

MAURITIUS TIMES

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

Interview: Manou Bheenick

«We cannot live with a system of growing endemic underlying corruption...



...punctuated by egregious cases of epic fraud and dishonesty»

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Dayal's electoral petition:

'The Law Lords will not brook any nonsense about flimsy objections or delaying tactics'



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Que nous réserve 2023 ?



Par Dr Avinaash Munohur, Politologue

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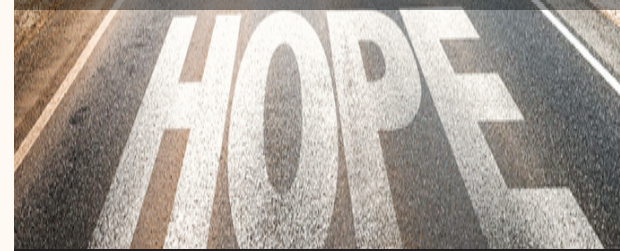


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The Challenges Ahead

One question that has been on the minds of many people, especially those who see in the continuation in office of the current dispensation following the next general elections a bane for the country, is whether a credible alternative is available. The circumstances of the past three years dominated by the restrictions imposed to the right of assembly in light of the Covid pandemic, the quasi monopoly of the public broadcaster for the dissemination of government propaganda, a crushing parliamentary majority and an overbearing speakership in the National Assembly bent on suppressing the voices from the opposition benches, etc., have not helped the latter to counter the current government effectively.

Worse, the continuing episodes relating to the probability or improbability of a common front comprising the main opposition parties, laboured upon and stretched to ridiculous lengths (and duly advertised in weekly press conferences) have not helped matters to the extent that it would appear nothing else matters to their party leaders. The resulting perception that the political ambitions of a few men (and their families in a few cases) seem to have the upper hand over everything else - and the issues affecting life's daily realities for the rest of the population are subordinate to those ambitions - has led to the growing sentiment that 'it makes no difference who is at the helm since they are all the same'.

Our recent history tells us a different story about the governance track record of the parties/alliances in power in recent decades — the 'all the same' narrative merely serves to condone the perpetuation of the status quo. If different vested interests - and politicians - succeed in what they do, it is because they have been playing craftily with the emotions of the people. The presumption is that emotions of fear, envy, narrow and wide loyalties, etc, driven by communal, caste or personal considerations, can hold sway totally over reason and have consequently a defining influence over most electors in societies like ours.

That is despite the fact that there are formidable challenges that Mauritius has to face in this globalising world — challenges relating to energy prices, mounting pressures on the international price of raw materials and commodities, climate change, global warming and deforestation, etc. For the common man, the most pressing problem of the day and the one that requires immediate attention is the rising cost of living that is crippling most of the working and middle classes of the country. Mauritius is also witnessing a rising crime rate; whatever official statistics would have us believe, there is apprehension among citizens of

this country regarding their personal safety and security. Besides their proliferation in the countryside, drugs are finding their way into secondary schools, and, worse, it appears that some youngsters may have been enlisted in such traffic.

This is not to overplay the crime problem, but only to emphasize that it would be a pity if it were allowed, due to the absence of strong political leadership, to fester further, thus negating whatever gains that may have been achieved in other sectors. We are not going to hold the police totally responsible for this deteriorating state of affairs, but the Force itself has not helped in light of the growing perception of it having increasingly become subservient to the powers that be, whereas it's meaningful policy changes and consequential actions that are long overdue.

These past three years have also brought to light the various dysfunctions at the level of other public institutions, ICAC for example in the fight against corruption, the Electoral Commission and its Supervisory Commission with regard to the organisation of elections, the sluggishness of the judicial system in relation to the hearing and disposal of electoral petitions. Much of the level-minded and non-partisan population would be aware of the fate of numerous Fact-Finding Committees, Commissions of Inquiry, the Kistnen Judicial Inquiry, the morbid dialysis saga, the FTI Audit on Mauritius Telecom or even now the Wakashio Court of Investigation: government just ignores or sits on them unless they offer convenient fodder for the political mill of those in power. As for the depth of slumber which surround any obvious malfeasance case against power brokers and their aficionados (the St Louis Gate affair, the Pack & Blister case, the frauds on medical supplies, the *ti-papiers* scandal to mention but a few) it defies any rationale or any trust in investigative institutions.

What the country requires instead is true leadership that comes up with broad-ranging solutions indicating a clear vision of where we have to go. There are Augean stables to be cleaned up, and only a determined and new dispensation can forget the legendary broom and take up a Karcher. Owing to political contradictions, we are actually at a loss as to whether there is a real sense of direction or that we know what we want. As for the population, is it itself ready to acknowledge that our future cannot be written anew without their own contribution for change from the comfort zone of past practices? Nevertheless, it is up to the Opposition - the alternative government - to raise their consciousness, sketch a credible way forward and thus live up to those expectations and challenges.

The Conversation

Elections to watch in 2023 – what's at stake as millions head to the ballot box around the globe

Zimbabwe, Turkey, Argentina, Pakistan and Nigeria all have presidential or general elections in 2023



Supporters of the ruling All Progressive Congress. Pic - Getty Images

Predicting the outcome of national elections can be a mug's game. Polls are often wrong, and second-guessing how people will vote months down the line can leave even the most savvy election specialist with egg on their face.

In short, there are too many unknowns – the state of the economy, late political shocks and even the weather on election day. What is known is that 2023 has its fair share on consequential races. Democracy is on the ballot in a number of nations, while common themes – such as the handling of inflation and corruption – may determine how incumbent governments and presidents fare as the ballot box. Five experts provide the lowdown on what is at stake in key national votes in 2023.

Here are their psephological pearls of wisdom:

Nigeria (Feb. 25)

By Carl LeVan,

professor of comparative and regional studies at American University

Some of the campaign dynamics heading into the Nigerian presidential election will seem familiar to those who follow the country, with politics still deeply entwined with the country's geographic-religious divide between a predominantly Muslim north and its Christian south. And after eight years of a northerner – Muhammadu Buhari – holding the presidency, debate revolves around whether power should "shift" to the south.

Buhari, in line with the constitution, is stepping down after serving two four-year terms – and that changes the electoral landscape. For only the second time since the transition to civilian rule in 1999, there's no incumbent presidential candidate.

Having no incumbent seeking reelection has historically increased the chances of opposition party victory in Africa.

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Mauritius Times

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

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

This epaper has been produced with the assistance of

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A Very Warm Thank You

to all our

Readers, Business Associates and Well-Wishers

for their Support and Good Wishes during the year.

Best Wishes for the New Year

Kindly note that our next edition will come out on Friday 13th January 2023.

Our office will be closed for the end-of-year festive season as from today 30

December, and we will resume work on Monday 9 January 2023.

Mauritius Times

Metro Express and the Simmering Political Cauldron

Jan Arden

By all accounts, the eventful year that was 2022 will have left its marks on the collective memory and conscience of our compatriots and we went over some of those markers in the last issue of *Mauritius Times*. Each one of us would have gauged those and many other events with his or her own prism and some may well have repercussions during 2023 or even much further.

Metro Express rides high?

Undoubtedly the completion of the tramway and its commercial operation before mid-October 2022, connecting the capital, Port-Louis, with Curepipe along the urban corridor of intense vehicle traffic, will be a feather in the cap of Metro Express Ltd (MEL), Larsen & Toubro and the MSM government which will rely on this as proof of its shining achievement. If the case was so clear-cut, there would have been no reason for the MSM-ML-others to dilly-dally around the holding of municipal elections which have already been postponed since more than a year.

But if a 45-minute trip in air-con comfort for such a ride at a ticket price fixed at only some 10-15% above bus rates, is something that some 50,000 daily travellers can appreciate, we have by the same token to acknowledge that we are all now, like it or not, forced stakeholders and financiers of that infrastructure. Beyond the generous contribution of India of some Rs 8-9 billion, which probably met the Port-Louis to Rose-Hill stretch, the rest of the financing of that capital investment we have to collectively assume even if repayments on that capital balance that keeps ballooning up with the announced extension to Cote d'Or, have not even started. We understand that those will kick in as from 2024 thanks to the moratorium of a few years from India Inc.

As stakeholders we are yet to be apprised of how those capital reimbursements will be met when our national coffers are running empty, taxes are on the high, cri-

tical other infrastructure financing (water in particular) are under abeyance and public debts are already mountainous. The havoc and distress wrought by the pandemic have not caused any opportune rethinking or remapping of our infrastructure needs in a distressed economy or the priority accorded to the tramway line and its massive drain on scarce resources under difficult times.

As for repayments of interests on those loans and meeting all the management, maintenance and operational costs of running the tramway line, they will have to come from MEL's revenues and, as at May 2022, we read that the accounts were in the red to the tune of some Rs 500 million, which was ascribed to daily ridership at some 40,000 not yet having attained then its maximum. Whether another 20,000 or so daily travellers will shift MEL accounts out of the red remains doubtful unless we are provided with clearer evidence that such is indeed the case in the May 2023 accounts.

Otherwise, government will have to keep on subsidising MEL's operational costs when it has not even started repayments on the capital loans extended by India. As stakeholders of that venture, the authorities might deem it important to explain and document the real financial facts, figures, and forecasts to the population. Most of them are not daily tramway riders but do not need the lack of transparency nor the gnawing feeling that they have been taken for a costly ride that they have yet to pay for.

Meantime, non-tram commuters have to face the daily havoc of a major infrastructure that has been placed so damnably onto our narrow streets and avenues. With St Jean Road and Sivananda Avenue carved up, times are stressed out for those who have to run their trucks, buses, vans, cars and motorcycles through the traffic nightmare as they ply to their trade and daily activities. With the failure of the feeder buses concept, the lack of convenient secure parking at stations and the uncertainties around urban terminals, 2023 may not bring the urban population



the relief they had been expecting.

Subsidiarily, it might be of some relevance if the authorities were to justify to the nation's stakeholders why the tramway extension to the airport and Mahebourg, which would probably have whipped up development opportunities in many agglomerations (namely Mahebourg itself, the SSR Airport traffic, Plaine Magnien, Mare d'Albert, Union Park, Rose-Belle and Nouvelle France amongst others) that are now going to play second fiddle at the expense of the announced Cote d'Or extension.

We trust government MPs, PPS and Ministers along these stretches have been fully taken on board in the decision-making loop that ended up diverting the tram to the PM's constituency and cherished village of Cote d'Or that would be completed by end 2024. Did they raise or share some concerns about their own 'mandants', so unceremoniously tossed aside by a mighty pen? Don't commuters from Mahebourg, Rose-Belle and the south generally and those moving to and from the national SSR airport deserve more explanations about that rationale and its financial justification when quite obviously ridership along a logical Curepipe - Airport - Mahebourg axis would have been far more substantial than the Cote d'Or to Reduit axis?

The Political Cauldron and general elections

As 2023 dawns on us, the political cauldron seems to be simmering with secretive and not so secretive end-of-year meetings. The perspective of general elections being nearer than the end-2024 schedule, in possible relation to the Privy Council judgement in the Suren Dayal electoral petition, may have focused minds and energies towards mid 2023 both for the MSM masterminds and the Opposition forces, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary. From their public statements, the idea of an LP-MMM-PMSD get together with some possible extra-parliamentary input seems to be making ground, for none would be ready for a repeat of the 2019 triangular contest that saw the MSM sailing in with some 37% of the votes cast and running the country, the National Assembly, the processes and institutions as their proprietary preserve.

It is no secret that the governing



alliance disposing of a formidable war-chest on its own and with financially powerful backers, will do its best to shore up support outside its narrow base in the electorate. It is a time for their *agwas* and agents to show their mettle, with feelers and concrete loyalty buy-in proposals, some more indecent than others, having already been in the press.

Largely unsuccessful at luring tar-

geted LP figureheads of a particular community, they seem to resort to what they perceive as the weaker links of the same community from the MMM fold. Time will tell whether such moves bear fruition in the months to come or whether the MMM finds the wherewithal and answers to counter such attempts. As matters stand, such overtures reflect the MSM discomfort at being closeted in

both by its ethnic calculations and its weak existing alliance partners.

High-handed policing, abuses at Terre-Rouge station, accusations of drug planting and the incarceration of Bruneau Laurette, on a collective memory already scarred by ghastly mismanagement of the Wakashio and Sir Gaetan Duval tug marine disasters, have certainly played a part in eroding hopes that the MSM has holds on the Creole community that outweigh possible financial dish-outs come election times. With at best 50% of the Hindu vote, the sociological imperative of the MSM for attracting some Muslim figure-heads in a bid to possibly counter the damaging loss of the Creole or "general population" is at its peak as 2023 rolls out and the perspectives of hastened general elections draws near.

It is the appropriate time to end this note by wishing all readers of *Mauritius Times* and the general public a safe, serene and fulfilling 2023.

Jan Arden

Major Issues to Watch in 2023

Dayal's electoral petition

'The Law Lords will not brook any nonsense about flimsy objections or delaying tactics'

Lex shares his legal views regarding various questions of topical relevance for the judiciary, our democracy and the conduct of elections that are free and fair. There has been much speculation about the appeal lodged by candidate Suren Dayal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and the potential impact of a ruling based on facts and their interpretation that is unfavourable to the three returned candidates from number 8 constituency. Lex also comments on the appointment of a new DPP and the Kistnen inquiry where investigations and relief for the victims remain bogged down by Police inaction.

LEX

* What will undoubtedly be a momentous event in 2023 is the much-awaited Privy Council's judgement in the electoral petition lodged by unreturned candidate Suren Dayal against the election of Pravind Jugnauth, Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun and Yogida Sawmynaden in Constituency No. 8 at the 2019 general elections. When is the judgement likely to be delivered?

If the lawyers of Suren Dayal manage to convince the Law Lords that this is an urgent matter which has already suffered an inordinate delay at the level of the Supreme Court, and to give the appropriate priority to the appeal, then a judgment may be expected early next year.

Once the appeal is fixed, the Law Lords will not brook any nonsense about flimsy objections or delaying tactics as has been the case over here.

* The lawyers of Suren Dayal will make their case and it will be won or lost on its merits. Could it be said however that elected candidates Jugnauth, Dookun-Luchoomun and Sawmynaden stand a good chance of winning their case? If so, on what grounds?

It all depends on whether the Law Lords will look at the case as one involving findings of facts or not. Even if they

consider the case as one bearing on findings of facts, they may still intervene if they consider that wrong conclusions have been drawn from the facts. Or else they may look at the legal implications and see whether the local judges correctly applied the provisions of the Representation of the People Act.

* What do the Representation of The People Act and other laws related to this matter prescribe in terms of penal sanctions in case the MSM candidates were to lose their case?

Any person who is guilty of bribery, treating or undue influence under the Representation of the People Act, shall be liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding 2,000 rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year.

In addition, any person found guilty of bribery, treating or undue influence will be disqualified to be registered as an elector or be a candidate for a period of seven years. But there must be a prosecution as the findings on an electoral petition cannot constitute a criminal conviction.

* It has been speculated that the Prime Minister could go for early elections within the next few months with a view to circumventing any unfavourable judgement of the Privy Council? Would an early dissolution end the legal appeal? If not, should the judge-



“A judgment unfavourable to the Prime Minister and his colleagues may have a bearing on the legality of the government. The 2019 elections would stand invalidated from the very day of the proclamation of its results. The President is elected by the Assembly on a motion made by the Prime Minister. It's the Prime Minister who recommends the choice of ministers. He also appoints people in many key institutions. What will be the fate of all those appointments?”

ment come after the elections, will it have a bearing on the legality of the preceding government?

It is very difficult to speculate. A hint may be gathered from the arguments that would be submitted by the lawyer representing the Prime Minister and from the questions the Law Lords would raise. But again, this is only an indication and no hasty conclusion should be drawn from that.

Even if Parliament is dissolved, this does not preclude the lawyers representing Suren Dayal from asking the Law Lords to give a declaratory judgment that would serve as a guideline for future elections. A judgment unfavourable to the Prime Minister and his colleagues may have a bearing on the legality of the government. The 2019 elections would stand invalidated from the very day of the proclamation of its results. The President is elected by the Assembly on a motion made by the Prime Minister. It's the Prime Minister who recommends the choice of ministers. He also appoints

people in many key institutions. What will be the fate of all those appointments?

* What is within the control of the local authorities is the conduct and organisation of the next elections. The Opposition has taken issue with the Computer Rooms put in place at Counting Centres for the 2019 elections and the opacity surrounding the functioning thereof on counting day, as well as the late hour counting of votes. Can the Opposition bring the Electoral Commission to revise the timing of the counting of votes and put an end to the recourse to Computer Rooms, defended as a “mesure administrative” by the Electoral Commissioner before the Court?

As far as the opacity surrounding the computer rooms, the Supreme Court ruled that this could not have any bearing on the counting of votes in the absence of any evidence that the computers were used for counting.

“All that the Electoral Commission can do is issue guidelines on how the election campaign should be conducted. Does the Commission have the will or the power to enforce such guidelines? What did or could the Commission do during the 2019 campaign regarding the abusive use of the MBC especially the broadcast of Mr Dulthumun's comments on a statement made by Navin Ramgoolam while at the same time it refused a right of reply to Mr Ramdhean?”

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Clouds in the Crystal Ball – What will Not Happen in 2023



Anil Madan

As mentioned in my last piece, I find it not very useful to pretend to know what **will** happen in 2023. I am, however, prepared to take a stab at predicting — well, yes, it's guessing — what will **not** happen in 2023. In a way, these thoughts are a sad commentary on the state of the world. Come look with me as I peer into an imaginary crystal ball and watch it cloud over when specific subjects are mentioned.

There is no dearth of trouble spots in the world, no shortage of problems, no lack of conflicts. What hope there is that any of them will be resolved is not supported by experience. So, for example, I cannot predict that there will or will not be a nuclear weapon used in 2023 or that peace will or will not come to Ukraine and so I'll leave those types of predictions to others.

Aside from the war in Ukraine and the rising danger of the use of a nuclear device, the three other most significant concerns are the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, a possible Chinese attack against Taiwan, and adverse weather-related events such as forest fires, floods, massive snowstorms, drought, cyclones and hurricanes.

Covid-19: The Covid-19 pandemic will not be resolved in 2023. The experiences of the US, Canada, India, Britain, Europe, and some other countries have shown that broad-based vaccine campaigns and some measure of acquired immunity short of herd immunity allow these societies to conduct business almost as normal. China's experience, on the other hand, shows what happens when a government ignores science and imposes draconian lockdowns and isolation rules. China is well behind the curve on containing Covid-19.

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Cases in the countries I have mentioned are spiking. This is due to a convergence of factors. Variants more transmissible than the first iteration of Covid have proliferated. Vaccines cannot be developed rapidly enough to contain all variants. Lockdowns and isolation have left many people resentful and alienated from their governments. This, in turn, has led to vaccine hesitancy when it comes to boosters.

Human beings crave normalcy. Having to live in a perpetual state of emergency, consumed by fear is not the default. So, whether it is wishful thinking or a rebellious streak, we revert to behaviours that make it easier for the virus to strike. China's sudden easing of lock-

downs and social restrictions is generating millions of new cases of Covid infections. It is only a matter of time before this creates mutations that will generate new strains of the virus.

Taiwan: China will not attack Taiwan. This is the expression of a hope as well as a prediction of what will not happen. It is not clear that China has the capability to mount an amphibious invasion against Taiwan without suffering massive casualties. Of course, China can impose a blockade across the Taiwan Strait and around Taiwan, but aside from doing so for short periods of time to make the point that it has that capability, it likely will not.

What is clear is that China has much to lose from an economic blockade of Taiwan as does the US. It is not in the interest of either the US or China to destroy Taiwan's economy and particularly, its semiconductor manufacturing capability. China has little to gain from incentivizing the Taiwanese to sabotage their own semiconductor manufacturing plants to avoid a Chinese takeover.

Weather-related events: Significant damage from weather events will not be curtailed or controlled much less prevented. This prediction is an easy one. Let us face it, the world has done literally *nothing* by way of mitigation adaptation when it comes to forest fires, floods, massive snowstorms, drought, cyclones, or hurricanes. Regardless of the cause, unless Mother Nature shuts herself down, things will go on as they have.

Carbon consumption and renewable energy: There will be little change on this front and things are unlikely to change for decades to come. The world is dependent on fossil fuels for energy and will remain dependent until there is a major new technology that can meet the world's energy needs. In the meantime, the industrialized countries are not going to shut down their factories and transportation infrastructure and developing countries will refuse to work in the dark.

Simply put even if the world's nations do more than paying lip service to the idea of cutting carbon consumption, there will have to be a massive and coordinated commitment of resources to research and development of new technologies and solutions. It is unrealistic to think that energy from fusion is realistically achievable within the next two to three decades. Things will go on as they are.

North Korea: Kim Jong Nuke will not use a nuclear weapon. This is more or less a hope rather than a prediction of what will not happen. But it seems fairly obvious that Chairman Kim likes the leverage that having nuclear weapons and missile tests gives him. One point that few consider is that Kim's nuclear weapons are as much a threat to China as they are to South Korea, Japan and the US. For now, barring a major change in the attitude that the US has adopted with respect to engagement with North Korea and lifting sanctions, the stalemate will continue.



Women are the vanguard of Iran's revolution. Pic - The Jerusalem Post

“Afghanistan is not going to emerge from the 12th Century and suddenly plant itself in the 21st. Iran is not going to emerge from the 12th Century and suddenly plant itself in the 21st. On both these counts, I have the sense that I could be wrong. The Ayatollahs are messing with Iran's women and the Taliban are back to messing with Afghani women. Revolutions inspired by women are far more likely to bring change than protests by men...”

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Iran: Iran is not going to emerge from the 12th Century and suddenly plant itself in the 21st.

