

# MAURITIUS TIMES

• "Unexpected kindness is the most powerful, least costly, and most underrated agent of human change." – Bob Kerrey



Interview : Dr Avinaash Munohur,  
Politologue

## «Le brouillard s'épaissit...»

Tant que Sherry Singh n'apporte pas les preuves solides – nous resterons dans l'obscurité»

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## The Last Straw



*As a nation, we must measure the seriousness of the allegations made... it would be an extremely damning indictment of the government and the PM if these allegations are true. They would certainly have to go*

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He has all the power and means of countering Mr Singh's allegations if they are indeed lies»

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## Women feel let down by Supreme Court judges



The Supreme Court is or should be the bulwark of the citizen who faces any kind of threat to his rights or to his life. Woe betide the citizen in the country where the trust between the judiciary and the citizen has snapped

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Photo: Bill Clark/CQ-Roll Call, Inc via Getty Images

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# The Sniffing Maelstrom

This may be the first time that a Mauritian Prime Minister has been caught in a maelstrom of such gravity following the allegations made "in a spirit of patriotism" by the ex-CEO and long-time confidant, Sherry Singh, about instructions received from Pravind Jugnauth to allegedly allow a "third party" to access the Mauritius Telecom network with a view to installing equipment which would enable "sniffing", interception, monitoring or recording of internet traffic to and from Mauritius and/or countries in the region.

What are the real motivations of the ex-CEO of MT, who apparently had been distanced from the inner circle of the Prime Minister since 2020, are not known at this stage. But he must have weighed the gravity of his allegations before deciding to go public given the implications and the risks that any interference with our internet network poses to the proper functioning of a democratic constitutional state. In particular, there would be many questions raised about freedom of expression, and the integrity, reputation and stability of our financial system and the business and banking sectors. He would also be surely aware that unless backed by solid and concrete evidence, any groundless allegation would place him directly in the line of fire - unless he would be privy to other potentially damning evidence that could embarrass the holders of power and shield him from any form of reprisals.

All this however is a matter of speculation at this stage. What is important however is for the Prime Minister, the one ultimately responsible for the policy and decisions of the government and who has the duty to safeguard our national security and sovereignty, to reassure the population that no malicious intent was meant in his instructions to the ex-CEO of Mauritius Telecom. Neither was there an unacceptable intent to put in place a surveillance mechanism on political opponents of the regime and reassure the international community that his government is not be caught up in the middle of a technology and internet-assisted warfare involving competing powers in this part of the world.

His earlier denial of any instructions to the ex-CEO of MT to allow a "third party" access to the Mauritius Telecom network, to be followed thereafter by a confirmation that his telephone conversation with Sherry Singh had only to do

with the conduct of a survey by Indian technicians at Baie Jacotet Cable Landing of the national communication system in place have not helped matters. Nor has the National Assembly's Speaker ill-advised curtailment of any and all supplementary questions from the Leader of the Opposition to the Prime Minister during last Tuesday's PNQ. Both have only fuelled further speculations about the real intent of the instructions of the Prime Minister.

What's now doing the round on social media relates to the earlier promulgation of the Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act, which received the assent of the Acting President of the Republic Eddy Boissezon in November 2021, could be another pointer that the authorities had approved of an "Information sharing agreement" between "a private entity... with a public entity regarding a critical information infrastructure". Sec 36(2)C is of particular interest in that it allows an agreement to be entered "for the following purposes and in accordance with the critical information infrastructure policy - for the protection of national security, public safety or public interest". However, in the absence of further information, it is unclear whether the PM's instruction to the former MT CEO could legitimately be considered to fall under such an "information sharing agreement". The minimal public exposure of those tractations between the two parties does however shed new light on the intents being pursued by government with the Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act ever since the White Paper proposing internet traffic diversion had raised a furore.

At the moment, given the limited disclosures of one and the fuzzy responses of the other, we are entitled to wonder what deeper undercurrents may lurk beneath the surface waters. Had there been security lapses or breaches as alleged seemingly by the PM that justified recourse to Indian technical wizz-kids? Who would have controlled what foreign technicians would do over our network? If there had indeed been security lapses in our internet network, mature democracies might have envisaged that the PM be enabled to share such highly sensitive matter impacting our sovereign interests, obviously under total confidential protocols, with the leaders of the mainstream opposition parties, prior to any action. That might have toned down the current maelstrom that has engulfed the country.

The Conversation

## Politicians live longer than the populations they represent

The public expects transparency about politicians' earnings, but it's not the only area where elite groups have an advantage

In many countries, inequalities in income and wealth have been rising since the 1980s. It has been estimated that the top 1% of income earners globally earn 20% of total income. But inequality isn't just about wealth - elite groups also have advantages over the rest of society in areas such as education and health. They also tend to live longer. Life expectancy of the top 1% of income earners in the US is almost 15 years longer than the bottom 1%.



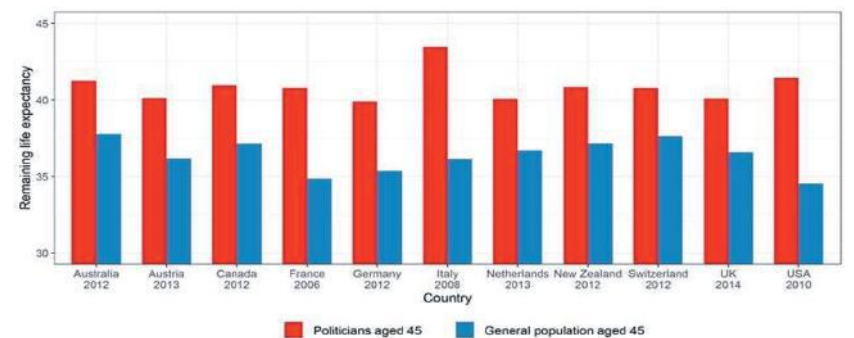
Joe Biden is the oldest person to be sworn in as US president. New research shows politicians are likely to live longer than the populations they represent. Pic - BiksuTong - Shutterstock

Typically, highly educated, and with salaries well above average population levels, politicians are one important elite group. They are often accused of being too unlike those they represent, and slow to make policies that would improve the welfare of everyday people. In a recent study we investigated differences in mortality between politicians and the public and found that politicians generally live longer than the populations they represent.

Our analysis is the most comprehensive so far, based on data from 11 high-income countries: Australia, Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland, the UK and the US. Previously, similar studies tracking

Our study was based on more than 57,000 politicians, using historical data that in some cases dated back two centuries. To measure the inequalities, we matched each politician according to their country, age and gender to mortality data for the general public. Then, we compared the number of politicians who died each year with the number expected based on population mortality rates. We also calculated the difference in remaining life expectancy at the age of 45 (which is when, on average, politicians first get elected to office) between politicians and the public.

For nearly all countries, politicians had similar mortality to the general population in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. But throughout the second half of the 20th century, lifespans of politicians grew more rapidly, meaning that in all countries we studied they lived longer than the general population.



Remaining life expectancy of 45-year-old politicians and the general populations in 11 countries. Author provided

long-term trends in health inequalities have focused on just a few countries, such as Sweden and the Netherlands.

The graph above shows the most recent estimates of life expectancy for politicians and the public.

Philip Clarke - Prof of Health Economics, University of Oxford, An Tran-Duy - Senior Research Fellow, University of Melbourne & Laurence Roope - Senior Researcher, University of Oxford

### Mauritius Times

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Doojesh Ramlallah, Sultana Kurmally and Kersley Ramsamy

Pearl House 4th Floor Room 406 - Sir Virgil Naz Street, Port Louis

Tel: 5-29 29301 Tel/Fax: 212 1313



Mrinal Roy

**Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely.**  
— Lord Acton

A live broadcast presents the event covered uncensored as it happens. There are no insidious doctored images or spin possible. It is also readily available on the net. The live broadcast of the parliamentary session covering the Private Notice Question put to the Prime Minister on 5 July regarding the burning issue of 'whether he or the Secretary to the Cabinet or anyone acting on behalf of government has had any discussions or agreement with any foreign party and/or telecommunications operator in connection with the installation or use of equipment to enable sniffing, interception, monitoring or recording of internet traffic to and from Mauritius and/or countries in the region' showcased and exposed yet again the seedy aspects and systemic flaws of our democracy.

As evidenced on the live TV broadcast, the PNQ session was peremptorily cut short by the Speaker after the reply of the PM denying any discussions or agreement as spelled out in the question. The abrupt and high-handed manner in which the Speaker bluntly denied the Leader of the Opposition the right to ask germane supplementary questions to his PNQ following the reply of the PM has shocked the nation and people across the country.

### Imperative to come clean

Despite the serious public allegations levelled against the PM on such an important matter and rife speculations spawned in the country, there was a long and deafening silence from the PM. People across the country were impatiently awaiting prompt and straightforward replies and complete transparency from the PM to dispel their misgivings and concern about any encroachment on the country's sovereignty and their fundamental rights, freedom and the sacrosanct privacy of their internet exchanges. People expected the PM to come clean with candid replies to all the supplementary questions of the Opposition and the public in a forthright manner which allays all their justified apprehensions and doubts. This did not happen.

Unless these grave allegations are convincingly dis-

# The Last Straw

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**"People expected the PM to come clean with candid replies to all the supplementary questions of the Opposition and the public in a forthright manner which allays all their justified apprehensions and doubts. This did not happen..."**

pelled, they will also have dire impact on the trust and goodwill enjoyed by Mauritius in the world. Against such a backdrop, how can the PM remain so gallingly silent?

Far from ending the polemic, the clarifications now provided by the PM raise new interrogations.

Despite government's oft tom-tommed rhetoric about transparency and democratic standards in the country, people watching the live broadcast of the PNQ were appalled at the lame stratagem conjured to shield the PM and the government from the thrust of legitimate supplementary questions on a matter of such national importance and profound concern to the people. Such shenanigans have heightened people's angst and misgivings.

True to form, the national TV financed from public funds blithely aired a truncated and doctored version of the live broadcast of the parliamentary session covering the Private Notice Question on prime time news in the teeth of the actual live broadcast available on the net.

### Shameful display

It was a shameful display and a far cry from the lofty standards of parliamentary democracy prevailing in the best democracies of the world. The government must realize that this is not a cat and mouse game but an extremely serious matter which cannot be surreptitiously swept under the carpet. The onus is therefore squarely on the PM to provide honest replies to all interrogations on a matter of such national importance. People want full transparency. They will not be hoodwinked by filibustering tactics, empty pontifications from the government legal brigade or hollow motherhood statements.

What is also particularly galling is that on a matter of

such importance to the people and the repute and standing of the country in the world, all Ministers and government MPs closed ranks around this abject and infuriating travesty of democracy. The government must realise that the public demand for full transparency and credible answers will not go away. This is too serious a matter for people and civil society to let go. The fundamental rights and freedom of people and the sacrosanct integrity and sovereignty of the country are red lines for the nation.

In contrast, in the UK, Chancellor Rishi Sunak and Sajid Javid, the Health Secretary, have this week resigned from Boris Johnson's government. Rishi Sunak explained that he was resigning because 'our approaches to chart a path to a better future are fundamentally too different' and that 'the public rightly expect government to be conducted properly, competently and seriously and that these standards are worth fighting for.' Sajid Javid said that he could 'no longer, in good conscience, continue serving in this Government' as the 'British people also rightly expect integrity from their Government.' These resignations have left the UK PM, Boris Johnson fighting for his survival. He resigned as PM on 7 July.

### Moment of reckoning

No political leader or party can be more important than the superior interests of the people and the country in a democracy. This is a moment of reckoning for the country. People are up in arms against the appalling state of governance in the country grounded on absolute and hegemonic control of key state institutions ineptly manned by the coterie and political appointees of every ilk. They condemn the lack of transparency and accountability of public finances, MIC funds and the policy of dishing out freebies at public expense the country can ill afford to all and sundry to entice support. People decry the flawed economic model and the tens of billions Rupees of public funds sunk in so many costly blunders and white elephants by incompetent political appointees. People are also riled that they are the ones who will eventually have to hold the can.

**"The government must realize that this is not a cat and mouse game but an extremely serious matter which cannot be surreptitiously swept under the carpet. The onus is therefore squarely on the PM to provide honest replies to all interrogations on a matter of such national importance. People want full transparency. They will not be hoodwinked by filibustering tactics, empty pontifications from the government legal brigade or hollow motherhood statements..."**

The chequered history of Mauritius is littered with glaring evidence that Government has no competence to manage commercial ventures. This must be left to seasoned professionals in the related field.

The heady pursuit of power by all means can only be detrimental to the interests of the country. In the absence of a Freedom of Information Act, the people must remain mobilised against any subterfuge and lobby government to demand full transparency and trustworthy replies on the grave public allegations made against the government.

The country is sitting on a powder keg. Any tinkering with our fundamental rights and liberties and our sovereignty would be the last straw. As a nation, we must also measure the seriousness of the allegations made and realize that it would be an extremely damning indictment of the government and the PM if these allegations are true. They would certainly have to go.



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

# Women feel let down by Supreme Court judges

*The Supreme Court is or should be the bulwark of the citizen who faces any kind of threat to his rights or to his life. Woe betide the citizen in the country where the trust between the judiciary and the citizen has snapped*

In any country, the citizen expects the State to guarantee him the free exercise of his rights as enshrined in the Constitution. In democracies this is assumed to prevail at all times; in autocracies and dictatorships the question of free exercise of rights may not even exist. However, let's confine ourselves to democracies, though in them too ground realities may not necessarily conform to the expectations. Perhaps this is a reflection of what the British politician Winston Churchill said about democracy, that it is the least bad of the systems of government. In the past few years, the way politics has been practised has led to the observation by American analysts that democracy is in crisis in their country.

Where the State or other citizens interfere with the rights of a citizen, the latter has only one, final recourse: the justice system. The citizen would like to believe that he can trust the justice system, but in particular its apex represented by the Supreme Court, totally and blindly. The Supreme Court is or should be the bulwark of the citizen who faces any kind of threat to his rights or to his life. Woe betide the citizen in the country where the trust between the judiciary and the citizen has snapped, for he finds himself without protection, without defense.

In two democracies, one deemed to be the oldest (in recent history) and the other the largest, women have felt let down by judges in their respective Supreme Courts. In the US, the Supreme Court overturned a 50-year-old judgement, the famous Roe v/s Wade case, that gave 'women access to abortion' as a constitutional right. The most disturbing aspect of this new judgement is that it was almost a foregone conclusion, because earlier in the year there was a leaked document from the Supreme Court that was in line with it. There was an attempt by the Supreme Court to find out the origin of the leak, but nothing was heard afterwards.

Another unsettling element is that the judgement has a political colouration: the majority was obtained because of the presence of judges appointed by the Republican Party, and who adhere to its anti-abortion ideology.

Feeling betrayed, pro-choice women (in favour of medical termination of pregnancy – MTP) with similar-minded stakeholders continue to stage countrywide protests and marches, and have gone to the extent of picketing in front of judges' house. Pro-life (anti MTP) women too have taken to the streets to confront their rivals, fortunately without any violence – so far.

This setback has unleashed chaos in the already boiling cauldron of access to MTP, with women and associated stakeholders facing major legal and financial hurdles in addition to personal and social problems. Consider the critical situation of the 10-year-old child, flagged a few days ago, who was raped and has tested positive for pregnancy in a state where MTP is illegal. This is the dilemma being faced by social workers handling her case

who feel condemned by this ideology-motivated Supreme Court judgement.

## Personal opinions instead of unbiased ruling

On the other side of the world is the largest democracy, India, where Indians in growing numbers have come to the support of their 'sister' Nupur Sharma whom they feel has been badly treated by two Supreme Court judges, Surya Kant and JB Pardiwala.

In a debate which was made viral on social media, Nupur Sharma was reported to have been provoked into reacting to the derogatory criticisms against her faith by her opponent and quoted from the Islamic scripture (Bukhari's Hadith) by way of reply, which several scholars and religious persons, including one from Pakistan, have confirmed as being correct. Despite that, and her public apology, there was an outcry against her with threats to her life.

This is just to give the context, but the debate is not our concern here. What is of interest is that after it and the threats to Nupur, FIRs (First Information Reports) were filed against her in several states (8 or 9). Because of the threats to her life and the fact that she would have to travel to different states to be present in Court, she made a plea to the Supreme Court of India to lump the cases together and to allow them to be taken up in only one Court, in New Delhi. There are established procedures in law, as well as precedents where the Supreme Court has allowed such pleas (cited in Drishtikone Newsletter #346).

