

MAURITIUS TIMES

• "Make yourself an honest man, and then you may be sure that there is one less scoundrel in the world." -- Thomas Carlyle

Interview: Rabin Bhujun, Journaliste



«Le risque que le trio de l'opposition ne s'entende pas est réel.

Vu la complexité de la répartition des tickets ou encore de la place à accorder ou pas à Bodha, voire à Bhadain»

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America remains in search of leadership. There is much to be done and much need for that elusive leadership



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Rule of Law

Some recent events in the country and the way police authorities have reacted to them, or failed to react in a timely manner appear to call the principle of rule-of-law into serious questioning. Irrespective of their political or other affiliations, if the citizens do not feel protected by a uniform application of an established rule of law, then there will be little confidence left on which to do business in general.

We have seen the troubled background against which elections are held in Haiti. In that country, mob violence has been recurrent. Departure from universal norms of good governance has been the rule rather than the exception. The consequent anarchy has compromised the country's future and made it one of the poorest nations on earth – and the poorest in the Western Hemisphere, in spite of its proximity to the United States, the largest market in the world.

We are far from that situation in Mauritius, but our credentials as a rule-of-law country should not be allowed to be undermined by shoddy decisions or the absence of sound decisions by those who have been entrusted with the execution of official duties. There is a serious risk that any distraction from our main concerns of the moment into issues such as these will result in a loss of focus on the items set out for the economic agenda. The law and order situation should therefore be impeccable.

Credible public institutions can make the whole difference between our capability to find the needed remedies for our economic failings or going out on an altogether different wild goose chase. The fact that simpler allegations of offences like breach of some ICTA regulation or of a relatively peaceful public gathering are being investigated by top police units (like Major Crime or Central CID) whenever they concern any opponent puts into question the efficient and effective use of resources when more serious criminality on the streets should have been given greater priority. Not to mention that it is an irritant for those who value their freedoms

in a democratic setup and the ability to voice opinions that may not suit the government's narrative but should in effect be wake-up calls to help government address those concerns.

The goings-on in police custody that made headlines with publicly aired clips of humiliating treatment of some suspects or the leakage of private images and videos from material seized and under police custody have not conferred the Force with the image of propriety we expect. As for "acting without fear or favour" as sometimes the police spokespersons claim, the perception is that it has failed in several high-profile investigations concerning those hovering around government's beehive.

As for the more vigorous brand of policing of the special unit (the Special Striking Team) set up by the CP, it has failed to impress in its first two sorties against two lawyers felt to be too voluble and its entire reputation now rests on the arrest of Bruneau Laurette with 30 to 40 kg of hashish reportedly seized from his car boot. The latter, after being held incommunicado during the weekend, has alleged that the drug would have been planted by some officers. All the facts of the case are not yet known at this stage, but all sorts of allegations have been levelled about the existence of a so-called "hit list" meant to target opponents of the regime. That also remains to be proved.

But all this is symptomatic of the loss of public trust in the very fundamental equity element in police action that has stoked the controversies around the opposing narratives. This is relatively unheard of and fuels the atmosphere of malaise in the general public despite the fact that a large majority of police officers are honest and dedicated to the higher callings of their job.

We can only wish that the higher levels in the hierarchy take measures to revamp or overhaul the police image and professionalise their interventions to avoid unnecessary controversies that detract from public confidence in such a vital institution for public peace and law and order.

The Conversation

70-plus seems the new 50 for male politicians but they're threatening the world order



Many of the world's most powerful and aspiring leaders are aging or elderly men. That's a big problem.

Joe Biden is turning 80 soon. Russia's Vladimir Putin is 70; India's Narendra Modi is 72, while China's Xi Jinping at 69 is the youngest of the rulers of the major world powers.

None are planning to retire.

Brazil just elected a 77-year-old as its new president, while Israel's incoming prime minister is 73. As younger men, both Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Benjamin Netanyahu held power previously. Donald Trump, at age 76, is reportedly about to announce that he will seek the American presidency a second time in 2024.



Newly elected Sen. Joe Biden is seen in this 1972 photo. (AP Photo/Henry Griffin)

One reason for the gerontocracy is that those who assumed power at younger ages in non-democratic countries have amended constitutions and rules to allow unlimited terms of office. In Russia, Putin has ruled uninterrupted for 23 years, while in China, Xi has ensured unlimited years of rule for himself.

In democratic countries, older politicians draw on decades of political capital and alliances. Biden's success in running for president was partly due to the fact that he convinced voters that his 36 years as senator and eight years as vice-president would benefit America. The surprisingly strong performance of Democrats in the mid-term elections may suggest he has a point.

Like Biden, older leaders often promise continuity and stability. In a world beset with daunting problems — from climate change to pandemics and inflation — a capable leader, particularly of a major power, is often seen by citizens as someone who has a track record. Those with many years of political experience argue they are best placed to deal with what lies ahead.

Challenges faced by novices

The sorry tale of Liz Truss, Britain's prime minister for 44 days earlier this year, shows how quickly and furiously the business and political establishment can turn on a novice leader.

Curiously, western Europe, the region with the largest proportion of older citizens (more than a fifth of western Europeans are over age 65), has the youngest leaders. France's Emmanuel Macron, in his second term, is 44, while the United Kingdom's Rishi Sunak is 42. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz at 64 is the oldest leader of a major European country.

Thomas Klassen,
York University, Canada

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India at the wheel? G20, UK and Chagos...

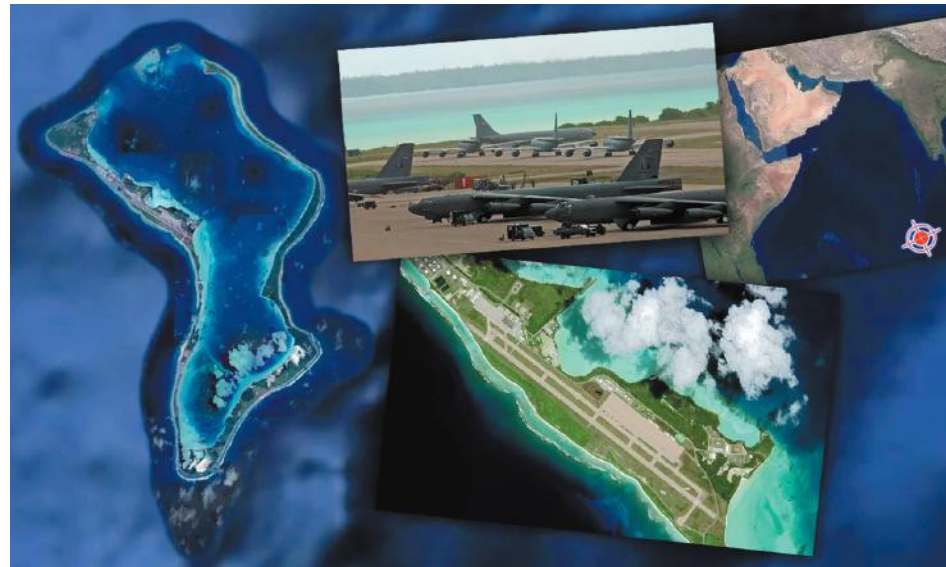
Jan Arden

The G20 groups some 75% of world trade and more than 80% of world GDP and the accession of India and PM Modi to its rotating presidency may not be a game-changer but it is certainly a symbolic event of some magnitude on the world stage. The more so for a country that came out only 75 years ago of the shackles and shambles left over by British colonisation and the Partition with such atrocious human costs. Pakistan inherited the British civil and military infrastructures and the fertility of Punjab, blessed with the mighty Indus River system while its eastern region, with its plantation economy, was one of the leading producers of tea and jute in the world.

Both India and Pakistan, equally impoverished and at similar per caput GDPs, embarked on a nationalisation spree. By the end of the 1960s, Pakistan's inherited infrastructure and its twin agricultural powerhouse drove economic growth to outperform India by a considerable margin, with the latter's "Hindu" rate of growth becoming derisively coined. The shocks endured by China's aggression in 1962 to Nehru's non-alignment, or the fact that the Anglo-Saxon West camped openly on the side of Pakistan's military dictatorship against Indira Gandhi in the Bengal liberation movement, and Indian establishment having to go to the IMF for its first conditional bailout to weather a massive balance of payment crisis, may all have pushed India finally to scuttle in 1991 its bureaucratic Soviet-style economic development strategies.

With time and further reforms, India became the second fastest-growing major economy till 2015, and since then is the fastest-growing major economy in the world, overtaking today the UK's economy in the global pecking order, a remarkable feat in its own right.

While political differences between parties and ideological debates will continue to run their course, the Indian PM Modi was lucid and statesmanlike in paying tribute to that journey since independence: *"All the governments and citizens in their own way have tried to take India forward together..."* he is quoted, dispelling



“Since continued operations of the US base at Diego were always on offer by Mauritius without substantive progress, the US/UK establishments might have received enough reassurances through the West-India axis in the Indian Ocean to outweigh the past and prepare the geopolitical future in the region with a fresh outlook. Were that the case, illustrative of India's new status as a strategic security and development partner for the West, it would be a momentous, emotional moment for Mauritius to which astute Indian diplomacy might have played a discrete but effective role...”

the narrow-mindedness of those ruling regimes which brand political opponents as enemies of the State, their views as unpatriotic and dissent from official narratives having to be forcibly quelled.

We could benefit from such statesmanlike attitudes in our own local political discourse which might spare us the parochialism of some senior government spokespersons.

* * *

G20's new challenges

Unleashing India's inherent aptitudes for the digital age, its entrepreneurial spirit and the managerial skills nurtured by its network of IITs and IIMs, have upended and definitively confined to dusty history books the so-called "Hindu" rate of growth. PM Modi looks forward to preside over the G20 summit as the world faces new challenges, including lasting peace in East Europe, reducing military tensions linked to China's assertions of pre-eminence, shared security and economic development around Asia, Africa and the Indo-Pacific and large-scale environmental and resource competition issues facing the

planet.

At first sight that sounds like quite a formidable agenda on the G20 plate and for PM Modi's turn at its wheel and we wish him a fruitful contribution and direction to that eminent assembly. What we might be more concerned here with, beyond any feelings of pride felt by those Mauritians attached to their cultural roots and ancestry, is whether this inflection point, coupled with recent geopolitical shifts, namely Brexit, the dragged-out Ukraine conflict or resistance to Chinese diplomatic offensives in certain parts of the world by the Western powers, will herald some significant movements concerning security, naval bases and economic developments in the Indian Ocean zone.

The geopolitical realities in the Indian Ocean began shifting when the Anglo-Saxon powers (UK, USA, and Australia) recognised through the establishment of Quad including Japan that the Indian subcontinent, on the rise economically, had to be a vital partner for peace and security on the high seas of the Indian Ocean which controls strategic sea-lanes for economic activities around the world. Regular joint naval exercises with individual Quad countries, and agreement for use and sharing of facilities and strategic information, as with France, a legitimate Indian Ocean power, have consolidated the India-West alliance in which all partners must have gone some way to recognise and accommodate each other's expectations.

The highly professional Indian Foreign

Service was fully aware of the issues surrounding both the vital necessity of keeping the US or UK/US base in Diego Garcia and our own consistently pressed demands over decades and legal actions towards recognition of our sovereignty over those islands illegally excised prior to independence and whose native populations were expelled and relocated in Mauritius.

National sovereignty

It is not beyond the pale therefore to assume that India Inc may have whispered into the horses' ears, the Tory party and its deep-state Foreign and Commonwealth Office establishment, words of sufficient endearment and reassurance that have triggered the sudden reversal by the UK of its staunchly repeated stance through the written statement of Foreign Affairs Minister James Cleverly, as reported by the BBC and The Guardian, to open negotiations on relinquishing sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius so long as the UK/US base at Diego Garcia continues its operations and trusting that such constructive negotiations are concluded by early next year.

Since national sovereignty is not a matter for "negotiation", one can assume these talks will be principally concerned over the administrative and judiciary hand-over aspects, the dissolution of the British Indian Ocean Territory which was always a UK concept of convenience, and the agreements, terms and conditions of a continued or renewed long-term lease of the Diego aero-naval base by sovereign Mauritius directly to the US or to a UK/US entity. Triumphalism is not warranted as both Mauritius and the UK endeavour to turn the page, but that reversal is clearly a recognition of what all past Mauritian regimes, leaders and PMs had been fighting for since independence, with the UK suffering major setbacks in all international fora (UNCLOS - International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the International Court of Justice and the UN General Assembly).

The factors leading to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office's reversal of its obdurate resistance despite several humiliating defeats in the international courts over the issue may yet emerge. Certainly, the UK's moral ground on pressing for the rule of international law in Ukraine while dismissing the legal condemnations over Chagos, its ability to forge alliances in the region or the necessity to create post-Brexit alliances and economic cooperation with India or, more generally, the shifts in the West's strategic alliances in the Indo-Pacific, could have ushered UK's new thinking on the niggling area it had boxed itself into.

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Dangerous Drugs (Amendment) Bill & Medical Cannabis

“A hit list is a double-edged sword. Those who feel threatened by a hit list can also hit back by coming up with their own hit list”

LEX

Mauritius will join the group of countries that have legalised the use of cannabis for therapeutic purposes only through the amendments to the Dangerous Drug Act of 2000. While medically authorized and controlled access to cannabis is a step in the right direction, there has been no movement to consider legalising the use of low-cannabinoid plant varieties or their commercially available derivatives either for personal, recreational usage or as a tool to curb the scourge of synthetics, as yet. Lex provides his views on the legal aspects and comments on the recent high-profile cases of cannabis seizures and the speculations that have been rife about those criminal arrests and charges.

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* The 2020 report of the Global Commission on Drug Policy states that the ‘hundreds of thousands of people (who) have died, considered collateral victims of prohibition... represent the price paid for a policy that has only enriched and empowered criminal organizations, fuelled corruption and money laundering, and contributed to the increase of trafficking,

the number of trafficking routes and networks...’ Does this strike a chord with what obtains in our small island as well - despite the best efforts of successive governments?

It is well known that prohibition may make drugs more attractive, especially to young people, and the more prohibition there is, the more attracted people get to the use of drugs. It all starts as a pleasure activity among friends and ends in tragedy. The policy of prohibition and the noisy publicity on the seizure of drugs or the big talks about breaking the back of drug barons are leading nowhere except to turn the country into an island of drug consumers with fatal consequences for some.

* With the amendments being brought to the Dangerous Drugs Act, in line with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking (2018), Mauritius will join the group of countries that have legalised the use of cannabis for therapeutic purposes only. It’s a first shift away from the policy of repression, but that does not mean that the war on drugs will be won with this policy change, isn’t it?

There is no policy guidelines regarding the sentencing of convicted persons. For the same offence an accused may receive a heavy prison sentence before one magistrate and another one obtaining a lighter sentence from another magistrate. The same goes for drug offences.

The amendments brought to the law concerns only the use of drugs for therapeutic purposes. What about those drug users who do not need the drug for therapeutic purposes because they are

“We can only hope there is no such thing as a hit list of persons perceived to be vigorous opponents of the regime and who have to be targeted. If that is indeed the case, Mauritius would be on the way to becoming a rogue State. A hit list is a double-edged sword. Those who feel threatened by a hit list can also hit back by coming up with their own hit list. We would not want to venture into such a territory, would we?”



“As the facts stand at this stage, it appears that the police have a prima facie case against B. Laurette given the drugs seized from his vehicle”

hooked on drugs and need to get their regular doses? How will a therapeutic measure help such consumers? By not sending them to jail and trying to provide treatment to them will no doubt help, but will that be sufficient to curtail drug trafficking?

* The Dangerous Drugs (Amendment) Bill does not go in the direction of decriminalising people who use drugs. In fact, it refers to “... a person... suspected of having committed a drug offence for his personal consumption”. Are there however good reasons, based on evidence, to support the decriminalisation of recreational cannabis as well?

Decriminalization of drugs will only mean that there will be a control on drugs in the sense that the legal system will still be supervising the possession and consumption of drugs. Decriminalizing the use of drugs does not mean that people will have a free license and a total freedom to possess and use drugs

* What about the attitude of our courts towards consumers of drugs for recreational purposes such as cannabis? Aren’t these low-level and nonviolent consumers of “soft drugs” being unfairly punished by society and our justice system?

The Dangerous Drugs Act forbids the

use of prohibited drugs for any purpose. The offence is there, and the use of a prohibited drug for recreational, religious or social purpose is punishable. It is as simple as that.

* Magistrates and judges do not make the law; they only apply it. That’s our understanding of how the system works, but can they go beyond what’s prescribed in the statute books and render justice that could help rehabilitate the individual and ultimately help society itself?

