

MAURITIUS TIMES

• "I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones." — Albert Einstein



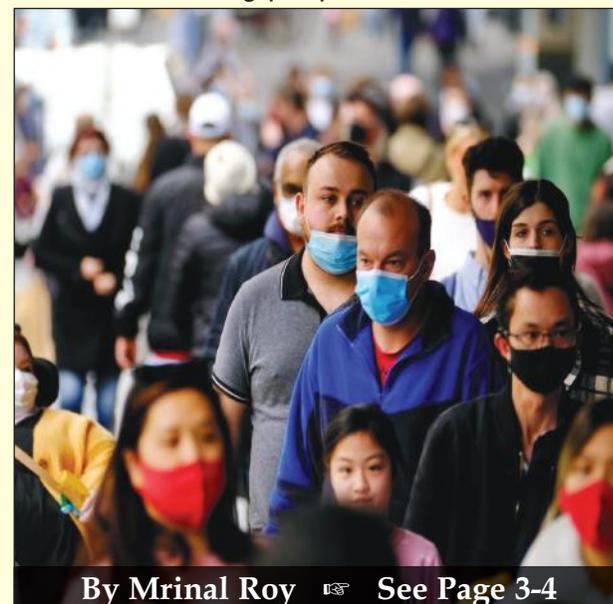
Interview: Milan Meetarbhan

«A futile debate at this stage on who would lead an alliance against the MSM... is counter-productive»

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Coronavirus Pandemic: Hope and Caution

Covid-19 is very much present and infecting people out there



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Legislative Tyranny and Arbitrariness

«The threat of suspension or expulsion seems to have become the new norm of parliamentary democracy»

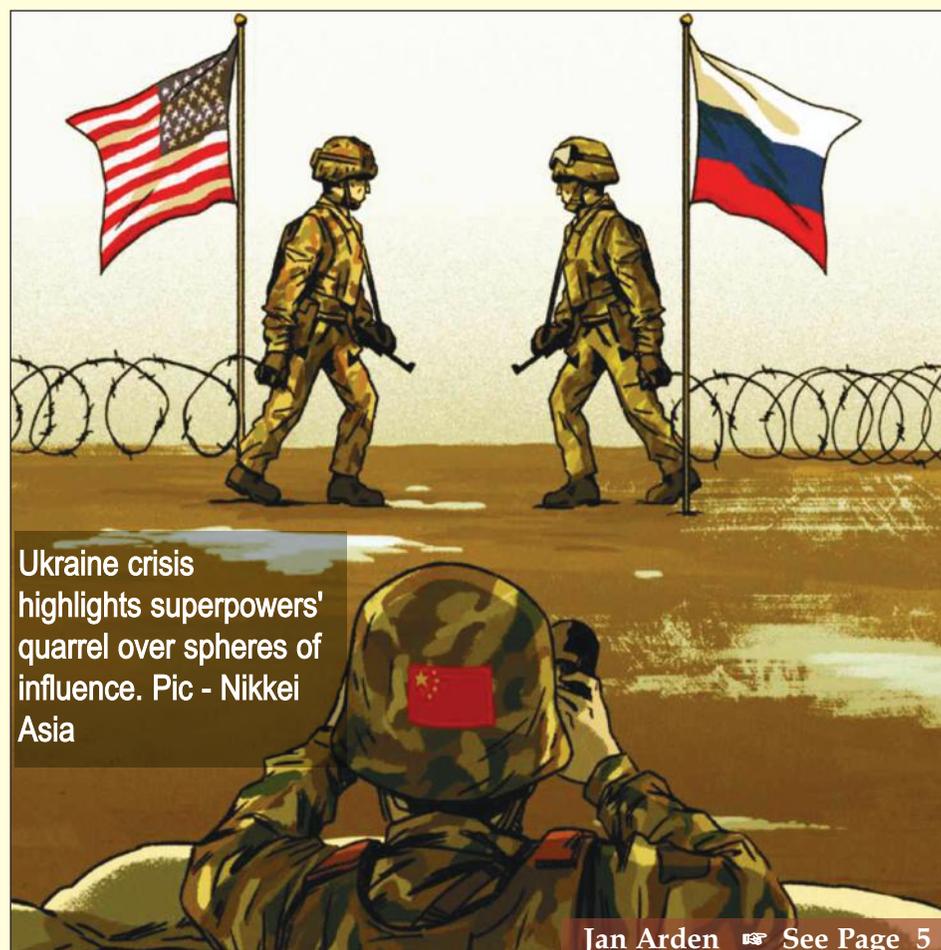


Qs & As

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The West, Putin and Ukraine

Are there other unspoken rationales behind the promises of Western and US fury should Russia not kowtow to NATO's growing encroachment into its immediate vicinity?



Ukraine crisis highlights superpowers' quarrel over spheres of influence. Pic - Nikkei Asia

Jan Arden See Page 5

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A State of Malfunctions

In Dec 2019 the people had pinned their hope on the Pravind Jugnauth-led government to change course and reverse the trend that had marred the proper running of the country's institutions.

But that was soon dashed in the wake of the appointments in different institutions of the country and which continue to this day. The same pattern is seen, despite the electoral assurances given from one election to another, for remedial changes and doing things differently. The renewed pledges for transparency, meritocracy and competence soon gave way to the old habits of appointing relatives, political sponsors, field agents and such others. The government has forged ahead regardless of protests from civil society, the press and opposition parties.

The same attitude continues to this day. The same story has been replayed in the series of scandals that have rocked the government since it came to office: its handling of the Wakashio oil spill, the St Louis Redevelopment Project, the disbursement of public funds by the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd, the dysfunctions in the National Assembly, the never-ending inquiries of its anti-corruption commission, the failure of investigative authorities to hold accountable those close to power, etc. The government presses on regardless of civil society protests and calls for the promised transparency in the functioning of the country's institutions.

We will not prejudge nor speculate on the outcome of the further investigation called for by the Inquiring magistrate and the DPP into the death in mysterious circumstances of the former MSM activist Soopramanien Kistnen, which seems to be connected with the emergency procurements of medical equipments and drugs, or the investigations of the police into the cases of what appears to be serial suicides, etc. The Commissioner of Police had made known when he was heading the Force in a temporary capacity his determination to go to the bottom of these cases. Now that he has been appointed in a substantive capacity, we trust he'll do what is required to reassure the population that law and order will be abided by one and all.

Thankfully the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Judiciary have more than

once stepped in to uphold the Constitution and safeguard the country. The most recent example was the Supreme Court, in view of "glaring discrepancies" in vote tally sheets, ordering on an exceptional basis the recount prayed for in the electoral petition of Jenny Adeburo in Constituency No19 for elections that were held more than two years ago. If vote tally sheets in other petitions reveal such happenings elsewhere, and even without the further discrepancies observed at recount, we fail to understand how the Electoral Commissioner can continue opposing such recounts elsewhere or avoid giving his explanations in Court.

This can only reflect poorly on the state of malfunction of public sector institutions, even in matters that should have attracted earnest corrective actions as highlighted in the next editorial comment.

* * *

More disasters in our territorial waters

Even if we accept that neither the National Coast Guard, nor the Mauritius Port Authority, nor the echelons to the National Security Adviser, nor the professional manning of our maritime radar surveillance system, nor the functional state of several helicopters and aircraft stationed at Plaisance were at fault in the wreckage of MV Wakashio and its oil-spill while authorities waited on various "expert advice", even if all that were true, we would have expected an active inquest, a report tabled and recommendations to have been finalised for the more secure management of our territorial waters.

If such a report exists in some private quarters and ministries, we would suggest that it be made accessible to knowledgeable outside input from those who may enrich its scope and effectiveness. More importantly we expect the Minister to whom such responsibility has been ascribed to indicate what we have learned and what new protocols have been implemented given the disturbing fact that more than five beachings of trawlers and fishing vessels have been reported since that disaster, the last ones in Pointe aux Sables.

The Conversation

Eight changes the world needs to make to live with Covid

There is no going back to a pre-pandemic normal – only forward to a new one.



Spreading Covid vaccine coverage worldwide and increasing disease surveillance will be crucial. Pic -EPA

More and more people have been asking for a return to normal, and with omicron waning, governments are starting to act. The UK, for example, is removing its remaining public health measures, including mandatory self-isolation of Covid cases and free testing. However, the inescapable truth is that - unless the virus mutates to a milder form - the "normal" life we are returning to will be shorter and sicker on average than before.

We've added a new significant disease to our population. Covid is often compared to flu, as if adding a burden equivalent to flu to a population were fine (it isn't). In fact, Covid has been and remains worse. Covid's infection fatality rate - the proportion of people who die once they've caught it - was initially about ten times higher than for flu. Treatments, vaccines and prior infections have since brought the fatality rate down, but it's still almost twice as high as for flu - and yes, this still holds for omicron.

The impact is then worsened because Covid is so much more transmissible. It also has a similar or worse longer-term impact on the heart, lungs and mental health than other respiratory diseases, and a higher rate of long-term symptoms. Vaccines have been incredibly effective at reducing severe illness and death, but they're not perfect. New variants have tested vaccine defences,

and protection against infection - and to a lesser extent severe illness - wanes after a few months.

While we're unlikely to lose all protection against severe illness and death, the sort of return to normal being attempted in countries such as the UK, Denmark and Norway will result in many people facing repeated Covid infections over the coming years. The large majority will cope, but some will die, and more will be left with lasting ill health. Many with mild illness will still need time off work or education, and as we have seen with omicron, the aggregate effects can be hugely disruptive.

In short, the world pre-2020 no longer exists - we may want it to, but it just doesn't.

How to live post-Covid

The last 150 years have seen vast improvements in public health, with dramatic reductions in deaths from malnutrition, infectious diseases, environmental diseases, smoking and road traffic accidents to name a few.

For communal problems we have developed communal solutions, from vaccines to controls on pollution, passive smoking, unsafe driving and other ills.

Christina Pagel, Professor of Operational Research, University College London

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Mauritius Times

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

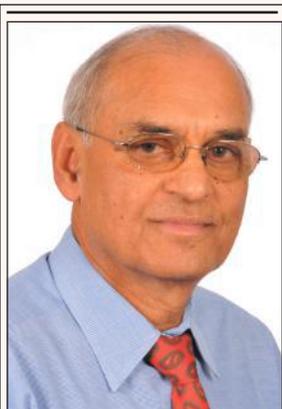
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What kind of society do we want?



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

This is not a new debate; it has probably been going on ever since human beings started to live in groups. At these beginnings, the groups were likely to be small and the overriding concern must have been sheer survival: finding enough to eat (the hunter-gatherer), looking for shelter (probably a cave), and defending against predators. The latter were most likely animals also looking for food and not other

human beings; the latter must have come into the picture much later, when territories had to be 'instinctively' delineated so as to protect the limited resources within a given geographical area.

We will have to go back quite far in human history to find out exactly when human societies as we know them today came about, but even if we cannot arrive at a definitive date, it doesn't matter very much. Enough is known to suggest that the issues were qualitatively similar, but new dimensions came in that went beyond mere physical survival. Humans started asking questions about their place in the world, and the purpose of life, about the nature and forms of human relationships especially as they applied to man-woman, adult/parent-children, collective living and decision making for the common good, and so on. All these emanated from the forces that impel human beings to act, namely the emotions of love, fear, passion, jealousy and hate, the desire to control and affirm oneself – tempered, alas not often enough, by commonsense, reason and experience.

We see the same forces at work today but manifested on a larger scale and forcefully visible right into our living rooms because of all the modern means of communication. Because of the predominance of media groups from the West we tend to see more of their version of happenings around the world, but more and more we are also getting a clearer picture of other countries and cultures. It is amazing how certain leaders are ignorant about other cultures, let alone be willing to learn or discover at least a few basics about them so as not to make humongous blunders, especially when they make profound-sounding statements which are anything but, and in so doing reveal their ignorance to public glare.

This was the case when Canadian PM Justin Trudeau – who was taken into secure hiding when his country was in the thick of protests by truckers – when he made a remark about a Canadian MP, Melissa Lantsman, accusing her in Parliament of waving swastikas and standing with the protesters. According to 'Mail Online' she took him to task, and the speaker reprimanded him and pressed him to make an apology which he refused to do. On the other hand, 'reacting to this, the US-based HinduPACT (Hindu Policy Research and Advocacy Collective) has urged Trudeau and Singh (NB: an activist known to Trudeau) not to conflate the "Swastika", an ancient and auspicious symbol for Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and many indigenous communities around the world, with the "Hakenkreuz", a 20th century Nazi symbol of hate,' which resembles but is NOT the swastika.

The Canadian MP went on to point out that Trudeau was creating divisions in the country instead of addressing the real problems and concerns facing the people. Indeed,

It is undeniable that there is obviously a great malaise that is affecting our society that knows no boundaries of community, class, or culture



“It is amazing how certain leaders are ignorant about other cultures, let alone be willing to learn or discover at least a few basics about them so as not to make humongous blunders...This was the case when Canadian PM Justin Trudeau when he made a remark about a Canadian MP, Melissa Lantsman, accusing her in Parliament of waving swastikas and standing with the protesters. 'Reacting to this, the US-based HinduPACT

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we find that increasingly there are common concerns amongst all people globally: economic growth and the appropriate/acceptable methods of creating and distributing wealth, role that governments should play and the limits of state intervention, generation of jobs, level of unemployment, security of food and housing, behaviour of people towards each other, breakdown of societal/family norms and values and the uphill task of a fresh infusion of these to make living better, the generation gap and how to cope with the growing proportion of the elderly, the damage that human activity is causing to the environment and containment/salvage measures that are urgently required, amongst many others which are however all intertwined.

These are no longer national or regional, but global matters. Correspondingly we have to ponder and search solutions from global sources but adapt the best practices to our situation and take account of resources and scale. It certainly is not about blind copying of models from elsewhere, especially the advanced countries which command much vaster facilities and potential and have the advantage of longer historical timelines which have allowed them to test-try their own solutions.

But an example of the common conundrum can be cited from the British press of a few years ago which as will be seen still resonates in today's world, especially when we think of the ongoing inequalities and other asymmetries that the Covid pandemic continues to give rise to:

'Do we want a society where 50% of young people are kept out of work in order to bring the deficit down from 9% of GDP to 3% in three years? A society in which the rich have to be made richer to work harder (at their supposed jobs of investing and creating wealth) while the poor have to be made poorer in order to work harder? Where a tiny minority (often called the 1% but more like the 0.1% or

even 0.01%) control a disproportionate, and increasing, share of everything – not just income and wealth but also political power and influence (through control of the media, think tanks, and even academia)?'

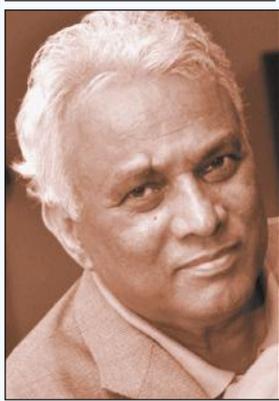
These larger questions surely find an echo locally, as they apply to all economies, even ours because of our dependence on the Euro and US markets. Given this reality, we have to be cautious in this country about mega-projects that are planned, and the escalating expenditures which seem always to be associated with them, especially when they are nearing completion. There is a sure need for closer monitoring, but even before we come to this stage, we have to ask ourselves questions about our strategic thinking – is there any such thinking when it comes to national development, or is this more of an *ad hoc* process driven not by a robust system but by vested interests? The linkage may be indirect, but it undoubtedly impacts the kind of society we want to be.

It is undeniable that there is obviously a great malaise that is affecting our society that knows no boundaries of community, class, or culture. Just think of the many cases of crime and murder that remain unsolved even as new ones keep taking place, and the protracted legal process that makes us despair about whether there will ever be resolution, and closure for the families of the victims. This should be reason enough for national shame and the need for community/religious leaders to focus on giving proper guidance to their respective constituencies, so that we can look forward to a saner and more secure society now and for future generations.

The effort to define what kind of society we want must come from all who care for our common, sustainable (and not only from an economic perspective) future – and we have to find local solutions, though they will perform have to be inspired by universal principles.

Coronavirus Pandemic: Hope and Caution

Covid-19 is very much present and infecting people out there



Mrinal Roy

Ever since the spread of the Omicron variant in the world, infectious disease experts ventured to say that there just may be an end of the Covid-19 pandemic in sight. There is a muted hope that the spread of the Omicron variant infection in the world combined with the rising number of people that have been fully vaccinated will provide people some degree of herd immunity going forward. There is also hope that the next Covid-19 variants may be contagious but not cause as severe and deadly a disease. In such a situation, Covid-19 would become endemic akin to an influenza.

People are also suffering from coronavirus restrictions fatigue and are up in arms against questionable pandemic management decisions and repressive mandates which are seen as a restriction of fundamental rights and freedom. However, there is still the risk of the emergence of new variants which our protective immunity derived from vaccination and infection from Covid-19 cannot overcome.

Despite such potential risks, a series of countries are lifting Covid-19 restrictions. Last week, Switzerland lifted all its coronavirus pandemic restrictions except for the obligation of wearing masks on public transport or while visiting healthcare facilities. With presidential elections scheduled in April 2022, the French government announced that while remaining prudent, restrictions will be eased in February in stages over the next few weeks. Austria will lift most of its remaining restrictions by March 5.

Personal responsibility

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said earlier this week that he is scrapping the last domestic coronavirus restrictions in England, even as he acknowledged the potential for new and more deadly variants of the virus. He added that mandatory self-isolation for people with Covid-19 will end starting Thursday. Addressing MPs in the House of Commons he said that the country was 'moving from government restrictions to personal responsibility' as part of a plan for treating Covid-19 like other transmissible illnesses such as flu. He added: 'We now have sufficient levels of immunity to complete the transition from protecting people with government interventions to relying on vaccines and treatments as our first line of defence.'

In a clear bid to bring Covid-19 related expenditure under control, Boris Johnson said that 'people will still be advised to stay home if they are sick but will no longer get extra financial support introduced during the pandemic for those who miss work. As from April 1, lab-confirmed PCR tests for the virus will be available free only for older people and the immune-compromised. Government will also stop offering the public free rapid virus tests, though they will be available privately at a price, as is already the case in many countries.

Australia has reopened its international border to vi-



“Only 3 out of 188 countries and territories have reported no new cases of infection for four weeks in a row. Covid-19 is very much present and infecting people out there. This situation affects decisions regarding international travel and demands that countries exercise extreme caution and care to protect their population instead of rashly lifting essential sanitary protocols and indiscriminately removing travel restrictions. The new vogue mantra of ‘learn to live with Covid-19’ blithely echoed here must also take on board the hard facts of ground realities...”

sitors this week for the first time in nearly two years bringing a boost to tourism. Australia imposed one of the world's strictest travel bans in March 2020. Australia received about 9.5 million overseas visitors in 2019 earning revenues of \$32 billion in 2018-19. The CEO of Australian Federation of Travel Agents cautioned that the shortage of trained staff would affect quality of tourism services and travellers' experiences. He soberly predicted that the tourism industry would not be back to pre-pandemic levels until early 2024, assuming no new major outbreaks or variants do not bring back restrictions. The main sources of tourists are China, New Zealand, the United States, the UK, Japan, and Singapore. The UN agency's World Tourism Barometer also predicts that world tourism will not return to pre-pandemic levels until 2024.

As evidenced by the lower than expected number of tourist arrivals in Mauritius since the opening of our frontiers, the recovery of the tourism sector to 2019 levels will probably take more time than envisaged and require well thought out and pointed marketing strategies to offer a competitive, memorable, culturally rich and exceptional holiday experience.

Ground realities

Despite the lifting of restrictions in some countries, coronavirus continues to be severe in Italy, making it the most-affected country in Europe as well as outside Asia. Recent statistics show that in February 2022 the number of new cases of infection increased in 47 countries whereas the number of new cases doubled in 14 countries. These countries are spread across the world and include Cambodia, China, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Belarus, Honduras and New Zealand. The 33 countries where the number of Covid-19 cases increased include Iran, Japan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, Vietnam, Egypt, Estonia, Finland,

Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Russia, Slovakia, Ukraine, Chile, Dominica and Guatemala. Only 3 out of 188 countries and territories have reported no new cases of infection for four weeks in a row. Covid-19 is very much present and infecting people out there.

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It is equally high time to go back to work and pick up the pieces of a battered economy.

* * *

Risk of Armageddon in Ukraine

There is more to an armed conflict than meets the eye

The risky and endless game of brinkmanship between the US, Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries and Russia over Ukraine could not last forever. The protracted stalemate had to fall apart and give way. Ukraine's President Zelensky's demands last week for a clear timetable to join NATO and an end to appeasement of Russia could but stoke and bring the conflict to a head.

● Cont. on page 15

The West, Putin and Ukraine

Are there other unspoken rationales behind the promises of Western and US fury should Russia not kowtow to NATO's growing encroachment into its immediate vicinity?

Jan Arden

Two weeks ago, in a topical history line, Mrinal Roy described the systematic attempts by US military and deep state establishment since Germany's reunification, to encircle the remains of the former Soviet Union, namely the Russian Federation, by enlarging NATO to many former East bloc countries. Despite assurances to the contrary, the USA wrought an alarming ring of fire causing a dire growing threat to the former superpower but there was little the enfeebled Russian Federation could do to prevent nuclear arsenals based so close to its frontiers in Germany, Poland and, at one time, Turkey. It was only when NATO made a pressing bid to integrate Ukraine in its military and, no doubt, nuclear orbit, that President Putin decided enough was enough. No great power, as the Cuban missile crisis reminds us, could accept such a military and nuclear noose around its neck in its backyard.

We are here more in receipt of the Western narrative through their news channels daily recounting the high-level meetings of political top brass and alarming declarations about the impending Russian "invasion" of independent Ukraine and the risks of another unimaginable pan-European war. We heard the economic sanctions promised by all, including the US Vice President Kamala Harris to throw Russia to the Stone Ages, the hawkish stance of Ukraine's President and the virtual hysteria revved up in liberal Western media about Russian boots and tanks in Kiev.

From a Russian perspective though, President Putin had few alternatives left when diplomacy had failed to bring common sense and realpolitik to bear. His counter-move was however deft: as in Georgia after the invasion of 2008, as with Crimea after its annexation by Russia in 2014 and as with Kazakhstan earlier this year – he announced recognition of the two eastern Russian-



First Ukraine, now Poland?! How Western Tabloids Indulge in Stoking 'Russian Invasion' Narrative. Pic - Sputnik International

“What then was the organized rumbling about, with immense energies deployed by diplomats, with high-voltage tensions, with all European leaders jumping into a partition that seemed to have prepared elsewhere, with friends and allies like India being asked, rather pointedly, to take sides? If it was really about Ukraine's sovereignty, then one may wonder who really put it at risk. Were there other unspoken rationales behind the promises of Western and US fury should Russia not kowtow to NATO's growing encroachment into its immediate vicinity?”

speaking Ukrainian states, which were breakaway since 2014, and a surgical, limited, "peace-keeping" operation for their protection.

While punitive sanctions will be worked out by the West, while it does not resolve the broader tensions between Russia and the West over the future European security order, we hope this unanticipated but deft Russian operation may deflate the war-mongers and lead to a gradual stabilization in those regions. Ukraine will be what a mystifyingly bad US policy over thirty years has condemned it to be: a neutral, weakened vital buffer zone separating Russian territory from that of the West's aggressive designs.

There are many speculations afoot about why the US military and establishment were so keen on keeping the

thumb ever more firmly on the jugular of a power that no longer presented any realistic threat to NATO, the USA or the Western interests and most certainly not at the level of China, the real super-power challenger to those interests as the latest US National Security Policy document postulated. If all this intense brinkmanship and eyeball to eyeball confrontation with President Putin has only served to get Russia and China closer in the greater chess game under way, would it not be a costly blunder by inexperienced mariners?

What then was the organized rumbling about, with immense energies deployed by diplomats, with high-voltage tensions, with all European leaders jumping into a partition that seemed to have prepared elsewhere, with friends and allies like India being asked, rather pointedly, to take sides? If it was really about Ukraine's sovereignty, then one may wonder who really put it at risk. Were there other unspoken rationales behind the promises of Western and US fury should Russia not kowtow to NATO's growing encroachment into its immediate vicinity?

There have been speculations about Russia's huge gas reserves and pipelines that, to US unhappiness, fuel united Germany and may in the future bring their pipelines down to South Asia, but were these considerations enough to justify such levels of quasi-military confrontation with a former power that had posed no threat to Western Europe for decades? Were the sound of the war drums across central Europe a means to challenge the new West German Chancellor, avoid buddy trade ties building up with Russia or pave the way to a future militarised unified Germany, able to raise its own army/navy/air force, hence meet its own defense expenses and contribute a more effective share to NATO budgets and high command?

As the dust settles over the coming months, we may all start to see clearer behind the

Press and social media freedoms

We read of amendments this week to Pakistan's already draconian cybercrime laws, that has the country's Human Rights Commission and activists angry, all Opposition parties in arms and journalists infuriated, fearing it will curtail media freedom as any criticism of the government, any humorist's dig, can be treated as a non-bailable crime carrying up to five years jail.

Under the 2016 version of the Pakistan Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), parody or satire-based websites and social media accounts could be targeted, investigation agencies were authorized to unlock any computer, mobile phone or

other devices for the purpose of investigating any claimed offense. Bad enough and hotly contested but the new legal constraints are another deadlier blow that have been called for judicial review by the Pakistan Union of Journalists.

The Islamabad High Court IHC chief Justice remarked that since even countries such as Zimbabwe and Uganda were removing defamation from their criminal law, why was Pakistan regressing, assailing freedoms further under the guise of protecting cyber users?

As laymen we are fully aware that Pakistan's twin-headed democracy and Constitution are special constructs of its difficult history, but we do not know why the Mauritian Constitution and laws prevent direct judiciary reviews by concerned parties for matters that impact our

lives and freedoms. We would feel proud to note that Mauritius is not in the league of countries where a Law Minister or top brass political babus condone and defend such ordinances that only remotely democratic countries and autocrats fearful of critical thoughts promulgate. That's not the case.

* * *

Every penny counts!

Some observers at various times have attributed our ruling political dispensation as being influenced by Modi politics in India. That may be the case or not generally but there is certainly one aspect where both teams, in their governing philosophies, stand miles apart.

PM Modi comes from a grassroots

organizer background with some feeling for the tracasseries of the common man and the judicious use of public funds to attain stated goals. He recently said during a Rural Development webinar: "How can we ensure optimum utilisation of each and every penny to bring changes in the lives of people in villages? If we are able to do this, you will see that no citizen is left behind."

Whether he would even remotely condone the lifestyles and partying of Boris Johnson during the deep end of the pandemic or the profligate expenses of top brass politicians, nominees and high-level civil service cadres with public funds extracted from depleted public and consumer pockets locally remains very doubtful.

Jan Arden

Legislative Tyranny and Arbitrariness

“The threat of suspension or expulsion seems to have become the new norm of parliamentary democracy”

In this week's Qs & As, Lex analyses and reflects on the authority and powers of the Speakership and the limits of such powers when they arbitrarily or unfairly curtail the Opposition MPs in the conduct of their elective duties through suspensions and expulsions backed with a simple vote of the House majority. As Lex points out, Courts are generally reticent to intervene as the Assembly may regulate its own procedure but the operative unambiguous rider is “subject to this Constitution” which is the only avenue through which, as jurisprudence shows, the Court may be called upon to exercise its judgement on excesses that may negate Constitutional provisions.

LEX

* On 28 Jan 22, the Indian Supreme Court quashed the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly's resolution of July 5, 2021, which suspended 12 BJP MLAs for a period of one year for alleged disorderly behaviour in the House. The bench said that such suspension, which exceeds the term of a session, will amount to a punishment of the constituency, as it remains unrepresented in the Assembly, and added that it can be “dangerous to democracy” since it can result in the manipulation of a majority in the House when voting on important matters arise. There may be circumstances that differ, but does it strike a chord with what has been happening in our own Parliament?

If you go to the website of the National Assembly, one can read: “One of the most important qualities of a Speaker is impartiality. He must be above party politics.”

Once elected to the Chair, he owes his loyalty to the dignity of Parliament.”

Has this been the case since the 2019 elections? Or has it been an exercise of power by the Speaker that borders on an abuse of his authority? We should better out of respect for the Court to leave it to our judges to determine.

* The resolution of the Maharashtra Assembly for suspending the MLAs for a period of one year was contrary to the rules framed under Article 208 of the Indian Constitution, which proscribes suspensions lasting one year. Senior advocate Mahesh Jethmalani, who appeared for the suspended MLAs, said that “the best thing about it is that it prevents legislative arbitrariness and tyranny against an opposition”. The other “best thing” about this judgement is that an independent judiciary was prepared to put a check on the majoritarian attitude of the government. What do you think?

Whether we like it or not, to use the words of advocate Mahesh Jethmalani, we would indeed be living in a time of legislative tyranny were the Speaker to adopt a harsh attitude towards the Opposition and that, egged on by comments bordering on contemptuous ridicule or mockery and the clapping of hands by the majority, he would proceed to suspend Opposition MPs for an abusively long time. My own comments are not dictated by partisan considerations, since the threat of suspension or expulsion seems to have become the new norm of parliamentary democracy.

*** But Speakers exercise a quasi-judicial function and are therefore expected to act fairly and be seen to be protecting the rights of parliamentary minorities from the majoritarian attitude of governments? Isn't this what is expected from the most important office in the House - the Speakership?**

Of course. When the Speaker is chairing the proceedings of Parliament, he has to ensure that order and the dignity of the House are maintained in what we call the “Temple of democracy”. The authority of the Speaker is derived from the Standing Orders, which are made in accordance with constitutional provisions. Section 48 of the Constitution clearly spells out that “Subject to this Constitution, the Assembly may regulate its own procedure and may, in particular, make rules for the orderly conduct of its own proceedings.”

The regulations so made are subject to the Constitution. As stated in the Supreme Court of India judgement referred to earlier, “The [Indian] Constitution, by itself, does not specify the limitation on the privileges of the Legislature, but, indubitably, those privileges are subject to the provisions of the Constitution.”

*** Section 48 of our Constitution, relating to ‘Regulation of Procedure in National Assembly’ states that ‘Subject to this Constitution, the Assembly may regulate its own procedure and may, in particular, make rules for the orderly conduct of its own proceedings.’ Can these rules and their implementation be subjected to the scrutiny of the court?**

The Supreme Court has always been reticent to interfere with the manner in which the Speaker exercises his power with the exception of the historical judgement of late Justice Rajsoomer Lallah in 1993 in the case lodged by the then leader of the opposition, Navin Ramgoolam, challenging the attempt of the government of Sir Anerood Jugnauth to disqualify as an MP.

Justice Lallah wrote: “...where Parliament exercises sovereign powers under the Constitution and the Courts are empowered to exercise a particular jurisdiction which itself requires an enquiry into the exercise of those powers by Parliament, then the jurisdiction of the Courts must be exercised to the appropriate extent in order to enable it to determine the particular question that is before it. It would be misleading, in those circumstances, to invoke the sovereignty of the National Assembly which would have the effect of paralysing the effective exercise of the constitutional jurisdiction of the Court.”

● Cont. on page 7



“In our country, which has no army, the stability of the Government does not depend upon force, but upon the consensus of the people. And that consensus itself derives from confidence in the rule of law. The rule of law is the citadel which guards the people against despotism. It is equally the citadel which guards Government against anarchy. If any part of the wall crumbles, the enemy is free to widen the breach, and the citadel. -- Sir Maurice Rault...”

'The Court does possess jurisdiction to determine whether Parliament is acting within the boundaries set by the Constitution'

— Judges Bernard Sik Yuen and Vinod Boolell

● Cont. from page 6

* But it is held that the Courts have no jurisdiction over Parliament, especially those based on the Westminster model, since any interference in its internal proceedings would be considered as a breach of the principle of separation of powers implied under the Constitution. Is that correct?

Not necessarily. In a recent case in Great Britain, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's advice to the Queen that Parliament should be prorogued for five weeks at the height of the Brexit crisis was found unlawful.

The UK Supreme Court agreed that it is the prerogative of the Prime Minister to advise the Crown to prorogue Parliament, but it also held that "a decision to prorogue Parliament (or to advise the monarch to prorogue Parliament) will be unlawful if the prorogation has the effect of frustrating or preventing, without reasonable justification, the ability of Parliament to carry out its constitutional functions as a legislature and as the body responsible for the supervision of the executive. In such a situation, the court will intervene..."

In Mauritius in the case of Paul Berenger against the then Speaker in 1999, the full bench of the Supreme Court (Pillay CJ, Yeung Sik Yuen SPJ, Matadeen J) held that it was permissible for the Court to determine "the existence of a parliamentary privilege but [it] will not inquire into its exercise unless it results in a breach of the Constitution".

The Learned Judges went on to underline that this legal principle was in line with the practice obtained in Common law countries governed by a Westminster Constitution. The full bench of the Supreme Court turned down the application, after reaching the conclusion that the Applicant had no constitutional peg to hang his complaint.

The words of the Judges were: "Had this Court been satisfied that the alleged breach of the Standing Order could give rise to an alleged breach of the Constitution, then this Court would have had jurisdiction to determine the constitutionality of the disciplinary measure taken by the National Assembly and would not have been prevented by section 3 of the Act from doing so since no act of the National Assembly which is not sanctioned by the Constitution is allowed to stand".

* Does this mean that the courts in the Mauritian



“The UK Supreme Court agreed that it is the prerogative of the Prime Minister to advise the Crown to prorogue Parliament, but it also held that “a decision to prorogue Parliament (or to advise the monarch to prorogue Parliament) will be unlawful if the prorogation has the effect of frustrating or preventing, without reasonable justification, the ability of Parliament to carry out its constitutional functions as a legislature and as the body responsible for the supervision of the executive. In such a situation, the court will intervene...”

context can overrule Parliament?

Maybe the answer is to be found in what the Supreme Court had to say in a case of Mahen Utchanah against Paul Berenger in 1998. Judges Bernard Sik Yuen and Vinod Boolell observed:

“The all-important words ‘subject to this Constitution...’ appearing in both sections 45(1) and 48 of our Constitution should neither be overlooked nor minimised. In *Jugnauth v. Daby* in 1990 the then Prime Minister moved the Court for a declaration on certain rulings given by the then Speaker. No less than a Prime Minister and Leader of the House invoked the aid of the Court when it appeared to him that the very person who presides over the Assembly was going to clog the machinery of Parliament.”

In the same case the Judges held that “Parliament may hide neither behind the cloak of privilege or immunity nor behind an ouster of jurisdiction in order to flout the Constitution which is the very essence of its existence. This Court does possess jurisdiction to determine whether Parliament is acting within the boundaries set by the Constitution.”

* What about Parliament overruling the courts? Is that possible?

That would be possible, but the courts would frown on this. There is one example when Parliament sought to legislate to overrule a judgment of the Supreme Court in 1982. The Court struck down that piece of legislation as being unconstitutional, and Sir Maurice Rault stated:

“I hope that Parliament will never again resort to such

an ill-advised piece of legislation. In our country, which has no army, the stability of the Government does not depend upon force, but upon the consensus of the people. And that consensus itself derives from confidence in the rule of law. The rule of law is the citadel which guards the people against despotism. It is equally the citadel which guards Government against anarchy. If any part of the wall crumbles, the enemy is free to widen the breach, and the citadel is lost. If Government itself, by usurping a judicial function to which it has no right, undermines the rule of law, it destroys the very foundation upon which it is built.”

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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What prompted Putin's invasion of Ukraine

Russia launched a 'military operation' against Ukraine - effectively an invasion - early Thursday morning, triggering global fears of a major multi-national armed conflict. Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the attack in a televised address, which follows his declaration that a 2015 peace deal agreed to stop fighting over breakaway regions of Donetsk and Luhansk - is invalid.

What followed was reports of explosions and missile strikes at key Ukraine cities, including capital Kyiv and in rebel areas of Donetsk and Luhansk. Russia, western intel says, has amassed over 150,000 troops and significant military equipment along the border, reports Hindustan Times.

So far, Russia has claimed the destruction of air-bases and air defences, while Ukrainian military says it has shot down six Russian aircraft in Luhansk. At least eight people have been killed and nine wounded by Russian shelling, an advisor to Ukraine's Minister of Internal Affairs was quoted by Reuters.

Why has Russia attacked Ukraine?

Russia believes Ukraine is moving closer and closer to the West via both the NATO, or North Atlantic Treaty Alliance, and the European Union.

Ukraine is not a member of NATO but has cooperated with the alliance and frequently expressed its intention to sign up.

Putin, however, is aware Ukraine joining NATO significantly increases the difficulty of bringing Donetsk and



What's behind the Russia-Ukraine war fears -- And what might actually happen? Pic - Reuters

Luhansk within his control. He has also frequently accused Ukraine of being a 'puppet' in the hands of the West.

The removal of pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovich as President of Ukraine - he was voted out by the Ukrainian parliament in February 2014 - triggered Russia's annexation of the strategically valuable Crimea peninsula eight years ago.

A former member of the Soviet Republic - it gained independence only in 1991 - Ukraine still has deep social, historical, cultural, and political ties to Russia, but relations have been strained since 2014.

Fearing it could be surrounded by what it sees as hos-

tile forces if Ukraine joins NATO, or moves any closer to the West, the Kremlin has demanded guarantees NATO will not accept it or other former members of the Soviet Republic.

Russia's defiance in the face of sanctions

The US, the European Union, the UK and other countries have all slapped sanctions on Russia, targeting its banks (to cut funding to operations in rebel regions) and the lawmakers who approved the use of force.

Earlier this week Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov brushed off the threat of sanctions, saying, "We're used to it. We know that sanctions will be imposed anyway, in any case. With or without reason."

Putin is also possibly secure in the knowledge that the US and other western nations will think twice (and maybe thrice) before deploying troops themselves, and risk turning this conflict into a potentially global one.

The threat of a prolonged military operation is something Putin can sustain almost indefinitely, if he is willing to pay the cost of keeping a large number of troops and equipment in the field, according to two retired US military commanders quoted in a report by Bloomberg.

As he launched the 'military operation', Putin said: "Whoever tries to interfere with us, and even more so to create threats for our country... Russia's response will lead you to consequences you have never experienced in your history."

What are sanctions and how could Western countries target Russia

The United States and its allies are preparing sanctions against Russia after Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday recognised Donetsk and Luhansk - the two rebel regions in Ukraine - as independent entities.

Russia, which has been under Western sanctions since its 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine, is likely to face more stringent punitive measures this time; the United States has already announced some, and foreign ministers of EU nations are expected to add to that, reports Hindustan Times.

Ukraine has called for severe sanctions against Russia. India has called on all concerned parties to exercise "utmost restraint" and work out a "mutually amicable solution" to the crisis.

What is a 'sanction'?

Sanctions are economic and financial punishments enforced by a country (or a group of countries) against another nation. For example, in this case it could mean the United States bans the import of certain goods from Russia.

Sanctions can have very serious consequences for receiving countries, and the hope is that the population in these areas become agitated enough to demand change from their governments.

How can Western nations sanction Russia? These can be levied against both individuals and institutions; some of the smaller Russian state-owned banks are already under sanctions.

According to Reuters, the US plans to target relationships between certain Russian and American banks, and President Joe Biden has already issued an order prohibiting investment in and financing to the separatist regions.

The UK has threatened to block Russian companies from US dollars and British pounds, thereby preventing them from raising capital in London, Europe's financial centre for such transactions.

Sanctions can also be imposed on individuals via asset freezes and travel bans.

The US, the EU and the UK already have sanctions in place against Russian individuals; the EU on Monday sanctioned five people over a Russian election in annexed Crimea in September last year.

A bill unveiled by Democrats in the US Senate aims for sanctions against top Russian government and military officials, including Putin.

Sanctioning individuals, as a rule, is generally easier to decide and implement. Sanctions against financial institutions and entire sectors - like banking or defence -



Russia has been under Western sanctions since its 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine. Pic - i.inews.co.uk

will take longer.

The US and the EU already have sanctions in place on Russia's energy and defence sectors, with state-owned gas company Gazprom, its oil arm Gazpromneft, and oil producers Lukoil, Rosneft and Surgutneftegaz facing curbs on exports, imports, and debt-raising.

Germany has said it will halt the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia. The pipeline brings natural gas and has been singled out as increasing Europe's reliance on Russian energy supplies.

Sanctions against Russia could also include disconnecting Russia from SWIFT - the global messaging network used by

banks and other financial institutions to send and receive critical information.

In 2012 SWIFT disconnected Iranian banks and the country lost 50 per cent of its oil export revenues and 30 per cent of its foreign trade, the Carnegie Moscow Center think tank said.

As with all financial sanctions, though, this cut both ways. The US and Germany stand to lose the most from such a move, as their banks frequently use SWIFT with Russian banks, which is why German banks have insisted any banking sanctions are "precise and unambiguous".

Ukraine crisis & Kenya's lesson on borders to the world



Permanent Representative of Kenya to the U.N. Martin Kimani, shown last year, delivered a speech criticizing Russian actions. Pic –Pacific Press

At the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) meeting on Monday night in New York, convened on the request of Ukraine, the United States and its allies forcefully condemned Russia's decision to recognise two breakaway Ukrainian provinces as republics; Russia slammed the West and put forth the case that President Vladimir Putin had already articulated in a television address; China gave a crisp response which was sympathetic to Russia; and India stuck to its position of ambiguity.

But it was Kenya's response that drew the most attention, for Nairobi abstained from a procedural vote just three weeks ago on whether Ukraine should even be discussed at the UNSC as a threat to peace and security, as demanded by the West and its allies.

This time, the Kenyan permanent representative to the UN, Martin Kimani, began by acknowledging that diplomacy was failing and they were meeting on the brink of a major conflict in Ukraine. But he took a firm position against the breach of Ukraine's territorial integrity. "The charter of the United Nations continues to wilt under the relentless assault of the powerful."

Kenya spoke about the hypocrisy of powers that invoked the charter with reverence and then turned their back on it and said it was "gravely concerned" at Russia's decision to recognise Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine as independent states, reports Hindustan Times.

And that is when Kenya offered a lesson on borders to the world, and the need to live with those borders – as colonies had, even when those borders were arbitrarily carved out without their consent, even when political borders did not overlap with cultural borders.

"Kenya, and almost every African country, was birthed by the ending of the empire. Our borders were not of our own drawing. They were drawn in the distant colonial metropolises of London, Paris and Lisbon with no regard for the ancient nations they cleaved apart," said Kimani. "Today, across the border of every African country live our countrymen with whom we share deep historical, cultural and linguistic bonds." But had they chosen to pursue borders on the basis of "ethnic, racial or religious homogeneity", he reminded the audience, bloody wars would have continued till now.

Kenya said that, instead, it agreed to the borders it inherited and decided to pursue continental political, economic and legal integration.

"Rather than form nations that looked over backward into history with a dangerous nostalgia, we choose to look over greatness than none of our nations and peoples had ever known." The reference, in the wake of Russian President Vladimir Putin's history lessons in his speech on Monday on why Ukraine was never a state and how the West undermined Russia consistently, was hard to miss.

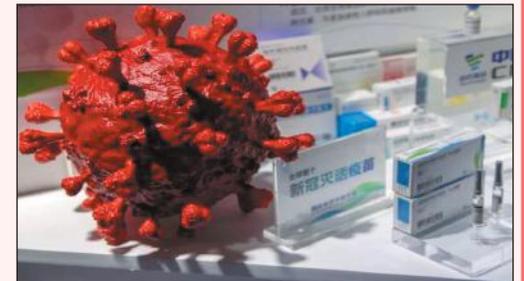
Kenya said that it understood that states formed as a result of the collapse and retreat of empires had people who yearned for integration with people in neighbouring states. "However, Kenya rejects such a yearning from being pursued by force. We must complete our recovery from the embers of dead empires in a way that does not plunge us back into new forms of domination and expression." Kenya said it rejected "irredentism and expansionism"; it condemned powerful states breaching international law; it declared that multilateralism lay on its deathbed; and it ended by supporting Ukraine once again.

Is Omicron subvariant BA.2 disarming key antibody treatment? What we know so far

While US health regulators added a new antibody drug to the country's arsenal against the Omicron variant of coronavirus, the rapidly spreading subvariant, BA.2, could force doctors to rethink antibody treatments for Covid-19, according to a report by journal Nature. The report, based on several studies, suggests a steep drop in the ability of sotrovimab, one of the few therapies for Covid-19 caused by the Omicron, to neutralize BA.2.

A team of US researchers at the department of microbiology, NYU Grossman School of Medicine found that the Omicron BA.2 is not neutralised by Regeneron, Eli Lilly, Sotrovimab and the Evusheld therapeutic monoclonal antibodies. The researchers highlighted that the results "demonstrate the difficulty of identifying broadly neutralizing monoclonal antibodies against SARS-CoV-2".

Another team of researchers from Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons concluded that BA.2 exhibited marked resistance to 17 of 19 neutralizing monoclonal antibodies, which had retained "appreciable activity" against BA.1. Both studies have not been peer reviewed and are available in pre-print, reports Hindustan Times.



A team of researchers concluded that BA.2 exhibited marked resistance to 17 of 19 neutralizing monoclonal antibodies. Pic - www.financialexpress.com

David Ho, a virologist at Columbia University and co-author of one of the studies, however, said that they cannot extrapolate laboratory findings to human treatment outcomes.

While BA.1 remains the most prevalent variant of concern in several countries, including the US and Britain, cases of BA.2 are rising in India, China, and Denmark.

On Tuesday, the World Health Organization said that the BA.2 variant of the Omicron is not more severe than the original. Maria Van Kerkhove, a senior WHO official, said that no difference in disease severity from BA.1 compared to BA.2 has been established.

Partygate: Questions asked to Boris Johnson by police revealed in leak

Downing Street staff were asked to name a "lawful exception" or "reasonable excuse" for lockdown parties in No 10, a leak has revealed.

The Metropolitan Police sent a written questionnaire to those in government suspected of breaching Covid regulations as part of their evidence gathering process over Partygate.

The document, a version of which was obtained by ITV News, says that those accused are being given an opportunity to provide "a written statement under caution".

Questionnaires were reportedly tailored to different individuals under investigation, so will not be identical – but the example obtained by the broadcaster gives a flavour of what Mr Johnson was asked.

It includes around a dozen questions, including: "Did you participate in a gathering



PM Boris Johnson. Pic – Getty Images

on a specific date" and "What time did you leave".

Other questions include "Did you interact with, or undertake any activity with, other persons present at the gathering. If yes, please provide details", and "What was the purpose of your participation in that gathering".

The document says people responding to the questionnaire can provide an answer to the questions put, send a statement in their own words, or remain silent, reports The Independent.

Downing Street confirmed on Friday that the prime minister has submitted his questionnaire, though he has not elaborated on what he said in it.

In an interview on BBC's Sunday Morning the prime minister refused an extraordinary 17 times to answer questions about the events, including whether he felt ashamed.

Compiled by Doojesh Ramlallah

Milan Meetarbhan

“A futile debate at this stage on who would lead an alliance against the MSM... is counter-productive”

In today's interview, Milan Meetarbhan shares his views on Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2021, released recently, and according to which Mauritius remains the only African country that is a "full democracy". One important issue, he raises is to what extent did the index reflect an actual assessment of governance? He says: 'It is true that a historical analysis of our electoral process may yield positive results. However, if for instance the current composition of supervisory bodies is scrutinised and the professional, political and personal links of members with the ruling party are factored in, the assessment of the electoral process and the trust which people have in the process will be viewed differently.' He also lays stress on the need for the Opposition to come together as a Parliamentary Caucus whilst maintaining their respective autonomy, ideology and policy preferences. 'The immediate concerns, he adds, must be reinforcing effective parliamentary opposition and fighting the municipal elections. A futile debate at this stage on who would lead an alliance against the MSM whilst there is no agreement at all yet on the principle of an alliance or on what this alliance would stand for, is counter-productive...'

Mauritius Times: According to the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2021, released recently, Mauritius remains the only African country that is a "full democracy". That's a major boost for the government, even if the Opposition, the privately owned media and civil society may think differently about our democracy, don't you think?

Milan Meetarbhan: Yes, it could give a boost to the government's morale and they have already made sure that their mouthpieces blare this loud and clear. Whenever we talk of an index, we have to see who did it and what was the methodology used. The criteria may be assessed from a desk study or from field research. In the case of the EIU report, the criteria used for assessing the state of our democracy give the results that they give.

Mauritians have their own assessment based on what empirical evidence they have of what's been happening in Parliament and in various institutions, various scandals and the way the law enforcement authorities have been dealing with these, on the "glaring disparities" noted in connection with the one electoral constituency for which

“Given that public confidence in the process has been shaken by what was told to the Court, what the Court itself said and what has come to light subsequently, it is important that the results of a review or analysis conducted after the elections be made public. Any attempt to conceal the audit of results nationwide will only lead to greater erosion of confidence and to lots of speculation...”

details have been made public and much else that they have witnessed in recent years.

One important issue: where does governance fit in all this? To what extent did the index reflect an actual assessment of governance? To what extent does the report take on board an assessment of how good or bad is governance in the country and is better or worse than what's it's been so far?

I see that even in the private sector various "awards" and quotes are bandied about, followed by waves of congratulatory messages without people bothering to check the credibility of the awarding institution and the criteria used. Often these awards are literally bought and the narratives and the quotes are supplied by the recipients themselves.

I am not suggesting that this is the case with the EIU Reports, but I just want to draw attention to the fact that reliance on some indexes and awards can lead to wrong and unjustified decisions. I have even heard of reports of fake PhDs bought off the shelf from inexistent institutions followed by warm congratulations by those who are credible enough to believe in these charades.

Some people use indexes and awards for self-promotion because they know that the targets take things at face value and do not always read the small print.

* It would seem that the electoral process in place here would have been positively reviewed by the EIU. This comes as a surprise given the number of electoral petitions lodged following the last general elections... though it could be true that the Electoral Commission's admission of discrepancies in Constituency No. 19 - and possibly elsewhere - might have come after the EIU conducted its survey of the state of



our democracy?

I don't know whether the methodology used involves taking on board current events such as those you mention. It is true that a historical analysis of our electoral process may yield positive results. The constitutional and legal frameworks as prescribed may also be assessed positively.

However, if for instance the current composition of supervisory bodies is scrutinised and the professional, political and personal links of members with the ruling party are factored in, the assessment of the electoral process and the trust which people have in the process will be viewed differently.

The statutory process may be sound, but public trust in those charged with administering or supervising the process is as important. A desk study of legislative texts and a field study of how things are being managed may lead to very different findings.

* One question which remains is: what happens next after the admission of "glaring discrepancies" as qualified by the Supreme Court with regard to the electoral process in Constituency No. 19, even if Ivan Collendavelloo will have won the election, as confirmed by the recount? Nobody, it seems, will be held accountable, and the Electoral Supervisory Commission has itself remained quiet to date...

I suppose that as far as legal challenges with respect to Constituency no 19 itself are concerned, we have reached the end of the road since the petitioner has resigned from her party a few days after the recount and she will not be making any further legal challenges. However, the wider debate on electoral processes remains open.

First, a lot of so-called "irregularities" or "human errors" that have come to light in the course of court proceedings and subsequently during the recount give rise to a number of questions. Did the same thing occur in other constituencies or was No. 19 an outlier and the numerous "errors" can be explained by exceptional circumstances in that particular constituency?

● Cont. on page 11

'The immediate concerns must be reinforcing effective parliamentary opposition and fighting the municipal elections'

● Cont. from page 10

Second, did the authorities conduct a thorough audit of results communicated by returning officers, figures announced and/or published on polling day and immediately after counting and will they state if everything was in order and publish their findings?

Given that public confidence in the process has been shaken by what was told to the Court, what the Court itself said and what has come to light subsequently, it is important that the results of a review or analysis conducted after the elections be made public. Any attempt to conceal the audit of results nationwide will only lead to greater erosion of confidence and to lots of speculation.

*** On the other hand, there's also the raising of our flag on the outer islands of the Chagos Archipelago in the context of the Bleinheim Reef expedition organised by the government with a view to establishing and asserting Mauritius' extended exclusive economic zone in its maritime boundary with the Maldives. Whether that expedition was necessary or not is besides the point now since one positive fallout - and not the least - has been its mediatic impact internationally. Isn't that true?**

What was initially described as a "scientific mission" to conduct a survey in view of submissions that have to be made to a Special Chamber of the International Tribunal on the Law of Sea (ITLOS) has turned out to be a highly publicised PR event. Given that the present strategy is to keep the pressure on the UK and the US to accept the award of the Arbitration Tribunal on the Marine Protected Area, the authoritative opinion of 14 of the 15 judges of the highest judicial organ of the United Nations and the recent ruling of an ITLOS tribunal, the cumulative effect of a series of initiatives taken recently will certainly add up to the pressure.

Our legal advisers, who have been with us since 2010 and have shown tremendous commitment to our cause, have once again advised on a course of action that helps to inch forward one at a time in this strategy. This may be for the long haul, but each step matters and what happened over the last couple of weeks was in essence such a step.

However, I wish to say that some statements made by Pravind Jugnauth and his ministers tend to show that the objective of the "scientific mission" was not only to advance the national cause at the international level but to make political capital domestically.

Jugnauth lamented that the local media had not given

“Mauritians have their own assessment based on what empirical evidence they have of what's been happening in Parliament and in various institutions, various scandals and the way the law enforcement authorities have been dealing with these, on the “glaring disparities” noted in connection with the one electoral constituency for which details have been made public... One important issue: where does governance fit in all this?”

enough coverage to this historic event because he was no doubt frustrated by the fact that the rest of the local media had not followed the MBC in singing the praises of the leader who acted as the national hero defending our sovereignty.

“The MSM's political strategy is based on a personality cult. The MSM wants to win elections based on branding their leader as the good guy, the soft-spoken guy from the next block. Branding is for marketing purposes and is often around a manufactured product for purposes of the promotion campaign but does not always reflect the real product. But it can still work. At times...”



What is worse is that his spokesperson at a press conference held on Saturday openly and brazenly sought to obtain political mileage for “Pravind Jugnauth and the MSM” from the fallout of the scientific mission.

It is fortunate that there has over the years been a large degree of national consensus on the Chagos issue and at a time when things are highly politicised in our country, the Chagos initiatives have on the whole benefited from bi-partisan support.

Any attempt to extract domestic political capital out of the Chagos issue and of taxpayer-funded initiatives, is bound to backfire. An end to the political consensus around the issue will weaken our leverage as a nation.

Cheap politics do not rhyme with struggle for territorial sovereignty.

*** As regards the long and determined struggle Mauritius has been waging to regain its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, how do you see things shaping up on that front, especially in light of the new geopolitical interests of the major powers - the old as well as the new or emerging ones - in this part of the world?**

The outcome of our case against Maldives will be a matter of law to be determined by a tribunal. Though the tribunal has already given a ruling which supports our sovereignty claim, its decision on the outer limit of the Chagos Archipelago, which will determine the extent of our Exclusive Economic Zone, will be based on the interpretation of the relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Indeed, the Tribunal will have to be satisfied that Brenham Reef meets the requirements of UNCLOS for purposes of determining archipelagic baselines from which the EEZ is measured. If it does not, then our dispute with the Maldives over delimitation of overlapping EEZs will be assessed differently.

The Indian Ocean is recognised as a zone of significant geo-strategic importance. Not only are two major regional powers vying for influence and markets - though only one of them is a coastal state - there are outside powers with military bases in the Indian Ocean rim. A large chunk of international trade is carried out through the Indian Ocean and large oil supplies also go through this

ocean. Over 80% of oil carried by sea and over 100,000 commercial ships pass through the Indian Ocean every year.

In an ocean with such sea routes, there are four critically important access waterways and who controls them is crucial. So given the economic and military stakes, the Indian Ocean will for the foreseeable future remain of major interest.

“The conduct of proceedings in the National Assembly and the deleterious role of the MBC may be decried by the people but the government will press on and even reward those at the helm. Some respected economists say that we do not have a central bank in this country anymore. Is that part of a government agenda or is it something else?”

*** The old colonial powers seem to be very touchy about any threats to their interests in the Indian Ocean as evidenced France's sudden classification of Mauritius into the list of “destinations en zone ‘écarlate’ » and the subsequent hit to our tourism industry following the Prime Minister's reference to another contentious territory - Tromelin, which is administered as part of the “French Southern and Antarctic Lands, a French Overseas Territory”, but over which Mauritius claims sovereignty as well. The French reaction is a brutal reminder that we should tread carefully, right?**

Whilst I agree that for all players in the Indian Ocean zone, the stakes are high and as you say they would be very touchy about any threats to their interests, I do not necessarily believe that there is any link between the statement about Tromelin and the French decision to include Mauritius in their “zone écarlate”. There could be a nexus but not necessarily, as far as I know.

Anyway, whilst Mauritius sitting right in the middle of an ocean with huge potential for resources and strategically important for commercial and defence interests, must tread carefully in its diplomatic moves, yet it cannot give up its territorial claims for areas which are considered as part of our territory under our Constitution.

● Cont. on page 12

'Any government which boasts about being a full-fledged democracy listens to its people.

This government does not do that'

● Cont. on page 11

Our country hosts two important Indian Ocean organisations which have established their headquarters here and we must make sure that our Indian Ocean policy, if and when we have one, secures our privileged position and national interests.

*** The current government has been in office for slightly more than two years. Do you get the feeling that besides the occasional hiccups and fire-fighting, the Pravind Jugnauth-led government has set for itself a well-defined political and government agenda that's being pursued in a determined manner unhindered by any opposition whatsoever be it from civil society, media, political parties?**

I do believe that the government has a clear political agenda and that it is engaged in a relentless pursuit of its political goals. However, I am not aware that it has a well-defined government agenda, a policy agenda for the short- and medium-term in view of serious challenges both at home and globally.



“The people elected different parties to form the opposition to the present government. Two of these parties were in an alliance for the last election and the third one fought the election opposing that alliance. So, the people cannot expect that immediately after the election these parties should become allies in opposition to the ruling party. But an Opposition Caucus would in the present circumstances be in the national interest ...”

Since the political agenda prevails over a responsible national policy agenda, lavish spending on projects which earn short-term political capital but could seriously jeopardise the long-term economic interests of the country, show to what extent political objectives trump national objectives.

I do not believe that the systematic appointments of cronies to top positions in our institutions is a government agenda. No government would want to weaken its institutions to such an alarming extent. Any government which boasts about being a full-fledged democracy listens to its people. This government does not do that. The conduct of proceedings in the National Assembly and the deleterious role of the MBC may be decried by the people but the government will press on and even reward those at the helm. Some respected economists say that we do not have a central bank in this country anymore. Is that part of a government agenda or is it something else?

*** There's a different spectacle on the opposite side of the fence: loose cannons going for each other's throats in public view, and in the background, opposi-**

tion parties, especially the mainstream ones, appearing confused about the way forward. How would you react to that?

I believe that there should be a robust working arrangement between opposition parties in Parliament. But having an Opposition Caucus to coordinate parliamentary action is not the same thing as an alliance for future elections. These are two very different things. The ruling party accuses the opposition of being divided but when it wants to work together the same opposition is treated as a "ramassis".

In any case, the people elected different parties to form the opposition to the present government. Two of these parties were in an alliance for the last election and the third one fought the election opposing that alliance. So, the people cannot expect that immediately after the election these parties should become allies in opposition to the ruling party. But an Opposition Caucus would in the present circumstances be in the national interest as it would enable better coordination and more effective opposition on policy issues and on holding the government accountable.

*** There is also the view that the good thing about the current situation for the Labour Party is that the fortunes of all the other opposition parties remain hinged to what it decides to do regarding the next elections. But the contrary could also be true since the LP might also need the support of the other parties to be able to challenge the MSM next time round. What do you think?**

The Labour Party is the largest group in the opposition. If we look at the official results of the last elections, the Alliance consisting of Labour and PMSD was by far the largest opposition group as per the wishes of the electorate. Labour and PMSD were not competing against each other but they were competing against the MMM.

The fact that these parties can now, whilst maintaining their respective autonomy, ideology and policy preferences come together as a Parliamentary Caucus and coordinate their action vis-à-vis the ruling party would be perfectly in line with a mature parliamentary system.

Do they need to look beyond the Parliamentary Caucus, at a political alliance for future elections, that's another kettle of fish? The municipal elections are long overdue and the "only full-fledged democracy in Africa" cannot postpone these elections indefinitely. The opposition parties would want to find a common understanding on how to send a strong message to the population and to the world by ensuring that the opposition takes over control of the municipalities.

*** There is however the issue of the leadership of the**

“A large chunk of international trade is carried out through the Indian Ocean. Over 80% of oil carried by sea and over 100,000 commercial ships pass through the Indian Ocean every year. In an ocean with such sea routes, there are four critically important access waterways and who controls them is crucial. So given the economic and military stakes, the Indian Ocean will for the foreseeable future remain of major interest...”



Labour Party - transitional or not - that remains unresolved to this day. That's a major dilemma, isn't it, since the electorate's vote is usually biased in favour of who'll sit in the prime ministerial chair?

Yes, even though we have a parliamentary system, yet the elections tend to be organised as if we had a presidential system. The MSM's political strategy is based on a personality cult. The MSM wants to win elections based on branding their leader as the good guy, the soft-spoken guy from the next block. Branding is for marketing purposes and is often around a manufactured product for purposes of the promotion campaign but does not always reflect the real product. But it can still work. At times.

Though the opposition must be ready for general elections at any time, yet a futile debate at this stage on who would lead an alliance against the MSM whilst there is no agreement at all yet on the principle of an alliance or on what this alliance would stand for, is counter-productive.

The immediate concerns must be reinforcing effective parliamentary opposition and fighting the municipal elections. If the parties agree to maintain the common tactical platform after the municipal elections, then they will first have to agree on a common policy platform, engage in public debate with the people on this platform and then decide on an electoral strategy.



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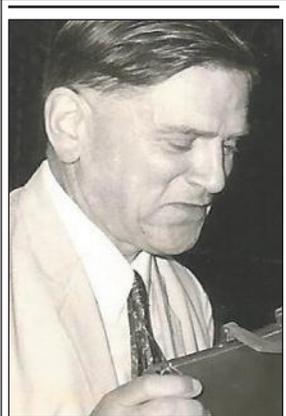
From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

5th Year No 184

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 14 February, 1958

• *Swallowing angry words is much easier than having to eat them.* — A. M. Schaefer



Peter Ibbotson

Workers must have a living wage

Now that the already well-paid Civil Servants have had their increases (far too large in the case of the top men, and too little in the case of the lowest-paid employees), it is the turn of 11,000 employees paid under "Other Charges" to have their wages scrutinised by a Working Party (No. 2).

In the past, the wages paid to these government labourers, artisans, apprentices, etc., have been fixed after reference to the wages paid to workers of similar status in private employment. Therefore, we must examine the method of assessing the wages of such workers in outside employment; and we find that they are still regulated by reference to a 1939 Minimum Wage Board which drew up a typical labourer's budget and assessed his wage accordingly. The Board drew up a list of commodities which it thought a labourer ought to wish to buy for himself and his family and computed the cost of these commodities. The monthly total cost was Rs 18.61; that would, in the estimation of the Board, keep together the body and soul of an adult female worker. With a wife and two children, the Board estimated, the workers would need Rs 16.39 a month more; but his wife was expected to work, and he was expected to eke out his earnings with cow-keeping; so that the 1939 man's wage was fixed at 66 cents a day.

That 1939 Board's findings have not been reversed. It still is used to regulate the wages of workers in private enterprise; and these wages still regulate the wages paid under "Other charges" to Government labourers. This is a state of affairs which is truly (as Mr Dabee said in the *Mauritius Times* on January 10) "inhuman and disgraceful".

What of wage rates inside and outside the Government service? Ramage recommended a daily rate of Rs 4.50 for drivers. Up to a few months ago privately employed drivers were getting Rs 5.50 a day. They complained that this was too low and arbitrators awarded them (after enquiry) an extra Rs 1.30 a day, making Rs 6.80 in all. But Government drivers haven't had such in award; if Working Party 2 is considering outside earnings in framing its recommendations for Government labourers, then this very recent award of the arbitrators of Rs 6.80 a day for drivers cannot be ignored.

The whole wage structure needs, of course, to be examined. It needs to be related to the actual cost of life in Mauritius today. And, of course, since the Howes award, the cost of living has gone up already: meat and fish have increased in price. As *Tribune Ouvrière* pointed out on January 21, *dans notre curieuse île, l'augmentation des prix suit l'augmentation des salaires*. The workers paid under "Other Charges" haven't had any rise yet, but they are having to pay the same increases as those who have had a rise — and so they are relatively still even worse off!

What does it cost to live in Mauritius today? Two years ago, Father Dethise investigated this very matter. He published some typical workers' budgets; and found that most workers were earning insufficient to feed themselves and their families properly. A worker had a monthly income of Rs 150.00 on which to keep himself, his wife and three children. On food alone the family spent Rs 114.12 a month — three-

quarters of his wages! But the average spent on food alone by a family with three children was Rs 120 a month; and since February 1956, prices of all commodities have certainly not gone down. Another worker's family spent more than the average on food — Rs 133.10 a month — to provide what the Health Department considered a reasonably balanced diet for a man, his wife, and their children.

But as Father Dethise pointed out, a family of four children is more normal in Mauritius than a family of three; and if Rs 133 a month provided only a reasonable diet for five persons, what sort of a diet would it buy for a larger number? Concluded Father Dethise, *une dépense de Rs 120 pour une famille ordinaire est probablement juste assez, sûrement rien de trop et peut-être un peu trop peu*. A family of man and wife and 9 children spent Rs 122.40 a month on food, of which Rs 67.20 went on rice alone, and only Rs 6.00 (just one pint of milk a day) on milk.

These typical budgets have been supplemented in later months by details of personal expenditure given in letters to the press by other workers. They show that the present level of wages paid to workers on the sugar estates, in private employment, and under "Other Charges", is too low. The Working Party 2 should scrap the 1939 basis of wage assessment and award a level of wages which bears a relationship to the cost of life in Mauritius today. What did Father Dethise say two years ago? *Arrivé au terme de l'enquête dont j'ai été chargé, il me reste à faire une simple addition... Pour une famille ordinaire :*

Nourriture: Rs 120; Loyer: Rs 25; Vêtements: Rs 30; Accessoires: Rs 40. Total - Rs 215

And since the working month is 26 days long, a man must have a daily wage of over Rs 8.00 to pay out Rs 215.00 a month. And he must be in work all the year round — which most Mauritian workers are not.

Since Father Dethise's findings are based on actual examination of worker's budgets, and since prices have not



fallen since 1956, it follows that, to achieve a minimum of social justice for the workers of Mauritius, the Working Party must fix a minimum wage of at least Rs 8.50 a day for the very lowest paid daily-paid workers.

I hope, however, that the Working Party will get away, once and for all, from this business of daily rates of pay. It is high time that wages were expressed at an hourly rate. Said Ramage (paragraph 147) "a daily rate is convenient in a certain stage of industrial and commercial development, although in more advanced industrial communities it is replaced by an hourly basis for wages... With the increasing emphasis placed on hours of work, the logical development is to apply a similar hourly basis to wages, as is already the practice in most overtime."

Ramage failed to recommend the institution of an hourly basis for wage rates; perhaps Working Party 2 will do so. It should do so. And it should lay down, very definitely and categorically, that all hours worked in excess of 8 per day are overtime and should be paid for at overtime rates. This may appear to be an infringement of trade union activity but if the principle can be established in a Government report that an 8-hour day is standard, with hours in excess of 8 paid for as overtime, then non-Government workers can have a useful handle to refer to in their negotiations with private employers, many of whom at present do not always recognise when overtime starts. If Government gives the lead, then private enterprise must fall into line.



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The Night of the Three-eyed One

Ravina Ramlugun

One of the most popular festivals in India and Mauritius is indisputably Mahashivratri, which means the great night of Lord Shiva. The night of "Shivratri" is said to be the longest one of the year. It is a night of meditation aimed at cleansing the impurities accumulated during the year. Interestingly, most Hindu festivals are celebrated during the day, but Mahashivratri is celebrated throughout the night; there is undeniably a reason behind this.

What is the story behind this popular festival?

There once lived deep in the forest a hunter named Lubdaka with his wife and children. Every day, it was his duty to go and search for food for his family. As usual, one day, Lubdaka set out to the forest looking for a prey. After crossing several clearings, streams and rivers, he still could not find anything. However, thinking of his hungry children and wife, he went on, deeper and deeper into the forest.

Soon, the sun set. Lubdaka thought of his wife's loving embrace and his children in their peaceful slumber, but he was very far from it all! He realised that he had entered too deep into the forest. The shrieks and shrills of wild animals were heard and he had to look for a shelter at once.

There was a large Bael tree near him, and he decided to climb up so that he could spot any sign of danger and stay away from it. That night there was clearly no way sleep would come to him. To pass the time, he plucked one leaf at a time and dropped it to the ground. It is said that Bael leaves are very sacred as Goddess Lakshmi resides in



them. By sunrise, Lubdaka had dropped thousands of those leaves onto a Shiva Linga which happened to be just under the tree. Unaware of all this, however, he went back home as usual.

Time went by and Lubdaka's hour of death drew near. As he was a vile hunter, his soul was being taken to the hell of Yama. But Lord Shiva, who is very loving and pleased by simple offerings, caught sight of what was happening and sent his troop to the hunter's rescue. Eventually, Lord Yama agreed to hand over Lubdaka and the latter was taken to the heaven of Lord Shiva.

Thus, it can be perceived that whatever be one's status, s/he can undoubtedly please the all-powerful One and obtain His blessings. It is for this reason that Lord Shiva is also known as Bholenath, the Merciful One. (It is worthy of mention that there are other stories associated with the origin of Mahashivratri - however, the one of Lubdaka is the most popular.)

The domains of Lord Shiva

Besides, to shower His grace on the habitants of the earth, Lord Shiva chose certain areas as his domains of special effect. It is nearly impossible to count the number of mountains and rivers the earth has. However, out of all these regions, Lord Shiva has blessed some with more spiritual potency than others. Out of those specific *Kshetras*, some have been created by the celestials devoted to the Lord and others have been founded by seers and holy men. One such popular place is the city of Kashi, situated on the bank of the river Ganga. Another one is the Holy Godavari.

In Mauritius, such a place is unquestionably the Ganga Talao - a well-known lake in a secluded mountain area and the most important Hindu site. In the year 1992, a Jyotirlinga (luminous symbol of Lord Shiva) was consecrated at the Ganga Talao.

"Om Namaha Shivaya"

Also, it can be seen that at the Ganga Talao, there is all the time the utterance of the mantra "Om Namaha Shivaya". Indeed, the festival of Shivratri cannot be complete without this mantra. "Om Namaha Shivaya" means "I Bow down to Shiva". However, if we break down the mantra, we can have a glimpse of its depth:

Om: it is the primordial sound, the sound of creation and the first vibration that emerged out of the void and silence that existed before creation.

Namah: I offer my most humble salutations.

Shivaya: To Shiva, the most auspicious One, the Great God and the Master of time.

Chanting this mantra will bring one peace, mental clarity and happiness and will clear off grief and stress. It also helps in attracting positive energy and protecting one from negative energy.

A night of sanctity and self-reflection

Along with chanting this mantra, there are several other means by which a devotee can please the Lord and receive His blessings. Devotees may choose to show their love to the Unborn One on this night by fasting the whole day, by reading the Shiva Purana, by walking with Kanwars on their shoulders from their home to Ganga Talao, by serving other devotees with Prasad and by staying up the whole night to meditate on Lord Shiva. At the stroke of midnight, Shiva is said to manifest as the inner light of pure consciousness. If one follows this path of preparation, purification and celebration, then only can one experience the real meaning of Shivratri.

Karma and Humanism

K.R. Moorateeah

Karma means action and the consequence of actions. Everything that is of the material realm exists because of cause and effect. A cause is a condition, reason for why there is a resultant effect or consequence. It is an invisible force that influences the destiny of a person, a family, a nation or the world. Good karma creates karmic income and bad karma generates karmic debt. Often sufferings are the consequences of karmic debt that one has to pay back. There is a cause for everything that happens - what you sow is what you'll reap. The pain that you endure now is the effect of your past negative actions, you will also reap the reward for all your good karma or benevolent actions. There is a perfect order in all that happens. Nothing occurs randomly or by coincidence.

When we exhibit a negative force in action, thought or word, that negative energy will come back to us. Every action must have a reaction. When we speak, think or act, we imitate a force that will react accordingly. This returning force may be modified, changed or suspended but most people will not be able to eradicate it. Karma is not a

punishment; it is more of a state of nature like magnetism — like attracts like. When a bird is alive, it eats ants; when the bird is dead, ants eat the bird. Time and circumstance can change at any time. Giving away money will not necessarily result in receiving money especially as it depends on the energy behind the gift. If money is offered for the selfish reason of desire to receive, then the karmic energy being sent out is actually selfishness, and it is on that level that the karmic energy will return. Do not devalue or hurt anyone in life, you may be powerful today but remember time is more powerful than you.

The three major laws of karma are the laws of harvest, the law of lag time and the law of multiplier effect. The three laws of karma have an effect on all that you attract in your life, family, people, events, wealth and happiness.

Law of harvest

As you sow, so you reap.

Do unto others what you want others do unto you.

Do not do unto others what you do not want others do unto you.

Rejoice in others' success. Be compassionate.



Do the best, leave the rest.

Law of lag time

Just as marigold can blossom in a few weeks while a seed of mango takes years to give fruits, in the same way you will reap the fruits of some actions quickly while some other actions can mature after much time and even after many lifetimes.

Law of multiplier effect

Although it takes long to reap the mangoes, after you have sown the seed, you do not get just one but many mangoes which when matured return to you manifold.

When a person is highly enlightened, karma becomes clear to him.

We are all children of the same God. Truth is eternal and nobody's property. No individual can lay any exclusive claim to it. Truth never comes where lust, fame or gain reside. Whether religion is God-ordained or otherwise, God does not favour one religion over another, but God hears the yearning and the sincere request for help whether they come from the religiously oriented or

from the secular population, God knows the plight of humanity and listens to the language of the heart. Also, God does not hear the prayers of those who are arrogant or disrespectful, are not compassionate and intolerant, and show no good qualities of humanism. Humanism like spirituality is about self-realization, a personal journey, not talk, not doctrine, not theories however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming - not hearing or acknowledging.

Faith should be more behaviour than belief. As long as faith in the concept of the universality of the supreme is a common factor and there is respect for different forms of identification or a form of the supreme with full tolerance for differing views, there is no danger. The moment one asserts that a particular form of the concept of the supreme alone is true, then it leads to intolerance and unavoidable conflict.

Many so-called religious wars have been fought throughout the ages over an interpretation of the same experience. We need to respect each other's boundaries. You should set a standard for yourself; if you live life according to your own standard and do not let anyone keep you from following your life path, then others will see you as someone they can trust and respect. Do not go by blind faith, only by trial and error can you really learn what is right for you and what is not.

Risk of Armageddon in Ukraine

● Cont. from page 4

Earlier this week, the Russian Security Council held an extraordinary meeting which was broadcast live to take stock of the reaction of the US and NATO to Russia's request for security guarantees to comfort its concerns over NATO's eastward expansion. The Russian Security Council was told that Western countries continued to ignore Russia's fundamental security concerns. The Council also examined the request of the two Russian speaking breakaway 'republics' of Donetsk and Lugansk in eastern Ukraine to recognize them. Amidst reports of hardships faced by the population in these regions including not having access to water and rising number of refugees arriving in Russia, the Council which includes the country's top officials approved the recognition of the two 'republics.' which Russia has backed since 2014.

After informing French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz by phone, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed two decrees recognizing 'the People's Republics of Luhansk (LPR) and Donetsk (DPR)' as independent and sovereign states. A Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance was signed between Russia and the heads of the two 'republics.' Russia's parliament agreed to President Putin's request to use the country's military forces outside the country. The Russian President ordered Russian troops into the two 'republics' to ensure peace. Will this potential game changer escalate the conflict?

Sanctions

As expected, the US, UK, the EU, and other Western countries have imposed sanctions on Russia, after it recognised two rebel-held areas of Eastern Ukraine and



sent troops there. The US barred 'new investment, trade and financing by US persons to, from, or in' the two Russia-backed breakaway republics. Germany has suspended the approval of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline meant to carry natural gas directly from Russia to northern Germany.

However, despite calls from Ukraine urging its Western allies for tough actions, the steps taken by Russia have not triggered the full range of sanctions Western nations have been preparing. Although more US troops could be sent in Eastern Europe, the US President has clearly stated that no US troops will be deployed in Ukraine as US and Russian troops shooting at each other would be a World War. According to a recent poll, 57% of Americans said the US should not send troops into Ukraine if Russia invades.

Big winners

There is more to an armed conflict than meets the eye. The big winners of any armed conflict and war are the largest weapons companies in the world. As the US gets

more and more involved in the growing conflict between Ukraine and Russia, two of the largest weapons companies in the world, namely Raytheon and Lockheed Martin are openly telling their investors that tensions between the countries are good for business.

The Biden administration declared last month that as advanced weaponry including Javelin missiles (produced through a joint venture between Raytheon and Lockheed Martin) were being shipped to Ukraine, US military advisors will continue to stay in the country to presumably set up and teach the Ukrainian army how to use these weapons systems.

Interviewed on CNBC last month, Raytheon CEO when asked about the role the company could play in arming US allies said that 'we have some defensive weapons systems that we could supply which could be helpful, like the Patriot missile system or some of the radar systems.' He spoke of the tensions in Eastern Europe and in the South China Sea and candidly added that 'I fully expect we're going to see some benefit from it.'

The chairman, president and CEO of Lockheed Martin suggested to investors that 'this great competition between superpowers bodes more business for the company.'

As evidenced in so many war-torn countries like Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan or Yemen, the losers and collateral casualties of armed conflict are always the people of these countries.

Will these developments strike a new balance of the power play in the region, or will the conflict escalate and trigger a destructive Armageddon?

Mrinal Roy

The Conversation

Eight changes the world needs to make to live with Covid

● Cont. from page 2

There's nothing normal about upending decades of progress by simply accepting a serious new disease like Covid without actively attempting to mitigate it.

The good news is that we can mitigate it. We can accept that the world has changed and make adaptations based on what we have learned from the last two years. Here are eight key changes that can reduce the future impact of Covid:

1. Outdoors is pretty safe - so let's make indoor air as much like the outdoors as possible. This will involve large investment in infrastructure to improve ventilation and to filter and clean the air. This isn't simple, but neither was bringing clean water and electricity to every home. We know how to do it and it will be effective against any future variant and any airborne disease.

2. Vaccines remain crucial. We need to vaccinate the world as soon as possible to save lives and slow down the emergence of new variants. We also need to

keep working towards vaccines that are longer lasting and more variant proof.

3. We've learned that acting sooner rather than later is crucial to containing outbreaks and preventing spread to other countries. So we need to invest in global surveillance of new Covid variants and other new infectious diseases.

4. Most countries already have routine surveillance for serious infectious diseases (such as flu and measles) and plans in place to mitigate their impact. Countries need to add permanent surveillance of Covid infection rates to existing programmes, to keep track of how much Covid is circulating, where and in which communities.

5. We still know too little about the long-term impacts of Covid, though we do know it can cause long-lasting organ damage and result in long Covid. We need to invest in understanding, preventing and treating these impacts.

6. Many health systems were already struggling before Covid hit, and have

since had their resilience further depleted by the pandemic. Investment in health systems is urgently needed, particularly in winter seasons where the additional burden of Covid will be most acutely felt.

7. Covid has hit the most disadvantaged the hardest. Those least able to afford to self-isolate are also more likely to work outside the home, use public transport and live in overcrowded housing - all risk factors for catching the virus. Increased exposure is coupled with lower vaccination rates and poorer health among disadvantaged groups, leading to worse outcomes if infected. Countries need to invest more in reducing inequalities: in health, housing, workplaces, sick pay and education. This will make all of us more resilient to future outbreaks and reduce ill health and death - not just from Covid but everything else too.

8. Finally, there will still be future waves of Covid- the above will simply reduce their frequency and scale. We need to have a plan to deal with these. Excellent

national surveillance systems will help rapidly identify an outbreak and understand how much ill health is being caused and immunity evaded - all of which will help tailor an appropriate temporary response. A response might, for instance, include escalating testing, reintroducing masks and working from home where possible.

Such plans should enable us to avoid long widespread lockdowns. Refusing to learn to live with Covid by pretending the old normal exists is in fact the biggest risk for future lockdowns.

We need to move on from the denial and anger stages of grief and on to accepting that the world is different now. Then, we can take control and build a way of living that is designed to contain the virus while allowing all of us - including the clinically vulnerable - to lead freer and more healthy lives.

Christina Pagel, Professor of Operational Research, University College London

4 plant-based foods to eat every week (and why science suggests they're good for you)



Clare Collins, Laureate Professor in Nutrition and Dietetics, University of Newcastle

As a laureate professor in nutrition and dietetics people often ask – what do you eat?

Plant-based foods are good sources of healthy nutrients. These include different types of dietary fibre, vitamins, minerals, and a range of “phytonutrients”, which plants produce to help them grow or protect them from pathogens and pests.

A review of research published in May 2021 looked at 12 studies with more than

500,000 people who were followed for up to 25 years. It found those who ate the most plant foods were less likely to die from any cause over follow-up time periods that varied across the studies from five to 25 years, compared to those who ate the least.

Here are four versatile and tasty plant foods I have on my weekly grocery list, and the research showing why they're good for you.

1. Tomatoes

Tomatoes are a berry fruit (not a vegetable). They're rich in vitamin C and “lycopene”, which is a carotenoid. Carotenoids are pigments produced by plants and give vegetables their bright colours.

A review of six trials asked people to consume tomato products equivalent to 1-1.5 large tomatoes or 1-1.5 cups of tomato juice daily for about six weeks.

The researchers found people who did this had reduced blood levels of triglycerides (a type of fat in your blood that increases heart disease risk), as well as lower total and “bad” cholesterol levels, compared to those who didn't have any tomatoes.

These people also had increased levels of “good cholesterol”.

Another review of 11 studies tested the effect of tomatoes and lycopene on blood pressure.

Researchers found consuming any tomato products led to a large decrease in systolic blood pressure (the first number that measures the pressure at which the heart pumps blood).

However, there was no effect on the diastolic pressure (the second number which is the pressure in the heart when it relaxes).

In the group who had high blood pressure to begin with, both systolic and diastolic blood pressure decreased after eating tomato products compared to placebos.

A review of studies included a total of 260,000 men and found those with the highest intakes of cooked tomatoes, tomato sauces and tomato-based foods (equivalent to around one cup per week) had a 15-20% lower risk of developing prostate cancer compared to those with the lowest tomato intakes. Keep in mind correlation doesn't necessarily mean causation, though.

Recipe tips

Keep canned tomatoes in the cupboard and add to



Pumpkins, carrots and sweet potato have high levels of beta-carotene, which has health benefits. Pic - Shutterstock

pasta sauce, casseroles and soup. Make your own sauce by roasting tomatoes and red capsicum with a splash of olive oil and balsamic vinegar, then puree with a spoon of chilli paste or herbs of your choice. Keep in the fridge.

Try our fast tomato recipes at No Money No Time, a site full of dietary advice and recipes founded by my team at the University of Newcastle.

2. Pumpkin

Pumpkin is rich in beta-carotene, which is also a carotenoid (plant pigment). It gets converted into vitamin A in the body and is used in the production of antibodies that fight infection. It's also needed to maintain the integrity of cells in eyes, skin, lungs and the gut.

A review of studies that followed people over time looked at associations between what people ate, blood concentrations of beta-carotene and health outcomes.

People who had the highest intakes of foods rich in beta-carotene (such as pumpkin, carrots, sweet potato and leafy greens) had an 8-19% lower relative risk of having coronary heart disease, stroke, or dying from any cause in studies over 10 years or more compared to those with the lowest intakes.

Recipe tips

Pumpkin soup is a favourite. Try our design-your-own soup recipe.

Heat oven to 180°, chop the pumpkin into wedges, drizzle with olive oil, roast till golden. Speed it up by microwaving cut pumpkin for a couple of minutes before roasting.

3. Mushrooms

Mushrooms are rich in nutrients with strong antioxidant properties.

The body's usual processes create oxidative stress, which generates “free radicals”. These are small particles that damage cells walls and cause the cells to die.

If these aren't neutralised by antioxidants, they can trigger inflammation, contribute to ageing and development of some cancers.

A review of 17 studies on mushrooms and health found people who ate the most mushrooms had a 34% lower risk of developing any type of cancer com-

pared to those with lowest intakes. For breast cancer, the risk was 35% lower. Though, again, correlation doesn't necessarily mean causation.

Across the studies, a high mushroom intake was equivalent to eating a button mushroom a day (roughly 18 grams).

Recipe tips

Check out our mushroom and baby spinach stir-fry recipe. It makes a tasty side dish to serve with scrambled or poached eggs on toast.

4. Oats

A review of ten studies tested the effects on blood sugar and insulin levels from eating intact oat kernels, thick rolled oats or quick rolled oats compared to refined grains.

These found eating intact oat kernels and thick rolled oats led to significant reductions in blood glucose and insulin responses, but not after eating quick rolled oats.

This is likely due to the longer time it takes for your body to digest and absorb the less-processed oats. So it's better to eat whole grain oats, called groats, or rolled oats rather than quick rolled oats.



Tomatoes are high in vitamin C and other important healthy nutrients. Pic - Shutterstock

Oats are a good source of beta-glucan, a soluble fibre shown to help lower blood cholesterol levels.

Across 58 studies where people were fed a special diet containing about 3.5 grams of oat beta-glucan a day, “bad” cholesterol levels were significantly lower compared with control groups.

The impact of oats on blood pressure has been tested in five intervention trials which showed a small, but important, drop-in blood pressure.

Recipe tips

You can eat rolled oats for breakfast year round.

Eat them as muesli in summer or porridge in winter, add to meat patties, mix with breadcrumbs for coatings or add to fruit crumble toppings.

Haunted-house experience scares up interesting insights

The so-called fight-or-flight response is evolution's way of preparing the body to defend itself or flee from a real or perceived threat, like a lion in the tall grass or -- in modern times -- an overdue performance review.

In new research published in the journal 'Psychological Science', researchers used a haunted-house experience to study participants' subjective and physiological responses to perceived threats in a safe yet immersive environment.

In this haunted-house setting, which included 17 rooms with various threats that formed an uninterrupted experience, the researchers examined how the body responds to threats differently depending on the social context (whether friends were around), features of the threats (whether they were expected), and emotions (whether individuals felt afraid).

"There are a lot of factors that influence how human bodies respond to threat," said Sarah M. Tashjian, of the California Institute of Technology and lead author of the study. "We found that friend-related emotional contagion, threat pre-

dictability, and subjective feelings of fear were all relevant for the body mounting a response."

All of these factors help increase a person's ability to survive when under threat, but in the study, each had slightly different influences, which demonstrate the dynamic nature of the sympathetic nervous system.

To study the effects of frightening experiences, previous studies used scary images, mild electric shocks, or loud noises. In the current study, 156 participants went through the haunted house in small groups. During the 30-minute experience, they encountered situations that mimicked the threat of suffocation, an oncoming speeding car, and a volley of shots (with pellets) from a firing squad.

Participants wore real-time physiological-monitoring wristbands to measure their electrodermal activity, or sweat-induced changes in the skin's electrical characteristics, including skin conductance level and skin conductance response.

Before visiting the haunted house, par-



ticipants rated their expected fear on a scale from 1 to 10. Afterward, they rated their experienced fear level on the same scale. From these data, four factors were examined, including group composition, threat imminence, intrapersonal factors of fear, and a "baseline orienting response," or the participant's sensitivity to threats.

Results showed a positive association between the number of friends in a group and tonic arousal, which reflects the body's overall physical response to stress or emotion. On average, the more friends that participants had with them while touring the haunted house, the higher their physical response.



Why is February shorter than every other month?

The answer comes from how the Romans measured the year

The reason February is shorter than other months comes down to the history of how we measure and divide the year.

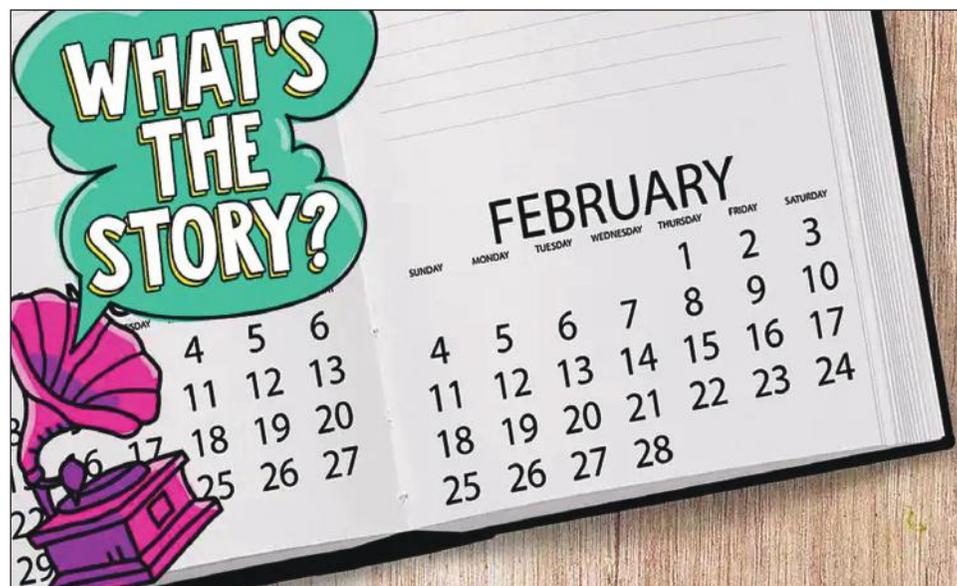
We know that the Earth takes 365 days and just under six hours to go around the Sun. The division of those days into twelve months is a human invention to measure time. But it hasn't always been divided that way.

In the first surviving ancient Roman calendar, there were ten months. The calendar was shaped by the agricultural year, so began in spring with March and ended 304 days later in December. There was no work to be done in the fields during the two months of winter, and the rest of days in the year were simply not counted in the calendar.

In 731BC Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome, decided to line the calendar up with the phases of the moon. There are 12 cycles of the moon each year, so the calendar was divided into twelve months. January and February were added and the new calendar year lasted 355 days.

The Romans believed that even numbers were unlucky, so the length of the months in Pompilius' calendar alternated between 29 or 31 days. However, the length of the calendar year meant that the final month – February – was left with only 28.

In Rome, February was linked with rituals of purification, or februum – giving it its name. During the festival of Lupercalia



purification ceremonies took place to prepare buildings and people for the feasts and sacrifices of the festival. During the festival of Feralia food and gifts were brought to cemeteries, to honour the dead and keep them happy so they would not rise and haunt the living.

However, a calendar year lasting 355 days created its own problems. Because the Earth takes longer than this to go round the Sun, as years went by the months and the seasons started to fall out of alignment. So an extra month called Mercedonius was added to the calendar before the start of March.

Mercedonius was not used every year. It was added whenever it was necessary

to re-align the months and the seasons. It had either 27 or 28 days, creating a year that lasted for either 377 or 378 days.

But this had unfortunate consequences for February. Mercedonius started on 24th February, cutting four days from a month that was already the shortest in the calendar. And although Mercedonius helped to link the months with the seasons, its use was unpredictable. People living far from Rome might not realise that the extra month had been added to the calendar.

Another calendar

Another new calendar tried to fix this problem. In the Julian Calendar, named after Julius Caesar and dating from 45

BCE, a year lasted 365 days.

None of the extra ten days were added to February. There were twelve months, each of which were the same length as in our calendar. To keep the calendar accurate, an extra day was added to February once every four years – a leap year.

However, an extra day each four years is actually a bit too much to correct the difference between a 365-day year and the 365 and just under a quarter days in which the Earth orbits the Sun. By the middle of the sixteenth century, the Julian calendar was out of alignment with the seasons and cycles of the year by ten days.

This led to the creation of another calendar. The Gregorian Calendar was introduced in 1582, named after Pope Gregory XIII, and is still in use today. In the Gregorian calendar, no century year can be a leap year unless it is exactly divisible by 400 - so 2000 was a leap year, with an extra day in February, but not 1900. This prevents the problems caused by the Julian calendar.

This sounds simple enough, but that ten-day error in the Julian calendar still needed to be corrected. In 1582, ten days were taken out of the calendar in countries that adopted the Gregorian calendar. This meant that the day after 4 October was 15 October - and the dates in between never existed.

**Helen Parish, Professor in History,
University of Reading**



To whom it may concern

“Mr Martin was 75 yrs old, had two stents put in, was feeling very frisky. He approached his wife, who immediately told him that she was afraid he could die of exertion if he got frisky with her.

Despite his pleading, she said that if his doctor said it was ok then she would relent.

He goes immediately to his doc who examines him carefully and passes him fit. He asks the doc to give him a letter to say he was ok and fit.

The doc obliges and writes the letter. It stated: 'Dear Mrs Martin, Mr Martin is very healthy and could easily pass as a young man of 30 in any physical activity that involved sex. In fact he might prove to be younger now that he has two stents. Yours sincerely, Doc Ebrahim'

The old man reads the letter and is very satisfied. He tells the doc to make a small change to the letter. He says, 'Could you please remove Mrs Martin and put 'To whom it may concern'.

Two men, one American and one Indian were sitting in a bar and discussing about their family problems. The Indian told the American, "We have problems in India, we cannot marry the one whom we love, my parents are forcing me to get married to a homely girl from the village whom I haven't even seen once. We call it arranged marriage, I don't love -- I told them that openly and now have a hell lot of family issues."

The American said, talking about love marriages, "In US we can marry the one

woman whom we love. I'll tell you my story: I married a widow whom I deeply loved and dated for two years. After a couple of years, my father fell in love with my step-daughter and married her, so my father became my son-in-law, and I became my father's father-in-law.

"Legally my daughter is my mother, and my wife my grandmother. More problems occurred when I had a son; my son is my father's brother and so my uncle.

"Situations turn worse when my father had a son, now my father's son. My brother is my grandson. Ultimately, I have become my own grandfather and I am also my own grandson, and you say you have family problems."

The Indian fainted.

Husband to wife: "Today is a fine day."

Again, the next day, he says the same thing: "Today is a fine day."

Finally, after a week, the wife can't take it and asks the husband: "Since a week, you are saying, 'Today, is a fine

day'. I'm fed up. What's the matter?"

Husband: "Last week when we had an argument, you said - 'I will leave you one fine day.' I was just trying to remind you."

On a bus, the priest sat next to a drunk.

Suddenly, with a slurred voice, the drunk asked the priest: "Do you know what arthritis is?"

The parish priest soon thought of taking the opportunity to lecture the drunk and replied: "It's a disease caused by sinful and unruly life: excess, consumption of alcohol, drugs, marijuana, crack, and certainly lost women, prostitutes, promiscuity, sex, binges and other things I dare not say."

The drunk widened his eyes, shut up and continued reading the newspaper.

A little later the priest, thinking that he had been too hard on the drunk, tried to soften: "How long have you had arthritis?"

"I don't have arthritis! It says here in the paper that the head priest has it.

That's Life

Dumb asses

King wanted to go fishing, and he asked the royal weather forecaster the forecast for the next few hours.

The palace meteorologist assured him that there was no chance of rain.

So, the King and the Queen went fishing. On the way, he met a man with a fishing pole riding on a donkey, and he asked the man if the fish were biting.

The fisherman said, "Your Majesty, you should return to the palace! In just a short time I expect a huge rainstorm."

The King replied: "I hold the palace meteorologist in high regard. He is an educated and experienced professional. Besides, I pay him very high wages. He gave me a very different forecast. I trust him."

So, the King continued his way. However, in a short time a torrential rain fell from the sky. The King and Queen were totally soaked. Furious, the King returned to the palace, and gave the order to fire the meteorologist.

Then he summoned the fisherman and offered him the prestigious position of royal forecaster.

The fisherman said, "Your Majesty, I do not know anything about forecasting. I obtain my information from my donkey. If I see my donkey's ears drooping, it means with certainty that it will rain."

So, the King hired the donkey.

And thus began the practice of hiring dumb asses to work in influential positions of government.

The practice is unbroken to this day.

Learn to detach

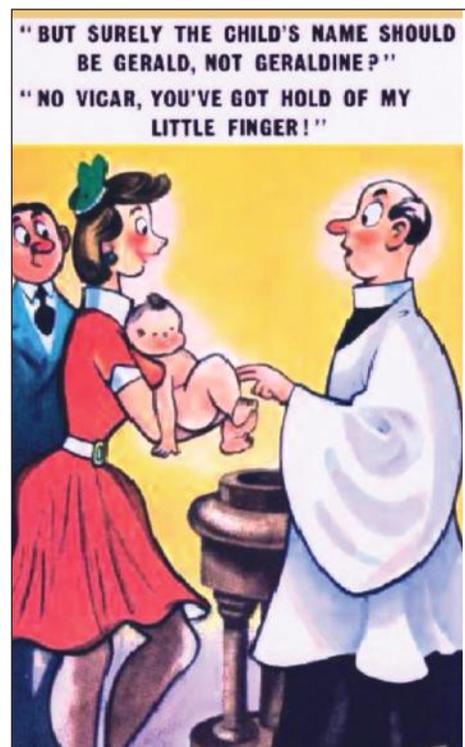
A lady (85) is thinking of leaving

Mumbai and shifting to a senior citizens colony near Pune. Her husband passed away many years ago.

She educated and married her three daughters who are now US citizens. They have two kids each who are now in High School/College. The lady travelled to US on her own many times. She lived there for six months or more on six occasions when her daughters delivered babies.

The other day she became emotional and disclosed her plan to settle for assisted living in an old age home here and that she had no intention to go back to the US for some reasons. One feels very sorry for her life in her sunset years.

Please read the article below. The lady was feeling the same way as the author of the article — a retired writer, who expressed emotion when she was about to go to a nursing home.



Thoughts to Live by

I wept after reading this judge's sentence on a 15-year-old boy...

This was a fifteen-year-old boy. He was caught stealing bread from a store. On trying to escape from the hold of the guard, a shelf of the store was also broken.

The judge heard the crime and asked the boy, "Did you really steal something, a loaf of bread and cheese?"

The boy responded by looking down: "Yes."

Judge: "Why?"

Boy: "I needed it."

Judge: "Couldn't you have bought it?"

Boy: "There was no money."

Judge: "Take it from the family."

Boy: "There is only a mother in the house. Sick and unemployed."

Judge: "You don't do anything?"

Boy: "Used to wash a car. When I took a day off to take care of my mother, I was fired."

Judge: "Don't you ask someone for help?"

Boy: "Had left the house since morning, went to about fifty (50) people, but no help; so, I decided to take this step at the very end."

When the arguments ended, the judge began to pronounce the verdict:

"The theft and especially the stealing of bread by a hungry boy is a very shameful crime and we are all responsible for this crime. Every person in the court, including me, is guilty and a perpetrator, so every person present here is fined ten dollars each. No one can get out of here without giving ten dollars."

Saying this, the judge took ten dollars out of his own pocket and then picked up the pen and started writing the names of all those present in court. He added:

"In addition, I fine the store a thousand dollars for handing over a hungry child to the Police. If the penalty is not deposited within 24 hours, the court will order to seal the store. Also, the Police is fined the same amount for charging a hungry boy to court. By giving the full amount of fine to this boy, the court asks for forgiveness from that boy."

After hearing the verdict, tears were pouring from the eyes of the people present in the court. The boy's handcuffs were untied, and he stood there looking at the judge for a long time. The judge came out hiding his tears.

If a hungry person is caught stealing bread, then the people of that country should be ashamed.

J'suis pas expert en oiseaux mais j'dirais 4 femelles et 1 mâle.



Why gifting is important in a relationship

There are many reasons why people find gifting important and in case you have a doubt, here are 5 main reasons which may help you realise that in any relationship, a small gift can hold a lot of meaning. It may even become priceless for the other just because you gave it. A report by TOI...

* Manifesting emotions

Words of love, adulation are amazing in a relationship but sometimes gifting something with a certain relevance for the other person is important too. If you are unable to express your feelings, why not get a little something for your partner which is thoughtful and meaningful. This makes your partner not only feel special but also understand what you have not been able to say in so many words.

* Show gratitude

If your partner isn't the type who would ask you for a present or a gift, then a little something he or she likes as gratitude for always being there for you is the best step. Words play a role, you do say thank you but when words fall short for what you really feel, a small gift goes a long way.

* As an apology

You are not buying your way out if that is your thought here. Sometimes a mere sorry is nothing or not enough

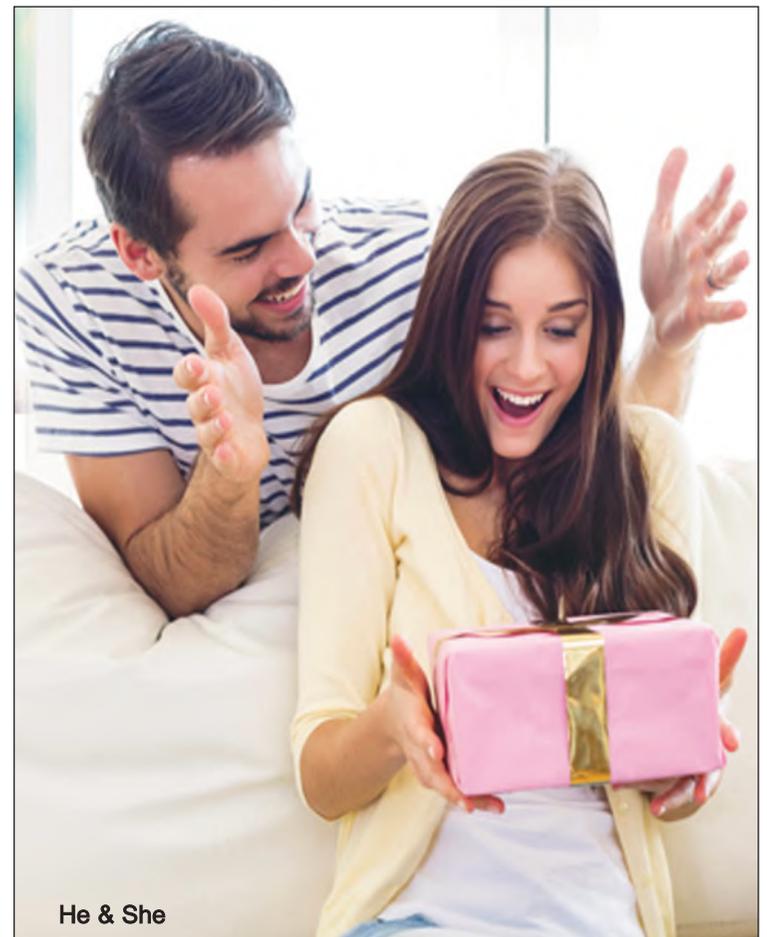
depending on what you have done. If it gets tough to pacify your partner, because you have hurt them way too much, a thoughtful gift can do wonders. A personal touch means a lot to us as humans because all we want to see is the effort, he/she has put in. It becomes a symbol of our feeling; how sorry we are.

* Milestone celebrations

In a relationship, every day counts. It is up to us how memorable we make that journey. You cannot remember each day but what you can do is mark some anniversaries, dates when something meaningful happened in his/her life. Make a mental note, do something special for them to mark it. Taking them out for lunch or dinner and celebrating it with champagne or something is an option but so is buying a nice gift which will make your partner smile (genuinely). Remember, it is the thought and effort that counts.

* Rekindling your love

Often, couples who have been together for a while now, let the spark fizzle. They forget that once this partner was a blessing. To revive it all, doing the things you used to do together when you started seeing each other is important and so is gifting them something that revives those memories. It could be anything that hits that button in them, it does not have to be expensive but thoughtful, yet again!



He & She

Healthy Living

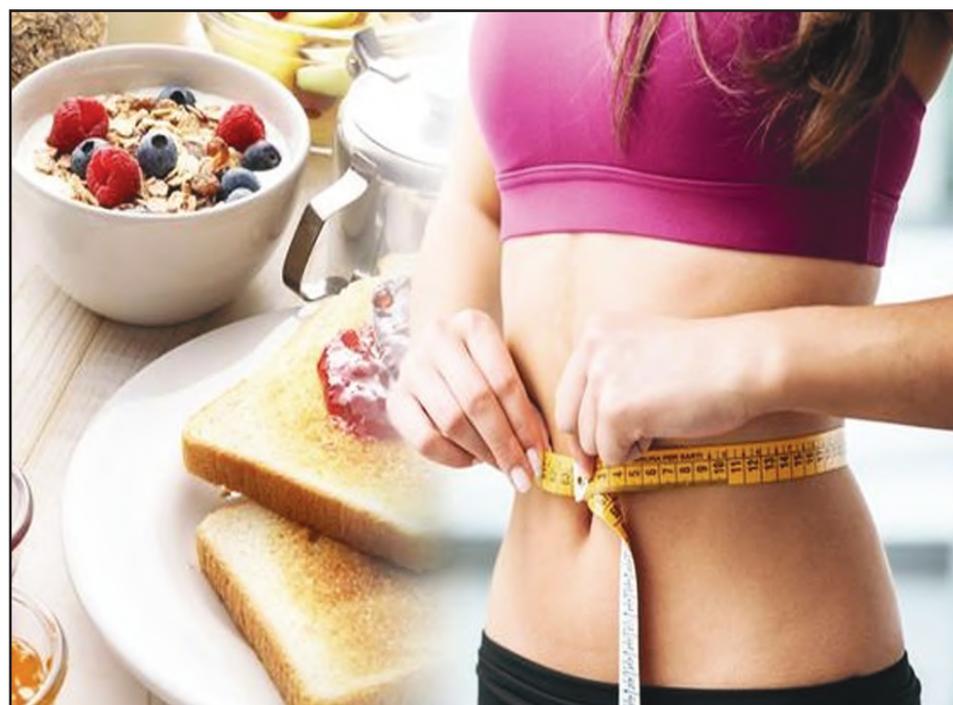
Weight Loss can be Tricky at Times

Not losing weight despite all efforts? These could be the possible reasons

A well-planned diet, a regular workout routine and all other measures to ensure that your body is functioning in an optimum manner in order to facilitate the process of weight loss. Despite trying out everything, you may meet with disappointment every time you step on the scale, and the probable reasons could vary widely. Losing weight is not the easiest task but there is definitely something wrong if you are not able to lose weight despite making all efforts in that direction. Here are some of the most probable and commonly found reasons, as reported by Times of India, that hinder weight loss.

Proteins

Proteins are vital for the body because they're the building blocks that are responsible for muscle building, repair and energy needs of the body. In addition to this, proteins also make us feel full. Proteins are vital food components that build muscle and prevents loss of lean muscle mass while speeding up the loss of fat. Considering all these benefits of protein for the body and specifically for better weight loss, it is important to include sufficient amounts of protein in your diet. Depending upon weight, the amount of protein consumed varies from person to person but falls between 40 to 80 grams



for women.

Sitting

Even if you spend an hour a day working out and breaking a sweat, it won't help if the rest of your day is characterized by a sedentary lifestyle that involves sitting for a major part of the day. An enzyme called lipase plays an important role in burning fat and sitting for long hours inhibits the proper formation of lipase in the body. Consider walking for two to three minutes in the middle of long sitting hours to improve your lipase production.

Very regular workouts

It might sound nearly impossible but working out very regularly can lead to weight gain or stagnation. After working out, people tend to eat more because they feel like they have earned it. In addition to

this, it can also promote water retention and lead to gained weight. Keeping oneself hydrated will help with losing excessive water weight and stabilize the levels of water retention in the body.

Stress

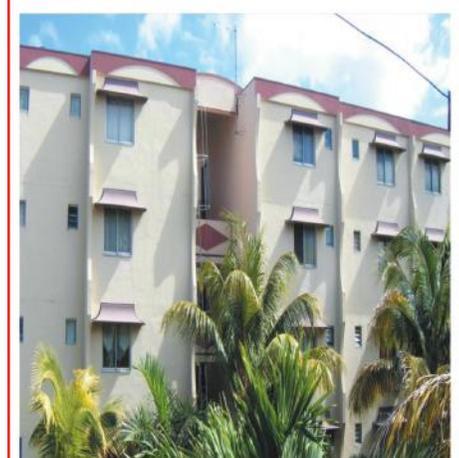
Stress hormone cortisol is responsible for triggering the fight or flight response due to which most people end up consuming a lot more food than they normally would. Cortisol stimulates the appetite and leads to comfort eating which are facilitators of gaining weight. If you try not to give in to stress cravings, cortisol will lead to a slower metabolism which will lead you the same way as your cravings.

Hydration

Are you drinking enough water? Even though all of us are well aware of the

benefits and importance of drinking water, it is mostly the reason people end up failing in their diets. Dehydration obstructs proper kidney function and the liver has to compensate for its dysfunction. Since the liver is principally involved in burning fat, it slows down its primary function to facilitate other secondary ones. Make sure you stay hydrated and add fibre to your diet gradually so that you don't get dehydrated.

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Madalsa Sharma defends her negative character, reacts to trolls



'Anupamaa' actor says 'trolling is obvious, but luckily Kavya is not a negative role of a conventional vamp'

Based on the Star Jalsha's Bengali series 'Sreemoyee', 'Anupamaa' is currently among the most loved shows on Indian television. The show is hugely successful garnering high TRPs each week. Rupali Ganguly, who achieved fame for portraying Monisha Sarabhai in the cult sitcom 'Sarabhai vs Sarabhai', plays the titular character in 'Anupamaa'.

Madalsa, who portrays the negative character of Kavya, is a huge social media celebrity as well with 1.3 million followers on Instagram. In a recent interview, she has defended her character and said that she doesn't play a conventional vamp. She

also revealed that she often has to face social media trolling when her character goes against the leading lady, Anupamaa.

As quoted by Zoom Entertainment, she said, "Trolling is obvious, but luckily Kavya is an exception; it is not a negative role of a conventional vamp. Kavya is an educated and an intelligent girl trapped in a regressive family because of her love for Vanraj. My increasing fan base and their comments are a testimony to my statement."

On her character Kavya being the centre of attraction in the show, Madalsa further added "Who doesn't like to be the centre of attention? Being an actor, I would always like to take the centre stage. It is morale boosting and complimentary,".

In real life, Madalsa Sharma is married to Mahaakshay Chakraborty, son of the veteran actor Mithun Chakraborty.

apprehensive when it came to playing a negative role. Now, when I see people responding positively to Kavya's character, I feel very overwhelmed and happy. She is so independent just like a one-man army. She never gives up in her life. So, many people are actually getting inspired by the message given through Kavya.

There have been reports of cold war going on between Rupali Ganguli and Sudhanshu Pandey. What do you have to say about that?

I don't understand from where these rumours have come from at the first place. We shoot like a family... every single day we work together, we giggle, we eat together. As for my equation with Rupali, it's very good as it is with everyone else. When we work together every day, we develop a strong bond. Sometimes, we have scenes where we look at each other as if we are going to eat each other but we burst into laughter right after the cut. Both me and Rupali have no negative feelings towards one another.

How do you handle online trolling? Does it bother you?

Luckily, out of 100, 90% are positive, 5 to 10% can be negative trolls. If there's good, there is a bad. So, it doesn't bother me, somebody's insecurities can't make me feel insecure about myself.

As an actor, what kind of roles excites you?

Something which is challenging and has different shades of emotions. Any intense character which has a lot of substance and weight excites me.

On her equation with Rupali Ganguly, cold war between the cast...

In an interview with Spotboye.com, Madalsa Sharma spoke on her 'Anupamaa' journey, bond with co-actress Rupali Ganguly and much more.

How do you feel to be a part of the popular show 'Anupamaa'?

"Touchwood, the show has been on the top since Day 1 and till now, it has maintained its top spot. It's nothing but a blessing from God. In such little time, our show has given us so much to all of us individually, so it's an amazing feeling to be connected and a part of a team.

Did you expect so much love to come your way when you signed the show?

This was my dream goal to begin with. I have always been a part of the film industry be it Bollywood, South, Punjabi or international. But I hadn't done anything in the television field so when 'Anupamaa' was offered to me, when I heard the story of the show, I got the soul completely right that time only.

Were you first apprehensive to take up a negative role?

I feel it's a grey role. So, yes of course I was

YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

You'll be preoccupied with household activities, which will bring you closer to your family. You will be greeted with cheerful gossip. Your colleagues will also deliver you some good news. But you may feel awful about your behaviour in the second half of the week.

Lucky Numbers: 15, 20, 23, 24, 30, 31

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

You will set your ego aside and accept responsibility for your faults. Accepting your flaws will not make you any less of a person; rather, it will earn you a lot of respect for your honesty. It is an excellent week to find your soul mate. The person you meet will be very good at heart.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 9, 16, 21, 23, 30

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

Don't make assumptions or put yourself under unnecessary stress. You must confront issues head-on while being stress-free. You will become more of a money minded person this week. Aquarians looking for a partner will find Taurus and Gemini as one of their most compatible matches this week.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 20, 23, 30, 36, 40

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

Your week is going to be full with surprises. You will be thankful for the presence of your loved ones. But you should not get overly sensitive to matters that do not affect you. People may be trying to get you to fall, but you should not fall for their bait. You will meet someone who will try to bring you closer to God.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 9, 15, 19, 20, 34

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

You need to interact with others in a calm manner. You could be envious of folks who have accomplished so much in their life this week. Ignore them and go about your business. This week, you will be delighted to see some good changes in your partner's behaviour.

Lucky Numbers: 11, 17, 20, 23, 26, 30

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

Excellent possibilities are identified for next week. Any substantial financial transaction should be signed. You and a business partner may have a significant quarrel about a little problem in the middle of the week. Don't be concerned; the scenario will not persist much longer.

Lucky Numbers: 11, 13, 18, 20, 30, 38

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

You might receive a significant sum of money this week with little work on your part. Work on your communication skills and avoid interfering in other people's affairs. You are more likely to get eligible to take a loan and this will boost the process of your project.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 5, 9, 10, 16, 30

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

You'll uncover solutions to your money problems. People will also offer your assistance. In the midst of the week, you will be antsy. To prevent the emptiness in your life, spend time with your friends and keep yourself cheerful.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 6, 20, 23, 26, 30

Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

On the job front, some sort of good news is conceivable. You'll earn profits in estate and land-related topics. In their projects, students will get exceptional achievements. People will criticize you in the middle of the week. Boost your self-esteem and achieve everything you set your mind to.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 7, 12, 13, 20, 30

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

This coming week, you could get some fantastic moments. Events are unfolding in your favour, and this will add a glimmer to your everyday routine. You may have a new source of money. Someone proving to be a very compatible partner for you will enter your life.

Lucky Numbers: 11, 17, 20, 30, 36, 40

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

You'll see the completion of ongoing projects. Financial clarity will be achieved. Others will respect you as a result of your efforts. You may be upset by someone. Keep your calm since you'll be moving in separate directions and it'll pass quickly.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 11, 18, 23, 24, 30

Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

You will recover from your missteps this coming week. There's a chance you'll be given a significant assignment this week. You will be reimbursed for the money you loaned. Take care of the crucial things this week. You'll be really adept at handling things.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 11, 24, 31, 36, 39

Gangubai Kathiawadi Review

Bollywood take on the mafia queen of the Mumbai underworld



Here is a luxuriously sleazy-sentimental melodrama about the Mumbai underworld, directed with gusto by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, the powerhouse Bollywood film-maker who 20 years ago had a Bafta nomination for his mighty epic *Devdas*. It is an adaptation from a tale in the true-crime reportage bestseller 'Mafia Queens of Mumbai' by Hussain Zaidi: the story of Gangubai Kathiawadi, who in the 60s was tricked and trafficked into prostitution in Mumbai's Kamathipura red-light zone, but through her survivor's ruthlessness and shrewd cultivation of political connections rose to become an underworld madam involved in drugs and violent crime. She then parlayed this gangland prestige into a media

profile, campaigning for sex workers' rights.

Alia Bhatt plays Gangubai, the innocent provincial girl who dreams of movie stardom and believes the sinister smoothie boyfriend luring her to the big city. Then she is imprisoned, raped and brutalised in the brothel, but becomes a kind of unofficial union rep for the other women and pleads for justice from a local chieftain of city politics: Karim Lala (Ajay Devgn) to whom she extends the brothel's onsite booze franchise in return. And so her upward climb begins, which involves a political duel with a rival, trans madam Raziabai, played by Vijay Raaz.

This fictionalised version omits any violence in which Gangubai was

reportedly involved and drugs are demurely replaced with alcohol being sold on the premises; when Gangubai finally evolves from being a mafia queen into a revered figure, blessed by smiling sex workers all around Mumbai, the movie loses a bit of its voltage. But there is terrific verve and audacity in this picture and some spectacular fantasy-musical set pieces. In fact, it is the streak of schmaltz within the gruesomeness which gives the story its outrageous energy. There is an entertainingly brazen quality to this movie, a brashness and recklessness to go with the mawkishness: it has a storytelling killer instinct.

Peter Bradshaw, *The Guardian*



Alia Bhatt says she was a 'sweet little girl' when she decided to marry Ranbir Kapoor

Alia Bhatt said that she wanted to marry Ranbir Kapoor from a young age, ever since she first saw him on screen. The two have been in a relationship since 2017.

In an interview, Alia opened up about constant news reports speculating about when she is tying the knot with Ranbir. She said that according to her marriage is a 'state of mind' and she already feels at peace in her relationship, reports Hindustan Times.

Speaking to India Today, Alia said, "If you ask me honestly in terms of when I will get married, well, in my head I'm already married to him. Forget that! When I saw him for the first time on screen, that was the day I decided that I wanted to marry him. That was when I was a sweet little girl. But that's what I meant and I feel it's a state of mind. It's the peace that you have in your mind, in your heart and in your relationship," she added.

Ranbir and Alia will be seen together for the first time in Ayan Mukerji's supernatural drama *Brahmastra*. The film also stars Amitabh Bachchan, Mouni Roy and Nagarjuna Akkineni. It is set to hit the theatres on September 9.

Lip-syncing sensation Kili Paul honoured by Indian HC in Tanzania

A few months ago a video of a Tanzanian brother-sister duo lip-syncing Bollywood songs perfectly had gone viral on social media. Fans have been enjoying the videos of Kili Paul for a long time and the Tanzanian content creator enjoys a fan following of over 2 million on Instagram. Now the latest news is that the Indian High Commission in Tanzania honoured Kili on Monday. They took to their Twitter handle to post about the 'special visitor' who has won the hearts of millions of Indians.

The Indian Diplomat, High Commissioner of India, Tanzania, Binaya Pradhan took to his Twitter handle to share two pictures. Sharing these pics, Binaya wrote, "Today had a special visitor at the @IndiainTanzania; famous Tanzanian



artist Kili Paul has won millions of hearts in India for his videos lip-syncing to popular Indian film songs #IndiaTanzania."

Many Bollywood actors like Ayushmann Khurrana, Gul Panag, Richa Chadha follow him. Along with lip-syncing to popular Hindi film songs, Kili Paul also presents his dancing skills in the videos. One of

Kili Paul's videos *Raatan Lambiyar* from the film *Shershaah* - in which his sister Neema also made an appearance, were particularly liked by the netizens.

Social media users have appreciated Kili Paul for maintaining his tradition and posting videos in his traditional clothes.

Cinema Sirsa

Castel – Tel Nos – 6867356 / 6971613 / 59119396 / 57069330

MOVIE: BADHAAI DO

Friday	25 Feb 2022	- 13:15
Saturday	26 Feb 2022	- 20:15
Sunday	27 Feb 2022	- 13:15
Monday	28 Feb 2022	- 20:15
Tuesday	01 March 2022	- 13:15
Wednesday	02 March 2022	- 20:15

MOVIE: GANGUBAI

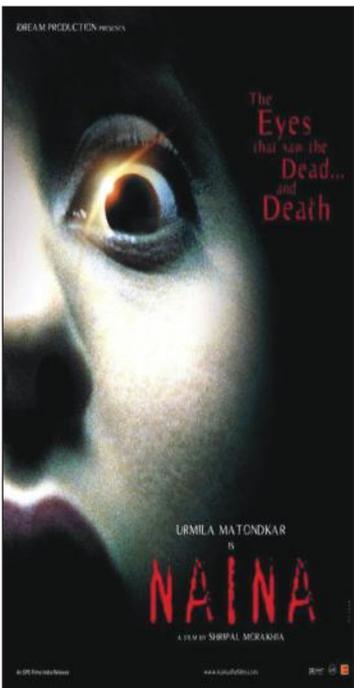
Friday	25 Feb 2022	- 20:15
Saturday	26 Feb 2022	- 13:15
Sunday	27 Feb 2022	- 16:15 / 20:15
Monday	28 Feb 2022	- 13:15
Tuesday	01 March 2022	- 20:15
Wednesday	02 March 2022	- 13:15



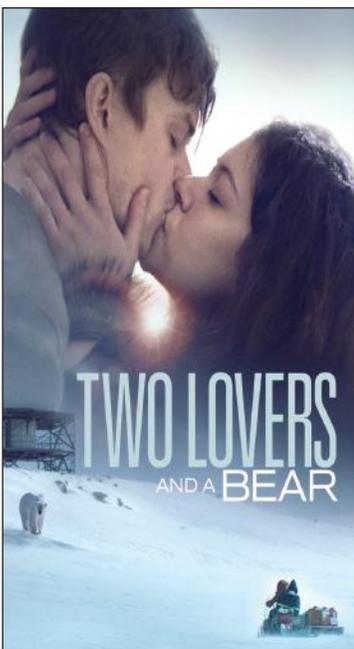
vendredi 25 février - 21.15



samedi 26 février - 21.00



dimanche 27 février - 21.15



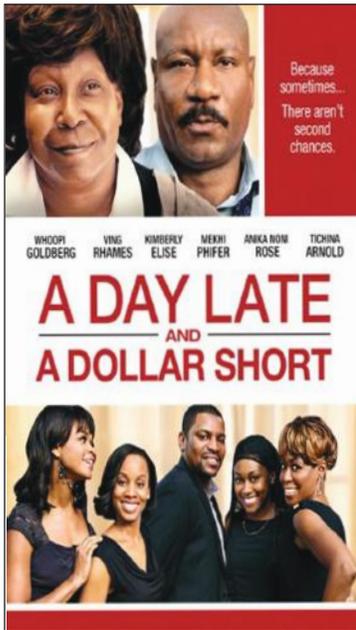
Programme TV



	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
vendredi 25 février	07.00 Local: Les Grandes Lines 09.00 Doc: Poisoned Land? 10.15 Local: Rodrig Prog 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Serial: Ode To Joy 14.15 Local: Lavi Kontinye 14.33 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill 15.20 D.Anime: Cat & Keet 15.23 D.Anime: PAF, Le Chien 16.03 D.Anime: Gummibar & Friend 17.05 Serial: Mustangs FC 17.30 Serial: Project MC 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Surya Puran 18.55 Serial: Jag Jaanani Maa Vaishnodevi 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.10 Local: Les Grands Noms... 21.15 Serial: Madam Secretary 23.20 Le Journal 23.35 Mag: Eye On SADC	07.00 DDI Live 10.00 Bisaat-E-Dil 11.01 Tawaan 12.00 Film: The Lady Dabang Starring: Altaf, Hemangini, Firoz Irani 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.20 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.42 Serial: Bommarillu 16.07 Serial: Sondha Bandham 16.25 Serial: Juda Na Hona 16.47 Serial: Imtihaan 17.05 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.25 Serial: Chhanchhan 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 Mag: DDI Mag 19.05 Zournal Kreol 19.26 Serial: Radha Krishna 19.58 Serial: AAS (Urdu Serial) 20.40 Local: Anjuman 21.00 Local: Urdu Progamme	07.00 Mag: Border Crossing 07.20 Mag: Tomorrow Today 07.46 Doc: La Route De La Soie 09.52 Doc: Legendary Hotels 11.57 Mag: Red Carpet 14.27 Treasures In The Sand 15.09 Doc: Legendary Hotels 16.37 Mag: Eco India 17.31 Mag: Border Crossing 18.00 Student Support Prog... 18.30 Local: Shiv Bhajans 19.00 Local: Excerpts From Shiv 20.05 Local: Maha Shivratri 2020 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.45 Doc: Forces Of Nature 21.37 Doc: Innovation On Board 23.23 Doc: Mega Yachts 00.19 Mag: World Stories 00.31 Mag: Our Voices 00.57 Mag: Japan Video Topics 01.27 Mag: Euromaxx	01.42 Film: Dans La Ligne Du Mire 04.24 Film: The Cleanse 05.41 Tele: Marimar 06.04 Tele: Rubi 06.26 Serial: Pine Gap 09.00 Serial: 19-2 09.45 Tele: Teresa 10.35 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 11.00 Serial: Absentia 12.00 Film: The Cleanse 13.30 Tele: Marimar 14.45 Serial: Island Doctor 16.23 Serial: 19-2 17.04 Serial: Pine Gap 18.05 Tele: Teresa 19.00 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 19.34 Serial: Backstage 20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana 20.30 Serial: Killjoys 21.15 Film: Le Second Souffle Avec: Hilary Swank, Emmy Rossum...	07.00 Film: Achanak 11.12 / 20.30 - Radha Krishna 11.43 / 21.00 - Anupamaa 12.12 / 21.30 - Mere Sai 12.42 / 22.00 - Agnihera 13.12 / 22.03 - Yeh Teri Galiyan 13.55 / 22.30 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.30 / 23.00 - Main Maike Chali Jaungi Tum Dekhte Rahiyo 15.00 / 21.46 - Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 15.25 Film: Aarakshan Starring: Amitabh Bachchan, Saif Ali Khan and Manoj Bajpai 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 19.00 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 20.00 Siddhi Vinayak 20.30 Radha Krishna
samedi 26 février	06.02 D.Anime: Invention Story 06.29 D.Anime: Gon 06.53 D.Anime: Booba 07.01 D.Anime: Cosmic Quantum... 07.52 D.Anime: Paf, Le Chien 08.26 D.Anime: Tom-Tom Et Nana 09.35 Serial: My Perfect Landing 10.00 Local Prod: Zanfan Nou Zil 12.00 Le Journal 12.35 Tele: Teresa 14.50 Local Prod: Artizan 15.20 D.Anime: Cat & Keet 15.23 D.Anime: PAF, Le Chien 16.46 D.Anime: Panda Fanfare 17.15 Serial: Creeped Out 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Taare Zameen 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.10 Local: Autour Des Valeurs... 21.10 Film: Boyhood Acteurs: Ellar Coltrane, Patricia Arquette 23.10 Local: Le Journal	07.00 Film: Samraat 10.00 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 11.03 Serial: Dikri Vahalno Dariyo 12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhya Bhare 12.17 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 12.45 Serial: High School 13.11 Annakodiyum Ainthu Pengalum 13.35 Anu Pallavi 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.25 Film: Jaisi Karni Waisi Bharnii Starring: Govinda, Kimi Katkar, Asrani, Kader Khan 18.10 DDI Magazine 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.06 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha 20.29 Serial: Porus - Ep 3 21.43 Film: Naina Starring: Urmila Matondkar...	06.00 Mag: Destination Culture 06.26 Mag: World Stories 06.55 Mag: Our Vocies 07.25 Mag: Euromaxx 07.53 Doc: Forces Of Nature 11.17 Mag: Destination Culture 11.43 Mag: World Stories 12.10 Mag: Japan Video Topics 13.11 Doc: Forces Of Nature 15.00 Student Support Prog... 18.02 Mag: Future Mag 18.31 Local: Round Table 19.00 Local: Excepts From Shiv 20.30 Local: News (English) 21.10 Des Montagnes Du Monde 21.52 Doc: Guardians Of The Desert 22.34 Doc: Northern Lights 23.17 Doc: Globestiy 00.28 Mag: In Good Shape 00.54 Mag: The 77 Percent 01.20 Mag: Check In	01.28 Film: Assassin's Code 03.04 Serial: Seal Team 03.46 Beauty And The Beast 04.27 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 05.08 Tele: Tanto Amor 05.45 Serial: Killjoys 08.27 Serial: Airwolf 09.16 Beauty And The Beast 09.53 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 10.45 Film: Le Second Souffle 12.22 Serial: Seal Team 18.31 Local: Round Table 14.52 Tele: Muneca Brava 16.07 Serial: Killjoys 16.47 Film: Gattaca 18.35 Serial: Rich Man, Poor Man 19.40 Serial: Backstage 20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana 20.30 Series: Killjoys 21.15 Film: Original Gangster Starring: Steve Guttenberg, Ian Reddington, Vas Blackwood	04.05 Radha Krishna 04.36 Anupamaa 05.03 Mere Sai -- Shradha Aur... 05.33 Agnihera 06.00 Yeh Teri Galiyan 06.34 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 06.38 Chhanchhan 06.57 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 07.18 Siddhi Vinayak 08.02 Yeh Teri Galiyan 10.35 Motu Patlu 10.47 Siddhi Vinayak 12.18 Serial: Bhakharwadi 14.13 Anupamaa 16.23 Pavitra Rishta 18.00 Samachar 18.53 Film: Hum Tum Aur Ghot Star: Arshad Warsi, Dia Mirza, Boman Irani 20.52 Serial: Motu Patlu 21.04 Serial: Namah 21.24 Serial: Naagin Season 3
dimanche 27 février	06.02 D.Anime: Invention Story 06.32 D.Anime: Gon 06.56 D.Anime: Booba 07.00 D.Anime: Commic Quantum... 09.00 D.Anime: Les Triples 10.00 Local: Zanfan Nou Zil 11.00 Local Production: Nu Rasinn 12.00 Le Journal 12.40 Tele: Teresa 14.05 Local: Elle - No 177 15.20 D.Anime: Cat & Keet 15.27 D.Anime: PAF, Le Chien 15.41 D.Anime: Robot Trains 16.18 D.Anime: Gummibar & Friend 17.20 Mag: Human Nature 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Local: Jugalbandi 19.30 Le Journal 20.20 Local Production 21.25 Film: Two Lovers And A Bear Stars: Tatiana Maslany, Dane DeHaan...	07.00 Film: Teesra Kaun 08.56 DDI Magazine 11.00 Serial: Azhagu 11.23 Jag Jaanani Maa Vaishnodevi 12.10 Film: Majboor Stars: Amitabh Bachchan, Parveen Babi, Pran, Farida Jalal 14.37 DDI Magazine 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.20 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 15.45 Serial: He Mann Baware 16.12 Serial: Sondha Bandham 16.30 Local: Yaadein 17.03 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 17.43 Chacha Bhatija 18.30 Local: Tipa Tipa Nu Avance 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol 20.05 Serial: Mann Mein Vishwas.. 20.48 Serial: CID 21.33 Serial: Naagin Season 2	06.00 Mag: Future Mag 06.55 Mag: The 77 Percent 07.28 Mag: Check In 09.07 Doc: Guardians Of The... 09.45 Doc: Northern Lights 10.21 Doc: Globesity 11.10 Mag: Future Mag 12.32 Mag: The 77 Percent 12.32 Mag: Check In 13.26 Les Montagnes Du Monde 14.08 Doc: Guardians Of The... 16.45 Mag: In Good Shape 18.00 Mag: Magnifique 19.00 Local: Excerpts of Shiv 20.01 Local: Maha Shivratri 20.30 Local Prod: News (English) 20.45 Doc: Tresors Oublies De... 22.03 Doc: Dying For Gold 22.45 Doc: Great Apes 23.55 Mag: Future Mag 00.29 Mag: The Inside Story	00.55 Film: Original Gangster 02.25 Serial: Dynasty 2 03.05 Film: Boyhood 05.43 Tele: Tanto Amor 06.25 Serial: Killjoys 07.00 Film: Signed. Sealed... 08.30 Serial: Airwolf 09.19 Film: Juste Un Peu D'alchimie 11.05 Film: Gattaca 12.47 Serial: Dynasty 2 13.23 Serial: Absentia 15.32 Tele: Muneca Brava 17.16 Serial: Killjoys 17.56 Serial: Dynasty 2 18.36 Serial: Deux Flics A Miami 19.38 Serial: Backstage 20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana 20.30 Serial: New Amsterdam 21.54 Film: The Jane Doe Identity Avec: Emile Hirsch, Brian Cox, Ophelia Lovibond...	01.00 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak 01.44 Bhakharwadi 03.40 Anupamaa 05.52 Pavitra Rishta 06.00 Motu Patlu 08.11 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 10.03 Jaana Na Dil Se Door 11.39 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 14.00 Agnihera 16.29 Punar Vivaah 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Film: Masti Starring : Ajay Devgan, Aftab Shivdasani, Vivek Oberoi, Ritesh Deshmukh, Amrita Rao, Lara Dutta 21.00 Naagin Season 3 21.42 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 23.28 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 01.13 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein
lundi 28 février	06.27 Mag: Eye On SADC 07.00 Local Prod: Nu Rasinn 07.55 Local Prod: MBC Prod 09.00 Doc: Drought In Europe 09.45 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 11.00 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous? 11.30 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Serial: Ode To Joy 14.00 Local: Zanfan Nou Zil 14.30 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill 15.20 D.Anime: Cat & Keet 15.27 D.Anime: PAF, Le Chien 15.37 D.Anime: Akili And Me 17.00 Serial: Mustangs FC 17.25 Serial: Project MC 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Namah 19.30 Le Journal 20.40 MBC Production 21.10 Film: The Stolen	07.00 DDI Live 10.00 Serial: Kundali Bhagya 12.10 Film: Ek Din Bahu Ka Stars: Suresh Oberoi, Swapna, Vijay Arora 14.00 Mag: DDI Mag 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.30 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.52 Serial: Bommarillu 16.15 Serial: Sondha Bandham 16.34 Serial: Juda Na Hona 16.56 Serial: Imtihaan 17.14 Kullfi Kumarr Bajawala 17.34 Serial: Vandhal Sridevi 18.03 Serial: Colourful Bone 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.02 Local: Programme In Telugu 20.31 Film: Irumbu Manithan Stars: Ganja'Karuppu Santhosh	06.00 Mag: Magnifique 06.55 Mag: The Inside Story 07.24 Mag: Destination Culture 08.43 Doc: Wedding The French... 11.00 Mag: Magnifique 14.44 Doc: Dying For Gold 15.29 Doc: Sur Mesure 16.06 Student Support Prog 16.33 Live: Ganga Talao 16.15 Serial: Sondha Bandham 16.34 Serial: Juda Na Hona 16.56 Serial: Imtihaan 17.14 Kullfi Kumarr Bajawala 17.34 Serial: Vandhal Sridevi 18.03 Serial: Colourful Bone 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.02 Local: Programme In Telugu 20.31 Film: Irumbu Manithan Stars: Ganja'Karuppu Santhosh	01.43 Film: The Jane Doe Identity 03.19 Serial: Absentia 04.05 Film: Le Second Souffle 05.26 Tele: Marimar 05.48 Tele: Rubi 06.09 Serial: New Amsterdam 07.55 Film: Two Lovers And A Bear 09.45 Tele: Teresa 10.35 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 11.00 Serial: Absentia 12.00 Film: Le Second Souffle 13.30 Tele: Marimar 13.45 Tele: Rubi 14.45 Film: Two Lovers And A Bear 16.32 Serial: New Amsterdam 18.08 Tele: Teresa 19.00 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You 19.38 Serial: Backstage 20.05 Les Trois Visages D'Ana 20.30 Serial: Anomalie 21.15 Film: The Vow	08.00 Film: Taare Zameen Par 11.16 / 20.30 - Radha Krishna 11.47 / 21.00 - Anupamaa 12.30 / 21.30 - Mere Sai 12.48 / 22.00 - Agnihera 13.18 / 22.03 - Yeh Teri Galiyan 14.00 / 22.30 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.30 / 23.00 - Main Maike Chali Jaungi Tum Dekhte Rahiyo 15.00 / 21.46 - Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 15.21 Film: Hum Hain Lajawab Starring: Kumar Gaurav, Padmini Kolhapure, Shakti Kapoor 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 19.00 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 19.31 Serial: Bhakharwadi 20.01 Siddhi Vinayak



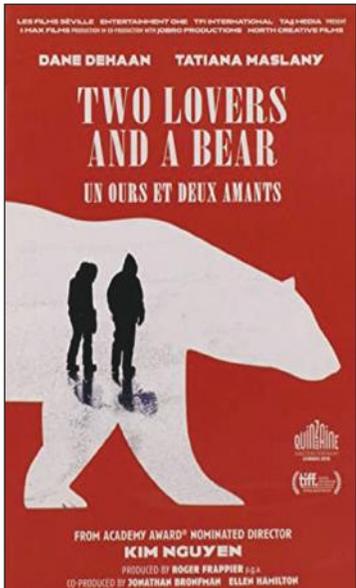
mardi 1 mars - 21.10



mercredi 2 mars - 21.15



jeudi 3 mars - 21.15



Programme TV



SERIAL



mardi 1 mars

MBC 1

06.00 Local: Rodrig
07.10 Film: Fireman Sam
08.10 D.Anime: PAF Le Chien
08.35 Film: Fish School
09.35 Film: Alpha And Omega 8
10.30 Local: Special Shivratri
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Serial: Ode To Joy
13.10 Local: Douane Prete A...
14.30 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill
15.20 D.Anime: Cat & Keet
15.30 Film: Simba, The King Lion
17.34 Serial: Project MC²
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain
18.55 MBC Production
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.10 Local: Autour Des Valeurs...
21.10 Film: A Day Late And A Dollar Short
23.00 Le Journal

MBC 2

07.00 DDI Live
10.00 Serial: CID
12.00 Film: Har Har Mahadev
Religious Film - Starring: Dara Singh
14.30 DDI Magazine
15.00 Live: Samachar
15.20 Aamhi Doghi
15.43 Bommarillu
16.07 Sondha Bandham
16.25 Juda Na Hona
16.49 Serial: Imtihaan
17.10 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
17.31 Serial: Premabhishekam
18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone
18.30 Local: DDI Magazine
19.00 Journal Kreol
19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna
20.06 Local: Tamil Programme
20.30 Film: Shiv Ganga
Starring Biswajeet, Ahalya, Dara...