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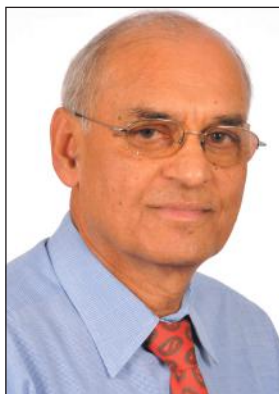
India/Pakistan: These two countries will not find rapprochement. After Pakistan was hit by devastating floods, a Pakistani Minister said that his country would allow imports of vegetable and critical food supplies from India due to shortages but only for a few months.

However, the Prime Minister of Pakistan has stated that he wants to have permanent peace with India as war is not an option for either country. It is not clear if the Prime Minister of India will see this as an opening worth walking through. Don't hold your breath because there are plenty of voices on the Pakistan side opposed to any deal with India.

Ukraine: This has me flummoxed. I cannot tell what will happen. I cannot tell what will not happen. Russia's forces apparently lost the will to fight a long time ago, but Russia's leaders have not lost their will to inflict wanton damage and destruction. Ukraine's people have not lost the will to fight but there are at least three more winter months ahead and their ability to continue their fight is dependent on support from the West as well as their ability to fight the elements.

Trump: Finally, Donald Trump seems slowly to be losing his mind as he reacts to the January 6 committee's report and criminal referral, as well as to the ongoing investigations in multiple fora. He will not regain his sanity (note: I do not suggest he ever was sane).

Cheerz...
Bwana



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

Against the backdrop of so many bad things happening across the world and in our own country on the social, economic and political fronts, it is almost unthinkable to expect that the new year will bring with it any magic solution to these myriad problems that human beings create for themselves.

Especially those where solutions exist but lack of political will delays resolution. A glaring problem of

direct concern to us, and very acutely felt at this moment, is the failure of the authorities down the years to fulfil their repeated electoral promise of ensuring 24/7 water at the tap to ALL citizens. Billions have gone into consultancies and reports, yet the objective is far from being achieved, let alone anyone in authority being willing to wager a bet as to when this will happen – if it ever does.

Meanwhile, we are facing an impending drought.

Similarly, on several other issues, high expectations are not justified. The Ukraine war is likely to continue, supply chains will not be restored to normalcy any time soon, all countries will face economic hardships even as several go into recession (with the greatest sufferers being the people). Moreover, terrorist attacks will keep taking place, to existing conflicts will be added the threat of new ones – like the second one in Europe between Kosovo and Serbia, or the China-Taiwan confrontation that is becoming a matter of increasing concern - and contrasting catastrophes will hit individual countries as well as affect countries all over the world.

For example, the recent 'stormbomb' of heavy snowfall, strong winds and temperature down to as little as minus 50 degrees Celsius in the US that has claimed nearly 50 lives was the opposite of the ongoing dryness that has affected the south west of the country: its largest freshwater reservoir, Lake Mead, has seen its level fall drastically to a dangerously low mark.

The World Cup in Qatar ended with the victory of Argentina, and throughout the duration of the games wild enthusiasm prevailed, and praise and accolades were showered on the heroes. But was there any news coverage about the darker side of the event – other than the rioting by Moroccans et al in France? No, because these things had better remain under the radar so as not to cause offence to the moneyed organizers. Who, except close family and friends would want to know that there were hundreds of deaths among the thousands of workers who were hired to work on the construction of the stadium? Whose passports were confiscated when they landed there, who were made to toil in temperatures touching the 50s degree Celsius, for long hours? Who would console that father from Kerala who had to receive his son's corpse instead of welcoming him home after the games were over?

The litany of such destructive phenomena and inhuman treatments is very long, but these few examples indicate the trend. Focusing on them can cause much despair and trigger dark thoughts in one's mind about our future, but fortunately one can balance them by more positive news coming in the main from the world of science and technology, and medicine and its allied fields.

Thus, during this year was launched the James

Hope Our Only Lifeline

Webb Space Telescope (JWST) which has superseded the Hubble telescope, and has sent fabulous photographs of our early universe that surpass in detail and in optics the already spectacular ones that came from Hubble during its lifetime. Besides, these images are so refined that they have allowed astronomers to make calculations that have yielded findings that are advancing much further the frontiers of knowledge about the evolution of the universe from its earliest origins. The JWST itself was many years in the making until the final stages were reached, and its successful launch to its precise positioning way above the Earth nothing short of another big WOW moment for not only the team that did the job but for science and the world at large.

Such accomplishments should make us proud as human beings, as should the ones with the potential for more practical applicability. In this category one can place the discoveries and techniques such as CRISPR in genetic engineering that now allow scientists to correct defects caused by faulty single genes. There is a category of rare diseases caused by alterations in the genetic make-up of what are known as the powerhouses of the cell, the mitochondria, resulting in mitochondrial disease syndromes. A few days ago, there was a report about six children suffering from mitochondrial disease showing remarkable improvement after they were treated by correction of the genetic fault in their mitochondrion, a first in the field that holds much promise to come.

If this doesn't make much sense, let's say it is the equivalent of scanning the grains of sand on a large beach, zooming on ONE odd looking grain, removing it, and placing at the same exact spot another normal grain made in the laboratory. That is the precision which such techniques have achieved, and that have required years and years of dedicated and persevering research to be perfected – with the sole objective of relieving the suffering of both patients and their intimate ones. What could be more noble than such work?

On the other hand, of more immediate relevance to the world in the matter of the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular with the expected tsunami of the resurgence in China, is the development of an intranasal vaccine by Bharat Biotech which made its entry with the highly successful Covaxin vaccine in the control of the pandemic in India.

In fact, it is reported that 'Bharat Biotech's iNCOVACC, the first intranasal Covid-19 vaccine approved for mix-and-match booster inoculation... will be available for administration by the fourth week of January, and that 'people who have taken two shots of either Covaxin or Covishield can opt for the nasal vaccine as a booster.'

The great advantage of the intranasal vaccine is its ease of use, requiring no sophisticated equipment or paraphernalia such as syringes, swabs, etc., for its administration, and except in children it can be self-administered. As it is, 'India is on alert given the recent surge in Covid-19 cases in China and some other countries. The cases are likely to lead to a rise in demand for booster doses.' India logged 157 new Covid-19 cases



Pic - Getty Images

“It is reported that 'Bharat Biotech's iNCOVACC, the first intranasal Covid-19 vaccine approved for mix-and-match booster inoculation... will be available for administration by the fourth week of January, and that 'people who have taken two shots of either Covaxin or Covishield can opt for the nasal vaccine as a booster.' The great advantage of the intranasal vaccine is its ease of use, requiring no sophisticated equipment or paraphernalia such as syringes, swabs, etc., for its administration...”

on Tuesday – not even a drop in the ocean for country of 1.4 billion people. Nevertheless, a preparedness plan, with mock drills in hospitals across the country, has already been set in motion at central government level to face any eventuality.

It is such advances in our capacity to discover new knowledge and to invent new techniques that benefit all humanity that give us hope for the future which is otherwise so full of ominous uncertainties – hope, in fact, is our only lifeline under the circumstances.

Circumstances that call for a universal prayer, such as the one that Hindus recite daily:

*Om Sarve bhavantu sukhinah
Sarve santu niraamayaah
Sarve bhadraanni pashyantu
Maa kashcid dukkha bhaag bhavet
Om shaantih shaantih shaantih*

*Om, May all be happy
May all be free from illness
May all see goodness and auspiciousness
in everything
May no one suffer
Om peace, peace, peace*

Note that the invocation is that ALL, not only Hindus, should be so blessed – to be happy, free from disease and pain, and seek goodness. It is the ideal state of mankind and the world that one can hope for, but alas we know that this is far from being the case because of our imperfections.

But at least we must try, make the effort to bring about a better world by not causing pain and suffering, and avoiding to inflict irreparable damage to our environment that will compromise the lives of future generations. Let us be better stewards of the abundance that nature has showered on us, that only if we live in peace, we can share equitably with all.

Happy New Year to All.



Dr Avinaash Munohur
Politologue

Que nous réserve 2023?

L'année 2022 touche finalement à sa fin. Elle aura été marquée par ce qui nous apparaît comme la fin définitive de la pandémie de la Covid, signifiant par la même la reprise de l'activité économique. Mais elle aura également été marquée par un approfondissement des effets socio-économiques

de la pandémie et du ralentissement de l'économie mondiale. En effet, malgré une reprise soutenue de l'activité dans les secteurs majeurs de notre économie – tourisme, finances et immobilier notamment –, l'inflation mondiale a touché de plein fouet les Mauriciens. La cherté des matières premières, du prix des énergies et notre trop grande dépendance à l'égard des importations ont eu un impact direct sur le pouvoir d'achat des ménages.

Mais l'augmentation des prix, la difficulté à stabiliser la Roupie ou encore l'inflation qui peine à être contrôlée malgré l'augmentation du Repo Rate, sont les signes d'un problème plus vaste, plus profond également. Problème que nous avons encore du mal à saisir entièrement en réalité. Il est pourtant assez simple et pourrait se résumer ainsi: la pandémie de la Covid a produit un shift radical dans les rapports de pouvoir de la géopolitique mondiale avec, pour effet immédiat, une transformation qui va prendre d'autres formes – formes qui seront conditionnées par les impératifs liés au réchauffement climatique et à la révolution digitale ou numérique.

Ces transformations de la mondialisation sont, pour nous à Maurice, des données essentielles qu'il est impératif de comprendre car notre pays est entièrement exposé à ses dangers, mais également à ses potentialités. Et ces transformations vont impacter nos vies de manière de plus en plus significative en 2023.

Que nous réserve donc 2023? Et qu'est-ce qui nous attend sur le plan géopolitique, économique, sécuritaire et politique?

Géopolitique, alliances historiques et stratégiques

Sur le front géopolitique, nous devinons facilement qu'il faudra compter sur une accélération de la militarisation de l'océan Indien. Cette région du monde, où Maurice compte près de deux millions de km² de Zone Économique Exclusive (ZEE), devient rapidement le cœur névralgique de la sécurité mondiale. Ceci est dû au déploiement des Nouvelles Routes de la Soie et aux investissements massifs de la Chine sur le continent africain.

Après l'accord AUKUS pour l'achat de sous-marins nucléaires par l'Australie, les Etats-Unis semblent aujourd'hui plutôt se concentrer sur ses intérêts sécuritaires dans notre région du monde. La négociation pour le retour de l'archipel des Chagos sous souveraineté mauricienne aura lieu dans ce contexte, et le PM a déjà indiqué que Maurice ne cherchera pas à faire bouger le statu quo, ce qui implique que le gouvernement se concentrera sur la rente que nous pourrions percevoir de la part des Etats-Unis pour leur base de

Diego Garcia.

Parallèlement à cela, les efforts militaires de la marine indienne continueront à s'intensifier. L'Inde est petit à petit en train d'occuper le vacuum créé par le retrait progressif de la marine britannique de notre océan. Cette intensification de la sécurisation de l'océan Indien par la marine indienne s'inscrit dans un ensemble d'accords tacites avec les Etats-Unis et la France – le Président Macron indiquant clairement que la France travaillerait de concert avec l'armée indienne afin que le respect des souverainetés insulaires soit conservé – ; même si la politique internationale indienne continue à prôner un non-alignement hautement stratégique pour les intérêts de la Grande Péninsule.

Maurice va devoir naviguer prudemment dans cet océan de la multipolarité géopolitique, consolidant ses alliances historiques tout en créant d'autres alliances stratégiques.

Économie et la reprise

Sur le plan de l'économie, nous savons que les prévisions pour 2023 ne sont pas optimistes avec le pic de l'inflation mondiale qui devrait arriver d'ici le milieu de l'année (si les conditions actuelles restent les mêmes). Cela aura forcément un impact non-négligeable sur les ménages à Maurice. Notre trop grande dépendance aux importations et notre stratégie économique fondée dans le consumérisme de masse feront que le pouvoir d'achat des ménages continuera à chuter.

La marge de manœuvre du gouvernement est, en réalité, extrêmement réduite sur cette question. Notre modèle de développement ne peut pas être radicalement transformé et orienté vers la production locale du jour au lendemain. Trop de fondamentaux – comme la baisse de la productivité, le manque de main-d'œuvre,



“L'Inde est petit à petit en train d'occuper le vacuum créé par le retrait progressif de la marine britannique de notre océan. Cette intensification de la sécurisation de l'océan Indien par la marine indienne s'inscrit dans un ensemble d'accords tacites avec les Etats-Unis et la France – le Président Macron indiquant clairement que la France travaillerait de concert avec l'armée indienne afin que le respect des souverainetés insulaires soit conservé – ; même si la politique internationale indienne continue à prôner un non-alignement hautement stratégique...”

les formations inadéquates, etc. – ne sont pas présents pour pouvoir envisager des transitions rapides vers une économie réelle et de la production locale. De ce fait, nous resterons extrêmement dépendant des investissements directs étrangers (Foreign Direct Investments - FDI) et extrêmement exposés aux fluctuations des prix sur les marchés mondiaux.

La reprise actuelle de nos secteurs clés est, en revanche, un signe extrêmement encourageant. En phase avec la reprise mondiale, il fallait que les secteurs qui ont fait leurs preuves puissent redémarrer afin de stabiliser l'économie nationale. Mais il est également essentiel que le gouvernement se penche sur l'ouverture d'autres secteurs d'activités, et surtout ceux qui seront porteurs pour les transformations à venir et qui sont moins dépendant des FDI.

Le défi est immense dans ce domaine puisque cela implique de revoir tout autant nos politiques économiques que nos politiques d'éducation, d'aménagement du territoire et nos politiques migratoires.

Politiques énergétiques et sécuritaires

L'année 2023 risque également d'être une année charnière pour nos politiques énergétiques et sécuritaires. Nous constatons tous la fragilité de nos portefeuilles en face des fluctuations importantes des marchés du pétrole et du gaz. Certes, les prix de ces énergies sont en baisse depuis quelques mois – baisse que la STC n'a pas reflété sur le prix à la pompe pour l'essence et le diesel – mais les prix peuvent repartir à la hausse à la moindre déstabilisation mondiale. Ce fut le cas au début du conflit russo-ukrainien, et nous ne sommes pas à l'abri d'autres conflits.



“L'autre grand défi de l'année 2023 sera celui de la gestion de l'eau... Un individu habitant une Smart City ou un PDS consomme sept fois plus d'eau qu'un individu vivant dans les régions du sud ou du sud-est. Cette équation va devoir être réglée rapidement et il faudra pour cela des investissements massifs dans les infrastructures de captage, de traitement et de distribution de l'eau. Ce chantier doit commencer le plus rapidement possible si nous ne voulons pas faire face à une crise sécuritaire qui se transforme en une crise sociale d'envergure...”

'Any person found guilty of bribery, treating or undue influence will be disqualified to be registered as an elector or be a candidate for a period of seven years'

● Cont. from page 4

This is what Justices Jugessur-Manna and D. Mootoo said in their judgement in the electoral petition of Ezra Jhuboo:

"The petitioner has failed to prove by way of cogent evidence on a balance of probabilities that there was any connection between the computer room and the physical manual counting process, the capitulation exercise and the official final results announced by the respondent number 6 and that the alleged opacity surrounding the computer room had any impact on veracity of the figures derived from the manual counting."

If the computer rooms were not used for counting, why were they set up in the counting centres and what purpose did they serve? It would seem that for the Supreme Court the presence of the computers was a normal feature on counting day.

To avoid any suspicion surrounding the computation and counting of votes, this exercise must be done soon after the closing of the polls as is done in many countries. There should be no computers allowed and the manual counting process should be sufficient. The seals on the ballot boxes must be placed in the presence of candidates and broken in their presence.

"It is an accepted fact that the DPP must act independently. The outgoing DPP Satyajit Boolell maintained that independence and he paid a high price from the hands of the government who wanted not only to strip him of his independence with the rosecution Commission but also to arrest him. Rashid Ahmine will no doubt act independently, but one can never know how the present regime will act towards him..."

* Can we also reasonably expect the judiciary to take a more proactive role in checking any abusive recourse to propaganda by the public broadcaster or to the dishing out of freebies in an election year?

No way. We have a conservative Supreme Court that would be wary of interfering in the election process. Even if a case is filed in court to put a stop to an abusive use of the MBC, for example, objections will be raised and rulings will have to be given. By the time the matter is heard and determined, much time will have gone by. That's all the more reason why a special Constitutional Court should be put in place to deal swiftly with all these issues.

* What about the Electoral Supervisory Commission itself regarding unfair election practices?

All that the Electoral Commission can do is issue guidelines on how the election campaign should be conducted. Does the Commission have the will or the power to enforce such guidelines? What did or could the Commission do during the 2019 campaign regarding the abusive use of the MBC especially the broadcast of Mr Dulthumun's comments on a statement made by Navin Ramgoolam while at the same time it refused a right of reply to Mr Ramdhean?

* Is the DPP Office likely to face some more testing times during 2023 and will those have a bearing on Rashid Ahmine's declaration of intentions, in particular, with regard to public interest and the fierce protection of its independence?

It is an accepted fact that the DPP must act independently. The outgoing DPP Satyajit Boolell maintained that independence and he paid a high price from the hands of the government who wanted not only to strip him of his independence with the Prosecution Commission but also to arrest him. Rashid Ahmine will no doubt act indepen-

dently, but one can never know how the present regime will act towards him. But he has to do his duty towards his country.

* The parting shots of the outgoing DPP included concern over the Criminal and Police Justice Act and the abuses being made of provisional charges. Should the latter be done away with entirely?

The problem is not with provisional charges. The Supreme Court has time and again held that the provisional charge that is drawn up on a document called Information is just a means of informing the court which charge there is against a person. The main issue lies in the power of the police to arrest an individual. It is the abuse made in matters of arrest that need to be looked into.

* It has been a matter of concern that the police, after failing in their investigations regarding the murder of MSM activist Kistnen, have ignored any of the inquiring Magistrate's recommendations or instructions and those of the DPP. What else could be done legally to protect the interests of those relatives who have been so unfairly treated?

As a rule, when a magistrate forwards his/her conclusions following a judicial inquiry to the DPP, the latter after studying the file may ask the police to investigate along certain well-defined lines. It is up to the police to comply with this directive. Now if the police refuse to comply, there is not much the DPP can do about it.

While some police officers tried to protect certain people in the Kistnen murder either because they were under orders or because of their incompetence as underlined by Magistrate Mungroo-Jugurnath... we do not know. But they totally missed out on an important aspect of the investigation, namely the interest of the victim's relatives.

LEX

● Suite de la page 7

Ce qui est certain c'est que nous devons absolument commencer à repenser notre politique énergétique pour le long terme. Le projet du gouvernement d'investir dans le Gaz Naturel Liquéfié (GNL) pourrait s'avérer extrêmement intéressant de ce point de vue, mais ce choix requiert une stratégie clairement définie en matière d'approvisionnement, et notamment en matière de la géopolitique de l'approvisionnement. Mais cela ne suffira pas pour permettre une baisse importante du prix de l'électricité.

Il devient urgent de revoir le modèle de la production, de la distribution et de la consommation de l'énergie à Maurice. Cela implique de redéfinir le rôle et le scope ou marge de manœuvre du CEB afin de permettre l'émergence de micro-producteurs et libéraliser l'autoconsommation. Les technologies de production et de stockage de l'énergie évoluent, il devient urgent de faire également évoluer notre politique nationale en matière d'énergie.

L'autre grand défi de l'année 2023 sera celui de la gestion de l'eau. Nous faisons dans ce domaine face à deux problèmes fondamentaux à Maurice: les ressources en eau se raréfient à cause du réchauffement climatique et l'accès à l'eau devient une source d'inégalité profonde dans notre pays.

Par exemple, un individu habitant une Smart City ou un PDS consomme sept fois plus d'eau qu'un individu vivant dans les régions du sud ou du sud-est. Cette équation va devoir être réglée rapidement et il faudra pour cela des investissements massifs dans les infrastructures de captage, de traitement et de distribution de l'eau. Ce chan-

Que nous réserve 2023?



"L'année 2023 risque également d'être très agitée sur le plan politique. Le cas de Suren Dayal sera entendu au Privy Council dans le courant de l'année, ce qui pourrait produire un cataclysme politique majeur. En effet, le Premier ministre risque de se retrouver mis hors-jeu si les 'Law Lords' donnent raison à Suren Dayal. Ce n'est pas la première fois que Pravind Jugnauth aura une épée de Damoclès passant par le Privy Council sur la tête. Mais cette fois-ci il risque beaucoup plus gros..."

tier doit commencer le plus rapidement possible si nous ne voulons pas faire face à une crise sécuritaire qui se transforme en une crise sociale d'envergure.

Agitations sur le plan politique

Enfin, l'année 2023 risque également d'être très agitée

sur le plan politique. Le cas de Suren Dayal sera entendu au Privy Council dans le courant de l'année, ce qui pourrait produire un cataclysme politique majeur. En effet, le Premier ministre risque de se retrouver mis hors-jeu si les 'Law Lords' donnent raison à Suren Dayal. Ce n'est pas la première fois que Pravind Jugnauth aura une épée de Damoclès passant par le Privy Council sur la tête. Mais cette fois-ci il risque beaucoup plus gros.

En face, les partis traditionnels de l'opposition peinent à trouver le consensus nécessaire pour contracter une alliance. Nous imaginons mal une telle alliance se fonder sur un projet de société qui adressera frontalement les problèmes évoqués ci-dessus. Mais au contraire, on imaginerait aisément une bataille d'egos et une lutte pour la distribution des tickets et des responsabilités et aussi garantir la survie de certaines dynasties politiques.

Toutefois nous voyons mal une alternative crédible aux partis traditionnels capable d'émerger aujourd'hui, ce qui donne au gouvernement des arguments solides pour des élections générales anticipées.