If no law provides for rehabilitation, a court of law cannot order same. The Dangerous Drugs Act 2000 provides an alternative to punishment in its section 34 which provides that before passing a sentence of imprisonment on a drug consumer the court shall explain to the convicted person that, if he undertakes to cooperate in order to be cured of his addiction, the court, instead of sentencing him to imprisonment, shall order him to undergo such treatment, education, after care, rehabilitation or social reintegration as the court thinks appropriate at such institution as may be prescribed and for such period not exceeding three years as the court may specify and, if he so undertakes, the court shall order for treatment accordingly.

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‘Decriminalizing the use of drugs does not mean that people will have a free license and a total freedom to possess and use drugs at leisure’

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And where the court is satisfied that the order has been complied with, the court shall discharge the offender. However, if the person fails to comply with an order made by the court, he shall commit an offence and shall be liable to a fine which shall not exceed Rs 5000 and to imprisonment for a term which shall not exceed one year.

Further the person in charge of the relevant institution prescribed for the purposes of rehabilitation shall notify a police officer attached to the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit of any persistent failure by any person to comply with the terms of an order.

*** Is it market demand, the low effectiveness of controls or the very nature of prohibition that makes drug business a highly lucrative temptation, with its barons, mules and circuits?**

It is a combination of all three factors. As with any commodity the law of supply and demand plays a key role. Control there is but in the wrong direction in that only small fries who would by any stretch of the imagination be unable to afford astronomic sums of money to buy drugs worth millions of rupees are arrested and jailed.

The drug barons have established a very comprehensive network of import-



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ing, stocking and distribution of drugs. One may well ask whether there have been any concerted and coordinated actions between the police and the other authorities in the financial and anti-money laundering sector to monitor such networks.

*** The latest case that’s grabbing headlines relates to the arrest of social activist/politician Bruneau Laurette, who has been booked on numerous charges, including apparently drug trafficking. Questions have been raised about the source of the**

drugs or the existence of a so-called “hit-list” targeting political adversaries of the regime. All the facts are not yet available to help in our understanding of what’s happening, who is doing what and with what motivations. What’s your take on this case?

Without all the facts and evidence, it would be hard to comment on this case.

One allegation made in the wake of his arrest is that the drugs would have been planted in his car. There is also the other allegation about the police having apparently rubbed their hands on his face to obtain his DNA and possibly rubbed that same DNA material on the sachets of drugs found in his car.

It remains to be proved whether the planting theory is true or not and whether it will stand up in court. But as the facts stand at this stage, it appears that the police have a prima facie case against him given the drugs seized from his vehicle.

We have to wait and see whether a magistrate will go along with the version of the police or examine the evidence thoroughly and probe every aspect before coming to a decision.

*** In the wake of the arrest of Bruneau Laurette, a number of his close associates and even lawyers, who suspect they also may figure on the alleged hit list of the regime, have gone to register precautionary measures with the police. What is the importance of a precautionary measure, and how does it help?**

Members of the public make a statement of precautionary measure to the police. But one wonders whether the police have the time to bother about precautionary measures the more so if they come from those perceived to be opponents of the present regime. To that extent, a precautionary measure serves no purpose.

We can only hope there is no such thing as a hit list of persons perceived to be vigorous opponents of the regime and who have to be targeted. If that is indeed the case, Mauritius would be on the way to becoming a rogue State.

A hit list is a double-edged sword. Those who feel threatened by a hit list can also hit back by coming up with their own hit list. We would not want to venture into such a territory, would we?

The West-India axis

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Since continued operations of the US base at Diego were always on offer by Mauritius without substantive progress, the US/UK establishments might have received enough reassurances through the West-India axis in the Indian Ocean to

outweigh the past and prepare the geopolitical future in the region with a fresh outlook. Were that the case, illustrative of India’s new status as a strategic security and development partner for the West, it would be a momentous, emotional moment for Mauritius to which astute Indian diplomacy might have played a discrete but effective role. Many observers have interpreted as such the explicit allusion in Cleverly’s statement: “We recognise the US’s and India’s interests and will keep them informed of progress.”

At this stage we will not speculate further other than recognise that a Chagos new deal may also have a bearing on how we collectively and, with our own strategic interests at heart, view the future of current infrastructure developments in Agalega. Meantime, we trust that our own diplomats will be wary of pitfalls in such high-level long-term negotiations and get assistance from international legal specialists.

We would even suggest further that any draft agreement between Mauritius and the UK/US over the complex Chagos and Diego issues be shared in total confidentiality with past PMs and key fighters to benefit from their considerable experience, take useful suggestions on board before putting pen to paper in an agreement that would bind several generations to come.

Jan Arden



Military Base Camps around The Indian Ocean Region - Pic - 1.bp.blogspot.com

LEX



Anil Madan

Midterm Elections Done - The World Calls for Attention

America remains in search of leadership. There is much to be done and much need for that elusive leadership

The midterm elections in the US are all but over, down to the final counting. As I write on Wednesday, the day after election-day in the US, the Republicans appear likely to have taken control of the House of Representatives by a slim margin. The Senate is still up for grabs, but it seems likely to remain in the Democrats' control with an even split 50-50 (48 Democrats plus 2 independents who caucus with the Democrats) and Vice President Kamala Harris casting a deciding vote in case of a tie.

The runoff election in Georgia will decide whether the Republicans get to designate the Majority Leader or whether the Democrats remain in control. The biggest loser was Donald Trump. No, America did not reject all the election-deniers (the term used to describe those who, without any evidentiary support, claim that the 2020 presidential election was stolen from Trump) but the big names that Trump pushed found themselves floundering in defeat.

Trump finds himself looking in from the outside at an America that, for the most part, rejects him and his antics. Those who accepted the foolish notion that patriotism is shown by wearing a baseball cap and shouting meaningless slogans, have long since faded into obscurity.

What was forecast to be a debacle for the Democrats, a Red Wave of Republican wins, turned out to be a Pink Ripple. Trump and his allies may have nicked a capillary, but he is an insignificant leech who failed to exanguinate the Democrats.

America remains in search of leadership. And what we now have posing as leadership must get on with the business of governing. There is precious little time for that because the thrust and parry of the 2024 presidential election will be upon us ere long. There is much to be done and much need for that elusive leadership.

The nation aches for vision

On the Republican front, the Governor of Florida, Ron DeSantis staked his claim. The mainstream media sprang to attention to proclaim him the heir apparent, if not the fair prince. But here is a man with no articulated vision for where he intends to lead America or why, and for that matter, no stated reason why he wants to be president. On the Democratic front, Joe Biden says he will likely run but again, we are not told why or to what end. The nation aches for vision.

As a practical matter, from a domestic policy perspective, if the numbers eventually resolve to the devolution that the House will be under Republican control and the Senate under Democratic control, doesn't mean much. Whether it is the Democrats or Republicans in control of the Senate, no major legislation can be passed without getting 60 Senators on board. Else, there will be a filibuster and whatever legislation is at issue, will be doomed. However, fiscal legislation can be

passed in the House via the reconciliation process. The Democrats will not be able to leverage that route to pass legislation if the House is in Republican hands. This means stagnation in Washington, DC for the next two years. Strangely, when Congress is gridlocked and cannot pass foolish laws, the American economy does quite well, thank you.

What this does mean in practical terms is that President Biden will have more time to focus on foreign policy issues than on domestic matters. And there, he will have his hands full. From Ukraine to the Korean Peninsula, from Beijing to Taiwan to Iran to Saudi Arabia and Israel, there are forces, seemingly unmanageable, at play. Certainly, corralling any of the problems in these areas will take a deft hand.

When we look at Ukraine ten years hence, will America and NATO be proud of what they did? As Putin continues his wanton cold-blooded murder of Ukraine's people including women and children, and his ruthless, pointless destructive bombing and missile attacks on its energy and water supplies, thus ensuring suffering and death in a harsh winter to follow, did we do enough to stop this idiocy? Putin can gain nothing by annexing Ukraine for he will never subjugate its people. He can gain nothing by killing all Ukrainians other than to cement his historical place in the pantheon of war criminals.

What of the US and NATO? Did they allow Putin to use the doctrine of MAD or Mutually Assured Destruction as a means of nuclear blackmail? Will Ukraine's population survive another winter without heat, water, food, and shelter?

Nuclear blackmail

Nuclear blackmail is not solely the province of a great power such as Russia. It is now in full-fledged use by Kim Jong Un of North Korea too. As he launches ballistic missiles over Japan and adjacent to South Korea, while apparently threatening to conduct another nuclear test, it becomes more and more apparent that the world is dealing with a deranged leader who is looking for recognition and respect. Can he be taken out? Does the US have a first strike capability to wipe out Kim's ability to launch missiles at South Korea, Japan or Guam, and at the same time to wipe out his nuclear capability?



US President Joe Biden campaigning for Democratic Party Rep. Mike Levin in Oceanside, California, last week in preparation for midterm elections. Pic - AFP-JIJI

If the answer is no, be prepared for more nuclear blackmail. And if the answer is yes, it does not follow that it should be the This point has not been lost on the Ayatollahs of Iran for decades. A former President of Iran mused that Israel could be destroyed by one nuclear blast whereas Iran, much larger, could survive a limited attack. As crazy as that may be, it is a risk the rest of the world cannot take. It also highlights why the Ayatollahs seem to have this single-minded and hell-bent pursuit of nuclear weapons as their primary mission. Well, perhaps secondary to their lust for repressing their own citizens.

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The Iranian regime may be doomed. We cannot tell whether the ongoing protests in that nation will lead to regime change. We hear or read that hundreds have been killed and thousands arrested with threats of long-term incarceration. This only seems to inspire more protests. We shall see.

What then of the Abraham Accords that brought Israel together with the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco?

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Putting aside that when Israel held a celebratory follow up meeting, Egypt was present and Jordan was there in spirit but not actual presence, this is clearly a paradigm shift in the Middle East. But let us suppose for a minute that the Iranian regime is displaced. Will this alliance, birthed out of security concerns about a hostile and encroaching Iranian regime, hold together? There was some speculation that for the UAE and Bahrain to have agreed on the accords, Saudi Arabia must have given its tacit approval. Not so fast. It appears that MBS is positioning himself solidly with China and Russia as a counterfoil to the US.

And speaking of China, there are formidable concerns. At the recent National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, not only did President Xi succeed in getting a third term — and perhaps leadership for life — but he reiterated the notions of conquest of Taiwan and the inevitable conflict with the West led by the US. He has recently repeated calls on the armed forces to be ready to fight.

Delusions of greatness

It is difficult to understand the minds



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of men such as Xi and Putin. Russia stands to gain nothing from the annexation of Ukraine. The Ukrainian people would not be willing subjects and Russia has no need to add 40-45 million to its population. True, Ukrainian grain producing lands are productive and lucrative, but it is unlikely that Russia would ever

be able to run the farms as the Ukrainians did. The sale of Russian oil and gas without sanctions is a surer way to prosperity.

Similarly, Xi seems hell-bent on conjuring up conflict with America. To what end? China is now the major manufacto-

ry for sales to the American consumer and American business. Why would Xi want to destroy that relationship? Why does China have even a remote interest in the island nation of Taiwan? Out of wounded pride? Ego? How would it better the lives of the Chinese people for Taiwan to be annexed? An invasion of Taiwan risks the destruction of the island's chip-making plants. Certainly, over time, plants can be replaced but the economic devastation of supply chains in this area could produce a lasting recession.

Both Putin and Xi seem to have delusions of the greatness of their nations, greatness in the sense of being the dominant nation in its sphere of influence. The post-Soviet Union collapse experience of the US is instructive. The Russia that emerged remained a formidable power, military, strategic, and economic. Neither the US nor NATO wanted to tangle directly with Russia over the Ukraine war. So also, the US is not going to disappear as a world-class power even as China dominates world trade.

These are the shoals that Biden must navigate. In the hands of strong and visionary leaders, the nations involved would face massive and delicate challenges to optimize outcomes and to negotiate mutually beneficial tradeoffs. In the hands of weak and insular leaders, the problems seem insurmountable.

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China's leaders recommit to 'unswerving' zero-Covid policy

China is fighting its biggest wave of locally transmitted cases in six months, with nearly 9,000 infections reported on Thursday

China's top leadership, led by President Xi Jinping, on Thursday reinforced the need to maintain the 'zero-Covid' policy while instructing officials to minimise economic damage.

In a meeting of the new Politburo Standing Committee chaired by Xi, who is the Communist Party of China's general-secretary, the members called for "more decisive" measures to curb the spread of the virus so that normal life and production can be resumed as soon as possible.

"We must concentrate our efforts on fighting the epidemic in key areas, take more resolute and decisive measures to combat the epidemic, curb the spread of the epidemic as soon as possible, and restore normal production and living order as soon as possible," the official news agency, Xinhua, said in a report on the meeting.



This photo taken in October shows an employee working on an assembly line producing speakers at a factory in Fuyang city, in China's eastern Anhui province. Pic - AFP

It was the new committee's first publicised meeting on Covid-19 after seven new members took over the leadership of the country at the CPC's 20th national congress in October, reports Hindustan Times.

"We must not relax the necessary epidemic prevention initiatives," the leadership decided, the Xinhua report said, indicating that there will be no let-up in the controversial "zero-Covid" policy, which, with its lockdowns and mass testing, has managed to keep infection rates low, simultaneously but hurt the economy and disrupted the lives of people across the country.

The decision of the committee comes against the backdrop of at least 9,005 new Covid-19 cases reported for Wednesday, of which 1,185 symptomatic and 7,820 asymptomatic cases, the national health commission said in its daily bulletin on Thursday.

The cases rose when compared with the 8,335 new cases that were a day earlier (with 1,346 symptomatic and 6,989 asymptomatic infections).

Chinese health officials have said the outbreak situation is likely to get worse during the coming winter and country's leadership reaffirmed that apprehension.

This was Camilla's 8-word reply when Diana confronted her over Charles affair

King Charles III's affair with Camilla during his marriage to late Princess Diana has been widely talked about. King Charles and Queen Consort Camilla dated before the now-monarch met Princess Diana, however it didn't work out. Charles and Camilla remained close friends but soon rekindled their romance which Princess Diana found out, reports Hindustan Times.



Queen Consort Camilla: Britain's King Charles III and Britain's Camilla, Queen Consort is seen. Pic - AFP

Princess Diana once confronted Queen Consort Camilla at a party about her affair with Charles in what she later described as the "bravest moment of her marriage".

Princess Diana's former royal protection officer, Ken Wharfe who accompanied her to a party hosted by Camilla's sister said that, "Diana didn't have any particular friendships at that party but when we arrived there, it was almost like freeze-framing a scene in a movie because there was this surprise that Diana had even arrived."

"I went out and there was Diana, who said 'you've got to come with me, I can't find my husband or Camilla'. Now, I couldn't say no, clearly this woman was in some distress, and eventually we found the prince and Camilla sat on a sofa in the basement of this property just talking," Ken Wharfe said.

Then Diana went over to Camilla and offered her a stark warning, he said.

"I didn't know quite what Diana was going to do at that point but, with a great deal of confidence, Diana just went up to both of them and said to Camilla 'please don't treat me like an idiot, I know what's going on'," he said.

"And Camilla sort of said something, to which still to this day I have never really understood what she meant by that is 'well you know, you have two wonderful boys'. Well, it was an incredible moment for me and certainly for them as well. That was a defining moment in their life because I think at that point... this was an indicator the end was nigh," he added.

'Life is wild!': First Generation Z member elected to US Congress

Maxwell Frost had just been elected to represent Florida in the US Congress when the 25-year-old received a call that embodied the historical moment.

"Still thinking about that 'please hold for the President' call last night," Frost tweeted on Wednesday. "Life is wild!"

It was US President Joe Biden, a fellow Democrat calling with congratulations on being the first person of Generation Z elected to Congress as a member of the House of Representatives.

The progressive candidate campaigned on reforming gun laws, expanding health care, increasing housing access and addressing climate change on his way to win 59% of the vote in Florida's 10th Congressional District.

The district is a Democratic stronghold that includes the Orlando area. Frost powered his campaign with \$2.6 million in fundraising, according to federal election filings, to defeat Republican Calvin Wimbish.

In the 435-member legislative body whose current members average 58 years of age, Frost will be the lone voice of "Generation Z-ers," some



Identifying as Afro-Latino, Maxwell Frost's background reflects a generation of Americans that is more racially and ethnically diverse than older age groups. Pic - AP

70 million Americans born between the late 1990s and early 2010s.

Appearing on ABC on Wednesday, Frost noted that Gen Z and millennial voters, who increasingly make up a larger share of the voting population, were instrumental in weakening a so-called "red wave" for Republicans. Biden himself showed gratitude to younger voters who made it to the polls.