The two judges, however, instead of considering her plea, went on a tirade against her which is in the public domain, accusing her of being solely and wholly responsible for the many incidents of violence in the country that have taken place, including gruesome beheadings. This has led a cynic to comment that the Wright brothers, who invented the aeroplane at the beginning of the 20th century, are responsible for the 9/11 attacks on the twin towers in New York!

The upshot is that comparable to the protests in the US, there has been a surge of support to Nupur across India, from media outlets to individual activists. Several well-known public intellectuals too have raised their voices against the 'observations' of the two judges, among them J. Sai Deepak, a young lawyer who is an expert in the Constitution, who has argued that these opinions are extra-constitutional and extra-judicial. Also, Dr Anand Ranganathan, a biomedical scientist, and author with an ency-



Abortion rights protests across US - Pic - Axios

**“Feeling betrayed, pro-choice women (in favour of medical termination of pregnancy – MTP) with similar-minded stakeholders continue to stage countrywide protests and marches, and have gone to the extent of picketing in front of judges' house. Pro-life (anti MTP) women too have taken to the streets to confront their rivals... This setback has unleashed chaos in the already boiling cauldron of access to MTP, with women and associated stakeholders facing major legal and financial hurdles in addition to personal and social problems. Consider the critical situation of the 10-year-old child, flagged a few days ago, who was raped and has tested positive for pregnancy in a state where MTP is illegal...”**

clopaedic knowledge of the scriptures who has been as unsparing about the biased pronouncements of the judges. Other analysts have pointed out that they have practically given a clean hit to the perpetrators of hate and violence who populate that ecosystem.

The latest outcry, however, has come in the form of an open letter to the Chief Justice of India CV Ramana by a group of 117 prominent citizens made up of 15 retired Supreme Court judges, 77 retired bureaucrats and 25 army officers.

Some of the high points of that letter are:

- Those 'unfortunate and unprecedented comments' from the bench of Justice Surya Kant and Justice JB Pardiwala 'are not in sync with judicial ethos'.
- 'Such outrageous transgressions are without parallel in the annals of judiciary,' and the observations have 'no connect' with the issue raised in her petition. She has been 'denied access to the judiciary', and there was 'an outrage on the Preamble, spirit and essence of the Constitution of India'.
- 'One fails to understand why Nupur's case is treated at a different pedestal... Such an approach of the Supreme Court deserves no applause and impacts the very sanctity and honour of the highest court'.

As another lady commentator, who is a former DGP (Director General of Police) observed, the Supreme Court is the highest institution in the country, and Nupur has been let down by none else than the Supreme Court. Where then does the ordinary citizen go to obtain protection?

One wonders what answer would Justices Surya Kant and JB Pardiwala give to this crucial question.

# Policy Choices

*To the layman, neither the devaluation of the rupee, nor the scale of government's lifestyles and its privileged dealings with suppliers/contractors under emergency, nor again the exaggerated levels of taxes and VAT on fuel have anything to do directly with Ukraine. They are matters of public policies and choices by a government*

Jan Arden

The open economy we have so long worked for and thrived upon, has been no doubt impacted since mid 2020 by the world's exposure to the Covid-19 pandemic and the current ongoing war in Ukraine, prodded along by NATO's policies and the consequent invasion of its eastern region by Putin's Russia.

Our growth rate that slumped by 15% has yet to catch up with pre-pandemic levels, while the authorities have adopted the non-conventional approach of dipping their hands deep into the Central Bank's reserves through the Mauritius Investment Corporation (MIC), greater public debt and a consequential devaluation of our national currency to keep a social explosion off the streets. In difficult times, most businesses and families would curb their excessive

reliance on those projects and capital expenditures, that are simply not priority and can be delayed, postponed or simply canceled, not quite what we infer from government budgets.

The temporary sop of subsidies for a few essential commodities having ended this month has left the population exposed to a barrage of exorbitant price rises for such commodities as cooking oil (more than 100%), milk powder (+50%), diapers and other daily essentials, harder hitting the lower to middle classes already struggling with high taxation levels on fuel. The Rs 40 forked out to authorities on every litre of fuel has, as we know, cascading consequences on transport, distribution and many small business activities.

As for the Central Bank, the IMF Staff reports and appraisals have for the past two to three years lambasted, in not very



**“The impact on a dwindling and impoverished middle class will have been barely softened by the budgetary promise of a monthly Rs1000 allowance to the elderlies and employees from end July, while the daily life for thousands, irrespective of party colouration or urban-rural divide is taking a severe hit according to many economists...”**

nuanced terms, its credibility, policies or balance sheet as an institution independent from the overbearing oversight of the high powers at the Ministry of Finance (MoF). From a press report Monday last (Le Mauricien, 5th July, 'Twin Towers Under Fire'), it would appear that the Central Bank has been in receipt of the latest IMF Staff Appraisal Report since a fortnight and its publication is exceptionally still under wraps.

It is not clear what such delay brings as

comfort to the Central Bank or the MoF for that matter. What is clear is that ordinary Mauritians are being forced to finance the high spending sprees of a government that seems at a loss for economic development alternatives and solutions other than drains, canals, property sales to foreigners and more public expenditure at large scales.

The impact on a dwindling and impoverished middle class will have been barely softened by the budgetary promise of a monthly Rs1000 allowance to the elderlies and employees from end July, while the daily life for thousands, irrespective of party colouration or urban-rural divide is taking a severe hit according to many economists.

To the layman, neither the devaluation of the rupee, nor the scale of government's lifestyles and its privileged dealings with suppliers/contractors under emergency, nor again the exaggerated levels of taxes and VAT on fuel have anything to do directly with Ukraine. They are matters of public policies and choices by a government reputed to be sitting on a "war-chest" of 40 plus billion rupees.

We cannot unfortunately foresee any change in orientations over the near future, unless, as increasingly disenchanted Mauritians would suspect, looming general elections suddenly loosen all strings.

## The Bolt from MT

In a surprise development that stunned both the highest spheres of government and most observers, the CEO of Mauritius Telecom (MT) handed in his resignation on June 30th after having been a loyal, smart and perhaps decisive partner alongside current PM Pravind Jugnauth since his electoral defeat of 2005 and a Senior Advisor at the latter's PMO from 2017 to 2021.

"MT is now gearing up to its next level of growth. I will unfortunately not be part of the next ride as I have submitted my resignation today. I am unable to continue without compromising my values and that is not an option for me..." he wrote in a parting note to MT employees who were sufficiently aghast as to give him the warmest signs of affection as he left MT Tower with, some might say, a public flair for communication.

This was therefore no ordinary matter although it was yet to be made clear precisely what snake the CEO would have been asked to swallow that would be so incompatible with his "values". After all, slamming the door on one of the State's plush jobs with consequential exposure to an orchestrated smear campaign and the possible wrath of a government that has acquired a reputation of chasing and hounding opponents through various institutions and agencies without qualm is not given to every regime stalwart.

That was to be answered on the very next day, Friday 1st July, on a scheduled Radio-Plus live interview of nearly two hours that attracted an extraordinary audience of some 18,000 on that web station, ten times more than past widely followed events and sagas. Undoubtedly, the population



Sniffing the Internet. Pic - Radware Blog

had sensed that this was a different kettle of fish from previous spats and resignations such as those of former Ministers Roshi Bhadain and Nando Bodha or the demotion from Cabinet of former Ministers Ivan Collendavelloo or Yogida Sawminaden, trapped in affairs that our fabled anti-corruption agency has yet to unravel.

The extent of the damaging revelations on radio had senior advisors, wielding unelected powers, and the highest spheres of Pravind Jugnauth's inner circle scurrying for a relatively credible parade against the bolt from the MT's CEO relayed so widely on air and on the radio's web station.

### Hijack the country's internet traffic

According to his account, on the specific count of the unacceptable snake to swallow, Sherry Singh explained having received a few weeks previously a phone call from the PM allegedly ordering him, there was no option left open, to allow a third party of unspecified foreign origin to install at MT the necessary hardware and software that would divert and effectively control all ingoing and outgoing internet (including WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, etc) traffic to the Republic of Mauritius. A phenomenon he referred to as "sniffing", but that only hides the enormity of the alleged proposal and its potential consequences for a sovereign jurisdiction like ours, which has yet to tumble down to North Korean levels, as far as we know.

Most of us will recall the considerable uproar when the ICTA and the Attorney General came up last year with a White Paper that purported to do exactly that through a legal enactment which was unceremoniously dumped as the former PM Navin Ramgoolam, leader of the Labour Party, was quick to point out. He added that the idea of diverting and controlling all internet access to and from the island had not been dismissed but was now the object of a

back-door ploy, if the allegations of the CEO were true.

Navin Ramgoolam and all other political parties and many respected voices, like those of past President Cassam Uteem, intimated that Pravind Jugnauth had no choice but to come clean on what would be tantamount to "high treason". The latter, rather than a solemn forceful denial through all channels at his disposal, chose to answer questions after an NGO function, saying essentially that "he was lying" and "wait and you will see" when pressed for any actions he might take if this was an outright defamatory statement from Mr Sherry Singh. This sounded far from adequate to reassure the population. He did add to a question about unelected circles and advisors that he worked with a Cabinet of Ministers, although one might suspect that such a preposterous proposal, if true, would most probably have not been presented for Cabinet approval.

At Tuesday's National Assembly session, the PM at last gave a short but stout denial of his or government official dealings with third parties to the PNQ of the Leader of the Opposition. Unfortunately, by blocking any supplementary question, the session was turned into a raucous affair by the Speaker, resorting to expulsions all round of Opposition MPs. If hounding and checking on internet exchanges of political opponents was the objective, the alleged proposal would certainly have dealt a hammer blow to all citizens as well as to banks, insurance companies, legal cabinets, the business community, foreign embassies and the very fundamentals of our open economy.

Political expediency, even if government feels the troubled times call for desperate measures, cannot justify such grave risks to the economic and social infrastructure of the country, the confidentiality ingrained in the Banking Act, potential diplomatic repercussions and the innate freedoms of all citizens. Every vigilance should be exercised to ensure that any new CEO does not entertain such a paleolithic measure.

Jan Arden

## Sniffing internet traffic to and from Mauritius

# “The Prime Minister cannot remain content with a bare statement that Sherry Singh has lied...

*He has all the power and means of countering Mr Singh's allegations if they are indeed lies”*

**T**he general outcry that has followed Mr Sherry Singh's resignation from his CEO job at Mauritius Telecom stems from his allegation that he had been personally asked by the PM to allow the installation and operation of a device from an unnamed third party for monitoring all the country's internet traffic. Through such an unexpected bolt, some key legal and political questions arise, namely had Mr Singh ensured he had back-up evidence, was he prepared for a smear campaign from high offices and why had the PM not entered a criminal defamation suit against his former strategic advisor if the allegations are untrue. Lex shares his views below.

LEX

**\* What do you make out of the allegation made by Sherry Singh following his resignation as CEO of Mauritius Telecom (MT) relating to instructions he would have received from the Prime minister to allow the installation of “third party sniffers” on MT's servers/networks to “sniff”/monitor your internet traffic in real time, capturing all the data flowing to and from your computer?**

The person most concerned, that is the Prime Minister as Minister responsible, for internal security and defence, has bluntly stated that Mr Singh has lied. We are in a chicken and egg situation. On the one hand, we do not have any proof so far of the allegations and without which speculations will run high.

On the other hand, the Prime Minister cannot remain content with a bare statement that Mr Singh has lied. He has the State apparatus at his disposal. He has the police force at his beck and call. He has the National Security Service at his command. He has a cohort of advisers being handsomely remunerated with taxpayers' money. With all this at his disposal, he has all the power and means of countering Mr Singh's allegations if they are indeed lies.

**\* What would it amount to in terms of offence in case the allegation could be substantiated and confirmed?**

First of all, it may amount to an offence against the sovereignty of the State of Mauritius. It will be recalled that the Criminal Code was amended to make it an offence for any person to misrepresent the sovereignty of Mauritius.

In addition, some statements have been made that may point to an offence of high treason. High treason is provided for by the Criminal Code that states that any person who devises any plot or keeps up intelligence with any



foreign power or the agent of a foreign power shall commit an offence punishable by imprisonment for life or a maximum sentence of 60 years. In addition, the law provides for the forfeiture of the property of the culprit.

**\* What would happen if Sherry Singh were unable to substantiate his allegation?**

Then we would all have been taken for a ride and that would boost the credibility of the Prime Minister. Mr Singh may be liable to be prosecuted for the offence of spreading false news under the Information and Communication Technologies Act or criminal defamation if the Prime Minister files a complaint along those lines.

**\* Press reports indicate that the ex-MT CEO would have a recording of the telephone conversation exchanged with the Prime Minister during which the question of “third party sniffers” had been discussed. If that is true, would such a telephone recording (of something that is intended) constitute evidence of a criminal offence (just like the commission of the act itself) in the eyes of the law?**

Generally, evidence of telephone conversations is admissible when the witness can identify the other speaker. Therefore, the circumstances under which identification is sufficiently certain is the key problem. A conversation is admissible when it is related by the person who called the listed number of an office or person, and received an answer. Expert evidence will have to be brought to establish the genuineness of the recording. It can be a long process.

**\* It's not known at this stage whether this battle will be waged in a court of law or limited to the political battlefield. Do you expect the Prime Minister to take legal action against Sherry Singh with a view to defending his honour and integrity?**

Not really; and this would fuel the speculations around the stand of the Prime Minister. If the Prime Minister had to take action, he would have asked the police as he has done in the case of Ms Seenauth to arrest Mr Singh. Why

he has not done it so far opens the door to all sorts of conjectures and rumours.

The battle may ultimately turn out to be a political one depending on the campaign that will be launched by both parties against each other. The process has already begun in that direction.

**\* On the other hand, one would expect Sherry Singh to have kept more ammunition in reserve to protect himself from any form of reprisals. What are his best options other than going to the police?**

Going to the police may backfire. If Mr Singh files a complaint against the Prime Minister, it may well be that the police may ultimately arrest him for the offence of “false and malicious denunciation in writing” or for criminal defamation even though no offence may have been committed by him. He might be arrested and remanded to police cell or jail and his fate would be in jeopardy. The best option for Mr Singh is not to go to the police but make a clean breast of everything that is in his possession.

**“The Prime Minister cannot remain content with a bare statement that Mr Singh has lied. He has the State apparatus at his disposal. He has the police force at his beck and call. He has the National Security Service at his command. He has a cohort of advisers being handsomely remunerated with taxpayers' money. With all this at his disposal, he has all the power and means of countering Mr Singh's allegations if they are indeed lies...”**

**\* The allegations made by Sherry Singh are sufficiently serious as to call for an independent commission of inquiry. But that cannot be forced upon the government, isn't it?**

No, it cannot be forced upon the government. Who will preside over such an inquiry if there is one? One of the supporters of the government? How long will such an inquiry last? To what end?

On the other hand, whatever evidence is obtained during such inquiry cannot be used in a trial. The investigation will have to start again at the police level.

**\* We understand that the Director of Public Prosecutions is empowered by virtue of Section 64 of the District and Intermediate Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act to direct a Magistrate to start an inquiry into this matter. Do you think that may be the only option to get down to the bottom of this matter?**

There is much doubt and confusion around this particular section. It says the DPP may direct an investigation into any offence. Should that be predicated on an accused having committed an offence or is it a blanket provision that confers on the DPP the power to direct an inquiry by a magistrate?

The matter is far from clear. Until a court of law gives a ruling on this, it will be difficult to order an inquiry into an offence.



Anil Madan

# On this July 4th January 7 is more important than January 6

**I**t was November 19, 1863, almost 160, or eight score years ago, that Abraham Lincoln recalled the fundamental notions underlying the creation of America as a nation conceived in Liberty and dedicated to the proposition that

all men are created equal. The Civil War, he said, was a test of whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, could long endure. And fundamentally, he saw it as a revolutionary test of whether Democracy itself could survive, that this nation “shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

Until January 6, 2020, this nation had passed that test — more or less. It should have been expected that notwithstanding the highest of hopes, achieving the goal of equality would be far more difficult than just articulating the concept of equality. The idea of equality seems outcome suggestive, but any such notion should be tempered by the obvious fact that equality of outcome is distinct from equality of opportunity. The failure to grasp this glaring truth has prompted lamentations about lack of equal opportunity from those whose outcomes have lagged.

