

MAURITIUS TIMES

• "Government is a trust and the officers of the government are trustees, and both the trust and the trustees are created for the benefit of the people." — Henry Clay

Interview: Satyajit Boolell, Former DPP

"The FCC: Same old vinegar in a new bottle, but with a political appointee shielded from accountability"



• 'The FCC may be cast aside as being unconstitutional. It is an attempt to circumvent Section 72 of the Constitution by a simple legislation'

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La FCC, une commission de poursuite 2.0



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The Financial Crimes Commission

In an earlier comment in these columns on the proposals canvassed at different times aimed at setting up a Financial Crimes Commission (FCC), we had argued that there is need for a clean-up either in the form of a new single lead Agency for investigating all financial scams, frauds, money-laundering and corruption activities or an apex organisation that might sit over and coordinate the existing disjointed structures with different reporting mechanisms. The present setup has given rise at times to grumblings in the past arising from competing agendas, limited communication and information-sharing, mistrust as well as capacity differences between the different agencies at work in the fight against financial crime. Legal and institutional overlap and conflicts were perhaps inevitable with six separate agencies involved in tracking financial crime.

The purpose of a FCC, as announced by Sir Anerood Jugnauth on 7 June 2016, in reply to a PQ pertaining to the proposed setting up of such an institution, and even around 2013 with rumours floating about a proposed merger of the Bank of Mauritius and the Financial Services Commission, was meant to ensure greater coordination among law enforcement agencies and to reinforce public-private partnership in combating financial crime. The objective then favoured the setting up of an umbrella institution that would bring greater coordination among the law enforcement agencies, reporting to different parent ministries.

The Financial Crimes Commission Bill - (No. XX of 2023), as tabled in the National Assembly, last week, has already given rise to protests from political and legal quarters which have questioned the constitutionality of the proposals. What is being proposed appears to be another version of ICAC, but much more powerful and with a wider-ranging authority and mandate and devoid of any kind of accountability as regards the status of investigations. Given the experience with ICAC since its inception and its singularly inept performance in taking to task those in the spheres of power, it is not surprising that the proposed FCC is already being viewed with so much suspicion and resentment.

A perusal of the FCC Bill indicates that its object is to establish an apex agency to detect, investigate and prosecute financial crimes. Some of the provisions of the Act, listed below, may not appear objectionable *per se*, but the devil is, as always, in the details -- and in their application:

- The Commission (including the Director-General) shall, in the discharge of its functions and exercise of its powers, not be under the direction or control of any person or authority;
- The Commissioners shall be appointed by the President, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, tendered after the Prime Minister has consulted the Leader of the Opposition; the Director-General must have 'served in an anti-corruption body at a senior level for a period of at least 5 years;
- A legal person shall ensure that it has adequate procedures in place, which are reasonably necessary, to prevent it or any person acting on its behalf from committing an offence under the Act, failing which it shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable for a fine not exceeding 20 million rupees;
- The Commission may, in carrying out an investigation, conduct such hearings as it considers appropriate - in public or in private - at the discretion of the Director-General;

- Where, in the course of an investigation under the Act or for any other purpose under the Act or the Declaration of Assets Act, the Director-General is satisfied that a property is the subject matter of, or relates to, an offence, the Director-General may seize that property;

- Where the Director-General is satisfied, with regard to an investigation or prosecution for an offence under this FCC or the Declaration of Assets Act, the Commission may, in writing, direct an officer to arrest that person;

- Members of the Operations Review Committee - political appointees -, excluding *ex officio* members, shall be appointed - by the President, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister;

- A Parliamentary Committee, which shall be responsible to monitor and review the general manner in which the Commission discharges its functions, shall consist of 9 members, 5 of whom shall be designated by the Prime Minister and 4 of whom shall be designated by the Leader of the Opposition.

- The Commission may institute such criminal proceedings as it may consider appropriate for any offence under the FCC or the Declaration of Assets Act - without prejudice to the powers of the Director of Public Prosecutions to take over, continue or discontinue such criminal proceedings;

- Any person convicted of an offence under the FCC - monetary benefits or from a property - shall in addition to the fine and imprisonment imposed for that offence, pay a penalty in an amount not exceeding 100 times the amount of the monetary benefits or value of the property;

- No action shall lie against the Commission, the Director-General, a Commissioner or an officer in respect of any act done or omission made by it or him in good faith in the discharge of its or his functions.

Comforted by its numerical strength in the Assembly, the passing of the FCC legislation by a simple majority, will have the effect of installing a supervening authority (the FCC) which may put in question the absolute discretion the DPP currently enjoys whether to prosecute a case or otherwise in the light of available evidence and/or substantive law. So far, the independent set-up of the DPP's Office has prevented it from "being polluted by the inflow of noxious political contamination", to quote from the Constitutional Commissioner, Prof SA De Smith in 1964.

Other pointedly relevant questions relate to the appointment of the members or head of the proposed FCC and with what degree of independence and accountability they would operate - the more so given that the government has not seized this opportunity to rebuild trust by proposing to give the head of the FCC constitutional protection in much the same way as the DPP for him/her to be able to function independently, without fear and favour; The FCC head will instead be appointed by the Prime Minister and could therefore be subjected to political influence.

Beyond the possibility that the FCC Act might constitute an *ad hominem* attack against an Opposition leader, what is being proposed looks to many lawyers and commentators like a monster that could eventually be instrumentalised to track and indeed neutralise political adversaries across the board.

The Conversation

So you want to be an autocrat?

Scholars say countries across the globe are experiencing a rise in autocratic rule, with declines in democratic ideals and practice



Two autocrats: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, left, and Hungarian leader Viktor Orbán, right, in Budapest, Hungary, Nov. 7, 2019. AP/Presidential Press Service

Scholars say countries across the globe are experiencing a rise in autocratic rule, with declines in democratic ideals and practice. Autocratic rule - also known as authoritarianism - is when one leader or political party exercises complete power to govern a country and its people.

Definitions of democracy vary. All citizens in a democracy have the ability to vote in elections, which should be free and fair. Independent media, freedom of speech and assembly and the rule of law feature in most contemporary perceptions of democracy.

Democratic declines are most notable in the regions with the world's largest concentration of democracies. That includes Europe, North America and Latin America.

One example: The United States in 2018 was rated a "flawed democracy," dropping from 21st to 25th place among 167 countries and territories.

In the old days, autocrats often came to or retained power through military coups and violent crackdowns. Now the shift from democracy to autocracy is slower and less obvious.

While control over security forces remains essential in the autocratic playbook, overt strong-arm tactics aren't.

Shelley Inglis, Executive Director, University of Dayton Human Rights Center, University of Dayton

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Public Trust and Good Governance

Murli Dhar

Breach of trust in both the public and private sectors is one of the serious structural challenges facing the country on the way forward

Those who are placed in a position of trust have a duty to act with responsibility. The greater the amount of trust placed on them, the more responsibly are they expected to behave during their mandate. It is unfortunately the case in many instances that this duty of trust is easily breached for private pursuits at the cost of the public interest. Most of the time, the abuse is out of the sight of the public.

Some local examples

At the time cooperatives started being formed in the country (in the 1950s), they were looked upon as clean institutions run by members of high integrity for the benefit of members, some sort of liberation from a capitalist system that did not allow small units to thrive in business. Cooperatives actually lived up to the promise of better days to numerous families caught in repeating cycles of poverty. In past years, some cooperatives have come in the limelight for misgovernance of funds having resulted in significant losses for contributing members. The noble ideal of altruistic social service with which cooperatives were started seemed to have been overtaken by those placed in positions of trust. On the other hand, the Covid-19 pandemic gave rise to multiple cases of corrupt dealings.

Public officers occupied positions in the public service in the hope of leaving behind a rich legacy of achievements, an enduring culture of high disciplined conduct for their successors to continue building upon them. Some were remembered at the end of their careers for having improved public health services to a standard comparable with what obtained in developed countries. Others lifted the education system to international levels, despite the limited resources available. Still others made their mark in the judicial

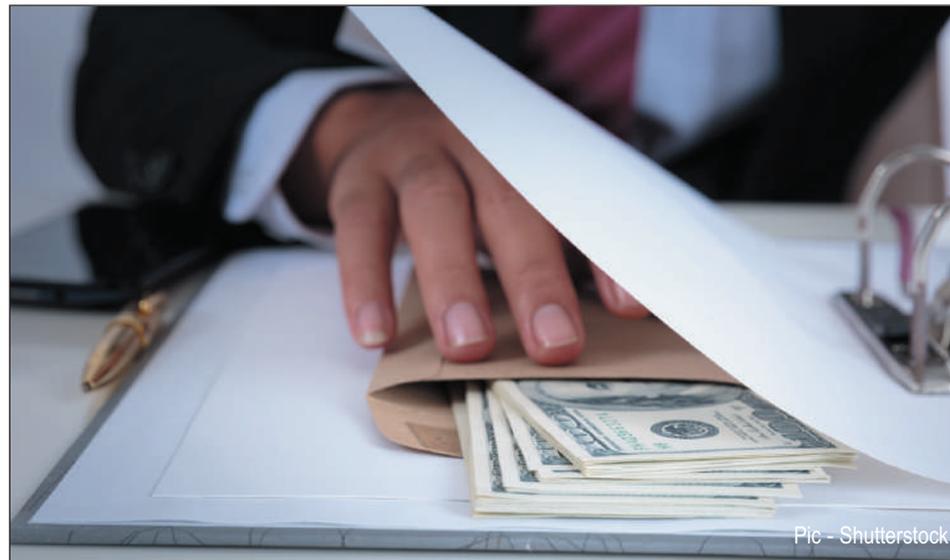
“The (Singapore) Government’s policy is clear: If you are a senior officer, director in the organisation, you are in a position of greater trust. You have considerable authority to make decisions in relation to the organisation’s assets. If you abuse that trust, you should be more culpable, and you should be liable for more severe punishments, compared with an ordinary employee. That’s really common sense, and there can be no question about that...”

system, their principled decisions being lauded in higher courts of appeal. Our agricultural research received very high international regards.

A few years back, we learnt about how pandemic procurement procedures provided the opportunity of considerable derailment and corruption to the tune of hundreds of millions of rupees, if not billions; in connivance with high officials shady business operators have been reported to have made mega profits on all fronts. Earlier, others have taken decisions, such as in the Betamax and BAI cases, which have cost the public exchequer several billions of rupees in damages for not having followed due process. Even if they step out of office – being no longer held directly accountable – the liability has had to be borne by the country. It is the reason why when offices involving public trust were given to certain individuals, those individuals were vetted for the necessary character and abilities to be able to “deliver the goods”. Once officers started seeing their offices more as private dens for self-gratification and for the exercise of oppressive power – and not for the public good – the element of public trust was seriously undermined.

Another example may be taken from the political field. From independence, we’ve seen several alternations of political parties in power. Some have credited these alternations of power as the accepted play of democracy. In reality, political parties, having messed it up in the course of a mandate or not delivered on electoral promises, have come back to power in new disguises with new alliances of political parties. Voters have trusted these new alliances each time believing that “things will now change for the better”. Sometimes, the situation has ended up becoming worse than before. It is only after the event that voters have realised that they had again misplaced their trust.

Breach of trust may therefore be seen to be playing out at different levels in various spheres in the country – in the public as well as in the private sector. Instances of breach of trust are many in the latter sector as well. It is one of the serious structural challenges facing the country on the way forward. Those who have committed the breach of trust have usually walked away after “committing the crime”. Others have been whitewashed after change of government. Mauritius has fallen short of being decisive enough to overturn this aggravating situation by dealing with it once and for



Pic - Shutterstock

“Breach of trust may therefore be seen to be playing out at different levels in various spheres in the country – in the public as well as in the private sector. Instances of breach of trust are many in the latter sector as well. It is one of the serious structural challenges facing the country on the way forward. Those who have committed the breach of trust have usually walked away after “committing the crime”. Others have been whitewashed after change of government...”

all in an exemplary manner.

If one were looking to a fundamental reason why we haven’t been adequately re-inventing our political, administrative, and business outlooks in a more sustainable manner, this national passivity in the face of abuse could be one of the principal reasons for the observed lack - in the past decade at least - of breakthroughs significant enough to put the country on a higher track.

Examples from outside

Mauritius is not alone in suffering from breach of trust in upholding the public interest. Breaches of trust happen across the world, but what defines some countries as no-nonsense jurisdictions is how they act decisively with such cases as and when they happen.

Consider how Singapore has dealt with a relatively small case which caught public attention over there. It is the City Harvest Church case which came to a close some years back. The founder of the church and five other church leaders were investigated some years back in a case involving falsifying and misrepresenting financial accounts, with diversion and personal misappropriation of S\$ 50 million of church funds. The six of them were originally sentenced to jail terms from 21 months to 8 years under a specific section of the Penal Code. They appealed and were delivered reduced sentences between 7 months and 3 ½

years under a different section of the Penal Code.

The government was unhappy with the reduced sentences, having asked for up to 15 years in jail. While complying with the court’s decision, Singapore’s Attorney General said: “The Government’s policy is clear: If you are a senior officer, director in the organisation, you are in a position of greater trust. You have considerable authority to make decisions in relation to the organisation’s assets. If you abuse that trust, you should be more culpable, and you should be liable for more severe punishments, compared with an ordinary employee. That’s really common sense, and there can be no question about that.”

Company directors and other persons in similar positions of responsibility are warned that they should take no risks to trespass the law. Punishment could be exemplary. The effect is to boost the public international image of the jurisdiction that it will not brook any breach of trust without it being severely punished.

There may be several cases of breach of trust in this jurisdiction which may not have surfaced up. What is noteworthy however is the public stand taken: the government will neither associate itself with nor condone cases of breach of trust by those who are expected to uphold it, religious institutions not excepted.

Le salaire minimum augmenté à partir de janvier 2024

Par A. Bartleby

Le gouvernement a annoncé, cette semaine, l'augmentation du salaire minimum qui passera à Rs 15,000 par mois à partir de janvier. Cela signifie que le revenu minimum garanti passera à Rs 18,500 par mois, car le gouvernement puisera dans le fond de la CSG afin de redistribuer Rs 2,000 en plus des Rs 1,500.

Cette mesure a surpris pas mal de gens car elle a été annoncée sans préavis. Les syndicats se sont dit satisfaits de cette mesure, surtout que le ministère du Travail finalise actuellement les négociations pour la valorisation salariale.

Cette mesure fait suite à la question du leader de l'opposition Xavier-Luc Duval concernant l'attribution d'un 14ème mois de boni. Cette question a très certainement pris le gouvernement par surprise car il se murmure que cette mesure était en discussion pour une éventuelle mise en place l'année prochaine. Est-ce que la question du leader de l'opposition a fait reculer le gouvernement sur cette mesure? Peut-être.

Et peut-être que l'augmentation du salaire minimum a compensé ce recul du gouvernement sur le 14ème mois de boni. Si c'est le cas, le gouvernement aura fait une bonne chose. Il est indéniable que les petites classes moyennes sont particulièrement affectées par les effets de l'inflation sur le pouvoir d'achat. Il est ainsi impératif pour le gouvernement de tenter de rectifier la donne à quelques mois des échéances électorales.