Identifying as Afro-Latino, Frost's background reflects a generation of Americans that is more racially and ethnically diverse than older age groups.

Another Gen Z candidate, Republican Karoline Leavitt, lost her congressional race in New Hampshire.

Qatar alleges racism as critics demand compensation fund for FIFA World Cup migrant workers

Dismissing the demand for a compensation fund for migrant workers killed or injured during football world cup preparations as 'publicity stunt', Qatar has accused its critics of 'racism'.

International human rights group including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have led demands for FIFA and Qatar to create a fund for workers matching the \$440 million prize money of the World Cup, which is set to kick-off in November, reports Swarajya Staff.

Rights groups have accused Qatar of under-reporting deaths of workers on construction sites.

However, the Qatar government has disputed the reports that said that thousands of workers have died in construction site accidents or from heat-related illnesses in the country's searing

summer temperatures.

Qatar's Labour Minister Ali bin Samikh Al Marri was cited in an AFP report as saying that the country has already been handing out hundreds of millions of dollars in unpaid wages.

Marri said Qatar already has a fund to deal with worker deaths and injuries. "This call for a duplicative FIFA-led compensation campaign is a publicity stunt," Marri was quoted by AFP as saying.

"Our door is open. We have dealt with and resolved a lot of cases," he added. The minister also claimed that some critics have also acted through "racism".

UK PM Rishi Sunak under pressure as minister resigns amid bullying row

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is facing pressure from the Opposition on Wednesday as one of his close allies and embattled ministers resigned from the Cabinet pending an investigation into allegations of bullying against him.

Sir Gavin Williamson, who was minister of state without portfolio as of yet was accused of abusive behaviour towards fellow Conservative Party colleagues and civil servants after which he posted his resignation on Twitter.

Sunak said he accepted Williamson's resignation 'with great sadness' and thanked him for his 'personal support and loyalty'.

However, the Opposition has branded the episode as a sign of 'poor judgement and leadership' by Sunak, reports PTI.

The row over Williamson's conduct has been brewing since the weekend, with reports that outgoing Conservative Party chairman Jake Berry told the newly-appointed Prime Minister about the "bullying" complaint against Williamson on



Rishi Sunak said he accepted Williamson's resignation "with great sadness".
Pic – Daily Sun

October 24, a day before his appointment to the Sunak Cabinet.

Downing Street has maintained the new Prime Minister 'knew there was a disagreement' but that he didn't know the 'substance' of the messages until they were published by 'The Sunday Times' newspaper.

Williamson is believed to have been instrumental in working behind the scenes to dissuade Boris Johnson from contesting in the leadership election against Sunak in the days after Liz Truss resigned as Prime Minister last month.

Refuting the allegations, Williamson in his resignation letter, said he refutes the 'characterisation' of the claims about his 'past conduct' but felt they had become a 'distraction from the good work the government is doing'.

It referred to some expletive-laden text messages he reportedly sent to the former Tory party whip, Wendy Morton, over being overlooked during Queen Elizabeth II's funeral.

These were published in 'The Sunday Times' and since then others have come forward to allege "intimidating" behaviour while Williamson was a Cabinet minister under previous prime ministers.

He has since been reported to the parliamentary bullying watchdog, the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme, and says he has apologised to the recipient of the text messages and would comply with the complaints process to 'clear my name of any wrongdoing'.

Meanwhile, for Gavin Williamson, this marks the third time he has been forced out of the Cabinet.

In 2019, he was sacked as defence secretary by then Prime Minister Theresa May after allegedly leaking sensitive information.

Later that year, he was made education secretary by Boris Johnson, but in 2021 was removed over his handling of exams during the Covid pandemic.



Taraneh Alidoosti posing with her hair uncovered. Pic – Republic World

Iranian actress poses without headscarf in support of anti-hijab protests

Iranian actress Taraneh Alidoosti posted a picture of herself on Instagram without a headscarf in support of nationwide anti-hijab protests which began in September. Best-known for her role in "The Salesman", which won an Academy Award in 2017, Taraneh Alidoosti was seen in the photo holding a sign which read "Woman, Life, Freedom" in Kurdish, reports Hindustan Times.

The statement is a popular slogan in the demonstrations that sparked after the September 16 death of Mahsa Amini in the custody of the morality police for not wearing "appropriate attire".

The protests have posed one of the biggest challenges to Iran's government since the 1979 revolution. Alongside the photo, Taraneh Alidoosti wrote a poem which read, "Your final absence, the migration of singing birds, is not the end of this rebellion."

In the past as well, Taraneh Alidoosti has posted many posts on social media critical of Iran's establishment.

Since the beginning of the protests, at least five female Iranian actresses have posted pictures of themselves without the hijab in solidarity with the demonstrations.

China's Peking University topped overall Asia rankings

IIT Bombay top educational institution in southern Asia, IIT Delhi ranks second

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay is the best educational institution in Southern Asia while IIT Delhi ranks second in the region, according to the QS Asia University Rankings 2023.

The 15th edition of the QS World University Rankings: Asia features 757 institutions – up from 687 last year and making it the biggest rankings for the region yet.

The major locations represented in the rankings include China Mainland (128 institutions), India (118), Japan (106) and South Korea (88), accounting for more than a half of all ranked institutions.

In the rankings released on 8 November, IIT Bombay was evaluated as not only India's but Southern Asia's top higher education institution.

IIT Delhi secured second place in the rankings for India and Southern Asia, followed by the Indian Institute



IIT Bombay top educational institution. Pic – Byju's

of Science in Bengaluru ranked at third spot.

IIT Madras, IIT Kharagpur and IIT Kanpur also made it to the top six in the rankings.

China's Peking University topped the overall Asia rankings, with IIT Bombay ranked at 40th position in the list, IIT Delhi at 46, IISc Bengaluru at 52, IIT Madras at 53, IIT Kharagpur at 61 and IIT Kanpur at 66.

Mother tongue survey of India completed with field videography of 576 languages and dialects

The Mother Tongue Survey of India (MTSI) project is successfully completed, the annual report 2021-22 of the Ministry of Home Affairs says.

Field videography of 576 mother tongues was done during this survey. The video-graphed speech data of these languages and dialects will be uploaded to National Informatics Centre (NIC) Server for archiving purposes.

The aim is to preserve and analyse the original flavour of each indigenous mother tongue. For this purpose, proper editing in arranging the linguistic data by the in-house linguists is under process.

NIC along with National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) are rendering their exemplary services in documenting and preserving the linguistic



Home Ministry successfully completes mother tongue survey. Pic – Getty

data of surveyed mother tongues, reports Swarajya Staff.

After the enumeration exercise and processing, the data will be disseminated for its use by government departments, universities, institutes of repute, scholars, students and other data users.

It will also be available on the Census of India website for free download. Census Workstations have also been set up in 18 different universities/institutes across India to allow access to data.

Rabin Bhujun, Journaliste

“Le risque que le trio de l’opposition ne s’entende pas est réel.”

Vu la complexité de la répartition des tickets ou encore de la place à accorder ou pas à Bodha, voire à Bhadain”

Cette semaine, Rabin Bhujun souligne les difficultés persistantes de l’opposition, ce qui n’aide pas à redonner confiance en un avenir meilleur. Malgré tous les soubresauts de la classe politique mauricienne, la masse reste muette à propos de ses intentions de vote pour les prochaines élections. Mais notre invité, est optimiste. Un changement pourrait se poindre à l’horizon si les leaders des partis politiques décident de sortir des sentiers battus, cassent les codes pour faire jaillir les idées innovantes. Mais ces derniers sauront-ils faire la différence?

Mauritius Times: Quand vous examinez le bilan du gouvernement de Pravind Jugnauth au bout de ces trois années passées au pouvoir, quelle analyse faites-vous de ses réalisations, de ses manquements et de ses perspectives d’avenir sur le plan politique?

Rabin Bhujun: C’est un vaste sujet qui nécessite une longue réponse. Pour faire simple, envisageons une évaluation sur quatre dimensions: Economique, Infrastructurale, Institutionnelle et Sociale.

L’économie est bel et bien repartie après la crise de la Covid. Dans la dernière édition de *MCB Focus*, l’estimation du taux de croissance de 2022 a été légèrement revue à la hausse à 6,2%. Mais la prévision pour l’année prochaine a été abaissée à 5%. Le tourisme connaît une fin d’année faste, les industries de l’exportation ont bien rebondi tandis que le secteur des services financiers démontre sa résilience année après année.

Toutefois, la guerre en Ukraine, le ralentissement des économies de nos principaux marchés, le manque criant de main-d’œuvre dans plusieurs de nos industries, l’inflation importée, entre autres, ne permettent pas de penser que nous pourrions continuer bien longtemps sur la trajectoire des 5% de croissance.

Sur le plan infrastructurel, l’an 3 du précédent mandat de ce gouvernement était déjà marqué par des avancées assez importantes du projet Metro Express ou encore la fin des réparations sur l’autoroute Terre-Rouge/Verdun, véritable artère névralgique du pays. L’entrée en opération de la première phase de projet à la veille des législatives de 2019 était le point d’orgue du programme infrastructurel du dernier mandat.

Il y a bien quelques projets d’envergure qui ont été et vont être inaugurés dans les mois et l’année à venir. Mais aucun n’a le même « *wow factor* » et l’effet immédiat sur la mobilité de milliers de Mauriciens. Pire, l’entrée en opération du Metro Express cause un cauchemar quotidien pour des milliers de Mauriciens à Quatre-Bornes ou à Vacoas.

Sur le plan institutionnel, le bilan est aussi catastrophique que honteux. Ce gouvernement a installé ses partisans et ses sous-fifres dans toutes les institutions du



pays. On peine à discerner, dans cette foule de médiocres, les « *right (wo)men in the right place* ». De Air Mauritius aux corps paraétatiques les plus stratégiques, c’est la culture du « *wi misié* » qui s’est installée et qui prime.

Toutefois, la chose la plus grave et inquiétante, à mon sens, c’est que ce gouvernement a plus ou moins réussi à fracturer ce pays en deux. Entre, d’une part, ceux qui cultivent une défiance permanente et malade envers le gouvernement – et pire – l’Etat lui-même; et d’autre part, ceux qui vaquent à leur train-train quotidien sans moindrement s’intéresser ou s’offusquer de ce qui enflamme les colonnes de nos journaux et les *lives* de nos radios.

Soyons réalistes toutefois, les torts sont aussi partagés.

“Il est quand même consternant de constater que certains titres de presse ont choisi de rapporter l’existence de la risible « *hit list* » sans prendre aucune sorte de recul. N’importe quel journaliste rationnel et qui se respecte verrait la supercherie en deux secondes et n’en ferait absolument pas état. Ou alors, il le ferait afin de bien préciser que c’est – au mieux – un canular ou – au pire – une tentative concertée de manipulation de l’opinion...”

Cette polarisation est instiguée par des forces politiques – pas qu’au gouvernement – qui pensent cyniquement en tirer un capital politique et électoral.

* S’il y a eu des avancées, principalement sur le plan infrastructurel, par contre on ne peut pas en dire autant en ce qui concerne la question de la bonne gouvernance, ou même de l’attitude du gouvernement vis-à-vis de ses adversaires politiques - parlementaires ou non-parlementaires. Dans le fond, il ne semble pas qu’il y ait de différence fondamentale entre la méthode d’Anerood Jugnauth et celle de son fils, non?

Il y a bien une différence fondamentale entre Sir Anerood Jugnauth et son fils. SAJ savait déléguer. Pour cela, il faut avoir une certaine confiance en ses collaborateurs – qu’ils soient ministres ou nommés politiques. Même si SAJ effectuait bien évidemment des choix partisans dans la plupart des cas, il était aussi connu pour ne pas se fier uniquement au critère partisan.

Pravind Jugnauth installe, lui, des médiocres à toutes sortes de postes de responsabilité sur la seule base de leur fidélité et de leur profil. SAJ était « *enn tipe pli tipti ki bondie* » pour certains de ses admirateurs. Pravind Jugnauth est lui - carrément - le tout-puissant pour ceux qui lui doivent leur existence politique.

Il y a pire. SAJ entretenait une relation saine avec ses collaborateurs. Il accueillait et écoutait les avis divergents, même s’il était celui qui décidait en dernier ressort. Pravind Jugnauth est un sphinx, qui écoute sans rien laisser transparaître de ce qu’il pense. Ses ministres n’osent pas lui dire ses quatre vérités. Leurs nombreuses frustrations ne sont vraiment exprimées qu’en petits comités.

Les plus téméraires réfléchissent même à des stratagèmes pour faire remonter les messages via le puissant et influent *Kitchen Cabinet* de Pravind Jugnauth, dans l’espoir d’amener le Premier ministre à agir sur certains dossiers sensibles. Par exemple, plusieurs ministres orange souhaitent ardemment que Yogida Sawmynaden soit exclu du parti, afin d’envoyer un signal fort. Mais Jugnauth et sa ‘Cuisine’ ne le lâchent pas, pour je ne sais quelle obscure raison.

* Pour revenir aux méthodes employées sous la tutelle de l’actuel gouvernement, on n’a qu’à se référer aux récents coups du ‘Special Striking Team’ de la force policière - la perquisition suivie de l’arrestation d’Akil Bissessur et de sa compagne, la descente et la perquisition chez les beaux-parents de Sanjeev Teeluckdhar et celles chez Bruneau Laurette - tous figurant sur une ‘hitlist’ alléguée du régime... Rien n’a été prouvé jusqu’ici car les enquêtes sont toujours “on” dans certains cas. Mais tout cela ne peut pas se résumer à des actes impulsifs. Qu’en pensez-vous?

Il faudrait aussi créer une liste de tous les crédules qui croient tout et n’importe quoi en lisant les nombreuses idioties publiées quotidiennement sur les réseaux sociaux.

☞ Suite en page 11

‘Pourquoi Pravind Jugnauth paierait-il cher pour une alliance avec le MMM, quand il peut tout à fait cueillir uniquement les mauves qui l’intéressent?’



☞ Suite de la page 10

Il est quand même consternant de constater que certains titres de presse ont choisi de rapporter l'existence de la risible «hit list» sans prendre aucune sorte de recul.

N'importe quel journaliste rationnel et qui se respecte verrait la supercherie en deux secondes et n'en ferait absolument pas état. Ou alors, il le ferait afin de bien préciser que c'est – au mieux – un canular ou – au pire – une tentative concertée de manipulation de l'opinion avec la complicité de médias complaisants ou partisans.

Pour revenir à votre question, il y a un «*political narrative*» bien établi autour de l'arrestation de Laurette et de Bissessur. Je pense donc qu'il faut absolument se distancier de ce que les uns ou les autres veulent nous faire croire. J'attends de voir comment les deux enquêtes aboutissent pour me prononcer.

Entretemps, je note juste que le ton et le propos des avocats de Laurette ont considérablement changé entre le moment où il a été appréhendé et ce début de semaine. Je les ai même entendu louer le professionnalisme des enquêteurs. De quoi se sont-ils rendu compte? Que leur a-t-on expliqué? Que leur a-t-on montré pour qu'ils soient

☞ **Le néophyte Dhaneshwar Damry peut-il succéder à Ramgoolam parce qu'il est d'abord le blue-eyed boy de ce dernier et, de surcroît, bien né? Ou alors est-ce le toujours bien né Ritesh Ramphul, mais bien plus expérimenté, qui peut légitimement aspirer au poste suprême au PTR? Ou alors est-ce qu'Arvin Boolell ou Shakeel Mohamed, tous deux malnés, peuvent prétendre au poste. Au MMM, la question est autre. Le parti est-il voué à consacrer un deal Papa-Tifi...»**

soudainement bien moins belligérants? Je n'ai pas la réponse à ces questions.

Par contre, je pense que la perquisition chez les beaux-parents de Sanjeev Teeluckdharry est, elle, choquante. Cet épisode nous donne l'impression qu'un mandat de perquisition au cadre assez large a été rédigé afin que la police puisse effectuer une «*fishing expedition*» la veille de la manifestation organisée par Laurette et ses sympathisants. C'est un épisode qui apparaît comme une manœuvre de harcèlement, de rétorsion et de pression : c'est un très mauvais signal.

Pour l'heure, je n'ai aucun a priori – ni positif, ni négatif – sur le travail de la Police Head Quarters Special Striking Team de l'ASP Jagai. Il est dans le feu de l'actualité et il s'occupe de nombreux «*very high profile cases*». Tout ce que je lui souhaite, c'est qu'il ne contracte pas les mêmes habitudes et le même syndrome qu'un autre ASP jadis très connu et controversé, Prem Raddhoa.

*** Malgré toutes les secousses et autres scandales qui le frappent, le gouvernement de Pravind Jugnauth parvient toutefois à maintenir le cap. Il y a aussi l'usure du pouvoir ou les manifestations de rue ou celles devant les tribunaux. Quelle explication donner à tout cela?**

☞ **Le ton et le propos des avocats de Laurette ont considérablement changé entre le moment où il a été appréhendé et ce début de semaine. Je les ai même entendu louer le professionnalisme des enquêteurs. De quoi se sont-ils rendu compte? Que leur a-t-on expliqué? Que leur a-t-on montré pour qu'ils soient soudainement bien moins belligérants?»**

Si Pravind Jugnauth s'en tire aussi bien, c'est parce que l'opposition échoue lamentablement. La dernière manifestation de Bruneau Laurette a, une nouvelle fois, démontré que le PTR, le MMM et le PMSD ne s'entendent toujours pas sur le fondamental : le grand rassemblement de toutes les forces de l'opposition. Xavier Duval pousse un coup de gueule suite au soutien très visible des rouges à Bruneau Laurette; deux jours plus tard le trio PTR/PMSD/MMM annonce une alliance pour les municipales... alors que Laurette a dit vouloir siphonner l'électorat bleu et mauve.

L'opposition souffle en permanence le chaud et le froid sur sa capacité à représenter une alternative cohérente, crédible et donc gagnante face au gouvernement. C'est bien pour cela qu'on entend davantage les rumeurs de députés s'appêtant à quitter les rangs des partis de l'opposition que l'inverse.

L'opposition, contrairement à la dynamique 2003-2005 en faveur du Parti Travailleuse, n'apparaît pas vraiment comme étant une menace réelle et imminente pour le gouvernement.

*** Par ailleurs, même s'il existe un sentiment anti-gouvernement très fort sur les réseaux sociaux et dans certains titres de presse, il est difficile de bien saisir le 'mood' réel de l'électorat vis-à-vis du gouvernement. Est-ce possible qu'un nombre important d'électeurs - souvent silencieux - soit d'un avis diffé-**

☞ **Je pense que la perquisition chez les beaux-parents de Sanjeev Teeluckdharry est, elle, choquante. Cet épisode nous donne l'impression qu'un mandat de perquisition au cadre assez large a été rédigé afin que la police puisse effectuer une «*fishing expedition*» la veille de la manifestation organisée par Laurette et ses sympathisants. C'est un épisode qui apparaît comme une manœuvre de harcèlement, de rétorsion et de pression...»**

rent des internautes?

Les réseaux sociaux ne sont absolument pas le reflet de la réalité du «*mood*» de l'ensemble du pays. Leurs algorithmes sont conçus pour vous servir du «*more of the same*», c'est-à-dire que les fans de Pravind Jugnauth verront le plus souvent du contenu à sa gloire tandis que les partisans de l'opposition verront surtout défiler des «*posts*» critiques à l'égard du gouvernement.

Par ailleurs, ce sont ceux qui ont choisi leur camp qui s'expriment le plus souvent sur les réseaux. Donc, même en ligne et dans les colonnes de commentaires des articles des grands groupes de presse, il existe une majorité silencieuse, qui regarde et lit sans commenter et dont on ne connaît pas l'opinion. Cela ne doit pas étonner. Souvenez-vous, le sondage Straconsult/Le Mauricien de mai 2022 concluant que 56% des Mauriciens n'optent pour aucun parti

Je ne peux donc pas répondre à votre question en disant qu'une majorité silencieuse ne partage pas le sentiment que vous estimez prédominant sur les réseaux sociaux. Je peux, par contre, seulement conclure que puisque cette majorité existe et elle est silencieuse, on ne peut pas supputer sur ce qu'elle pense. Il se peut que les prochaines législatives soient une redite quasi identique de 2019 ou alors qu'on se retrouve dans une dynamique tardive et réelle aboutissant au même type de conséquences qu'en décembre 2014.

*** Un accord de principe pour une alliance pour les élections municipales réunissant les partis parlementaires de l'opposition - le PTR, le MMM et le PMSD - est intervenu durant la semaine écoulée. Mais rien ne dit que cette alliance de l'opposition va durer au-delà des municipales, car il est probable qu'elle sera vite abandonnée si on vient à la percevoir comme incapable de gagner les prochaines élections. Que se passera-t-il dans ce cas-là, selon vous?**

Non seulement rien ne le dit, mais personne ne l'a dit. Les trois leaders ont bien pris le soin de préciser que cet accord concerne les municipales. Ils ont raison de distinguer les deux contextes électoraux, car les cinq municipalités n'ont pas la même topographie socioéconomique, ethnique et politique que l'ensemble des 20 circonscriptions du pays.

La campagne des municipales – si elle a effectivement lieu avant les législatives – permettra de tester la collaboration des trois partis sur le terrain, d'évaluer l'adhésion des électeurs des cinq municipalités à ce trio et surtout de mesurer son poids électoral.

☞ Suite en page 12

N. Ramgoolam subit les appels du pied l'appelant à permettre aux rouges d'accéder à coup sûr au pouvoir à travers une alliance avec le MSM'

☞ Suite de la page 11

C'est une sorte de *test drive* qui permet à Ramgoolam, Bérenger et Duval de prendre le volant tour à tour.

A l'issue du dépouillement, chacun pourra alors juger de l'efficacité de la collaboration tout en évaluant si les efforts consentis et les bénéfices récoltés sont asymétriques ou équitables.

Ce n'est qu'alors qu'on pourra répondre à l'épineuse question: Peut-on confier le volant à Ramgoolam seul?

*** Jocelyn Chan Low nous disait dans une récente interview qu'au cas où les choses ne marchent pas au niveau de l'opposition parlementaire, nous nous retrouverons une nouvelle fois dans une lutte à trois ou même à quatre, et dans ces circonstances, le MMM pourrait être tenté par l'option MSM... Qu'en pensez-vous? Improbable?**

Je suis à trois quarts d'accord avec Jocelyn.

D'abord, le risque que le trio de l'opposition ne s'entende pas est réel. Vu la complexité de la répartition des tickets ou encore de la place à accorder ou pas à Nando Bodha, voire à Roshi Bhadain, si celui-ci cesse de se prendre pour ce qu'il n'est pas. Valeur du jour, je crains même qu'on ait davantage de chance de voir une opposition divisée entre un tandem PTr/PMSD, d'une part, et un accord MMM/RM de Bodha, d'autre part.



“Le leader du PTr subit les appels du pied aussi bien à l'intérieur du parti qu'à l'extérieur – et pas que de parties mauriciennes – l'appelant à permettre aux rouges d'accéder à coup sûr au pouvoir à travers une alliance avec le MSM. Afin de se reconstruire dans le confort des ors du pouvoir pour ensuite mieux se rebeller contre Pravind Jugnauth et permettre au PTr d'avoir une très importante chance de réussite en 2029. Cela, sous un nouveau leadership...”

Par contre, je pense que Pravind Jugnauth et Paul Bérenger ne peuvent s'entendre. Donc un rapprochement MSM/MMM se fera irrémédiablement sans l'actuel leader mauve. Je vois mal le MMM aller justifier cela auprès de ses partisans. Souvenons-nous, par exemple, de la forte défiance exprimée envers la direction du parti quand Paul Bérenger avait finalement conclu une alliance avec Ramgoolam... après avoir bombé le torse et affirmé qu'il allait seul aux législatives pendant des semaines.

Je pense plutôt que Pravind Jugnauth et ses collaborateurs rêvent de saigner davantage les mauves en amenant quelques membres en vue du parti à quitter le navire, notamment en leur promettant monts et merveilles, mais aussi en instiguant la sourde colère qui existe par rapport à la transmission du leadership du parti.

Le raisonnement est simple: Pourquoi Pravind Jugnauth paierait-il cher – en tickets – pour une alliance avec le MMM, quand il peut tout à fait cueillir uniquement les mauves qui l'intéressent?

*** Par contre, ce qui paraît actuellement totalement improbable, c'est l'option d'une alliance PTr-MSM comme le craignent certains au sein de l'opposition elle-même. Est-ce vraiment improbable?**

D'abord un fait : Pour des raisons aussi bien objectives que subjectives, Ramgoolam est convaincu qu'il est le seul, au sein de son parti, à pouvoir se présenter comme Premier ministre lors de la prochaine législative. C'est ce qui explique sa posture.

Ceci dit, je ne dirais certainement pas qu'une alliance MSM/PTr est impossible. Navin Ramgoolam, qu'il le concède ou pas, est un homme diminué. Il ne pourra mener une campagne électorale en projetant la même force et détermination qu'en 2014 ou 2010. Face aux réalités physiques et physiologiques, il n'est pas impossible qu'il change d'avis.

Il y a aussi d'autres considérations au-delà d'une possible remise en cause personnelle. D'abord, le Parti Travailleur n'a plus de trésor de guerre. Or une campagne électorale coûte excessivement cher surtout face à un MSM qui n'aura aucun scrupule à dépenser ce qu'il faut durant sa campagne. Le manque de ressources pourrait amener Ramgoolam à ouvrir ses options.

Ensuite le leader du Parti Travailleur subit les appels du pied aussi bien à l'intérieur du parti qu'à l'extérieur – et pas que de parties mauriciennes – l'appelant à permettre aux rouges d'accéder à coup sûr au pouvoir à travers une alliance avec le MSM. Afin de se reconstruire dans le confort des ors du pouvoir pour ensuite mieux se rebeller contre Pravind Jugnauth et permettre au PTr d'avoir une très importante chance de réussite en 2029.

Cela, sous un nouveau leadership face à un Pravind Jugnauth qui sera alors certainement usé par le pouvoir et bien plus facile à battre qu'en 2024.

*** La prochaine bataille promet d'être très dure et très rude. Si le PTr et le MMM ne parviennent pas à faire la différence, ce sera un coup très dur pour les leaders de ces deux partis. La relève saura relever le défi, diriez-vous?**

Depuis 2014, Ramgoolam a subi deux échecs électoraux. Bérenger n'a pas connu de victoire aux législatives depuis 22 ans. Le PTr et le MMM auraient dû avoir deux différents leaders depuis quelques années déjà... si ces partis étaient réellement démocratiques et le leader y assumait correctement sa responsabilité morale et politique.

Mais, pour diverses raisons, ces deux leaders sont indispensables aux yeux d'un certain nombre de leurs partisans. Ils sont peut-être indispensables mais certainement pas éternels. La question de leur succession se posera donc à un moment ou à un autre, de gré ou de force.

Les rouges et les mauves sont deux familles politiques assez compliquées avec leurs propres pesanteurs et «réalités». Si les deux leaders n'assument pas clairement leurs responsabilités en mettant en place un *succession planning* clair et connu de tous, leurs partis respectifs risquent de sombrer dans des guerres de succession fratricides, ce qui arrangera de nouveau les affaires du leader du MSM.

“Je pense plutôt que Pravind Jugnauth et ses collaborateurs rêvent de saigner davantage les mauves en amenant quelques membres en vue du parti à quitter le navire, notamment en leur promettant monts et merveilles... Le raisonnement est simple:

Pourquoi Pravind Jugnauth paierait-il cher – en tickets – pour une alliance avec le MMM, quand il peut tout à fait cueillir uniquement les mauves qui l'intéressent?”



Ces deux leaders ont non seulement une responsabilité envers leur parti mais aussi envers le pays. Ils doivent enclencher clairement le processus de succession et ainsi donner une réelle chance à la relève dont vous parlez, non seulement d'accéder au leadership dans des conditions propices mais aussi d'y faire leurs preuves sans perdre leur temps et leur énergie dans d'interminables querelles internes visant à déterminer qui est le leader légitime en l'absence d'un testament politique en bonne et due forme du prédécesseur.

Par ailleurs, ne nous y trompons pas... Chacun de ces partis a quelques questions fondamentales à trancher. Le néophyte Dhaneshwar Damry peut-il succéder à Ramgoolam parce qu'il est d'abord le *blue-eyed boy* de ce dernier et, de surcroît, bien né? Ou alors est-ce le toujours bien né Ritesh Ramphul, mais bien plus expérimenté, qui peut légitimement aspirer au poste suprême au PTr? Ou alors est-ce qu'Arvin Boolell ou Shakeel Mohamed, tous deux malnés, peuvent prétendre au poste.

Au MMM, la question est autre. Le parti est-il voué à consacrer un deal *Papa-Tifi* et ressembler davantage au PTr, MSM et PMSD ou alors un autre leadership pérenne est-il possible?

*** 'Nature abhors a vacuum,' dit-on. Elle saura remplir le vide?**

Bien évidemment, c'est ce qu'on souhaite. Mais nous ne sommes pas en 1969, nous ne sommes pas non plus en 1982. Notre système électoral étant ce qu'il est, il continuera à privilégier les partis et les alliances ayant déjà une forte assise nationale pouvant leur permettre d'obtenir au moins une majorité relative des votes par le *First Past The Post*.

Je demeure très pessimiste sur la capacité des partis de l'opposition à faire un *aggiornamento* salutaire afin d'identifier leur futur leader tout en leur donnant les moyens de réussir.

On a déjà un sous-SAJ au pouvoir. Il aura sans doute en face de lui un sous-Ramgoolam et un sous-Bérenger à l'avenir si les principaux partis de l'opposition se complaisent dans leur *business as usual*.

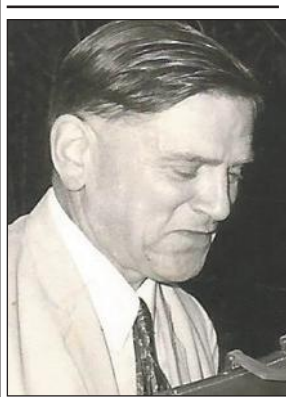
From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

5th Year No 210

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 15 August, 1958

• 'Society does not in any age prevent a man from being what he can.' — Thomas Carlyle



Peter Ibbotson

It is four years since the *Mauritius Times* first appeared, originally as a two-page single sheet; a *feuilleton* indeed. Now it is a firmly-established eight-page paper, which has amply proved the need in Mauritius for a paper in English.

My first contribution to the infant *Times* was on October 23rd, 1954, when in a letter to the Editor I crossed swords (not for the last time!) with NMU. I did not contribute again until December 4: in fact, in the 45 weeks of the paper's life, I contributed but 14 articles. Not until July 1, 1955, did my (almost weekly) series of regular articles begin in earnest. Altogether I have written over 160 articles for the *Mauritius Times*; I cannot say exactly how many, because I haven't now got copies of them all.

These articles have covered a wide variety of topics. Sometimes I have dealt with a subject of interest arising in another colony — e.g., the resemblance between Barbados and Mauritius; the constitutional development in Trinidad. Sometimes I have described some British practice or institution, e.g., the organisation of the British police, the payment of rates, secondary school selection, and control of private schools. I have reported meetings, such as when the 1955 constitutional delegation came to London, or when Mr Anderson spoke to the Students' Union. Or, most often, I have commented on many an aspect of the Mauritian political or social scene. I have dealt with the Education Department, the Police Report, the cement project, the Five-year Plan, various commissions, and many Government proposals. Many people in Mauritius have wondered if I really do live in London — I can assure them that indeed I do. As to how I have so great a knowledge of Mauritius and its affairs (and I have been asked about this by many people in London) — well, that is a (shall we say) trade secret.

Whatever I have written, I have tried to help the people of Mauritius. I have tried to show them how some practice current in Mauritius might perhaps be better modelled on the British plan; or I have criticised defects in Government departments with a view to securing greater efficiency, especially where it appears that such defects have gone on for years. Everything I have written, in fact, I have written as a Socialist, striving for a better world for my fellow-men. I have written as a Socialist, I repeat; not as a pseudo-socialist of the type who leaves the Labour Party for the Parti Mauricien and thinks he will still be able to work for socialism as a member of the capitalists' party. Nor as the demagogic socialists such as we find in this or that party, active on behalf of the underdog yet dissipating their energies and becoming discredited by continually making complaints which on investigation prove unfounded.

No, I write as a democratic Socialist; and the *Mauritius Times* has lived four years as a democratic Socialist newspaper. There is no reason why it should not live for many more years as just that. New dailies

Looking Backward



Mauritius Times team campaigning for Independence in the early 1960s

are springing up or are mooted, but the *Mauritius Times* has a well-established place in the political and journalistic life of Mauritius, and need fear no competition from the news-sheets being put out by disaffected minorities or racist groupings.

Like me, the *Mauritius Times* stands for democratic Socialism. It occurs to me that it may be useful if I restate the beliefs of the democratic Socialist. Then readers will know plainly, and unequivocally just what I do stand for. Therefore, I may entitle my next four paragraphs:

The creed of the Democratic Socialist

The democratic Socialist believes that every man, woman and child has intrinsic worth as an individual human being, and is entitled to social justice as a member of the community. He recognises that while human beings have a common heritage, they are essentially individuals, exhibiting countless varieties of behaviour and quality, partly by reason of heredity, mainly because of environmental influences. To each, he believes, should be accorded as far as is possible equality of opportunity for self-fulfillment.

He believes that every individual finds his most complete self-fulfillment and satisfaction in social living, sustained by and helping to sustain a community in which he enjoys equal rights and has equal responsibilities of citizenship. He believes that service to the community rather than greed for power or wealth is the best incentive to creative effort; that co-operation is better than self-seeking competition; and that the strong should help the weak.

These ideals are difficult to realise in a social sys-

tem which has developed under the influence of aristocratic rather than democratic principles — a social system in which it is assumed that there are the "best people" (the Quality) who should own, manage, and live well, and the "common people" (the Commonalty) who should live frugally because they are incapable of appreciating the best things in life and should be managed; a social system, moreover, in which it is assumed that the virtues of the Quality are handed down from father to son so that society consists of two hereditary classes.

Since the early training of a child does much to determine how he will think and act in later life, democratic socialists attach immense importance to education. While the system of education reflects in large measure the social philosophy of the times, it can itself be a profoundly important instrument for progressive change, since it can prepare the child of today for social living in the world of tomorrow.

The foregoing is the creed, briefly, of the democratic Socialist. It is what I stand for. It is what the *Mauritius Times* stands for. It is also what the Mauritius Labour Party, like Labour Parties the world over, stands for. In a later article I will relate the various items of the creed to conditions in present-day Mauritius; for now, I will say only that the application of the creed to, and its full implementation in, Mauritius would cause a social upheaval.

Which is, of course, what Mauritius needs. The Few have too long held political and or economic domination over the Many; the application of democratic principles to Mauritius is long overdue.

70-plus seems the new 50 for male politicians

but they're threatening the world order



Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin adjusts her earphone during a media conference at the European Parliament in France in September 2022. Pic - AP Photo/Jean-Francois Badias

● Cont. from page 2

The phenomenon of younger leaders but a greying population in Europe is due to some extent to the unique politics of many countries in the region. Nearly all European nations have a multitude of political parties, meaning coalition governments are the norm.

Other countries, like the U.K., have party rules that make it relatively easy to replace leaders. Under such conditions, outcomes in political leadership races are less predictable, and there's more turnover. Britain has had five prime ministers in the past six years, while Italy has had four.

Women are largely absent among world leaders. The few women who have recently reached the pinnacle of political power have done so early in their

careers. Giorgia Meloni, the new prime minister of Italy, is 45 while Jacinda Ardern of New Zealand is 42. Sanna Marin, the prime minister of Finland, turns 37 soon.

Working longer

Around the world people are living longer and healthier lives than ever before in human history, and in many cases working longer. This is good news, but there are concerns about elderly and long-serving leaders.

They may be out of touch with the younger generations they need to represent. Solutions to policy conundrums that worked for them decades ago might no longer apply now or in the future.

Their attitudes and perspectives may become conservative or inflexible. Unlike Finland's Marin, they probably don't have children in kindergarten and so don't see how policy plays out in real life.

Transitions from one leader to another are among the most dangerous times in the political life of a nation, whether they're democracies or authoritarian regimes. The Capitol Hill riots in the United States during the last days of Trump's infamous presidency are a reminder of how even in the "world's greatest democracy," long-established rules about the transfer of power can quickly be undermined.

But when the same person dominates public life in a nation for a long time, transitions are bound to be even more difficult. This is especially worrying in a large



Supporters take photos of Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on election day in São Paulo, Brazil, on Oct. 30, 2022. Pic - AP Photo/Marcelo Chello

and powerful country since internal volatility can quickly have dramatic, and unpredictable, international repercussions.

Long-term rulers rarely prepare a succession plan, if only because doing so jeopardizes their grip on power.

But without a succession strategy and strong institutions that support a peaceful transition to the next leader, the aging leaders of the world's superpowers can represent a serious threat to the global order.

Thomas Klassen, York University, Canada

Short Stories

Life is not that complicated

An old man was frustrated when he discovered his shoes were torn beyond repair and needed a new pair. He spent a lot of time walking daily, so he knew he had to find the best-fit shoes to support and protect his feet. Unfortunately, getting shoes in those times wasn't as easy as it is today.

The old man was very educated and held the knowledge of books in the highest regard. He knew that the wrongly sized shoes could be dangerous and could result in blisters and other injuries. So, he bought all the books on how to find perfect-fit shoes. He read dozens of books about measuring his feet right for the ideal shoes. The man even made a measuring stick for measuring the foot and shoes while following the book's instructions. He went to the market when he was confident in his knowledge to find the best fit for his feet. He was very proud of all the knowledge he had gathered. He

thought that if he hadn't done this intensive research, he might have had to go barefoot for life.

When he reached the shop, he found a beautiful pair of shoes that fit his taste in



Pic - alltimeshortstories.com

aesthetics. But when he was going to measure the shoes, he realized that he had left his measuring stick at home. Oh, what a pity that his home was a long way away, and he wouldn't have made it back on time to purchase the shoe on the same day. So, he returned the next day with his measuring stick.

The following day the man went to the market barefoot because his older shoes were unwearable. He had to get the shoe today; otherwise, he will have to walk barefoot until he gets a new shoe. But to his dismay, he couldn't find the shoes he liked in the shop. So, the man inquired about the shoe to the shopkeeper. The shopkeeper told him the shoe he had chosen the other day was sold out. The old man was sad. Looking at the man's despair, the shopkeeper asked him why he didn't get his favorite pair the other day if he had liked them so much.

The old man told the shopkeeper how

he forgot his measuring stick at home, how important it was to have the correct measurement to get the right shoes and how he couldn't get measurements without his measuring stick.

The shopkeeper was even more confused and asked, "But, your feet were with you; why didn't you try the shoes on?"

The old man was bewildered and responded, "All the books say that the shoes should have to be measured before getting them."

The shopkeeper laughed and said, "Oh, no! You don't need to make things so complicated to buy shoes. You need to have your feet, some money, and maybe some common sense to buy the perfect pair of shoes."

Moral: Knowledge and research come in handy in most circumstances. But we should not get into the trap of overthinking. Sometimes overthinking may delay the decision, which may result in missed opportunities. On the other hand, sometimes, the problem can be solved with simple reasoning skills and common sense.

Why Magical Thinking is so Widespread

A look at the psychological roots of common superstitions

An anthropologist explains why we all have some irrational beliefs and the reason they give us comfort.



Dimitris Xygalatas
University of Connecticut

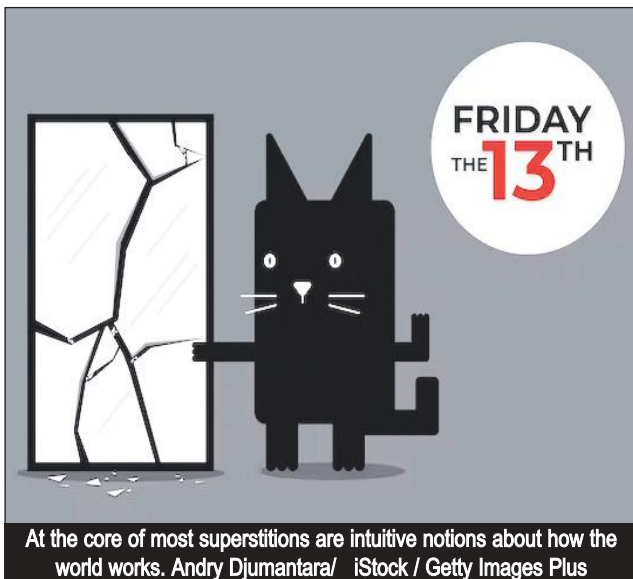
Growing up in Greece, I spent my summers at my grandparents' home in a small coastal village in the region of Chalkidiki. It was warm and sunny, and I passed most of my time playing in the streets with my cousins. But occasionally, the summer storms brought torrential rain. You could see them coming from far away, with black clouds looming over the horizon, lit up by lightning.

As I rushed home, I was intrigued to see my grandparents prepare for the thunderstorm. Grandma would cover a large mirror on the living room wall with a dark cloth and throw a blanket over the TV. Meanwhile, Grandpa would climb a ladder to remove the light bulb over the patio door. Then they switched off all the lights in the house and waited the storm out.

I never understood why they did all this. When I asked, they said that light attracts lightning. At least that was what people said, so better to be on the safe side.

Where do these kinds of beliefs come from?

My fascination with seemingly bizarre cultural beliefs and practices eventually led me to become an anthropologist. I have come across similar superstitions around the world, and although one may marvel at their variety, they share some common features.



The principles of magical thinking

At the core of most superstitions are certain intuitive notions about how the world works. Early anthropologists described these intuitions in terms of principles such as "similarity" and "contagion."

According to the principle of similarity, things that look alike may share some deeper connection, just as the members of a family tend to resemble each other both in appearance and in other traits. Of course, this is not always the case. But this inference feels natural, so we often abuse it.

Case in point: The light reflected on the surface of a mirror is not related to the light resulting from the electrical discharges produced during a thunderstorm. But because they both seem to give off light, a connection between the two was plausible enough to become folk



Lucky charms help us feel safer in an uncertain world. Image Source via Getty Images

wisdom in many parts of the world. Likewise, because our reflection on the mirror closely resembles our own image, many cultures hold that breaking a mirror brings bad luck, as if damage to that reflection would also mean damage to ourselves.

The principle of contagion is based on the idea that things have internal properties that can be transmitted through contact. The heat of a fire is transferred to anything it touches, and some illnesses can spread from one organism to another. Whether consciously or unconsciously, people in all cultures often expect that other kinds of essences can also be transferred through contact.

For example, people often believe that certain essences can "rub off" on someone, which is why casino players sometimes touch someone who is on a winning streak. It is also why, in 2014, a statue of Juliet, the Shakespearean character who fell madly in love with Romeo, had to be replaced due to excessive wear caused by visitors touching it to find love.

A search for patterns

These kinds of superstitions betray something more general about the way people think. To make sense of our world, we look for patterns in nature. When two things occur at around the same time, they may be related. For instance, black clouds are associated with rain.

But the world is far too complex. Most of the time, correlation does not mean causation, although it may feel like it does.

If you wear a new shirt to the stadium and your team wins, you might wear it again. If another victory comes, you begin to see a pattern. This now becomes your lucky shirt. In reality, myriad other things have changed since the last game, but you do not have access to all those things. What you know for sure is that you wore the lucky shirt, and the result was favorable.

Superstitions are comforting

People really want their lucky charms to work. So when they don't, we are less motivated to remember them, or we may attribute our luck to some other factor. If their team loses, they might blame the referee. But when

their team wins, they are more likely to notice the lucky shirt, and more likely to declare to others that it worked, which helps spread the idea.

As a social species, so much of what we know about the world comes from common wisdom. It would therefore seem safe to assume that if other people believe in the utility of a particular action, there might be something to it. If people around you say you should not eat those mushrooms, it's probably a good idea to avoid them.

This "better safe than sorry" strategy is one of the main reasons superstitions are so widespread. Another reason is that they simply feel good.

Research shows that rituals and superstitions spike during times of uncertainty, and performing them can help reduce anxiety and boost performance. When people feel powerless, turning to familiar actions provides a sense of control, which, even if illusory, can still be comforting.

Thanks to these psychological effects, superstitions have been around for ages, and will likely be around for ages to come.

That's Life

Fatherhood and Love

« Some people feel that you can't compare the love a mother has for her child to the love a father could feel for him. »

They say that a woman's life changes, her body changes, and she sacrifices every little nutrient she has, to offer to the baby.

What they don't understand is that a mother and father's type of love can be different, never inferior. Those people don't understand that the man's body also transforms, and his mind will never be the same again.

They do not understand that, while the mother is devoted 24/7 to taking care of her son and helping him survive, the father is devoted in body and soul in turn, to help them both so that, in this struggle, they do not lack anything.

The mother starts her battle: to be the best mom in the world. Father starts his battle - to take care of them. And so, begin the broad working days, mental and even physical absences, betting everything to work, because deep down you know that, at that time, it is the best way she finds to combat her fears.

Because being a parent entails the same goal: the mother cares eternally for her children, and the father cares eternally for his family. Some people don't understand that, within parenthood, there is no competition. There is only love and teamwork."

Source: Worthy Words

People may lie to appear honest

People may lie to appear honest if events that turned out in their favor seem too good to be true, according to new research published by the American Psychological Association.

"Many people care greatly about their reputation and how they will be judged by others, and a concern about appearing honest may outweigh our desire to actually be honest, even in situations where it will cost us money to lie," said lead researcher Shoham Choshen-Hillel, Centre for the Study of Rationality at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. "Our findings suggest that when people obtain extremely favourable outcomes, they anticipate other people's suspicious reactions and prefer lying and appearing honest over telling the truth and appearing as selfish liars."

The study found similar findings about lying to appear honest in a series of experiments conducted with lawyers and college students in Israel, as well as online participants in the United States and United Kingdom. The research was published online in the 'Journal of Experimental Psychology: General'.

In one experiment with 115 lawyers in Israel, the participants were told to imagine a scenario where they told a client that a case would cost between 60 and 90 billable



hours. The lawyer would be working in an office where the client wouldn't know how many hours were truly spent on the case. Half of the participants were told they had worked 60 hours on the case while the other half were told they worked 90 hours. Then they were asked how many hours they would bill the client. In the 60-hour group, the lawyers reported an average of 62.5 hours, with 17% of the group lying to inflate their hours. In the 90-hour group, the lawyers reported an average of 88 hours, with 18% of the group lying to report fewer hours than they had actually worked.

When asked for an explanation for the hours they billed, some lawyers in the 90-hour group said they worried that the client would think he had been cheated because the lawyer had lied about the number of billable hours.

In another online experiment with 201 adults from the United States, participants were told to imagine a scenario where they drove on many work trips for a company that had a maximum monthly compensation of 400 miles. They were told that most employees reported 280 to 320 miles per month.

Half of the participants were told they had driven 300 miles in a month while the other half were told they drove 400 miles. When the participants were asked how many miles they would report, the 300-mile group told the truth and reported an average of 301 miles. For the 400-mile group, the participants reported an average of 384 miles, with 12% lying and underreporting their mileage. There were similar findings in another online experiment with 544 participants in the United Kingdom.

Choshen-Hillel said she believes the study findings would apply in the real world, but there could be situations where the amount of money or other high stakes would lead people to tell the truth even if they might appear dishonest.

"While our findings may seem ironic or counterintuitive, I think most people will recognize a time in their lives when they were motivated to tell a lie to appear honest," she said.

How does language emerge?

How did the almost 6000 languages of the world come into being? Researchers from the Leipzig Research Centre for Early Childhood Development at Leipzig University and the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology have tried to simulate the process of developing a new communication system in an experiment -- with surprising results: even preschool children can spontaneously develop communication systems that exhibit core properties of natural language.

How the languages of the world emerged is largely a mystery. Considering that it might have taken millennia, it is

intriguing to see how deaf people can create novel sign languages spontaneously. Observations have shown that when deaf strangers are brought together in a community, they come up with their own sign language in a considerably short amount of time. The most famous example of this is Nicaraguan Sign Language, which emerged in the 1980s. Interestingly, children played an important role in the development of these novel languages. However, how exactly this happened has not been documented, as Manuel Bohn describes: "We know relatively little about how social interaction becomes language. This is where our new study comes in."

In a series of studies, researchers at the Leipzig Research Centre for Early Childhood Development and the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology attempted to recreate exact-

ly this process. The idea had been around for quite some time, says Gregor Kachel. But there was a problem: how to make children communicate with each other without them reverting to talking to each other? The solution came up in Skype conversations between the two researchers from Germany and their colleague Michael Tomasello in the US. In the study, children were invited to stay in two different rooms and a Skype connection was established between them. After a brief familiarization with the set-up, the researchers sneakily turned off the sound and watched as the children found new ways of communicating that go beyond spoken language.

How does a language emerge? Based on the present study, the following steps appear plausible: first, people create reference to actions and objects via signs that

resemble things. The prerequisite for this is a common ground of experience between interaction partners. Partners also coordinate by imitating each other such that they use the same signs for the same things. The signs thus gain interpersonal and eventually conventional meaning. Over time, the relationships between the signs and things become more abstract and the meaning of the individual signs more specific. Grammatical structures are gradually introduced when there is a need to communicate more complex facts.

The studies demonstrate that communication cannot be reduced to words alone. When there is no way to use conventional spoken language, people find other ways to get their message across. This phenomenon forms the basis for the development of new languages.



Why do people get old?

Do you know someone who's had lots of birthdays? That doesn't always make them old.

That's a great question, Emily!

Who do you think is old? Is it anyone older than you, like an annoying older brother or sister? Is it your mum? Your grandpa? Anyone with wrinkly skin?

Or is it someone who might have had lots of birthdays and still has lots of fun?

Maybe you know an older person who likes using TikTok. Maybe they like dancing or riding a bike? Or maybe they laugh at the same jokes you do.

You see, being old means different things to different people. If someone has had a lot of birthdays, they may not actually feel old.

The government might call them old

and expect them to stop working. Even then, they don't feel old.

In fact, some people who have had a lot of birthdays, learn new things, never stop working, and have years of great adventures.

Of course, some older people, just like some younger people, can feel lonely. Or perhaps they have a few health problems. Maybe they have sore knees and can't walk as far and as fast as they used to.

But mostly, they can do things they want and live long, healthy and happy lives.

So, we've covered a lot. The word "old" means different things to different people. Not everyone feels or acts "old". But some



SHVETS production/Pexels

do.

Great, but why do people get old?

I'll give you two answers.

I could say getting old is all about your body. When people get older, their body's cells might not work in the same way. This could explain why some older people get

diseases like cancer. Or I could say some of their body parts wear out a little, and may not work as well. That's why some older people don't hear so well.

But there's another answer I'd like you to think about.

We know most older people are busy doing things and often help out with their families. Your grandparents might even pick you up from school or teach you to make yummy cakes.

So maybe the reason why people get old, after all those birthdays, is to share all the amazing things they've learned along the way.

Maybe the real reason why people get old is to be there to help young people as they grow old.

Sarah Pitt

University of Brighton

Alan Gunn

Liverpool John Moores University



Senior citizen faces rape charges

Two old men, Frank and Albert used to meet regularly for breakfast. Then Frank disappeared for a month. Albert was worried but he could not remember Frank's home address.

After one month, Frank reappeared.

Albert: "What happened to you? You had me worried."

Frank: "I was in jail."

Albert: "Jailed for what?"

Frank: "Remember Lily, the waitress who works at the coffee shop?"

Albert: "Yes I do. What about her?"

Frank: "She filed rape charges against me. At 85 years old, I was so proud that I pleaded guilty. The damn judge gave me 30 days for lying under oath."

A Golfers Love Story

A couple were having dinner one evening when the husband reached across the table, took his wife's hand, and said: "Beth, soon we will have been married for 30 years and there's something I have to know. In all these 30 years have you ever been unfaithful to me?"

Beth replied: "Well, Charles I have to be honest with you. Yes, I have been unfaithful to you on three occasions, but all for good reason."

Charles was obviously hurt by his wife's confession but said, "I never suspected, but can you tell me what you mean by 'good reasons'?"

Beth said: "The very first time was shortly after we were married and we're about to lose our little house because we couldn't pay the mortgage. Do you remember one evening I went to see the banker and the next day he advised you that our loan would be extended?"

Charles recalled the visit to the banker and said: "I can forgive you for that. You saved our home, but what about the second time?"



You can see Changing of the Guard in the morning and Changing of the PM most afternoons'

Beth asked, "Do you remember when you were sick, and we didn't have any money to pay for the heart surgery you needed? Well, I went to see your doctor one night and if you recall he did the surgery at no charge."

"I can recall that" says Charles, "and you did it to save my life, so of course I can forgive you for that. Now tell me about the third time."

"All right," said Beth "Do you remember when you ran for president of your golf club and you needed 73 more votes?"

Never Bulla Shita Your Mama

Mrs Ravioli goes to visit her son Anthony for dinner. He lives with a female roommate, Maria.

During the course of the meal, his mother couldn't help but notice how pretty Anthony's roommate is.

Over the course of the evening, while watching the two interact, she started to wonder if there was more between Anthony and his roommate than met the eye.

Reading his mom's thoughts, Anthony volunteered, "I know what you must be thinking, but I assure you, Maria and I are just roommates."

About a week later, Maria came to Anthony saying, "Ever since your mother came to dinner, I've been unable to find the silver sugar bowl. You don't suppose she took it, do you?"

"Well, I doubt it, but I'll email her, just to be sure."

So he sat down and wrote an email:

Dear Mama

I'm not saying that you "did" take the sugar bowl from my house; I'm not saying that you "did not" take it.

But the fact remains that it has been missing ever since you were here for dinner.

Your loving son

Anthony

A few days later, Anthony received a response email from his Mama which read:

Dear son

I'm not saying that you "do" sleep with Maria, and I'm not saying that you "do not" sleep with her.

But the fact remains that if she was sleeping in her OWN bed, she would have found the sugar bowl by now.

Your loving Mama

Moral: Never Bulla Shita Your Mama.

A person on his death bed (in Mumbai hospital) with wife, kids and nurse beside him.

Man to eldest son: You take the 15 bungalows at Borivali.

To daughter: You take the 8 bungalows at Juhu.

To youngest son: You are my youngest and most dearest and I want your future to be bright, so you keep the 20 offices at Nariman Point.

To wife: Dear Kavita, you keep all 11 of our Lokhandwala building flats.

Nurse, quite impressed, says to the man's wife: Wow...You are lucky to have such a husband, who is so rich and giving you all the properties...

Wife: What properties, what rich...? Doodhwala hai sala! He's distributing our responsibilities of delivering milk to his clients in the morning.

Nurse fainted!



Quotable Quotes

The Future of Mankind

Life can be understood backwards, but must be lived forwards.

-- Anonymous

The best way to predict the future is to create it.

-- Abraham Lincoln

The future depends on what we do in the present.

-- Mahatma Gandhi

The future belongs to those who believe in the

beauty of their dreams.

-- Eleanor Roosevelt (First Lady of US from 1933 to 1945)

In the future, there will be no female leaders. There will be just leaders.

-- Sheryl Sandberg (chief operating officer of Facebook)

Do not let the memories of your past limit the potential of your future. There are no limits in what you can achieve on your journey through life, except in your mind.

-- Roy Bennett (author of the world-famous book 'The light in the heart')

The illiterate of the future will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn,

unlearn and relearn.

-- Alvin Toffler (American writer, known for his books, Future shock, The Third Wave, Powershift)

There is nothing like a dream to create the future.

-- Victor Hugo

The work of a scientific man is like that of a planter - for the future. His duty is to lay the foundation for those who are to come, and point the way.

-- Nikola Tesla

The future (Call it Industry 10.0, Society 10.0, Life 10.0!) of humanity will depend on an equilibrium between Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Different Forms of Natural Intelligence (DFNI) and Actual Reality and Virtual Reality.

-- Anonymous

Life's Lessons**Indian sweets carry positive psychology****1. Jalebi**

Your shape doesn't matter, your nature does.

No matter how messed up you look, or life is, keeping a sweet tone will always help.

2. Rasgulla

No matter how much you are squeezed by circumstances, never forget who you are. Come back to your original self. Be resilient.

3. Boondi Ladoo

Every little drop of boondi matters. Similarly little and

continuous efforts can bring in miraculous results.

Continue doing little things, success will follow.

4. Soan Papdi

Not everyone likes you, yet the Maker doesn't stop to make you.

Pursue your goals, irrespective of validation.

5. Gulab Jamun

Your softness is not your weakness, it can be your strength.

Softness is a quality much appreciated, be proud of it.

6. Besan ka Ladoo

If you get shattered due to pressure, you can always rebuild.

It's a symbol of hope. No matter what goes wrong, we can always fix it.

That's Life**My golden young days**

During my school days, after getting the first beating on my hands from the teacher, I used to wipe my hands on my trousers and then only take the second one! I was very particular about cleanliness.

All my teachers used to stand and take the classes. You know the reason? Respect... They respected me so much... Nothing else.

During my school days, my teachers used to often request me to bring my father as they were afraid of telling me anything, lest they offend me!

My teachers were very fond of reading what I had written. In fact, they would make me write it a hundred times so that they can read it again and again!

Many times, the teachers have thrown their valuable chalks to me without me asking for it.

Many times, I have been asked to attend lower classes to assist those teachers evaluate the students!

How many times I have been honoured/elevated by asking me to stand up on the bench with all others looking up to me?

How many times I have been given a break from class to enjoy the sunshine & fresh air, when most others were sweating/choking inside the classroom?

As I knew everything, the teachers used to appreciate my knowledge and have told me many times: Why do you come to school? Why can't you do something else instead?

Hmmm ...

Those were golden young days. It's how you look at it that matters.

Quotable Quotes**On Rainbows**

Human beings must co-exist harmoniously like colours in a rainbow and realizing that all colours come from white light.

-- Anonymous

Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud.

-- Maya Angelou

Rainbow is the symbol of hope, like seeing a rainbow during a thun-

derstorm.

-- Anonymous

Life comes with challenges and every challenge comes with rainbows and lights to conquer it.

-- Amit Ray

It might rain today; can you please be my rainbow!

-- Anonymous

It takes sunshine and rain to make a rainbow.

-- Roy Bennett

When there is love in the heart,

there are rainbows in the eyes, which cover every black cloud with gorgeous hues.

-- Henry Ward Beecher

We are all part of the same rainbow. We are all reflections of each other. As unique and as diverse as we are in character and skills, the source of all creation is as multi-dimensional as we are.

-- Suzy Kassem

If your dreams is at the end of a rainbow, you will never reach it.

-- Ritchie Norton

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

INVICTUS

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.

That's Life**Words by Mommy**

Some days I just don't want to

I don't want to play.

I don't want to cook.

I don't want to parent.

I don't want to wife.

I don't want to do anything, but sit there and scroll.

It's not all the time. I don't always feel this way. But my body and mind need a break; and they start to show me.

My body shows me this with an ache in my foot that won't go away without rest. A headache that reminds me to drink water and slow down.

My mind shows me this with forgotten words (known as mom brain) and a lack of patience when I'm normally plentiful.

I'm running on empty. I'm surviving on fumes. I can't drive the car on fumes; and I can't be the mom, wife, and human being I need to be on fumes either.

Finally, I just don't want to. That is what forces me to rest. It forces me to take a much-needed break, even if my children decide to destroy the house while I do so.

Some days I just don't want to.

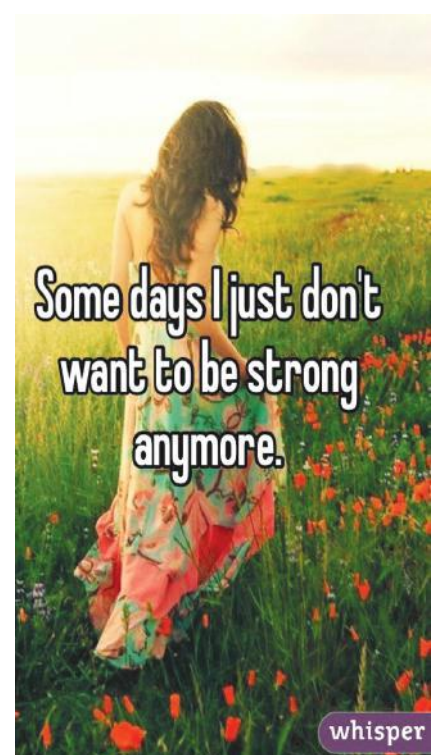
And so, I just don't.

I recharge.

I rest.

I refill my tank.

Words by Mommy Dignen Diaries -
Holly Dignen



whisper

Life's Lessons**Slower, Older and Smarter**

An Airbus 380 is on its way across the Atlantic. It flies consistently at 800 km/h at 30,000 feet, when suddenly a Eurofighter with a Tempo Mach 2 appears.

The pilot of the fighter jet slows down, flies alongside the Airbus and greets the pilot of the passenger plane by radio: "Airbus, boring flight, isn't it? Now have a look here!"

He rolls his jet on its back, accelerates, breaks through the sound barrier, rises rapidly to a dizzying height, and then swoops down almost to sea level in a breath-taking dive. He loops back next to the Airbus and asks: "Well, how was that?"

The Airbus pilot answers: "Very impressive but watch this!"

The jet pilot watches the Airbus, but nothing happens. It continues to fly straight at the same speed. After 15 minutes, the Airbus pilot radios, "Well, how was that?"

Confused, the jet pilot asks, "What did you do?"

The Airbus pilot laughs and says: "I got up, stretched my legs, walked to the back of the aircraft to use the washroom, then got a cup of coffee and a chocolate fudge pastry."

Moral: When you're young, speed and adrenaline seem to be great. But as you get older and wiser, you learn that comfort and peace are more important.

This is called SOS: Slower, Older and Smarter.

Dedicated to all my senior friends: it's time to slow down and enjoy the rest of the trip.

Better Health

Lifestyle changes that can lower your blood pressure

There's plenty you can do to manage high blood pressure. Making changes to your diet, exercise, and other day-to-day habits can help keep it in check.

If you have high blood pressure, there's plenty you can do every day to control it. Eating healthier, exercising more, and tweaking other day-to-day habits can help keep your readings in check. That might keep you from needing medication to keep your numbers where they should be. Need some ideas to get started? Read on.

Eat a healthy diet: You can lower your blood pressure by eating lots of whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy. Look for foods that don't have much fat or cholesterol. This approach has a name: the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet. It includes lean meats, poultry, fish, and nuts. It's also high in protein and fiber and avoids sugary drinks, red meats, and sweets.



Lose extra weight: Shedding even a few extra pounds can lower your blood pressure. It's also important to watch your waist. Too much bulk around your midsection can affect your BP. For women, a waist of more than 35 inches is high. For men, it's more than 40 inches.

Be active: Exercise can help you lower your blood pressure and lose weight. Aim to get at least 150 minutes of physical activity each week. Look for aerobic workouts that make your lungs and heart work a little harder. Try things like brisk walking, biking, swimming, or dancing. Even chores like raking leaves or washing windows count.

Watch your salt: Too much sodium can raise your blood pressure. You should aim for no more than 1,500 milligrams a day. You don't get sodium just from the salt you sprinkle in foods. It can also hide in packaged foods. Read labels before you buy. Salt can lurk in things like soups, sandwiches, and pizza.

Get more potassium: Your blood pressure is likely to be higher if you don't get enough of this nutrient. Shoot for between 3,000 and 3,500 milligrams each day. How much is that? A medium banana has about 420 milligrams. A baked potato with the skin gives you more than 900 milligrams. Spinach, beans, tomatoes, oranges, yogurt, and sweet potatoes are also high in potassium. Some people with medical issues like kidney disease or

who take certain medicines may have to be careful with potassium. So, check with your doctor before changing what you eat.

Ease stress: It might have an impact on your blood pressure, especially if you deal with it by eating a lot of unhealthy foods, or by smoking or drinking. Find ways to cope with stress, like meditation, yoga, or deep breathing. Take time to relax and do things you enjoy, whether it's listening to music, gardening, or spending time with friends.

Limit alcohol: Drinking too much of it can raise your blood pressure. If you're on medicine for your blood pressure, alcohol may affect how well it works. Women should try to have no more than one drink a day. For men, it's two. One drink equals 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof liquor.

Quit smoking: It raises your blood pressure and makes a heart attack or stroke more likely. When you smoke, you hurt the linings of your blood vessels. That makes it harder for them to relax. What's more, smoking can make some medicines you take for your blood pressure less effective. Your doctor can give you tips on how to quit.

Pay attention to caffeine: If you regularly drink coffee, soda, and other drinks with caffeine, it may not affect your BP much. But if you rarely, have it, caffeine can cause a short spike in your blood pressure when you drink it. Talk to your doctor about what your limit should be.

Get enough sleep: Your blood pressure goes down when you get some ZZZs. Getting enough is an important way to keep your heart and blood vessels healthy. How much is enough? Most folks need at least 7 hours of high-quality sleep each night. That means you fall asleep within 30 minutes, don't wake up more than once, and fall back to sleep quickly when you do.

Keep tabs on your blood pressure: Check yours regularly to make sure it doesn't get too high. High blood pressure often doesn't have symptoms. So, measuring your BP is the best way to tell if diet, exercise, and other lifestyle changes are working. You can check it with a home monitor, or you can visit your doctor.

Control other conditions: Work with your doctor to make sure any other health issues you have are under control. Many people with diabetes also have high blood pressure. Other conditions like high cholesterol, sleep apnea, and thyroid disorders are also often linked with it. When you manage your overall health, you'll help keep your blood pressure in check.

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These are the worst marriage habits of all

Marriage is no simple game. It's complicated, tough, and requires a lot of compromises and considerations. Sometimes, certain habits make us a horrid person to our partner. In addition, we make it worse by doing nothing to rectify these behaviours, mostly because we simply don't recognize them! So, to help you understand your mistakes more, we bring to your attention the worst marriage habits of all.

Complaining to your friends: Whatever happens in your marital life should be between you and your spouse. Fights, arguments, and discussions need to be held only with your partner. You shouldn't go on complaining or venting about your marital struggles to your friends all the time, except for when the problem is unbearable. Don't list your private life out in the open.



He & She

Checking your phone: If you and your partner are lying in bed together and checking your phone, without uttering a single word, you both need to stop. Even if social media posts seem more interesting, make it a point to leave your phone and the outside world when you're with your spouse. Just cuddle when you both slip into your bed!

Saying all thoughts out loud: So this is a trick that works. Suppose you tell your husband to do the laundry and he replies in the affirmative, don't reply by saying, "do it now or I know you won't do it later." This only derails the work and frustrates the other person even more. Unintentionally the remark may agitate the person by their laziness or procrastination.

Doing stuff alone: As much as having your own time seems inviting, it's necessary to spend time and do things with your spouse as well. Don't just watch shows, listen to music alone, but get your spouse to enjoy an evening with you. Doing things of interest together with your spouse sparks some togetherness of love and excitement.

Resenting intimacy: Has work or your children been holding you up from enjoying some intimate time with your spouse? If yes, then you need to focus on your intimate marital life as well. Even if you feel tired after an exhausting day, make it a point to at least have sex once or twice a week to keep the fire alive in the marriage. Remember, it doesn't take long for a marriage to become mundane.

Forgetting to make each other laugh: Even if your partner's joke is pretty lame, just laugh for the sake of it. Laughter can cheer up a person immediately. So make your significant other laugh heartily every chance you get. Don't have a long, grumpy face in front of your spouse, all the time.

Bollywood... where beauty and brains go hand in hand

When you bring up the topic of Bollywood celebrities, the first thing that comes to people's minds is how glamorous their lives are. You likely perceive them to be less brainy or intelligent than other people from different fields. However, there are numerous Bollywood celebrities who hold multiple degrees, if not one, and later decided to pursue a career in acting. So, if you're wondering which Bollywood celebrities are highly educated, Niharika Nayak of stylecraze.com presents a list of 12 celebrities who prove that beauty and brains go hand in hand:

1. Ayushmann Khurrana

Ayushmann Khurrana is one of the biggest actors to come out of nowhere. His versatile performances, emotive expressions, and incredible singing voice make him a fan favorite. But before he took up acting as his profession of choice, he studied English Literature at DAV college in the state of Chandigarh. After completing his Bachelor's, Ayushmann pursued a Master's degree in Mass Communication from the School of Communication Studies in Chandigarh.

2. Amitabh Bachchan

Amitabh is known for his groundbreaking roles in movies like *Baghban*, *Don*, *Paa*, *Sholay*, and many more. However, what many don't know is that Amitabh is a graduate of the prestigious Sherwood College in Nainital. He pursued two double majors in Science and Arts from Kirori Mal College and was later awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Queensland in Australia.

3. Shah Rukh Khan

SRK was known for being an all-rounder student and has studied at the prestigious St. Columbia's school. He also went to Hansraj College and pursued a degree in Economics. After completing his Bachelor's, he decided to pursue a Master's degree in Mass Communication at Jamia Millia Islamia but had to drop out due to his good luck in acting.



4. Anushka Sharma

Anushka Sharma, the daughter of an army man, is the perfect example of an intelligent diva. The *Pari* actress pursued a degree in Arts from Mount Carmel College in Bangalore. She is also said to have pursued a Master's degree in Economics via correspondence.

5. John Abraham

John Abraham isn't just a handsome hunk with a love for animals. The *Dostana* actor earned a degree in Economics from Jai Hind College in Mumbai and later pursued an MBA from Narsee Monjee College of Management Studies. He is also an alumnus of Bombay Scottish School.

6. Vidya Balan

We fell head over heels in love with Vidya Balan after her incredible performances in the films, *Kahani*, *Paa*, and *The Dirty Picture*. Although Vidya had an early start to her career in films, with her appearance in the iconic TV show, *Hum Paanch*, she didn't let it stop her from pursuing her educational goals. She studied Sociology at the esteemed St. Xaviers College in Mumbai. She later pursued a Master's degree from the University of Mumbai before she decided to choose acting as her preferred profession.

7. Parineeti Chopra

Parineeti Chopra may have stolen our hearts in *Ladies vs Ricky Bahl*, but she is also highly educated and

has worked in industries other than Bollywood. Parineeti holds a triple honors degree from Manchester Business School in the areas of Finance, Economics, and Business.

8. Soha Ali Khan

Soha Ali Khan may be the princess of Pataudi, but that doesn't mean she slacked off education-wise. The daughter of Tiger Pataudi and Sharmila Tagore holds a Bachelor's degree in Modern History from Balliol College in Oxford. She has also pursued a Master's degree in the subject of International Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

9. Randeep Hooda

Randeep Hooda is another highly educated actor who deserves more credit than he is given. He pursued a bachelor's degree in Marketing and later acquired a post-graduate degree in the fields of Human Resource Management and Business Management from Melbourne, Australia.

10. Sara Ali Khan

Like her aunt before her, Sara, too, is someone with a passion for education. Before she decided to cast her net into the acting world, she pursued a course in political science and history from the esteemed Columbia University in New York. And what's more, this intelligent diva completed her degree in just three years and was able to take time off and focus on improving her health.

From Parveen Babi to Bhagwan Dada and Bharat Bhushan 9 big Bollywood names who tragically faded away in utter poverty

If we may paraphrase a classic movie quote; "With great fame, comes great responsibility". Bollywood is a place that can take you from rags to riches even if you don't make it to the topmost echelons. However, it can just as soon plummet you from riches to rags if you're not careful, like these Bollywood celebs, some of whom were really big names, but, tragically, faded away in abject poverty, writes Russel D'Silva of Bollywoodlife.

O.P. Nayyar

One of Indian cinema's classic music composers lost all his wealth and even ended up abandoning his family due to his addiction to alcohol. Rumour has it that it became so bad towards the end that he would ask for cash and liquor bottles to give interviews.

Achala Sachdev

One of Bollywood's famous character artistes, popularly known as Zohrajabeen after the eponymous song was filmed on

her in Yash Chopra's 1965 masterpiece, *Waqt*, died in oblivion with no one from her family by her side during her last days.

Parveen Babi

The biggest name on this list, Parveen Babi was found dead in her Mumbai apartment in 2005, years after there was no word about her. A psychological ailment was blamed for her disappearance for so many years and subsequent death.

Allegedly, the heartbreak and betrayal suffered at the hands of a couple of big industry insiders had also taken a toll on her mental health. When no one came forward to claim her cadaver for two days, Mahesh Bhatt, with whom she was once involved in a relationship with, took the onus to perform her last rights.

Raj Kiran

Another famous character actor of the industry, Raj Kiran was found in an insane state in a psychological-care facility in Atlanta, US, years after people has



assumed, he had passed away. It was Rishi Kapoor, his costar in the Subhash Ghai's 1980 classic, *Karz*, who made the discovery after not hearing about him for so long and becoming worried about his whereabouts.

Bhagwan Dada

Once the owner of a line of posh bungalows, and someone who had achieved considerable fame as the poor man and working class' matinee idol (his movies were a rage amongst factory workers,

who'd flock to watch the 3 pm show after getting off from work), passed away in abject poverty in a nondescript Mumbai slum after losing all his earnings when his movies like *Jhamela* and *Albela* had miserably flopped.

Bharat Bhushan

Possibly the second biggest name on the list after Parveen Babi, Bharat Bhushan was once a star of considerable repute, known for his dramatic work in big films. His extravagant lifestyle and affair with screen goddess Meena Kumari though ruined him, and he ended up working as a gatekeeper in a film studio to keep a roof over his head and food on his plate, before passing away in oblivion in a shabby, rented Mumbai flat.

Geetanjali Nagpal

Once a famous model who fashion designers would flock for, Geetanjali Nagpal got addicted to drugs before her Bollywood career could even get underway, and she ended up begging on the streets of South Delhi and also worked as a maid to make ends meet.

Jelly Bytes

Ekta Kapoor recalls her initial years of entering the entertainment industry

From starting her career at the age of 17 as an intern to becoming the most successful producer, TV czarina Ekta Kapoor has come a long way and she recalls her earlier days after receiving 'Bemisaal Rishta' award during an award function, reports IANS.

Though she started her career in the entertainment industry very early, her first successful show was the 1995 sitcom 'Hum Paanch'. Later in 2000, her show 'Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi' became the most successful TV serial.

Post that she did several hit shows including 'Kahaani Ghar Ghar Ki', 'Kabhi Sautan Kabhi Sahelii', 'Kalash', 'Kasautii Zindagii Kay', and 'Kasamh Se'. Ekta also came up with a fearless reality show 'Lock Upp' hosted by Bollywood star Kangana Ranaut.



She said: "I certainly have to say that I was only 17 years old and created history by starting at such a young age with the serial 'Hum Paanch'. I still remember taking the entry form for the pilot shoot of the show. I was not sure at that time, but I would say it doesn't matter if you are young, or old, you have a filmy background or not, this channel always functions with you, based on your ability."

She also expressed her gratitude towards the team of her popular shows and said pointing towards 'Kumkum Bhagya' actor Shabbir Ahluwalia that everyone from the team misses him.

"A special thanks to the team of 'Kundali Bhagya', 'Kumkum Bhagya', and 'Bhagya Lakshmi'. The man standing here, Shabbir, the channel doesn't miss you because they have you. But, we miss you," she added.

Arjun Bijlani says he has said no to a lot of money

Arjun Bijlani is currently on a break from fiction shows. The reason? He wants to give time to his family as well apart from his other professional commitments.

"I have always believed in managing things. It's not that difficult, people just say it is. Of course, when doing daily soaps, it does get really difficult. You start your day from eight in the morning, shoot till late, and then don't end up giving time to your family. Right now, I am not doing any TV fiction for sure. You then have enough time to work also, balance life, travel. I am liking this space I am in right now," says the actor, popular for shows such as *Naagin* and *Ishq Mein Marjawan*.

The 39-year-old recently moved into his new Mumbai house with wife Neha and their seven-year-old son Ayaan. Bijlani in fact reveals that he has turned down ridiculously high amounts of fees offered to him for daily soaps, reports Hindustan Times. "The money is so good... the kind of money I have been refusing recently. But sometimes you have got to prioritise things," he states.

This is the reason why he likes work on the web space, as that doesn't take too much time from an actor. "I am kind of taking it easy right now. You cannot keep running behind money all your life. It is important no doubt, but I balance that by doing other things," he signs off.



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YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

Good news is indicted on the career front. You may get multiple job offers from reputed firms. Some issues may crop up on the family front. Parents may impose their will upon you and it may make you upset. Try not to make it a big deal, just take it easy.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 12, 14, 21, 23, 27

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

You should plan everything in advance if you want everything goes as per your expectations. Health wise, you may have an excellent week and feel energetic all day long. It is not just about physical health, but you may manage to maintain a healthy and positive frame of mind too. It may also be a stable time on the financial front.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 9, 17, 20, 21, 36

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

The favourable planetary alignments may bring wealth, prosperity, peace and esteem to you. Splurging on self-care is indicated. You may find ways to improve your relationship with your love partner. You may go on a trip to spend quality time with your beloved.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 14, 15, 17, 20, 27

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

Dear Pisces, it is going to be a favourable time in terms of finances, career and health. You may be excited about new work opportunities. Some may invest in real estate and stocks. But those who are planning to get married may have to wait a bit longer.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 10, 17, 18, 19, 30

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

You should take care of your health as there are possibilities of seasonal diseases. Some may struggle with a new project assigned to them on the work front. Everything seems okay, but you may face financial issues. Avoid investing your hard-earned money in any tempting scheme.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 14, 19, 24, 30, 40

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

Careerwise, you may reach to the top and enjoy professional success. Those who have just started a new venture can expect financial benefits. Everything seems okay, but some issues may crop up. You should involve third party in order to make the things simplified on the family front.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 4, 7, 12, 26, 30

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

It can be a favourable time for students who want to pursue higher education abroad. Some may get their business or personal loans sanctioned. You may start home renovation work. A business trip is indicated for some. Unfavorable stars positions may cause a rift between you and your partner.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 9, 10, 23, 26, 30

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

All your health issues may be over and you may start living a healthy life. Careerwise, you may do well and your outstanding performance may get you recognition and appreciation at work. Committed couples may take their relationship to the next level. Those who are planning to hit the road with loved ones should go ahead.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 9, 12, 16, 30, 31

Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

A property case may be sorted out in your favour. Everything seems normal, but you should be cautious if you are travelling. If you are newly married, you may start enjoying your relationship with your spouse. Singles may meet someone special and this meeting may turn out to be a long-lasting bond of love.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 9, 11, 12, 29, 30

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

Healthwise, you may feel fine, but do make some dietary changes to stay fit and fine. Everything seems okay, but some troubles are indicated on the love front. Your past love affairs may become the cause of tension and misunderstandings between you and your beloved. Try to discuss issues in a healthy way.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 8, 11, 20, 26, 30

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

Some may buy or sell a property. Financial stability is indicated. Cash may flow in. Those who are in a committed relationship may think about love marriage. Singles may spend time exploring dating sites to find someone special.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 9, 10, 18, 20, 30

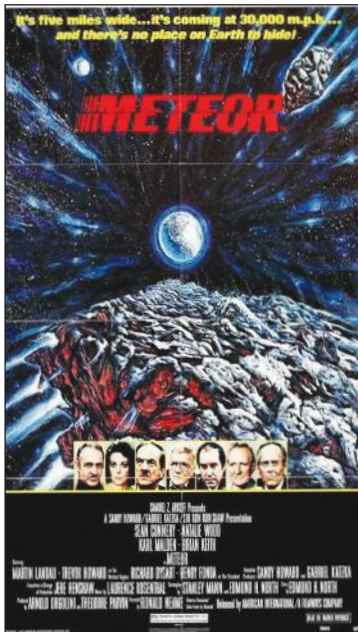
Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

Stability is indicated on the financial front. You may find multiple sources of income. Businesspersons may be busy with client meetings or product promotions. Married couples may feel the happiness of childbirth. Divorced men or women may find love again.

Lucky Numbers: 14, 20, 21, 23, 26, 30



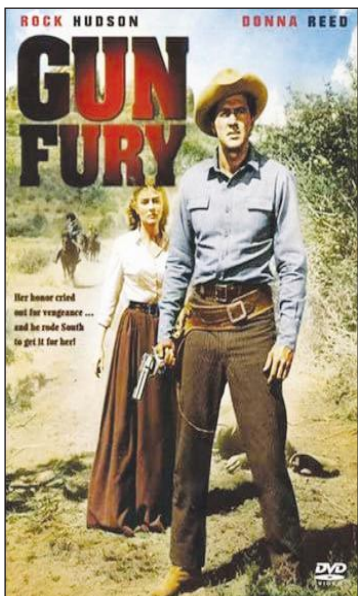
Mardi 15 novembre - 21.10



Mercredi 16 novembre - 21.15



Mercredi 16 novembre - 21.15



Programme TV



MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
mardi 15 novembre 06.30 Local: Artizan 07.00 Dessin Anime 09.30 Mag: National Anthem 10.00 Serial: Backstage 11.15 Tele: Muneca Brava 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Local: Les Grands Noms... 12.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 13.50 Local Production 14.45 D.Anime: Briko 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.20 D.Anime: Kids Songs 15.40 D.Anime: Kung Fu Panda 17.05 Serial: Malory Towers 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.20 Local: Autour Des Valeurs... 22.25 Film: Meteor With: Robert Keith, Olivia Nash, Thom Hallum	07.00 DDI Live 10.00 Serial: CID 10.50 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 12.00 Film: Aashirwad 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.20 Saare Tujhyachsathi 15.43 Bommarillu 16.04 Sondha Bandham 16.33 Serial: Meer Abru 16.56 Bhaag Na Bachhe Koi 17.13 Bhakharwadi 17.35 Serial: Premabhishekam 18.00 Serial: Meteor Butterfly... 18.30 Local: DDI Magazine 19.00 Zournal Kreol 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.06 Local: Tamil Programme 20.30 Film: Razia Sultan Starring Hema Malini, Dharmendra, Parveen Babi 22.30 DDI Live	06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa 07.27 Mag: In Good Shape 07.53 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures 09.35 Mag: Washington Forum 11.13 Mag: Eco@Africa 14.00 Doc: Volcano Stories 14.52 Mag: Washington Forum 16.31 Mag: Eco@Africa 18.00 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto... 18.41 Mag: Red Carpet 19.03 Mag: Check In 19.34 Mag: Made In Germany 20.30 Live: News 20.50 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures 21.52 Mag: Euromaxx 22.18 Mag: Close Up 22.44 Local: Rodrig-Klip Seleksion 00.05 Mag: The Global Auto... 00.50 Doc: Nobel Prize 01.50 Mag: Happiness Is On The... 02.18 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures	01.34 Film: Faith Under Fire 03.08 Serial: 19-2 03.50 Film: Journey To The Forbid... 05.21 Tele: Tour De Babel 06.12 Serial: L.A.'s Finest 06.51 Serial: Island Doctor 09.45 Tele: La Beaute Du Diable 10.37 Tele: Fierce Angel 11.00 Serial: 19-2 12.00 Film: Journey To The Forbid... 13.37 Tele: Tour De Babel 14.22 Mag: Close Up 14.50 Serial: Island Doctor 16.40 Serial: Last Resort 17.16 Serial: L.A.'s Finest 18.05 Tele: La Beaute Du Diable 19.00 Tele: Fierce Angel 19.37 Serial: Creeped Out 20.05 Tele: L'Envers Du Paradis 20.30 Seiral: L.A.'s Finest 21.15 Film: Underworld	06.50 Film: Humlaa Stars: Dharmendra, Anil Kapoor, Kimi Katkar 11.34 / 19.27 - Radha Krishna 12.05 / 20.57 - Anupamaa 12.35 / 21.27 - Mere Sai 13.05 / 22.07 - Agniphera 13.34 / 22.37 - Yeh Teri Galiyan 14.05 / 23.07 - Patiala Babes 14.25 / 21.59 - 100 Years Of Indian Cinema 15.00 / 22.25 - Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 15.26 Film: Bheja Fry 2 Star: Vinay Pathak, Kay Kay Menon, Minisha Lamba... 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Kundali Bhagya 19.04 Udaariyaan 19.34 Kuch Rang Pyar Ke Aise 20.00 Sasural Simar Ka 2
mercredi 16 novembre 07.00 D.Anime: Kids Songs 07.30 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis... 07.52 D.Anime: Panda And Little... 09.05 D.Anime: Trolls 09.30 Mag: National Anthem 10.45 Doc: Snapshots 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 13.50 Local Production: Les Klips 14.37 D.Anime: Briko 15.21 D.Anime: Kids Songs 15.28 D.Anime: Best Furry Friends 15.58 D.Anime: Word Party 17.05 Serial: Malory Towers 17.40 Mag: Bricks 'O' Brian 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Other: Radha Krishna 19.00 Local: Planet Bollywood 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.30 MBC Production 22.20 Film: Little Kingdom Stars: Alicia Agneson, Lachlan...	07.00 DDI Live 10.00 Suhani Si Ek Ladki 12.00 Film: Raaste Pyar Ke 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.23 Saare Tujhyachsathi 15.49 Bommarillu 16.15 Sondha Bandham 16.33 Serial: Meer Abru 16.53 Bhaag Na Bachhe Koi 17.18 Bhakharwadi 17.31 Serial: Kulvadhu 18.00 Meteor Butterfly Sword 18.30 Local: DDI Magazine 19.00 Zournal Kreol 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.06 Programme In Marathi 20.30 Film: Mission Thunderbolt Starring Jonathan Stierwald, Michael Wai-Man Chan, Steve Daw 22.26 DDI Live	06.00 Mag: Rev: Global Auto... 06.56 Mag: Nobel Prize 07.31 Mag: Made In Germany 08.23 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures 09.50 Mag: Close Up 14.03 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures 16.32 Doc: The Forest Rescuers 18.07 Mag: Motorweek 18.26 Mag: Vous Et Nous 19.00 Mag: Arts.21 19.30 Mag: The Inside Story 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.50 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures 20.53 Les Montagnes Du Monde 21.55 Mag: Business Africa 22.21 Mag: Focus On Europe 22.47 Doc: Megacity Mumbai 00.12 Mag: Motorweek 00.38 Mag: Vous Et Nous 01.11 Mag: Arts.21 01.37 Mag: The Inside Story 02.03 Doc: Skuld	01.32 Film: Underworld 03.04 Serial: 19-2 03.50 Film: The Lion Woman 05.42 Tele: Tour De Babel 06.30 Serial: L.A.'S Finest 06.59 Film: Meteor 09.45 Tele: La Beaute Du Diable 10.37 Tele: Fierce Angel 11.00 Serial: 19-2 12.00 Film: The Lion Woman 13.30 Tele: Tour De Babel 14.50 Film: Meteor 16.14 Mag: Red Carpet 16.30 Serial: Deux Flics A Miami 17.20 Serial: L.A.'S Finest 18.05 Tele: La Beaute Du Diable 19.00 Tele: Fierce Angel 19.37 Serial: Creeped Out 20.05 Tele: L'Envers Du Paradis 20.30 Seiral: Seal Team 21.15 Film: Gun Fury Avec Rock Hudson, Donna Reed, Philip Carey	07.08 Film: Bheja Fry 2 11.30 / 20.06 - Radha Krishna 12.00 / 20.26 - Anupamaa 12.29 / 20.02 - Mere Sai 13.00 / 20.46 - Agniphera 13.30 / 21.09 - Yeh Teri Galiyan 14.00 / 21.50 - Patiala Babes 14.25 / 22.15 - 100 Years Of Indian Cinema 14.47 Other: Sayings Radha Krishna 15.00 Film: Zulmi Starring Akshay Kumar, Twinkle Khanna 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 19.00 Udaariyaan 19.30 Kuch Rang Pyar Ke Aise... 20.00 Sasural Simar Ka 2 20.30 Radha Krishna 20.59 Anupamaa
jeudi 17 novembre 06.00 Local: Klip Seleksion 07.00 D.Anime: P'tit Cosmonaute 07.29 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis 08.15 D.Anime: The Hive 09.29 Mag: National Anthem 10.00 Serial: Backstage 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 13.45 Local: Generations J 15.21 D.Anime: Kids Songs 15.35 D.Anime: Kung Fu Panda 15.58 D.Anime: Word Party 16.56 Serial: Malory Towers 17.21 Mag: Bricks 'O' Brian 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 18.56 Local: Chaar Dham Tirth... 19.30 Le Journal 20.30 Film: Lingaa Starring Rajinikanth, Anushka Shetty, Sonakshi Sinha,	07.00 DDI Live 09.58 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki... 11.05 Serial: Mann Mein Vishwas... 12.00 Film: Neel Kamal 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.22 Serial: Saare Tujhyachsathi 15.45 Serial: Bommarillu 16.12 Serial: Sondha Bandham 16.32 Serial: Meer Abru 16.46 Bhaag Na Bachhe 17.15 Bhakharwadi 17.30 Local: Amrit Vaani 17.40 Local: Bhajan Sandhya 18.00 Serial: Meteor Butterfly... 18.30 Mag: DDI Mag 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 20.04 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 20.30 Local: Production: Evasion 21.20 Film: Equity With Anna Gunn, James Purefoy, Sarah Megan Thomas	06.00 Mag: Motorweek 06.24 Mag: Vous Et Nous 06.57 Mag: Arts.21 08.15 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures 10.37 Doc: Fat, Fatter, Fattest... 11.50 Local: Vous Et Nous 12.44 Mag: The Inside Story 13.29 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures 15.19 Doc: Megacity Mumbai 16.48 Mag: Motorweek 18.00 Mag: Eco India 18.30 Mag: Shift 19.00 Doc: Nobel Prize 19.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.50 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures 22.31 Doc: To Tell A Tale 23.56 Mag: Eco India 00.22 Mag: Shift 00.02 Mag: Carnet De Sante 00.49 Doc: Nobel Prize	01.33 Film: Eaten By Lions 03.06 Serial: 19-2 03.50 Film: Gun Fury 05.21 Tele: Tour De Babel 06.10 Serial: Seal Team 07.09 Film: Eaten By Lions 09.00 Serial: Last Resort 09.45 Tele: La Beaute Du Diable 10.38 Tele: Fierce Angel 11.05 Serial: 19-2 12.00 Film: Gun Fury 13.30 Tele: Tour De Babel 14.50 Film: Eaten By Lions 16.40 Serial: Last Resort 17.21 Serial: Seal Team 18.05 Tele: La Beaute Du Diable 19.00 Tele: Fierce Angel 19.41 Serial: Creeped Out 20.05 Tele: L'envers Du Paradis 20.30 Serial: Seal Team 21.15 Serial: Kojak	07.00 Film: Zulmi 11.33 / 20.26 - Radha Krishna 12.00 / 21.01 - Anupamaa 12.26 / 21.31 - Mere Sai 12.57 / 21.56 - Agniphera 13.25 / 22.20 - Yeh Teri Galiyan 14.00 / 22.52 - Patiala Babes 14.25 - Mag 100 Year Of Indian Cinema 15.00 / 21.46 - Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 15.23 Film: Pyare Mohan Starring Fardeen Khan, Vivek Oberoi, Esha Deol, Amrita Rao 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.59 Udaariyaan 19.22 Kuch Rang Pyar Ke Aise... 20.01 Sasural Simar Ka 2 20.33 Radha Krishna 21.03 Anupamaa



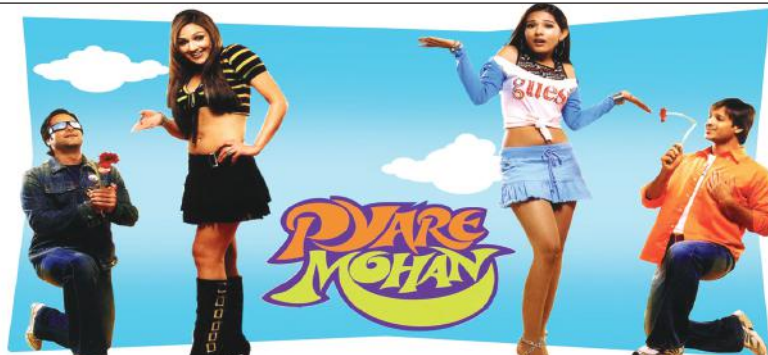
Jeudi 17 novembre - 15.30

Stars: Fardeen Khan, Vivek Oberoi, Esha Deol, Amrita Rao, Boman Irani



Jeudi 17 novembre - 20.20

Star: Rajinikanth, Anushka Shetty, Sonakshi Sinha, Santhanam, Jagapati Babu



The Cost of US obsession. Can Britain be a game changer?



Nita Chicooree-Mercier

While the planet is burning and countries worldwide are grappling with post-pandemic economic woes and industrialists' predator policy in unfair hikes of transport and foodstuffs, an unsolicited war is heaping further miseries on mankind. By and large, Asia, barring

South Korea and Japan, South Africa and most of Africa and South American countries have turned a deaf ear to the US and its Western allies' war cry to isolate and boycott Russia. As from March 2022, this column drew attention to the American obsession with Russia. An opinion which is recently echoed by the brilliant Indian Minister of External Affairs, Dr Jaishankar in a statement whereby he states: 'I am baffled by the American thinking and, to some extent, Europe's obsession with Russia.'

Not only India's MEA, but the world is baffled by the specific enemy culture the US political leadership is indoctrinated with. The question is: which Western ally can withdraw support to the US and bring back some sanity on the world stage.

By now, there is increasing awareness that democratic principles apply in domestic politics and, conversely, the habit of lecturing other countries, giving advice in running their lives and threatening them with reprisals in case of disobedience smacks of autocratic behaviour on international stage. This has to stop. The West needs the world, and the world needs the West, but on their own terms, not as stooges and blind lackeys of imperialist powers who brought enough sufferings and miseries in two western wars, wrongly labelled as world wars in the 20th century, and extended the rampage in three invasions in the 21st century.

There has been a well-crafted strategy to push Russia into a conflict with Ukraine and spark a proxy war with the intention of finishing off Russian power.

Step One: Prepare the ground to provoke Russia by encircling it with NATO forces. Non-implementation of Minsk agreement to anger President Putin. Educational policy by former American ambassador, who took up Ukrainian citizenship and became Minister of Education, to wipe out Russian history and heritage in schoolbooks, and forbid the use of Russian language in Ukraine. Appoint neo-Nazi forces as head of the army to attack, to persecute and kill civilians in eastern Donbas regions.

Step Two: Western media manipulate American public and world opinion to believe in the bad guy and good guy narrative. Roughly, so-called imperialist goals of Putin and champions of the free world represented by Western democracies.



Anti-war demonstrators in the U.S. Pic - Getty Images

Step Three: Let Russia and Ukraine get at each other's throat. Sit on the fence and watch Europe grappling with Ukrainian refugees at taxpayers' expense.

Step Four: Spotlight on the woes of Ukrainians. Convince the world Russia is the incarnation of the Red Devil itself. Time for military intervention in Ukraine.

Meanwhile Putin's discourse on the Empire of Lies did not reach the ears of all American and European public. The US strategy worked out well. The dichotomy of the nasty Russian dictator and the innocent Ukrainian president in khaki green tee-shirt created mass hysteria in European public to open their doors to the flow of Ukrainian refugees. The conflict developed into a full-fledged war causing destruction of buildings and infrastructure in Ukraine, immense sufferings, and loss of lives on both sides. It leaves the world struggling with shortage of wheat, an energy crisis and rising cost of living. The killing of a dozen Russian generals was a deliberate move to enrage Putin further and drag him into a devastating war for his dwindling military forces. As of today, America has gained 200 billion dollars from the sale of LNG, weapons, and warplanes.

Britain has often been criticized for its loyal support to its former colony, the US in all circumstances even against the will of the people as in the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, for instance. Newly appointed PM Rishi Sunak has been chosen for his skills as Chancellor of the Exchequer to sort out the mess of inflation, devaluation of the pound, national debt, poverty, high cost of living, and tackle increasing public discontent and threats of street protests and strikes. He is also there to save the Tory party from rising unpopularity. A big hot potato in his hands in an unavoidable series of austerity measures to haul up the British economy. There are high expectations on him to deliver the goods for the interests of the British population.

Can he bring a change in British-Russian relationship and review the unwavering British support of reckless American foreign

policy? Britain has always teamed up with America and France in conducting ruthless attacks on other countries ever since the 19th century burning of the Summer Palace of the Chinese emperor. Not only the highly condemnable cut-throat competition in controlling other countries' resources is a contentious issue, the national character and ego rivalry of the Anglo-American family together with their European counterparts pitched against Russia as a major power in Slavic Eastern Europe poses an obstacle for world peace. Needless to recall communism and competition in space technology, armament, and J.Kennedy's refusal to allow the first astronaut Yuri Gargarine to visit the States in the 1950s.

Putin has scored points on the chessboard of geopolitics, and the threat to dollar-based trade transactions is likely to drive the US crazy and push for more military assaults. Republican victory in Congress may impede the Democrats' military agenda. But what can be more effective is a constructive fresh vision of international relations, a review of NATO's policy so as to avoid conflicts with Russia. Europe and the West need more wisdom in their relation with other countries.

There is no need to meddle in China's and Iran's internal affairs, either. Germany is already adopting an independent stance in its relation with China. The US and Europe have no business intervening in other countries. NATO forces have to pull out from Russia's backyard. Let Slavic countries settle their own quarrels. There is no other option. Can Rishi Sunak swerve from Britain's position regarding Russia, and create a domino effect in Europe? Or is it going to be realpolitik and blind following of US dictates? The charismatic and energetic British PM can embody the change the West needs if he tones down the senseless US obsession of hunting down Russia, China and Iran. It is a golden opportunity to reverse the tide and promote a multi-polar world to ensure peace on world stage.



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor

Silence Vast and Potent

Silence can make us nervous thinking we need to fill the void, but there is immense strength in silence.

All sounds, from a whisper to a classical symphony, arise out of silence and disappear into silence. But silence is always there beneath sound and is the space where sound can exist. We tend to think of silence as the absence of sound, but silence has its own weight and quality. When you listen to silence, you can perceive its intense depth and power. Taking the time to experience silence calms the mind and rejuvenates the body. Silence is the void where we can hear the many sounds that we often ignore — the voice of our intuition telling us the truth, the sound of the breeze blowing, the hum of the radiator, and the noises we make just because we are alive.

One way to experience silence is to wake up before the rest of the world has come alive. Try not to move into activity, and leave off the lights, radio, and television. Sit still and simply listen. You may hear your heart-beat or your breath, but keep your attention tuned to the silence that surrounds you. Stay this way for as long as you can, and allow the sound of silence to penetrate your body until it moves into your core. Feel the gentle, pulsing waves of silence and allow it to cleanse you. Five minutes of communing with silence can leave you feeling vibrant and connected to the universe.

At night, choose a moment after everyone around you has retired and tune in to silence. You can also experience silence throughout the day. Even in the midst of activity, moments of silence are always present. Usually we ignore or feel nervous around silence and try to fill these moments with sound. Yet silence is always there — vast, potent, and available for us to step into any time we choose.