On the other hand, new immigrants to this country have, over the decades, showed that opportunity is there for them who will reach for it. They have soared.

American exceptionalism, perhaps a somewhat eroded notion, had been a real force in the world, at least until Ronald Reagan assumed the presidency. One might attribute this to the fact that people who emigrated to this country from the world over were risk takers, talented, educated, and unafraid. They prospered and along with them, the nation became a true melting pot of exceptionalism.

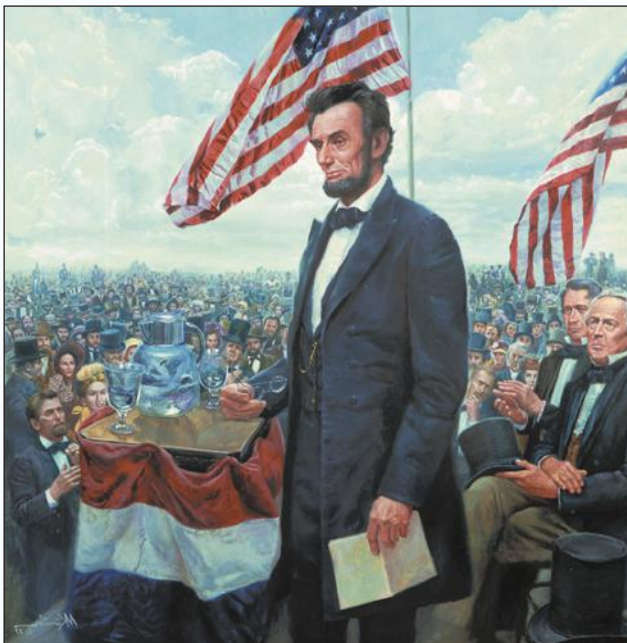
If this nation attracted a good share of the world’s elite risk takers, it would stand to reason that such results would ensue. The equally obvious secondary lesson is that it is not simply equality of opportunity, but what one does with opportunity that determines outcome.

What of the rest of the world, stagnant in many parts not just for decades, but for centuries? Why would Americans, imported from the corners of the world, also not regress to the mean, or stagnate? Would such regression not be a realistic expectation?

The genius of the American experiment is that we never had to answer that question of regression to the mean until recently. Generation after generation succeeded in America and it was often with the impetus provided by immigrants.

So, how does Ronald Reagan bear any responsibility here? He was the presidential candidate who made the most un-American declaration that “government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem.” Reagan’s remark was taken slightly out of context, but he never attempted to correct his followers who misconstrued his words. He was too busy basking in their adulation, a Grade B movie actor turned new age philosopher-sage. There is nothing a man embraces more easily than adulation — especially adulation built on false premise.

The faithful seized on the wisdom of their patron Saint



The Gettysburg Address. Pic - Hankering for History

**“In some quarters, cries about opportunity denied have devolved to demands for reparations. Certainly, it is right to correct past injustices. But reparations should involve more than throwing money at a problem for money spent without purpose or plan is never the answer, much less a solution. We can expect and anticipate that funds so distributed will be dissipated without achieving much. Worse, there will be charlatans who will grab what they can. Among the charlatans will be money managers from Wall Street who will see a bonanza. And, surely, when the money is gone, there will be laments that it was not enough and more must be done...”**

Ronnie to denigrate the role of government in providing for the general welfare. They did not care that the Declaration of Independence states that governments are instituted among men to secure the unalienable rights: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of happiness. So, the notion of government itself became a pariah.

Reagan’s actual remarks were: “In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem. From time to time we’ve been tempted to believe that society has become too complex to be managed by self-rule, that government by an elite group is superior to government for, by, and of the people. But if no one among us is capable of governing himself, then who among us has the capacity to govern someone else?”

And so it was that a generation of Republicans grew up with a disdain for the very notion of government. The great curiosity and paradox are that the leaders of the Republican Party who denigrate government have been the most anxious to run it.

Underlying this movement is an explanation for the regression to the mean. Just as those who were actually denied equality of opportunity whether due to race or gender, have lamented their own shortfall of outcome, those

who have not been able to achieve despite being given opportunity, found a convenient scapegoat: government.

The Democrats and liberals, in turn, saw government as failing them and called on it to do more. Thus, was born an American schism between those on the right who denigrate government for its very existence and those on the left who lament its failures, each seeing the destruction of government in its present form, a worthy goal.

In some quarters, cries about opportunity denied have devolved to demands for reparations. Certainly, it is right to correct past injustices. But reparations should involve more than throwing money at a problem for money spent without purpose or plan is never the answer, much less a solution. We can expect and anticipate that funds so distributed will be dissipated without achieving much. Worse, there will be charlatans who will grab what they can. Among the charlatans will be money managers from Wall Street who will see a bonanza. And, surely, when the money is gone, there will be laments that it was not enough and more must be done.

Is there a better path? We have some reason to believe that education and job training are the best paths to providing opportunity not only for citizens but for the nation as a whole. I would offer to every Black American aged from 10-60 (even older if any be interested) the opportunity to complete a high school education, a college degree or vocational training — all free of charge and even pay everyone who participates in the program a stipend, for as long as they achieve minimally acceptable grades, so that living expenses are not an issue.

After that, the pursuit of opportunity is on each person, as it should be. But wait a minute. In this land where all persons are entitled to the equal protection of the laws, I would make the program open to ALL Americans, not just Blacks. A better educated and trained workforce is essential to our survival. We cannot continue to count on importing talent from around the world. More importantly, we cannot and should not let Americans languish due to lack of education or vocational training.

Then, of course, there are those who complain of opportunity stolen, most notably, our recently defeated former president. Here, the sin is even greater than Ronald Reagan’s faux pas. It is a sin built on falsehood and a refutation of that essential proposition to which Lincoln spoke: can a nation so conceived, long endure? Donald Trump made his failure the nation’s failure. Those who give him succor deny the essence of this nation’s founding.

We have seen the press and the House Committee set up to investigate the events of January 6 document pretty much what we knew — that Trump is a liar and a fraud. To be sure, there have been many revelations about the many other ways in which Donald Trump is a despicable and vile person.

There are too many forces around the world dedicated to the proposition that America must fail. We cannot allow one of our own, particularly a former President, to aid their cause.

On this July 4, two hundred forty-six years later, our job as a nation is to make sure that on January 7 and all the days to follow, this nation will endure.

Happy birthday, America and happy fourth to all.

Cheerz...  
Bwana

# British PM Boris Johnson steps down after scandals prompt a wave of resignations

*In a remarkable twist, Johnson was abandoned by the finance and education ministers he had promoted just 36 hours earlier in a bid to cling to power*

Scandal-ridden British Prime Minister Boris Johnson capitulated to mounting pressure to step down Thursday, announcing his decision after days of high-profile government resignations and calls from fellow Conservative Party members to quit.

"In the past few weeks, I have been trying to convince my colleagues it would be eccentric to change governments when we have achieved so much," he said in his speech outside No. 10 Downing St. amid loud booing from the crowd nearby. "I regret not to be successful in those arguments and, of course, it's painful not to be able to see through those projects myself."

Johnson also said he planned to remain as prime minister until a successor is chosen — a move that may face opposition from others in an increasingly hostile Parliament, reports NBC News.

In his speech, he hailed his government's achievements, including supporting Ukraine after the Russian invasion and weathering the Covid pandemic.

He becomes the third consecutive British prime minister to resign before their term in recent years, following in the footsteps of Theresa May and David Cameron.

While Johnson was met with applause from colleagues on Downing Street, boos from a crowd nearby threatened to drown out his speech. Meanwhile, a loudspeaker blasted a reworked version of the Bay City Rollers song "Bye Bye Baby" with the lyrics changed to "bye bye Boris."

Some in the crowd celebrated Johnson's departure.

Months of discontent over Johnson's judgment and ethics within his governing party erupted with the resignations of Treasury chief Rishi Sunak and Health Secretary Sajid Javid within minutes of each other Tuesday evening.

The final straw for them was the prime minister's shifting explanations about his handling of sexual misconduct allegations

within Conservative Party ranks.

Calls for Johnson's resignation had only intensified in the hours that followed, during which more than 50 other members of the government also resigned.

Here are top quotes from Johnson's resignation address.

"In the last few days, I tried persuade my colleagues that it would be eccentric to change governments when we're delivering so much and we have such a vast mandate and when we're actually only a handful of votes behind in the polls even in mid-term after quite a few months of pretty relentless sledging."

"I regret to not have been successful...of course, it's painful not to be able to see through many ideas and projects myself...But when the herd instinct is powerful, the herd moves."

"And to my friends in politics, no one is remotely indispensable...And to the new leader, I say, whoever he/she maybe, I will give you as much support as I can."

"And to you the British public, I know there will be many people who are relieved and perhaps quite a few who will also be disappointed. And I want you to know how sad I am to be giving up the best job in the world."

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## Who could be new UK PM, what is the method and how long will it take?

The '1922 Committee' will oversee the selection of a new head who automatically becomes prime minister. Candidates must be nominated by two other Conservative lawmakers. This means there could be a large field of potentials.

Multiple rounds of voting will be held, with each lawmaker asked to vote for his/her choice in a secret ballot. After each round the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated. This continues till there are two candidates left. The wider membership of the party is then asked to choose a



leader.

How long this takes depends on how many candidates there are; in 2016 Theresa May became PM less than three weeks after David Cameron resigned.

## Who could replace Johnson as prime minister of the UK?

**Liz Truss** - The foreign secretary is the darling of the Conservatives' grassroots and has regularly topped polls of party members carried out by the website Conservative Home. Truss, 46, was earlier international trade minister (a role in which she championed Brexit) in the Johnson cabinet and last year was made lead negotiator with the European Union.

**Jeremy Hunt** - The ex foreign and health minister, 55, finished second to Johnson in the 2019 contest. He is seen as offering a more serious and less controversial style of leadership - a big plus point for many.

**Ben Wallace** - Wallace, 52, is the defence minister and a popular figure within the party thanks, in large part, to his handling of the Ukraine crisis. A former

soldier who served in Northern Ireland, Germany, Cyprus and central America, Wallace has seen his stock increase steadily over the past three years.

**Rishi Sunak** - The finance minister was, till last year, the odds-on favourite to replace Johnson. He won praise for rescue packages for the economy during the worst of the Covid pandemic, including an employment programme that could cost as much as \$514 billion.

**Nadhim Zahawi** - Zahawi, 55, has been appointed as Sunak's successor but that does not rule him out from taking a shot at the prime minister's post. Zahawi impressed as vaccines minister after Britain had one of the world's fastest roll-out rates and last week said it would be a 'privilege' to be prime minister. As a plus, his personal story - a former Iraqi refugee who came to Britain as a child - sets him apart.

**Penny Mordaunt** - Mordaunt, 49, is the former defence minister who was fired by Johnson when he took charge in 2019 because she had backed his rival, Hunt.

# FBI, MI5 chiefs warn of 'immense' China threat at rare joint address

FBI Director Christopher Wray and United Kingdom MI5 Director General Ken McCallum on Wednesday cautioned business leaders against threat from the Chinese government, in an unprecedented joint address at the British intelligence service's London headquarters. The top domestic security service officials said the threat from Chinese spies is paramount in both countries and only continues to grow.

Speaking to an audience of officials and business executives in Thames House, Wray talked about "complex, enduring, and pervasive danger" to the innovative businesses from China, reports HT.

"We consistently see that it's the Chinese government that poses the biggest long-term threat to our economic



and national security, and by 'our', I mean both of our nations, along with our allies in Europe and elsewhere," he said.

While the security officials understand the appeal of doing business in and with

China, the FBI director said, the Chinese government "poses an even more serious threat to Western businesses than even many sophisticated businesspeople realize."

Elaborating on what the danger looks like, Wray asserted that the Chinese government "is set on stealing your technology—whatever it is that makes your industry tick—and using it to undercut your business and dominate your market."

Adding to it, McCallum said most of what is at risk from Chinese Communist Party aggression is "the world-leading expertise, technology, research, and commercial advantage developed and held by people in this room, and others like you." Covert theft, tech transfer, and exploiting research were some of the ways highlighted by the MI5 chief that China could use to acquire advantage.

\* Contd on page 9



## New Covid test developed in US can identify all variants in hours, says report



Representational image(AFP)

Scientists in the US have developed a rapid Covid-19 test that can accurately detect all current variants of SARS-CoV-2 within hours. The test, CoVarScan, detects the signatures of eight hotspots on the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes Covid-19.

The researchers at the University of Texas (UT) Southwestern Medical Center in the US tested CoVarScan on samples collected from more than 4,000 patients.

The research, published recently in the journal 'Clinical Chemistry', shows that the test is as accurate as other methods used to diagnose Covid-19, and can successfully differentiate between all current

variants of SARS-CoV-2, reports PTI.

"Using this test, we can determine very quickly what variants are in the community and if a new variant is emerging," said Jeffrey SoRelle, an assistant professor at UT Southwestern, and senior author of the study.

"It also has implications for individual patients when we are dealing with variants that respond differently to treatments," SoRelle said.

While a number of other tests for Covid-19 exist, they generally detect either a fragment of SARS-CoV-2 genetic material or small molecules found on the surface of the virus, and don't provide information to identify the variant.

In addition, many researchers worry that these tests are not accurate in detecting some variants, or may miss future strains.

To determine which variant of Covid-19 a patient has, scientists typically must use whole genome sequencing, which is time-consuming and expensive, relying on sophisticated equipment and analysis to spell out the entire RNA sequence contained in the viruses.

CoVarScan hones in on eight regions of SARS-CoV-2 that commonly differ between viral variants.

It detects small mutations — where the sequence of RNA building blocks varies — and measures the length of repetitive genetic regions that tend to grow and shrink as the virus evolves.

The method relies on polymerase chain reaction (PCR) — a technique common in most pathology labs — to copy and measure the RNA at these eight sites of interest.

SoRelle's team ran the test on over 4,000 Covid-19-positive nasal swab samples collected at UT Southwestern from April 2021 to February 2022 -- from patients both with and without symptoms.

The tests were validated with the gold-standard whole genome sequencing, and the results were used by doctors to choose treatments in some critically ill Covid-19 patients.



Nearly 100 Sikhs had been removed from their posts for not meeting the 'clean shave' requirement. Pic - Reuters

## 'Clean shave' directive: Toronto makes an exception for Sikh security guards

The city of Toronto on Tuesday said it is making an exception to its "clean shave" directive for security personnel posted at shelters impacted by Covid-19, after nearly 100 Sikhs were removed from their posts for not meeting the requirement.

Contracted security providers were formally contacted and the Canadian city "repeated its expectations that they appropriately accommodate any Sikh security guard employees who have requested religious exemptions and reinstate any employee whose employment was terminated, immediately. The city will not accept any contractors failing to accommodate religious freedoms," authorities said in a statement.

The city recently mandated that all guards be fitted with N95 respirators fitting directly on to the face, disallowing any facial hair. As a result, security agencies contracted by the city laid off or transferred Sikhs who refused to shave their beard for religious reasons, reports HT.

Toronto will immediately permit "under-mask beard covers" as a "reasonable accommodation option for individuals who maintain facial hair as a tenet of their faith and are required to be present at city sites with protective N95 respirator requirements".

The covering is a method of applying a tight-fitting mask over a beard that covers the chin and cheeks, and ties in a knot at the top of the head. An N95 mask is then worn over the cover. The technique, also known as the Singh Thattha Method, is used by many Sikh people in the medical community and has been found to be highly effective in respirator fit testing, the release said.

The matter was raised by the World Sikh Organisation (WSO). In a statement issued on Monday, it said it wrote Toronto Mayor John Tory and all members of Toronto City Council on June 7, seeking "an urgent resolution to the current situation".

Compiled by Doojesh Ramlallah

## Sri Lanka keeps schools shut amid fuel crisis

Sri Lanka extended school closures for one more week starting July 4 amid unprecedented fuel crisis, the education ministry announced on Sunday. The government and state-approved private schools will remain closed for a week as there's not enough fuel for teachers and parents to get children to classrooms.

The Sri Lankan minister said the school will cover the syllabus in the next vacation term.

Last month, the schools were shut nationwide for a day due to fuel shortages and remained closed in the urban areas for the last two weeks.

Sri Lanka education ministry announced that all government and government-approved private schools in Colombo city limits, as well as schools in other main cities in the other provinces, will be closed during the next week due to prolonged power cuts.