L'attribution d'un 14ème mois de boni de fin d'année n'était pas la bonne formule. Cela aurait mis une pression



L'augmentation du salaire minimum... il est indéniable que les petites classes moyennes sont particulièrement affectées par les effets de l'inflation sur le pouvoir d'achat.

financière insupportable sur les petites et moyennes entreprises, qui auraient pu se retrouver dans la situation de devoir licencier une partie de leur effectif. Une légère augmentation du salaire est beaucoup plus réaliste et moins punitive pour les entreprises.

Cela a également du sens car les secteurs clés de l'économie tournent à plein régime. Le secteur touristique et hôtelier se porte à merveille, tout comme les secteurs financiers et immobiliers. Il suffit de voir les augmentations records des profits des grands conglomérats pour constater que nous sommes bel et bien sortis de la crise économique à Maurice et que les objectifs de croissance

seront sans doute atteints.

Mais cela ne signifie pas non plus que le gouvernement se doit maintenant de devenir le grand redistributeur des revenus de l'économie. L'économie globale reste précaire avec une inflation qui pourrait repartir à la hausse l'année prochaine. La BOM a d'ailleurs maintenu le repos rate à 4,5% en cette fin d'année afin de consolider la stabilisation de la Roupie face au Dollar et à l'Euro. Mais cette stabilité monétaire retrouvée risque de basculer encore l'année prochaine, et les spécialistes des finances parlent déjà d'une augmentation du repo rate à 5%.

La situation est clairement instable, avec un commerce mondial qui montre les signes d'une ralentissement qui pourrait durer tout le long de l'année 2024. Il est ainsi impératif d'être extrêmement prudent quant aux mesures sociales et économiques. Une balance devrait être trouvée entre l'obligation de permettre aux Mauriciens d'avoir une augmentation de leurs revenus afin de faire face à la crise du pouvoir d'achat et le fait de ne pas provoquer un surplus monétaire inflationniste sur le marché local.

Cette équation risque de structurer l'année prochaine en matière de politiques économiques et sociales. En effet, il est clair que le gouvernement devra honorer ses promesses de redistribution de la croissance avant d'aller aux prochaines élections. Mais cette redistribution devra se faire dans des conditions qui permettront aux opérateurs de continuer à consolider la résilience de l'économie mauricienne.

Le BJP remporte une joute électorale capitale à moins d'une année des prochaines élections générales

Le BJP, parti du Premier ministre indien Narendra Modi, est sorti victorieux des élections régionales organisées le 3 décembre dernier, en remportant trois des quatre États où les votants s'étaient rendus aux urnes au mois de novembre afin de renouveler leurs assemblées locales. Il s'agissait du

Telangana, du Rajasthan, du Madhya Pradesh et du Chhattisgarh, le BJP perdant au Telangana mais consolidant son assise dans les trois autres.

Ces élections étaient attendues par les observateurs politiques car elles devraient donner la tendance pour les élections générales qui se tiendront l'année prochaine. Les résultats sont probants pour le BJP, et Narendra Modi

n'a d'ailleurs pas hésité à qualifier cette victoire d'historique, la jugeant même sans précédent.

Les résultats des élections générales et des élections régionales ne sont pas forcément corrélés. Mais les scrutins locaux donnent la température et le ton de ce que devraient être les élections générales. Il est ainsi clair que le BJP a su galvaniser ses troupes et a envoyé un message clair, en reprenant notamment les États du Rajasthan et de Chhattisgarh au Congress Party, qui peine à construire une opposition solide pour résister à l'ancrage de plus en plus tenace du BJP dans les États clés du nord de la Grande Péninsule, et notamment dans les régions dites «hindiphones».

Rahul Gandhi a été forcé de reconnaître la défaite du Congress Party mais s'est dit déterminé à tenir tête au BJP lors des prochaines élections.

Cette situation n'est pas sans rappeler la scène politique locale. Rahul Gandhi est l'arrière-petit-fils de Jawaharlal Nehru, le petit-fils d'Indira Gandhi et le fils de Rajiv Gandhi. Il s'agit de la quatrième génération de la dynastie des Nehru/Gandhi – même le PMSD ne fait

pas mieux à Maurice puisqu'ils en sont à la troisième génération.

Rahul Gandhi personifie le népotisme et les abus qui lui sont liés, chose que la majorité des Indiens rejettent massivement depuis dix ans maintenant. Son accession à la tête du Congress Party devait signifier un renouvellement de ce parti, mais en réalité, cela a renforcé le rejet massif de ce que représente aujourd'hui le Congress, chose que le BJP a su parfaitement utiliser afin d'arriver à ses fins politiques.

Ainsi, les victoires électorales de cette semaine confirment la tendance d'un Congress Party qui ne fait que s'engouffrer dans un trou dont il aura énormément de mal à s'en extirper.

Le BJP, qui s'appuie sur ses succès économiques et industriels en plus d'une idéologie qui rassemble clairement une majorité d'Indiens, semble filer tout droit vers un troisième mandat consécutif l'année prochaine.

Nous devons observer de très près ces élections générales en Inde l'année prochaine. Une nouvelle victoire de Modi pourrait donner une certaine tendance ici aussi, surtout si l'assise du BJP est confortée dans les régions hindiphones de l'Inde, dont le parallélisme avec le «Hindu Belt» à Maurice appelle à la réflexion.

☞ Voir plus en page 5



Les résultats des élections générales et des élections régionales ne sont pas forcément corrélés. Mais les scrutins locaux donnent la température et le ton... P - RFI

Henry Kissinger: Un parcours tout aussi exemplaire que controversé

Henry Kissinger est décédé le mercredi 29 novembre à l'âge de 100 ans. Il fut sans doute le diplomate le plus important de la seconde moitié du 20ème siècle, son influence sur les politiques américaines étant telle qu'il présida à la conduite de la guerre froide et à la recomposition géostratégique qui suivit l'effondrement du bloc soviétique.

Son parcours fut tout aussi exemplaire que controversé. En effet, ce fils d'immigrés juifs allemands passe rapidement de professeur émérite à Harvard à conseiller à la sécurité nationale puis secrétaire d'État, repéré par le président Nixon. C'est le début d'une carrière fulgurante qui le gardera proche des plus hautes sphères d'influence jusqu'à sa mort.

En effet, c'est avec Richard Nixon



Henry Kissinger, le diplomate le plus important de la seconde moitié du 20ème siècle. P - Magazine Diplomat Investissement

qu'Henry Kissinger va véritablement acquérir une stature internationale. Il va ainsi se trouver au foyer de la plupart des grandes initiatives politiques américaines, dont certaines structurent toujours les relations internationales actuelles: le Proche-Orient, l'ex-Union

soviétique, la Chine, entre autres.

Mais son grand fait d'armes fut son rôle à mettre fin à la guerre du Vietnam. C'est Kissinger bien sûr qui, en 1969, entama les négociations en vue d'un accord sur le Vietnam, ce qui permit à l'armée américaine de se retirer de ce pays où elle était embourbée depuis le début des années 1960.

Henri Kissinger reçut d'ailleurs le prix Nobel de la paix en 1973 pour son rôle dans les négociations afin de mettre un terme à la guerre du Vietnam. Ce prix Nobel

fut l'un des plus controversés puisque Kissinger fut également au cœur de décisions militaires et politiques qui coûtèrent la vie à des centaines de milliers de personnes, comme l'intensification des bombardements au Vietnam et au Cambodge. Il soutint également une série de

coups d'État en Amérique latine, incluant celui de Pinochet au Chili en 1973.

Partisan de la realpolitik, Kissinger devint rapidement incontournable dans le domaine de la négociation. En pleine guerre froide, il fut l'homme du compromis lorsqu'il prôna la détente avec l'URSS. Il initia aussi le dégel des relations des États-Unis avec la Chine de Mao, une opération couronnée de succès par le très symbolique voyage du président Nixon à Pékin en 1972.

Il passa ses dernières années dans le domaine du conseil en stratégies politiques, son immense réseau lui permit d'être un homme de l'ombre dont l'influence n'a jamais vraiment diminué. Et malgré les controverses, il fait partie de ces hommes dont les traces resteront gravées dans les pages de l'histoire politique de leur époque.

La Haute Cour constitutionnelle malgache valide définitivement l'élection d'Andry Rajoelina



La HCC malgache proclame la réélection d'Andry Rajoelina. P - RTBF

La Haute Cour constitutionnelle (HCC) malgache a proclamé vendredi dernier les résultats officiels et définitifs du premier tour de l'élection présidentielle confirmant la victoire du Président sortant, Andry Rajoelina avec 58,96% des voix.

Il est suivi par Siteny Randrianasoloniaiko qui est crédité de 14,39% des voix tandis que Marc Ravalomanana, arrivé à la troisième place, totalise 12,09 % des voix.

D'après la loi, les candidats et les électeurs avaient deux jours, du 26 au 27 novembre, pour déposer des requêtes liées aux contentieux électoraux auprès du tribunal administratif ou de la Haute Cour constitutionnelle. La Cour a reçu une quinzaine de requêtes dont la plupart ont été déclarées recevables mais non fondées.

Seuls deux candidats, à savoir Andry Rajoelina et Sendrison Daniela Raderanirina, ont fait le déplacement

au siège de la HCC à Ambohidahy, Antananarivo, pour assister à cette cérémonie de proclamation.

Rajoelina s'est dit satisfait de l'issue des élections et a affirmé que le peuple malgache avait fait le choix de la stabilité et du développement économique, et que son gouvernement continuerait sur le chemin déjà engagé.

Selon ses explications, les membres du gouvernement qui ont été efficaces dans le passé seront reconduits à leur fonction. «Il faut respecter le choix du peuple», a-t-il enfin lancé à l'endroit de ses adversaires.

L'opposition, pour sa part, campe sur sa position et maintient ses revendications en vue de l'annulation du scrutin et la mise en place d'un régime de transition de sept mois. Elle annonce la poursuite du combat et affirme mobiliser ses partisans dans les régions.

A. Bartleby



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Anil Madan

Uncertainty in Interesting Times: We Live in an Interesting Age

There is so much uncertainty all around us. Whether we consider the issues of climate change under discussion at the COP28 conference, the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict/war, the war in Ukraine, the US presidential election, or geopolitics writ large, it is difficult to predict what is going to happen

The Thanksgiving holiday was a welcome break, and I was fortunate to spend some time in California sunshine with friends and on golf courses. As I was contemplating thankfulness for so many things, I was also struck by how much turmoil there is around the world that dampens my sense of thankfulness other than for being far away from most of it.

We certainly live in an interesting age, I thought. This ruminating brought to mind the alleged ancient Chinese saying that sounds like a blessing but is ostensibly a curse: "May you live in interesting times." A little reading led me to an article in The Phrase Finder (www.phrases.org.uk) which claims that this saying is neither Chinese nor an ancient curse. The phrase, "we live in an interesting age" is attributed to remarks made by Frederic R. Coudert at the *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science*, 1939 in which he recounted writing to a friend, Sir Austen Chamberlain, who replied that he had been told that one of the principal Chinese curses is: "May you live in an interesting age." That was uncertain since Chamberlain did not read Mandarin.

As I made a mental survey of interesting topics for interesting times, it struck me that there is so much uncertainty all around us. Whether we consider the issues of climate change under discussion at the COP28 conference, the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict/war, the war in Ukraine, the US presidential election, or geopolitics writ large, it is difficult to predict what is going to happen.

COP28 conference in Dubai

Sultan Al Jaber is the President of the COP28 conference in Dubai. In an exchange with former Irish President Mary Robinson, Al Jaber said that while phasing out fossil fuels is inevitable, there is no scientific evidence to support the notion that it would meet the world's climate change goals. The only certainty was that his remarks would cause an uproar. But it bears noting that while he was politically incorrect, he was factually correct. Putting aside the problem of defining the "world's climate change goals" or over what time-scale fossil fuels are to be phased out, the warnings that we hear from scientists are that if we don't reduce fossil fuel consumption, we will push things over the tipping point. No responsible scientists claim that eliminating all fossil fuels tomorrow will be

an instant cure for the damage already done, or that it is reversible. And, of course, given the world's energy needs, it is unlikely that absent a major technological breakthrough in the very near future, we will see a massive shift away from fossil fuels. The end of fossil fuels is inevitable, the time frame is uncertain.

Meanwhile as the COP28 conference went on, Chennai and its environs experienced another major flooding event, the second in eight years. Chennai was hit with 24 cm (almost ten inches) of rainfall in a single day, on Monday. In a span of 35 hours Sunday to Monday evening, a nearby area had 43 cm (nearly 17 inches) of rain. Events around the world have shown the certainty that major floods, winds, snowfalls, and fires, is beyond question. What is uncertain is where and when they will strike, and how hard. The other certainty is that despite all warnings, the world is unprepared to deal with these catastrophes. And it seems that once again, the attendees at COP28 will pay lip service to compensating countries that are most affected by rising sea levels while producing minimal greenhouse gases but fail to accomplish any meaningful funding.

Israel-Gaza war and war in Ukraine

The Israel-Gaza war and the war in Ukraine tell us that just as it has always been true, the certainty is that man will find cause to kill his fellow man. There is grave uncertainty about whether Ukraine can withstand Russia's ongoing onslaught and indeed, uncertainty about whether and for how long Russia can continue. Aid from the US and European countries to Ukraine is critical to the beleaguered nation's defense. Yet, there is uncertainty about whether the aid will continue.

There is a slight bit of good news here. It appears that Republican opposition to aid for Ukraine is not rooted in any ill will or disregard of the Ukrainians' struggle to maintain their democracy. Rather, it is a cynical ploy to force funding for border

control to stem the burgeoning inflow of undocumented immigrants into the US. It is not clear why the Democrats do not want more robust enforcement at the border, and such reluctance seems illogical. This will certainly resolve itself.

On the Israel-Hamas front, it seems inevitable that in the short-term, Israel will succeed in damaging Hamas significantly. Less certain is whether Israel can prevail

continue to rule an unwilling populace. The history of the world tells us that tyranny is often long-lived.

Reports from UN agencies state that almost 1.8 million Gazans have been displaced and the threat of death from hunger and disease is ever-present. Meanwhile Israel threatens to flood the tunnels that Hamas has constructed under Gaza's buildings with sea water. It is uncertain what environmental damage sea water will do as it may take months to execute this plan and years for the sea water to lose its corrosive force.



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over the long-term or whether its campaign will result in a million or more dead Palestinians. And that is a serious existential question for Israel. The good news is that the major Arab nations seems to have abandoned the idea of destroying Israel. Certainly, it is in the interest of the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan, and the Gulf nations to make peace with Israel.

Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon are hardly major nations in their current condition. This leaves Iran as the wild card. There is grave uncertainty about whether and how fast Iran will develop a nuclear weapons delivery capability. It is all but certain that Iran will develop nuclear weapons if it has not already done so. There is uncertainty about how much longer the Ayatollahs can

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The China-Russia-Iran Axis

On the geopolitical front, some months ago, it seemed that China, Russia, and Iran were about to form an axis to challenge the US, Europe, and countries generally aligned with the West. The faltering Chinese and Russian economies seem to have damped that move for now. But it would be a mistake to underestimate China. For decades to come, China will continue to enjoy massive trade surpluses that can be diverted to expanding its naval fleet, attack aircraft, space capabilities, nuclear arsenal, and armaments in general. China will remain a regional Asian harasser and a world-stage troublemaker.

India remains the odd man out in this mix. Still dependent on Russia for aircraft parts and for armaments, but pivoting toward America, India has a growing economy and a growing working age population. Will India make a major dent in China's unrivalled position as the world's manufactory? That remains to be seen. India has its own security priorities, with hostile neighbours in China and Pakistan. It will be decades before India is a true force on the international stage in terms of strategic capability. What is uncertain is whether India can accomplish this without US technology and perhaps US funding and whether the US has the wherewithal to fund such an endeavour.

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Prakash Neerohoo

Crimes financiers

La FCC, une commission de poursuite 2.0

Le gouvernement a présenté un projet de loi visant à mettre sur pied une *Financial Crimes Commission* (FCC) qui sera l'organisme central pour enquêter sur les crimes financiers (notamment la fraude, la corruption, le blanchiment d'argent et le financement du trafic de drogue) et pour poursuivre les suspects en justice.

Ce projet fait l'objet d'un débat intense qui polarise l'opinion publique en deux camps opposés, l'un qui soupçonne le gouvernement de mobiles sinistres et l'autre qui défend une réforme structurelle avec l'objet déclaré de mieux combattre les crimes financiers.

La moralisation des mœurs financières du pays est un enjeu majeur de la gouvernance économique, et ce, compte tenu du fait que les crimes financiers sont des sources d'enrichissement illicite qui ont des ramifications profondes dans la société en termes de trafic d'influence, de passe-droits et de relations incestueuses entre certaines autorités de l'Etat et des trafiquants.

D'ailleurs, dans un passé récent, Maurice fut inscrite sur les listes grise et noire du Groupe d'Action Financière (GAFI) de l'OCDE et de l'Union européenne pour cause de déficiences stratégiques dans le régime AML/CFT (*Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of Terrorism*).

C'est malheureux qu'une réforme structurelle aussi importante ne puisse faire l'objet d'un débat dépassionné. Si tout le monde est d'accord que le combat contre les crimes financiers requiert une structure de régulation et de contrôle plus efficace, c'est la méthodologie proposée qui est problématique. En effet, derrière

« Dès le départ, il semble qu'un problème de crédibilité se pose pour la FCC. Bien que l'article 4 du projet de loi dit que la FCC ne sera pas, dans l'exercice de ses fonctions et de ses pouvoirs, sous la direction d'une personne ou d'une autorité quelconque, les conditions de son indépendance ne semblent pas être réunies. En effet, l'article 10 prévoit que le directeur général de la FCC sera nommé par le Premier ministre sur une base contractuelle de cinq ans après consultation avec le leader de l'Opposition. Dans la pratique, on sait ce que signifie consultation... »



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l'objet général du projet de loi, c'est toute l'intention stratégique du gouvernement qui fait sourciller les observateurs avertis.

Depuis les années 1990, le pays cherche la formule structurelle idéale pour détecter les crimes financiers. La première institution connue comme l'*Economic Crime Office* (ECO) fut créée par un gouvernement travailliste, mais elle fut dissoute en janvier 2002 par le gouvernement MMM-MSM. Par la suite, celui-ci avait mis sur pied une nouvelle institution, l'*Independent Commission Against Corruption* (ICAC), sous la *Prevention of Corruption Act* pour remplacer l'ECO. Toutefois, tous les espoirs placés en l'ICAC ont été frustrés en raison de son manque d'indépendance, de ses lenteurs proverbiales et de son bilan très maigre.

L'ICAC a donné l'impression de s'occuper de menus fretins au lieu de traquer les gros requins de la fraude et de la corruption. Les gros dossiers de corruption qui lui ont été référés sont restés en suspens depuis des années. Dans certains cas, l'ICAC a été désavoué par les cours de justice, comme dans celui où un suspect (un pharmacien de l'Etat) - poursuivi pour maladresse allégué dans l'attribution d'un contrat de fourniture de médicaments - a été acquitté faute de preuves.

Vu les dysfonctionnements institutionnels actuels selon lesquels les institutions chargées de combattre les crimes financiers opèrent en vase clos, et sont parfois à couteaux tirés l'un avec l'autre sur leur champ de compétences, une nouvelle structure est sans doute nécessaire.

La FCC est la nouvelle structure qui regroupera sous un même toit trois institutions d'investigation, notamment l'ICAC, l'*Asset Recovery Investigation Division* (ARID) de la *Financial Intelligence Unit* et l'*Integrity Reporting Services Agency* (IRSA). Comme l'ICAC, l'ARID et l'IRSA n'ont pas donné des résultats positifs. Le bilan de l'ARID, en termes d'enquête sur les richesses inexplicables, est

nul à ce jour alors que les signes de richesse extérieurs sont très visibles dans certains milieux.

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Dans la pratique, on sait ce que signifie consultation. Le PM informe le leader de l'Opposition de son choix. Celui-ci peut exprimer son désaccord mais il n'a pas un droit de veto. Comme dans beaucoup de cas, un chef de service nommé par le PM n'est redevable qu'au chef du gouvernement. Il n'a pas de compte à rendre au public contribuable ou au Parlement. Idéalement, le directeur général de la FCC devrait être nommé par consensus par les trois personnalités de l'Etat (le Président de la République, le PM et le leader de l'Opposition) ou par un corps indépendant comme la *Judicial and Legal Services Commission* en puisant l'oiseau rare dans les rangs du judiciaire.

Sous l'article 6 du projet de loi, la FCC aura le pouvoir de détecter des crimes financiers, de faire des enquêtes et de poursuivre des suspects sans passer par le bureau du Directeur des Poursuites Publiques (DPP). L'alinéa 142(1)(a) stipule que la FCC peut tenter de telles poursuites au pénal qu'elle estime nécessaires pour un délit sous la loi. C'est une concentration de pouvoirs d'enquête et de poursuite entre les mains d'une seule autorité (FCC), ce qui est contraire à la séparation des pouvoirs qui existe actuellement entre l'ICAC et le DPP.

Sous le présent système, l'ICAC

enquête sur un crime et envoie un dossier au DPP, qui seul peut loger une poursuite. Bien que l'alinéa 142 (1)(c) du projet de loi dise que le DPP peut arrêter tout procès intenté par la FCC, l'alinéa 142 (1)(d) prévoit que toute partie mécontente de cette démarche peut demander une révision judiciaire de la décision du DPP en Cour suprême.

On imagine donc les conflits potentiels qui surviendraient entre le DPP et la FCC dans certains cas, lesquels seront identiques aux conflits entre le DPP et le Commissaire de police que l'on voit ces jours-ci en Cour suprême sur les droits de poursuite et le droit de libération de suspects sous caution.

En retirant au DPP les pouvoirs de poursuite en matière de crimes financiers, le projet de loi crée une commission de poursuite spéciale pour ce genre de délits sous la direction de l'Exécutif. Or, cette commission n'a pas la même indépendance constitutionnelle que le Bureau du DPP.

Ceci peut potentiellement ouvrir la voie à des abus de pouvoir comme l'arrestation arbitraire, la détention prolongée en prison d'un suspect et la saisie des avoirs du suspect en attendant que la Cour de justice commence le procès. Même si le DPP peut éventuellement annuler une poursuite, la réputation du suspect sera salie entretemps.

La FCC a donc l'apparence d'une commission de poursuite 2.0. La commission de poursuite 1.0, avec pour but de couper les ailes au DPP, fut proposée dans un projet de loi en 2016, mais elle n'avait pas vu le jour en raison de l'objection du PMSD, un des partenaires du gouvernement. Ce parti avait quitté le gouvernement d'alors au lieu de soutenir le projet de loi, qui demandait un amendement constitutionnel. Le présent projet de loi sera voté par une majorité simple pour donner des pouvoirs exceptionnels à la FCC.

Interview: Satyajit Boolell, Former DPP

“The FCC: Same old vinegar in a new bottle, but with a political appointee shielded from accountability”

‘The FCC may be cast aside as being unconstitutional. It is an attempt to circumvent Section 72 of the Constitution by a simple legislation’



Mauritius Times: It would seem that the loud protests over the Financial Crimes Commission (FCC) boils down to the real possibility that we might end up with another ICAC, which already suffers from a trust deficit, and would be in no way more accountable than the present anti-corruption agency, but much more powerful and might constitute a threat to civil liberties. Do you think that’s a correct assessment of what’s in the offing?

Satyajit Boolell: The ICAC has indeed a poor track record, and this is why it is difficult to comprehend why its powers are being extensively increased and the scope of offences under its responsibility extended to all financial crimes.

Given the complexity and scale of financial crimes worldwide, and the advent of Artificial Intelligence, I was hoping to see a modern piece of legislation based on international best practices of transparency, accountability and

“Given the complexity and scale of financial crimes worldwide, and the advent of Artificial Intelligence, I was hoping to see a modern piece of legislation based on international best practices of transparency, accountability and guarantees of independence. Instead, the FCC Bill adopts textually existing statutes namely GGIRA, ICAC, FIAMLA, ARA. It is the same old vinegar in a new bottle. Of serious concern, we shall have a political appointee shielded from accountability when investigations are not triggered or discontinued...”

Former Director of Public Prosecutions Satyajit Boolell does not mince words in his comments on the Financial Services Commission Bill, tabled last week, and that will come up for debate next Tuesday in the National Assembly. Of particular concern to Mr Boolell are the provisions that “shift the control of prosecutorial powers (from the DPP) albeit for one category of crime to a political appointee” - the head of the FCC, who shall be appointed by the Prime Minister and therefore could be subjected to political influence. He is also of the view in light of its provisions “the FCC may be cast aside as being unconstitutional” given that it’s “an attempt to circumvent section 72 (of the Constitution) by a simple legislation”. Read on:

lity and guarantees of independence. Instead, the FCC Bill adopts textually existing statutes namely GGIRA, ICAC, FIAMLA, ARA. It is the same old vinegar in a new bottle.

Of serious concern, we shall have a political appointee shielded from accountability when investigations are not triggered or discontinued.

It may look an innocuous piece of legislation and Government will be surfing on the argument that indeed Section 72 provides “for another or authority to institute proceedings”. But in substance this is not what’s happening since the powers of the DPP to decide whether

to prosecute financial crimes will be removed and these powers are being vested in a political appointee who could be subjected to political influence.

I am worried that a political appointee will, under the Bill, be vested with powers of surveillance and intercep-

for his final advice and decision.

In addition, in several statutes the legislator has deemed it fit to provide that the consent of the DPP is a condition *sine qua non* to make assurance doubly sure that inappropriate prosecution can occur. This is the situation with respect to offences under the Information and Communication Technologies Act. Why then do we need a departure from established practice the more so that we are dealing with even more serious offences, such as corruption, fraud, money laundering, cyber-crime, proceeds of crime and the financing of drugs. Why is the DPP denied the right to appeal?

*** Without personalizing the issue, does it matter who heads the Commission? Shouldn’t it instead be about whether the conditions have been set for an efficient and independent functioning of the organization?**

Certainly, it matters greatly. The DG of the commission will have no security of tenure since he will be

“If we carry on transferring the responsibility for deciding criminal offences to other investigative bodies, we might as well close down the Office of the DPP”

tion of our communications if he satisfies a Judge in an *ex parte* application that there are reasonable suspicions - a very low threshold that such a need exists. There are no safeguards, and provisions of the law are quite vague.

*** There’s also the shadow of the Prosecution Commission hovering over the FCC provisions. Would it be correct to say that we might see a revised version of the Prosecution Commission coming by the backdoor?**

The Prosecution Commission pertained to the whole prosecutorial powers of the DPP, whilst the FCC Bill pertains only to powers of the DPP as far as financial crimes are concerned.

But I can see what your question is aiming at because, as I have mentioned earlier, in substance the powers of the DPP are being drastically curtailed.

It is a well-established legal requirement under the Courts Act, that all cases referred to the Intermediate Court need a referral from the DPP. Except for cases where the DPP has delegated his powers, all case files destined for prosecution must be submitted to the DPP

appointed on contractual terms to be decided by the Prime Minister. There is no guarantee of his independence and instead a very real possibility of political interference in the discharge of his duties. More insidious and problematic is clause 7(5) (a) where it is provided that the appointment of the DG will be terminated for “breach of trust” - a notion more appropriate in the context of employer and employee relationship.

We should not fool ourselves into believing that the identity of the person appointed at the head of the FCC will not affect the efficiency and independence of the Commission. On the contrary, by virtue of being a political appointee, the Director General will be the face of the Commission.

*** The Constitution provides for the DPP to institute/take over and continue/discontinue criminal proceedings. What’s wrong with the provision that would empower the FCC to start and conduct an investigation and even to prosecute?**

I note, first of all, that there are no amendments being made to Section 72 of the Constitution.

☞ Cont. on page 9

CP vs DPP: 'The rule of law should prevail over everything else'

Private prosecutions: 'The considerations of the DPP remains the same for all cases: the evidence test and the public interest test'

☞ Cont. from page 8

Therefore, the legislator intends Section 72 to trump any legislation which may be read in contravention of its provisions. So, what is wrong is that the FCC in its present form attempts to curtail significantly and indeed reduce the powers of the DPP without the constitutional powers of the incumbent being touched. This in itself suggests that the FCC may be cast aside as being unconstitutional. It is an attempt to circumvent section 72 by a simple legislation.

And let me add that whilst it is right to acknowledge that Section 72 contains other measures for controlling prosecutions (the power of the DPP to take over and discontinue proceedings), these measures would NOT be sufficient to prevent the harm that would be caused by inappropriate proceedings even though they may be terminated post institution, before the court at least in theory.

* We understand that when the Constitution was being drafted, it was thought necessary to provide the Commissioner of Police, DPP, etc., an additional guarantee of constitutional protection to allow them to counter abuses or excesses of the Executive, if any. But shouldn't they not be made answerable to at least some form of oversight - parliamentary or otherwise - rather than through onerous and time-consuming judicial reviews?

The only so-called accountability revolves around the termination of the Commissioners by the Parliamentary Committee or submissions of annual reports of accounts. No independent mechanism of accountability is provided for in the Bill. The Parliamentary Committee has been useless and that's perhaps the very reason why it has been maintained.

* Besides institutional conflicts that may arise between the FCC and the ODPP in light of what may

“I am worried that a political appointee will, under the Bill, be vested with powers of surveillance and interception of our communications if he satisfies a Judge in an *ex parte* application that there are reasonable suspicions - a very low threshold that such a need exists. There are no safeguards, and provisions of the law are quite vague...”

“The DG of the commission will have no security of tenure since he will be appointed on contractual terms to be decided by the Prime Minister. There is no guarantee of his independence and instead a very real possibility of political interference in the discharge of his duties. More insidious and problematic is clause 7(5) (a) where it is provided that the appointment of the DG will be terminated for “breach of trust” - a notion more appropriate in the context of employer and employee relationship...”



be perceived as a usurpation by the FCC of the DPP's constitutional powers, do you see our highest court eventually striking it down as an unconstitutional piece of law - if it goes through?

The Supreme Court is the guardian of our Constitution. Under Section 72 of the Constitution, the DPP has indeed been expressly given power to enter prosecution, by himself or other persons acting under his general or specific instructions. Section 72 insulates the DPP as a prosecutorial authority from any political organs of the State. Let me remind you what Justice Lallah wrote in *Edath-Tally v M J K Glover* [1994] MR 200:

“A distinguishing feature of our Constitution is the splitting of executive functions between what one might call the political Executive which remains answerable to Parliament and an independent non-political Executive, in specific matters, consisting of, among others, the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Service Commissions and the Electoral Supervisory Commission, which are not answerable to Parliament. The purpose of this device is, institutionally, to insulate certain areas in the conduct of public affairs from political responsibility and control, thus ensuring their autonomy and independence.”

And, at time of the creation of the Office in 1964, constitutional expert De smith wrote on the need “to safeguard the stream of criminal justice from being polluted by noxious political contamination to segregate the process of prosecution entirely from general political considerations”. These warnings could not have been in vain.

However clever the legislator is trying to be, one can-

not shift the control of prosecutorial powers albeit for one category of crime to a political appointee. If we pursue that logic and carry on transferring the responsibility for deciding criminal offences to other investigative bodies, we might as well close down the Office of the DPP.

* On the other hand, what do you make of the legal conflict opposing the Commissioner of Police and the DPP - both holders of constitutional posts?

It is unfortunate; there must be a good working relationship, cooperation, and mutual respect between the

“There are no amendments being made to Section 72 of the Constitution. Therefore, the legislator intends Section 72 to trump any legislation which may be read in contravention of its provisions. So, what is wrong is that the FCC in its present form attempts to curtail significantly and indeed reduce the powers of the DPP without the constitutional powers of the incumbent being touched. This in itself suggests that the FCC may be cast aside as being unconstitutional. It is an attempt to circumvent section 72 by a simple legislation...”

“However clever the legislator is trying to be, one cannot shift the control of prosecutorial powers albeit for one category of crime to a political appointee. If we pursue that logic and carry on transferring the responsibility for deciding criminal offences to other investigative bodies, we might as well close down the Office of the DPP...”

two institutions. It is as simple as that. The rule of law should prevail over everything else.

* The DPP might have had good reasons in law to discontinue Vivek Pursun's private prosecution against Maneesh Gobin and Rajanah Dhaliyah - just like you did in the case instituted by Mrs Simla Kistnen against Yogida Sawmynaden. An offence might have been committed, but the complainant/s, unlike the police, would not have the resources to gather any incriminating evidence to mount a credible case. Could it be argued therefore that the case/s should nevertheless have been allowed to go through?

As a former DPP, my answer would be in the negative, regardless of the parties, the considerations of the DPP remains the same for all cases: the evidence test and the public interest test.

* In the run-up to the next elections, the recent judgement of the Privy Council in the electoral petition of Suren Dayal challenging the election of Pravind Jugnauth, Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun and Yogida Sawmynaden does not unfortunately provide much comfort to proponents of free and fair elections in view of the freebies that are likely to be distributed ahead of the polls. What are your comments on that judgement?

Whoever is going to challenge the elections after the upcoming National Assembly elections will have to make sure that his petition clearly substantiates his grounds and emphasises the Mauritian context which is invariably unknown to the Law Lords.



Former President Donald Trump. Pic - AP

Donald Trump vows not to be a dictator if he becomes president, 'except for day one'

Donald Trump said on Tuesday that he will not become a dictator if he becomes U.S. president again except "on day one", after warnings from Democrats and some Republicans that America was in danger of becoming an autocracy if he wins the 2024 election.

Republican presidential candidate Trump had to be asked twice during a televised town hall event in Iowa to deny that he would abuse power to seek revenge on political opponents if re-elected to the White House, reports Reuters.

"No. No. Other than day one," Trump said when asked to deny he would become a "dictator" if he wins the November election.

Trump said on the "day one" he referred to, he would use his presidential powers to close the southern border with Mexico and expand oil drilling.

Trump, seeking a second White House term in a likely election re-match with Democratic President Joe Biden, has frequently promised "retribution" on political opponents if he gains power again.

Targets include Biden, prosecutors who have charged him with dozens of crimes, the Department of Justice, and the federal bureaucracy, he said in campaign speeches and TV appearances this year.

Trump, the frontrunner for the Republican presidential nomination, was appearing at a Fox News event before a friendly audience in Davenport, Iowa, the state where the party's nominating contest kicks off on Jan. 15.

Trump was U.S. president between 2017 and 2021, and has refused to concede that he lost to Biden in the 2020 election.

Since then Trump has spread false claims that the 2020 election was stolen from him, a conspiracy that fueled the deadly insurrection by Trump supporters at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. Trump's election lies also form a cornerstone of his current White House campaign.



Spain's King Felipe and Queen Letizia visit the Danish Architecture Center in Copenhagen, Denmark. Pic – The Times

The other royal family: Spain's Queen Letizia had an extramarital affair?

Spain's Queen Letizia had an affair during the early years of her marriage to King Felipe, reports claimed citing Jaime del Burgo, a longtime friend of the queen who went on to marry her sister. He alleged that he was in a romantic relationship with Queen Letizia, before she was married in 2004 and later after her wedding.

Jaime Del Burgo shared an image of Letizia on social media in which she is visibly pregnant saying that the Queen sent him the photo while they were conducting the affair along with the message, "Love. I am wearing your pashmina. It is like feeling you by my side. It looks after me. Protects me. I am counting the hours until we see each other again, love you, get out of here. Yours."

King Felipe and Queen Letizia's daughters were born in 2005 and 2007, reports HT.

In a book written by royal reporter Jaime Peñafiel, Jaime del Burgo claimed Queen Letizia told him that she loved him as they lay in hammocks by the pool at the royal residence. This prompted him to write an unpublished play in English with the title 'The Hammock', he said.

Owing to the affair, Spain's CNI secret service placed him under surveillance for five years and even broke into his home in Switzerland, Jaime Del Burgo said. "The alleged operation did not achieve its presumed objectives as he had placed photographs, videos, mobile phones, text messages with the Queen in a bank vault."

The Queen begged him to "never leave her" the night before she was married, he said. He went on to marry the queen's sister, Telma Ortiz, in 2012. The couple divorced two years later.

This comes as King Felipe and Queen Letizia appeared to be consolidating their reign after a series of scandals involving former King Juan Carlos. A recent poll published by the digital newspaper El Diario showed that 45 per cent of Spaniards support a republic, while 43.5 back the current system of monarchy.

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People inspect the damages left by severe flooding and an explosion in Mahe in the Seychelles. Pic - AFP

Seychelles declares state of emergency after explosion, flooding

Seychelles President Wavel Ramkalawan declared a state of emergency on Thursday after a blast at an explosives depot and heavy rains damaged an industrial zone and surrounding areas, reports Reuters.

"Everyone is being asked to stay at home. All schools will be closed. Only workers in the essential services and persons travelling will be allowed free movement," Ramkalwan's office said in a statement.

The explosion had caused "massive damage" to the Providence Industrial zone and surrounding areas on the main island of Mahe, the statement said, while flooding due to rains had resulted in "major destruction".

The statement gave no further details.

The Seychelles is made up of 115 islands and is the least populous country in Africa with about 100,000 people.

UK's new Rwanda bill 'will not stop the boats': former minister Suella Braverman

Rishi Sunak is facing a revolt from the right-wing of his Conservative Party over efforts to deport migrants to Rwanda, with immigration minister Robert Jenrick quitting on Wednesday after the prime minister set out new draft legislation.

The new bill will instruct judges to ignore some sections of the Human Rights Act (HRA) and provisions of domestic or international law that might deem that Rwanda was not a safe country to send asylum seekers to, though appeals by people based on specific circumstances would still be permitted, reports Reuters.

Braverman, Jenrick and their allies says that does not go far enough, with some wanting Britain to leave the European Convention on Human Rights altogether.

The government says the Rwanda scheme would deter migrants from paying people smugglers to ferry them from Europe across the Channel to Britain.

It has been forced to come up with a two pronged strategy to relaunch the Rwanda policy after the Supreme Court ruled it would violate international human rights laws enshrined in domestic legislation.

The British government signed a new treaty with Rwanda earlier this week.



Britain's hardline former interior minister Suella Braverman on Wednesday issued Prime Minister Rishi Sunak an ultimatum to get tougher on immigration or face certain wipeout at the polls. Pic - Reuters



The U.N. weather agency is reporting that glaciers shrank more than ever from 2011 and 2020. Pic - AP

World Meteo Org cites worrying warming trend as COP28: 'We are losing the race'

The United Nations weather agency is reporting that glaciers shrank more than ever from 2011 and 2020 and the Antarctic ice sheet lost 75 per cent more compared to the previous 10 years, as it released its latest stark report about the fallout on the planet from climate change.

The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) served up more evidence of what scientists already know – the Earth is heating – on Tuesday, but this time looking at the trend over a longer period with its latest Decadal State of the Climate report.

"Each decade since the 1990s has been warmer than the previous one and we see no immediate sign of this trend reversing," its secretary-general, Petteri Taalas, said. "We are losing the race to save our melting glaciers and ice sheets."

China launches fourth-generation nuclear reactor, world's first

China began commercial operations of the world's first next-generation, gas-cooled nuclear reactor power plant, state media reported Wednesday.

The Shidao Bay plant in eastern Shandong province is powered by two high-temperature reactors cooled by gas rather than pressurised water, according to state news agency Xinhua, making it more efficient and cost-effective.

Conventional reactors produce electricity from nuclear energy. However, these advanced models -- known as small modular reactors, or SMRs -- can be used for other applications that include heating, desalination or steam

Warming oceans and melting of ice sheets caused the rate of sea-level rise to nearly double in less than a generation, he said, and WMO says that bodes ill for low-lying coastal regions and countries, reports PTI.

Experts are divided about one of the most important metrics: The rate of warming.

Former NASA top scientist James Hansen, nicknamed the Godfather of Global Warming for his early warnings, has reported that the rate is accelerating. University of Pennsylvania climate scientist Michael Mann has argued warming has been steadily increasing since 1990, but isn't speeding up.

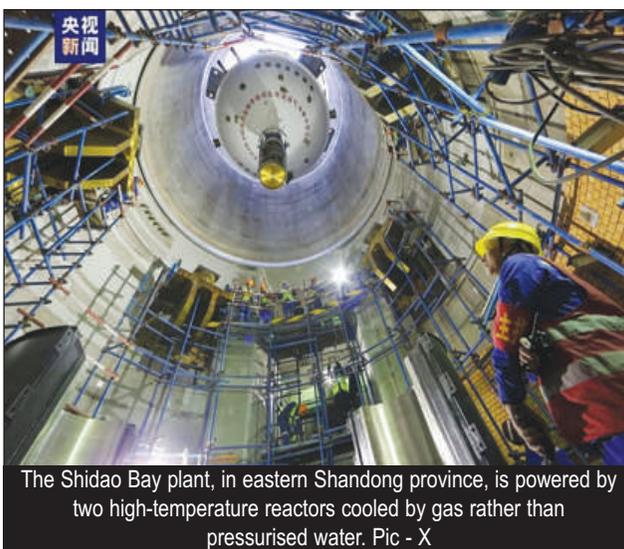
The WMO report said that glaciers measured around the world thinned by roughly one metre (about 3 feet) per year on average from 2011 to 2020, and a look at over 40 "reference glaciers" showed the lowest mass balances of any decade.

"The remaining glaciers near the Equator are generally in rapid decline. Glaciers in Papua, Indonesia are likely to disappear altogether within the next decade," WMO said. "In Africa, glaciers on the Rwenzori Mountains and Mount Kenya are projected to disappear by 2030, and those on Kilimanjaro by 2040."

As for the ice-sheet thaw, Greenland and Antarctica lost 38 per cent more ice from 2011 to 2020 than in the previous decade. It also said that sea level rise has accelerated during the decade because of the melting.

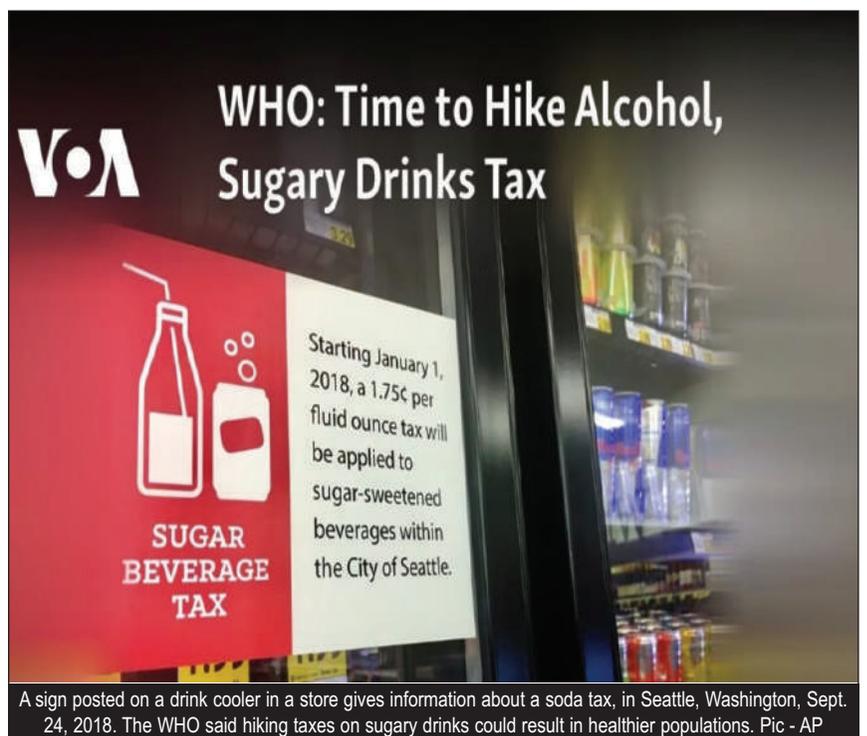
WMO deputy secretary general Elena Manaenkova said the report is different from other warnings in the past because it provides a long-term perspective and sustained trends from the 2010s which can help discern where the warming is headed.

With the world emitting 36.8 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide in 2023 — twice the yearly volume of four decades ago — Manaenkova, attending her 17th international climate conference, said: "Let's finally get serious."



The Shidao Bay plant, in eastern Shandong province, is powered by two high-temperature reactors cooled by gas rather than pressurised water. Pic - X

WHO asks countries to hike alcohol, sugary drinks tax to incentivise health



A sign posted on a drink cooler in a store gives information about a soda tax, in Seattle, Washington, Sept. 24, 2018. The WHO said hiking taxes on sugary drinks could result in healthier populations. Pic - AP

Countries need to increase their taxes on alcohol and sugar-sweetened beverages, the World Health Organization said Tuesday, saying too few states were using tax to incentivise healthier behaviours.

After studying taxation rates, the WHO said the average global tax rate on such "unhealthy products" was low, and hiking taxes could result in healthier populations, reports AFP.

The WHO said 2.6 million people a year die from drinking alcohol, while more than eight million die from having an unhealthy diet.

It would not only help cut down use of these products but also give companies an incentive to make healthier products, it added.

The WHO said that although 108 countries do impose some taxation on SSBs, globally, excise taxes on average represent just 6.6 percent of the price of a soda.

Half of those countries also tax

water, the WHO noted -- something not recommended by the UN agency.

"Taxing unhealthy products creates healthier populations. It has a positive ripple effect across society - less disease and debilitation and revenue for governments to provide public services," said Rudiger Krech, the WHO's health promotion director.

The Geneva-based WHO on Tuesday released a manual on alcohol tax policy and administration for its 194 member states.

It said minimum pricing, combined with taxation, could curb consumption of cheap booze and reduce drink-related hospitalisations, deaths, traffic violations and crimes.

Some 148 countries apply national excise taxes on alcoholic drinks.

Globally, on average, the excise tax in the price of the most sold brand of beer is 17.2 percent, while for the most sold brand of the most sold type of spirits, it is 26.5 percent, the organisation claimed.

for industrial needs.

China is seeking to free itself from coal-fired power plants and reduce its dependence on foreign technologies against a backdrop of tensions with Western countries, reports AFP.

More than 90 percent of the Shidao Bay plant's equipment is of Chinese design, project manager Zhang Yanxu told Xinhua. Construction of the plant began in 2012 and the first SMR was connected to the power grid in 2021.

According to proponents, multi-use SMRs could play a central role in decarbonisation and energy transition thanks to their compact and simplified architecture, with their modular design reducing costs and construction time.

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, more than 80 SMR projects are currently under development in 18 countries.

JSS Academy wins Patent for Microneedle Patch for Diabetes

A closed-loop transdermal patch – a game changer in diabetes research

A patent has been granted to researchers from JSS Academy of Higher Education and Research, Mauritius, JSS College of Pharmacy, Ooty, India and Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay for the innovation “A Process for Fabrication of the Transdermal Dissolving Microneedle Patch for the Controlled Release of Insulin” on 30th November 2023 (Patent no. 475507, Patent Office, Government of India).

According to the WHO, around 180 million people globally are affected by diabetes and that number is estimated to reach over 350 million by the year 2030. The last NCD survey conducted in 2021 shows around 20% of the overall population in Mauritius suffer from diabetes. The prevalence of uncontrolled diabetes is a real concern as it increases the risk of severe health complications such as heart disease, renal impairment, eyes problems and damaged arteries.

Diabetes: A metabolic disorder

Diabetes, which causes uncontrollable increases in blood glucose levels, is globally one of the most prevalent chronic diseases. It is a metabolic disorder that either causes permanent lack of insulin production from the pancreas (Type 1 diabetes) or a condition where the cells fail to respond to insulin due to dysfunction (Type 2 diabetes) which later elevates blood glucose levels. Insulin is a hormone which is synthesised and secreted from the pancreas to mediate the metabolic reaction involving glucose.

In the absence of insulin, the cellular system cannot accurately convert carbohydrates such as sugars, starches, or other foods into energy which is used by the body. These factors in due course result in many complications, such as cardiovascular disease, chronic renal failure, retinal damage, nerve damage, and microvascular damage.

In the human body, insulin and glucagon are counter regulatory hormones that play a vital role in regulating blood glucose levels. Either excess or shortage of glucose in the blood is known as a metabolic disorder.

The problem associated with current therapy

In the case of diabetic patients, medications like oral drugs and insulin injections are taken which give rise to multiple complications where delivery by parenteral route administers the drug into the bloodstream. Some common problems associated with injectable insulin therapy are:

- Subcutaneous insulin injection is painful and leads to lipohypertrophy in patients.
- Injectable insulin taken with other anti-diabetic drugs increases risk of side effects.

- The traditional care for diabetic people often requires monitoring of blood glucose and insulin injections to maintain normal glycemia. - Injectable insulin leads to poor patient compliance as it causes pain and irritation.

JSS's innovation – microneedle patch

Prof Dr Ashish Wadhvani, Principal Investigator of the project and Head Faculty of Health Sciences, Dean School of Pharmacy, JSS Academy of Higher Education and Research, Mauritius, assisted by Dr Baishali Jana, Senior Research Fellow, conducted research to mitigate the limitations of injectable insulin therapy, and



Prof Dr Ashish Wadhvani,
Principal Investigator
of the project

they have developed a microneedle-mediated drug delivery system that may enable patients to painlessly self-administer therapeutic micro and macromolecule drugs.

The microneedles (MNs) have been described as a novel method of delivering effectively pharmacologically potent molecules to the deeper layers of the skin in a minimally invasive manner; it is also pain-free, bio-safe, patient-friendly, and self-applicable system. An alternate approach is insulin delivery via transdermal delivery system, which could provide insulin continuously using a system likely to be well accepted by patients.

The goal of the research was to design, fabricate and test arrays of dissolving microneedles for minimally invasive and continuous delivery of insulin in-vivo. Insulin is a hydrophilic protein drug that was found to be compatible with gelatin and sodium carboxymethyl cellulose thus making the two materials suitable for this study. The dissolving microneedle made up of the above material is widely being explored in many medical applications such as tissue engineering and drug delivery. Dissolving microneedle patches were fabricated mainly composed of a combination of carboxymethyl cellulose and gelatin.

Gelatin produces a tough and strong needle material suitable for penetration and, on the other hand, carboxymethyl cellulose is considered to be an excellent material as a dissolving factor and encapsulating drug and this composite has proved to be safe in drug formulation and release with no side effects.

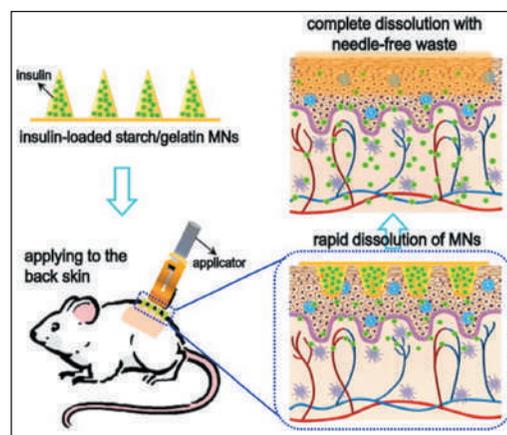
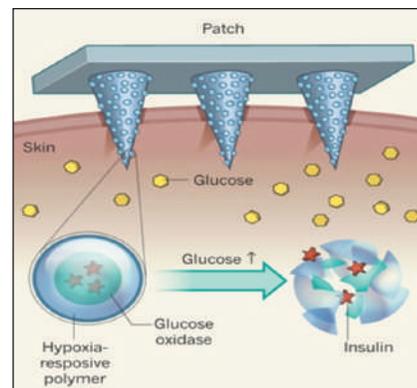
This study demonstrated that the proposed microneedle system featured this unique design allowing more convenient and efficient self-administration of drug insulin into the skin.

Way forward

Prof Wadhvani says this breakthrough invention is a significant step forward in the development of non-invasive insulin delivery methods. The transdermal microneedle patch offers a pain-free and convenient alternative to traditional insulin injections. The dissolving, poly-

meric microneedle patches were fabricated with a very simple process to maintain the protein drug ability, localize the drug in the needle and minimize the drug loss. The degradation of the polymeric compound takes place only after insertion of these dissolving microneedle patches into the skin thereby releasing drug in rapid and sustain manner.

He adds that compared with subcutaneous injections, dissolving microneedle patches are fully biocompatible and generate no biohazardous sharp waste making them an ideal candidate and this will certainly be a game changer in the field of diabetes research. The dissolving microneedle patch mainly offers a potentially fast and inexpensive pharmaceutical development model by using drug already proven safe and effective. It can also influence product stability and delivery to the intended site of action. “Ultimately there is remarkable increase in efficiency, with no side effects, long duration action, and slow reduction in blood glucose level and maintained at a significantly reduced level. The discussion is ongoing with pharmaceutical and biomedical companies and hopefully, the product will be in the market soon,” he adds.



Dr Baishali Jana,
Senior Research Fellow
of the project

Breakfast with Bwana

Uncertainty in Interesting Times: We Live in an Interesting Age

● Cont. from page 6

US presidential election

On the domestic US front there is great uncertainty about the presidential election coming in 2024. Although Donald Trump is far ahead in the polls for the Republican Party nomination, the uncertainty as to whether he is barred from serving as President by the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution, remains a cloud over him. That issue is now squarely before the Colorado Supreme Court. It is certain that the issue will reach the US Supreme Court ere long. What is uncertain is how that court will rule.

Meanwhile, Trump continues to get more unhinged by the day. If his 2016 and 2020 campaigns were characterized by ginning up hate against enemies, real or just perceived (China, immigrants in general, Mexicans specifically, Muslims, NATO, etc.) those were all foreign. Now, he is defining fellow Americans as the enemy and threatening to exact vengeance. Are the Republicans who ostensibly support him in the polls, crazy enough to turn on their fellow Americans and vote for a man with that kind of message? Will we have a civil war at the polls? That is uncertain.

President Biden has injected more uncertainty of his own. He said: “If Trump wasn’t running, I’m not sure I’d be running, but we cannot let him win.” This certainly sounds like Biden is setting the stage to bow out of the presidential race. But that too is uncertain. As a reader of the tea leaves of presidential politics, I have long predicted that California Governor Gavin Newsom is the most likely Democratic Party nominee if Biden does not run, and I reiterate my prognostication that he will not run again. If Newsom does run, then Kamala Harris cannot be his running mate because a Vice Presidential candidate cannot be from the same state as the Presidential candidate. Certainly, she could change the state of her domicile, but that too is uncertain.

The only certainty is that we live in an interesting age.

Cheerz...

Bwana

From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

6th Year No 257

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 17 July, 1959

• One can't create love. Love comes by itself. — Geetakory

The Cinderella of Education Department

The teaching of oriental languages has so far remained the Cinderella of the Education Department. A century ago, the British government started teaching the children of the immigrants their mother tongue. It was done on a very small scale, but even that was stopped only after a short time. The Government of India had laid it as a condition that the children of immigrants should be taught their mother tongue and went on reminding the Mauritian government of that requirement. The Commissions which inquired into the conditions of Indian immigrants laid emphasis on that point. The question was taken up by the local government and then dropped.

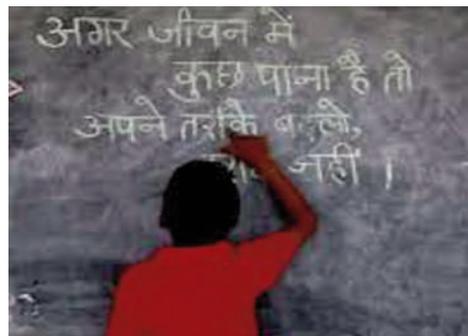
Two factors contributed to that attitude: First, the Indians were not enough vocal and were to some extent indifferent. Second, those who were running the government and the aristocracy of the time looked down on that proposition with suspicion. They hoped to "mauricianize" the children of immigrants by withholding the teaching of their mother tongue.

In 1924 when Sir Kumar Maharaj Singh came to inquire into the conditions of Indian immigrants, he was surprised to learn that the government was not teaching Oriental languages to Indian children. It is thought that upon his recommendation that government started teaching Hindi. But the teaching was just an eye-wash meant to silence Indian public opinion which had started finding expression. In some senior schools, a six-hour course per week was adopted and in others only two hours per week were devoted to that language. That state of things dragged on for another twenty-five years.

In 1951 it was ultimately decided that Oriental languages should be taught on a larger scale. Unpaid students were recruited for training as teachers, but it was only after three years that they were employed. In the 1954-55 budget provision was made for 70 teachers. For two consecutive years that number was not increased. In the 1957-58 budget provision was made for another 25 teachers. In the following year, not a single increase was made. In 1958 a countrywide campaign was made against the apathy of the government. Govt. then accepted to increase the existing staff by another 72 teachers.

In the Draft Estimates of 1959-60 no provision was made for an increase in the number of Oriental languages. The Draft Estimates were prepared months before the present Education Minister took office. And so, we cannot hold him totally responsible for that grave shortcoming.

In October 1957, Hindi was taught in



only 63 Government and Aided schools by 68 teachers. These teachers were in charge of 19,289 pupils — approximately one teacher was in charge of 284 pupils.

In January 1959 there were approximately 67,400 pupils of Asian origin in primary schools. The sum voted for the teaching of Oriental languages (Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu) amounts to Rs 466,776 — approximately Rs 6.66 per head. Many teachers of Oriental languages have to teach as much as ten periods of 30 minutes each.

There is no superintendent to inspect the teaching of Oriental languages and so in some schools no inspection has been made for two years. This is how Government treats a community which forms two thirds of the population — a community which produces or helps to produce almost all the wealth of the country.

In East Africa, Swahili and English are taught side by side to African children, and Indian children learn Gujarati and English. In Mauritius our children are *compelled* to learn two foreign languages while their mother tongue is either not taught or superficially taught. The Government of Mauritius has cared very little about the injunction of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which says: "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

The days are gone when those speaking on Oriental, or an African language were looked down upon contemptuously.

The official language of Singapore was English until last month. The adoption of Malay as a national language is one of the aims of the new government. The inaugural speech of Legislative Assembly by Sir William Goode, Head of the State, was made in Malay.

Speeches were translated into four languages — English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil. The four principal languages of Singapore are spoken in the Legislative Assembly.

No one can accuse us of not co-operating with the government. But there are limits to certain things. On the question of the teaching of Oriental languages, we would not accuse the Education Department of apathy but of deliberately overlooking the just aspirations of the 390,000 people of Asian origin of this island. We have to tell the Government that if wants to keep the

teaching of Oriental languages on its curriculum, it is its duty to teach it properly otherwise scrape it off.

The Minister of Education, whose love for the Oriental languages is widely known, is suspected to have been deliberately or otherwise put into a critical situation, in the eyes of the population of Asian origin. Can he go now with a clear conscience in a *pat-shala* or *maktab* and dilate on the necessity of learning one's mother tongue? Can he persuade people to help run these schools when his Ministry itself is indifferent to this question?

The people of Asian origin are not as sheepish as some top people in the Administration tend to believe. They can become vocal whenever their rights are trampled.



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So you want to be an autocrat?

● Cont. from page 2
Top 10 list

I spent more than 15 years with the United Nations, where I advised governments and democracy advocates on how to strengthen the rule of law, human rights and democratic governance. I'm now a scholar of international law.

I've learned that today's leaders with authoritarian tendencies aren't just interested in using brute force to rise to power.

They are smarter, more resilient and can adjust their methods to take account of new developments, like modern technologies and a globalized economy.

Here are some of the newest tactics used by would-be authoritarians:

1. Extend executive power

The mainstay of today's authoritarianism is strengthening your power while simultaneously weakening government institutions, such as parliaments and judiciaries, that provide checks and balances.

The key is to use legal means that ultimately give democratic legitimacy to the power grab. Extreme forms of this include abolishing presidential term limits.

2. Repress dissent and citizen efforts to hold government accountable

Restrictions on funding and other bureaucratic limitations silence the ability of the people to hold accountable those in power. More than 50 countries have passed laws that stifle citizen groups. Democracies have also jumped on this bandwagon. Limitations on permits for public protest, detention of protesters and excessive use of force to break up demonstrations are frequently used tools.

3. Capture elite support and, when needed, demonize them too

Economic growth and prosperity are critical to retaining elite or oligarchical support for autocratic leaders. Whether through state-owned businesses, media conglomerates or more sophisticated connections between governments and free-market corporations, money and politics, translated into government favors for the rich, can be a toxic mix for democracy.

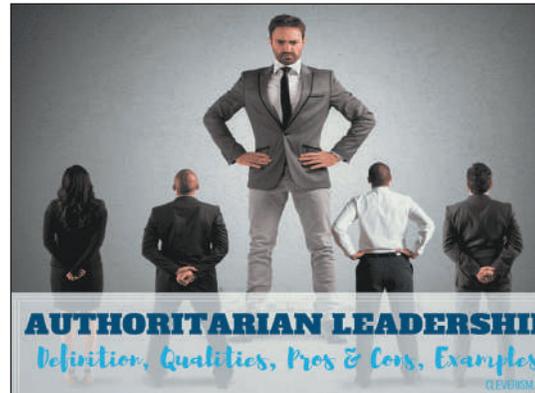
Ironically, popular distaste with elite corruption is so high that modern autocratic populists have even risen to power on anti-corruption promises.

4. Appeal to populism and nationalism

Most would-be autocratic leaders today exploit existing tensions within complex societies in order to solidify their support.

In many places, fears of migrants and refugees have fuelled resurgent nationalism, driving policies like UK's Brexit.

Blaming external forces for a country's



problem is also common.

5. Control information at home; misinform abroad

While propaganda and state-owned media is not new, control of modern technology and information has become a key battleground.

Many countries have used internet blackouts to block organizing and communicating by social movements.

6. Cripple the opposition

Damaging the opposition parties, while not completely destroying them, is now essential. Infiltrating parties, co-opting members and using pure scare tactics are some possible actions in the autocrat's playbook. This serves the purpose of retaining a target for pseudo-political competition while also stymieing the potential for new, more democratic forces to gain traction.

7. Covert election manipulation

Mostly gone are the days of vote-rigging and vote-buying as a path to power. Would-be autocrats have found cleverer ways to tilt the playing field in their favour. These new tactics include hampering media access, gerrymandering, changing election and voter eligibility rules and placing allies on electoral commissions.

8. Play the emergency card

Some autocratic leaders continue to use traditional strong-arm tactics, like declaring states of emergency, to enable

further repression.

Since 2001, using the threat of terrorism or organized crime has played well for furthering autocratic rule. President Rodrigo Duterte's drug war, which seems to have resulted in thousands of dead in the Philippines, is one illustration.

Since an attempted coup in 2016 up until 2018, for example, Turkey was under a state of emergency which enabled President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to jail and persecute academics, government officials, media and human rights advocates.

9. Extend your model and influence

Today's autocratic rulers are not keeping to themselves.

Using the international stage and their growing economic prowess, countries like China are spreading their influence through funding initiatives such as the Belt and Road to build infrastructure across Asia to Europe. They're hiring profes-

sional consultants to advise and lobby foreign capitals for policies that reinforce their power.

10. Learn and share

Characterized as "autocratic learning" by scholars, national authorities from Russia, China, Iran, Venezuela, Belarus, Syria and other places are developing and exchanging models for containing threats of social movements and the so-called "colour revolutions."

Direction unknown

Some experts claim the world is at a "tipping point" where decreasing faith in democracy will drive the dominance of autocracy globally.

The social movements of today inspire some hope that civil society – a key ingredient for democracy – though under pressure, is fighting the trend.

Nonetheless, strengthening democracy across the globe will prove impossible if even the most established democracies today fall prey to the tactics of would-be.

Shelley Inglis, Executive Director, University of Dayton Human Rights Center, University of Dayton

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RAASHTRIYA SANATAN SANSTHAAN

The Annual General Meeting of Raashtriya Sanatan Sansthaan will be held on 22 December 2023 at 6.00 pm at Prabhat Hall, Rameshwar Mandir, Grand-Baie.

AGENDA:

- Approval of minutes of past AGMs
- Matters arising
- Approval of Financial Report from 2019-2022
- Election/ selection of office-bearers
- Amendments to Rules (if any)
- Future Activities
- AOB

Secretary

02 December 2023

Technology is stealing your time in ways you may not realise

Research suggests people often feel a sense of guilt, shame and regret after filling their free time with online activities

Technology is supposed to make our lives easier. Smart phones provide a palm-size window to the world, enabling us to do almost anything at the touch of a button. Smart homes look after themselves, and virtual meetings mean that for many, time spent commuting is a thing of the past.

So, we should have more free time. Time which is now spent sleeping, relaxing or simply doing nothing – right?

If the idea that you have more time than ever before is making you choke on your coffee, you are not alone. There is growing evidence that while digital technology may help us to save some time, we end up using that time to do more and more things.

We recently interviewed 300 people across Europe to understand how they used digital devices in day-to-day life. This research showed that people want to avoid empty periods of time in their lives, so they fill those periods performing tasks, some of which wouldn't be possible without technology.

Whether it was waiting for a bus, waking in the morning, or lying in bed at night, our participants reported that time which would previously be "empty" was now filled with brain training apps, creating lists of things they should do or try based on their social media feed, and other life admin.

It seems that quiet moments of people watching, imagining and day-dreaming are now filled with tech-based tasks.

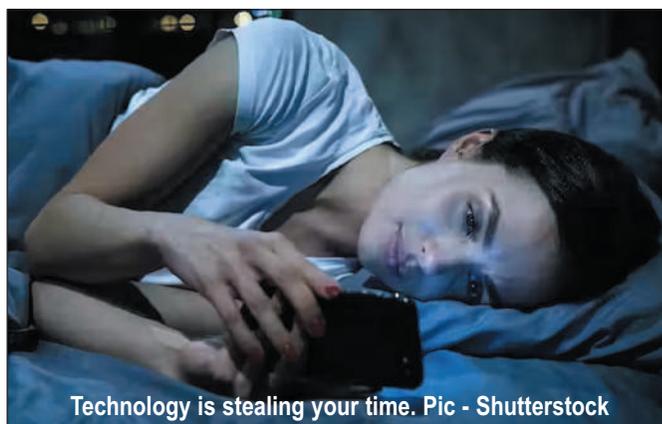
The growth in digital tasks is happening, in part, because technology appears to be changing our perception of what free time is for. For many people, it is no longer enough to simply eat dinner, watch TV or maybe do an exercise class.

Instead, in an attempt to avoid wasting time, these activities are performed while also browsing the web in search of the ingredients for a more perfect life and trying to develop a sense of achievement.

On the face of it some of these tasks may seem like examples of tech saving us time. In theory, online bank-

ing should mean I have more time because I no longer need to go to the bank in my lunch break. However, our research suggests that this is not the case. Technology is contributing to a denser form of life.

Social media may at times inspire, motivate, or relax people. But our research suggests people often feel a



sense of guilt, shame, and regret after filling their free time with online activities. This is because they perceive online activities to be less authentic and worthwhile than real-world activities.

It seems that people still see going for a walk or actually being with friends as more valuable than being online. Maybe if we put down the phone a little more, we would have the time to actually cook those recipes we watch online.

Why is technology creating work?

Changing working patterns are also thought to be intensifying work. Home and hybrid working, enabled by video conference technology, have blurred the boundaries between work time and personal time. Now that the office is in the spare room, it is all too easy to think: "I'll just pop into the study and finish up after putting the kids to bed."

Digital technologies are speeding up the pace of life. Take email and online meetings. Before they existed, we had to wait for responses to voice-mails and letters, or travel to places to speak to one another. Instead, we now have back-to-back online meetings, sometimes without enough time in between to even nip to the toilet.

And email creates exponential growth in communications, which

means more work to read and respond to it all. Poorly designed technology can also force us to do more work because of the inefficiency that it creates. We've all been there, entering information into system A only to learn that because system A and B don't talk to each other, we have to enter it all twice.

By doing more, we may end up achieving less and feeling worse. As time becomes more pressured, stress, exhaustion and burnout all increase, resulting in greater absence from work.

How do we slow down and take back our time?

Reclaiming the time "saved" by technology may require a shift in the way in which we proportion time. To break free of the habit of filling time with more and more tasks, we must first accept that sometimes it is OK to do little or nothing.

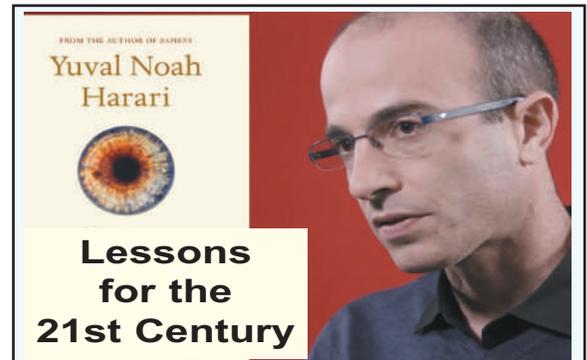
In the work environment, employers and employees need to create an environment in which disconnection is the norm and not the exception. This means having realistic expectations about what can and should be achieved in a normal working day.

But developing legislation that enshrines the right to disconnect may be the only way to ensure that technology stops taking over our time. Several European countries such as France and Italy already have right to disconnect legislation.

This specifies that employees are under no obligation to be contactable outside of their working hours, and that they have the right to refuse to take digital work home with them.

It is also possible that technology itself may hold the key to reclaiming our time. Imagine if, rather than telling you stand up and move around (yet another task), your smart watch told you to stop working because you'd completed your contracted hours. Maybe when technology starts to tell us to do less, we will finally regain time.

By Ruth Ogden, Liverpool John Moores University; Joanna Witowska, The Maria Grzegorzewska University; Vanda Černohorská, Czech Academy of Sciences



1. The technological revolution is disrupting our lives in ways we can't even imagine. This revolution is creating new opportunities and challenges, and it's important to be prepared for both.
2. We need to learn to live with uncertainty. The world is changing faster than ever before, and it's impossible to predict what the future holds. We need to be comfortable with ambiguity and be able to adapt to change.
3. We need to develop new skills to thrive in the 21st century. These skills include critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and communication.
4. We need to learn to think globally. The world is more interconnected than ever before, and the problems we face are global in nature. We need to be able to think beyond our own borders and work together to solve these problems.
5. We need to learn to live with difference. The world is becoming increasingly diverse, and we need to learn to respect and appreciate our differences.
6. We need to be careful about the power of technology. Technology has the potential to make our lives better, but it also has the potential to be used for harm. We need to be aware of the risks of technology and use it responsibly.
7. We need to find new ways to create meaning and purpose in our lives. The technological revolution is changing the way we work and live, and we need to find new ways to find meaning and purpose in our lives.
8. We need to learn to live with resilience. The world is becoming increasingly complex and challenging, and we need to be able to bounce back from setbacks.
9. We need to learn to be more compassionate. The world is full of suffering, and we need to learn to be more compassionate towards others.
10. We need to learn to be more humble. We are facing challenges that are beyond our full comprehension, and we need to be humble enough to admit that we don't have all the answers.
11. We need to learn to be more playful. The world is a complex and challenging place, but we also need to learn to enjoy it.
12. We need to learn to be more forgiving. We all make mistakes, and we need to be able to forgive ourselves and others.
13. We need to learn to be more grateful. We live in a world of unprecedented abundance, and we need to be grateful for all that we have.

Harari's book is a thought-provoking and challenging read, but it is also a hopeful one. He believes that humanity can overcome the challenges of the 21st century if we are willing to work together and learn from the past.

How highly successful leaders build trust and solve problems

Connect with your employees before you correct them

“First emotionally connect. Understand their thinking. Then work on fixing things.” This is one of the most important recommendations I give to executives I coach. It counters the common instinct to instantly jump in with the solution and save the day.

Now if there's an emergency, of course, act first. Otherwise, take a moment to connect, to find common ground, to let them know you understand and care - even if you don't agree. That way, your solution will be much better received.

This is the Amare Way leadership principle 'Aim for Connection' in action. It guides leaders to prioritize empathy and understanding over immediate problem-solving, even when the urge to react swiftly is strong. It's how to see beyond the problem at hand to the people involved.

- Do you actively listen to understand, or just to respond?
- How often do you acknowledge your team's perspective before offering solutions?
- In what ways can you foster a more empathetic and trusting work environment?

7 techniques for successful leaders to build trust and solve problems

Start with the common ground: Frame the conversation by voicing the outcome that is important to everyone involved. Come back to it if things drift



off-course.

Power pause: When you find yourself jumping to solutions, consciously pause. Collect your thoughts, control your immediate impulse to solve and refocus on the importance of connecting first.

Know your truth: Be clear about what you believe and why. Share your perspective without requiring it to be the right solution.

Attune to the emotional climate: In the heat of the moment, acknowledge the strong feelings in the room. Say something like, 'I see this is something you really care about,' or 'I understand that tensions are high.'

Focus your listening: Direct your full attention to actively listening to and understanding the concerns being expressed. Resist the urge to interrupt or provide solutions immediately.

Ask clarifying questions: Be genuinely curious. Ask open-ended questions to gain a deeper understanding of their perspective, like 'I'm wondering, how did you get to that conclusion?'

Manage your emotions: Tune in. If you feel yourself getting impatient, take a step back mentally and remind yourself of the importance of connection over immediate problem-solving.

"People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." That's a quote from President Theodore Roosevelt and it's a great reminder. In high-pressure moments, the instinct to immediately solve problems can overshadow the importance of connection.

As an emotionally intelligent leader, your challenge is to find the delicate balance between swift action and empathetic engagement. The key is not to suppress the urgency for action but to channel it through a lens of understanding and empathy.

Commit to being the powerful leader who listens first, understands deeply and then leads with compassion and insight.

Moshe Engelberg - Inc.



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YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

Your adventurous spirit is calling. You're all in, whether it's a new project at work or a spontaneous getaway. Professionally, your unique ideas will be given the attention they deserve, but make sure to act on them. In relationships, your openness and honesty will help you connect with your spouse on a deeper level.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 7, 11, 16, 23, 30

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

Your ability to be disciplined is your strongest suit this week. You'll find yourself efficiently completing your tasks at work and at home. Your organisational abilities will be useful, especially in group settings. This week is a good week to make careful financial investments. You may come across as restrained or aloof in relationships. Take the time to strengthen your bonds.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 8, 16, 20, 39, 40

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

Your inventiveness is at its pinnacle. You may find a financial chance to invest in something that aligns with your ideals, such as a sustainable initiative. Your independence may clash with your partner's need for connection in relationships. Finding a happy medium is critical to preserving harmony.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 10, 23, 28, 29, 31

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

Your intuitive powers are enhanced, making you more sensitive to the emotions of those around you. This sensitivity will benefit you in personal connections. Stick to your budget and avoid making rash purchases. Although your intuition may lead you to a financial opportunity, it is critical

that you contact specialists before making any decisions.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 9, 14, 15, 26, 30

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

Even if it's in your nature to rush into things, the stars recommend taking things more slowly for the time being. Spend some time cultivating relationships, both in your personal life and in your professional life, because these connections will be extremely important to your success in the future.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 9, 13, 17, 30, 31

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

Now is a good time to try new things because Jupiter is moving through the house that governs your own personal development. Whether you do it by picking up a new book or starting a new pastime, expanding your horizons will bring you a variety of unexpected pleasures. Take precautions with your money.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 10, 15, 20, 31, 36

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

Think about the things you want to accomplish and how you may best direct your actions to get you there. When it comes to matters of the heart, Venus ushers in a surge of desire and closeness. If you're not attached to somebody, an intriguing newcomer can attract your attention. If you already have a connection, you can strengthen it through honest conversation.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 9, 17, 20, 36, 40

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

This week's main focus is on family-related issues. Take a direct approach while maintaining your compassion. In terms of your professional life, Mercury's retrograde in your domain of work could lead to misunderstandings. Check everything twice, especially the agreements

and correspondence.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 8, 14, 24, 31, 34

Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

As a result of Venus's presence in your third house of communication, a chance meeting may result in a connection that is both important and unexpected. Due to the presence of Neptune in the fifth house of your chart, which governs creativity and romance, professionally. This week is the perfect time to transform that energy into something that can be seen and touched, whether it be a project at work or a personal interest.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 6, 9, 12, 13, 20

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

It's important for you, Virgo, to show off your emotional side this week, even though your analytical nature is one of your greatest strengths. It's possible that a hard assignment at work will demand you to think of solutions that fall outside the norm. Don't be afraid; the careful preparation you've done will get you through this.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 8, 10, 19, 30, 31

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

The presence of Pluto in your 8th house of transition indicates that it is time to let go of outdated routines and become open to new experiences. Trust your gut, whether it be regarding a change in your professional life or a personal choice. On the love front, there is a lot of passion going around.

Lucky Numbers: 14, 16, 20, 30, 35, 38

Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

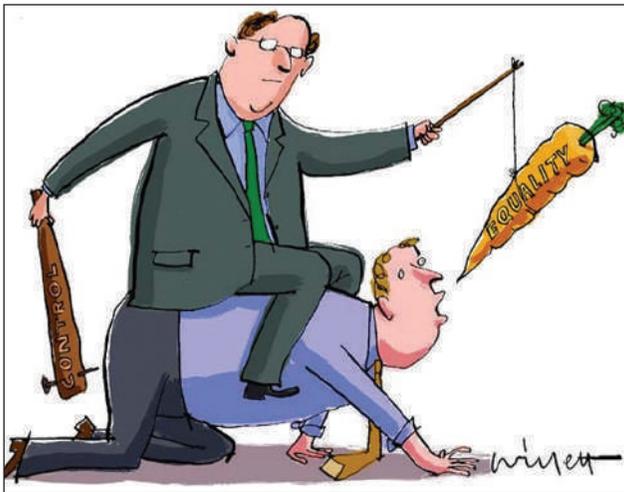
Professionally, your concentration will help you solve a difficult challenge, gaining you praise. This intensity, though, can make you rather compulsive. Be aware of this inclination, particularly in partnerships. Financially, the week is stable, but a long-term investment possibility may pique your interest. Before you get in, do your homework.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 17, 20, 21, 23, 26

When it comes to learning, what's better: The carrot or the stick?

Does the potential to win or lose money influence the confidence one has in one's own decisions? Does either of them help learn more quickly? Researchers from the University of Geneva (UNIGE), Switzerland, in collaboration with the University of Amsterdam and ENS Paris, investigated confidence bias in a learning context through a system of monetary punishment and reward. They demonstrated that we become more confident in our choices when learning to seek rewards than when learning to avoid losses. However, this confidence rapidly evolves into over-confidence, which leaves us thinking that we are better than we actually are. Learning in a loss context mitigate these errors of judgment. Moreover, the prospect of monetary gains makes us less flexible, while the fear of losing money preserves our ability to adapt. You can read all about these results in the journal PLOS Computational Biology.

Evaluating one's learning performance relies on how confident one feel about her decisions. But can our



ability to learn and to judge our decisions be influenced by economic factors? In other words, do we judge our performance identically when faced with a situation that involves monetary gain or loss?

Confidence is intensified when the aim is to win money

The UNIGE researchers tested 84 participants to investigate confidence bias in the context of reward or punishment-based learning, known as reinforcement

learning.

The initial results showed that the ability to learn is statistically identical when participants learn to seek gains and when they learn to avoid losses. On the other hand, participants were much more confident when it came to making money rather than avoiding losing it. "There's a 10% boost in confidence!" says Maël Lebreton, a researcher in UNIGE's Swiss Centre for Affective Sciences. Given that the task and performance were the same, one should expect similar levels of confidence. This difference demonstrates the existence of a bias in learning and confidence judgments introduced by the economic context.

Yet, the increase in confidence in the gain context is not necessarily a good thing. "It's normal for confidence to increase during the learning process because participants increasingly choose the most profitable symbol. But this phenomenon is intensified when it comes to the pursuit of gain: participants end up clearly overestimating their performance. This over-confidence, which is at about 10%, is not there when it comes to avoiding losing money," says Lebreton. In fact, in a negative context, people tend to doubt their choices, which means they evaluate them more accurately. "But this doubt could turn to anxiety and potentially make participants ultimately loses all their confidence."



Why are you so gassy ?

Kian, age 6, has some interesting questions about farts that we're probably all wondering about



Shutterstock

small fart but everyone has to hold their nose. These smelly farts contain more hydrogen sulphide.

Food and farts

If you eat foods that have a lot of sulphur, your gut will produce more hydrogen sulphide.

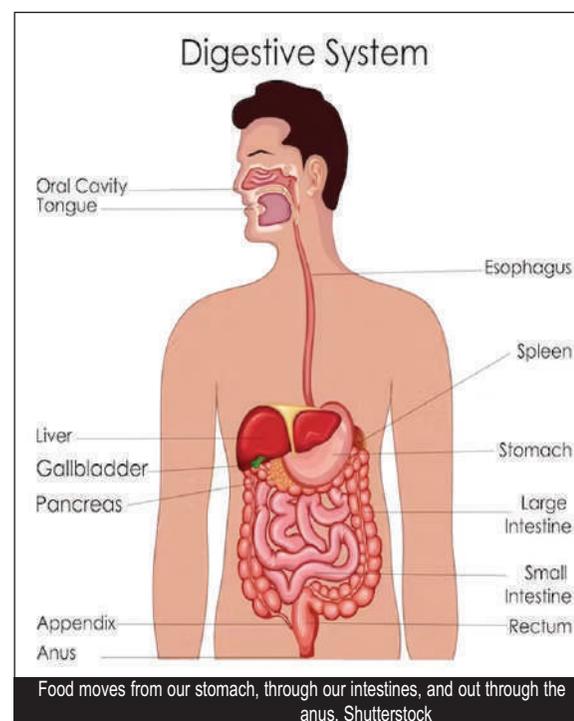
Some vegetables have a lot of sulphur, such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, turnips and Asian greens.

Meat does too. If you eat a really huge piece of meat, your body can have trouble digesting it all at once.

As you digest food, it moves from your stomach into the large intestine or colon. Once the foods with sulphur get there, bugs in your gut break them down and produce the hydrogen sulphide gas.

If a lot of it builds up and gets released in a fart, it will be very, very smelly.

So why do farts sometimes feel hot?



speedy ones don't have as much contact with your bottom.

There is another reason why farts can feel hot. Sometimes people get a hot or burning feeling in their bottom after they eat really spicy food. This is due to a spicy food chemical called capsaicin.

If you eat food that has chilli or hot spices in it, the capsaicin makes your mouth feel hot. When you eat lots and lots of spicy food, some of the capsaicin travels all the way to your large intestine and gets passed out in your poo.

The capsaicin then gives you a hot feeling in your bottom when you go to the toilet. The reaction is the same as that burning feeling in your mouth after eating spicy food, except it happens at the other end.

Did you know there are fart-proof undies?

Researchers did some experiments to test whether they could catch fart smells by getting people to wear special undies that can absorb hydrogen sulphide gas.

And the experiments worked!

Now a company in Australia sells these undies to help people who have gut problems. Their company says it wants to help people "fart with confidence".

Clare Collins

Laureate Professor in Nutrition and Dietetics,
University of Newcastle

Farts sometimes feel hot because of the temperature difference between inside your body, which is a very warm 37 degrees, and the air temperature outside, which is usually cooler.

This means that fart gas feels hot as it moves from your large intestine, leaves through the opening in your bottom called the anus, and touches the cooler skin.

You're not as likely to notice the temperature if farts comes out really fast because



Tim decided to tie the knot with his long-time girlfriend. One evening, after the honeymoon, he was organizing his golfing equipment. His wife was standing nearby watching him.

After a long period of silence, she finally speaks: "Tim, I've been thinking, now that we're married maybe it's time you quit golfing. You spend so much time on the course. You could probably get a good price for your clubs."

Tim gets this horrified look on his face.

She says, "Darling, what's wrong?"

"For a minute there you were beginning to sound like my ex-wife."

"Ex-wife!" she screams, "I didn't know you were married before!"

"I wasn't," he replied.

My nagging wife died suddenly on a trip to Jerusalem.

Funeral director, "Sir, it would cost about \$45,000 if we send her home back to the States or \$500 if we bury her here in Jerusalem."

Me: "Ship her home."

Funeral director: "But sir, why don't you bury her here in the Holy Land and you can save money."

Me: "A long time ago a man was buried here and 3 days later he rose from the dead, I can't take that chance."

"If there are any idiots in the room, will they please stand up", said the sarcastic teacher.

After a long silence, one freshman rose to his feet.

"Now then mister, why do you consider yourself an idiot?", inquired the teacher with a sneer.

"Well, actually I don't," said the student, "but I hate to see you standing up there all by yourself."

A guy said to God, "God, is it true that to you a billion years is like a second?"

God said yes.



The guy said, "God, is it true that to you a billion dollars is like a penny?"

God said yes.

The guy said, "God, can I have a penny?"

God said, "Sure, just a second."

Putin is held hostage by a terrorist. A Russian truckdriver stops at the back of a long queue on the motorway. He sees a policeman walking down the line of stopped cars to briefly talk to the drivers. As the policeman approaches the truck, the truckdriver rolls down his window and asks, "What's going on?"

Policeman: "A terrorist is holding Putin hostage in a car. He's demanding 10 million rubbles, or he'll douse Putin in petrol and set him on fire. So, we're asking drivers for donations."

Driver: "Oh, ok. How much do people donate on average."

Policeman: "About a gallon."



A wife got so mad at her husband she packed his bags and told him to get out. As he walked to the door she yelled, "I hope you die a long, slow, painful death."

He turned around and said, "So, you want me to stay?"

My buddy got arrested on drug charges and because it was his first offense, he thought he would get off lightly, but it turned out his lawyer was one of the worst in the state and ended up botching his case, so instead of getting a short term, he ended up getting 40 years without parole!!

Man, that sentence was way too long.

After a prolonged drought when the rain came, all the animals in the forest were happy except the kangaroo. When the others asked him what the reason was for such sadness, the kangaroo revealed that the rain meant that all its kids would now be playing inside.

The wife and I took a long, leisurely drive out to the country and pulled over to fill up our car's gas tank and tires... She was surprised to see that the station had a fee to fill the tires and asked me, "Why in the world do they charge for AIR?!"

If you didn't hear it from the horses mouth, stop listening to the ass who told you!



I responded, "Inflation."

During my check-up I asked the Doctor, "Do you think I'll live a long and healthy life then?"

He replied, "I doubt it somehow. Mercury is in Uranus right now."

I said, "I don't go in for any of that astrology nonsense."

He replied, "Neither do I. My thermometer just broke."

A man is walking through the woods when he sees a bear charging at him.

He books it, but he knows he can't outrun a bear for long, so he starts praying, "Dear Lord, I beseech thee. Please, O Lord, please let this bear be a Christian!"

The bear catches up to him, knocks him down on the ground, then gets on its knees and says, "Dear Lord, thank you for this food I am about to receive..."

A guy asks a lawyer about his fees.

"I charge \$50 for three questions", the lawyer says.

"That's awfully steep, isn't it?" the guy asks.

"Yes, I suppose so," the lawyer replies. "Now what's your final question?"

A guy is sitting at home when he hears a knock at the door. He opens the door and sees a snail on the porch. He picks up the snail and throws it as far as he can.

A year later, there's another knock at the door. He opens it and sees the same snail. The snail says, "What was that all about?"

One day Max went to see Carl. Carl had a big swollen nose.

"Whoa, what happened, Carl?" Max asked.

"I sniffed a brose," Carl replied.

"What?", Max said. "There's no 'b' in rose!"

Carl replied, "There was in this one!"

My daughter want's the new iPhone for her birthday. I told her she will get one as long as she has good grades, does her chores, and follows the house rules. Otherwise, she will get a cheaper phone. It's my way or the Huawei.



Thoughts to Live by

“Don't prioritise your looks, my friend, as they won't last the journey.

Your sense of humour though, will only get better with age.

Your intuition will grow and expand like a majestic cloak of wisdom.

Your ability to choose your battles, will be fine-tuned to perfection.

Your capacity for stillness, for living in the moment, will blossom.

Your desire to live each and every moment will transcend all other wants.

Your instinct for knowing what (and

Judi Dench - In her own words

Don't prioritise your looks, my friend



Judi Dench

flourish like ivy on a castle wall.

Don't prioritise your looks, my friend, they will change forever more, that pursuit is one of much sadness and disappointment.

Prioritise the uniqueness that makes you, and the invisible magnet that draws in other like-minded souls to dance in your orbit.

These are the things which will only get better.”

who) is worth your time, will grow and

When I was young...

I found it **difficult** to **wake up**.

When I am **old**,
I find it **difficult** to **sleep**.

The reality and truth of **life** are so beautifully written.
young and **old**

When I was **young**,
I was **worried** about **my pimples**.
When I am **old**,
I am **worried** about **my wrinkles**.

When I was **young**,
I was **waiting** to **hold** someone's **hand**.

When I am **old**,
I am **waiting** for **someone** to **hold** my **hand**.

When I was **young**,
I **wanted** my parents to **leave me alone**.

When I am **old**
I am worried to be **left alone**.

When I was **young**,
I **hated** being **advised**.

When I am **old**,
There is **no one** around to **talk** or **advise**.

When I was **young**,
I **admired** **beautiful things**.

When I am **old**,
I see **beauty** in **things** around **me**.

When I was **young**,
I felt I was **eternal**.

When I am **old**,
I know **soon** it will be **my turn**.

When I was **young**,
I **celebrated** the **moments**.
When I am **old**,
I am **cherishing** my **memories**.

When I was **young**,
I **wanted** to be a **heart - throb**.

When I am **old**,
I am **worried** when will **my heart stop**.

At extreme stages of our life,
we worry but we don't realize,
Life needs to be experienced.

It doesn't matter whether
young or old.
Life needs to be lived and lived with
love & loved ones.
You are surely one of these.

Anonymous

18 things mentally strong people do

1. Practice gratitude.
2. Learn from mistakes.
3. Take calculated risks.
4. Focus on the things that can control.
5. View failure as an opportunity for growth.
6. Accept full responsibility for own lives.
7. Practice realistic optimism.
8. Tolerate discomfort.
9. Modify unhealthy beliefs.
10. Accept challenges.
11. Practice perseverance.
12. Set healthy boundaries.
13. Make peace with the past.
14. Set aside time to be alone.
15. Create own definition of success.
16. Spend mental energy wisely.
17. Stay true to values.
18. Retain personal power.

LEISURE

BY WILLIAM HENRY DAVIES

What is this life if, full of care, We have no time to stand and stare,
No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.
No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts
in grass.
No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.
No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.
No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.
A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

This is what you should be doing in 2024

Manage which friends, co-workers & relatives influences you both negatively and positively

Eliminate those who suck your energy and increase time with those who inspire and challenge you.

Don't confuse someone being negative as challenging you.

Challenging you properly is someone who is engaged and in pursuit of their dreams.

Choose which circles you'd like to be in

Make a list of 10 names you'd like to be in their circle.

Then ask yourself the question, why they would want you in their circle.

Choose to recreate yourself

One of the most annoying aspects of recreating yourself is accepting the fact that the current you isn't good enough for the next level.

Which issues kept reappearing in 2023 that needs to be addressed.

Excuses? Same approach to conflicts? Over reaction? Under reaction? Blame? Skill set?

Then create a step-by-step plan to how you plan on recreating yourself.

Be overly prepared up front for 2024

Anticipation has been and will continue to be a very valuable resource in today's economy.

Those who anticipate both opportunities and crisis for 2024 will succeed and those who won't will get crushed.

This is a terrible season to be in the winging business.

Drop 2 things you eat that is killing you.

Whether it's cigarettes, vaping, candy, chocolate, sweets, soda, bread or whatever your weakness is, drop a thing or two that you know it's not good for you.

Work on your faith

People are afraid and embarrassed to discuss their faith.

Working on your faith, whatever it may be gives you a few great qualities to win in life: Discipline and confidence

It decreases your chances of making dumb decisions, and helps you think bigger knowing no matter how bad things may be, the future looks bright.

Create a better process and



standard for making better decisions.

This will take time and it's not easy.

The challenge of making good decisions logically while emotions are high is tough.

Some jump to conclusions. Some run away from problems

Some see everyone as an enemy. Some are unreasonable to work with.

Regardless of what it may be, this will take an investment of time and resources to get better at.

Spend at least a full day writing out your business and life plan for 2024

This has been a life changing exercise for me the last 23 years.

A great business plan has to have both

an emotional and a logical side to it.

There are 12 building blocks to writing a real effective business plan.

If done right, no one will recognize you going into 2024.

Choose your enemies wisely.

Everyone has enemies. Some are public. Some are private.

Whether you know it or not, even you're on people's list of enemies.

If you're not, that means you're living a small life not working on anything big

Think about who has the most enemies in business? Probably Elon Musk. Why? How many people are driving different billion-dollar companies and coveting their opinion publically that could cost him money.

The challenge with enemies are most people choose small enemies that don't bring out the best in them.

80% of people think their enemy is an opposing sports team they hate. Even though they don't even play for that team.

What a way to waste the energy a REAL enemy can do to your life.

I can go on and on but if you really want to get deeper on the topic of choosing your enemies and making 2024 a special year for you, do yourself a favour and order the book 'Choose Your Enemies Wisely'.

Leading a better life

Deep Inspirational Quotes That Will Empower You

By Lucky

No one is perfect and we all make stupid decisions and moves, and sometimes it's okay. But these stupid decisions can lead to one of your life's biggest regrets and problems, and that's the only thing you need to avoid.

What I've learned in my life is that; if you feed your mind positivity, it will stay healthy. Reading quotes and articles that make you wiser and better can improve your productivity at work and your well-being.

Here is a list of the I've collected the best inspirational quotes with valuable lessons for everyone who wants to change his/her life for the best.

1. No amount of regrets can change the past, and no amount of worries can change the future.

Regretting and worrying changes nothing. Focus on what you can change because it will decide your future. Simple habits like:

- * Being grateful
- * Getting enough rests
- * Smashing your mini-goals
- * Networking with positive and mature people
- * Practising self-care

These simple habits can improve your well-being and make you happier.

2. You can't always have a good day. But you can always face a bad day with a good attitude.

You can't control how your day will be, but you can control how you respond to everything you face throughout the day. A good attitude enables creative and constructive thinking.

These two qualities can increase your productivity at



work, keep your mind active and curious, and improve your relationships and social life. Almost all successful people have mastered the skill of positive and good attitude.

3. Never quit. Today is hard, tomorrow will be worse, but the day after tomorrow will be sunshine.

Your hard days are preparing your happy days filled with good vibes and joyful nights. So, keep going and never quit. Beautiful days with positive vibes are waiting for you, but you have to keep going and never quit.

4. Everyone is trying to change the world. Change yourself first.

Having the urge to change the world for the better is a noble quality. But it's what everyone is trying to do, and we aren't seeing any real change.

Changing the world is something big. But changing yourself is achievable. If you want to influence people, be the change you wish to see.

If you want people to have a positive mindset, show the world how positive your mindset is in tough situations.

5. It's okay to clap for your friends if their dream takes off before yours.

Being jealous of your friend when their dreams take off before yours is a sign of weakness.

Clap for your friends and colleagues when they succeed because your day will come too. Think positive

and choose a positive attitude.

6. The funny thing about getting older is that: your eyesight may weaken, but you can see through people much better.

We all trust what our grandmothers say because they are experienced at reading people and their doubts about people are always right.

Growing older comes with a lot of positive and cool traits that we can't acquire when we are young.

7. Believe in your dreams; they were given to you for a reason.

Never doubt your dreams, no matter how big it's or how different it seem.

When people say your dreams are too big, tell them their mindset is so small.

Believe in your dreams, guard them, they're yours, and it's your responsibility to turn them into reality.

8. If they don't see the value of having you, don't try to convince them.

You don't have to continually put effort to make someone see your value.

If they don't see it, other people would love to be with you.

9. Behind every strong person is a story that gave them two choices: sink or swim.

Strong people, either mentally, emotionally, or physically, are loved and admired for their wisdom, protection, and mindset.

But behind that beautiful smile is a story that most people won't know. It's a story of how they survived and became the warriors they are today.

10. No matter how good or bad your life is, wake up each morning and be thankful you still have one.

You should be grateful that you are still alive even when you are going through tough times. If you are still breathing, you still have the chance to change your situation.

Relationship red flags in women you should never ignore

So you've found yourself the perfect woman. Awesome personality, great looks... Only something isn't quite right. Arguments keep breaking out, and tension is building. When things aren't going right, it's important to recognize red flags in women. Identify them sooner rather than later, and you can work to resolve issues or end the relationship before anyone gets hurt.

I've had my share of rocky relationships and I've learnt a lot of lessons. Antonio Centeno lists down some of the red flags to watch for when dating.

1. She's always criticizing you

Now there's a big difference between complaining and criticizing:

Complaining is, "I was concerned when you were running late and didn't call me."

Criticizing is "You're not forgetful, you're selfish. You never think of me!"

Everyone lashes out and criticizes from time to time; we're only human. But, repeatedly using you as an emotional



He & She

punching bag shouldn't be tolerated and can lead to the other issues on this list.

2. She treats you with contempt

To treat someone with contempt means using mockery, sarcasm, and disrespect. Essentially, it means your girlfriend is not taking discussions seriously.

What effect is this going to have on you? It will make you feel unloved and devalued. Nobody deserves this, so if this seems familiar, you should work on this as a couple.

3. She gets defensive

The third horseman of an apocalyptic relationship comes from blaming other people for their problems.

When someone makes a mistake, they can either say sorry and admit they made a mistake or defend themselves. Defensiveness will only escalate the conflict, though; it places the blame on someone else.

In life, but especially in a relationship, 'sorry' is a golden word. If your girlfriend won't say it to you and own her mistakes (because nobody is flawless), then this is

a sign for you.

4. She stonewalls you when there is a problem

Stonewalling is an alternative route to contempt that people in a relationship sometimes take. Instead of your girlfriend not taking a conversation seriously, she refuses to engage.

John Gottman says refusing to talk, acting busy, or otherwise evading and refusing to participate with you means your girlfriend is physiologically flooded and is not in a place where she can have a rational discussion.

If this sounds familiar, you need to take a break and consider if you are committed to the relationship.

Sure, taking some time to run through your emotions is a good idea. But ignoring you as a way of hurting you is never acceptable.

5. She needs constant reassurance

If your girlfriend cannot make herself happy, she could end up draining all your willpower and mental energy as you try to do it for them.

Everyone needs an emotional pick-me-up now and then. But if you are constantly doing that for her, when can she do that for you?

One of the most challenging life lessons I've learned is: You have to love yourself before you can love someone else.

6. She's a drama queen

Does this one sound familiar?

Somehow, nobody has it worse than your girlfriend. Everything is a soap opera, and everyone has a vendetta against her – or so she says.

Engaging in one-upmanship is a contest with no winner. If your partner is the sort of person who always has to have it worse off than you, then consider that a red flag.

7. She's on the phone to you 24/7

If your girlfriend is messaging you every hour of the day and expecting you to respond every time, this is overstepping natural boundaries. It will get in the way of you doing focused, productive work and spending quality time with friends and family out of business hours.

8. She shares other people's secrets with you

Gossip is one thing but what you should never do is share another person's secrets. If your girlfriend does this, she breaks a bond of trust with her friends by going behind their backs. It also means she is likely sharing your secrets too, so be careful what you say.

Think about it, what's worse? Someone doing something embarrassing or someone gleefully telling the world about it?

Randeep Hooda and Lin Laishram married in a traditional Meitei ceremony

Actors Randeep Hooda and Lin Laishram have tied the knot in a traditional Meitei wedding ceremony in Imphal last Wednesday (November 29).

Randeep dressed in white, looked like a beautiful Manipuri groom as he was surrounded by his family and relatives. While another video from the wedding ceremony has Lin dressed as a traditional Manipuri bride.

Wedding rituals took place at Chumthang Shannapung resort in Imphal as actors Randeep Hooda and Lin Laishram tied the knot in a traditional Meitei wedding ceremony.

During an interaction with a media person, Randeep talked about his love story with Lin Laishram and how he is excited to experience the Manipuri tradition.

He said, "Feels very good. I felt that it's only respectful to come and marry in the bride's tradition. I wanted to experience my life partner's culture."

Randeep added, "We have been talking about their culture, Manipuri culture and all that for a long time. I am praying for our happy future and lots of kids and lots of abundance. Yes, it's east meets west. It's like a traditional or cultural exchange. We have been friends for a very long time. We met when we were in the theatres. Since then, we have had a great friendship, which we are



now making into a family."

Lin Laishram also shared a story about how it all started with Randeep Hooda. She stated, "We actually met at Naseeruddin Shah's theatre group called Motley and he was my senior. That's where I met him. We were

friends and it's turning into a beautiful journey."

A few days ago, Randeep took to Instagram and announced that they would marry in Imphal on November 29. The post included a card picture with a message written on it. The message read, "Taking a leaf out of the Mahabharata where Arjuna married Manipuri Warrior Princess Chitrangada, we are getting married with the blessings from our families and friends... As we embark on this journey, we seek your blessings and love for this union of cultures, for which we are forever indebted and grateful. In love and light, Lin and Randeep."

Even though, earlier, Randeep and Lin never confirmed their relationship in public, the two often post pictures of each other on social media.

Lin made her Bollywood debut in 2007 with the film 'Om Shanti Om' in which she gave a cameo appearance as Om Kapoor's friend. She has appeared in other Bollywood films including *Mary Kom* (2014) as Bem, *Umrika* (2015) as Udai's wife, *Rangoon* (2017) as Mema, *Qaidi Band* (2017), and *Axone* (2019) as Chanbi.

Randeep, on the other hand, made his debut with 'Monsoon Wedding', got a lot of popularity with films such as 'Once Upon a Time in Mumbai', 'Saheb, Biwi Aur Gangster', 'Rang Rasiya', 'Jism 2' and many more.

December upcoming movies: Dunki, The Archies, Salaar, Joram...

In December many movies including *Dunki*, *Animal*, *The Archies*, *Salaar*, *Sam Bahadur*, and *Joram* will release in theatres as well as on OTT platforms. As the list continues, we bring you an interesting lineup of films that you can look forward to in December.



1) Dunki

The third film of Shah Rukh Khan this year will release on December 21. Helmed by Rajkumar Hirani, the film stars Taapsee Pannu, Boman Irani, Vicky Kaushal, Vikram Kochhar, and Anil Grover. Written by Abhijat Joshi, Rajkumar Hirani, and Kanika Dhillon, *Dunki* has been produced by Rajkumar Hirani and Gauri Khan. It is a heartwarming tale of four friends and their quest to reach foreign shores. It charts the arduous yet life-changing journey they are about to undertake to make their dreams come true.

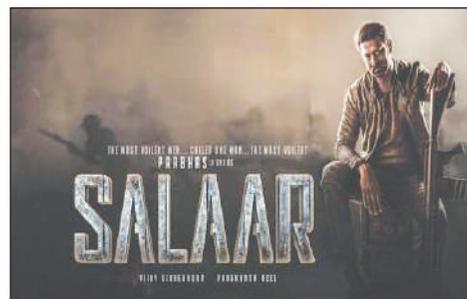
2) The Archies

The much-awaited film helmed by Zoya Akhtar will release on December 7.

The Netflix film marks the acting debut of Shah Rukh Khan's daughter Suhana Khan, producer Boney Kapoor's daughter Khushi Kapoor, and Amitabh Bachchan's grandson Agastya Nanda. It also stars Dot, Mihir Ahuja, Vedang Raina and Yuvraj Menda. It is a coming-of-age musical which follows the lives of Archie, Betty, Veronica, Jughead, Reggie, Ethel and Dilton who will take audiences to the fictional hilly town of Riverdale.

3) Salaar Part 1 - Ceasefire

Helmed by Prashanth Neel, the film stars Prabhas in an action avatar. The much-awaited film is all set to release on December 22 in Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, and Hindi. It also stars Prithviraj Sukumaran, Shruti Haasan, and Jagapathi Babu. The movie has been produced by Vijay Kiragandur under Hombale Films.



4) Joram

The Manoj Bajpayee-starrer has been directed and written by Devashish Makhija and produced by Shariq Patel, Ashima Avasthi Chaudhuri, Anupama Bose, and Devashish. *Joram* is an Indian survival thriller drama. The cast also includes Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub, Rajshri Deshpande, Tannishtha Chatterjee and Smita Tambe in lead roles. The film is all set to hit the theatres on December 8.

5) Hi Nanna

The film features Nani and Mrunal Thakur in the lead roles. Angad Bedi is all set to make his Telugu debut with *Hi Nanna*. The film is touted to be an emotional family entertainer, with Nani playing the role of a father. Shouryuv directed the film, which will hit the screens in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi languages on December 21.

6) Wonka

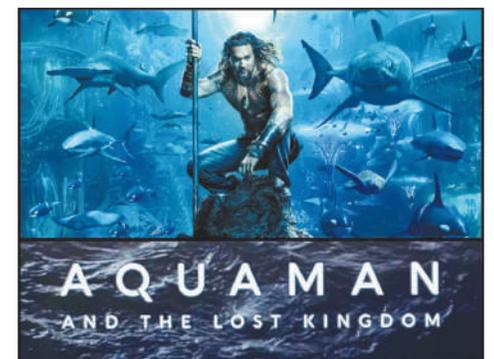
Wonka is a musical fantasy film directed by Paul King. The film tells the origin story of Willy Wonka. The film stars Timothee Chalamet in the title role, along with Calah Lane. The film also features Keegan-Michael Key, Paterson Joseph, Matt Lucas, Mathew Baynton, