as having a billboard, or it can be as complex as having a storefront with an actual employee," he said.

"You could walk in with your avatar and have 3D digital representations of a shoe that you can hold, and ask questions."

## Dozens held after mob kills Sri Lanka national in Pakistan

More than 100 people have been arrested in Pakistan after a Sri Lankan factory manager was beaten to death and set ablaze by a mob who accused him of blasphemy, Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Saturday.

The vigilante attack has caused outrage, with Khan calling it a "day of shame for Pakistan" and later saying he had spoken to the Sri Lanka president about the killing.

Khan wrote on Twitter: "Spoke to Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa today in UAE to convey our nation's anger & shame to people of Sri Lanka at vigilante killing of Priyantha Diyawadana in Sialkot."



A man along with others carries a sign, condemning the lynching of the Sri Lankan manager of a garment factory after an attack on the factory in Sialkot, during a protest in Lahore. Pic - Reuters)

He added that more than 100 people had been arrested and would be "prosecuted with full severity of the law".

The incident took place on Friday in Sialkot, a district in central Punjab province, about 200km southeast of the capital Islamabad, reports Agencies.

Local police officials told AFP that rumours spread that Diyawadana had "torn down a religious poster and thrown it in the dustbin" and that up to 120 people had been arrested, including one of the main accused.

Tahir Ashrafi, a religious scholar and special representative of the prime minister on religious harmony, confirmed the arrests and told AFP that workers had complained of the manager being "very strict".

"Police have arrested 118 suspects so far, including 13 prime suspects for their involvement in the lynching of the Sri Lankan national," according to inspector general of police (Punjab) Rao Sardar Ali Khan, adding that an FIR has been registered against 800 people under terrorism charges.

Compiled by Doojesh Ramlallah

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# Beating the Covid Pandemic with Dr Darrell DeMello

*"Covid-19 is a viral, inflammatory and a clotting disease. In a way, the virus can be described as a terrorist that incites the body to overreact..."*

**D**r Darrell DeMello is a doctor with 30 years of experience, having graduated from one of India's premier medical colleges (St John's Medical College, Bangalore - MBBS/Physician in Medicine and Surgery) in the early 1980s. Dr DeMello has developed effective treatment protocols which span all stages of the disease and include measures to prevent long-haul Covid. In this interview, he tells us about his successful Covid treatment protocols and the enabling environment in India.

## \* How did you first become involved with the treatment of Covid?

I got involved with Covid as from January 2020, jumping into it thinking that this could be a huge thing. I learned as much as I could about the disease, developed comprehensive treatment protocols and the standard operating procedures (SOPs) that go with the treatments. I came up with the idea that Covid-19 is a viral, inflammatory and a clotting disease. In a way, the virus can be described as a terrorist that incites the body to overreact. The super overdrive of the body's immune response system then sets off the tsunami known as the cytokine storm. That tsunami sets off clotting. So basically, you've got to look to block the clotting. From 1 May 2020 I started treating Covid as a hyper-inflammatory disease-causing clotting.

## \* What is your basic early treatment protocol?

It starts with a three-drug regimen, using anti-viral, anti-inflammatory, and anticlotting drugs. I use an antiviral drug called Ivermectin to prevent the replication of the virus; it's fantastic at denying a certain key element that the virus needs to replicate. Ivermectin became my drug of choice, based on the paper that the Royal Melbourne Hospital and Monash University released and that said that one dose reduces the viral load by 99.8% in 24 hours. (*The FDA-approved drug Ivermectin inhibits the replication of SARS-CoV-2 invitro*) - Generically produced Ivermectin is very low cost. I give a four-dose regimen over two days on an empty stomach. After the dose of Ivermectin, my theory has been that there's no live virus in the person, and I allow my patients to come out and mix with the family 24 hours after the last dose.

The second is an anti-inflammatory drug called Colchicine prescribed mainly to reduce the inflammation in the body - the infamous cytokine storm. I call Colchicine my fire retardant; it's fantastic at reducing the inflammation, so there's no overdrive, no super overdrive. Anybody who's taken Colchicine will realise that this drug really works well to calm the body down. Colchicine is easy to administer, generally well tolerated at a low dose, and inexpensive, so you calm the body down and stop that over inflammatory response, the additional extra super overdrive of the immune response system, such that you most likely won't set up the clotting.

However, to prevent clotting, I still give an anti-clotting drug. I started off using aspirin in my first 200 cases. But, as we went into the second week, I saw that the platelet count bounced back to very high levels. Platelets are blood cells that bind together when they recognise damaged blood vessels. This clotting stops us from

bleeding. However, excess clotting can be dangerous leading to pathologies such as heart attacks and strokes.

I ended up picking the brains of a very well-known cardiologist Ragavendra Baliga (Professor of Internal Medicine/Cardiology at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Centre) and shared with him the idea that I wanted to use Clopidogrel (in the US it's called Plavix) as my anti-clotting drug - he agreed that it was an excellent idea. And since case number 200 we started using this three-drug regimen. We have successfully treated over 10,000 Covid patients, 50,000 family members and provided prophylaxis to another 16,000 people. Most patients can be managed very well as long as you start as early as possible. Until now I've had something like 66 admissions and 21 deaths, and it's been a fantastic success at all stages, although of course anyone death is a tragedy.

It's such a very simple and replicable process. I generally do not need to use steroids, though I do use them and various other drugs in serious cases. The precise

**“Covid is a viral, inflammatory and a clotting disease. In a way, the virus can be described as a terrorist that incites the body to overreact. The super overdrive of the body's immune response system then sets off the tsunami known as the cytokine storm. That tsunami sets off clotting. So basically, you've got to look to block the clotting...”**

regime depends on the individual and the stage of treatment. I also manage post-Covid treatment to ensure that nobody becomes a long hauler. The good news is that my regime, which was developed during the first wave, works fantastically well with all the variants, including Delta. I see no reason why it should not work effectively with Omicron.

Whether a patient is fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated, or unvaccinated, once you have Covid you are a Covid patient, and I will treat you as such as early as possible. I have seen so many types of variants which I recognise from the symptomatology, and my treatments have worked with all variants of the disease, facilitated thanks to technology, telemedicine, which I have recourse to in 90% of the cases treated. Patients get in touch remotely, obtain a diagnosis, and an appropriate treatment is advised within three or four minutes.

## \* Is it solely a drug regime or do you recommend

## other practices during the course of the disease?

I do have strict rules for the patient to follow during the course of the disease. It's a 14-day disease and during this time I want people to only eat certain foods, in particular soft foods, which are well-cooked and soft dahl (lentils) and rice. I recommend a lot of soups with yellow pumpkin soup, yogurt, besides taking in a lot of fluids. The diet is plant-based as animal products are a challenge to the digestive system, although I do allow eggs. I also give high dose vitamin D as tablets or as injections. I may also give iron injections.

My protocols include tracking blood oxygen saturation levels (using a pulse oximeter) and taking temperature and pulse rate three or four times a day.

Mobilisation is especially important on the days eight, nine, and ten if blood oxygen levels are low. I make patients walk, sometimes during the whole night. In certain instances, I've told people that if you want to live you are not going to sleep tonight. You need to move until your blood oxygen levels improve. And most patients have succeeded. If you can move correctly, it slows down the clotting process. It's not just the drugs, it's also the mobility of the patient that makes a difference. There's a whole bunch of things that go into making sure you have success with patients. My appeal to everyone is to treat this as a clotting, not as an interstitial lung disease. Because at the end of the day you've got to stop the clotting or the patient's going to die.

## \* How is this getting implemented at the ground level?

I've been running a sustenance campaign to help three large companies continue to work. With that mandate certain plans were put into place from August - September of last year to build up people's immunity over time. I tell everybody to get their vitamin D up to above 60 nanograms per millilitre (ng/mL) so that when you get Covid you won't even know you had Covid. And of course, if people do get sick, I treat them. We carry out either monthly or quarterly screening where we do a Covid antibody test, and those who actually get sick are treated with the therapy that I described earlier. That way, we get them back to work asap.

One of our clients is a hotel business, and they haven't had a Covid case since July of last year till April of this year. The other two companies in the financial sector, have continued operating uninterrupted.

The full text is available online. Please consult:  
[www.mauritiustimes.com](http://www.mauritiustimes.com)

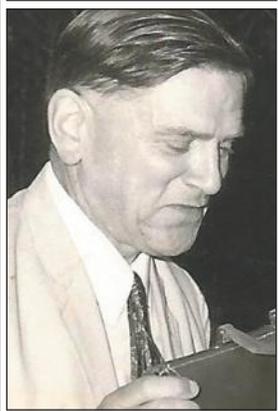
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5<sup>th</sup> Year No 179

## MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 10 January, 1958

● *Hatred is a heavy burden. It sinks the heart deep in the breast, and lies like a tombstone on all joys.* -- Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe



Peter Ibbotson

# Programme of the Parti Mauricien



On December 9, *Le Mauricien* published the programme of the Parti Mauricien; as meretricious a document as ever I saw. Let us take a close look at the document and see what it contains and implies.

It begins by saying that the PM was founded in 1950 under the presidency of Hon Koenig, by "des citoyens de toutes les communautés". Thus, right at the start the document contains an inexactitude. It was the *Ralliement Mauricien* which was originally formed; after a crushing defeat at the 1953 general election, the routed forces of the Ralliement regrouped themselves into the PM; but for months after the PM was in existence, Hon Koenig described himself consistently as a non-party man. He even described himself as non-party in the Legislative Council on at least one occasion.

History aside, what do we read as the aims of the PM?

The first aim is "créer un mauricianisme intégral"; the second is "créer une atmosphère saine..." These do not tie up with the avowed aim of the leaders of the PM to perpetuate Franco-Mauritian leadership. In the past the Franco-Mauritians have combated the idea of having a coloured man as general secretary of the PM; they have combated the idea of having a Moslem assistant secretary. When they proposed having a Franco-Mauritian as regional secretary in Lower Plaines Wilhems, some coloured members proposed a coloured regional secretary for Upper Plaines Wilhems. At once this idea was opposed. "What!" exclaimed the Franco-Mauritians in effect, "Have a coloured secretary in Upper Plaines Wilhems? No fear. We're not having a coloured secretary; No; definitely not. No coloured secretary for Upper Plaines Wilhems!"

And speaking of "mauricianisme intégral", we have only to refer back to the speeches by Hon Koenig at several of his election meetings in Port Louis and elsewhere. He stressed the question of Hindu domination and waved aloft the bogey-banner of Hindu hegemony. At the last municipal elections, an agent of the PM circulated a leaflet purporting to show a coloured servant being beaten by a Hindu woman — it was a picture reprinted (without the publishers' permission) from the *Oxford English Course*, (I dealt with this leaflet in the *Mauritius Times* at the time of the elections in 1956). The distribution of this leaflet was intended to aggravate racial tension.

M. Guy d'Arifat has been, in the past, prominently

connected with the PM. He, too, has evidence to support criticism of the PM's claim to be working for "mauricianisme intégral". Speaking at a public meeting at Rose Hill on October 13 last he referred to two principles underlying the *raison d'être* of the PM. He said, "Le deuxième principe est que la communauté hindoue submergera toutes les autres communautés, avec le système d'un député par circonscription. Ces deux principes sont les deux pivots des arguments du Parti Mauricien. Si un de ces pivots flanche, tous leurs arguments doivent tomber à terre". And M. d'Arifat went on to analyse the anti-Hindu attitude of the PM in detail and to criticize the Parti's arguments. But the fact that he did so, — and remember that he was prominent in the councils of the PM, — is sufficient to show that the PM, despite its high-sounding concern in its programme for the creation of a "mauricianisme intégral", is based firmly and squarely on one basic policy: the bogey of Hindu domination. (The PM forgets that for decades there has been white domination in Mauritius!).

We will go on to aim number three. This is: 'Garantir à chaque travailleur un travail dans des conditions saines et agréables, un salaire minimum convenable...' A worthy aim, indeed, but shall we ever see the PM put it into practice? The supporters of the PM are the sugar barons who have always had it in their power to give a decent living wage to their workers; to all their workers instead of only to the *état-major*. The workers on the Mauritian sugar plantation are among the lowest-paid in the British Commonwealth; if Mauritius were a French colony, he would in all probability be even worse off -- but that is a digression. Yet it is by the blood and tears and toil and sweat of the Indo-Mauritians (first as indentured labourers, later as free labourers) that the sugar barons have prospered; and I call Virgil Naz to be my witness. For years it has been in the power of the sugar barons — the same people who now support the PM and its aim "garantir... un salaire minimum convenable" — to pay that decent

minimum wage. But have they done so? No; and the riots pre-war and during the war are witness of the intransigence of the sugar barons when it was a question of paying decent wages.

It is the labourers who are poorly paid, of course. The *état-major* is more than well paid; they have, indeed, princely privileges. They get large bonuses every year over and above their normal year's salary; this bonus can be paid because of their successful exploitation (on behalf of their employers, the barons) of the poor labourers.

The PM speaks of establishing "de bonnes relations entre employeurs et employés". How on earth can this be done when a handful of employees, a few hundred are treated as sons of the Aga Khan while thousands upon thousands of poor labourers are toiling for a meagre wage and having employment only twice or thrice a week in the crushing season and less during the inter-crop? Centralisation of the factories, and mechanisation and artificial weed-killing, has done nothing to improve the chances of the poor workers, on the other hand, centralisation has widened the opportunity for the *filis-à-papa* to step into a managerial post over the head of someone better qualified by experience to fill it but lacking the right-coloured skin.

The PM is also to encourage youth movements. Another laudable aim, this: but where is the PM to get the money? By subscriptions of members? Or by gifts from the sugar barons and other commercial and industrial interests? We suspect the latter; it would be interesting if the PM were to publish its present balance sheet so that we could see just where its funds now come from. There must be some wealthy backers of the present PM for it to be able to pay its secretaries *monthly* salaries of Rs 1,500; to finance elections, at which they have already spent thousands of rupees backing lame horses; to finance undercover agents who publish and distribute various publications; to distribute free of charge daily papers like the *Cernéen* and others on sugar estates and wherever there are Indo-Mauritians; and, as I have been reliably informed, to have an organised ring of informers in private employment and elsewhere to follow every act and every move of peaceful, law-abiding citizens whose opinions happen to differ from those of the PM itself.





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# Better to be safe (and quick) than sorry

● Cont. from page 2

## Not a scientific issue

The question of how we should manage uncertainty is not a scientific issue, it is an ethical issue of how we should balance different “moral costs”. Imposing public health restrictions early has tangible costs on individual liberty and wellbeing. Travel bans have economic implications and may damage international solidarity. These costs are all the more galling if data later shows that they were not truly necessary. Yet these restrictions could be scaled back once the evidence suggests that it is safe to do so.

In contrast, delaying restrictions could have even more significant costs. If a more transmissible variant is allowed to go unchecked, this will lead to a significant spike in infections. In turn, it would lead to more people suffering severe outcomes from COVID – the extent depending on whether current vaccines have reduced protection against omicron.



Pic - Phill Magakoe/AFP via Getty Images

To protect healthcare systems from such a wave of seriously ill people, it may become necessary to impose even more restrictive and far-ranging policies that go beyond mask-wearing and travel restrictions. It may also be necessary to impose them for a longer period. The costs of such policies to liberty and wellbeing may be far higher than those currently in place,

and they may have other social harms, for instance, if they involve interruptions to education.

We are also now far enough into the pandemic to have made mistakes that we ought to learn from. The UK government was roundly criticised for the slowness of its initial pandemic response, including the absence of border measures. If we are interested in safeguarding individual liberty in the long term, saving lives and preserving trust in our policymaking institutions, then it is better to act now.

*Dominic Wilkinson & Jonathan Pugh*  
University of Oxford

## MAURITIUS TIMES To Our Readers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# How vulnerable is your personal information?

When you enter your personal information or credit card number into a website, do you have a moment of hesitation? A nagging sense of vulnerability prompted by the parade of headlines about data breaches and hacks? If so, you probably push those feelings aside and hit the submit button, because, well, you need to shop, apply for that job, file that insurance claim, apply for that loan, or do any of the other sensitive activities that take place online these days.

First, the bad news. If you regularly enter sensitive information online, chances are you've had some data stolen somewhere at some point. By one estimate, the average American had data stolen at least four times in 2019. And the hits keep coming. For instance, a data breach at the wireless carrier T-Mobile reported in August 2021 affected 100 million people.

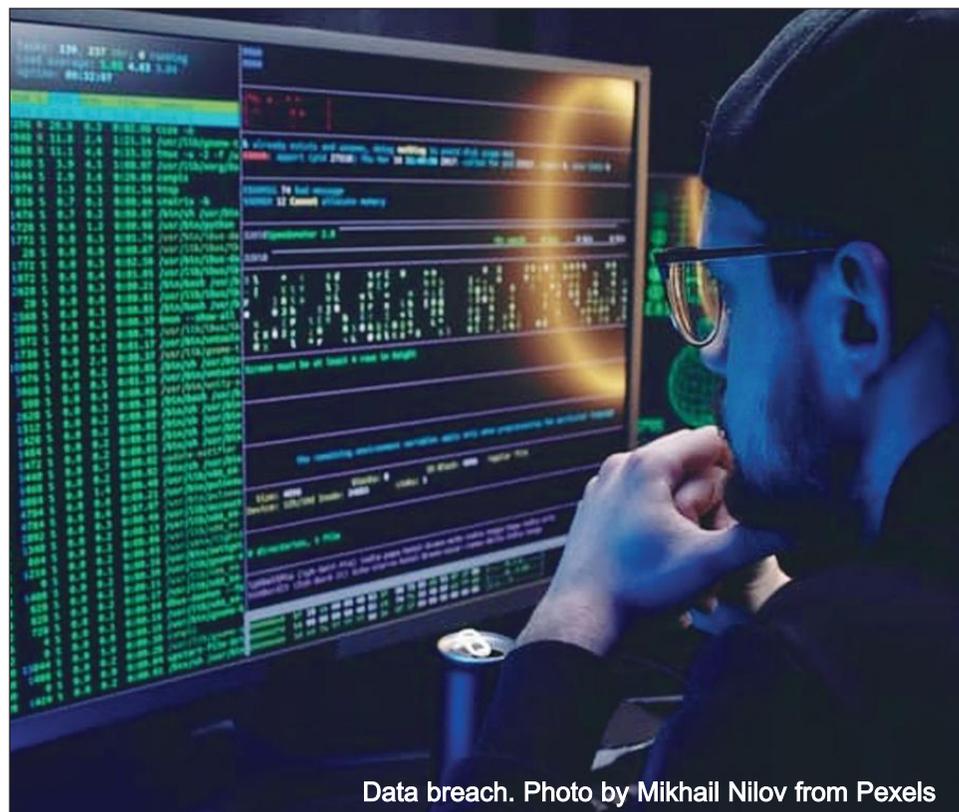
Now for some good news. Not all hacks are the same, and there are steps you can take to protect yourself. The Conversation gathered four articles from our archives that illuminate the types of threats to your online data, what data thieves do with your stolen information, and what you can do about it.

## 1. Take stock of your risk

Not all cyberattacks are the same, and not all personal data is the same. Was an organization that has your information the victim of a ransomware attack? Chances are your information won't be stolen, though the organization's copy of it could be rendered unusable.

If an organization you deal with did have customer data stolen, what data of yours did the thieves get? Merrill Warkentin, a professor of information systems at Mississippi State University, writes that you should ask yourself some questions to assess your risk. If the stolen data was your purchase history, maybe that won't be used to hurt you. But if it was your credit card number, that's a different story.

Data breaches are a good opportunity



Data breach. Photo by Mikhail Nilov from Pexels

"to change your passwords, especially at banks, brokerages and any site that retains your credit card number," he wrote. In addition to using unique passwords and two-factor authentication, "you should also consider closing old unused accounts so that the information associated with them is no longer available."

## 2. The market for your stolen data

Most data breaches are financial crimes, but the hackers generally don't use the stolen data themselves. Instead, they sell it on the black market, usually via websites on the dark web, for other criminals and scammers to use.

This black market is awash in personal data, so much so that your information is probably worth a lot less than you would guess. For example, stolen PayPal account information goes for \$30.

Buyers use stolen data in several

ways, writes Ravi Sen, an associate professor of information and operations management at Texas A&M University. Common uses are stealing your money or identity. "Credit card numbers and security codes can be used to create clone cards for making fraudulent transactions," he writes. "Social Security numbers, home addresses, full names, dates of birth and other personally identifiable information can be used in identity theft."

## 3. How to prepare for the inevitable

With all this bad news, it's tempting to throw up your hands and assume there's nothing you can do. W. David Salisbury, a professor of cybersecurity management, and Rusty Baldwin, a research professor of computer science at the University of Dayton, write that there are steps you can take to protect yourself.

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"Think defensively about how you can protect yourself from an almost inevitable attack, rather than assuming you'll avoid harm," they write. The key is focusing on the information that's most important to protect. Uppermost are your passwords, particularly for banking and government services. Use different passwords for different sites, and use long – though not necessarily complicated – passwords, they write.

The most effective way to protect your data is to add another layer of security via multifactor authentication. And rather than rely on websites to text or email you authentication codes, which can be hijacked, you should use an app or USB device that uses public-key encryption, they write.

## 4. Don't make it easy for the thieves

The risk to your personal information isn't just having it stolen from a third party. Phishing attacks can get you to do the thieves' work for them. These emails fool people into entering personal information and passwords on fake websites controlled by data thieves.

It turns out that you're probably pretty good at sensing when something is off about an email message. Rick Wash, an associate professor of information science and cybersecurity at Michigan State University, found that the average person is as good as a cybersecurity expert at sensing when something is weird about an email message.

The trick to protecting yourself from phishing attacks is remembering that phishing exists and could explain what you're sensing about an email message.

"The people who were good at noticing phishing messages reported stories about specific phishing incidents they had heard about," he wrote. "Familiarity with specific phishing incidents helps people remember phishing generally."

## The Nudge Theory

A father was cajoling his daughter to jump into the pool. The little girl was adamantly refusing. He was getting frustrated. Then something happened. He sweetened the offer with a promise of a big two-scoop chocolate ice cream. Splash! She was in the water before he could count 3! That little incentive was a nudge.

A nudge is a small act - an extrinsic one - that triggers people to change behaviours and take decisions.

The nudge theory is pretty popular worldwide. It is widely used in three forms:

**Perception nudges:** A food survey in the USA in 2012 revealed that people majorly opted for '99% fat free' in place of '1% fat!' It's common perception psyche.

**Motivation nudges:** A municipal corporation in the UK was sending repeated mails to tax defaulters to pay up.

Without result, till it changed a tactic. It sent a 'personalised' email to every defaulter with coloured graphics depicting details of taxpayers in the neighbourhood with no dues and 63% of the defaulters paid up in 3 days.

**Ability nudges:** In March 2009, the admin staff at the Schiphol Airport stuck up tiny fly shaped stickers on the urinals in the men's wash rooms. It worked. Men aimed at the flies and 'spillages' reduced by 80%.

Behavioural economist, Dr Richard Thaler, won the 2017 Nobel for his outstanding work on the subject.

Nudge theory is a concept in behavioural economics, political theory, and behavioural sciences. It says that people,

rather than being forced, can be encouraged and influenced to pursue or desist from certain actions through nudges. So, while there is encouragement, there is no compulsion to comply and people have the freedom to choose other options.

"Putting fruit at eye level counts as nudge. Banning junk food does not." Tax breaks are a nudge to encourage people to invest in financial instruments in place of gold or property. Insurers use the 'nudge' of lower premiums on life covers to encourage customers to keep away from smoking. The Nudge Theory can be used to drive favourable behaviour and avoid unfavourable ones, without resorting to drastic intervention and penal action.

'Nudge' your friends and family to desired action and stay blessed forever.

## Appartement à louer - long terme



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

## To Rent

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

## Tips for small business and startups from expert entrepreneurs



These days, it seems like everyone is hoping to become an entrepreneur and come up with “the next big thing”. Who can blame them? When successful, the benefits to owning a startup are obvious: being your own boss, creating something from scratch, bringing value to the people around you and, of course, making a bit of coin along the way. But the key phrase in that equation is, “when successful.” Too often, startups fail – 75 percent of them, to be exact, says The Harvard Business Review. So what goes wrong? Failure doesn’t preclude you from ultimately succeeding. Unfortunately, not everyone is cut out to be an entrepreneur. Or at least, not by nature. To run a good business you have to be able to assume the proper role. If that means doing things and acting in ways that don’t come naturally, then so be

it. Otherwise, you will risk failing like that 75%. Here are some crucial points the pros agree are prerequisites to becoming a successful entrepreneur.

### 1. Take risks and be willing to fail

Failure doesn’t preclude you from ultimately succeeding – in fact, it’s often a necessary step. The best entrepreneurs don’t let the fear of failure prevent them from going for what they believe to be a great idea. Some of those risks won’t pan out, but the ones that do will be the ones that define you.

### 2. Never stop networking

When you haven’t gotten your business off the ground, connections will help to keep it afloat. When you do, those initial helpers will turn into powerful allies. “Make connections and keep a record on each

person you meet,” Clare Dreyer, career expert, told Forbes. “Ask for their advice and help. Keep in touch with them along the way and build your network before you need it! Quality relationships are the keys to the kingdom.”

### 3. Learn your niche

Many startups succeed because they’ve identified a niche and have cornered that market. By discovering a service, product or feature no one else has thought of – or at least effectively pulled off – you give your company a shot at success. George Shepherd, Professor of Law at Emory University, recommends entrepreneurs “become the guru in that niche.”

### 4. Be a consummate student

Long after you leave your last class, you still learn new things every day. As an entrepreneur, you must always be a student – willing to take advice, listen to other ideas and learn from those who’ve been there themselves.

“Entrepreneurship is about solving problems and learning on the go,” Andrew Medal wrote for Entrepreneur. “It’s exciting to learn new things and as entrepreneurs we should be learning something new every day.”

### 5. Don’t worry about your wallet...

If you’re starting a business, you’re going to take a few financial hits. As they say, you can’t make money without spending money. But there’s more to it than avoiding miserliness. The best entrepreneurs don’t think in terms of how much

they make, they consider how much value they can add. That value might be financial, but it might well be social, psychological, or other ways.

### 6. ...but try not to go broke

With that said, you can’t add value if you can’t pay rent or buy groceries. That’s when you’ll need to determine exactly what you need to do to support yourself while you pursue your entrepreneurial dream. Entrepreneur pointed out that a part-time job could be your saving grace – not only would it provide financial relief, it could provide an excellent networking outlet.

### 7. Be flexible and listen to the market

Even if you nail down the perfect niche, it won’t necessarily remain the same forever. Markets can be fickle and consumers want to be on the cutting edge. If you can’t pivot and react when the winds of change come, you’ll be blown away.

“Resist falling in love with your initial idea so you can discover what the market actually wants and is willing to pay for – and then give it to them,” Cherylanne Skolnicki, career coach, told Forbes.

### 8. Take care of yourself

What good is a successful startup if you destroy yourself in the process? Nothing is as precious as health, which is why you shouldn’t sacrifice your well-being for the sake of your entrepreneurship. In fact, what might seem like hard work could ultimately derail your career. Losing sleep, eating unhealthily and allowing yourself to become stressed are surefire ways to shorten your life expectancy. By tending to your health, you’ll have the strength to carry out your goals.

– Chelsea Segal, CoxBLUE

## Work Smarter

### To uphold ethical standards in your organization, have honest conversations

Every good leader has to balance getting the job done while upholding ethical standards, and the deeper you get into your career, the more challenging this can become. Living up to your ethical ambitions requires honest conversations — with yourself, your leadership team, and those you lead. First turn inwards. Write down key decisions you made in your life (for example, your career choice) and then ask yourself what motivated these decisions and what they say about you. Be honest about what matters to you and where your ethics lie. With that clarity in mind, next, ask your senior team to have a frank discussion. What are their aspirations for the kind of company they want to create? Together, craft an ethics mission statement that you and your

team will live by, and hold others accountable to. Third, be proactive about sharing and reinforcing this statement — in other words, don’t wait for a whistleblower to surprise you. Schedule routine conversations to check-in with your team to ensure that you’re all living up to your collective ethics, and address any possible breaches early, swiftly, and honestly.

*This tip is adapted from “How to Be a Leader Who Stays True to Their Ethics,” by Michael Beer - Harvard Business Review*

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### Don’t be afraid to cut your losses

Too often, we hold on to things even after they’ve run their course. Think about that relationship you couldn’t give up on or the job you stayed in despite a boss who made you miserable. These five strategies can help you figure out when it’s time to throw in the towel.

- Reframe your thinking. Instead of focusing on what you’ll lose, think about what you gain if you stop

putting time and energy into the lost cause.

- Identify what’s in your control. Getting clear on what you have agency over and what you don’t will help you make a quality decision about whether to call it quits or persevere.
- Expand your identity. Avoid the trap of insisting that you’re “not a quitter.” Sometimes putting an end to something is a sign of wisdom and strategic thinking.
- Seek other perspectives. Rather than relying solely on your own thinking and instincts, consult with friends, colleagues, and mentors to get a different point of view.
- Have self-compassion. When something promising doesn’t turn out the way we imagined, we can be overly self-critical. Instead of ruminating over what went wrong, focus on what you can learn from this situation, and do better next time.

*This tip is adapted from “Do You Know When to Give Up?,” by Dina Smith - Harvard Business Review*

## Engaged in Mauritius



*Felix Hartley Russell son of the High Sheriff of Royal Berkshire and London Irish Fly Half engaged to Beatrice Hill of Clifton Elderflower and Dash Water on 30 November 2021 in Mauritius.*

## When older couples are close together, their heart rates synchronize

As couples grow old together, their interdependence heightens. Often, they become each other's primary source of physical and emotional support. Long-term marriages have a profound impact on health and well-being, but benefits depend on relationship quality.

A new study from the University of Illinois examines the dynamics of long-term relationships through spatial proximity. The researchers find that when partners are close to each other, their heart rates synchronize in complex patterns of interaction.

"Relationship researchers typically ask people how they're doing and assume they can recall properly and give meaningful answers. But as couples age and have been together for a long time, they laugh when we ask them how satisfied or how committed they are. When they have been married for 30 or 40 years, they feel that indicates commitment in itself," says Brian Ogolsky, associate Prof in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at the U of I.

But just being close to another person isn't always beneficial; it depends on the nature of the interaction, Ogolsky points out. Closeness in the context of a conflict



is very different from closeness in the context of a loving interaction. Similarly, changes in heart rate can be positive or negative.

The study included 10 heterosexual, married couples, ages 64 to 88, who had been in their relationships from 14 to 65 years. The researchers followed the couples for two weeks, continuously tracking their heart rates and their proximity to each other when at home.

Participants wore a Fitbit measuring their heart rate.

They also wore a small proximity-sensing device. The researchers installed sensors in the home that allowed them to monitor the devices and observe in real time how physically close the spouses were to each other. They could then correlate all three measures -- each partner's heart rate and the couple's proximity -- in real time.

The findings indicated a lead-lag relationship in heart rate synchronization, where one partner leads and the other follows. Sometimes the wife's heart rate would lead the change and other times the husband's heart rate would change and the wife's would follow.

"This suggests a delicate balance. When one partner triggers the other partner, they start a unique couple-level dance that affects their physiology and their patterns throughout the day," Ogolsky states.

"We found each day is a unique context that changes depending on circumstances. Couple interactions, their attitudes, behaviours, whether they're close to each other or far away, change all the time. Even across 14 days, couples are not consistent enough in these kinds of objective patterns to allow us to make any couple-level conclusions. We can make only make day-level predictions."

Ogolsky notes this finding is an important contribution to relationship research. "If we really want to understand the unique patterns of interaction that happen within couples, we need to start focusing our attention on micro processes; the small interaction patterns that accumulate over a day. Those tell us about the nature of how couples' interactions play out from moment to moment."

## A genetic change for achieving a long and healthy life?

Living a long, healthy life is everyone's wish, but it is not an easy one to achieve. Many aging studies are developing strategies to increase health spans, the period of life spent with good health, without chronic diseases and disabilities. Researchers at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology

homolog (PTEN) that dramatically extends healthy periods while maintaining longevity. This study highlights the importance of the well-conserved tumour suppressor protein PTEN in health span regulation, which can be targeted to develop therapies for promoting healthy longevity in humans. The research was published in 'Nature Communications' on September 24.

Insulin and insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1) signaling (IIS) is one of the evolutionarily conserved aging-modulatory pathways present in life forms ranging from tiny roundworms to humans. The proper reduction of IIS leads to longevity in animals but often causes defects in multiple health parameters including impaired motility, reproduction, and growth.

The research team found that a specific amino acid change in the PTEN protein improves health status while retaining the longevity conferred by reduced IIS. They used the roundworm *C. elegans*, an excellent model animal that has been widely used for aging research, mainly because of its very short normal lifespan of about two to three weeks.

Prof Lee said, "Our study raises the exciting possibility of simultaneously promoting longevity and health in humans by slightly tweaking the activity of one protein, PTEN."



presented new insights for improving the health span by just regulating the activity of a protein.

A research group under Prof Seung-Jae V. Lee from the Department of Biological Sciences identified a single amino acid change in the tumor suppressor protein phosphatase and tensin

## When bad things happen in childhood, what's the toll on your health?

New research from the University of Auckland shows the lifelong toll that adverse events in childhood can take on your health. The study covered eight types of childhood adversity: Emotional, physical or sexual abuse, and growing up in a household where there was violence, substance abuse, mental illness, divorce, or a household member behind bars. "Toxic stressors in childhood can take a lifelong toll on many aspects of our health," says Associate Prof Janet Fanslow. "The effects ripple across society to create a huge burden on family, our health service and the economy."

Experiencing even just one type of childhood adversity — such as having a household member in jail or witnessing interpersonal violence in the home — is associated with an increased risk of poor mental health, the study suggests. Experiencing two or more is associated with higher odds of disability, and four or more with chronic physical health problems.

Increased risks of health problems such as heart disease or asthma can be linked to specific types of adverse events, according to researchers led by Dr Ladan Hashemi, also of the School of Population Health. The scientists analysed 2,888 responses to the 2019 New Zealand Family Violence Survey, which was carried out in Waikato, Northland, and Auckland.

The odds of heart disease rose for people who had experienced emotional or



sexual abuse, witnessed interpersonal violence, or lived in a household where there was substance abuse. The odds of asthma increased for those from a household with substance abuse, mental illness or divorce.

International research shows how adversity in childhood can affect neurological and hormonal development, inflammation pathways, cognitive, social, and emotional competencies, and propensity for risky behaviours such as smoking or substance abuse. Socio-economic factors didn't fully explain the associations in the New Zealand study. "Policy and programmes to address child poverty are important in their own right, but will not fully mitigate the effect of adverse childhood experiences," write Dr Fanslow, Dr Hashemi, Dr P. Gulliver, and Prof T. McIntosh in the research paper.

## Health, Diet &amp; Lifestyle Tips

## Natural ways to cut your risk of heart disease

**M**edicine isn't the only way to lower your risk of heart disease. Diet, exercise, and other lifestyle changes can help.

**Go for a walk:** Just 40 minutes three or four times a week (or 25 minutes of harder exercise, like jogging) can lower blood pressure, cholesterol, and body weight. You don't have to do it all at once. Even 10 minutes at a time is great for your heart. If you're new to working out or just getting back into it, start slow. Talk to your doctor to see if you're healthy enough for exercise.

**Meet a friend:** Your buddy can do your heart good -- literally. Research has shown that being alone, or perhaps more importantly feeling alone, is as bad for your heart as smoking, high blood pressure, obesity, or not exercising. It's not how often you see people that matters, but how connected you feel to others. So make some plans with an old friend. Or join a club and meet some new ones.

**Eat more fruits and veggies:** The nutrients and fibre (and low calories and fat) make them heart-healthy. But they also have antioxidants, which may help protect your cells from damage that can lead to diabetes and heart disease. Try to work different colours of produce into your diet. You can also add them to foods you already enjoy, like adding fruit to a bowl of cereal.

**Snack on nuts:** The fibre, unsaturated fats, and omega-3 fatty acids in nuts may help your body cut down on inflammation, "bad" LDL cholesterol, and plaque build-up in blood vessels -- all linked to heart disease. They also might protect against blood clots that cause strokes. The type of nuts you choose probably doesn't matter much, but don't overdo it -- they have lots of calories. About 4 small handfuls a week of unsalted nuts should do it.

**Serve up salmon:** Two servings a week of fatty fish like salmon, mackerel, sardines, or tuna may help your heart health. Part of it may be the omega-3 fatty acids in the



fish, but other nutrients may also help. Supplements may not have the same benefits.

**Move beyond the gym:** It's not just a single daily workout that lowers your odds of heart disease, it's how active you are all day long. Even if you have an exercise routine, being a couch potato, the rest of the day can still be harmful to your health. Gardening, playing with your kids, walking to the bus, and even cleaning house are great ways to stay up and moving.

**Do some yoga:** It's not just exercise, it's also a way to calm your mind and ease stress. That can lower heart rate and blood pressure and make you less anxious, which is all good for your heart. If yoga's not your thing, make time for other healthy ways to relax and cut stress, like meditation, listening to music, or a hobby you enjoy.

**Sleep at least 7 hours a night:** Your body needs long periods of deep rest. During that time, your heart rate and blood pressure drop low for a while, which is key for heart

health. If you always snooze less than 7 hours, your body may start to make chemicals that keep those things from happening. Less sleep is also linked to inflammation and high blood sugar, which can be bad for your heart.

**Find out if you have sleep apnea:** Do you snore loudly, wake up gasping for breath, or feel tired all day after a full night's rest? See your doctor. Those are signs of sleep apnea, a condition that can make you more likely to have stroke, high blood pressure, and heart disease. Your doctor can help you treat it, which will help you sleep better and protect your heart.

**Quit smoking:** Smoking raises blood pressure, makes it harder to exercise, and makes your blood more likely to clot, which can cause a stroke. But your chances of having a heart attack go down just 24 hours after your last cigarette. So, see your doctor or check with groups like the American Heart Association for resources that can help you quit.

**Stay at a healthy weight:** Extra pounds raise your odds of high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes, all linked to heart disease. Exercise and the right amount of healthy foods are the best ways to keep a healthy weight. Measure your body mass index (BMI) to find out if you need to lose weight.

**Get your flu shot:** Research has found that it seems to protect against heart disease, especially if you smoke or have high blood pressure, diabetes, or high cholesterol. It's not clear how, but scientists have a few theories. It might be that the flu causes inflammation that can lead to a heart attack or stroke. Or that the side effects of the virus strain the heart.

**Don't just sit there:** Heart disease is more likely if you sit all day. And it's not only because you burn fewer calories -- it's the actual sitting that seems to do it. It may change the way your body processes sugar and fat, which are closely linked to heart disease. Try to break up long periods of sitting at work and at home. Stand up and move around at least once an hour.

**Get regular checkups:** Your doctor can see if your blood pressure and cholesterol levels are in danger of damaging your heart and blood vessels. The earlier you find those problems, the quicker you can start to treat them.

James Beckerman, MD - WebMD

## Why you should choose mustard oil for weight loss

**S**ince ancient times, mustard oil has been an inevitable part of Indian culture. It has been used extensively for cooking, massaging and even as an offering to deities. Made from mustard seeds, this oil has a strong pungent smell that adds an earthy taste to the dish. But with time mustard oil has been replaced in the kitchen with more processed and refined oils like olive, canola, sunflower, which are branded as healthy and weight loss friendly.

Truth be told, these highly processed oils do not do any good to us. They are stripped off the nutrients and have margi-

nal health benefits. If you are really into healthy eating, it is time for you to bring the mighty mustard oil back to your kitchen to lose weight and improve your overall health.

Mustard oil contains three different types of fat. It contains only a small amount of saturated fats, which makes it an ideal choice of oil to cook your meal. The other fats are polyunsaturated and monounsaturated, which are considered healthy for heart health. Here is how mustard oil helps in weight loss and its other health benefits.

### Helps to lose weight

According to a study published in the British Journal of Nutrition, food cooked in mustard oil can decrease appetite. That's because of thermogenesis, which refers to the heat produced in the body. On top of that, food cooked in mustard oil is easy to digest and increases the metabolic rate. When the metabolism increases, you burn fat faster than usual.

### Promotes skin health

When applied topically, mustard oil can



moisturise all the layers of the skin and nourish it properly. Massaging with this oil can improve fine lines and reduce wrinkles. Warm mustard oil when applied to hair can promote hair growth and make the roots stronger. You can also add some drops of mustard oil to your homemade face pack.

### Supports heart health

Being high in monounsaturated fatty acids, including mustard oil in your diet can

also help to improve your heart conditions and reduce the risks of cardiovascular diseases. Studies show that it may help lower triglyceride, blood pressure, and blood sugar levels, all the conditions linked with increased risk of heart problems.

### Reduces pain

The pungent smelling oil also contains allyl isothiocyanate, a compound that can help to reduce pain in the body. Besides, this oil is also rich in alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), a type of omega-3 fatty acid that can be beneficial in reducing inflammation and minor burns.

### May treat cold

Mustard oil is an ancient Ayurvedic remedy for treating cold and congestion. Toppically applying warm oil to the chest when suffering from cold and flu can speed up the recovery and provide relief from other symptoms.



## It snowed last night...

8:00 am: I made a snowman.

8:10 - A feminist passed by and asked me why I didn't make a snow woman.

8:15 - So, I made a snow woman.

8:17 - My feminist neighbour complained about the snow woman's voluptuous chest saying it objectified snow women everywhere.

8:20 - The gay couple living nearby threw a hissy fit and moaned it could have been two snow men instead.

8:22 - The transgender man... women... person asked why I didn't just make one snow person with detachable parts.

8:25 - The vegans at the end of the lane complained about the carrot nose, as veggies are food and not to decorate snow figures with.

8:28 - I was being called a racist because the snow couple is white.

8:31 - The middle eastern gent across the road demanded the snow woman be covered up.

8:40 - The Police arrived saying someone had been offended.

8:42 - The feminist neighbour complained again that the broomstick of the snow woman needed to be removed because it depicted women in a domestic role.

8:43 - The council equality officer arrived and threatened me with eviction.

8:45 - TV news crew from Ch4 showed up. I was asked if I know the difference between snowmen and snow-women? I replied "Snowballs" and am now called a sexist.

9:00 - I was on the News as a suspected terrorist, racist, homophobe sensibility offender, bent on stirring up trouble during difficult weather.

9:10 - I was asked if I have any accomplices. My children were taken by social services.

9:29 - Far left protesters offended by everything marched down the street demanding for me to be arrested.

By noon it all melted

*Moral: There is no moral to this story. It is what we have become, all because of snowflakes.*

\*\*\*

An old man was sitting in private box at Leeds with an empty seat next to him!

A young fan saw the empty seat and said to him: "Who on earth has paid for this expensive seat but not turned up! they must be mad, do you mind if I sit here?"

The old man sadly looked up and said: "For 35 years me and my darling wife have sat together and watched every game, but unfortunately she has passed away so was unable to come, so you can gladly take her place if you like."

The young man thanked him for his kind generosity and sat beside the old man.

The young man turned to him and said: "I hope you don't mind me asking, but as sad as your story is, I have to ask, have you not got any relatives, like a son or grandchild or nephew that you could have brought along with you?"

The old man said: "Yes I have, but they've all gone to her funeral."

\*\*\*

## Some losses may be your gain

An unemployed man applies for a job as a toilet cleaner at a large computer company and takes an appointment for an interview with the company's manager.

During the interview, the manager told the unemployed person: 'You have been accepted for the job. But we need your email to send you the work contract and terms.'

The unemployed man replied that he had no e-mail and no computer at home.

The manager replied, 'You do not have a computer, which means that you are not present, and if you are not present, it means that you cannot work for us.'

The unemployed man came out upset after the doors were closed in his face and he was rejected.

And on his way, he bought with all he had, 10 dollars, 10 kilograms of strawberries, and started knocking on the doors to sell them.

At the end of the day the man earned \$20.

After this the man realized that the process is not difficult.

The next day, he started repeating the process three

MAYBE IF WE START TELLING PEOPLE THE BRAIN IS AN APP, THEY'LL START USING IT.



times, and after a while the man began to go out early in the morning to buy four times the amount of strawberries.

The man's income began to increase until the man was able to buy a bicycle.

After a period of time and hard work, the man was able to buy a truck until the man owned a small business selling strawberries.

Five years later, the man became the owner of the largest food store.

The man began to think about the future until he decided to insure the company with the largest insurance companies.

In an interview with the insurance company employee, the employee said: 'I agree. But I need your email to send you the insurance contract.'

The man replied that he did not have an e-mail and he did not even have a computer.

The insurance employee replied surprisingly, 'You established the largest food company in five years, and you do not have an email, what would happen if you had an email!'

The man replied to him: 'If I had an email five years ago, I would now be cleaning toilets in a company!'

\*\*\*

**How will the youth of the future mock the Covid-19 generation?**

OK Zoomer!

A very serious fight was going on between Husband and Wife...

**Husband said (In anger):**

"I resign from the post of your Husband..."

**Wife:**

"Okay but, You'll have to stay till I don't get any other alternative...!"



## Inspiration

### Think it over

Once, when the then Vietnamese President Ho-Chi-Minh went visiting a foreign country, in a meeting with ministers, he asked: "What do you guys do?"

These people said: "We do politics."

He could not understand this answer, so he asked again: "I mean, what is your profession?"

These people said: "Politics is our profession."

Ho-Chi Minh got a little annoyed and said: "Maybe you people do not understand my meaning. I do politics too, but by profession, I am a farmer and I do farming. Farming makes my livelihood. In the morning and evening I go to my fields. I work. I do my responsibility for the country as President during the day."

When Ho-Chi-Minh asked the same thing again, a member of the delegation shrugged and said: "Politics is our profession."

Just a few months ago, when Europe was being devastated by the coronavirus, the doctors were not getting leave for several months in a row, then a Portuguese doctor said angrily: "Go to Ronaldo, to whom you would give millions of dollars to watch. I only get a few thousand dollars."

In a country where the ideals of young students are not to become scientists, researchers, educationists, but actors, politicians and sportsmen, they may have their own economic progress, but the country will never progress.

Socially, intellectually, culturally, strategically, the country will always remain backward. The unity and integrity of such a country will always be in danger.

The country in which the dominance of unnecessary and irrelevant sectors continues to grow, that country will be weakened day by day. The number of corrupt people will increase day by day; honest people will be marginalized.

## Die empty

The most beautiful book to read is 'Die Empty' by Todd Henry.

The author got the idea of writing this book while attending a business meeting.

When the director asked the audience: "Where is the richest land in the world?", one member of the audience answered: "Oil-rich Gulf states."

Another added: "Diamond mines in Africa."

Then the director said: "No, it is the cemetery. Yes, it is the richest land in the world, because millions of people have departed/died and they carried many valuable ideas that did not come to light nor benefit others. It is all in the cemetery where they are buried."

Inspired by this answer, Todd Henry wrote his book, 'Die Empty'.

The most beautiful of what he said in his book is: "Do not go to your grave and carry inside you the best that you have.

Always choose to die empty.

The true meaning of this expression, is to die empty of all the goodness that is within you.

Deliver it to the world, before you leave.

If you have an idea, implement it.

If you have knowledge, give it out.

If you have a goal, achieve it.

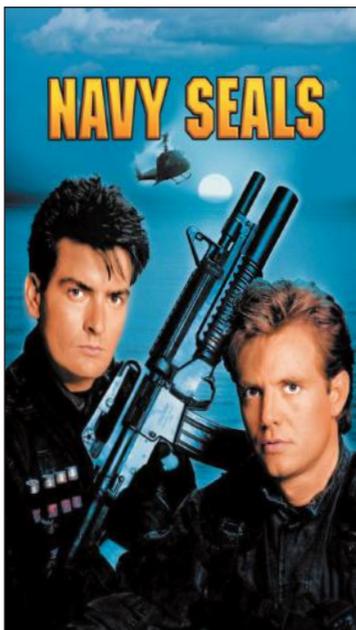
Love, share and distribute, do not keep it inside.

Let's begin to give. Remove and spread every atom of goodness inside us.

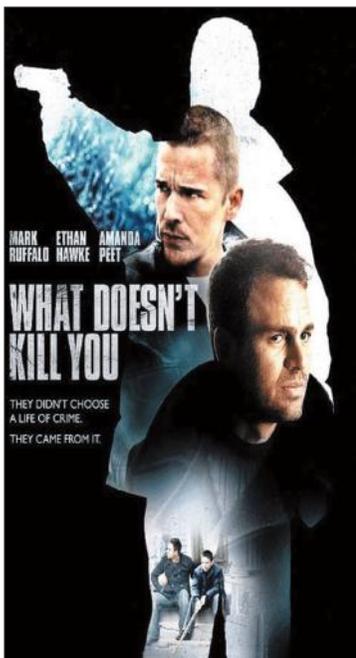
**Start the race. Let us Die Empty**



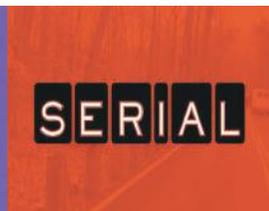
Mardi 7 décembre - 21.10



Mercredi 8 décembre - 21.15



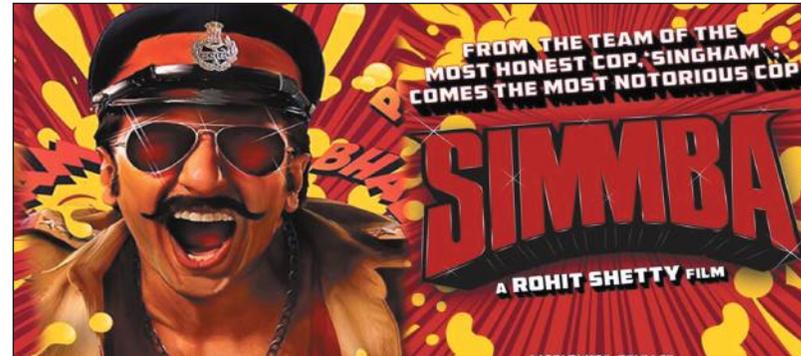
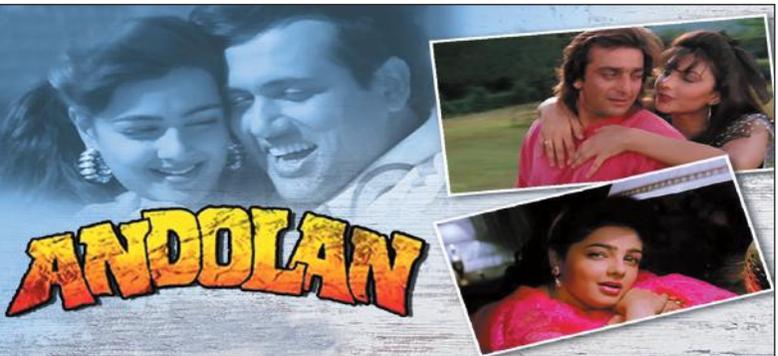
Jeudi 9 décembre - 21.15



MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
<b>mardi 7 décembre</b> 06.00 Local: Rodrig - Akoustic 09.30 Local: Zanfan Nou Zil 11.10 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.55 Local: Come On Let's Dance 13.45 Local: Nos Aines 14.15 MBC Production 14.30 Serial: Les Copains Carlins 14.41 D.Anime: Pet Alien 15.20 D.Anime: The Twisted... 15.42 D.Anime: Cosmic Quantum... 16.07 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 16.17 D.Anime: The Hive 17.20 Mag: Human Nature 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 18.55 Local: Charcha 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.15 Local: Priorite Sante 21.10 Film: Navy Seals	<b>mardi 7 décembre</b> 07.00 DDI Live 10.00 Serial: CID 10.45 Serial: Ye Vaada Raha 12.00 Film: Rakhi Aur Hathkadi Star: Ashok Kumar, Asha Parekh 14.18 DDI Magazine 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.20 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.43 Serial: Bava Maradallu 16.04 Serial: Sondha Bandham 16.27 Serial: Mera Maan Rakhna 16.48 Serial: Imtihaan 17.05 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.30 Telugu - Premabhishekam 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 DDI Magazine 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.04 Local: Programme In Tamil 20.30 Film: Oonche Log Starring: Ashok Kumar, Raaj Kumar	<b>mardi 7 décembre</b> 06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa 06.39 Mag: Voa Connected 07.34 Documentary 09.00 Educa Prog: G5 11.30 Educa Prog: G8 15.11 Doc: Iran From Above 15.53 Mag: Eco@Africa 16.50 Mag: World Stories 18.30 Mag: Healthy Living 19.00 Student Support Prog - G7 19.30 Mag: Magnifique 20.02 Mag: Happiness Is On The... 20.30 Local Prod: News (English) 20.45 MFDC Intercollege Film 21.45 Mag: Close Up 22.11 Local: Klip Seleksion 22.53 Doc: 9/11 23.35 Doc: Hunting In The Arctic... 00.01 Doc: Norwegian Riesling 00.27 Magazine: REV: The Global... 00.53 Mag: Healthy Living	<b>mardi 7 décembre</b> 01.35 Film: Men In Black II 03.36 Film: November Criminals 05.00 Tele: Muneca Brava 05.47 Serial: Absentia 06.53 Film: Men In Black II 09.00 Serial: The Good Doctor 09.45 Tele: Teresa 10.35 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 11.01 Serial: Night Shift 12.00 Film: November Criminals 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.17 Mag: Cinemag 14.45 Film: In Black II 16.41 Serial: The Good Doctor 17.22 Serial: Absentia 18.05 Tele: Teresa 19.00 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana 20.30 Serial: Mad Dogs 21.15 Film: The Misfits Club	<b>mardi 7 décembre</b> 07.01 Film: Fryday Cast: Govinda, Varun Sharma, Digangana Suryavanshi 11.30 / 19.27 - Radha Krishna 11.59 / 20.57 - Anupamaa 12.30 / 21.27 - Mere Sai 13.09 / 22.07 - Agniphera 13.30 / 22.37 - Yeh Teri Galiyan 14.00 / 23.07 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.30 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan 14.53 / 22.25 - Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 15.25 Film: October Star: Varun Dhawan, Banita Sandhu, Gitanjali Rao 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 19.00 Serial: Ishaaron Ishaaron... 19.30 Bhakharwadi
<b>mercredi 8 décembre</b> 06.00 Local: Roddrig Sa 07.00 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill 09.30 Local: Zanfan Nou Zil 11.15 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Local: Autour Des Valeurs... 12.30 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.55 Local: Proze Dime 13.25 Local: Generation J 14.30 Serial: Les Copains Carlins 14.44 D.Anime: Pet Alien 15.20 D.Anime: The Twisted... 15.43 D.Anime: Cosmic Quantum... 16.05 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 16.32 D. Anime: Magic Kaito 1412 17.20 Mag: Human Nature 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 18.55 Local: Hindi Sahitya? 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.30 MBC Production 21.25 Film: What Doesn't Kill You	<b>mercredi 8 décembre</b> 07.00 DDI Live 10.00 Pyar Ka Dard Meetha... 12.00 Film: Dharti Kahe Pukar Ke Starring Jeetendra, Nanda, Sanjeev Kumar 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.26 Aamhi Doghi 15.46 Bava Maradallu 16.07 Sondha Bandham 16.25 Mera Maan Rakhna 16.49 Serial: Imtihaan 17.10 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.31 Serial: Kulvadh 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: Murder Mestri Marathi film 22.25 DDI Live	<b>mercredi 8 décembre</b> 06.00 Mag: Rev: Global Auto... 06.26 Mag: Healthy Living 07.25 Mag: Magnifique 07.51 Mag: Happiness Is On The... 09.00 Educa Prog: Grade 5 11.30 Educa Prog: Grade 8 14.03 Local: Klip Seleksion 14.45 Doc: 9/11 15.54 Doc: Norwegian Riesling 17.20 Mag: Check In 18.00 Mag: Motorweek 19.00 Student Support Prog... 19.30 Doc: Garden Party 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.45 MFDC Intercollege Film 21.20 Documentary 22.02 Mag: Initiative Africa 22.28 Mag: Focus On Europe 22.54 Doc: Drought In Europe 23.37 Mag: Motorweek 00.03 Mag: Vous Et Nous 00.56 Doc: Garden Party	<b>mercredi 8 décembre</b> 01.44 Film: An Emma Fielding... 03.02 Serial: Night Shift 03.51 Film: The Misfits Club 05.35 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.17 Serial: Absentia 06.58 Film: An Emma Fielding Mystery 09.10 Serial: The Good Doctor 09.45 Tele: Teresa 10.35 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 11.01 Serial: S.W.A.T 11.43 Film: The Misfits Club 13.38 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.46 Film: An Emma Fielding Mystery 16.40 Serial: The Good Doctor 17.20 Serial: Absentia 18.08 Tele: Teresa 19.00 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana 20.30 Serial: Elementary 21.15 Film: The SnowMan	<b>mercredi 8 décembre</b> 07.00 Film: October Star: Varun Dhawan, Banita Sandhu, Gitanjali Rao 11.21 / 20.06 - Radha Krishna 11.51 / 20.26 - Anupamaa 12.23 / 20.32 - Mere Sai - Shrad.. 12.47 / 20.46 - Agniphera 13.29 / 21.09 - Yeh Teri Galiyan 14.03 / 21.50 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.32 / 21.15 - Chhanchhan 14.47 / 21.46 - Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 15.25 Film: Andolan Starring: Sanjay Dutt, Govinda, Mamta Kulkarni 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 19.00 Ishaaron Ishaaron... 19.30 Bhakharwadi 20.00 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak
<b>jeudi 9 décembre</b> 06.00 Local: Klip Seleksion 06.45 Local: Fee Main 07.15 D.Anime: Splash And Bubble 10.00 Local Prod: Elle - No 169 11.10 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 14.00 Local: Encounter 14.33 Serial: Les Copains Carlins 15.20 D.Anime: The Twisted... 15.32 D.Anime: Cosmic Quantum... 16.05 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 16.17 D.Anime: The Hive 17.20 Mag: Human Nature 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 19.30 Le Journal 20.10 Local: Autour Des Valeurs 20.15 Local: Sawdhan 20.35 Film: Simmba Stars: R.Singh, S. Sood, Sara Ali Khan	<b>jeudi 9 décembre</b> 07.00 DDI Live 08.00 Education Pro: Grade 3 10.10 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha 12.00 Film: Amrit 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.20 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.43 Serial: Bava Maradallu 16.04 Serial: Sondha Bandham 16.27 Serial: Mera Maan Rakhna 16.48 Serial: Imtihaan 17.05 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.30 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: Evasion 21.16 Film: Seized Star: Scott Adkins, Mario Van Peebles, Karlee Perez	<b>jeudi 9 décembre</b> 06.00 Mag: Motorweek 06.26 Mag: Vous Et Nous 07.19 Mag: Garden Party 07.49 Doc: Tresors Oublies... 09.00 Educa Prog: Grade 5 11.30 Educa Prog: Grade 8 14.45 Mag: Initiative Africa 15.11 Mag: Focus On Europe 15.36 Doc: Drought In Europe 16.22 Mag: Motorweek 18.00 Mag: Eco India 19.00 Student Support Prog... 19.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.45 MFDC Intercollege Film 20.55 Doc: Comme Une Envie... 21.44 Doc: Day Zero 22.27 Doc: Vincent Van Gogh... 23.09 Doc: China's Gateway... 23.52 Mag: Eco India 00.18 Mag: Shift	<b>jeudi 9 décembre</b> 00.31 Serial: Elementary 03.49 Film: Spinning Man 05.25 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.07 Serial: Elementary 06.48 Film: Last Action Hero 09.00 Serial: The Good Doctor 09.45 Tele: Teresa 10.15 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 11.00 Serial: S.W.A.T 12.00 Film: Spinning Man 13.36 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: Last Action Hero 16.50 Serial: The Good Doctor 17.32 Serial: Elementary 18.13 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 21.57 Tele: Muneca Brava 22.39 Serial: The good Doctor	<b>jeudi 9 décembre</b> 07.00 Film: Andolan Starring: Sanjay Dutt, Govinda, Mamta Kulkarni 11.23 / 19.54 - Radha Krishna 11.53 / 20.11 - Anupamaa 12.27 / 20.32 - Mere Sai 12.59 / 21.09 - Agniphera 13.34 / 21.24 - Yeh Teri Galiyan 14.00 / 21.50 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.30 / 21.15 - Chhanchhan 14.41 / 21.46 - Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 15.30 Film: Hameshaa Starring: Saif Ali Khan, Kajol, Aditya Pancholi 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.59 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 19.29 Bhakharwadi

**BTV** Mercredi 8 décembre - 15.30 Star: Sanjay Dutt, Govinda, Mamta Kulkarni

**MBC 1** Jeudi 9 décembre - 20.30 Stars: Ranveer Singh, Sonu Sood, Sara Ali Khan



# Why Indian-born CEOs dominate Silicon Valley

*The success of Indian-born CEOs in America is as much about what's right with America as what's right with India, says economist Rupa Subramanya*

Nikhil Inamdar and Aparna Alluri, BBC

**P**arag Agrawal, who was appointed last month as Twitter's CEO, has joined at least a dozen other Indian-born techies in the corner offices of the world's most influential Silicon Valley companies.

Microsoft's Satya Nadella, Alphabet's Sundar Pichai, and the top bosses of IBM, Adobe, Palo Alto Networks, VMWare and Vimeo are all of Indian descent.

Indian-origin people account for just about 1% of the US population and 6% of Silicon Valley's workforce - and yet are disproportionately represented in the top brass. Why?

"No other nation in the world 'trains' so many citizens in such a gladiatorial manner as India does," says R Gopalakrishnan, former executive director of Tata Sons and co-author of 'The Made in India Manager'.

"From birth certificates to death certificates, from school admissions to getting jobs, from infrastructural inadequacies to insufficient capacities," growing up in India equips Indians to be "natural managers," he adds, quoting the famous Indian corporate strategist CK Prahalad.

The competition and chaos, in other words, makes them adaptable problem-solvers - and, he adds, the fact that they often prioritise the professional over the personal helps in an American office culture of overwork.

"These are characteristics of top leaders anywhere in the world," Mr Gopalakrishnan says.

Indian-born Silicon Valley CEOs are also part of a four million-strong minority group that is among the wealthiest and most educated in the US.

About a million of them are scientists and engineers. More than 70% of H-1B visas - work permits for foreigners - issued by the US go to Indian software engineers, and 40% of all foreign-born engineers in cities like Seattle are from India.

"This is the result of a drastic shift in US immigration policy in the 1960s," write the authors of 'The Other One Percent: Indians in America'.

In the wake of the civil rights movement, national-origin quotas were replaced by those that gave preference to skills and family unification. Soon after, highly-educated Indians - scientists, engineers and doctors at first, and then, overwhelmingly, software programmers - began to arrive in the US.

This cohort of Indian immigrants did not "resemble any other immigrant group from any other nation", the authors say. They were "triple selected" - not only were they among the privileged Indians who could afford to go to a reputed college, but they



Global CEOs of Indian origin (from L to R): Jayshree Ullal - President and CEO of Arista Networks, Shantanu Narayen - CEO of Adobe Inc, Sundar Pichai, CEO of Alphabet Inc. and its subsidiary Google, Satya Nadella - CEO of Microsoft, Ajaypal Singh Banga - President and CEO of Mastercard

also belonged to a smaller sliver that could finance a masters in the US, which many of Silicon Valley's CEOs possess. And finally, the visa system further narrowed it down to those with specific skills - often in science, technology, engineering and maths or STEM as the preferred category is known - that meet the US's "high-end labour market needs".

"This is the cream of the crop and they are joining companies where the best rise to the top," says technology entrepreneur and academic Vivek Wadhwa. "The networks they have built (in Silicon Valley) have also given them an advantage - the idea was that they would help each other."

Mr Wadhwa adds that many of the Indian-born CEOs have also worked their way up the company ladder - and this, he believes, gives them a sense of humility that distinguishes them from many founder-CEOs who have been accused of being arrogant and entitled in their vision and management.

Mr Wadhwa says men like Mr Nadella and Mr Pichai also bring a certain amount of caution, reflection and a "gentler" culture that makes them ideal candidates for the top job - especially at a time when big tech's reputation has plummeted amid Congressional hearings, rows with foreign governments and the widening gulf between Silicon Valley's richest and the rest of America.

Their "low-key, non-abrasive leadership" is a huge plus, says Saritha Rai, who covers the tech industry in India for Bloomberg News.

India's diverse society, with so many customs and languages, "gives them (Indian-born managers) the ability to navigate complex situations, particularly when it comes to

scaling organisations," says Indian-American billionaire businessman and venture capitalist Vinod Khosla, who co-founded Sun Microsystems.

"This plus a 'hard-work' ethic sets them up well," he adds.

There are more obvious reasons as well. The fact that so many Indians can speak English makes it easier for them to integrate into the diverse US tech industry. And Indian education's emphasis on math and science has created a thriving software industry, training graduates in the right skills, which are further buttressed in top engineering or management schools in the US.

"In other words, the success of Indian-born CEOs in America is as much about what's right with America - or at least what used to be right before immigration became more restricted after 9/11 - as what's right with India," economist Rupa Subramanya recently wrote in Foreign Policy magazine.

The huge backlog in the applications for US green cards, and increasing opportunities in the Indian market have certainly dimmed the allure of a career abroad.

"The American dream is getting replaced with the India-based start-up dream," Ms Saritha Rai says.

The recent emergence of India's "unicorns" - companies worth more than a \$1bn - suggests that the country is starting to produce major tech companies, experts say. But, they add, it's too early to tell what global impact they will have.

"India's start-up ecosystem is relatively young. Role models of successful Indians both in entrepreneurship and in executive ranks have helped a lot but role models take time to spread," Mr Khosla says.



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor

## The Laboratory of Life

**I**n order to make our dreams come true, we must take action rather than simply wishing for what we want.

There is a popular misconception that we might be able to just wish our dreams into being. Maybe on some other level of consciousness this is the case, but here on earth what we need to do is take action in our lives. Vision is an important companion to our efforts, but it can't accomplish anything all by itself. When we focus on what we want and ask for what we want, we are initiating a conversation with the universe. Our desires, passionately defined and expressed, bring about valuable and relevant opportunities, which we then respond to by either taking or leaving them.

Many of us are afraid to step out into the world and make things happen, and so we hang back, dreaming and waiting and watching. There are times in life when this is the right thing to do, but this phase of inaction must eventually give way to its opposite if we are to build our dreams into a reality. This can be really scary, and we may fail and struggle, but that's okay because that's what we're supposed to do. Waiting for everything to be perfect before we act, or waiting for what we want to be handed to us, leaves us waiting forever. No one expects us to be perfect, so the best thing we can do for ourselves is to get out there and take action on our dreams.

One of the hardest parts about having a vision is that when we test it in the laboratory of life, it often comes out looking completely different than what we had in mind or, worse, it doesn't come out at all. If you read the life stories of people who have brought their dreams into reality, you will hear many stories about this experience. But you will also hear about hard work, taking action, perseverance, and, finally, the successful birthing of a dream.