Country's education ministry secretary Nihal Ranasinghe asked the schools to conduct online classes. Meanwhile, the schools at



People wait to buy fuel at a fuel station in Colombo, Sri Lanka, June 27, 2022. Pic -AP

the divisional level have been allowed to conduct classes with less number of students under conditions that transportation difficulties do not affect the students, teachers and principals, reports HT.

Ranasinghe announced that the Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka (PUCSL) has agreed not to have power cuts from 08.00am to 01.00pm to facilitate online teaching on weekdays.

Sri Lanka has been witnessing an unprecedented economic crisis since the country's independence in 1948.

The economic crisis sparked protests and political unrest leading to the resignation of Mahinda Rajapaksa as Sri Lanka's Prime minister.

The cash-strapped nation has been getting most of its fuel needs from neighbouring India, which provided it with a credit line. The Sri Lankan government said it was also negotiating with suppliers in Russia and Malaysia. The government has appealed to the Sri Lankan expatriates to send money home through the banks to pay for new oil purchases.

Interview : Dr Avinaash Munohur, Politologue

# “Le brouillard s'épaissit...”

*Tant que Sherry Singh n'apporte pas les preuves solides – nous resterons dans l'obscurité”*

**D**r Avinaash Munohur, politologue et Président de la Commission Développement durable du MMM, aborde avec nous toute la question des allégations formulées lors de la démission de Sherry Singh comme CEO de Mauritius Telecom, contre le PM l'accusant de vouloir lui forcer à accepter qu'une tierce partie étrangère ait accès au réseau de MT afin d'y installer des équipements de « sniffing ». A ce stade et sauf précisions additionnelles de Sherry Singh, rien n'autorise de porter un jugement sur une affaire d'une telle gravité, mais les implications morales, juridiques et géopolitiques, sans compter la portée politique locale sont abordées par notre invité.

**Mauritius Times: Une allégation d'une extrême gravité a été faite par l'ex-CEO de Mauritius Telecom, et celle-ci a été démentie par le Premier ministre dans sa réponse à la PNQ du leader de l'Opposition, mardi dernier, au Parlement. Les avis au niveau du barreau divergent quant au délit qui aurait été commis et ce qui pourrait être rapporté à la police, ce qui fait que faute de détails précis et de preuves fournies par Sherry Singh lui-même, on risque de tourner en rond, non?**

**Dr Avinaash Munohur:** Il est clair que les allégations portées par Sherry Singh sont d'une gravité extrême, et dépeignent un portrait particulièrement inquiétant de l'exercice du pouvoir actuellement à Maurice – un État démocratique qui a toujours été respecté et cité comme un modèle des pratiques libérales exemplaires dans la région, par nos partenaires géostratégiques, auprès des institutions internationales et auprès des investisseurs étrangers.

L'image pour le pouvoir est extrêmement dommageable, le nier relèverait de la mauvaise foi. Nous avons d'un côté un Sherry Singh communiquant de manière efficace et de l'autre un Pravind Jugnauth qui semble pour l'instant acculé, et dont les réponses sont faibles au vu de la gravité des accusations. La performance du Speaker de l'Assemblée nationale le 5 juillet dernier n'a clairement pas aidé le Premier ministre à rétablir un peu de confiance en son action, dans un moment aussi critique de la mandature.

Le Premier ministre a bien confirmé, le 6 juillet dernier, qu'une conversation téléphonique avec l'ex-CEO de Mauritius Telecom concernant l'accès à une équipe technique de l'Inde à Baie Jacotet avait bien eu lieu. Mais il a rejeté les accusations de Sherry Singh selon lesquelles il aurait demandé l'installation d'équipements permettant le 'sniffing' ou l'interception de données informatiques.

Il est clair que le brouillard s'épaissit et tant que Sherry Singh n'apporte pas les preuves solides qui soutiennent ses allégations et ses accusations – et en particulier des preuves démontrant la volonté d'installation d'équipements pour le 'sniffing' et la capture de données – nous resterons dans l'obscurité. Et il est essentiel que Sherry Singh fasse cela afin que nous puissions y voir plus clair.

Sommes-nous vraiment dans une affaire grave au cœur du pouvoir ou bien sommes-nous uniquement dans une guerre d'égo, où un ancien proche collaborateur ayant peut-être été poussé vers la sortie cherche à faire du sensationnalisme afin d'éclabousser son ancien maître? Ce point reste à être éclairci et il est urgent et extrêmement important que Sherry Singh vienne de l'avant avec des

preuves puisque ses révélations ont plongé la réputation du pays dans une spirale qui peut devenir extrêmement toxique.

Je n'oublie pas que nous nous remettons à peine de l'inscription de notre secteur financier sur la liste noire des paradis fiscaux de l'Union européenne, nous devons donc tout faire pour améliorer et renforcer notre image à l'inter-

**“Il est clair que le brouillard s'épaissit et tant que Sherry Singh n'apporte pas les preuves solides qui soutiennent ses allégations et ses accusations – et en particulier des preuves démontrant la volonté d'installation d'équipements pour le 'sniffing' et la capture de données – nous resterons dans l'obscurité. Et il est essentiel que Sherry Singh fasse cela afin que nous puissions y voir plus clair...”**

national. Notre pays est bien trop dépendant des investissements étrangers pour que ce genre d'allégations, voire ces soupçons de complots, restent sans réponses claires et précises.

**\* Un autre courant d'opinion soutient que l'allégation à l'effet que le Premier ministre aurait donné des instructions à Sherry Singh pour qu'une "third party" soit autorisée à accéder au réseau de Mauritius Telecom pour installer des équipements de 'sniffing' pourrait être considérée comme un délit portant sur des directives pour commettre un crime au terme de l'article 38 du Code pénal ou d'incitation à la haute trahison. Encore une fois, sans preuves ni témoins, il n'y aura pas de procès contre le Premier ministre...**

Il est absolument clair que sans preuves, que sans enquête policière et que sans matière à des poursuites, il ne peut pas y avoir de procès. Et, jusqu'à preuve du contraire, tout citoyen accusé a droit à la présomption d'innocence jusqu'à ce que cette accusation se transforme formellement en un verdict d'une Cour de justice.

De manière objective, nous sommes forcés de constater que nous ne savons en réalité pas grand-chose du contenu concret des allégations formulées. Nous avons besoin d'en savoir bien plus avant de pouvoir avoir une opinion informée puisque énormément de questions restent en suspens.

Supposons que les allégations soient fondées et que Sherry Singh remette des preuves de ce qu'il avance à la police, tout un ensemble de questions se poseront alors.

À l'heure où nous échangeons, Pravind Jugnauth a déjà reconnu qu'il a bel et bien appelé Sherry Singh pour lui demander l'accès aux installations de Baie Jacotet afin d'y effectuer un 'survey'. La raison évoquée pour cette



demande est « la sécurité d'État » et nous savons qu'une équipe avait été dépêchée à la suite d'une demande de Pravind Jugnauth auprès du PM indien. Mais nous ne connaissons pour l'instant rien quant à la nature de ce 'survey', tout comme nous ne connaissons pas les raisons qui ont poussé le Premier ministre à demander que ce 'survey' soit effectué.

De plus, un 'survey' effectué par des techniciens indiens ne nous informe pas forcément sur qui est le bénéficiaire de ce 'survey', ce qui revient à dire que nous ne savons pas encore de manière certaine qui est la «third party» évoquée par Sherry Singh. S'agit-il d'une puissance étrangère ou bien s'agit-il plutôt d'un dispositif installé pour que l'État mauricien puisse recueillir des informations pour son propre compte? Si cette dernière hypothèse est vérifiée, alors pourquoi est-ce que le gouvernement mauricien doit recueillir ces informations? Lorsque le Premier ministre parle de sécurité d'État, à quoi fait-il référence?

Je laisse aux lecteurs le loisir de la spéculation sur les réponses à ces questions. Je voudrais plutôt attirer votre attention sur le fait que nous sommes en face de deux hypothèses différentes.

Il me semble que dans la première hypothèse - celle de l'installation des équipements de surveillance pour le compte d'une puissance étrangère - nous sommes effectivement dans le cadre de l'article 38 du Code Pénal et qu'il peut y avoir haute trahison du fait que le chef du gouvernement ait autorisé l'accès à des dispositifs et des informations engageant sa responsabilité en tant que Premier ministre et ministre de l'Intérieur. Il peut même y avoir un 'breach' extrêmement sérieux pour la sécurité nationale, ne le sous-estimons pas, dans cette hypothèse.

● Suite en page 11

# ‘Allons nous vers un point de bascule? Nous verrons bien, mais il est clair que le Premier ministre navigue dans une zone sensible’

● Suite de la page 10

Dans la seconde hypothèse - qui est celle de l'installation de ces dispositifs de surveillance pour le compte de l'État mauricien - il n'y a pas forcément haute trahison puisque l'accès aux réseaux et aux informations se fait dans le contexte d'un mandat du gouvernement pour sa propre utilisation. Je ne dis pas ici que cette hypothèse ne pose pas problème. Au contraire, nous sommes, tout comme dans la première hypothèse, en face de sérieuses questions liées à la liberté d'expression, au bon fonctionnement de la démocratie, des droits des individus à s'opposer à un pouvoir, etc., mais nous ne sommes pas dans un cas où un chef de gouvernement a agi pour le compte et au profit d'une puissance étrangère.

Il me semble qu'il est important de poser cette distinction puisqu'elle a des conséquences radicalement différentes.

Mais, par delà la question juridique et la définition juridique de la haute trahison dans ce cas précis - qui relève d'un débat de juristes - nous ne devons pas occulter la dimension politique de la notion de trahison. Sommes-nous aujourd'hui à Maurice dans la situation où un chef de gouvernement, qui est le garant de notre sécurité nationale et de la souveraineté de notre pays, aurait usé de son pouvoir afin d'essayer d'obtenir des informations par des moyens illicites, que sa fonction ne pourrait cautionner?

Encore une fois, nous spéculons, et sans preuves, sans précisions et sans réponses à tout un ensemble de questions qui se posent, nous ne pouvons pas savoir. Nous devons donc attendre et éviter toute spéculation dangereuse et hasardeuse.

**\* Au bout du compte toute cette agitation autour de l'allégation de Sherry Singh risque aussi de se transformer en eau de boudin surtout pour l'opposition si l'ex-CEO de Mauritius Telecom ne parvient pas à soutenir par moyens de preuves ou pire ne souhaite pas avancer plus loin, n'est-ce pas?**

Encore une fois, l'impératif de la preuve est sur Sherry Singh. Il est l'accusateur, il doit maintenant soutenir ses accusations. Il en va de sa réputation et de son honneur en tant que citoyen, et surtout en tant que citoyen jouant soudainement la carte d'un patriotisme retrouvé, après tant d'années passées en première ligne des bénéfices et des avantages que peuvent procurer la proximité avec le pouvoir.

Que l'affaire se transforme en eau de boudin pour l'opposition, je ne le pense pas. L'opposition joue son rôle. Elle est la première à demander à Sherry Singh de venir de l'avant avec des preuves ; ne pouvant baser ses actions sur des spéculations gratuites. Il y a, de ce fait, une responsabilité des partis de l'opposition, et surtout ceux avec des représentants à l'Assemblée nationale. Leurs députés posent des questions et voudraient des réponses, comme

tous les Mauriciens curieux des affaires publiques. Mais, comme vous le savez, ce n'est pas toujours évident pour les députés de l'opposition d'exercer le droit souverain que leur confère le peuple de le représenter et de défendre ses intérêts en questionnant la majorité à l'Assemblée nationale.

Dernier point quant à votre question... on entend, dans la dernière partie le fait que Sherry Singh pourrait être convaincu de retirer ses accusations et de faire une sorte de *mea culpa* publique. Il me semble qu'en débattant de telles accusations, et avec une telle force, il ne peut plus reculer maintenant. Il y aurait de très sérieuses questions à lui poser s'il reculait, et il aura le devoir moral d'y répondre.

**\* Toutefois si ce que Sherry Singh a déclaré s'avère vrai, qu'est-ce qui vous préoccupe le plus dans toute cette affaire?**

Si cette hypothèse - et j'insiste sur ce terme, il ne s'agit pour l'instant que d'une hypothèse - s'avère vérifiée et prouvée, alors c'est une boîte de Pandore qui aura été ouverte, avec des ondes de choc pouvant avoir des répercussions d'une gravité extrême sur le plan géopolitique.

Dans un premier temps, le Premier ministre devra démissionner et s'expliquer sur les raisons de ses actions, avant de s'en remettre à la justice. Encore une fois, nous serons en face de tout un ensemble de questions. Pourquoi avoir fait une telle chose? Est-ce que les raisons relèvent purement de la politique partisane - comme ce fut, par exemple, le cas pour l'affaire Watergate aux États-Unis? Ou bien sommes-nous pris au cœur d'une guerre du *big data* et de l'information entre différentes puissances étrangères?

Je n'oublie pas, par exemple, que le nerf de la guerre commerciale entre les États-Unis et la Chine fut la guerre de l'économie du *big data* et de l'information, avec Huawei et la 5G chinoise en première ligne des attaques américaines - et notamment pour des raisons de surveillance et de contrôle des flux de *data* et d'informations. Nous sommes là dans le domaine des grands enjeux géostratégiques, avec la compétition pour l'hégémonie mondiale en jeu.

Certains géopolitologues disent d'ailleurs que nous sommes actuellement dans une phase historique de redistribution des rapports de pouvoir à l'échelle du monde, avec d'un côté les États-Unis qui revoient leurs ambitions mondialistes et leurs priorités sécuritaires à vitesse grand V; et de l'autre la montée en puissance de la Chine à travers notamment la *Belt and Road Initiative* qui est dans une phase de conquête agressive de nouveaux marchés pour ses industries.

Il y a bien évidemment, dans le sillage de ces deux superpuissances mondiales, tout un ensemble d'autres pays dont les ambitions et les aspirations géostratégiques ne devraient pas être sous-estimées. Cette redistribution des cartes se produisant d'ailleurs tout autant dans les eaux de l'Indo-Pacifique que dans les espaces digitaux - le contrôle du *data* équivalant



**“Un ‘survey’ effectué par des techniciens indiens ne nous informe pas forcément sur qui est le bénéficiaire de ce ‘survey’, ce qui revient à dire que nous ne savons pas encore de manière certaine qui est la «third party» évoquée par Sherry Singh. S’agit-il d’une puissance étrangère ou bien s’agit-il plutôt d’un dispositif installé pour que l’État mauricien puisse recueillir des informations pour son propre compte?”**

aujourd'hui à contrôler l'un des nerfs centraux de ce qui fait fonctionner le commerce mondial et la globalisation.

Je rajouterai ici qu'il serait extraordinairement innocent de penser que nous ne sommes pas pris dans ces enjeux ici à Maurice.

**\* Quelles soient vraies ou non ces allégations de Sherry Singh, quelles peuvent être ses motivations réelles, selon vous? Le vent tourne-t-il, à votre avis?**

Il s'agit, selon moi, d'un moment extrêmement critique du mandat actuel. Et oui, les choses peuvent basculer pour le Premier ministre.

La première chose qu'il faudrait dire c'est que Sherry Singh a choisi l'attaque frontale. Il n'y est pas allé de main morte, et c'est le moins qu'on puisse dire. En faisant cela, Sherry Singh a pris l'initiative et a montré qu'il n'avait pas froid aux yeux. «He's going for the kill» comme on dirait en Anglais. Au regard d'éventuelles ambitions politiques, il s'agit d'un excellent coup de communication. Maintenant, il nous apparaît de manière extrêmement claire également que si ces allégations ne poussent pas le Premier ministre vers la sortie alors c'est Sherry Singh lui-même qui sera mis KO, avec des conséquences que nous pouvons deviner extrêmement sérieuses pour lui.

Nous sommes vraiment comme dans un match de boxe entre deux hommes, et cette situation pourrait produire une instabilité politique réelle.

Je distingue ici situation politique et situation électorale. Je m'explique... Il me semble qu'au vu de la réalité économique actuelle, avec l'explosion du coût de la vie, les préoccupations de la majorité des Mauriciens sont ailleurs. Si vous rajoutez à cela le fait que nous sommes ici dans une affaire qui est - au regard du manque de précédents, des technologies et des enjeux impliqués - extrêmement complexe et obscure à comprendre, il se pourrait bien que nous soyons dans une situation où le Premier ministre soit en mesure de gagner une élection générale - qu'il aura tout intérêt à déclencher s'il se voit être poussé à la démission - alors même qu'il sera dans une situation de défiance généralisée.