MBC 3

06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa
06.26 Mag: The 77 Percent
07.47 Doc: Olivia's Garden
09.29 Mag: Washington Forum
10.11 Live: Foolbassea Baooram...
14.04 Mag: Washington Forum
15.20 Doc: Screen Generation
16.00 Mag: Japan Video Topics
16.36 Mag: Eco@Africa
17.02 Mag: The 77 Percent
20.00 Local: Shiv Bhajans



Cine 12

01.31 Film: The Vow
03.01 Serial: Absentia
03.35 Film: A Doggone Adventure
05.20 Tele: Marimar
05.44 Tele: Rubi
05.58 Serial: Anomalia
09.00 Serial: 19-2
09.45 Tele: Teresa
10.35 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You
11.01 Serial: Absentia
12.00 Film: Timecrafters
13.30 Tele: Marimar
14.05 Tele: Rubi
14.45 Film: The Professionals
16.40 Serial: 19-2
17.29 Serial: Anomalia
18.11 Tele: Teresa
19.00 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You
20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana
21.15 Film: Gattaca
Avec: Ethan Hawke, Uma Thurman

Bollywood TV

06.50 Film: Hum Hain Lajawab
Cast: Kumar Gaurav, Padmini Kohlapure
11.38 / 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
14.26 / 23.07 -
Bade Acche Lagte Hai
14.30 / 21.59 - Main Maike Chali Jaungi Tum Dekhte Rahiyo
14.53 / 22.25 -
Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
15.20 Film: Bumm Bumm Bole
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Kundali Bhagya
18.59 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein
19.30 Bhakharwadi
20.00 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak

mercredi 2 mars

07.15 Local: Profil
07.35 Local: Priorite Sante
09.00 Doc: Tresors Oublies...
10.15 Local: Rodrig Prog
10.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today
12.00 Le Journal
12.23 Serial: Ode To Joy
13.15 MBC Production
14.30 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill
15.20 D.Anime: Cat & Keet
15.23 D.Anime: PAF, Le Chien
15.37 D.Anime: Akili And Me
16.05 D.Anime: Gummibar & Friend
17.05 Serial: Mustangs FC
17.30 Serial: Project MC²
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain
18.55 MBC Production
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.30 MBC Production
21.25 Film: The Cleanse
23.00 Le Journal

07.00 DDI Live
10.00 Suhani Si Ek Ladki
12.00 Film: Aatish
Starring Jeetendra, Neetu Singh
14.30 DDI Magazine
15.00 Live: Samachar
15.23 Aamhi Doghi
15.46 Bommarillu
16.07 Sondha Bandham
16.25 Juda Na Hona
16.49 Serial: Imtihaan
17.10 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
17.31 Serial: Kulvadh
18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone
18.30 Local: DDI Magazine
19.00 Journal Kreol
19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna
20.06 Programme In Marathi
20.30 Film: Anandi Gopal
Starring Bhagyashree Milind, Lalit Prabhakar, Yogesh Soman...
22.30 DDI Live

06.00 Mag: Rev: Global Auto...
06.26 Mag: Healthy Living
07.25 Mag: Made In Germany
08.19 Doc: Garden Party
09.43 Mag: Close Up
15.46 Local: Rodrig
16.31 Doc: The Foggotten Temple
17.15 Mag: The Global Auto Aud...
17.41 Mag: Motorweek
19.00 Student Support Prog - G7
19.35 Mag: The Inside Story
20.30 Local: News (English)
20.45 Local: Business Connect
21.52 Doc: Olivia's Garden
22.18 Mag: Science Ou Fiction
22.44 Mag: Business Africa
23.37 Contest Of The Cathedrals
00.45 Mag: Vous Et Nous
01.14 Mag: Arts.21
01.45 Doc: Tree Stories
02.38 Doc: Olivia's Garden
03.04 Mag: Science Ou Fiction

01.08 Film: Gattaca
03.05 Serial: Absentia
05.11 Tele: Marimar
05.35 Tele: Rubi
05.59 Serial: Anomalia
06.41 Film: Gattaca
09.00 Serial: Deux Flics A Miami
09.45 Tele: Teresa
10.35 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You
11.01 Serial: Absentia
12.00 Film: A Day Late And A Dollar Short
13.30 Tele: Marimar
14.45 Film: Gattaca
16.38 Serial: Deux Flics A Miami
17.20 Serial: Anomalia
18.05 Tele: Teresa
19.00 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You
19.30 Serial: Backstage
20.30 Serial: Pine Gap
21.15 Film: Fools' Parade
Avec: James Stewart, George Kennedy

07.00 Film: Bumm Bumm Bole
Starring Darshel Safary, Atul...
11.31 / 20.06 - Radha Krishna
12.00 / 20.26 - Anupamaa
12.30 / 20.02 - Mere Sai - Shrad..
13.01 / 20.46 - Agniphera
13.29 / 21.09 - Yeh Teri Galiyan
13.51 / 21.50 -
Bade Acche Lagte Hai
14.32 / 22.15 - Main Maike Chali Jaungi Tum Dekhte Rahiyo
14.47 / 21.46 -
Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
15.25 Film: Awara Paagal Deewana
Starring Akshay Kumar, Sunil Shetty, Aftab Shivdasani
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Kundali Bhagya
19.00 Ishaaron Ishaaron...
19.30 Serial: Bhakharwadi

jeudi 3 mars

06.00 Local: Klip Seleksion
06.45 Local: Son Ladan Mem
07.15 Local: Lavi Zoli An XXLL
09.00 Local: Ekkril Kreol Morisien
10.55 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous
12.00 Le Journal
12.30 Serial: Ode To Joy
13.12 MBC Production
14.33 D.Anime: Fangbone
15.20 D.Anime: Cat & Keet
15.27 D.Anime: PAF, Le Chien
16.01 D.Anime: Gummibar & Friend
16.34 D.Anime: Panda Fanfare
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.55 Local: Chaar Dham Tirth Yatra
19.30 Le Journal
20.10 Local: Autour Des Valeurs...
20.20 Film: Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam
With Salman Khan, Ajay Devgan

07.00 DDI Live
10.00 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha
11.07 Serial: Mann Mein Vishwas...
12.00 Film: Saath Saath
15.00 Live: Samachar
15.20 Serial: Aamhi Doghi
15.43 Serial: Bommarillu
16.04 Serial: Sondha Bandham
16.27 Serial: Juda Na Hona
16.48 Serial: Imtihaan
17.05 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
17.30 Local: Amrit Vaani
18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone
18.30 Serial: Ghar Pahucha Da...
19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna
20.04 Local: Les Grandes Lignes
20.45 Local: Profil
21.09 Film: Two Lovers And A Bear
With Tatiana Maslany, Dane DeHaan

06.00 Mag: Motorweek
06.26 Mag: Vous Et Nous
06.52 Mag: Arts.21
07.49 Doc: Tree Stories
09.33 Doc: Olivia's Garden
10.29 Contest Of The Cathedrals
11.14 Mag: Motorweek
15.45 Contest Of The Cathedrals
16.28 Mag: Motorweek
16.54 Mag: Vous Et Nous
18.00 Mag: Eco India
19.00 Student Support Prog - G7
19.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today
20.30 Local: News (English)
20.45 Comme Un Envie De Jardins
21.36 Mag: Nouveau Look Pour...
22.38 Doc: Losing Sleep
23.21 Have Fun In Pyongyang
00.03 Mag: Eco India
00.29 Mag: Shift

01.25 Film: Signed, Sealed...
03.04 Serial: Absentia
03.46 Film: Fools' Parade
06.36 Tele: Rubi
07.07 Film: Signed, Sealed...
09.00 Serial: 19-2
09.45 Tele: Teresa
10.37 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You
11.00 Serial: Absentia
12.00 Film: Fools' Parade
13.36 Tele: Marimar
14.45 Film: Signed, Sealed...
16.40 Serial: 19-2
17.20 Serial: Pine Gap
18.05 Tele: Teresa
19.00 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You
19.36 Serial: Backstage
20.05 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'Ana
20.30 Serial: Pine Gap
21.26 Serial: Rich Man, Poor Man

07.00 Film: Awara Paagal Deewana
Starring Akshay Kumar, Sunil Shetty, Aftab Shivdasani
11.27 / 19.54 - Radha Krishna
11.56 / 20.11 - Anupamaa
12.25 / 20.32 - Mere Sai
13.13 / 21.09 - Agniphera
13.42 / 21.24 - Yeh Teri Galiyan
13.54 / 21.50 -
Bade Acche Lagte Hai
14.30 / 22.15 - Main Maike Chali Jaungi Tum Dekhte Rahiyo
15.00 / 21.46 -
Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
15.21 Film: Jeet
Star: Sunny Deol, Salman Khan, Karisma Kapoor
18.00 Samachar
18.30 Kundali Bhagya
18.59 Udaariyaan



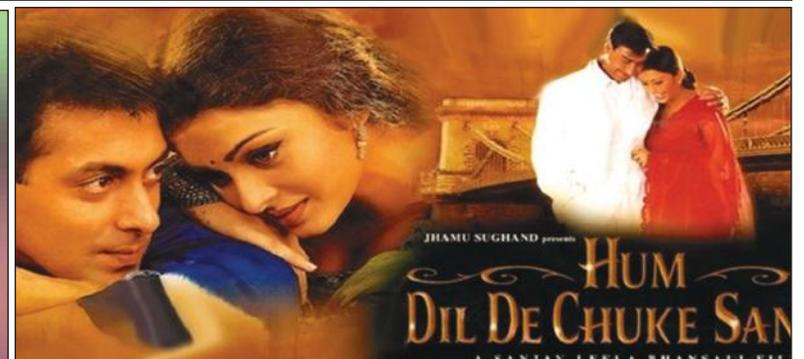
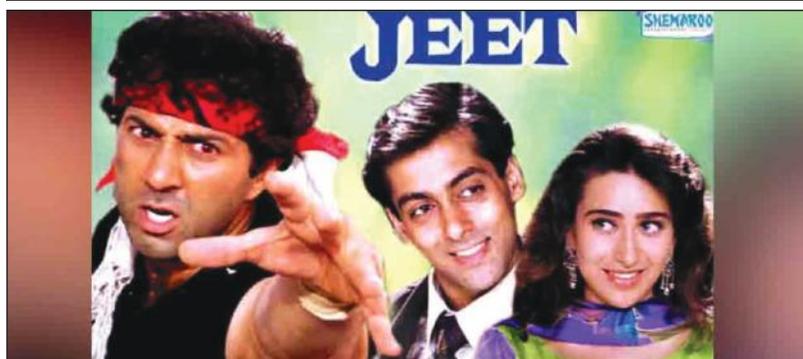
Jeudi 3 mars - 15.30

Star: Sunny Deol, Salman Khan, Karisma Kapoor



Jeudi 3 mars - 20.20

Stars: Salman Khan, Ajay Devgn, Aishwarya Rai





Nita Chicooree-Mercier

La voix du peuple en France

Le système de parrainage pour un candidat à l'élection présidentielle en France soulève des inquiétudes sur le fondement démocratique d'un procédé qui est rendu public par l'ancien président socialiste François Hollande, et qui prive les maires de France de l'anonymat souhaité de leur

choix du candidat.

C'est une vraie atteinte à la démocratie occidentale de menacer les maires de représailles, par exemple, refus de financer la construction d'une piscine ou d'autres infrastructures dans leurs communes si d'aventure ils accordent leur signature à des candidats qui ont de fortes chances de déloger le locataire actuel de l'Élysée et toute son équipe de LaREM (La République En Marche! Le mouvement fondé par Emmanuel Macron en avril 2016).

Actuellement, c'est la candidate du Rassemblement national, Marine Le Pen, qui fait les frais de ce système de parrainage rendu public, ainsi que Jean-Luc Mélenchon du parti de l'extrême-gauche, qui remonte dans les sondages après avoir laissé des plumes lors de ses sorties verbales intempestives et sa volte-face sur les sujets de société ces dernières années.

Mélenchon, lui, fait encore rêver une frange de l'électorat très remontée contre un système capitaliste qu'elle juge responsable de tous ses malheurs. Il attire aussi les électeurs d'origine nord-africaine, algérienne, tunisienne et marocaine depuis qu'il a renoncé à défendre la laïcité à la française, certainement sous l'influence de sa jeune compagne maghrébine. C'est une aubaine pour ces électeurs issus de l'immigration qui n'ont cessé de réclamer des droits spécifiques aux gouvernants.

«Ce qui distingue Eric Zemmour des autres candidats, c'est qu'il tient le même discours dans ses écrits et dans ses émissions télévisées depuis trente ans. Cet atout, qui renforce sa crédibilité auprès de ceux qui partagent ses idées, est perçu comme une preuve de sa sincérité, de son courage et de sa détermination alors que d'autres, à l'instar de Marine le Pen, a délaissé le terrain miné depuis belle lurette...»

Quant à Marine le Pen, ses efforts tendant à diaboliser son parti, dit d'extrême-droite, a fini par en faire un parti comme les autres. Ses fidèles se comptent dans les classes populaires, parmi l'électorat ouvrier et rural. Son programme de 2017 était plus socialiste que les gauchistes. Elle peine à récolter les 500 signatures des maires alors que les sondages la placent deuxième après Macron avec 16% d'intention de vote. Les candidats de gauche, égarés comme des brebis, sont au plus bas des sondages, et récoltent quand même 2,000 signatures, tous les gauchos réunis. A donner le tournis!

Le candidat le plus visé par le boycott des maires sous l'influence de l'équipe Macron est Eric Zemmour, journaliste, intellectuel et écrivain passionné par l'histoire et le destin de la France, et qui se porte en sauveur



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La voix de leur électorat doit être entendue...»

de sa civilisation chrétienne, sa littérature, sa langue et tout ce qui a fait sa gloire et sa grandeur. C'est le candidat qui tient le discours le plus ferme sur la radicalisation, l'islamisation des quartiers et des villes, le séparatisme et l'imposition des valeurs étrangères sur le sol français.

Ce qui distingue Eric Zemmour des autres candidats, c'est qu'il tient le même discours dans ses écrits et dans ses émissions télévisées depuis trente ans. Cet atout, qui renforce sa crédibilité auprès de ceux qui partagent ses idées, est perçu comme une preuve de sa sincérité, de son courage et de sa détermination alors que d'autres, à l'instar de Marine le Pen, a délaissé le terrain miné depuis belle lurette.

Depuis des années Eric Zemmour fait exploser l'audimat à chaque participation à une émission de télévision et de radio. Des millions de personnes l'écoutent. Depuis la création de son parti, *Reconquête*, il y a deux mois, c'est un nombre record de 100,000 personnes qui y ont adhéré. Ceux qui l'écoutent et partagent ses idées admirent son courage à décrire la réalité, à exposer des vérités, à lever le voile sur les tabous et le politiquement correct, à dénoncer le *wokisme* et le *cancel culture*.

Eric Zemmour s'est révélé un candidat pas comme les autres de par son calibre intellectuel, sa culture et la profondeur de ses convictions qui confèrent une puissance inégalable à ses discours.

Le candidat de «Reconquête» fait l'effet d'une météorite qui fait trembler tous ceux qui se complaisent dans la bien-pensance, les non-dits, la résignation, le défaitisme et le discours victimaire des diverses minorités offensées, féminisme extrémiste, la théorie absurde de genre, d'écriture inclusive, etc. C'est encore lui qui dénonce haut et fort l'effet calamiteux des soixante-huitards dans l'Éducation nationale, dernier bastion de l'ère soviétique, l'endoctrinement transmis aux élèves par les enseignants gauchisés, la déconstruction de tout ce qui fonde une nation et sa culture, la haine de soi, la haine de son pays et de sa culture.

Personne n'a tenu de tels discours depuis 60 ans.

Les discours d'Eric Zemmour sont d'une puissance à soulever les montagnes, à armer toute une armée de Génération Z, les jeunes qui l'écoutent depuis dix ans et aussi, ceux de quarante à quatre-vingt ans, qui retrouvent un espoir dans l'avenir.

L'étiquette 'extrême-droite' est vite collée sur le front de ceux qui défendent la nation, la patrie, la culture, le fondement religieux et les valeurs d'une civilisation.

Les partisans de «Reconquête» et ceux du «Rassemblement National» en ont assez des discours de culpabilité occidentale et de repentance, ils se méfient de l'Union européenne qui détruit l'agriculture locale, et la mondialisation qui sonne le glas des petites industries.

Tout cela fait peur aux partisans du statu quo. Les deux candidats se placent juste derrière Macron, selon les sondages. La voix de leur électorat doit être entendue. Les journalistes partisans et de mauvaise foi des médias publics, grassement payés par les contribuables, ont tout à craindre d'une percée de «Reconquête» qui entend privatiser les médias publics.

Vaste chamboulement à venir. Si des millions de gens se retrouvent dans le parti d'Eric Zemmour, ce serait catastrophique s'il ne peut pas se présenter aux élections!

Les autres peuples d'Europe qui rêvent de contrôler leur frontière, la définition même d'un pays, ont les yeux rivés sur la prochaine élection qui se déroulera dans toute la France et de Navarre. Macron craint en Zemmour un adversaire de taille, et il risque bien, si jamais il se trouve en face de lui, de se faire pulvériser comme les journalistes à deux neurones et autres interlocuteurs peu équipés à débattre.

Sans donner dans le complotisme, il faut s'attendre à des magouilles de toutes sortes pour renouveler le mandat macronien pour cinq ans encore. L'avenir de la France, c'est maintenant. Que les candidats puissent se présenter est un exercice démocratique indispensable dans un pays qui est à un point tournant de son histoire.