Le PM aura tout intérêt à prendre ses opposants au dépourvu, en pratiquant une politique de redistribution économique massive, en renouvelant son équipe et en devançant le jugement du Privy Council. De ce point de vue, l'année 2023 pourrait également bien être celle des élections générales anticipées.

Dr Avinaash Munohur, Politologue



A Covid-19 patient being moved on a wheelchair at Tianjin First Center Hospital in Tianjin. Pic - AFP

How world is reacting to China's Covid rise: Entry restrictions, testing, tracking

Countries across the world are implementing or considering measures to test or restrict travellers from China as Beijing abandoned its strict 'Zero-Covid policy' and is also preparing to reopen borders in early January, reports Hindustan Times.

China is rapidly dismantling its pandemic measures following massive protests in the country, triggering outbreaks. China's outbreak - world's largest - has raised concerns among public health officials worldwide as estimates showed almost 37 million people may have been infected with the virus on a single day last week.

Here's how countries are responding to China's Covid uptick.

United States: The US is considering new coronavirus precautions for people travelling from China amid questions about the transparency of data that Beijing is reporting about the spread of the virus, Bloomberg reported.

Japan: Japan announced steps requiring a negative Covid-19 test upon arrival soon after China said that it will no longer subject inbound travellers to quarantine from Jan. 8. Earlier this week, Japanese prime minister Fumio Kishida had said that there are "great discrepancies" in information coming out of China.

Taiwan: Taiwan may also adjust Covid measures such as testing as it anticipates tens of thousands of people returning from the Chinese mainland for the Chinese New Year later in January.

Philippines: Philippine transport secretary Jaime Bautista called for Covid measures, including testing on inbound travellers from China. "We should be very cautious because if they have a lot of Covid cases, we should be careful about Chinese visitors coming into the Philippines," he said.

Malaysia: Malaysia has also imposed new tracking and surveillance measures.

Benjamin Netanyahu sworn in as Israel PM, returns to power after 18 months

Netanyahu took the oath of office moments after parliament passed a vote of confidence in his new government. (AP)

Benjamin Netanyahu was sworn into office Thursday, taking the helm of the most right-wing and religiously conservative government in Israel's history and vowing to enact policies that could cause domestic and regional turmoil and alienate the country's closest allies.

Netanyahu took the oath of office moments after parliament passed a vote of confidence in his new government. His return marks his sixth term in office, continuing his more than decade-long dominance over Israeli politics.

His new government has pledged to prioritize settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank, extend massive subsidies to his ultra-Orthodox allies and push for sweeping reform of the judicial system that could endanger the country's democratic institutions. The plans have sparked an unprecedented uproar from across Israeli society, including the military, LGBTQ rights groups, the business community and others.

Netanyahu is the country's longest serving prime minister, having held office from 2009 until 2021 and a stint in the 1990s. He was ousted from office last year after four deadlocked elections by a coalition of eight parties solely united in their opposition to his rule.

Despite his political comeback, he remains on trial for charges of fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three corruption cases. He denies all charges against him, saying he is the victim of a witch hunt orchestrated by a hostile media, police and prosecutors.

The diverse yet fragile coalition that toppled Netanyahu collapsed in June, and Netanyahu and his ultra-



Benjamin Netanyahu presents the new government to parliament at the Knesset in Jerusalem on Dec. 29. Pic - Times of Israel

nationalist and ultra-Orthodox allies secured a clear parliamentary majority in November's election.

"I hear the constant cries of the opposition about the end of the country and democracy," said Netanyahu after taking the podium in parliament ahead of the government's formal swearing-in on Thursday afternoon. His speech was interrupted repeatedly by heckles and jeers from opposition leadership, who at times chanted "weak."

"Opposition members: to lose in elections is not the end of democracy, this is the essence of democracy," he said.

Netanyahu heads a government comprised of a hard-line religious ultranationalist party dominated by West Bank settlers, two ultra-Orthodox parties and his nationalist Likud party.

His allies are pushing for dramatic changes that could alienate large swaths of the Israeli public, deepen the conflict with the Palestinians and put Israel on a collision course with some of its closest supporters, including the United States and the Jewish American community.

Netanyahu's government platform says that "the Jewish people have exclusive and indisputable rights" over the entirety of Israel and the Palestinian territories and promises to advance settlement construction in the occupied West Bank. That includes legalizing dozens of wildcat outposts and a commitment to annex the entire territory, a step that would draw heavy international opposition by destroying any remaining hopes for Palestinian statehood and add fuel to calls that Israel is an apartheid state if millions of Palestinians are not granted citizenship.

Netanyahu's previous administrations have been strong proponents of Israel's West Bank settlement enterprise, and that is only expected to be kicked into overdrive under the new government.

Israel captured the West Bank in 1967 along with the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem — territories the Palestinians seek for a future state. Israel has constructed dozens of Jewish settlements that are home to around 500,000 Israelis who live alongside around 2.5 million Palestinians.

India makes inroads into Sri Lanka under China's long shadow

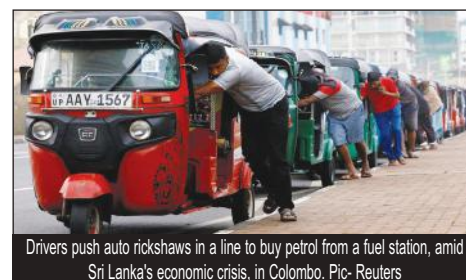
When Sri Lanka slid into its worst economic crisis in seven decades leading to deadly riots and alarming shortages of fuel, food and medicines earlier this year, its giant northern neighbour stepped into the breach. India provided about \$4 billion in rapid assistance between January and July, including credit lines, a currency swap arrangement and deferred import payments, and sent a warship carrying essential drugs for the island's 22 million people, reports Reuters.

Now, as Sri Lanka closes in on a \$2.9 billion loan deal from the International

Monetary Fund (IMF) and its economy stabilises, India is seeking to land ambitious long-term investments, with an eye on countering the influence of regional rival China, a government minister and three sources said.

"What we are looking at right now is investment from them," Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Ali Sabry said in an interview this month, referring to a range of projects worth over \$1 billion currently under discussion that would help bolster India's presence in Sri Lanka. "They're willing to invest as much as it takes."

Regional security would always be a



Drivers push auto rickshaws in a line to buy petrol from a fuel station, amid Sri Lanka's economic crisis, in Colombo. Pic- Reuters

focus for New Delhi, a source with knowledge of the matter told Reuters, at a time of persistent friction with China along their Himalayan frontier.

Besides seeking Indian investments to set up renewable energy and power

projects in the north of the island, Sri Lanka is also keen to work with New Delhi on expanding and developing the harbour at Trincomalee in the northeast into a major port, several officials said.

Taking advantage of northern Sri Lanka's proximity to India, these projects could help New Delhi balance China's extensive infrastructure projects in the south of the island that have been built up over the last 15 years.

Sri Lanka's Tamil-dominated north also shares ethnic ties with southern India's Tamil Nadu state.

* Contd on page 10

Britain: Brexit remains the elephant in the room

The past year has been one of the most tumultuous in modern British politics. The country has gone through three prime ministers, mourned the death of its longest-serving monarch, and is currently in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis that threatens to engulf the Conservative-voting middle classes.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, spent the first weeks of his premiership trying to steady a rocky ship. His most recent predecessor, Liz Truss, had precipitated an almost unprecedented financial crisis with a reckless budget and was forced to resign after just six weeks; the previous occupant of 10 Downing Street, Boris Johnson, spent the final months of his premiership tarnishing the institution as he battled a series of damaging scandals.

Sunak's pitch has been one of calm governance and sound economic policy that he hopes will narrow the huge polling gap between his Conservatives and the opposition Labour Party before the next general election, which must be held no later than January 2025, reports Luke McGee of CNN.

But for all the carnage of 2022, one of the most consequential aspects of Britain's new political reality has been barely discussed.

Brexit-in-full began on 1 January 2021, when the UK made the transition from a nation that was essentially a member of the EU in all but name, to a separate entity



Prime Minister Boris Johnson walks back into 10 Downing Street in central London on July 7, 2022, after announcing his resignation as party leader. Pic - AFP

bound to the bloc by a thin trade deal.

The consequences of that hard split have already hit the British economy.

The Office for Budget Responsibility confirmed earlier this year that both exports to and imports from the EU of goods and services have fallen since the full implementation of the Brexit deal, formally known as the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). The OBR concluded "there is little in the data" since the Brexit deal was implemented to suggest that the assumption of a 15% reduction in trade was misplaced.

However abstract this might sound, the real-life impact has been vegetables left to rot and fish thrown back into the sea as British exporters miss the narrow windows to get their goods into the EU. From an import perspective, Brexit has made certain foods more expen-

sive, exacerbating the cost-of-living crisis.

Under normal circumstances, government and opposition would be rushing to fix something causing such economic and social damage. However, six years since Brits voted to leave the EU, Brexit remains still anything but normal.

Labour leader Keir Starmer has put forward a five-point plan to make Brexit work. However, the plan makes perfectly clear that Labour has no intention to re-join the EU nor any of its satellite institutions.

While this upsets many Labour members, accusations of Europhilia and secret plots to reverse Brexit could wreck all the work Starmer has done to bring the party closer to power than at any point in the recent past. A key aspect of Johnson's 2019 landslide victory was Brexit-supporting traditionally Labour voters backing the Conservatives in former Labour heartlands. Starmer, bluntly, needs those votes to win.

This is the predicament facing the leading lights of British politics as they prepare for the next election. Aspects of Brexit could be improved, compromises are there to be reached with Brussels. But no one wants to light the fuse on the most explosive political issue in recent memory for fear it blows up in their face.

The consequence of such inaction is, critics say, a country without a long-term sense of direction or purpose.

Even if Britain's political class has a sudden change of heart, some experts suspect that we are beyond the point that anything significant can be done to mitigate the long-term impact of Brexit.

Africa's top 29 Best Places to Work for 2022 revealed

The Best Places to Work organization announced last Monday the top 29 most performing employers in Africa for 2022. Findings from this year indicated that the top performing organizations in Africa continued to invest in creating a highly-engaged workforce, with an average engagement score of 83%, compared with a market average of 71%. These organizations are particularly leading the way by creating engaging environments fostering organizational agility, building engaging leaders and demonstrating outstanding people practices and workplace excellence, reports PRNewswire.

The research has also shown that given the present challenges around talent retention in Africa, employees who do not see good career opportunities or agree with their organization's response to their well-being are three times more likely to leave.

Topping this year's ranking was Novo Nordisk, the global pharmaceutical company followed by Dell, the American based technology company. Groupe VipInterstis, a leading service provider in Customer Interaction operating across different countries in Africa, came in the third position. Webhelp, a leading customer relationship and business process outsourcing company, came in the fourth position followed by Nestle, the leading food producer. To be considered, companies must be identified as outstanding employers



People working. Pic- Malawi24

at least in one of the countries across the continent.

The ranking was determined based on feedback from employees gathered through anonymous surveys and an HR assessment evaluating the people management practices against the best workplace standards. The top 29 list includes:

1. Novo Nordisk
2. Dell
3. Groupe VipInterstis
4. Webhelp
5. Nestle
6. Safran Group
7. Hilti
8. Roche
9. BSH
10. Comdata
11. Schneider Electric
12. Glucode
13. Eaux Minérales d'Oulmès

14. ZitounaTakaful
15. Parkville Pharmaceutical
16. Asma Invest
17. eHealthAfrica
18. Zoetis
19. AstraZeneca
20. Pharma 5
21. Groupe Banque Populaire du Maroc
22. Jamjoom Pharma
23. EcoBank
24. Magrabi
25. Ooredoo
26. IHS Towers
27. Alsa
28. CDG Capital
29. Elezabypharmacy

Congratulating this year's Best Places to Work in Africa, Hamza Idrissi, Program Manager said, "Leading organizations in Africa have demonstrated agility to respond effectively to disruptions while being connected to the needs of their employees. This recognition validates the commitment of several leading employers in Africa to provide their employees with a positive work environment that challenges and encourages them to develop personally and professionally." Every year in Africa, the program partners with many organizations, across different industries, to help them measure, benchmark, improve their HR practices and use data-driven insights to add value, enhance agility, and increase organizational effectiveness.

Nigeria and 12 most advanced African countries' list

A report by Insider Monkey entitled: '12 Most Advanced Countries in Africa', listed 12 countries in Africa which have been able to use their natural resources to boost their economies.

These countries, according to the report, are Côte d'Ivoire; Zimbabwe; Tanzania; Senegal; Namibia; Ghana; Egypt; Kenya; Botswana; Tunisia; Morocco and Republic of South Africa, reports Leadership Magazine.

To arrive at the methodology used in ranking the countries, the publishers of the report said they consulted the World Intellectual Property Organisation's (WIPO) Global Innovation Index to find out which countries in Africa are the most advanced ones out of the 56 sovereign states that are members of the United Nations.

While other metrics, such as the OECD's patent database and the percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) spent on research and development, were initially considered, they were found lacking either in their scope, as few African countries have patents to their name, or incomprehensive and out of date due to a lack of availability of the latest entries.

However, the report revealed the age-long truth that Africa is one of the richest continents in the world when it comes to natural resources, with vast resources of valuable metals such as cobalt, gold, platinum and coltan.

It cited that Côte d'Ivoire relies primarily on agriculture for substance with exports of different products such as cocoa beans, gold, and petroleum products, thereby boosting its economy to \$173 billion GDP in terms of purchasing power parity.

Manou Bheenick

We cannot live with a system of growing endemic underlying corruption,

punctuated by egregious cases of epic fraud and dishonesty”

We asked Manou Bheenick to share his views on the general trends likely to affect the world economic landscape in 2023, a troubled era of uncertainties when neither the Covid pandemic nor the Ukraine crisis are yet out of the way. Inevitably, the management of public finances and the current state of the economy came under the scanner.

He was also invited to share his personal views on the political forces that, without giving in to populism, have to unite for the municipals or general elections to get the MSM and its minions out of the way.



*** 2022 has generally been the year of living with a Covid hangover for most parts of the world. It has also been another year of living dangerously in some other places with several colossal events dominating the headlines, the most prominent of which has been the war in Ukraine and the worldwide inflation that it helped spark. What's your assessment of 2022?**

2022 is most definitely one of those years that you are glad to put behind you, another *annus horribilis* of the kind that the world has gradually adapted to since Covid struck, and forced us all to change established routines and mindsets to learn to live with the virus and its succeeding variants. And we are not out of the woods yet: some of the new habits will stay with us and serve us well in the years to come as Covid becomes endemic. And this is irrespective of the raging debates that Covid has unleashed on its origins, conspiracy theories, vaccine efficacy, and the suspicious proximity between big pharma and key decision makers leading the fight to combat it.

We would be wrong to read the Ukraine war, undoubtedly the biggest marker of 2022, as just another shooting war or an isolated event on a par, say, with the killing of Saddam Hussein or Muammar Gaddafi, which the world took in its stride. It brings with it systemic risks for the body politic. We may actually be on the cusp of a major geopolitical reordering. The post-World War II dispensation may be in its last days, and together with it, so many essential elements of the global platform supporting

peace and security, international trade, global finance, and so much else, will also change.

We are not leaving these concerns behind. The shooting war will end with one or both of the main combatants much reduced and spawn realignment as NATO may have overreached and added wind in the sails of BRICS. With so much change in so many fundamental aspects on the horizon, the coming year will be far from peace and prosperity.

The spike in Covid-induced inflation is, mercifully, abating but it will be with us for quite a while, possibly until end-2024 at the earliest, before the flood of money-printing which kept the global economy afloat, is withdrawn and normalcy is restored to international finance, money markets and trade. If we look at the largest economy, the US as an example, inflation rates in the lower single digits may not be on the cards this year as economic recession may occur as collateral damage if the US FED maintains an aggressive stance to soak up all the liquidity that it flooded the system with. So, here again in the fight against inflation, we have an issue that we ignore at our risk and peril.

As we move into the new year, we carry with us a legacy of major concerns that should figure prominently on our policy agenda.

*** What do you think would be the most pressing trends to watch in 2023, especially those that are likely to have an impact on our country's fortunes?**

I would break them into two sets of

“With some major changes in the process, a combined opposition front behind him, and a slate of candidates with complementary skills and aptitudes, I believe Navin Ramgoolam will stand a good chance of dislodging the incumbents and pull our country out of the quagmire. For him, it'll be a case of “it's now or never” to borrow from Elvis Presley. But unlike Elvis in that eponymous song, we cannot spend a lifetime waiting for the right time...”

issues, first the global and exogenous ones on which we have little or no say and, second, the domestic ones which we as citizens, or our government, can influence and rank as our policy priorities and thus inform our action.

First, the global landscape. We've touched on some of these issues in the preceding answer and I won't repeat those. The trend towards increasing bilateralism and deglobalisation is an existential threat to small states like ours. We have neither the size nor the clout to succeed in bilateral agreements individually with the rest of the world if ever the likes of the UN, the EU Commission, the WTO, the WHO, and others like them in other sectors of activity like UNEP, the ILO etc, continue to be sidelined and marginalized by the big players opting for increasing bilateralism and power-play.

The geopolitical realignment, with the rise of China and BRICS, should definitely be on our scanner. As indeed should the sanctions regime, to which the US and the

West have resorted to browbeat others into submission, i.e. when not attacking them in pursuit of regime change for trumped-up reasons: trade embargoes, asset seizure, reserves freezing, debarred access to global payment and settlement system like SWIFT, etc., which Libya, Iraq, Iran, and Russia have experienced.

Still at the global level, I would emphasize global warming and effective coordinated action to implement the global climate change programme. I wish our countrymen were more alerted to the risks our country runs from such phenomena as sea level rise.

The dollar-dominated trade and settlement system may be changing and we should spread our risk.

Major countries are turning inward and becoming inhospitable to migrants. Is it just a coincidence that Mauritius had a reported net migration of 0.00 in 2022!!

There will be some fallout from the spectacular bust-up of FTX Trading, the biggest crypto currency exchange, also a hedge fund, last month. It is the ENRON of the digital world. There will be enhanced vigilance to combat this type of extraordinary fraud.

Locally, our policy agenda as Mauritian citizens, is to stop the spreading cancer that has proliferated across government bodies, public institutions, publicly-owned companies, and regulatory/supervisory institutions. We cannot live with a system of growing endemic underlying corruption, punctuated by egregious cases of epic fraud and dishonesty. We have to rebuild trust — trust in the political class, the police, the judiciary, and in our electorate which must learn to make wise choices and not give in to electoral bribery.

Once the trust is being repaired and regained — an uphill, if not impossible, task if the corrupt go free and enjoy their ill-gotten gains in total impunity as they have so far — then we can set to work to regain our long-lost and now all-but-forgotten lustre as the well-run little tiger of the Indian Ocean. We need to go back to become yet again a working democracy with totally free and fair elections, blessed with a confident population under an enlightened leadership that can put our society and our economy back on the rails and make up for the years which we have wasted by entrusting our country and its fortunes, especially its fortunes, to an unprincipled bunch of political bandits.

☞ Cont. on page 12

'We have to rebuild trust — trust in the political class, the police, the judiciary, and in our electorate which must not give in to electoral bribery'

☞ Cont. from page 11

* With the next elections said to be in the pipeline - possibly next year itself, should the Prime Minister decide not to expose himself to any discomfiture in the wake of an unfavourable judgement in the Dayal's electoral petition before the Privy Council - one could expect populism to trump responsible economics in the coming months. Is populism really bad economics?

There is nothing worse than populism to corrode any political system. A recent example would be Mr Trump, who seems to have whipped up the anti-establishment sentiment to the point that some extremists even stormed the White House. It's a form of demagoguery, with a hefty dose of political opportunism, seeming to address complex issues — but actually doing nothing of the sort — in a simplistic manner to maximize its appeal to the masses.

Its negative repercussions are certainly not limited to the political sphere: the road to Nazism and Fascism started that way, with a couple of populists like Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, firing their first shots to local electorates... and World War II was the cataclysm that resulted. Populism is not known as a good breeding ground for nation-builders and statesmen.

As regards the options facing Mr PK Jugnauth, the Prime Minister, I wonder if he cares two hoots about popular sentiment. He seems to be in his element mouthing well-rehearsed set-pieces and slogans to the docile audience provided by the socio-cultural crowd, old-age pensioners, and other groupies of a saffron bent. I am given to understand that the Privy Council will bend over backwards to avoid taking sides in an overtly political case. Maybe I've got that wrong. What I mean to say is that a Privy Council judgment against the PM is not a foregone conclusion. But will he risk such a possible negative decision before going to the country at the end of his full term?

Will his financial backers and his political minds advise against running such a risk, and encourage him to dissolve the National Assembly before any judgment is handed down? The municipal elections, which were supposed to be held in 2022, did not happen and may be on the agenda for next year.

If we abstract from the PC judgment for a moment, the municipal elections may serve as a curtain-raiser for the next general election: Will PKJ run the bigger risk of taking on the combined already-announced phalanx of Labour-MMM-PMSD in these elections? A defeat in the municipal

“What a monster we breed when we allow corruption and nepotism to take root, and proliferate unchecked! The Opposition is not to blame for the perception of its inability to function given the severe constraints imposed on them by the regime. We shouldn't be surprised that they haven't displayed a common front on all issues: their members do belong to different political formations and we should not expect total convergence of views on each and every issue they have faced over the last three years...”

elections will deflate MSM's pretensions for a third successive victory in the next general elections.

* Again, as regards the issue of populism, one could argue that a reasonable dose of welfare populism need not necessarily be that bad. That could have been at the back of the mind of the Labour Party's leader when he came forward with his proposal in favour of State-financed trips to neighbouring Reunion for old-age pensioners. How do you react to that?

Be careful there! Populism makes for bad policies. The welfare dimension is something else. A majority of Mauritians, as taxpayers in this caring society of ours, support the main planks of our welfare state such as free education, free health, subsidized housing, subsidized utilities, etc. But many of us have looked askance as the welfare bill, 100% funded by the taxpayer, began assuming alarming proportions. And this occurred as some of the welfare planks were allowed to turn into bargaining chips, even outright electoral bribes, to garner voter support in competitive political auctions at the hustings.

This was clearly the case with the basic old-age-pensions — a direct charge to the public budget with no beneficiary contribution to any pension pot during their working life — in the last general election when the outgoing Prime-Minister-cum-election-candidate announced, just a few days before polling, a steep increase in these pensions to the OAP's, bussed from all over the island to assemble in the largest convention centre in the country. If that is not an electoral bribe, what is? Electoral petitions seeking to annul the election results, because of this and other alleged electoral malpractices and irregularities, moved at a severely-handicapped snail's pace through the local courts without any success. Hence the recourse to the Privy Council.

We cannot bid up the burden of our state-supported welfare just because OAP's have the numbers to bend political office-seekers to their will, irrespective of the cost to public finance. We forget that welfare support to the needy, the poor, the invalids and so forth, have a foundation in ethics and morality. Beneficiaries of state largesse via these pensions, get a regular take-home-packet which, in many cases, is much bigger than what they earned during their working life — a perversion of what happens with a contributory pension!

And, let us remind ourselves, Mauritius is neither a resource-rich economy, that can plough its resource earnings in social support without regard for financial sustainability, nor a flourishing economy with a population pyramid tilted towards the working-age group, strong finances and a budget surplus, an adequate cushion of external reserves, low public debt and an external surplus, and bright prospects generally. Quite the opposite, unfortunately.

Navin Ramgoolam, as leader of the biggest and oldest political party, has the right to do some kite-flying. He is not running in an election. He is not an outgoing Prime Minister dangling a bribe. I see no difficulty in his floating new ideas for debate. Having served under him in his first Cabinet, I know he's not given to make policy on the run. I will not read deeper into this unguarded pronouncement. I would be worried, very worried, if he wanted to include that in his alliance's electoral program without making compensating



“Populism makes for bad policies. The welfare dimension is something else. A majority of Mauritians, as taxpayers in this caring society of ours, support the main planks of our welfare state such as free education, free health, subsidized housing, subsidized utilities, etc. But many of us have looked askance as the welfare bill, 100% funded by the taxpayer, began assuming alarming proportions. And this occurred as some of the welfare planks were allowed to turn into bargaining chips, even outright electoral bribes...”

reductions elsewhere.

Our public finances have already taken a heavy drubbing under the sustained mismanagement of the ruling gang of cowboys. We do not need more. Welfare populism would be a highly-explosive mix, best avoided if we want to leave anything standing for our children and grandchildren.

* It might not then be the best of times for the winning team at the next elections to assume responsibility for steering the ship of state given the prevailing economic situation. What will it take for the next government to deliver in these circumstances?

The global security, trade, and exchange environment is disquieting. The legacy of the MSM's eight long years of appalling mismanagement, to say the least, is disgusting. It is the worst of any outgoing government going into election. We can marshal the numbers to support that. But the real question is whether all this suffices for the electorate to turn their backs on this bunch?

The Kistnen campaign log book of the last general election in the Prime Minister's constituency has surfaced in the wake of his murder and is now in the public domain thanks to the stellar work done by Mr Rama Valayden and his indefatigable team. It reveals a well-oiled electioneering machinery, operating like clockwork, with quasi unlimited funding to slant, if not rig, votes towards their candidates. Unless you bank on a newly-discovered political maturity in a large part of the electorate, you can only win if this vote perverting juggernaut is stopped dead in its tracks.

☞ Cont. on page 13

'There is nothing worse than populism to corrode any political system'

Populism is not known as a good breeding ground for nation-builders and statesmen

☞ Cont. from page 12

And stopped *en temps utile*, i.e., before votes are cast. Who can do that? Our Supreme Court? The Electoral Commissioner?

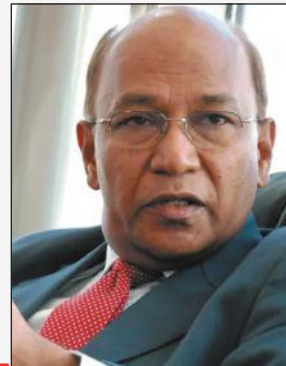
We should be in no haste to count our chickens. The challengers of the incumbents must dispose of the same means to market their programme for our country. If the financial outlay rules are breached in the same manner as revealed in painstaking detail by Mr Kistnen for Constituency No. 8 in the last election, and the electorate doesn't change its mindset and continues to be swayed by bribes and sweeteners, chances are that the challengers will come a cropper. To even the odds, a lot of advance footwork is required with the Electoral Supervisory Commission among others. I also feel that the Opposition should file Private Member's motions to try their chance at obtaining a debate on same-day vote counting in each polling centre, total transparency and all-party supervision of the infamous "computer room," and assorted other gripes on the electoral process.

With some major changes in the process, a combined opposition front behind him, and a slate of candidates with complementary skills and aptitudes, I believe Navin Ramgoolam will stand a good chance of dislodging the incumbents and pull our country out of the quagmire. For him, it'll be a case of "it's now or never" to borrow from Elvis Presley.

But unlike Elvis in that eponymous song, we cannot spend a lifetime waiting for the right time. The time is whenever the election is called. We just have got to make it the right time!

*** The Opposition's reluctance or inability to come up with a credible front has left the field open to the MSM-led government to do as it pleases during the last three years. Nevertheless, most people today would not really know which way the political wind is blowing at this point in time. Do you trust your party making the right choice next time round - one that the electorate will take heed of, or will it take heed of what the**

“The Opposition has announced a common front for the municipal elections already. I expect that this will pave the way for a similar united front, come the general elections. The stakes have never been so high at any previous consultation since Independence. Does a majority of the local electorate wish to continue with the current team to continue on the journey to perdition which we started in 2014? Or do we thank the incumbents and give them a well-earned Order of the Boot?”



electorate says to it?

Let me preface my reply to this complex set of questions, which touch directly not only on party-political issues but also on the presumed and yet-to-be-revealed preferences of the electorate ahead of elections, by clarifying that my views and opinions are very much my own and are not coloured by my appurtenance to any particular political formation. My personal political trajectory and my proximity to Labour are both a matter of public record.

To begin with, the crushing parliamentary majority that the MSM alliance wrested from the last electoral consultation by means fair or foul — the jury is still out on this — left very little room for manoeuvre to the much-diminished and disparate Opposition under normal circumstances. But circumstances have been anything but normal.

The DNA of the governing party, more a family business than anything else, shows little trace of the democratic instinct or any recognition or respect for the rights of the *other*, the latter an essential element of a working democracy. The MSM alliance interpreted their electoral predominance as *carte blanche* from the electorate to do exactly as they pleased. They thus proceeded to impose the party's diktat on every single body, institution, organisation, publicly-owned companies, regulatory bodies — you name it — and, in short order, we ended up with all of them singing from the MSM playbook, burying any trace of checks and balances.

They also buried accountability and transparency and threw a pall of secrecy

and opacity on the country, under cover of which they plundered the public treasury, accumulated reserves, and other state assets even as a number of strange and unexplained suicides among public procurement officers took place in the country as well as a political murder which the police is perceived to have covered up *illico presto* as a suicide. The occasional defection from the ruling party ranks to join the Opposition could not stop the onward march of the MSM to trample the Opposition and stifle dissent.

The Opposition has a thankless task in such a situation, even if the National Assembly were run properly with an even-handed Speaker. But our Speakership is a national disgrace, suspending and expelling the Opposition from the House at will, while stymieing Opposition efforts to get their voice heard in the environs of the parliament. The Prime Minister, who appointed this Speaker, weighs in as Leader of the House, to make our parliament still less effective by imposing long parliamentary vacations to avoid embarrassing Private Notice Questions on burning issues.

What a monster we breed when we allow corruption and nepotism to take root, and proliferate unchecked! The Opposition is not to blame for the perception of its inability to function given the severe constraints imposed on them by the regime. We shouldn't be surprised that they haven't displayed a common front on all issues: their members do belong to different political formations and we should not expect total convergence of views on each and every issue they have faced over the last three years.

*** The Labour Party has lately held discussions on socio-economic and political issues with Resistans ek Alternativ, which usually comes forward with interesting ideas that could help bolster the LP's 'rupture' agenda. But NR is clearly trying to ride two horses at the same time given that the ReA's ideological bent may be in opposition with that pursued by both the PMSD and the MMM. Is Ramgoolam playing politics or**

is he really sincere about his 'rupture' agenda?

I salute the dedication and commitment of Mr Ashok Subron and his colleagues in ReA who are doing a superb job of focusing on what they see as no longer appropriate for our election system half a century after independence.

Our democracy is enriched by such dedicated crusaders focusing on issues which the main parties are not yet ready or willing to espouse. It's healthy that ReA should have met the Labour Party leader, presumably on this matter. But there are more, and bigger, issues about our elections (and their organisation and supervision), our unequal constituencies, our Constitution, and the judiciary's approach to election petitions, that also need reforming if we really want to bring our democratic framework up to date.

I am sure a broad coalition to support such a reform package is worth fighting for. Shouldn't we, therefore, encourage more such meetings with the other political leaders in the budding alliance of opposition forces?

The *rupture* agenda will have many other dimensions and, I am sure, will be the subject of consultation with all coalition partners in due course. That is a bridge we should prepare to cross when the time comes.

*** Which way is the political wind blowing?**

The written press, independent or partisan, private radio channels, and social media have resisted snooping and muzzling efforts from the regime and its minions, and outright intimidation and persecution from the police. They continue to provide an avalanche of views on major issues and, regime trolls notwithstanding, the prevailing wind is firmly against the incumbents, except on the national TV operator's many channels which sing the praises of the regime round the clock. Whether this sentiment will change as elections, municipal or general, draw near will be a function of the rising political maturity of the electorate, campaign strategies of the various contenders, and — why not say it? — the capacity to resist the inducements expected to be deployed by the cash-rich incumbents.

The Opposition has announced a common front for the municipal elections already. I expect that this will pave the way for a similar united front, come the general elections. The stakes have never been so high at any previous consultation since Independence. Does a majority of the local electorate wish to continue with the current team to continue on the journey to perdition which we started in 2014? Or do we thank the incumbents and give them a well-earned Order of the Boot? And save our country and the coming generations...

That is the ponderous question which will exercise the minds of right-thinking Mauritians as 2023 kicks in. Ponder on!

“I am given to understand that the Privy Council will bend over backwards to avoid taking sides in an overtly political case. Maybe I've got that wrong. What I mean to say is that a Privy Council judgment against the PM is not a foregone conclusion. But will he risk such a possible negative decision before going to the country at the end of his full term? Will his financial backers and his political minders advise against running such a risk...”



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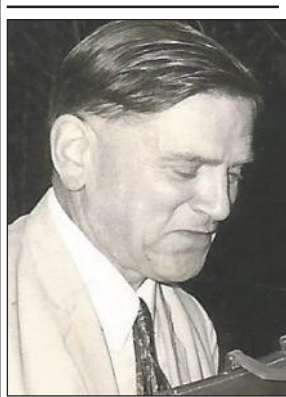
From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

5th Year No 215

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 19 September, 1958

• 'Liberty is an old fact; it has had its heroes and its martyrs in almost every age.' — Edwin Hubbel Chapin



Peter Ibbotson

Mr Barrett has left Mauritius, but before he went, he made it pretty clear that he was not at all pleased with the local trade union movement. Like Mr Young before him, he feels that the number of trade unions is too high, and that the unions themselves are too small and fragmented. Internal troubles and the management of funds bulk too large in the Mauritian trade union movement; meanwhile, the

workers suffer.

Part of the trouble stems from the trade union laws. Ever since the British occupied Mauritius nearly 150 years ago, the employing class have directly or indirectly shaped the laws so as on the one hand to give them full power and protection, and on the other hand to create confusion and rivalry among their opponents. This latter aim is achieved, in the case of trade union legislation, in the law permitting as few as 7 persons to form a trade union. As few as 7! How in the name of all that is wonderful can a union of 7 persons function as a union?

What are the functions of a trade union? The Colonial Department of the British TUC, which celebrates this year its 21st anniversary (and with it 21 years of assistance to colonial trade unions everywhere), lists nine objects as the functions of a union:

1. To secure 100% organisation of workers.
2. To get fair wages and working conditions.
3. To regulate relations and settle disputes between workers and employers, and among the workers themselves, using peaceful means if at all possible.
4. To provide benefits for members.
5. To promote legislation in members' interests.
6. To further lawful political objects affecting labour.
7. To publish suitable propaganda, including newspapers.
8. To further any federal or international body promoting the interests of trade unionism.
9. To promote the welfare of members in other agreed ways.

At the outset let it be well observed and understood that the TUC sees in the union an organisation which must participate in political affairs.

How, I ask again, can these aims and objects be achieved by unions as small as those permitted to exist by the absurd law of Mauritius? And how can such aims and objects be properly achieved when there are competing unions in many industries and professions? I have elsewhere pleaded for one big union for the teachers of Mauritius; the Primary Teachers' Union did me the honour of quoting the relevant section of my plea in their 10th anniversary commemorative booklet. But teachers are not the only group of workers who are split among different unions.

Most serious of course is the rivalry for membership between the Agricultural Workers' Union and the MALA (Mauritius Amalgamated Labourers Association), and between the militant General Port & Harbour Workers'

Set Up A Wages Board!



Guy Rozemont, Pt. Sahadeo, Kenneth Baker, Emmanuel Anquetil, Partab Allgoo, with members of the Mechanical Engineering and Technical Workers' Union

Union and the Union of Stevedores and Dock Workers, which enjoys the support and recommendation of agents of the Parti Mauricien.

The sugar barons have made it clear, for example, that they recognize only the MALA for bargaining purposes, and they signed an agreement with the Association to cover the calendar year 1957, and, unless it were denounced at two months' notice, the calendar year 1958 as well. The rates of pay under this agreement, the employers have said, apply only to members of the MALA, but they are as a matter of course paid to all workers - union members or not. But the figures of union growth show that the Agricultural Workers' Union (not recognised by the employers for bargaining purposes) enjoys more confidence from the workers than does the MALA. Nonetheless, the split among the estate labourers has serious repercussions — instead of combining against the common opponent, the employers, the workers are divided among themselves. They are dissipating resources in inter-union strife instead of using all resources against the employers.

Three choices lie before the sugar industry. First, matters can continue as now. Two unions will continue to exist, one recognised by the employers, one (the more militant) not recognised. The workers as a whole will suffer; only the employers will benefit.

Secondly, the employers can recognise both unions for bargaining purposes, and negotiate wage, etc., agreements with a Joint Board of both unions. This is done in the UK, where agricultural workers are divided among three unions — Agricultural Workers, Transport & General, and General & Municipal — and where the employers negotiate with local wages boards representative of all three unions. This way, the workers would fare better than under the present system; so, the employers would certainly be opposed to it.

Thirdly, the two unions could join forces, and form one big militant union. The unification of two rival unions into one is, however, as the history of trade unionism even in so sophisticated a country as the UK, shows, fraught with difficulties. One of the rival union leaders must be prepared to give way and play second fiddle; and this is often a stumbling block. It is an unnecessary stumbling block; the cardinal principle of trade unionism is that all work for

the benefit of all; no-one should be in a trade union if he is there merely to make a name for himself and to get into a position of power. The union leader — be he president, secretary, or treasurer — is there to work for the welfare of his members, not to ride to petty power on their backs.

And unfortunately, the history of trade unionism in Mauritius (as, I will admit, in the early history of trade unionism in the UK) is littered with examples of men who have either used their union office as a means to political power and advancement, or left their union in a fit of pique when matters have not gone all their own way. I well remember the late

James Maxton telling me that a working-class leader should not deliberately set out to go to Parliament or to prison; but if his union or political activities should lead him to either place (or even to both) he should accept that as part of the normal course of events. Maxton himself, like Fenner Brockway, sampled both — as part of the natural course of his left-wing political career.

Mauritius needs trade unionists who are prepared to give their lives to the development of trade unionism. Mauritius needs selfless union leaders who are prepared to sink personal differences and rivalries and jealousies in order to merge their small, rival unions into large unions which, by being large, can effectively bargain on their members' behalf and can bring pressure to bear on the employers.

We don't want to see, for example, a Union of Grocers' Shop Assistants, a Union of Chemists' Shop Assistants, a Union of Drapers' Shop Assistants, a Union of Butchers' Shop Assistants, and a Union of Bakers' Shop Assistants — five separate splinter unions. Instead, we would want to see a Shop Assistants' Union for workers in *all* kinds of retail shop. Yet the above is an example of the fragmentation that does occur in the organisation of trade unions in Mauritius; a fragmentation which does nothing but harm to the trade union movement as a whole and also operates against the best interests of the workers concerned.

One of the faults of many Mauritians — and I rely not upon the words of reactionary anti-socialists, but upon the words of many Mauritian socialists and workers with whom, over the last five years, I have had contact either orally or by correspondence — is desire to see their names in print and to hold some public or semi-public office. The trade union laws permit 7 people to form a union. So, 7 people get together and form a union. One becomes president, one secretary, one treasurer, one assistant secretary. The other three form the Executive Committee. The secretary then communicates to the press (daily and periodically) that such-and-such union has been formed and registered, the offices and committee being MM. A, B, C, D, E, F and G. All seven have thus got their names into print, and all seven are office bearers of a sort.

● Cont. on page 16

From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

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TIMESFriday 19
September, 1958

Set Up A Wages Board!

● Cont. from page 15

Note that they are office bearers; the minuteness of their union and the light (well-nigh non-existent) duties of their offices do not matter — they are office bearers.

This unfortunate attitude is not found among employers' organisations. The employers are ready to stand together (whatever may be the state of their relations in business) to pay the workers as little as they can. The workers in their turn should take a lesson from the employers, and sink their selfish desire for advancement in the interest of the many. It is the Community, not the Individual, that counts.

But if the trade unions continue weak, and continue to be bedevilled by personal rivalries to the detriment of the movement as a whole, then the Government must be prepared to step in and protect the workers. It is agreed that the labourers on the estates are underpaid — agreed by all except the employers, that is, and by the MALA leaders who, by not giving notice on October 31 to terminate the last wage agreement, tacitly gave consent to the thesis that labourers' wages were adequate. Since wages are too low, and since the workers' union has been unable to get proper wages from the Sugar Producers' Association, the Government has a duty to step in and see that adequate wages are paid.

Where trade union organisation is incapable of fully representing the interests of the workers, the Government is empowered (*and has the moral duty*) to intervene and establish rates of pay under the Minimum Wages Ordinance. It has done so for workers in several industries, e.g., passenger road transport, printing and privately employed messengers. As long as the agricultural workers' trade unions are split and rivals, the workers' pecuniary interests can adequately be protected only by the establishment of a Minimum Wages Board. And this Board must scrap the inhuman, iniquitous, approach of its pre-war predecessor, which decided that a man need earn only half his monthly income since his wife could earn some money too and he would be able to make a bit more on the side! It must approach its task by making (for publication in full as a sessional paper) a full-scale survey of the finances of the sugar industry, so that we would know at last just how big the estates' profits are and just where the estates' money does go. That the estates can afford to pay higher wages is indisputable; just how much higher, though, is something we don't know and can't find out — unless the government institutes (as part of the preliminaries to the establishment of a Minimum Wages Board for estate labourers) the full-scale economic survey of the sugar industry that I have adumbrated.

Ideally, the trade unions should develop without the need for government intervention by way of Wages Boards. In the particular circumstances of Mauritius however, there is really no alternative to government action on behalf of the workers. Tacit support to my comment and to my earlier strictures on certain unfortunate aspects of trade unionism in Mauritius, is afforded by *Le Flambeau* of August 22 which refers to *un genre du rivalité de personelle* imbuing the unions *souvent un léger malentendu au sein d'un petit noyau syndical suffit pour créer un division complète. J.O. et Tribune Ouvrière* echoes the appeal for trade union unity: *Mr Barrett... a dit que ce serait trahir la classe ouvrière que de rester plus longtemps ennemi l'un de l'autre. Il a fait un vibrant appel à l'unité.*

The last-quoted paper asks that *sera réalisée la fière devise du Trade Unionism United We Stand!* Father Dethise in *Advance* has said that Mr Barrett was right to ask union leaders to sink their differences and *de s'unir au service de la classe ouvrière.* But while we are waiting for this trade union unity, with the attendant benefits it will assuredly bring to the workers, the labourers and their children are going hungry. The union cannot help. The Government cannot stand by any longer; a Wage Board must be set up and the labourer's wages must be increased.

Remembrance

Jacques Caroopen

Feroze Bundhun
London

Jacques Caroopen, a former President of the Anglo-Mauritius Association in London died peacefully on Tuesday 27 December 2022. He was 81. He was admitted to St Helier Hospital in Sutton, Surrey four weeks ago with a serious ailment.

Jacques left Mauritius in the early sixties after completing his HSC at the Trinity College in Port Louis where he was the very first student to qualify at the school recently opened by the late Claude Obeegadoo, a distant relative of Jacques. The school then offered Jacques the opportunity to study for a degree in London, where he qualified as a Tax Inspector at the Inland Revenue. He soon saw many opportunities in the private sector, particularly in the life insurance business where he excelled over many years through sheer hard work, often taking second administrative jobs in the hospitality sector in the evenings in order to secure a network of customer base.

He built a comfortable life for himself and his family in high-end neighbourhoods in the suburbs of London; he frequently travelled abroad thanks, not least, to his success in dabbling in real estate investments in addition to his day job. It is fair to say that, as a result, he must have seen the world many times over.

In his sixties, when progressively winding down on his professional activities, he returned to his studies by reading for a degree in the History of Art, specialising in the Renaissance. This enabled him to spend a considerable amount of time in Italy, particularly in Venice in which he became an expert, often encouraging and guiding his friends throughout the city. When in America, he would often invite his friends to share his ex-



perience of Tampa in Florida where he regularly holidayed during the winter months in Europe.

Jacques was a man of great culture, well immersed in the arts and became a keen attendee of the Proms at the Albert Hall in London, which annually organised the greatest festival of classical music in Europe, often inviting many friends to share his musical interest as his guests. During the intervals Jacques ensured that there was a proper picnic in the boot of his car to accompany the well chilled bubbly.

The Montreux Jazz Festival was also of particular interest to him.

Even in sports he would secure many tickets for his friends, in advance for the Wimbledon Championships through his membership of local tennis clubs. I remember on one occasion it rained nonstop throughout the day so that no play could take place at all. The day was spent just as splendidly at the bar over champagne and strawberries filled with laughter. He had an eclectic taste in food as well, often sharing his interests with friends and recommending many exclusive restaurants where he enjoyed many connections.

Jacques was a widely read and cultured man happy to share his experiences of life with many people. He was a man comfortable with himself and at ease in any situation. He enjoyed life to the full and displayed his generosity liberally; although well anchored in the UK throughout his life, he nonetheless returned to his homeland regularly if only to remain in touch with his many friends and relatives. He would willingly travel abroad to visit his friends who will miss him greatly.

His wife Jane and two daughters Tracie and Melanie with a grandson Raphael survive him.

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Elections to watch in 2023 – what's at stake as millions head to the ballot box around the globe

● Cont. from page 2

Arguably for the first time since the 1980s, each of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria has produced a serious presidential contender: Atiku Abubakar who is of Hausa-Fulani descent, the Yoruba former Lagos governor Bola Tinubu and former Anambra governor Peter Obi, a member of the Igbo.

While this might seem like progress – and has advanced inter-ethnic cooperation in the presidential campaign – it also dramatically increases the risk of no clear winner under the constitution's formula that requires both a plurality of votes and a geographical distribution of support. A runoff has never before taken place, and the electoral commission would have only a week to organize it.

Security and poverty are key electoral themes. Buhari won in 2015 by prioritizing economic growth, anti-corruption and the defeat of the world's deadliest insurgency, Boko Haram. Yet today, more than 80 million Nigerians remain in poverty, while insecurity ravages the country. The scale of violence plaguing Nigeria has not been seen since the civil war ended in 1970, while the geographical scope is unprecedented. Meanwhile, only 15% of Nigerians feel more loyalty to their nation than to their ethnic group.

This raises the specter of electoral violence and voter intimidation in the run-up to the Feb. 23 vote. Political violence, both between and within political parties, increased in 2022. Despite this, candidates have been largely running on hopeful messages about economic diversification, anti-corruption and opportunities for Nigeria's youth.

Turkey (June 18)

By Ahmet Kuru, professor of political science at San Diego State University

People in Turkey tend to call every presidential election historic – but the June 2023 election will truly be historic. It will determine whether the increasingly autocratic rule of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will continue to dominate the country's politics or not. What's at stake is not simply "politics" in the narrow sense of the term, but also the direction in economic policy, religion, education and many other fields.

If Erdogan wins, it could portend a further erosion of the remaining opposition in Turkish public life, especially given his past record of authoritarianism and vengefulness. Indeed, there is already a suspicion that potential presidential candidates are being targeted, with the popular mayor of Istanbul being sentenced to prison in December – a conviction that if held up on appeal would bar him from running for any political office.

The danger is the Turkish opposition will lose hope for the future. It could also exacerbate the country's "brain drain" problem – as well-educated people, including medical doctors, academics, and businesspeople, migrate to Western countries, weakening the opposition at home.

An Erdogan loss would be hugely consequential. Those who have been silenced under his rule will be able to speak up again. Over a hundred thousand people have been jailed as part of Erdogan's political purge. It would not surprise me that in the event of an Erdogan loss, legal action is taken against him and his civil servants over alleged abuses and against his crony-capitalists over alleged corruption.

The outcome of the election will also determine the future of religion-state relations. Turkey's Directorate of Religious Affairs, which controls 80,000 mosques, is a major ally of Erdogan. Any change in the administration is likely to result in curtailing of the directorate's powers.

The 2023 presidential election will be fought over politics, economics and religion. If Erdogan wins, he will frame himself as the second founder of Turkey, after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. If he loses, his political, business, and religious allies will face the risk of being expunged.

Zimbabwe (likely July-August)

By Miles Tendi, associate professor of politics at the University of Oxford

The 2023 election in Zimbabwe will be the second national vote to take place after the downfall of the country's former leader Robert Mugabe.

The country's last election, in 2018, occurred a year after a military coup ended Robert Mugabe's oppressive 37-year-long leadership. But contrary to the hopes of many Zimbabweans and foreign governments, that ballot did not prove to be a momentous break from the country's extensive history of disputed and violent elections – underlining that powerful systemic problems, such as the conflation of the ruling ZANU PF party and the state, generate flawed elections in Zimbabwe.

Whether Zimbabwe can finally stage an election that is universally accepted as credible is one of the key issues in 2023. A credible election in itself will not bring about consequential political, economic and social reforms. But Western states and international donors such as the International Monetary Fund will be looking for an unblemished national vote as a prerequisite to earnest economic and diplomatic re-engagement with Zimbabwe after years of strained relations.

Observers will also be hoping for improvements on women's political rights. The gendered nature of political leadership, violence, election campaigns and voting behaviour have precluded equal representation for women in Zimbabwean politics. Only 26 of the 210 constituencies in the 2018 parliamentary election were won by women candidates. Although four women ran for president in 2018, none managed more than 4% of the vote share.

The future of opposition politics is also on the ballot. Since 2018, the main opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party has had to contend with state repression, internal splits and underfunding. In the intervening years it has failed to get large numbers of new voters onto the electoral register.

If the ruling ZANU PF party pulls off the overwhelming election victory it is working towards, it is likely that the opposition will be further saddled with division and disillusionment, posing an existential threat to the kind of vibrant opposition politics led by the MDC in the past two decades. And with no strong opposition to challenge and keep a check on ZANU PF, the danger is authoritarian rule will be solidified.

Argentina (October 29)

By Eduardo Gamara, professor of politics and international relations at Florida International University

Even with a World Cup to savour, many Argentines are pretty gloomy going into the 2023 election year – for good reason. The nation's economy has been on the skids for a long time and it has one of the highest per capita debts in Latin America. On top of this there are sky-high inflation, low wages and poor growth – all worsened by the government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Not all of these problems are the sole making of President Alberto Fernández and his powerful vice president, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner – both from the center-left Peronist faction. In fact, former President Mauricio Macri



Will it be 'V' for victory for Cristina Fernández de Kirchner? Juan Mabromata/AFP via Getty Images

racked up massive levels of debt to the IMF before being voted out in 2019. But it is fair to say that Fernández and Fernández de Kirchner have been unable to solve the country's economic problems.

Moreover, the pair have been plagued by other problems, notably corruption – both old-style political patronage and modern corruption based in drug trafficking throughout the country.

Indeed on Dec. 6, 2022, Fernández de Kirchner was sentenced to six years in jail in a scandal over a kickback scheme that saw public contracts go to a friend in return for bribes.

Some are even predicting that the combination of mis-handling the economy and the corruption scandal could bring an end to Peronism, the political philosophy that has governed Argentina for much of last 70 years. Indeed the Peronists appear to be struggling with unifying around a candidate to contest the election.

Meanwhile, the party of Mauricio Macri is similarly split, with the former president facing strong challenges from within his own party.

These political and economic circumstances may favor a third contender: Javier Milei, a populist libertarian who has been rising in the polls and whose brusque style has drawn comparisons with Donald Trump.

Pakistan (by end of 2023)

By Ayesha Jalal, professor of history at Tufts University

Pakistani elections are all about power. In particular, this one will be all about whether ousted Prime Minister Imran Khan can get the two-third majority he says he wants to govern Pakistan. Anything less will not satisfy the former national cricket star.

A big question is when the elections will take place. In Pakistan, general elections are not held under an incumbent government. Instead, an interim government – typically made up of technocrats – takes over with an election having to take place within 90 days.



Imran Khan is hoping for a two-thirds majority. Aamir Qureshi/AFP via Getty Images

But with the ruling coalition seemingly intent on holding on to power for as long as possible while the country faces an economic crisis, environmental disaster and a credibility crisis it is unclear when the national assembly will dissolve and an interim government take over. And that could mean pushing the election toward the end of the year.

Either way, it will be a consequential election. It remains to be seen if the current coalition government – which ousted Khan's Tehreek-e-Insaf party last year – will hold together, as it consists of a number of parties.

Khan has said he wants a two-third majority to bring about the constitutional changes he would like. So if he fails to get that, will he still be satisfied?

Either way, the 2023 election is unlikely to be the answer to Pakistan's woes. Whoever is in charge after will need to paper over the economic cracks with the help of the International Monetary Fund; without a further bailout, Pakistan won't have the liquidity it needs to function.

You can never rule out electoral violence. Pakistan is awash with guns and is very polarized. Violence marred the election in 2013 and there has been recent violence in northern Pakistan as well as the shooting of Khan at a rally.

That said, the hope is the nation's security forces can keep a lid on violence during the election.

I've indulged over the holidays. If I'm healthy the rest of the time, does it matter?

We all eat and drink a bit too much over the holidays. But how guilty do we really need to feel about it?



Emma Beckett
Senior Lecturer (Food Science
and Human Nutrition)
University of Newcastle

The holidays are often called the “silly season” – a time when we eat, drink and be merry. But these holiday indulgences can lead to feelings of guilt and fear that we've undone all the healthy habits from the rest of the year. But how much do you really need to worry about the impacts of holiday overeating?

Yes, weight gain can happen in the holidays

There are studies that show weight gain can and does occur in the silly season. But on average it's not as dramatic as diet culture would have us believe, coming in at about 0.7kg.

However, because humans are complex and varied, and nutrition science is hard, there are studies with varied findings. Some show that despite significant increases in overall energy intake and reductions in diet quality, weight gain doesn't occur.

Importantly, much of this research comes from the northern hemisphere where the major holidays coincide with winter. And these studies focus on weight, not health. Weight is just a marker that's convenient to measure, but health is more complicated.

Food is not just fuel

Food isn't just energy and nutrients. It's a big part of our cultures and celebrations, and contributes to social, cultural and emotional wellbeing.

While it's harder to study, nourishing our souls with foods that connect us to our loved ones and our traditions is just as important as the role food plays in nourishing our bodies.

Holiday feasts are also an opportunity to share meals. Sharing meals contributes to our emotional wellbeing and happiness.

Homeostasis is a scientific term that describes how



Drinking too much over the festive season is not without risk.
pexels/karolina grabowska, CC BY

systems self-regulate. The word comes from the ancient Greek words for “similar” and “steady”.

In living things it means that biology can adapt to changes to keep things in their normal constant state. Essentially, our body is always making little constant biological changes to help things stay the same. This is how we regulate things like our body temperature, blood sugar, blood pressure and other systems important for survival.

The principles of homeostasis also apply to our eating and metabolism. If we eat more for one or two holiday feast days (or even weeks) our biology works to minimise the impacts. This is also why losing weight on restrictive diets can be hard – homeostasis means as we reduce our energy intake our bodies adjust to using less energy.

So for most people, discrete periods of indulgence aren't likely to be the major determinants of health outcomes. It's more likely the patterns we follow most of the time will influence our long term health.

Biology and social norms both mean restrictive diets are hard to maintain long-term. Some people are more successful in maintaining a balanced diet when indulging is allowed.

And now science has helped you to relax a little, a few words of caution.

Drink in moderation

Over-consumption of alcohol can cause increased risk for chronic diseases.

Excess alcohol consumption in the festive period increases the risk of alcohol-related harm, including accidents and violence.

Staying hydrated by alternating with non-alcoholic beverages helps reduce how much you drink and how bad a hangover is, but it won't eliminate the risks.

Food safety risks

Festive eating, with sharing, travelling and overcrowded fridges increases our risks of food poisoning. Summer holidays also bring the added risk of heat.

You want to share food and joy, not germs, so remember your basic food safety rules like hand washing, avoiding cross contamination of uncooked meats and other foods, storing food chilled, and heating thoroughly.

It's also a good idea to make sure you talk to your guests or hosts about food allergens to make sure everyone has a safe holiday feast.

The bottom line

What we eat is a big part of determining our health, but adding a side serving of guilt to your festive feast isn't healthy either.

For true healthy choices, focus on balance and moderation for the bulk of the year and for most of your choices, but social and cultural eating is part of balance.

Enjoying your celebration foods doesn't need to mean throwing away all your healthy habits, but healthy eating and healthy indulgence can co-exist if we let it.

Leadership

Selling a comb to a bald monk

Three professional salespeople submitted their resumes to a major corporation. They all had similar qualifications, so the interviewer held a sales competition to determine who would get the job.

The goal was to make a sale of combs to monks at any mountain shrine. The monks should be of the tradition where they have to shave their heads.

The interviewer said, “You have three days, and the person who sells the most will get the job.”

The three applicants came back with their findings after three days.

The first candidate reported, “It was a very difficult situation, but I sold one comb. At first, they accused me of openly mocking them, and they scolded me. Because I was so dissatisfied, I decided to

leave. On the way back, however, I noticed a young monk scratching his head incessantly due to an itch. He only bought one comb after I assured him it would reduce his itching.”

The second candidate said, “That's good, but I did better. I made ten comb sales.”

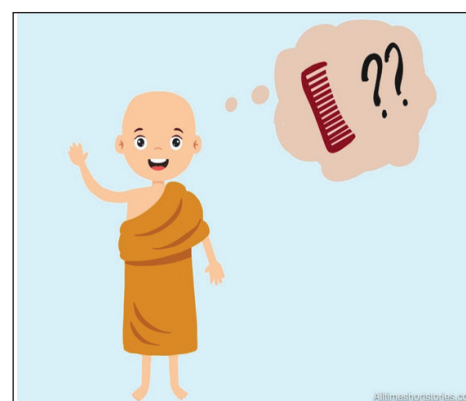
The interviewer was impressed and asked, “How did you do it?”

The candidate replied, “I noticed that the visitors' hair was all messed up because of the strong winds they encountered on the way to the temple. I persuaded the monk to hand out combs to the worshippers so that they would seem more reverent.”

The third candidate excitedly interrupted, “Not so fast; I sold more than both of them.”

When asked how many were sold, the candidate said: “It must be over hundreds.”

“Wow!,” the interviewer questioned, “How did you do it?”



“I praised the Senior Master of one of the largest temples for his service to the community and for creating a sacred space for worship. He thanked all who came to see him and expressed gratitude for their loyalty and commitment. I advised that he should give his guests Buddha's blessing and a souvenir.”

“I showed him the wooden combs I'd etched with inspirational words and explained how they'd be used daily to encourage people to be kind to others. The concept appealed to him, so

he placed an order for a thousand brushes.”

“You got fortunate,” one of the other candidates sniped sourly.

The interviewer said, “Not really. He had the comb etched before he went there, so he had thought it out. If not this temple, then another one will desire it.”

The third hopeful candidate grinned and said, “There is more. I returned to the temple the day before yesterday to see how the Master was doing. Many tourists who visited the monastery and received Buddha's blessing etched on the comb went home and informed their friends and families about it. The number of daily visitors continues to rise. As a result, the comb is in high demand, and people are willing to pay a premium for it. The Master predicts the temple's popularity will cause him to quickly run out of available combs and require him to place an additional order.”

Moral: Planning and creative thinking are essential for any successful leader.



The Benefit of Polygamy

A lady professor was invited for a lecture and the topic she chose to talk about was on polygamy.

She talked on the essence of polygamy, why women should embrace it and support their husbands towards achieving it. Her emphasis was that women should allow their husbands take an additional wife without grudges, saying the benefit is enormous.

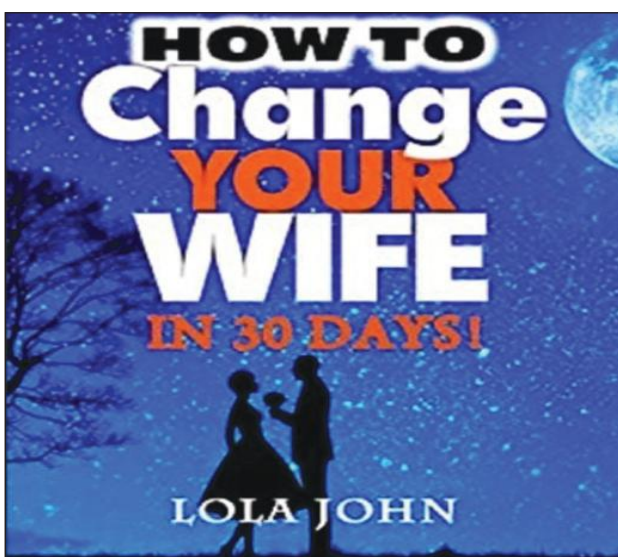
As she kept emphasising on this point, a lady from the audience raised her hand, stood up and introduced herself before speaking.

Lady: Professor, I really appreciate this topic because I am relieved of my fear. I never knew you are this simple and understanding. Your message has given me the opportunity to open up to you: 'I have been married to your husband for the past four years, and between us, we have a set of twins.'

To the greatest surprise of all in the hall, the Professor slumped and was rushed to the hospital. After she was revived, she opened her eyes to see the same lady standing by her bedside.

Lady: Professor I have never set my eyes on your husband, I don't even know him, I said this to test you and you failed. Next time, please lecture on subjects that you can do or take!

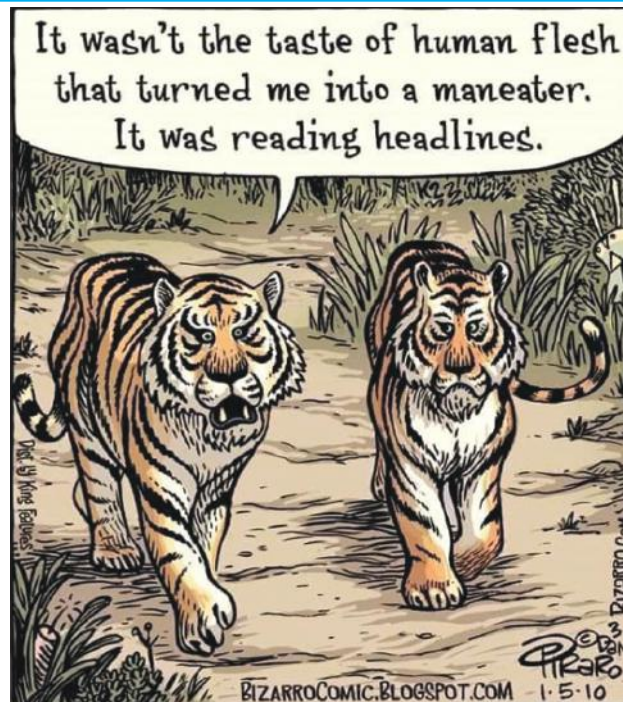
The judge looked at the defendant brought before him and asked: 'Haven't I seen you sometime earlier?'



A book titled: "HOW TO CHANGE YOUR WIFE IN 30 DAYS" sold two million copies in one week, before it was discovered that the title had a spelling error!

The correct title is: "HOW TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE IN 30 DAYS".

After the correction, for the whole month, only 3 copies were sold.



'Yes, your honour, I taught your son to play the drums?'

'Twenty years!'

Brought before the judge at night court, the defendant was asked his name, occupation and charge.

He said: 'I'm sparks, electrician, and I'm charged with battery.'

The judge ordered: 'Put this man in a dry cell.'

A knight went off to fight in the holy crusades but before leaving he made his wife wear a chastity belt. After tightly securing her nether regions, he handed the key to his best friend with the instructions that if he is not back within seven years to unlock his wife and set her free.

The knight then rode off on the first leg of his journey to the holy land, but he had barely travelled for half an hour that he suddenly heard the sound of pounding hooves behind him. He turned to see that it was his friend.

'What is the problem?' asked the knight

His best friend replied: 'You gave me the wrong key.'

A chief executive was interviewing ambitious young lawyers for a company post.

'I'm sure you can understand that in the business such as our ours, our personal integrity must be beyond question, so what I really need to know is, are you honest?' said the chief executive.

'Honest?' replied a young lawyer. 'Let me tell you something about honesty, I'm so honest that my father lent me \$14000 for my studies, and I paid back every last cent the minute I tried my first case.'

'That's very impressive, and what sort of case was it?' asked the boss.

The lawyer squirmed in his seat and admitted: 'My father sued me for the money.'

A judge was hearing a drink-driving case but the defendant, who had a history of driving under influence, insisted trial by jury. It was nearly closing time and getting jurors would take time, so the judge called a recess and went out in the main lobby where he found a dozen lawyers and told them that they were to be the jury. The lawyers thought this would be a novel

experience and volunteered to act as jury.

The prosecution and defence cases were heard in little over twenty minutes, and it was obvious that the defendant was guilty. The jurors retired to their room, and the judge thinking that they would return with their verdict in a matter of minutes, prepared to go home. But after two nights, the jury of lawyers did not show any signs.

The judge was furious and eventually sent the bailiff into the jury room to find out what was delaying the verdict.

When the bailiff returned, the judge asked impatiently: 'Well, have they reached a verdict yet?'

The bailiff shook his head and said: 'Verdict? They're still arguing over who should preside!'

A girl turned to his fiancé and said: 'When we get married, I want to share all your troubles and worries.'

'That's very kind of you, darling, but I don't have any troubles or worries.'

She replied: 'Well, that's because we aren't married yet.'

Before marriage, a man yearns for the woman he loves. After marriage the 'y' becomes silent.

A guy was telling one of his friends at work: 'You know I never realized just how much my wife loved me until I was sick last week. When the milkman and the postman walked down the drive, she ran out and shouted excitedly: 'My husband's home!'



My dog ran out of petrol

A little girl wants to take her dog for a walk, so she asks her mother whether she can take Lulu for a walk around the block.

Her mother says "No, sweetie. Lulu is in heat."

"What does that mean?" asks the girl.

"Why don't you go and ask your dad in the garage?" says the busy mother.

So, the girl goes to her father in the garage and asks "I want to take Lulu for a walk, but mom says she's in heat and to ask you about it."

The father takes a rag, pours some petrol on it, and then rubs Lulu's backside with it to disguise the scent. "Now you can take her for a walk", he says. "Just don't let her off the leash, and she'll be fine".

So, the little girl skips happily away with Lula trotting along beside her.

A few minutes later she returns with an empty leash, and no Lulu. Concerned, her dad asked "Where's Lulu, sweetie?"

"She ran out of gas halfway around the block," the girl replied, "so the neighbor's dog is giving her a push home."

Life's Lessons

Just Leave it!

It's a wonderful sentence. If we know the value of it, we won't be suffering as much as we do in our lives.

- Try convincing a person once or twice. If he or she refuses to get convinced, just leave it!
- When the children grow up and take their own decisions, do not impose, just leave it!
- Your frequency doesn't match with everyone in life. If you can't connect with someone, just leave it!

- After a certain age, if someone criticises you, don't get upset, just leave it!
- When you realise that nothing is in your hands, stop worrying about others and the future. Just leave it!
- When the gap between your wish list and your capabilities increases, stop self-expectations. Just leave it!
- Everyone's path of life, duration of life, quality of life is different, so stop comparing. Just leave it!
- Life has given you such a wonderful treasure of experience, stop counting what you don't have... just leave it!

That's Life

Difficult Days

« Today was a difficult day," said Pooh.

There was a pause.

"Do you want to talk about it?" asked Piglet.

"No," said Pooh after a bit. "No, I don't think I do."

"That's okay," said Piglet, and he came and sat beside his friend.

"What are you doing?" asked Pooh.

"Nothing, really," said Piglet. "Only, I know what difficult days are like. I quite often don't feel like talking about it on my difficult days either.

"But goodness," continued Piglet, "Difficult days are so much easier when you know you've got someone there for you. And I'll always be here for you, Pooh."

And as Pooh sat there, working through in his head



his difficult day, while the solid, reliable Piglet sat next to him quietly, swinging his little legs...he thought that his best friend had never been more right."

— Author Unknown

Sending thoughts to those having a difficult day today and hope you have your own Piglet to sit beside you

Life's Talk

I'm slowly learning...

— Stevie Flood

I'm slowly learning that I don't have to react to everything that bothers me.

I'm slowly learning that the energy it takes to react to every bad thing that happens to you drains you and stops you from seeing the other good things in life.

I'm learning that I'm not going to be everyone's cup of tea and I won't be able to get everyone to treat me the way I want to be treated and that's okay.

I'm slowly learning that trying so hard to 'win' anyone is just a waste of time and energy and it fills you with nothing but emptiness.

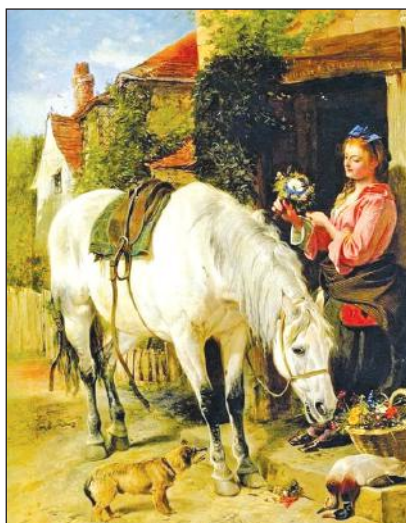
I'm slowly learning that not reacting doesn't mean I'm okay with things, it just means I'm choosing to rise above it.

I'm choosing to take the lesson it has served and learn from it.

I'm choosing to be the bigger person. I'm choosing my peace of mind because that's what I truly need.

I don't need more drama.

I don't need people making me feel like I'm not good enough.



I don't need fights and arguments and fake connections.

I'm slowly learning that sometimes not saying anything at all says everything.

I'm slowly learning that reacting to things that upset you gives someone else power over your emotions.

You can't control what others do, but you can control how you respond, how you handle it, how you perceive it and how much of it you want to take personally.

I'm slowly learning that most of

the time, these situations say nothing about you and a lot about the other person.

I'm slowly learning that maybe all these disappointments are just there to teach us how to love ourselves because that will be the armour and the shield we need against the people who try to bring us down.

They will save us when people try to shake our confidence or when they try to make us feel like we're worthless.

I'm also learning that even if I react, it won't change anything, it won't make people suddenly love and respect me, it won't magically change their minds.

Sometimes it's better to just let things be, let people go, don't fight for closure, don't ask for explanations, don't chase answers and don't expect people to understand where you're coming from.

I'm slowly learning that life is better lived when you don't centre it on what's happening around you and centre it on what's happening inside you instead.

Work on yourself and your inner peace and you'll come to realize that not reacting to every little thing that bothers you is the first ingredient to living a happy and healthy life.

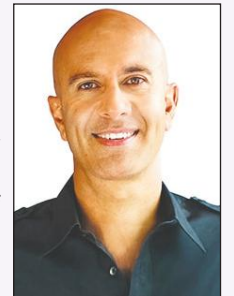
HR Diary

Life's Lessons

Key lessons 2022 taught me

Robin Sharma

Humanitarian & Leadership
Missionary



I'm in an Italian hotel room as I write this message. Fresh air fills the place, country music plays and I renew after 3 weeks of intense travel for leadership events. Here are some key lessons 2022 taught me:

- Deep change is the perfect time to work on your heroism, fearlessness and service to many.
- Getting really fit is the one habit that lifts every habit.
- That fasting increases my energy exponentially, keeps my focus clear and saves on my grocery bills.
- That few things bring you as much joy as creating "magical moments" for your family.
- That other people's opinions about you are none of your business.
- That reading for one hour every single day is a beautiful pursuit in a world suffering from broken focus syndrome.
- That being the hardest working person in the room is never a bad thing.
- That we are nomadic as a species and our souls come alive when we travel.
- That people have never been so interested in personal growth and professional mastery as now.
- That there are no extra people on the planet and that every one of us is equal, fascinating and wonderful.
- That dogs are incredible creatures.
- That just because some people can be mean doesn't mean you should ever be mean.
- That forgiveness is a productivity accelerator and understanding is the gateway into forgiveness.
- That having that special someone who gets you, encourages you and truly loves you for who you are is a gargantuan blessing.
- That rest is a secret success weapon and napping is the habit of giants.
- That digital media is a gorgeous tool and a dangerous master.
- That too many good people are destroying their futures watching inane videos on their smart phones.
- That silence, solitude and stillness early every morning is one of the finest elite performance rituals.
- That joy, peace and freedom is 1000x more valuable than fame, fortune and applause.
- That most superheroes are anonymous.
- That reading the news must be done in careful moderation.
- That writing handwritten thank-you notes brings me great joy.
- That doing the thing which is hardest to do is generally the thing which is wisest to do.
- That I probably only have 25 summers left so I better upgrade my passion for life even more.

Healthy Living

Lower your heart disease risk without drugs

There are plenty of things you can do outside of medicine to help fend off heart trouble. Spend time with your friends, eat more of these foods, and take these other steps today.

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

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

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

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



Serve Up Salmon: Two servings a week of fatty fish like salmon, mackerel, sardines, or tuna may help your heart health. Part of it may be the omega-3 fatty acids in the fish, but other nutrients may also help. Supplements may not have the same benefits.

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

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

Sleep at Least 7 Hours a Night: Your body needs long periods of deep rest. During that time, your heart rate and blood pressure drop low for a while, which is key for heart health. If you always snooze less than 7 hours, your body may start to make chemicals that keep those things from happening. Less sleep is also linked to inflammation and high blood sugar, which can be bad for your heart.

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

better and protect your heart.

Quit Smoking: Smoking raises blood pressure, makes it harder to exercise, and makes your blood more likely to clot, which can cause a stroke. But your chances of having a heart attack go down just 24 hours after your last cigarette.

Have Sex: You're less likely to have heart disease if you have sex a couple of times a week, compared to once a month. Scientists don't know exactly why. The sex itself may help protect the heart. Or it may be that healthier people have more sex. Either way, what have you got to lose?

Stay at a Healthy Weight: Extra pounds raise your odds of high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes, all linked to heart disease. Don't rely on fad diets or supplements to slim down, though. Exercise and the right amount of healthy foods are the best ways to keep a healthy weight. Talk to your doctor about how to measure your body mass index (BMI) to find out if you need to lose weight.

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

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

Get Regular Checkups: Your doctor can see if your blood pressure and cholesterol levels are in danger of damaging your heart and blood vessels. The earlier you find those problems, the quicker you can start to treat them. They may want to test you for diabetes as well. If you have any of these conditions, your doctor can suggest lifestyle changes and medication to protect your heart.

Medically Reviewed by Dany Paul Baby,
MD - WebMD

Living Better

Signs you're burned out

Symptoms of burnout aren't always so obvious. You could feel cynical or cranky, or just have trouble focusing.

You're Exhausted: Are you so tired that you can't move a muscle? Do you drag yourself out of bed to get to work in the morning? Does your 8-hour shift feel like 80? Burnout is a kind of work-related stress characterized by three specific things. The first is a feeling that you're exhausted -- both emotionally and physically.

You're Turning Cynical: The second thing that characterizes burnout is cynicism -- a lack of interest in work that can be negative or even callous. Exhaustion often leads to it.

You're Feeling Useless: The third burnout pillar is a sense of incompetence, a feeling that you just can't be effective. It leads to a lack of accomplishment and productivity. Sometimes, that feeling seems to be a result of the other two tent poles of burnout -- exhaustion and cynicism. Other times, all three come down on you at once.

You're Depressed: If you're exhausted, cynical, and feeling useless, it's no wonder that depression can set in.

Research shows burnout is mainly a job thing, while depression is a whole-life thing that can include your job.

But they're connected. Studies show that if you're prone to depression, you're more vulnerable to burnout.

You Hate Your Job: Studies show that job dissatisfaction is one of several side effects (along with things like absenteeism and many physical ailments) of burnout.

Everything Gets Under Your Skin: If the stresses of your job get to be too much or if you turn irritable with your co-workers (or, worse, customers or clients), burnout might be the culprit. It can get worse, too: Outright anger is another sign your job might be burning you out.

Your Mind Wanders: Trouble concentrating is one of the mental signs (along with things like forgetfulness) that could tell you burnout is approaching. Some studies suggest more than 100 symptoms for it. They include motivational symptoms like disillusionment and a loss of idealism.

Sleep Is Tough to Get: Some studies link trouble getting to sleep and staying asleep to burnout (though other studies don't find a clear connection). Don't fool around with sleep problems. If you don't get enough sleep, it can bring higher chances of heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes, and kidney disease.

Another Headache? Herbert Freudenberger, the psychologist who coined the concept of burnout in 1974, cited frequent headaches as a physical characteristic of the disorder. Like sleep problems, this isn't scientifically settled.

That Pain in Your Gut: That stomach and bowel pain you have might have to do with burnout, too. It and the

stress that can come with it can weaken your immune system. That might explain the problems with your tummy.

Drinks, Drugs, and Other Comforts: Using food, alcohol, or drugs to feel better may be a symptom of job burnout. This can be serious. Obesity, or alcohol and drug misuse, can lead to all sorts of health problems.

Burnout and Blood Pressure: If your blood pressure is up, your job might have something to do with it. Along with that, you might get a quicker heartbeat, too. Neither is good for you. They could damage not only your heart but your brain and your kidneys, too.

Thirsty? Vision Blurred? Being overly thirsty and having blurred vision are two signs of diabetes. Burnout may raise your chances of type 2 diabetes. If you're showing these or other symptoms of diabetes -- and you're having problems at work that might be related to burnout -- the two might be tied. Let your doctor know if you are having any increased thirst and get medical help right away for any vision changes.

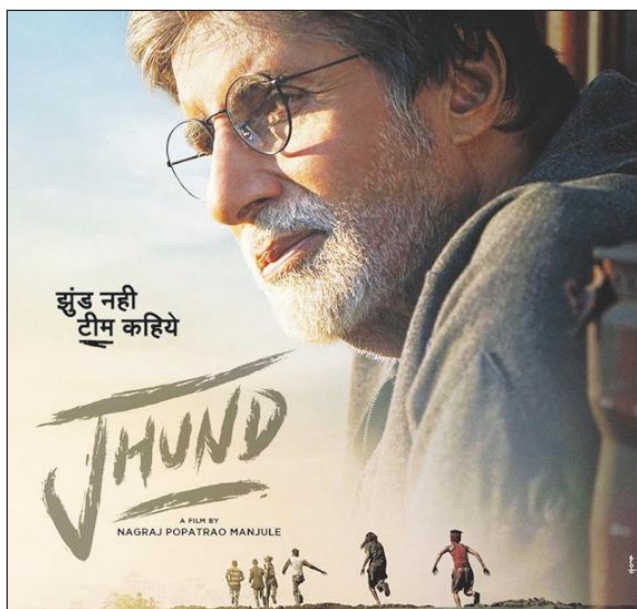
The Sick Days Are Piling Up: Research has found that burnout can trigger both absenteeism and presenteeism (which means coming to work even when you're sick). And it works the other way. All those sick days and feeling crummy while you're at work can lead to more burnout.

Melinda Ratini

8 Underrated Bollywood Movies of 2022 That You Should Watch ASAP

There are times that instead of the cult movies that shake us to the core we prefer to see some big banner movies to cheer us. There are certain movies that though they have a different approach to rom-com movies but are inspirational still fail to either on box-office or applause. Here are some of the most underrated Bollywood gems that truly deserve appreciation. a report by Vidushi Miya of Lehren.

1. Jhund



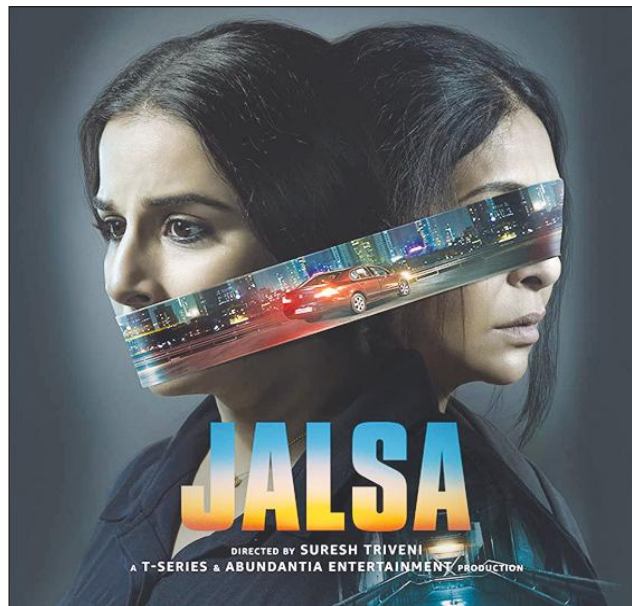
This sports biography about the life of Vijay Barse, founder of the NGO Slum Soccer, didn't get the attention it deserved. Starring Amitabh Bachchan and directed by Nagraj Manjule, it showed how a retired gym teacher rehabilitated street kids to join a team of soccer players to keep them away from drugs and crime.

2. Kaun Pravin Tambe?

Pravin Tambe, the senior IPL biopic on cricketer

watches as Shreyas Talpade plays the title role which provided one of the memorable performances. The man behind films like A Wednesday, MS Dhoni: The Untold Story, Special OPS, Special26, Baby, Rustom, and Neeraj Pandey directed the biopic.

3. Jalsa



Directed by Suresh Triveni, this thriller stars Vidya Balan and Shefali Shah. Both actresses gave fabulous performances. The film tells the story of a famous journalist and her cook and their conflict.

4. Runway 34

Produced and directed by Ajay Devgn, this thriller also stars him. Inspired by true events and also starring Amitabh Bachchan, Rakul Preet Singh, Boman Irani, Angira Dhar, and Ahmad Harhas, the film's story follows a MayDay call from Captain Vikrant Khanna, a flying prodigy, as he loses hope of saving himself. Your flight and its passengers.

5. Chup: Revenge of the Artist

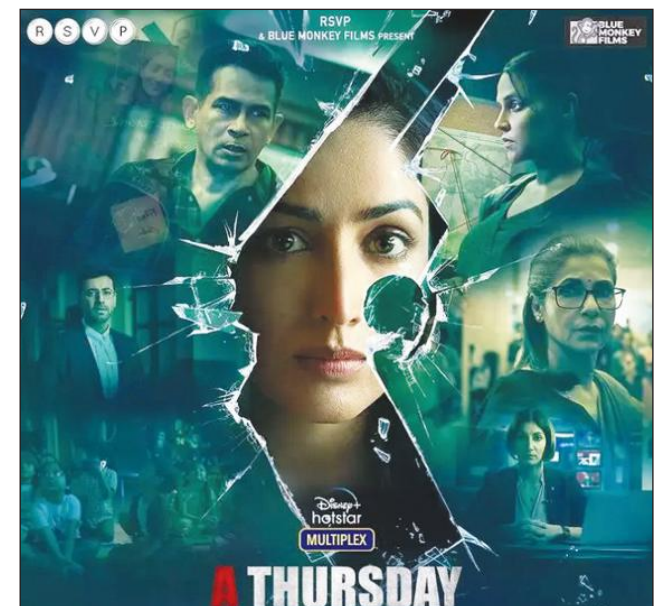
One of the most underrated Bollywood movies of 2022, Chup: Artist's Revenge is a real-life movie from R Balki, the filmmaker who has produced gems like Pa, CheeniKum, Padman, and more. The psychological thriller centres around a serial killer who targets film critics who write dishonest reviews of films and stars

Sunny Deol, Dulquer Salmaan, Shreya Dhanwanthary, Saranya Ponvannan, Pooja Bhatt, Amitabh Bachchan, and Adhyayan Suman, among others.

6. Uunchai

Featuring a legendary ensemble cast of Amitabh Bachchan, Anupam Kher, Boman Irani, Parineeti Chopra, Danny Denzongpa, Neena Gupta, and Sarika, among others, Uunchai is the story of three friends who journey to the base camp of Mount Everest to pay tribute to your friend and fulfill his last wish.

7. A Thursday



Yami Gautam has given one of his most powerful performances here. The film tells the story of a kindergarten teacher who takes 16 of her student's hostage. Her deeds send shockwaves across the country.

8. Sherdil: The Pilibhit Saga

If you're a Pankaj Tripathi fan, you truly cannot leave out this one. Giving every other terrific overall performance on this one, Tripathi's stars at the side of Sayani Gupta and Neeraj Kabi relate the actual existence incidents that came about at Pilibhit Tiger Reserve, in which humans could purposely depart their aged own circle of relatives understanding tigers could prey on them. They did this so that later they can declare compensation from the administration.

Why Ajay Devgn is Bollywood's star of 2022

While *Drishyam 2* is among the few Hindi hits this year, Ajay Devgn made his presence felt in *RRR* and *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, too, reports Vinayak Chakravorty of First Post

Drishyam 2 consolidates Ajay Devgn's stature as Bollywood's star of 2022, a year when not much has gone right for the industry. Devgn's latest is among the few Hindi releases that made money, along with *The Kashmir Files*, *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*, *Gangubai Kathiawadi* and *Brahmastra*. Of these, *The Kashmir Files* emerged as the highest-grossing Hindi film, but the film's phenomenal success was driven by modest budgeting than star cast. The multi-starrer, *Brahmastra*, may have covered its mighty budget, but the film is far from securing enough returns to earn a superhit tag. Devgn's *Drishyam 2* has emerged ahead of Bollywood's other star-driven masala fare that made it to the charts this year. Wikipedia ranks *Drishyam 2* as the eighth highest-grossing Indian film of 2022, a year when Kannada (*KGF: Chapter 2*; *Kantara*), Telugu (*RRR*), and Tamil (*Ponniyin Selvan: I*; *Vikram*) films caught fancy of the pan-India box office while Bollywood reeled under boycott threats.



Incidentally, if you consider he also had important cameos in *RRR* and *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, Devgn is actually in the credits of three of the year's biggest hits. Contrary to almost every other star who prefers working on one film at a time, Devgn, like Akshay Kumar, tries maintaining a regular flow of releases in a calendar year. While Kumar currently struggles with a multitude of flops, the tactic has worked well for Devgn through most of his career of over three decades since his 1991 debut, *Phool Aur Kaante*, mainly because his impact rests on an innate ability to grow quietly on the popular psyche by not being absent from the marquee for too long. Besides *Drishyam 2* and his two cameos, Devgn also courted success on OTT this year, with a smashing debut in the crime thriller

show, *Rudra: The Edge Of Darkness*.

There were the downsides, too. His latest directorial effort *Runway 34* crashlanded, and his Diwali release *Thank God* hardly fared better. But Devgn had clearly saved his best for the last. The spectacular show of *Drishyam 2* evens out the below-expectation performances of his past two releases, and also consolidates his branding as a solo hero.

For, Devgn's branding has had to be unique all along given his unconventional looks and screen personality. Over the past three decades, the actor has maintained his position among the Bollywood power set along with the three Khans and Akshay Kumar even as younger stars as Hrithik Roshan, Ranveer Singh, Ranbir Kapoor and, lately, Kartik Aryan came calling. Devgn's USP lies in his ability to connect with the masses utilising his intense screen persona that blends machismo with the occasional restrained bursts of melodrama and humour. From his debut act in *Phool Aur Kaante*, it is an image that has sustained his success down the decades, notably through roles in *Vijaypath*, *Zakhm*, *Company*, *The Legend Of Bhagat Singh*, *Gangaajal*, *Omkara*, *Once Upon A Time in Mumbai*, *Singham* and *Tanhaji*, and even when he occasionally broke away to try romance (*Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*) or comedy (the *Golmaal* franchise).

Nakuul Mehta on quitting *Bade Achhe Lagte Hain 2*: 'It was the right time to go'

Though quitting is not a word Nakuul Mehta would like to use, for him, his journey with *Bade Achhe Lagte Hain 2* has come to an end. After a year and a half on the show which has "been a satisfying, enriching and fulfilling journey", he says, he feels ready to go.

Nakuul explains, "The show got a lot of love though many people had doubts when we started as because we took on an iconic show (and remade it). But for it to have the journey and reach out to people the way it has, I think has been truly special. I feel creatively, full having been a part of it for so long. The story is going to places and I feel going ahead there's nothing new I can bring to it. I will miss playing Ram."

The actor, who has done three TV shows in his 10-year-old career, admits that post his last TV show, *Ishqbaaz*, he was exhausted and that's why took a four-year break. Nakuul shares, "I feel I have paid my dues to the makers and the audiences in the last 18 months. Moreover, you must know when to go and now is the time to go. It is tempting to stay on and continue with a show and receive the love but what more is my question. I look at challenging myself. I have had patience and resilience to say no to a lot of things and pre-



serve myself for bigger things."

Nakuul states he doesn't do too many shows as it is injustice to play different roles every few months when the audience is so invested in your TV characters. "Once an audience buys into you for playing a Shivay or Ram, I feel it's injustice to take up another character in two months and say, 'Now accept me as this (character)'. Now I work for credibility and respect. Today, you could be a star on television or film, but all of us are in the business of wanting to borrow the viewers' time. And I don't take that for granted."

I don't plan much, I believe in intuition: Dheeraj Dhoopar

With New Year around the corner, Dheeraj Dhoopar decided to start afresh by doing what he has always wanted to do, travelling solo for the first time.

With 2022 ending, Dheeraj Dhoopar decided to tick an item off his bucket list- travelling solo. Speaking to TOI on his return from London, he says with plans to make his Punjabi debut in 2023 and exploring more genres beyond TV, he wanted to take a break before diving deep into the new year. Excerpts from a conversation with the actor.

Is this your first solo trip since you became a father, since you are always usually travelling with your wife?

Yes, this is my first solo trip not only since I became a father, but this is my first solo trip as far as I can remember. I wanted to always travel solo and this time around I had a chance to do so. After becoming a parent, one hardly gets the time to travel solo, so I wanted to make the most of this. I love travelling a lot. This is one thing that I plan no matter what. Travelling helps me relax and is rejuvenating. Travelling with my wife also lets us spend that quality time together.

What did 2022 mean for you? 2022 was also a time when the world was picking up pace in work after the pandemic.

2022 has been a year of changes for me. It is a year where I moved on from *Kundali Bhagya* and signed *Sherdil Shergill*. The year has been a great year personally too as I became a father. Professionally also I did a lot of things that I always wanted to do. The year was hectic with so many new things happening around me. But I am glad that we are nearly back to normal with our lives post pandemic.



Are you the kind of person who believes in planning ahead and have you planned for 2023?

I don't plan much, to be honest. I believe more in intuition and less planning. Once I feel something, I end up doing it or achieving it. But I want to explore newer things professionally and travel to more places with my family. I want to grow professionally; may it be films or OTT or TV.

Would you want your son to be an actor when he grows up?

I haven't thought about it. I hardly get time to spend with him and the time that I get is spent in playing with him and loving him. He is free to choose whatever he wants as his career path.

YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

Sagittarians involved in the arts, media, or creative field could find themselves in a position to take advantage of new possibilities. A job transfer is also in the works for some Sagittarius natives. It's a great time to take pleasure in each other's company and discover new depths of love and joy in your relationship.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 7, 9, 12, 17, 20

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

Capricorn professionals will reap the rewards of their labours. In time, You'll gain a reputation as an expert that's sure to win you respect. People in the public sector also have good luck. You couldn't have picked a better time to make the changes in your life that would have the most significant impact on your romantic partnership.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 10, 14, 17, 26, 39

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

You have been working hard, but you must wait for the right time before taking any important decisions. Soon things will be in your control. On the romantic front, you are advised to reciprocate with affection and care, and this will make a bond with your spouse or partner even stronger.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 3, 8, 19, 25, 30

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

A meeting with an influential person may help Pisces natives advance in their chosen field. The work that has been waiting to be done on your end may now begin. Pisceans' chances of meeting someone suitable appear strong. A prearranged meeting could result in a proposal for some of you.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 9, 10, 15, 20, 36

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

Thanks to your natural leadership and communication abilities, you've worked your way up to a significant position in your field. So, take full advantage of this window of opportunity. The smallest acts of kindness can go a long way toward brightening your partner's day and your own.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 15, 16, 20, 23, 30

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

You are advised to take all your decisions after proper consultation with your seniors at the workplace. Your hard work and dedication may be rewarded soon. Be more expressive while interacting with your spouse or partner. Planning a picnic with your special someone can be a great idea.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 9, 15, 17, 21, 23

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

Working long hours for low pay is a possibility. Experts working alone may have to persist until they succeed. Determination is a key ingredient in effective motivation. Gemini natives who are currently single are likely to increase their social activity and work on developing romantic relationships.

Lucky Numbers: 15, 16, 23, 33, 39, 40

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

Cancerians may stand out for their ability to think outside the box and come up with original answers to challenging problems. There may be fresh openings for you to advance in your chosen fields. Cancer natives' relationships may probably go through some highs and lows. Keep your cool, and don't give in to your spouse's provocation.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 23, 26, 31, 32, 35

Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

A consistent effort may pay off and make Leo natives' long-term career strategy a success. You can accomplish anything if you maintain your resolve. If you continue down the path, you're on, a lack of trust may have a negative impact on your partnership. So, keep your cool.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 12, 18, 20, 23, 26

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

Virgo natives who have been waiting for a promotion for a long time should receive one soon. In addition, there are indicators that your current salary can be hiked. You and your partner may be able to resolve your differences. So be mindful of your words when interacting with or communicating with him/her.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 15, 20, 23, 26, 30

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

Your future looks bright, and a promotion or position of authority is likely. Your romantic life should improve. Those Libra natives who are currently single may have the chance to meet someone and start dating again.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 10, 13, 19, 21, 30

Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

Colleagues may appreciate your initiative and implement your suggestions. Scorpio natives' superiors may be delighted with how they've been performing at work. The love, care, and emotions that once filled Scorpio natives' relationships can be revived by making some simple adjustments.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 11, 15, 19, 30, 31



Vendredi 30 décembre - 21.15



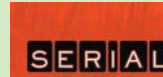
Samedi 31 décembre - 21.00



Dimanche 1 janvier - 21.52



Programme TV



vendredi 30 décembre

samedi 31 décembre

dimanche 1 janvier

lundi 2 janvier

MBC 1

07.15 D.Anime: D.I.Y. Discover
 08.00 D.Anime: Gon
 08.39 D.Anime: The Story Of Book...
 09.04 D.Anime: D.I.Y. Discover...
 09.15 Film: Go Fish
 11.10 Tele: Rubi
 12.00 Le Journal
 12.40 Tele: Fierce Angel
 14.35 D.Anime: Briko
 15.21 D.Anime: D.I.Y. Discover
 15.24 D.Anime: Sissi
 15.40 Film: Coeur Vaillant 2
 17.15 Serial: Les Copains Carlins
 17.40 Mag: Bricks 'O' Brian
 18.00 Live: Samachar
 18.31 Serial: Surya Puran
 18.55 Serial: Jag Jaanani Maa...
 19.30 Journal & La Meteo
 20.25 Local: Les Grands Noms...
 22.30 Serial: Rookie Blue
 23.15 Le Journal

06.04 D.Anime: Akili And Me
 06.42 D.Anime: Les Blagues De...
 09.07 D.Anime: Magic Kaito 1412
 09.27 D.Anime: D.I.Y. Discover...
 09.35 Mag: Kid's Planet
 10.00 Local: Grand Finale
 12.00 Le Journal
 12.25 Local: Les Grands Noms....
 13.35 Local: Best Songs 2022
 14.20 Local: Generations J
 15.00 Live: Samachar
 15.21 D.Anime: D.I.Y. Discover
 15.45 Film: La Princesse Enchantée
 17.06 D.Anime: D.I.Y. Discover...
 17.40 Local: Info En Langue Des...
 18.00 Samachar
 18.30 Enter: Taare Zameen Par
 19.30 Journal & La Meteo
 20.25 Local: Reveillon 2023
 23.58 Other: Countdown 2022/2023
 00.00 Local: Dance With Jerry
 01.15 Festival International Kreol

06.10 D.Anime: Akili And Me
 06.41 D.Anime: Les Blagues De...
 07.27 D.Anime: Best Furry Friends
 08.06 D.Anime: The Story Of Book...
 10.00 Local: Zanfan Nou Zil
 11.00 Local: Nu Rasinn
 11.55 Local: Autour Des Valeurs...
 12.00 Le Journal
 12.36 Local: Retrovizor
 13.00 Local: Elle
 15.22 Other: Radha Krishna
 15.40 Film: La Vallée Des Lanternes
 17.10 D.Anime: D.I.Y. Discover...
 17.35 Local: Flamboyant
 18.00 Live: Samachar
 18.30 Other: Radha Krishna
 19.30 Le Journal
 20.30 Local: Special Klips 2022
 23.00 Le Journal
 23.45 Film: Grace And Goliath

06.00 Local Prod: Elle
 07.00 D.Anime: Sam Le Pompier
 07.52 D.Anime: Gon
 09.00 D.Anime: Llama Llama
 10.30 Local: Rodrig Prog
 11.15 Tele: Rubi
 12.00 Le Journal
 12.30 Serial: Fierce Angel
 12.54 Local Prod: Welcome 2023
 14.30 D.Anime: D.I.Y. Discover
 14.38 D.Anime: Briko
 15.24 D.Anime: Sissi
 15.40 Film: Pirates
 18.00 Live: Samachar
 18.30 Local: Naya Saal Abhinundan
 19.30 Le Journal
 20.25 Local Production
 21.30 Local: Agir Ensemble
 22.00 Serial: Rich Man, Poor Man
 Avec: Nick Nolte, Peter Strauss
 23.00 Le Journal

MBC 2

07.00 DDI Live
 10.00 Serial: Wafa Lazim To Nahin
 11.16 Serial: Tu Ishq Hai
 12.02 Film: Love You Papa
 14.08 Mag: DDI Mag
 15.00 Live: Samachar
 15.22 Serial: Saare Tujhyachsathi
 15.45 Serial: Bommarillu
 16.04 Serial: Sondha Bandham
 16.31 Serial: Ishq Zahe Naseeb
 16.49 Serial: Saaton Vachanwa...
 17.11 Serial: Bhakharwadi
 17.30 Serial: Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein
 18.01 Serial: Ancient Detective
 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol
 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna
 20.00 Serial: Mushk
 20.44 Local: Anjuman
 21.15 Local: Ardu Programme
 22.05 DDI Live

07.00 Film: Lakshmanrekha
 Starring Naseeruddin Shah,
 Jackie Shroff, Sangeeta Bijlani
 09.31 Film: Super Bheem
 10.39 Bade Acche Lagte Hai
 11.26 Serial: Dikri Vahalno Dariyo
 11.48 Serial: The Demi-Gods And...
 12.35 Serial: Mooga Manasulu
 12.57 Serial: High School
 13.17 Serial: Annakodiyum Ainthu...
 15.00 Live: Samachar
 15.25 Film: Rajkumar
 Stars: Naseeruddin Shah,
 Anil Kapoor, Madhuri Dixit
 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol
 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna
 20.00 Local: Bollycart 2022 - Final
 21.00 Local: Bhojpuri Dhamaal
 22.30 Local: Reveillon 2023
 23.30 Local: Welcome 2023
 00.00 Other: Countdown 2022
 00.30 Local: Bollywood & Bhojpuri

07.00 Film: Shiv Ganga
 11.03 Serial: Azhagu
 11.20 Jag Jaanani Maa
 Vaishnodevi
 11.43 Serial: Surya Puran
 12.06 Film: Shiddat
 15.00 Samachar
 15.20 Mooga Manasulu
 15.42 Serial: He Mann Baware
 16.04 Serial: Sondha Bandham
 Starring: Bharathi, Badekilla,
 Pradeep, Naresh Eswar
 16.30 Local: Yaadein
 16.58 Serial: Siya Ke Ram
 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol
 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna
 20.05 Local: Naya Saal
 Abhinandan
 21.39 Serial: Naagin Season 3
 23.04 DDI Live

07.00 DDI Live
 09.00 Serial: Chacha Bhatija
 09.11 Serial: Babu
 09.22 Serial: Tik Tak Tail
 09.29 Serial: Kalari Kids
 10.00 Kundali Bhagya
 12.06 Film: Hindustani Film
 15.00 Samachar
 15.22 Serial: Saare Tujhyachsathi
 15.47 Serial: Bommarillu
 16.02 Serial: Sondha Bandham
 16.27 Serial: Ishq Zahe Naseeb
 16.53 Serial: Saaton Vachanwa...
 17.17 Serial: Bhakharwadi
 17.39 Serial: Vandhal Sridevi
 17.57 Serial: Ancient Detective
 18.30 Mag: DDI Mag
 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol
 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna
 20.00 Programme In Telugu
 20.30 Film: Pon Manickavel

MBC 3

07.00 Mag: Border Crossing
 07.28 Mag: Tomorrow Today
 08.20 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures
 11.28 Mag: Eco India
 11.54 Mag: Shift
 13.52 Doc: La Resilience Face Aux
 16.27 Doc: Our Future Cities
 16.57 Mag: Eco India
 17.23 Mag: Shift
 17.35 Mag: Carnet De Sante
 18.00 Doc: Riding The Rails...
 20.30 Live: News
 20.50 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures
 21.50 Doc: Planet Home
 22.16 The Languages Of Whales
 22.59 Doc: Bohemian Switzerland
 23.25 Doc: Riding The Rails...
 00.07 Mag: World Stories
 00.22 Doc: Castles
 00.25 Mag: Our Voices
 00.52 Mag: Euromaxx

06.00 Doc: Riding The Rails...
 07.00 Mag: Our Voices
 07.31 Mag: Euromaxx
 07.57 Mag: Global Food
 08.49 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures
 09.50 Doc: Planet Home
 10.16 The Language Of Whales
 12.11 Mag: World Stories
 13.25 Doc: Global Food
 14.17 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures
 14.24 Doc: Hotels
 15.18 Doc: Planet Home
 15.44 The Language Of Whales
 16.27 Doc: Bohemian Switzerland
 18.03 Doc: World Capitals
 18.31 Doc: Smoothie Mania
 19.00 Mag: Saladeria
 19.29 Mag: Check In
 20.00 Doc: Volcano Stories
 20.30 Live: News
 20.50 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures
 21.50 Doc: Trust The Guide

06.00 Doc: World Capitals
 07.06 Mag: The 77 Percent
 07.26 Mag: Check In
 09.18 Doc: Trust The Guide
 11.45 Doc: World Capitals
 12.13 Doc: Smoothie Mania
 12.42 Mag: Saladeria
 13.15 Mag: Check In
 13.41 Doc: Volcano Stories
 14.07 Doc: Fine Art Sculptures
 15.06 Doc: Trust The Guide
 16.04 Doc: Saint Helena-A
 16.46 Doc: Legendary Hotels
 17.29 Doc: A Mediterranean...
 18.00 Doc: World Capitals
 18.28 Doc: Smoothie Mania
 19.00 Doc: A Mediterranean...
 19.30 Doc: Tree Stories
 20.30 Live: News
 20.53 The Prince Of The Forest
 21.46 Doc: Origami Code

07.00 Doc: A Mediterranean...
 07.50 Doc: Tree Stories
 09.38 Doc: Origami Code
 10.30 Doc: Town Of Glory
 11.10 Doc: The Forgotten Temple...
 11.57 Doc: World Capitals
 14.53 Doc: The Prince Of The Forest
 18.00 Mag: Eco@Africa
 19.00 Mag: Africa 54
 19.33 Mag: In Good Shape
 20.50 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures
 21.49 Doc: Destination Mars
 23.09 Mag: Tomorrow Today
 23.35 Mag: Washington Forum
 01.12 Mag: The 77 Percent
 01.38 Doc: World Heritage
 01.43 Mag: In Good Shape
 02.07 Doc: Les Mysteres Du Nil
 03.02 Doc: Destination Mars
 03.55 Doc: Volcano Stories

Cine 12

01.33 Film: The Little Mermaid
 03.43 Film: Life Gets In The Way
 05.44 Tele: Tour De Babel
 06.32 Serial: Seal Team
 06.47 Film: The Little Mermaid
 08.45 Serial: S.W.A.T
 09.30 Tele: La Beaute Du Diable
 10.35 Tele: Fierce Angel
 11.00 Serial: Pine Gap
 12.00 Film: Life Gets In The Way
 13.30 Tele: Tour De Babel
 14.46 Film: The Little Mermaid
 16.35 Serial: S.W.A.T
 17.21 Serial: Seal Team
 18.05 Tele: La Beaute Du Diable
 19.00 Tele: Fierce Angel
 19.34 Serial: My Perfect Landing
 20.05 Tele: L'envers Du Paradis
 20.30 Serial: Being Human
 21.20 Film: Bloodshot
 23.05 Tele: Tour De Babel

01.18 Film: Bloodshot
 03.08 Serial: The Baker And The...
 03.45 Serial: Madam Secretary
 05.08 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana
 06.14 Serial: Suits
 06.55 Serial: Wanted
 08.30 Serial: Seal Team
 09.12 Serial: Madam Secretary
 10.40 Film: Le Concours De Noel
 12.15 Serial: The Baker And The...
 13.21 Serial: Zoo
 14.01 Serial: Pine Gap
 15.00 Tele: Marimar
 16.28 Serial: Suits
 17.06 Film: Bernie Le Dauphin 2
 18.48 Serial: Kojak
 19.35 Serial: My Perfect Landing
 20.05 Tele: L'Envers Du Paradis
 20.30 Serial: F.B.I
 21.15 Film: Spider-Man
 23.23 Tele: I Forgot I Love You

00.56 Film: Nana's Secret Recipe
 02.29 Film: Eaten By Lions
 04.00 Tele: Les Trois Visages D'ana
 05.11 Serial: F.B.I
 05.52 Film: Off Piste
 08.24 Film: Spider-Man
 10.35 Film: Bernie Le Dauphin 2
 12.14 Serial: Imposters
 13.00 Serial: Pine Gap
 15.48 Tele: Marimar
 17.19 Serial: F.B.I
 18.01 Serial: Imposters
 18.40 Serial: L'incroyable Hulk
 19.38 Serial: My Perfect Landing
 19.55 Mag: Top 100 Famous Actresses
 20.05 Tele: L'Envers Du Paradis
 20.30 Serial: New Amsterdam
 21.15 Film: Men In Black
 23.09 Tele: I Forgot I Loved You

01.25 Film: Grance And Goliath
 03.54 Film: Men In Black
 05.53 Tele: Tour De Babel
 07.22 Film: The Bourne Identity
 09.30 Tele: La Beaute Du Diable
 09.56 Tele: A Que No Me Dejas
 10.21 Tele: Fierce Angel
 11.00 Serial: Anomalia
 11.46 Film: Men In Black
 13.40 Tele: Tour De Babel
 14.48 Film: The Bourne Identity
 16.40 Serial: New Amsterdam
 18.05 Tele: La Beaute Du Diable
 18.31 Tele: A Que No Me Dejas
 19.00 Tele: Fierce Angel
 19.39 Serial: My Perfect Landing
 20.05 Tele: L'Envers Du Paradis
 20.30 Serial: Wanted
 21.15 Film: Two For The Win
 Stars: Tarcisio Meira, Tony Ramos,
 Glória Menezes

Bollywood TV

07.03 Film: Judwaa
 Starring: Salman Khan, Karisma
 Kapoor, Rambha
 11.34 / 20.30 - Radha Krishna
 12.03 / 21.00 - Anupamaa
 12.30 / 21.30 - Mere Sai
 13.07 / 22.00 - Agnihera
 13.36 / 22.03 - Yeh Teri Galiyan
 14.00 / 22.30 - Patiala Babes
 14.25 / 23.00 - 100 Years Of
 Indian Cinema
 15.00 / 21.46 -
 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 2
 15.26 Film: Total Dhamaal
 Starring: Ajay Devgn, Anil
 Kapoor, Madhuri Dixit, Riteish
 Deshmukh
 18.00 Live: Samachar
 18.30 Kundali Bhagya
 19.00 Udaariyaan
 19.25 Kuch Rang Pyar Ke...