● Suite en page 12

**“Nous ne devons pas occulter la dimension politique de la notion de trahison. Sommes-nous aujourd'hui à Maurice dans la situation où un chef de gouvernement, qui est le garant de notre sécurité nationale et de la souveraineté de notre pays, aurait usé de son pouvoir afin d'essayer d'obtenir des informations par des moyens illicites, que sa fonction ne pourrait cautionner ?”**

# 'Sherry Singh a pris l'initiative et a montré qu'il n'avait pas froid aux yeux.

*Maintenant, si ces allégations ne poussent pas le Premier ministre vers la sortie alors c'est Sherry Singh lui-même qui sera mis KO,..."*

● Suite de la page 11

Défiance des acteurs institutionnels, défiance des acteurs économiques, défiance des partenaires étrangers, défiance des observateurs mondiaux, etc... Maurice ferait alors face à une situation extrêmement dangereuse et grave que ce soit pour notre économie, pour notre démocratie, voir même pour la sécurité de la nation. Je pousse un peu le bouchon, mais ce scénario n'est pas impossible. Il ne relève aujourd'hui plus de la fiction.

C'est d'ailleurs aussi pour cela que les forces de l'opposition ont le devoir de mettre leurs différends de côté pour pouvoir former un front solidaire et uni afin que notre pays ne se retrouve pas dans cette situation.

**\* Par ailleurs, l'affaire de 'sniffers' et le 'coming-out' de Sherry Singh ont déjà un impact sur l'échiquier politique et cela ira probablement en s'accroissant durant les prochaines semaines si ce denier vient débattre encore d'autres affaires susceptibles de déstabiliser l'alliance gouvernementale. Avez-vous toutefois l'impression que la campagne électorale a déjà été déclenchée, bien plus tôt qu'on ne l'attendait?**

J'ai eu l'impression, en écoutant le dernier budget, que la majorité gouvernementale se donnait tous les moyens pour déclencher les élections générales le plus rapidement possible.

Il y a une disjonction trop importante entre la situation économique actuelle, et notamment l'instabilité de la Roupie, et la capacité du ministre des Finances à mettre en place des mesures onéreuses pour soutenir le pouvoir d'achat des classes populaires pour penser le contraire.

Je ne dis pas que le gouvernement a déjà un calendrier pour les prochaines élections générales, mais il me semble qu'il s'est donné les moyens de le faire et il faut avouer qu'il s'agit d'une bonne tactique de leur part.

Nous sommes dans une telle situation d'incertitude et d'invisibilité par rapport au moyen terme que la majorité aurait tout intérêt à déclencher les élections générales anticipées dès qu'une fenêtre de tir lui étant favorable se

présentera. Attendre la dissolution naturelle de l'Assemblée nationale en novembre 2024 équivaut à accepter de naviguer dans l'incertitude du futur, ce que les stratèges du MSM ont souvent refusé de faire.

Je me souviens, par exemple, ici des mandats de SAJ qui duraient moins de 5 ans dans les années 1980 et 1990. Je ne doute pas que Pravind Jugnauth appliquera la même méthode, surtout s'il pense que l'opposition sera prise au dépourvu.

**\* L'affaire Sherry Singh constitue un gros morceau pour l'opposition, probablement plus efficace que les autres affaires et thèmes, dont la dépréciation de la roupie et la crise du pouvoir d'achat affectant la population, etc., qui ont dominé l'actualité ces derniers mois. Faut-il toutefois qu'elle se fasse voir comme une alternance valable, n'est-ce pas?**

Un gros morceau très certainement, mais il ne faut pas oublier que ce gouvernement n'a eu de cesse d'accumuler les scandales.

Nous n'avons pas oublié la gestion désastreuse de la marée noire du Wakashio, nous n'avons pas oublié l'obscurité autour des *Emergency Procurements* passés pendant la Covid, nous n'avons pas oublié la démission de l'ancien ministre du Commerce dans le cadre de l'affaire Kistnen, et j'en passe...

Cette affaire vient s'ajouter à une série déjà longue de scandales mais nous sentons bien que nous sommes ici en face d'une affaire dont les implications et les répercussions pourraient être beaucoup plus graves que les autres.

Allons-nous vers un point de bascule? Nous verrons bien. Il est encore trop tôt pour s'avancer sur cette question, mais il est clair que le Premier ministre navigue dans une zone sensible.

L'opposition agira très certainement comme elle l'a toujours fait, c'est-à-dire de manière responsable. Il est important de ne pas basculer dans les fantasmes et les spéculations dangereuses, et d'avancer prudemment et de manière rationnelle. La sécurité nationale et la paix sociale restent les priorités de toute personne engagée de manière sérieuse en politique.

Parallèlement à cela, nous continuons à travailler – comme je peux le faire avec mes camarades de la Commission Développement Durable – à une meilleure compréhension de notre monde, de notre pays et des problèmes que nous vivons et qui touchent nos compatriotes, parfois de manière violente.

La responsabilité de l'opposition n'est pas uniquement la construction des alliances politiques représentant une alternative crédible, mais le fait de construire ces alliances sur des projets solides et qui répondent aux défis actuels - qu'ils soient économiques, sociales, sécuritaires, énergétiques, institution-

**“ Cette affaire vient s'ajouter à une série déjà longue de scandales mais nous sentons bien que nous sommes ici en face d'une affaire dont les implications et les répercussions pourraient être beaucoup plus graves que les autres. Allons-nous vers un point de bascule? Nous verrons bien. Il est encore trop tôt pour s'avancer sur cette question, mais il est clair que le Premier ministre navigue dans une zone sensible...”**



nelles ou culturelles.

**\* Certains observateurs politiques persistent à croire qu'il faut absolument une alliance PTr-L'Entente de l'Espoir pour affronter l'alliance au pouvoir, mais les choses sont toutefois toujours coincées sur ce plan-là, en raison du désaccord sur le leadership d'une alliance élargie de l'opposition. Et, on ne sait pas si les Travailleurs regardent dans la même direction que les autres composantes de l'opposition, en particulier le MMM. Qu'en pensez-vous?**

Des alliances politiques ne sont pas des choses qui peuvent être prises à la légère, selon le bon vouloir du sentiment que l'on peut avoir en se réveillant le matin ou en rentrant du travail après une dure journée. Les alliances politiques sont fondées dans des projets communs, et il est extrêmement important de s'accorder sur les projets, et sur la manière de les réaliser.

Nous ne sommes pas ici dans de l'improvisation pure. Le musicien que je suis vous dira que le jazz peut sembler improvisé, et il est indéniable qu'il comporte un élément de créativité, mais le jazz répond à une structure harmonique extrêmement rigide et solide. Il en va de même pour les projets politiques et les négociations d'alliance : ils doivent répondre à des critères qui feront que le projet proposé au peuple sera mené à bien, et ce malgré les imprévus qui se présenteront sur notre chemin.

Je peux d'ailleurs vous affirmer que les partenaires de l'Entente de L'Espoir regardent dans la même direction et ont un objectif commun : l'urgence d'un changement politique. Il me semble que le PTr a le même objectif. Mais cela ne suffit pas selon moi. Ce qui compte, à ce moment donné de l'histoire de notre pays et dans la conjoncture actuelle, c'est de s'accorder sur un projet commun qui permettra à la République de Maurice d'effectuer pleinement son entrée dans le 21ème siècle et d'ouvrir un cycle politique qui nous permettra de poser les bases d'un projet national nous menant vers les années 2050.

Encore une fois, je considère que mes camarades et moi sommes pris dans cette démarche même si elle reste un travail de fond qui n'attire pas forcément l'attention des médias devenus parfois trop friands de sensationnalisme, jusqu'à en oublier la fondamentale de la politique: le fait qu'elle soit l'instrument avec lequel nous pouvons changer notre monde.



**“ Je peux d'ailleurs vous affirmer que les partenaires de l'Entente de L'Espoir regardent dans la même direction et ont un objectif commun: l'urgence d'un changement politique. Il me semble que le PTr a le même objectif. Mais cela ne suffit pas selon moi. Ce qui compte, à ce moment donné de l'histoire de notre pays et dans la conjoncture actuelle, c'est de s'accorder sur un projet commun qui permettra à la République de Maurice d'effectuer pleinement son entrée dans le 21ème siècle...”**

From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

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MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 16 May, 1958

• 'Mental slums are more dangerous than physical slums.' — Radhakrishnan



Satcam Boolell

The Prime Minister of India is without contest the foremost statesman of the world today. Kings and emperors feel a proud privilege to meet him, to talk to him and be photographed with him. The young nations of the East look up to him for guidance. The oppressed people of the world see in him their most willing champion. In his own country he is practically worshipped as a god. Next to the Mahatma he is the man who

will leave after his death the most undying heritage to his country and the world.

People will travel hundreds of miles just to catch a glimpse of him. When he is a foreign land, the enthusiasm he evokes in the ordinary folks who turn up in thousands to cheer him is such as to leave the big wigs of the host country almost stunned. Everywhere his passage leaves a trail of hope behind.

The impact of his towering personality is so strong on world opinion that neither the East nor the West can reckon without him. His voice penetrates with the force of magic deep into the farthest corners of the world. He talks a language such goes straight to the heart because it rings with sincerity. In a world shattered with wild talks about nuclear warfare his is the only voice which brings hope to mankind. He moves on the world stage with a poise and self-confidence which makes the envy of others.

To my generation who read his autobiography in our early teens, the man was already a legend even then. Mahatma Gandhi, who was a Saint, seemed too remote to evoke more than a distant respect. His saintliness with its emphasis on non-violence and self-immolation by frequent fastings seemed too complicated to have any appeal to us. Jawaharlal Nehru answered in every respect our ideal. His life and sacrifice still bear a fascination to young people. I remember once in 1950 or 1951 I met a young R.A.F. officer, who waited for two hours at the India House in London, just to have a glimpse of Mr Nehru. When I was in India, a Pakistani friend told me that once a group of young Pakistani scouts who had stopped in New Delhi on their way to Karachi delayed their plane by one hour simply because they insisted on seeing the Prime Minister before flying back home. They had their way.

Such is the man I was to meet and even enjoy the privilege of a private conversation at his official residence in New Delhi. I had already seen him in London on two occasions but had never met him before I went to Delhi in December last. I still remember the rousing reception he was given by a packed house when he made his way into Kingsway Hall in London in 1948 accompanied by Lord Pethick Lawrence, Kingsley Martin, editor of *New Statesman*, and the late Professor Laski. The whole house rose to cheer him.

At the official functions in New Delhi, I have seen Commonwealth Ministers elbowing their way through the crowd to shake hands with him and be photographed with him. Cameras would flash only for him and the Vice President, Dr S. Radhakrishnan. In the presence of these two giants of Indian politics everybody else seemed to dwindle into insignificance.

# Nehru and Radhakrishnan

During my interview with the Prime Minister, we talked about Mauritius and its problems. As he knew something about our island, I was relieved of the task of placing Mauritius on the map. Jawaharlal Nehru inquired about Major General Chatterjee, our Indian Commissioner. He was glad to learn that his Commissioner was a popular figure in this country and was held in high esteem in every community. He criticized our one-crop economy and suggested that we should develop cottage industries as India was doing. He also suggested that every effort should be made to weld together the different elements to build up a Mauritian nation otherwise the attainment of political self-expression would become difficult.

My conversation with Mr Nehru was a unique experience. Unique not so much because of the subject matter of our discussion but because of the cordial atmosphere in which it took place. While I was sitting in front of him, I could not help thinking of how privileged I was to be in presence of a man whom I had learnt to worship from afar. It seemed as if I was in a dream.

Although I was much enthusiastic about the interview I wavered at the last moment when I thought how stupid I would look if I would not tell him something intelligent. But great men have a singular way of stepping down to the level of a small fry like myself. From the very start he put me at my ease and, a moment later, in the heat of the conversation I forgot that I was in presence of the world's foremost statesman. It was only when I left him that I realised that I had dared to contradict him on three points.

The next day after my meeting with the Prime Minister, I had an interview with Dr S. Radhakrishnan, the Vice-President of India and one of the best orators I have ever heard. I had the occasion to listen to him three times in New Delhi and each time he was head and shoulder above the other speakers among whom include such refined and accomplished orators like Heathcoat-Amory, leader of the British delegation, now Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr S. Bandaranaike, the Ceylonese Prime Minister. When Gordon Walker addressed the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference on 'The Role of the English Language on the Commonwealth', he confessed that he was ashamed he could not speak his own language with the same mastery and fluency as Dr S. Radhakrishnan.

The Vice-President came out to meet me under his verandah as soon as I was announced. He took me into his sitting room and after I settled down in a comfortable sofa he fired his first question: "How do you find India?" It was not an easy question to answer especially when it came from such a great scholar and philosopher. I mumbled a few words just to tell him that I was very much impressed by her achievements in such a short space of time after her Independence and in the teeth of so many difficulties. He also inquired about General Chatterjee and asked to convey his greetings to him.

When he talked about the Commissioner, he gave me the impression that he was more interested in him as a



Jawaharlal Nehru, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Rajendra Prasad

friend rather than otherwise. As a matter of fact, he referred to him as "my friend General Chatterjee". I hope the Commissioner would not mind any mentioning his name in this article. I might perhaps add that in practically every city where I stopped, I met people who asked me to remember them to him, I am sure he will pardon me if I have not so far mentioned to him all the people to whom I have promised to convey their greetings.

Dr S. Radhakrishnan informed me that he regularly gets the *Mauritius Times*. We talked about India and after listening to my impressions he suggested that I should come back and stay at least three months in order to get a fairly correct picture of the country. He was of opinion that an officially conducted tour could not help very much. In the course of our conversation, he told me that Mr K. Hazareesingh writes to him regularly very lengthy letters.

I took leave of the Vice President not without regret. It was so interesting to talk to him I was sorry not to have the same privilege with the President (Dr Rajendra Prasad) as I had with the Vice-President and the Prime Minister. The only occasion I met him I could not talk to him for more than a few minutes. As he was not feeling well, I did not think it proper to ask for an interview. I was however glad that I met him and paid my salutations to that glorious son of Bihar.

I am most grateful to the local Branch of the Parliamentary Association for having provided me with the opportunity of visiting India, Pakistan and Ceylon as a representative of Mauritius. My contribution to the Conference when I spoke on "Social services in the Commonwealth countries" and "Future of the smaller States in the Commonwealth" may not have been of great value. But if I have succeeded in however small a measure to bring closer the tie that binds our small country to the other parts of the Commonwealth, I shall consider that I have done my duty.

To those who believe in parliamentary democracy, the Conference was indeed of high importance. People holding different views, having different problems with different traditions and background but bound together by the invisible bond of a belief in and acceptance of parliamentary democracy as the best form of government, met together and talked freely for ten days in an atmosphere of cordiality. We were a small family who spent six weeks travelling together on the same plane, same bus, sleeping in the same hotel and eating at the same restaurant; South Africans felt no inhibition in mixing with the Nigerians. British were at home among Indians and Pakistanis. Hostility had given place to friendliness, inequality to equality.

# Politicians live longer than the populations they represent

● Cont. from page 2

While life expectancy varies across countries, there is much less variation in the life expectancy of politicians. In most countries, politicians' remaining life expectancy at the age of 45 is around 40 years. The general public's life expectancy across countries is lower and more varied (ranging from 34.5 years in the US to 37.8 years in Australia). Currently, politicians can expect to live between three and seven years longer than the public.

Over much of the 20th century, the remaining life expectancy of 45-year-old politicians across all countries with available data increased by an average of 14.6 years. For the general population across the same countries, the average increase was 10.2 years.

## Why politicians might be living longer

While gaps in income and wealth may partly explain these trends, they do not appear to be the only factor. Income inequality (measured by the share of overall income belonging to the richest in society) began to rise in the 1980s. In contrast, differences in life expectancy between politicians and the public began to widen as early as the 1940s.

Politicians' survival advantage may be due to a variety of factors, including differences in standards of healthcare and lifestyle factors such as smoking and diet. Cigarettes were widely popular in the first half of the 20th century and smoking was prevalent across all sections of society by the 1950s. This is no longer the case. Public health measures, starting with bans on tobacco advertising, mean smoking rates have fallen, especially among more advantaged professional groups, such as politicians.

It is also possible that the intro-

duction of new campaigning methods (including television broadcasting and social media) changed the type of person who became a politician.

Women tend to live longer than men generally, but in most countries, data on female politicians were available only after 1960. We found that trends in life expectancy gaps between politicians and the general public were similar for women and men.

In many countries, the public expects transparency and disclosure about politicians' earnings. The other advantages they have, such as longer life expectancy,

have been much less appreciated. Our study focused only on politicians in high-income, democratic countries where data were readily available. Conducting more analysis, particularly of low and middle-income countries, could improve our understanding of global health inequality trends and help find solutions.

**Philip Clarke** - Prof of Health Economics, University of Oxford, **An Tran-Duy** - Senior Research Fellow, University of Melbourne & **Laurence Roope** - Senior Researcher, University of Oxford



In the past, it was far more common to see politicians smoking. War Office official Pic - Horton (Capt), via Wikimedia Commons

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# Four ways to stop thinking the worst will happen when you're stressed

*People who like to feel in control are more prone to 'catastrophising'.*

Imagine you have an interview for a new job tomorrow. Some people might think about what kind of questions they will be asked so that they can prepare, or imagine the interview going well. For others, the thought of an interview will cause them to toss and turn all night thinking of every worst case scenario possible – no matter how outlandish these may be. If you're someone who has a tendency to do the latter, you are prone to catastrophising.

Catastrophising is a tendency to assume the worst will happen when imagining a future situation – even if you have evidence that this is not the most likely outcome. People who like to feel in control (and are therefore intolerant of uncertainty) are more likely to catastrophise. This has been linked to anxiety – suggesting that frequent catastrophising may be a factor in developing certain mental health problems.

Catastrophising comes from the belief that by imagining what might go wrong, we're better able to protect ourselves from harm – both physical and mental. However, this tendency is only helpful if you're able to correctly predict what will happen in a certain situation and how it will make you feel.

As we imagine future events, we experience an emotional reaction to the story we are creating – and we use this response to determine how we will feel in the future. But this way of predicting the future is often wrong since we're not able to imagine everything that might happen. This can lead to us creating the wrong emotional response for future situations in our heads.

But our belief in what will happen in the future can have a big influence on our behaviour. For example, people who are optimistic (or even realistic) about the future are more likely to be willing to try new things. They are also likely to notice what has gone well in new situations. On the flip side, people who catastrophise about what might go wrong are less likely to try new things. And, when they do try something new, they are more likely to



notice what has gone wrong. This will be stored in their memory and will add to the reasons why they shouldn't try new things in the future. As a result, catastrophising can lead to undue stress and anxiety and may stop you from doing the things you might enjoy or learn from.

If you're someone who tends to catastrophise when stressed or anxious, there are a few things that you can do to help:

#### 1. Make decisions in the morning

We often worry about the future at night. When we are asleep, activity in the rational part of our brain is reduced and activity in the more emotional part of our brain is increased. As a result, we tend to use our emotional brain to picture the future when we're awake at night. Lack of sleep can also make us more sensitive to things we see as threatening. This can lead us to focus more on what might go wrong, and makes us more prone to catastrophising.

It can be helpful to remind yourself that you are not thinking rationally when you're lying awake worrying about something. It can also be useful to wait until the morning to make decisions when your brain is rested.

#### 2. Teach your inner critic to be more compassionate

Catastrophising can be driven by our inner critic, which may use harsh language that makes us emotional.

When this happens, try imagining your inner critic as if you were looking through someone else's eyes. What language do you use and would you use this language when talking about someone else in a similar situation? Is the language your inner critic uses helpful or justified? Often the answers to these questions will be no. Be conscious of the language your inner critic is using when you're worried or stressed. If it's overly harsh, try to switch to a kinder way of speaking to yourself.

#### 3. Make up a better story

Even if things have gone wrong in the past, this is unlikely to be the case in the future – despite what we might tell ourselves. If you have a tendency to catastrophise about future events, try to think instead about ways in which this event might go well, which may help you to feel less anxious.

Another strategy is to make up, not just one, but a number of plausible stories about what might happen. This may help to remind you that the stories you're telling yourself are just that – stories. Choosing to focus on the stories with a positive outcome might also help you to feel less worried or stressed.

#### 4. Be kind to yourself

Try to be more compassionate with yourself when considering your future. This is more difficult than you might imagine – even for people who are very compassionate and empathetic to others.

Compassion and empathy evolved to help us to interact well with others. As such, compassion and empathy aren't really designed to be used for yourself. But small things – such as asking what advice you might give a friend in your situation – can help you to get in touch with your compassionate voice. Practising this often may even help you to see solutions where you might otherwise have only focused on the problem.

Planning for ways in which things might go wrong in the future does serve a purpose – and that is to keep us safe. But if you often find that you catastrophise by thinking of all the worst-case scenarios – especially to the detriment of your own mental health – it can be important to remind yourself that the things you're worrying about may never happen, and, if they do, they will probably turn out much better than you think.

By Patricia Riddell,  
University of Reading

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## Blood test as possible diagnostic tool for Alzheimer's disease

A recent study published out of the lab of Donna Wilcock, Ph.D., the Robert P. and Mildred A. Moores Endowed Chair in Alzheimer's Disease, at University of Kentucky shows promising results for a blood test that could be used to identify Alzheimer's changes in the brain before the onset of any symptoms, which could result in preventative treatments being used before any memory loss.

In their paper, published in 'Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association', the researchers note that the detection of disease-causing pathology associated with Alzheimer's disease and Vascular Contributions to Cognitive Impairment and Dementia (VCID) is limited to cognitive evaluations and neuroimaging like MRI and PET scans. Due to recent technological developments, blood-based biomarkers of disease are now available and the team at Sanders-Brown believes they could be beneficial in the diagnosis



of Alzheimer's and other dementias.

Zachary Winder, MD/PhD student at the UK College of Medicine, led the work within the Wilcock lab which used the extensive bank of samples found within UK's Alzheimer's Disease Research Centre autopsy cohort. For this study, researchers identified samples from participants who had blood taken and banked within two years of their death. They then tested blood samples from 90 participants for a variety of proteins with the goal of identifying biomarkers in the blood that could predict

changes in the brain that might have contributed to dementia. A biomarker is a measurable indicator that captures what is happening in a cell or an organism at a given moment.

They believe their results support the continued study of blood-based biomarkers as a clinical screening tool for Alzheimer's and VCID. "This study provides evidence that a blood test could be used to estimate the presence of Alzheimer's disease changes and blood vessel damage in the brain. We identified proteins in blood that indicate protein changes and changes in the brain known to cause dementia. Higher pTau181 and lower beta-amyloid in the blood indicate amyloid plaques of Alzheimer's in the brain," said Wilcock, who is associate director at Sanders-Brown. "Protein markers of inflammation in the blood were also associated with higher amyloid plaques in the brain. We also looked at proteins that might have a relationship with damage to the blood vessels of the brain. We found that inflammation proteins in blood were related to damage to blood vessels in the brain."

Wilcock, Winder and the rest of the research team agree that establishing biomarkers that allow doctors to diagnose and monitor patients is a crucial step towards identifying at-risk but not yet symptomatic patients, who could be more responsive to potential therapeutics.

## Whether marijuana helps with pain is unclear

Medical marijuana users who say they have high levels of pain are more likely than those with low pain to say they use cannabis three or more times a day, a new study finds.

However, daily marijuana users with severe pain also reported their health had become worse in the past year.

The results don't necessarily mean that marijuana is not effective in treating at least some kinds of pain, according to the researchers. But it suggests more research is needed before marijuana is accepted as an effective treatment for severe pain.

"It's not clear if marijuana is helping or not," said Bridget Freisthler, co-author of the study and Prof of social work at The Ohio State University. "The benefits aren't as clear-cut as some people assume."



The study was published recently in the 'International Journal of Drug Policy'.

One issue is the complex relationship between pain, marijuana use and self-reported health, said Alexis Cooke, lead

author of the study and postdoctoral scholar in psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco.

"Having high chronic pain is related to poorer health, so it may be that people who are using marijuana more often already had worse health to begin with," Cooke said. "There are still a lot of questions to answer."

People use marijuana for a variety of different types of pain, including cancer, joint pain, HIV and nerve pain. Researchers don't know if marijuana has different effects on different causes of pain, Cooke said.



## How does electricity work?

Electricity happens when electrons move from one atom to another.

Electricity is all around us. Maybe some of the toys you play with run on batteries, which have electricity stored in them. You or your parents are reading this article on a computer, phone or tablet, all of which use electricity. The light bulbs, the television, the traffic lights, cars, aeroplanes – they all run on electricity. Electricity is exciting and important, so I am glad you asked this excellent question.

### Everything is made from atoms

Everything is made from little tiny things called atoms. They are so small we cannot see them. They are much smaller than chickpeas, rice, ants, and ant eggs.

Because atoms are so small, we need a lot of them to make things. For example, a grain of rice has billions and billions and billions of atoms. Those atoms make up the rice, in the way LEGO pieces make up a LEGO car or house. They atoms click together and hold onto each other.

Even though an atom is extremely small, it is also made from even smaller

things.

One of the things that make up the atom is called an "electron". Electrons have many jobs. Some electrons help the atoms hold onto each other. Scientists call these electrons the "bonding electrons". Bond means to stick together.

Other electrons just keep running around in the atoms. They are free electrons and they're always on the move. Sometimes, they can move from one atom to another.

Electricity happens when electrons move from one atom to another.

### Electricity in the power cable

So, the story so far: we know there are billions and billions and billions of atoms. There are also billions and billions and billions of electrons in everything around you. A leaf, a plastic cup, your pet - they all have electrons. Some things, like metals, have more free electrons than other things. A plastic cup, for example, doesn't have as many free electrons.

You probably have a lot of power cables at home. They might be plugged into the TV or computer or a phone charger. Power cables have a huge number of free electrons.

When the free electrons in a power cable move from one atom to another, almost all in the same direction, you get something called an "electric current" running through the power cable.

How do we push the electrons through the cable? Adults do that by plugging the cable into a wall socket.

Remember, electricity can be very dangerous and can even kill people, so it's important that kids just let adults handle the cables and wall sockets.

The socket makes a thing called "voltage", which is like an invisible force that pushes all the electrons in the same direction down the cable.

Once the cable is plugged into the socket, the socket pushes the electrons inside the cable, like cars moving down

lots of lanes in a highway. The electrons inside the cable then keep pushing each other forward (and sometimes back and forth depending on the type of electricity). This creates an electric current inside the cable.

The cables have a kind of jacket (which we call "insulation") on the outside to keep the electrons moving along the metal safely. These jackets make it safe for us to use electricity by keeping them in the metal.

### But where does electricity come from?

Electricity comes from power stations - great, big places that can make electricity in different ways.

One way is by burning coal. But this way is bad for our environment. Some power stations use the light from the Sun to make electricity, using large solar panels. Or they might use wind, or water to make electricity. These methods are not as bad for our environment.

If you're interested in learning more about how electricity is made, check out this Curious Kids article over here.

Sherif A. Tawfik Abbas  
Research Fellow, RMIT University





## A long hot bath

Feeling stressed out, a man decided to take a long hot bath, but just as he had made himself comfortable, the doorbell rang. The guy climbed out of the tub, wrapped his head with a large towel. Put on his slippers and went to the door. It was a salesman trying to sell brushes. Slamming the door, the man returned to his hot bath.

No sooner had he climbed back into his bath than there was another ring at the doorbell. The man climbed out of the tub, wrapped another large towel around his waist, wrapped his head in a small one, put on his slippers, and walked downstairs to answer the door. It was an energy company trying to persuade him to change his power supply. Slamming the door, the man returned to his hot bath.

A few minutes later, the doorbell rang again. On went the slippers and towels as before, but as he tottered towards the bathroom door, he slipped on a wet patch of floor and hurt his back in falling against the hard porcelain of the tub.

Cursing under his breath, the guy struggled into his clothes and with every movement causing a stabbing pain, he drove to the doctor's surgery. After examining him, the doctor said: 'You know you've been lucky, there are no broken bones, but you need to relax, why don't you go home and take a long hot bath?'

\*\*\*

A mother told her grown-up daughter 'Honey, I don't want you to think I have diabetes because I'm fat, I have diabetes because it runs in the family.'

The daughter shook her head in despair: 'No, mum, you have diabetes because no one runs in our family,' she replied.

\*\*\*

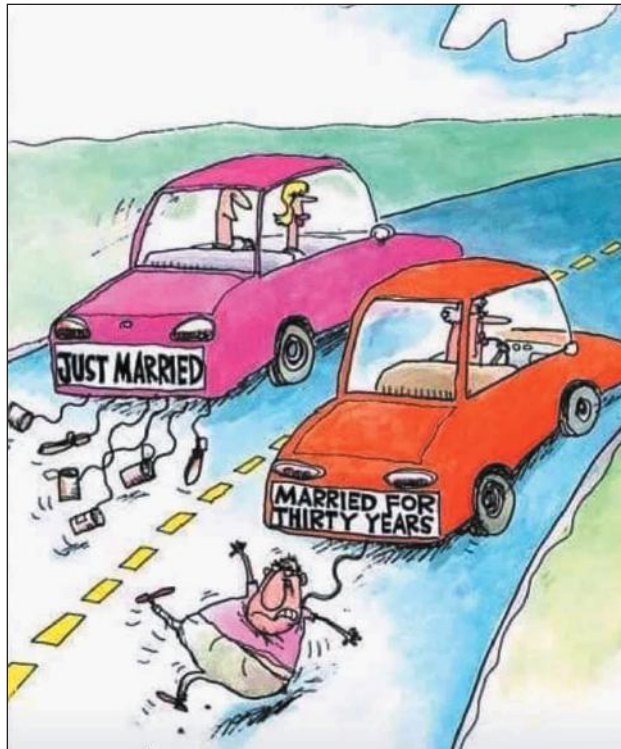
Une femme est au lit avec son amant, quand elle entend son mari arriver.

Elle dit à son amant, "Vite, mets-toi debout dans ce coin."

Elle enduit prestement le corps avec de l'huile et le saupoudre de talc.

"Ne bouge pas jusqu'à ce que je te dise. Tu es une statue! J'ai vu la même chez les Muller."

Sur ce, le mari entre et demande : "Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça ?"



"Ah là, c'est une statue, les Muller en ont mis une dans leur chambre, et cela m'a tellement plu que j'ai acheté la même!"

Et il ne fut plus question de la statue.

A 2 heures du matin, elle dormait et son mari regardait encore la statue.

Soudain, il se lève, va à la cuisine, prépare un sandwich, prend une boîte de bière et retourne dans la chambre.

Là, il se dirige vers la statue, et dit :

"Tiens, mange et bois quelque chose! Moi, je suis resté bloqué deux jours comme un con, dans la chambre des Muller... Et même pas un verre d'eau!..."

\*\*\*

A man was visiting a friend in hospital. He had recently quit smoking and was chewing on an unlit cigar when he stepped into the elevator. But the woman who was already in the elevator told him firmly: 'Sir, it's not allowed to smoke in this hospital.'

'I'm not smoking, lady,' replied the man.

'But you have a cigar in the mouth.'

'Yes, and I'm wearing a jockey short, but I'm not riding a horse.'

\*\*\*

Two small boys were sitting outside a clinic. One was crying very loudly.

'What's the matter?' asked the other boy.

'I came here for a blood test.'

'So? There is nothing to be afraid of.'

'You don't understand. For a blood test, they cut my finger.'

Hearing this, the second boy started to cry too.

'Why are you crying?' sobbed the first boy.

'Because I'm here for a urine test.'

\*\*\*

Pacing the hospital corridor, a man was getting really anxious about his imminent operation.

His wife asked him: 'What's the matter? Why are you getting worked up?'

He replied: 'I heard one of the nurses say: 'It's very simple operation, don't worry, I'm sure it will be all right.'

'She was just trying to comfort you,' said his wife. 'What's so frightening about that?'

'She was talking to the surgeon.'

\*\*\*

When a patient regained consciousness after an operation, the surgeon told her: 'I'm really sorry, but I'm afraid we're going to have to open you up again. You see, unfortunately I left my rubber gloves inside you.'

The patient said: 'Well, if that's all it is, I'd prefer you to leave me alone and I'll buy a new pair for you.'

\*\*\*

A man was staggering home at 7 am when he was stopped by a police officer.

'Where are going out early this morning?' asked the cop.

'I'm going to a lecture,' said the drunk.

'And who is giving the lecture?'

'My wife.'

\*\*\*

A drunk walked into a pub and started staring at the barmaid. Then he leaned over the bar and started kissing her. She was stunned by his behaviour but when she had pulled herself together, she slapped him very hard across the face, and he apologized immediately.

'I'm sorry, but I thought you were my wife -- you look just like her,' he said.

'You worthless drunkard,' she exclaimed. 'Don't ever lay your dirty hands on me again.'

'Well, I'll be damned, you even sound just like her, too,' said the drunk.



## Broken Eggs

A young boy was cycling with a basket full of eggs on it. Unfortunately, he came across an unseen bump on the road and lost his balance. He fell alongside the cycle while the eggs he was carrying fell and broke. A crowd gathered around the poor boy while he slowly tried to collect whatever remained. Free advice and taunts started flowing from the crowd of onlookers as usual.

"You should have been more careful."

"What were you thinking while riding your cycle?"

An older man emerged from the crowd, looked at what had happened and with a concerned look on his face, he said, "Poor little fellow, what will he answer to the owner of the eggs. How will this ordinary boy pay for the cost of all these broken eggs? I will help him as much as I can."

The man then handed over \$10 to the boy and said, "The people in this part of the town are very good people, they will not only give you good advice, but they will also help you by giving money so that you can pay your master for the loss you may have caused due to the accident."

Having heard what the older man said and observed his action, the crowd gave money to the boy. The young

boy was delighted since the money collected from the group was much more than the cost of his broken eggs.

The boy thanked the crowd for their help and generosity. While he was preparing to leave, a man from the crowd came and patted the boy's shoulder and said, "Young man, you should be thankful to that older man. If he wasn't around, I do not know what difficulties you would have faced with your owner."

The boy looked at the man and said, "Sir, I will thank him when I reach the shop; he is the owner of the shop where I work."

**Moral of the story: Clever minds will find ways during times of hardship instead of getting frustrated when life throws obstacles.**

## Life's Lessons

### The 22 Strangest Rules of LifeLong Success

**I** pray they serve your genius and your joyfulness lavishly...

1. Happiness follows helpfulness, not an obsession with becoming happy.
2. The consistent doing of unpleasurable things brings us satisfaction.
3. Spiritual peace causes us to revere worldly beauty.
4. A super strong family foundation is the bedrock of the elite productivity that builds the pride that brings you peace.
5. Being out in the woods a lot refuels the energy that makes you great in society. Balance wilderness with worldliness and you've got it made.
6. Wanting fewer things delivers much more happiness.
7. Running your own race and being your own top champion makes the crowd respect, like and appreciate you.
8. Silence makes you stronger.
9. Rising early makes you wiser.
10. Being the most honest person you know makes you faster. (Because a clean conscience removes psychic drag).
11. Being humble makes you bigger. [Ask Mandela or Rosa or Buffett].
12. Sweating via intense exercise most mornings multiplies your income, energy and contribution. It just does.
13. Worrying about your legacy takes your focus off the beautiful work that will build your legacy.
14. Not playing with productivity apps will make you more productive.
15. Your pre-sleep ritual is the key to your morning routine. Strange, right?
16. Saying no to most opportunities allows you to say yes to the best ones.
17. Liking yourself a lot is the driving force that causes you to respect and love others.
18. Eat less food, get more done. [Read that thrice; please].
19. Ignoring the trolls starves the trolls.
20. The heart of a great company is filling it with [only] great people.
21. Dream like a child yet operate like an adult.
22. Think big yet start now. [Because you're built to be legendary].

**Robin Sharma**

*Humanitarian & Leadership Missionary*



## Life's Stories

### Unknown relationship - a beautiful story

« Amma! Your son has sent a money order."

The postman stopped his bicycle on seeing Amma.

As Amma took off her glasses, cleaned them with the end of her saree and wore them back, there was suddenly a gleam in her old eyes. She looked at the postman with hopeful eyes and said, "Son! I want to talk to my son first."

But the postman tried to avoid her request. "Amma! I don't have enough time to call your son every time. I can't make you talk to him every time."

The postman tried to show Amma how busy he was, but Amma kept insisting him to call her son first.

"Son! It will only take a few minutes."

"Amma, you should not insist."

Saying this, the postman started dialling a number on his mobile before placing the money in Amma's hand.

"Here, talk to your son! But don't talk for long, the balance is very low in my account."

He handed over his mobile to Amma.

Taking his mobile phone from his hand, Amma started speaking to her son, asked about his well-being, and looked satisfied just within a minute of talking. A wide smile had appeared on her wrinkled face.

"Here's a one thousand rupees, Amma," the postman said, handing over ten-hundred-rupee notes to her.

While counting the money, Amma gestured for him to stay.

"What happened now, Amma?"

"Keep this hundred rupees, son!"

"But why Amma?" he asked with surprise.

"Besides delivering the money every month, you also call my son for me. Every time you must've spent some amount on the calls, isn't it?"

"Oh no Amma! Please let it be."

He kept on refusing, but Amma forcefully put a hundred rupee note in his hand. He looked at her for a moment, and then turned to get back to his work.

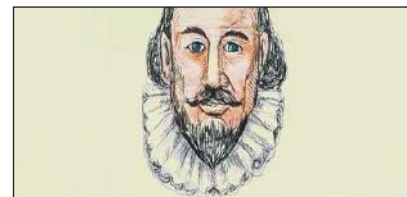
Amma, who lived alone in her house, also went inside, blessing the postman all the while.

The postman had just moved ahead a few steps, when someone put a hand on his shoulder...he turned back and found someone he knew standing there. He was surprised to see it was Rampravesh, who ran a mobile phone shop nearby.

Rampravesh's eyes were fixed on the postman's face. He said: "Brother, I want to ask you something."

"Yes, go ahead brother," the postman said very calmly.

"Brother! Every month, you give Amma money from your own pocket and you also give me money to talk to her on the phone as her son! What for?"



### Shakespeare said:

I always feel happy. You know why? Because I don't expect anything from anyone. Expectations always hurt. Life is short. So love your life. Be Happy. & Keep smiling. Just live for yourself & before you speak, listen. Before you write, think. Before you spend, earn. Before you pray, forgive. Before you hurt, feel. Before you hate, love. Before you quit, try. Before you die, live.

On this question, the postman let out a sigh and replied, "I don't give money to this old lady, I give it to my mother."

"I don't understand! She is not your mother."

The postman continued... "Her son had gone to another city to earn money and every month he used to send a money order of one thousand rupees for his Amma. But one day, instead of the money order, a letter came for Amma - it was from her son's friend. Her son had lost his life due to the virus, the pandemic.

"I did not dare give this sad news to Amma who waits every month for the money order and prays for the wellbeing of her son. I lost my mother to coronavirus last year. But every time I come here to deliver the money order, when I look at her, I feel the presence of my mother in her. In my mind, I started considering her as my own Amma and every month I bring her a money order from my side."

The postman's eyes had welled up with tears.

But he did not wait for Rampravesh to reply... He took his bicycle and proceeded to distribute the mail.

Rampravesh was stunned to see the postman's true love and affection for Amma, a complete stranger.

Standing there, he just had one thought in mind: If the feeling of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family) is developed in all of us, then how beautiful this world would become!

The two most important qualities that make us human are the ability to sympathize and empathize with others and the willingness to help them.

### Quotable Quotes

**O**riginal quotes by astronauts and space travellers, from their unique experiences in space:

"When you look at the stars and galaxy, you feel that you are not just from any particular piece of land, but from the solar system."

-- Kalpana Chawla (1962-2003), first woman of Indian origin to go to space in 1997. She was one of the 7 crew members who died in the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster in 2003

"That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

-- Neil Armstrong, first man to have walked on the moon in 1969

"I see Earth! It is so beautiful."

-- Yuri Gagarin, first man to go to space in 1961, and hence to have seen Earth from space

"Once you have been in space, you appreciate how small and fragile Earth is."

-- Valentina Tereshkova, born in 1937, first and youngest woman to go to space in 1963

"I am enjoying this so much. If I

were allowed, I would have spent several months up here in space."

-- Dennis Tito, born 1940, first space tourist in 2001, where he spent 8 days

"To all you kids down there, I was once a child with a dream. Looking up at the stars. Now, I'm an adult in a spaceship with lots of other wonderful adults looking down to our beautiful, beautiful Earth."

-- Richard Branson (first time a spaceflight company founder has travelled in his own spaceship into outer space on 11th July 2021):

## Health & Fitness

# Weight Loss Women: 14 tips for a slender body

**W**omen today have to play myriad roles therefore health takes a back-seat in their case. At the same time women should be cautious about their waist size and overall figure as it impacts the health. Due to paucity of time, they are unable to follow a safe and sustainable process for slimming down. These simple tricks and tips can help in losing weight without any adverse impacts on health.



**Set small and achievable goals:** Do not set high targets for losing weight, as it will add a perpetual stress to your routine. The target should be attainable,

measurable, and relevant. For example, instead of setting a goal to lose 5 kgs a month keep it 2 kgs only. As this goal is achievable gradually and without any pressure.

**Reduce consumption of refined carbs and sugar:** Avoid eating white bread, pasta, noodles, and other packaged foods opt for healthy nuts or brown foods as refined carbs have less fibre and micronutrients.

**Go for greens:** Add more leaves like curry leaves, oregano, parsley, coriander leaves, spinach, and rosemary. These greens are full of nutrients, help in digestion and control blood sugar and cholesterol levels. They also increase the metabolic rate thus helping in weight loss.

**Increase protein consumption:** To reduce weight, increase the intake of protein foods like meat, eggs, dairy, and legumes. High-protein diet keeps the stomach full and boosts metabolic rate. Thus, aiding in weight reduction.

**Drink plenty of water:** Keep hydrated. Consumption of sufficient water prevents snacking and reduces hunger pangs. For best results drink two glasses of water, 15 minutes before each meal.

**Walk more, sit less:** Take more steps every day to burn extra calories. Perform household chores on your own. Take stairs, park vehicles further from the destination, walk during lunchbreak to add on to the total number of steps taken in a day.

**Reduce screen time:** Usage of mobile phones, laptops and television should be reduced. Use the extra screen time for brisk walking or light exercise at home.

**Take sufficient sleep:** Setting a regu-

lar sleep schedule is vital for losing weight. Many studies have shown that sleep deprivation leads to weight gain as the body hormones get disbalanced. Minimum 7 hours of quality sleep each night increases the possibility of weight loss.

**Add cardio and resistance training to your routine:** Aim for at least 20 to 40 minutes of cardio per day as it increases the heart rate to burn extra calories. Resistance training builds muscle and increase endurance. Simple body weight exercises, lifting weights or using gym equipment can do wonders to your figure.

**Focus on mindful eating:** Packaged and fried snacking should be a big 'NO-NO'. For mindful eating go for a healthy diet and try eating slowly. Focus on how the food tastes, smells, looks and feels. Chew the food slowly and thoroughly. This process of eating gives a feeling of full-



ness and leads to reduction in calorie consumption.

**Stress less:** Some studies suggest that increased stress levels increase the risk of weight gain. Stress disturbs the eating patterns thus leading to overeating and bingeing. Therefore, listen to music, exercise, practice yoga, talk to friends or family to lower stress levels.

**Squeeze in small portions:** Use a small sized plate for meals as it helps in controlling the portion size of the food. Having food in smaller plate keeps satiated and also reduces the risk of overeating.

**Try intermittent fasting:** Experiment intermittent fasting as it keeps the food window closed for 14-16 hours. It increases the metabolic rate and improves digestion thus helping in weight reduction.

**Maintain a food journal:** Prepare a food journal to keep a track on the food consumed. This also helps in making healthier choices and count calorie intake per day which can prove effective for weight management.

## Do women cheat differently than men?

**A**n unhappy couple that no longer feels content being with their partner might look to cheat to fulfil their needs and wants with other people. In the process, some men and women are very clever with their cheating tactics so that they don't get caught. However, it is considered that women have a different way and outlook toward cheating. A report by Times of India...

**What do studies suggest?** Many pieces of research suggest that women tend to cheat when they find a healthier, better option than their husband. They look for selected opportunities where they can have a good time and be away from the stress of their current marriage. Whereas men tend to look at opportunities on a wider level. They try to find compatibility in more people.

**Women have different ways of cheating.** They are very discreet with how they cheat. They have a deeper understanding of their husband's behaviour, which makes it easier to



He & She

mask their infidelity. They are also known to better control their husband's moods, according to their con-

venience, which makes them easier to indulge in affairs.

**Reasons why women indulge in infidelity.** Some women have very low self-esteem and so, they look to find validation outside of their relationship. Some women cheat out of spite or anger, or when they are dissatisfied with the relationship. Loneliness and emotional abandonment are some of the other reasons why women generally cheat. While these are similar to men, women usually tend to feel these on a higher tone.

**Sexual deprivation.** Sexual deprivation is one of the major reasons why couples tend to cheat. When they no longer feel that their sexual needs are being met, at all, they turn to cheat. Men generally look at any opportunities they find, but women take their time looking for a person who's more refined to their taste. Sometimes, women relate more with the people who cross their path, and this provides them with another opportunity to indulge in cheating.

## With 'Anupamaa', people started noticing me: Rushad Rana

**R**ushad Rana, who is currently a part of *Kumkum Bhagya*, feels that after doing the daily soap *Anupamaa*, his life has taken a new turn on the professional and personal front. The *Hip Hip Hurray* actor says, "I feel that *Anupamaa* has been a lucky show for me. After doing it, I got some good projects. The character in the show was such that people got to see me doing something which I had never done earlier. People started noticing me and it served as a comeback vehicle for me."

Rushad is in a happy space on the personal front, too, reports India Times. The actor has found love and is in a relationship with the creative director of *Anupamaa*, Ketaki Walawalkar. Rushad met Ketaki on the sets of the show in August 2020. He says, "Ketki and I didn't start dating when I was doing the show because of my professional ethics, I don't date anyone on the sets. In December last year we met through a dating app and that's how we connected. Managing time between us is tricky, but the onus is on her because she is busier than me. Yet, she finds time to meet and sometimes we just meet near my house for a few minutes."

When asked about marriage plans, Rushad says, "We are both serious about each other and are looking in that direction, but this isn't the time to talk about it. All I can say is that we will talk about marriage when we lock the dates."



He agrees that when one relationship goes sour, it tends to make a person apprehensive the second time. "Many people are scared to fall in love. And when they do, they are scared about getting hurt all over again. It will be nine years since I have been divorced. I was not ready to commit until last year, but then I realised that I need a companion, too, and that's when I felt I was ready to be committed," says Rushad, who has been part of TV shows like *Kehta Hai Dil*, *Sasural Simar Ka*, *Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai* and also movies like *Mohabbatein*, *Veer-Zaara* and *Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi*.



### Kundali Bhagya

## Dheeraj Dhoopar exits the show; Shakti Arora to play new male lead!

**K**undali *Bhagya* has been in the news for a while now. There have been reports that the show will be taking a leap and the lead actor of the show Dheeraj Dhoopar will be exiting the show. As per the latest report, Dheeraj has indeed decided to quit the show that he was a part of for five years, reports Filmibeat.

According to Times of India, Dheeraj decided to

quit the show as he wishes to explore new avenues and it is being said that parting with the makers has been mutual.

Shakti Arora, who was seen as Ranveer in Ekta Kapoor's popular show *Meri Aashiqui Tum Se Hi* and was last seen in *Silsila Badalte Rishton Ka*, has been roped in to play the new lead of *Kundali Bhagya*. However, whether Shakti will be replacing Dheeraj or will be seen in a new character is not yet known. It is being said that the makers are working on storyline to accommodate the changes.

A source was quoted by the leading daily as saying, "Yes, Dheeraj has decided to move on. It was a fruitful association and a good one as long as it lasted. We are glad to have Shakti on board with us to play the new hero."

Apart from professional change, on the personal front too Dheeraj is all set to embrace fatherhood. Dheeraj and Vinny, who tied the knot in 2016, are expecting their first child in August.

### YOUR STARS

#### Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

A journey abroad or even nearer at hand would be enriching, especially in the right company. A good deal in commercial property may come your way shortly. Your partner may remain emotionally demanding due to insecurities about past events. Sagittarians are advised to keep a check on emotions, else you may end up spoiling your relationships this week.

**Lucky Numbers: 7, 11, 12, 18, 30, 32**

#### Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

Living together in a joint family will prove heartening, more so when going on vacations together. Married people can receive financial support from in-laws. Your love life will be good and your trust in your partner will increase. Your partner's health will need some attention and will demand to manage some extra time for them.

**Lucky Numbers: 15, 20, 21, 26, 39, 40**

#### Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

Keep a close watch on expenses to balance the domestic budget. This is a good time for prudent investments but only after taking the necessary advice from experts. This is also an auspicious time for married people. If you are single, you will meet someone interesting via an online app. An enjoyable evening is on the cards for some.

**Lucky Numbers: 3, 14, 15, 20, 23, 31**

#### Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

Your ability to listen critically is likely to help on the professional front. Selling a plot might be profitable as property rates tend to rise sooner. Pisces students will succeed in achieving their goals and objectives. It is a great time to spend some time with your loved one or partner and invest in your romantic relationship.

**Lucky Numbers: 2, 6, 15, 22, 23, 39**

#### Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

Luck is likely to be on your side today, Aries. There is a possibility of sudden monetary gains. Some of you may get the possession of a property booked long back. A romantic rendezvous will leave the most pleasant impression. Marriage prospects are on the cards for those who are still single.

**Lucky Numbers: 2, 9, 18, 20, 23, 31**

#### Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

This time is beneficial for Taurus natives who want to start something new, be it on the personal or professional front. This is the right time to look beyond your comfort zone. Married life will remain harmonious and your relationship with your spouse will become stronger. Those in a relationship will strengthen their bonding!

**Lucky Numbers: 2, 12, 17, 19, 20, 24**

#### Gemini: May 21 - June 20

Some of you may go ahead with your plan to purchase or sell a property. Good profits indicated for some. Single Geminis are likely to be confused about their feelings towards people they have recently connected with. Take your time to get your clarity. Those in a long-term relationship may be urged to settle down.

**Lucky Numbers: 1, 7, 12, 20, 26, 31**

#### Cancer: June 21 - July 22

It is likely to be productive career-wise for Cancer natives. You will also do well in your business and will get new opportunities to earn money. Your hard work and luck will support you well, therefore utilize this time well. You will get the support of your better half in your personal affairs. Confide in them to find a suitable resolution to your problems.

**Lucky Numbers: 11, 20, 24, 28, 31, 36**

#### Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

Opt for traditional and trusted investment schemes. Family life will be better than before. Family members will agree to your concerns regarding family welfare and will be supportive of decisions you make. Wedding bells may soon toll for Leo natives. This is also a good time for students as they will be able to fully concentrate on their studies.

**Lucky Numbers: 9, 15, 20, 25, 26, 34**

#### Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

You may undertake a short journey to refresh your thoughts. It may help you reassess your priorities in life. A disciplined approach may give a boost to your fitness endeavours. Singles looking for love will have to make efforts to be socially visible. You should push yourself out of your shell to go meet new people.

**Lucky Numbers: 11, 16, 20, 23, 27, 40**

#### Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

Your life will be full of happiness and contentment this week. There may be some auspicious activity at your place. It may bring a golden opportunity for Libra natives to strengthen their relationships with family members. Your hard work will pay a rich dividend and bring you gains. You will be financially strong and may purchase a property.

**Lucky Numbers: 6, 12, 14, 15, 20, 27**

#### Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

Those in a job should try to maintain a cordial relationship with their superiors. You can go on a short trip with your spouse or lover and the mutual bonding will increase. Some Scorpio students will see some notable achievements in academics. Some of you make even get the possession of a property booked earlier.

**Lucky Numbers: 3, 12, 14, 16, 20, 21**



## Madhuri Dixit reflects on Bollywood journey

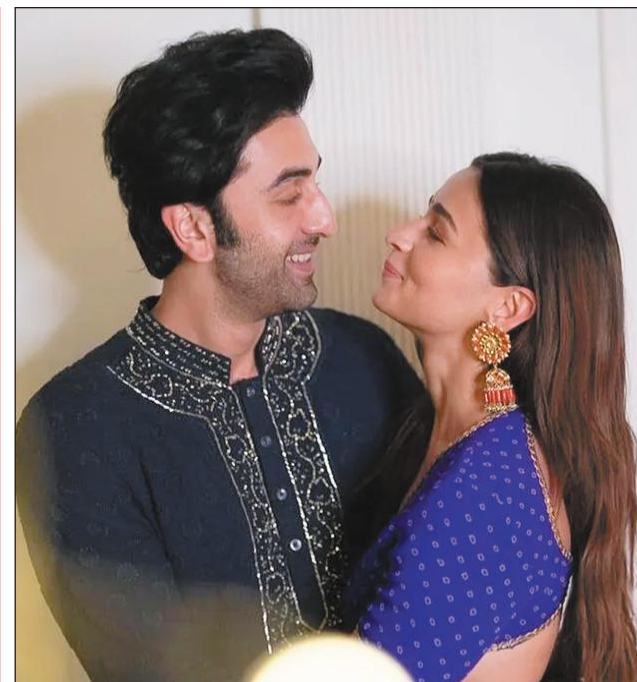
**M**adhuri Dixit ruled the charts and box office back in the day. The actress, on her return from the US, has successfully ventured into new projects which also included a Netflix web series titled *The Fame Game* this year. At the moment, she is working on her debut album, *The Film Star*. In a recent chat with Hindustan Times, the actress reflected on her Bollywood journey over the years.

Commenting on how things have drastically changed, Madhuri said, "Every generation has different difficulties of being a film star. When we started, this industry was very disorganised. Films used to take a year and a half to seven years sometimes to make. Nothing was planned. We just knew what the story was going to be. But we didn't know the dialogues or when it was being shot. It was all very haphazard. However, we used to still make good films."

She added that today the process of filmmaking is extremely systematic. "Every project has a budget, we know how many days they're going to shoot. The script is ready, your look is ready, the costumes are ready. The preparation is there. And then we go into it." Madhuri added that actors have a huge benefit in this kind of setup and women are omnipresent on film sets.

"They (actors) can be completely consumed by the movie they are doing. We used to do like three or five films at the same time. So, we used to be busy doing double or triple shifts in a day. Today, it is much more organised. When we went for outdoor shoots, we didn't have vans or anything. That was another difficulty at that time. As a woman, when we used to walk on the set, the only women in the room used to be me, my co-stars, and hairdressers. That's it. Now, when I walk on a set, there are women everywhere in all the departments who made strides, whether it's photography, or the camera person or the DOP. Women are everywhere, which is amazing, to see writers, directors doing such brilliant work," Madhuri added.

Apart from her work onscreen, Madhuri also makes noise on social media for her fun reels. Commenting on the same, Madhuri said, "I love doing the reels. For me, it is just another avenue to express myself. It's up to you, how much you actually want to say and how much you know, understand people respect that."



## Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor are expecting their first child

**B**hatt made the announcement on Instagram on Monday, posting a photo of herself in a hospital bed, smiling at a monitor as Kapoor looks on.

"Our baby ... coming soon," she wrote.

Bhatt, 29, and Kapoor, 39, married in a glamorous ceremony in Mumbai in April, attended by a who's who of Bollywood. The actors, who've been dating for a few years, made their first public appearance as a couple in May 2018 at actress Sonam Kapoor's wedding reception.

They were originally due to get married in 2020, but the wedding was postponed, owing to the pandemic, and was delayed further so they could wrap up the first part of their film *Brahmastra Part One: Shiva*.

Kapoor and Bhatt belong to illustrious film families. Popular stars in the former's clan include Kapoor's great-grandfather, Prithviraj, grandfather Raj, uncles Shammi and Randhir, and cousins Kareena and Karisma.

Ranbir is the son of actress Neetu Singh and late actor Rishi Kapoor.

Bhatt, meanwhile, is the daughter of actress Soni Razdan and director and producer Mahesh Bhatt. Her half-sister, actress Pooja, and uncle, producer Mukesh, also share the family name.

Bhatt is currently in filming on her Hollywood debut, *Heart of Stone*, a spy thriller alongside Gal Gadot and Jamie Dornan.

Kapoor will next be seen in the big-budget period action film *Shamshera*, scheduled for release on Friday, July 22.

## Celebs who swear by smoothie bowls for a healthy glowing skin

Do you go gaga over the gorgeous and dewy skin of Bollywood divas and wonder...

**M**ost B-town divas swear by fresh smoothies for breakfast or as their morning drink, this is due to the antioxidant, mineral and vitamin rich ingredients that makes these bowls super healthy. Made with fresh berries, seeds, nuts, fruits, veggies, most celebs are a fan of this simple drink as it helps them to stay in shape and get that beautiful dewy skin. Here are some popular B-town divas who love smoothie bowls, as reported by TOI...

### Malaika Arora

Malaika Arora, known for her stunning figure and flawless dewy skin, swears by yoga and healthy green smoothie to kick start the day, stay hydrated and satiated. Her smoothie bowl includes goji, acai and blueberry, Greek yoghurt, coconut water along with spirulina. The beautiful diva shared a glimpse of her smoothie with her social media followers and shared her secret of



staying.

### Jacqueline Fernandez

Jacqueline Fernandez, known for her fitness and healthy dewy skin, too swears by a green smoothie bowl for her breakfast. In one of her interviews the diva revealed her fitness secrets. Her morning smoothie includes amla, kale, spinach, lemon, ginger, and celery.

### Alia Bhatt

Alia Bhatt, beautiful diva, who has recently announced her pregnancy, has always been vocal about her love for food and she too swears by smoothie bowls made with milk, blueberries, almond, raisins, chia seeds and water. The actress' love for

healthy eating reflects on her beautiful skin.

### Shilpa Shetty

The fittest B-town diva has often shared glimpses of her healthy oats smoothie bowls with her Instagram fam. The actress is known for a delish 'Mermaid Smoothie Bowl' which can be made by combining kiwis, bananas, pineapples, blueberries, almond milk,

honey and blend it all together and pour into the bowl, add flax seeds, blueberries, chopped apples and edible flowers.

### Samantha Prabhu Ruth

The gorgeous diva is all set to make her debut in Bollywood, but much before that her song from *Pushpa* the rising 'Oo antava' left her fans mesmerized. The actress has always been vocal about healthy eating and she often shares her favourite meals with her Instagram fans. She recently shared a glimpse of her healthy breakfast--the Green smoothie bowl garnished with a melange of nuts like pistachio, chia seeds, and coconut shavings.

## Cinema Sirsa

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# OM

(By Aditya Roy Kapur, Jackie Shroff and Sanjana Sanghi)

Friday 7 & Saturday 8 July - 13:15/20:15  
 Sunday 9 July - 13:15/16:15  
 Monday 10 To Thursday 13 July - 13:15/20:15





# What abortion access and-reproductive rights look like around the world



Claire Pierson  
University of Liverpool

The global landscape of reproductive rights is constantly shifting. The US Supreme Court ruling that has overturned Roe v Wade – the landmark 1973 decision that protected a woman's right to have an abortion – marks a significant regression for abortion access. But it is not the only case. While countries like the US, Poland and Russia are taking steps backward, gains are being made in places such as Ireland, Colombia and Argentina.

Abortion restrictions range from laws where abortion is permitted only to protect the pregnant person's life or health, to decriminalising abortion entirely. Often, restrictions are structured around gestational time limits, such as allowing abortion only in the first trimester.

Some laws allow for abortion on socioeconomic grounds, for example in Finland. And Britain's 1967 Abortion Act is an example of a broad interpretation of health that includes wellbeing. Doctors may take account of the pregnant woman's actual or reasonably foreseeable life circumstances when making a decision about the impact of continuing a pregnancy.

Where health is interpreted more restrictively, such as in Zimbabwe, Morocco or Peru, abortion may only be available if a pregnant person's physical health is in danger. In other regions, such as Ghana or Bolivia, language referring to mental health is explicitly included in legislation, which can widen abortion access.

In some regimes, abortion can be performed later in pregnancy based on the health of the foetus, especially in cases of serious anomaly. This is the case in Croatia. Despite this, anti-choice sentiment in the country recently led to a woman



- Liberal abortion restrictions don't mean that abortion is always accessible, as in Croatia. Pic- EPA-EFE

being denied an abortion after her foetus was diagnosed with a serious brain tumour. After four denials by Croatian hospitals, the woman was advised by doctors to travel to neighbouring Slovenia. But following media and public outcry, she was finally permitted to have an abortion in Croatia.

The most liberal abortion laws are those where abortion has been removed from criminal law entirely. Decriminalisation permits abortion without penalty and prioritises the safety of pregnant people in making health decisions.

Northern Ireland decriminalised abortion in 2019 following an international human rights inquiry into its abortion laws and subsequent intervention from Westminster. The Abortion (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020 came into effect in March 2020. These regulations allow abortion up to 12 weeks on request, and after that on specific grounds of severe foetal impairment and fatal foetal abnormalities.

While Northern Ireland's abortion laws have been liberalised, this does not necessarily mean abortion is easily accessed.

The government has failed to fully commission services, meaning that abortion is being provided on an ad hoc basis by health trusts in Northern Ireland. Some women seeking abortions have continued to travel to England, illustrating how political deadlock can limit abortion access.

## More restrictive

In some countries, abortion is prohibited entirely, or only to save the pregnant person's life. Malta is the only EU country where abortion is banned under all circumstances. Malta has recently seen a pro-choice movement emerge.

Draconian restrictions on abortion also affect general reproductive and maternal care, like miscarriages and ectopic pregnancies. They can delay decision making with urgent medical care when the rights of the foetus are considered equal to the rights of the pregnant woman. In El Salvador, women have been prosecuted and imprisoned for having miscarriages or attempting to procure an abortion. Charged under aggravated homicide, a sentence can be up to 50 years.

In the Republic of Ireland, before liberalisation in 2018, abortion laws affected all aspects of maternal healthcare. The foetus was viewed to have equal rights to the pregnant woman, allowing healthcare professionals to overrule her requests. In 2014, a pregnant woman who was brain dead was kept on life support for four weeks against the wishes of her family, on the basis that the right to life of the foetus could have been breached.

Activist movements to liberalise abortion laws have made significant gains in the last few years as seen on the island of Ireland, but also in Colombia where the constitutional court decriminalised abortion up to 24 weeks in 2022. In Argentina,

abortion has been legal on request in the first 14 weeks of pregnancy since 2020.

## Outside the law

Progress on abortion rights has been cyclical, not linear. As we are seeing in the US, anti-abortion movements continue to push back against any gains that are made. Regression on reproductive rights often correlates with wider backlashes on gender rights and the rise of far right and populist political regimes.

Laws are just one part of abortion access. Conscientious objection by healthcare professionals, regulations targeting abortion providers, stigma and protests at clinics all make it more difficult and riskier to obtain an abortion.

Even in countries with less restrictive laws, there are movements outside of legal frameworks to help people access abortions and healthcare, by assisting with travel or financial support.

While these activist networks and organisations are often viewed as sticking plasters that won't be needed when restrictions are relaxed, the reality is that barriers to abortion continue to exist after laws change. The England-based organisation Abortion Support Network continues to help around 60 women a year from Ireland, four years after abortion laws were liberalised. These efforts are just as much a part of reproductive rights as the legal framework – and their work is not finished when laws change.



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor

## Staying Afloat Amidst the Spin

Every time you interact with others, you have the choice to listen to, acknowledge, and let go of their words, or you can take what they are saying personally. Taking things personally is often the result of perceiving a person's actions or words as an affront or slight. In order to take something personally, you must read negative intent in an individual's words or actions. But what people do and say has no bearing upon you and is usually based on their own experiences, emotions, and perceptions. If you attempt to take what they do or say personally, you may end up feeling hurt without reason.



If you are tempted to take a comment or action personally, creating some distance between yourself and the other person can help you. Try to determine what is at the root of your feelings. Ask yourself if the other person's words or actions are just reinforcing some insecurity within you or if you can really be sure that an offense was intended. You may even want to ask them what they meant.

Finally, put yourself in the other person's shoes. Instead of taking their words as the truth, or as a personal affront, remember that whatever was said or done is based on their opinion and is more reflective of what is going on inside of them, rather than having anything to do with you. You may have been an easy target for someone having a bad day, and their comments may have been offered with no ill intentions.

When you recognize that what anyone says or does doesn't necessarily have anything to do with you, you will no longer feel hurt or attacked. While it's easy to take things personally, you should never let anyone's perceptions or actions affect how you see yourself or your worth. Your life is personal to you, and it is up to you to influence your own value and sense of well-being.