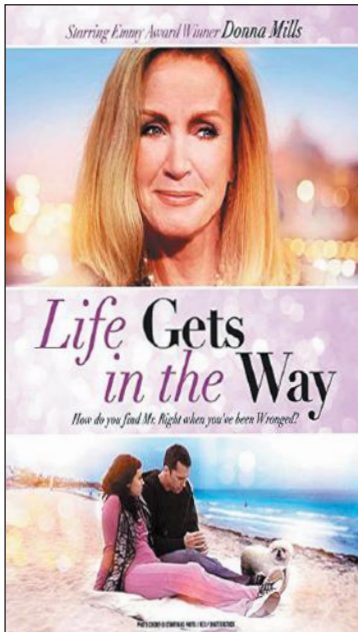
04.33 Anupamaa
 05.03 Mere Sai
 05.36 Agnihera
 06.06 Yeh Teri Galiyan
 06.28 Patiala Babes
 08.00 Yeh Teri Galiyan
 10.00 Motu Patlu
 10.11 Sasural Simar Ka 2
 12.13 Serial: Udaariyaan
 14.00 Serial: Anupamaa
 16.00 Kuch Rang Pyar Ke Aise...
 18.00 Samachar
 18.30 Film: Student Of The Year
 2 Starring: Tiger Shroff, Tara
 Sutaria, Ananya Panday
 20.51 Motu Patlu
 21.03 Porus
 21.24 Naagin Season 4
 22.07 Filler: Radha Krishna
 22.09 Serial: Yeh Teri Galiyan

00.00 Serial: Sasural Simar Ka 2
 02.02 Udaariyaan
 04.00 Anupamaa
 06.00 Kuch Rang Pyar Ke Aise...
 08.00 Serial: Motu Patlu
 08.12 Main Maikhe Chali Jaungi...
 10.00 Kundali Bhagya
 12.03 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
 12.49 Serial: Bade Acche Lagte...
 14.00 Agnihera
 16.00 Jijaji Chhat Par Hain
 18.00 Live: Samachar
 18.32 Entertainment: Dance +
 (Final) - Season 5 (New
 Year Special)
 18.30 Film: Hindustani Film
 22.56 Naagin Season 4
 23.37 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
 00.23 Serial: Bade Acche Lagte
 Hai 2

08.00 Taare Zameen Par
 11.45 / 20.30 - Radha Krishna
 12.15 / 21.00 - Anupamaa
 12.39 / 21.30 - Mere Sai
 13.12 / 22.00 - Agnihera
 13.39 / 22.03 - Yeh Teri Galiyan
 14.00 / 22.30 - Patiala Babes
 14.30 / 23.00 - 100 Years Of
 Indian Cinema
 15.00 / 21.46 -
 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 2
 15.27 Film: Hindustani
 18.00 Live: Samachar
 18.30 Kundali Bhagya
 19.01 Udaariyaan
 19.30 Kuch Rang Pyar Ke Aise...
 20.01 Sasural Simar Ka 2
 20.30 Radha Krishna
 21.00 Anupamaa
 21.34 Mere Sai
 22.00 Agnihera



Mardi 3 Janvier - 21.10



Mercredi 4 janvier - 21.15



Jeudi 5 janvier - 21.15



Programme TV



mardi 3 janvier

MBC 1

- 07.00 Dessin Anime
- 09.23 Film: Kung Fu Panda
- 10.45 Mag: MBC Production
- 11.11 Tele: Rubi
- 12.00 Le Journal
- 12.25 Local: Les Grands Noms...
- 12.30 Tele: Fierce Angel
- 13.43 Local: Varieties Occidentale
- 14.35 D.Anime: Briko
- 15.00 Live: Samachar
- 15.20 D.Anime: D.I.Y. Discover
- 15.45 Film: Mulan
- 17.40 Mag: Bricks 'O' Brian
- 18.00 Live: Samachar
- 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain
- 18.55 Local Prod: Kala
- 19.30 Journal & La Meteo
- 20.20 Local: Autour Des Valeurs...
- 21.25 Film: Life Gets In The Way
With: Donna Mills, Julie Sabray

MBC 2

- 07.00 DDI Live
- 10.00 Serial: CID
- 10.50 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain
- 12.00 Film: Ek Mahal Sapnon Ka
- 15.00 Live: Samachar
- 15.20 Saare Tujhyachsathi
- 15.43 Bommarillu
- 16.04 Sondha Bandham
- 16.24 Serial: Ishq Zahe Naseeb
- 16.42 Serial: Saaton Vachanewa...
- 17.13 Bhakharwadi
- 17.35 Serial: Premabhishekam
- 18.00 Serial: Ancient Detective
- 18.30 Local: DDI Magazine
- 19.00 Zournal Kreol
- 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna
- 20.06 Local: Tamil Programme
- 20.30 Film: Vikram Vedha
Starring: Saif Ali Khan, Hrithik Roshan, Radhika Apte
- 23.00 DDI Live

MBC 3

- 06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa
- 07.27 Mag: In Good Shape
- 08.47 Doc: Destination Mars
- 10.10 Mag: Tomorrow Today
- 11.51 Mag: Eco@Africa
- 14.42 Doc: Destination Mars
- 15.39 Doc: Volcano Stories
- 16.31 Mag: Washington Forum
- 18.00 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto...
- 18.45 Mag: Red Carpet
- 19.10 Mag: Check In
- 19.30 Mag: Made In Germany
- 20.30 Live: News
- 20.50 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures
- 21.23 Mag: Euromaxx
- 21.49 Mag: Close Up
- 22.15 Local: Rodrig-Klip Seleksion
- 23.39 Mag: The Global Auto...
- 00.05 Mag: Healthy Living
- 00.35 Mag: Check In
- 01.06 Mag: Made In Germany

Cine 12

- 01.01 Film: Nana's Secret Recipe
- 02.51 Serial: Pine Gap
- 03.33 Film: Two For The Win
- 05.13 Tele: Tour De Babel
- 06.01 Serial: Wanted
- 06.43 Film: Nana's Secret Recipe
- 08.45 Serial: S.W.A.T
- 09.28 Tele: La Beaute Du Diable
- 10.20 Tele: Fierce Angel
- 11.00 Serial: Anomalia
- 12.00 Film: Two For The Win
- 13.54 Tele: Tour De Babel
- 14.26 Film: Spider-Man
- 16.40 Serial: S.W.A.T
- 17.20 Serial: Wanted
- 18.05 Tele: La Beaute Du Diable
- 19.00 Tele: Fierce Angel
- 19.37 Serial: My Perfect Landing
- 20.05 Tele: L'Envers Du Paradis
- 20.30 Seiral: Wanted
- 21.15 Film: Waterworld

Bollywood TV

- 07.15 Film: Bala
- 11.36 / 20.29 - Radha Krishna
- 12.07 / 20.57 - Anupamaa
- 12.36 / 21.27 - Mere Sai
- 13.09 / 22.07 - Agniphera
- 13.38 / 22.37 - Yeh Teri Galiyan
- 14.00 / 23.07 - Patiala Babes
- 14.25 / 21.59 - 100 Years Of Indian Cinema
- 15.00 / 22.25 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 2
- 15.26 Film: Stree
Starring Rajkumar Rao, Shradha Kapoor, Pankaj Tripathi
- 18.00 Live: Samachar
- 18.30 Film: Jug Jugg Jeeyo
- 20.52 Serial: Kundali Bhagya
- 21.22 Udaariyaan
- 21.52 Kuch Rang Pyar Ke Aise
- 22.22 Sasural Simar Ka 2

mercredi 4 janvier

- 07.00 D.Anime: D.I.Y. Discover
- 07.35 D.Anime: Gon
- 08.05 D.Anime: Best Furry Friends
- 09.23 Film: Dragons
- 10.31 Local: Les Grands Noms Internationaux
- 11.10 Tele: Rubi
- 12.00 Le Journal
- 12.46 Local: Special Klips 2022
- 13.38 Local: Zafer La Tamamm
- 14.53 D.Anime: D.I.Y. Discover
- 15.00 Live: Samachar
- 15.40 Film: Boonie Bears 6
- 17.15 Mag: Sand Tales
- 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 Local: Emission De Varietes
- 21.30 Film: Two Lovers And A Bear
Stars: Tatiana Maslany, Dane

- 07.00 DDI Live
- 10.00 Suhani Si Ek Ladki
- 12.00 Film: Ram Aur Shyam
- 15.00 Live: Samachar
- 15.23 Saare Tujhyachsathi
- 15.49 Bommarillu
- 16.15 Sondha Bandham
- 16.33 Serial: Ishq Zahe Naseeb
- 16.53 Saaton Vachanwa Saath...
- 17.18 Bhakharwadi
- 17.31 Serial: Kulvadhu
- 18.00 Serial: Ancient Detective
- 18.30 Local: DDI Magazine
- 19.00 Zournal Kreol
- 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna
- 19.59 Programme In Marathi
- 20.28 Sayings Radha Krishna
- 20.30 Film: Ladoo Ghya Ladoo
- 22.12 DDI Live

- 06.00 Mag: Rev: Global Auto...
- 06.56 Mag: World Heritage
- 07.31 Mag: Made In Germany
- 08.23 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures
- 09.22 Mag: Close Up
- 14.12 Mag: Euromaxx
- 16.32 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto...
- 18.07 Mag: Motorweek
- 18.26 Mag: Vous Et Nous
- 19.00 Mag: Arts 21
- 19.30 Doc: Iran From Above
- 20.30 Local: News (English)
- 20.50 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures...
- 21.39 Mag: Initiative Africa
- 22.05 Mag: Focus On Europe
- 22.31 Doc: The Future Of Travel
- 23.56 Mag: Motorweek
- 00.22 Mag: Vous Et Nous
- 00.13 Mag: Arts.21
- 00.39 Mag: The Inside Story
- 02.00 Doc: Les Montagnes Du Monde

- 01.46 Film: Little Kingdom
- 03.17 Serial: Pine Gap
- 04.14 Film: Bernie Le Dauphin 2
- 05.53 Tele: Tour De Babel
- 06.41 Serial: Wanted
- 07.23 Film: Life Get In The Way
- 08.48 L'Incrovable Hulk
- 10.22 Tele: Fierce Angel
- 11.05 Serial: Anomalia
- 11.51 Film: Bernie Le Dauphin 2
- 13.30 Tele: Tour De Babel
- 14.48 Film: Life Gets In The Way
- 16.33 L'Incrovable Hulk
- 17.15 Serial: Wanted
- 18.05 Tele: La Beaute Du Diable
- 19.00 Tele: Fierce Angel
- 19.37 Serial: My Perfect Landing
- 20.05 Tele: L'Envers Du Paradis
- 20.30 Seiral: Seal Team
- 21.15 Film: Les Filles Du Docteur March
Avec Saoirse Roman, Emma Watson

- 07.08 Film: Stree
- 11.30 / 20.06 - Radha Krishna
- 12.00 / 20.26 - Anupamaa
- 12.29 / 20.02 - Mere Sai
- 13.17 / 20.46 - Agniphera
- 13.37 / 21.09 - Yeh Teri Galiyan
- 14.00 / 21.50 - Patiala Babes
- 14.25 / 22.15 - 100 Years Of Indian Cinema
- 15.00 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 2
- 15.25 Film: Baaghi 3
Starring: Tiger Shroff, Ritesh Deshmukh, Shradha Kapoor
- 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 5 janvier

- 06.00 Local: Emission De Varietes
- 07.00 D.Anime: D.I.Y. Discover Your
- 07.24 D.Anime: Les Blagues De...
- 08.09 D.Anime: Best Furry Friends
- 09.19 Film: Kung Fu Panda
- 10.40 Mag: MBC Production
- 12.00 Le Journal
- 12.30 Tele: Fierce Angel
- 14.35 D.Anime: Briko
- 14.52 D.Anime: D.I.Y. Discover Your
- 15.27 D.Anime: Sissi
- 15.40 Film: Fireman Sam
- 17.05 Mag: Sand Tales
- 17.32 Mag: Bricks 'O' Brian
- 18.00 Live: Samachar
- 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain
- 18.56 Local: Yatra
- 19.30 Le Journal
- 20.30 Film: Gulabo Sitabo
Starring Amitabh Bachchan, Ayushmann Khurrana, Vijay Raaz

- 07.00 DDI Live
- 09.58 Serial: Agniphera
- 12.00 Film: Anhonee
- 14.07 Mag: DDI Mag
- 15.00 Live: Samachar
- 15.22 Serial: Saare Tujhyachsathi
- 15.45 Serial: Bommarillu
- 16.02 Serial: Sondha Bandham
- 16.26 Serial: Ishq Zahe Naseeb
- 16.41 Serial: Saaton Vachanwa Saath Nibhaib Sajna
- 17.09 Bhakharwadi
- 17.35 Local: Amrit Vaani
- 17.45 Local: Bhajan Sandhya
- 18.00 Serial: Ancient Detective
- 18.30 Mag: DDI Mag
- 19.30 Serial: Radha Krishna
- 20.04 Mrs Mauritius
- 21.20 Film: Song & Story
With Sam Asante, Niqa Bailey

- 06.00 Mag: Motorweek
- 06.24 Mag: Vous Et Nous
- 06.57 Mag: Arts.21
- 07.55 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures
- 11.00 Mag: Motorweek
- 11.56 Local: Vous Et Nous
- 12.59 Doc: Les Montagnes Du...
- 13.52 Mag: Initiative Africa
- 15.44 Doc: The Future Of Travel
- 16.00 Mag: Motorweek
- 18.00 Mag: Eco India
- 18.30 Mag: Shift
- 19.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today
- 20.01 Doc: Tresors Oublies...
- 20.30 Local: News (English)
- 20.50 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures
- 21.36 Doc: Will Roots Save The...
- 22.19 Doc: The World's Biggest...
- 23.00 Doc: Extreme Climate...
- 23.43 Mag: Eco India
- 00.09 Mag: Shift

- 01.14 Juste Un Peu D'Alchimie
- 03.00 Serial: Anomalia
- 03.42 Film: Two Lovers And A Bear
- 05.08 Tele: Tour De Babel
- 05.56 Serial: Seal Team
- 06.38 Film: Les Filles Du Docteur
- 08.50 Serial: S.W.A.T
- 09.30 Tele: La Beaute Du Diable
- 10.19 Tele: Fierce Angel
- 11.05 Serial: Anomalia
- 12.00 Film: Two Lovers And A Bear
- 13.30 Tele: Tour De Babel
- 14.23 Film: Les Filles Du Docteur...
- 16.40 Serial: S.W.A.T
- 17.15 Serial: Seal Team
- 18.05 Tele: La Beaute Du Diable
- 19.00 Tele: Fierce Angel
- 19.36 Serial: My Perfect Landing
- 20.05 Tele: L'Envers Du Paradis
- 20.30 Serial: Queens Of Mystery
- 21.15 Serial: Kojak

- 07.00 Film: Baaghi 3
- 11.34 / 20.26 - Radha Krishna
- 12.00 / 21.01 - Anupamaa
- 12.34 / 21.31 - Mere Sai
- 13.06 / 21.56 - Agniphera
- 13.32 / 22.20 - Yeh Teri Galiyan
- 14.00 / 22.52 - Patiala Babes
- 14.25 - Mag 100 Year Of Indian Cinema
- 15.00 / 21.46 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 2
- 15.23 Film: Dabangg 3
Starring Salman Khan, Sudeep, Sonakshi Sinha
- 18.00 Samachar
- 18.30 Kundali Bhagya
- 18.59 Udaariyaan
- 19.31 Kuch Rang Pyar Ke Aise...
- 20.01 Sasural Simar Ka 2
- 20.36 Radha Krishna



Jeudi 5 janvier - 15.30

Stars: Salman Khan, Sudeep, Sonakshi Sinha



Jeudi 5 janvier

- 20.30

Star: Amitabh Bachchan, Ayushmann Khurrana, Vijay Raaz



A knife-edge election in Fiji sees power shift – and a chance to bring back real democracy

After a history of coups and military interventions, can Fiji make a peaceful transition to normal democratic rule?



Steven Ratuva,
University of Canterbury

When the final election results were announced around 4pm on Sunday 18 December, many Fijians, at home and around the world, breathed a collective sigh of relief: the government of coup-maker Frank Bainimarama

looked like it had finally been defeated at the ballot box.

Could it be that the militarised political culture, pervasive in Fiji since the 1987 coups, was finally being effectively challenged – peacefully?

Bainimarama's Fiji First Party (FFP) collected 42.55% of votes, well short of the majority needed to return to power. The closest rival, the People's Alliance Party (PAP), led by 1987 coup leader Sitiveni Rabuka, won 35.82%, followed by the National Federation Party (NFP) on 8.89% and the Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA) with 5.14% of the votes.

Total voter turnout was 68.28%, less than the 71.92% at the 2018 election. With the Unity Fiji and Fiji Labour parties not reaching the required 5% threshold to gain seats under Fiji's proportional representation system, the maths now points to a dead heat – and some anxious coalition horse-trading.

The vote shares mean FFP will have 26 seats in the new 55-seat parliament, the PAP 21, NFP 5 and SODELPA 3. The PAP and NFP have already signed a pre-election agreement to form a coalition, meaning they are tied with the FFP on 26 seats.

Led by Viliame Gavoka, SODELPA has suddenly been thrust into the role of king-maker. Given its fraught history with both FFP and PAP, the stage is set for some hard bargaining on all sides.

Family ties

The PAP, in fact, is a breakaway faction of SODELPA. The divorce was bitter and littered with bruised souls. A faction within SODELPA wanted nothing to do with Rabuka and the PAP.

On the other hand, SODELPA's relationship with Fiji First has been equally strained. The founding leader of SODELPA, the late prime minister Laiseni Qarase, was deposed, arrested and jailed following Bainimarama's 2006 coup.

But there is a personal link between SODELPA and the FFP, whose secretary (as well as attorney-general and minister for the economy in the previous government) is Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum. An Indo-Fijian Muslim, Sayed-Khaiyum is the son-in-law of SODELPA leader Viliame Gavoka, an indigenous Fijian (Taukei).



Fiji First leader Frank Bainimarama arriving to vote in Suva, December 14. Pic - AAP

While this multi-racial connection may have its political advantages, the reality is that many in SODELPA vehemently oppose Sayed-Khaiyum for what they view as his imposing and arrogant style.

Return of Rabuka

There are early indications that SODELPA may go with the PAP and NFP partnership to form a grand coalition. Ideologically and politically, SODELPA and PAP share the same basic vision and strategies regarding indigenous Fijian issues – after all, they were once the same party.

Gavoka and Rabuka are similar in various ways. They both have ethno-nationalist tendencies and embrace fundamentalist evangelical Christian doctrines. Gavoka has advocated setting up a Fijian embassy in Jerusalem, and Rabuka has been known as an admirer of Israel since he was commander of Fijian peacekeepers in the Middle East in the 1980s.

Furthermore, SODELPA has been under pressure from its international and local branches (which fund the party) not to entertain any FFP coalition proposals. The message coming through from supporters is that their votes for SODELPA were also votes against FFP.

There have also been fears that an alliance between SODELPA and FFP could provoke old grievances and escalate into wider political instability.

Lastly, "non-negotiables" laid down by SODELPA include enacting policies that promote indigenous Fijian interests (including the reinstatement of the Great Council of Chiefs (which Bainimarama abolished), forgiving scholarship debt and setting up a Fiji embassy in Jerusalem. These are similar to the PAP policies in the party manifesto but quite different from the FFP positions.

Culture change

If the election sees FijiFirst finally leave power, there is the potential for democratic progress. One of the major challenges for

an incoming new government will be reform of the country's civil service, judiciary, education and health systems, and the economy in general.

Over the years, Fiji society has been configured in ways that suit the narrow ideological interests and centralised control of the FFP. Security, public order and media laws have been used to undermine democratic debate, free expression and public engagement.

Democratising the institutions of state and making them more relevant will be a huge task. It will require significant financial, political and intellectual resources. It also has ramifications in the wider Pacific region, given Fiji's role as an economic, communications and political hub.

Many Pacific leaders, including in Australia and New Zealand, have been unhappy with Fiji under the Bainimarama-Kaiyum axis. Actions such as the government's refusal to release more than FJ\$80 million in funding for the University of the South Pacific – creating a major crisis at the regional institution – only reinforce such perceptions.

This time, Rabuka and Bainimarama – both former military leaders and coup makers – have used the democratic electoral system rather than guns and force to try to win to power. But behind them sits a culture of command and control that will be difficult to dislodge.

This is subtly woven into various aspects of the 2013 Constitution, such as the role of the military as the nation's constitutional security watchdog. But there is growing confidence that the chances of another military coup following this election are virtually nil.

Fiji's civil service and operations of state have incorporated micromanagement, authoritarianism and coercion as part of the institutional culture. The test will be to ensure that a coalition of parties can rule together in a way that expands political participation and enhances democracy.



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor

Understanding Oneness

Every thought we have and action we take becomes part of the collective energy of the planet.

Sometimes we look at the actions of others and find it difficult to understand what motivates them. But we are all doing the best we can with the information we currently have. We have all been taught how to see the world from the examples of those around us and by our experiences. Keeping this in mind, we can accept the choices made by others while seeking ways to increase the world's level of consciousness as a whole.

Our different levels of consciousness are like the developmental stages of children, whose understanding varies according to their age and experience. For example, the behavior of a two-year-old who doesn't want to share can be understood as a phase of his social education, whereas a 16-year-old who behaves in the same manner would be thought to be acting childish. It is important to remember that we are each on our own unique path. We may have chosen certain lessons or made an agreement to play certain roles in the unfolding of the world's understanding before we incarnated in this lifetime. So our job is not to judge others but to shift the balance of understanding in the world by increasing our own.

Every thought we have and action we take becomes part of the collective energy of the planet. When we use our energy to bring light into the world, it combines with the light brought by others to dispel the darkness. Though we live in a world of duality, which helps us to experience the material plane, we don't need to experience extremes to understand them. We can share our experiences and understanding with others not from a place of condescension but of connection.

When the entire family of humanity understands that each of our thoughts, choices, and actions affect us all, we will share an incredible level of consciousness – one that puts our oneness above all else and helps us evolve into higher expressions of our spiritual selves. Remember the next time you witness an action of another that they are of the same earth as you but simply on a different conscious level at this point in their life. Find compassion, bless them, and move along your day in grace.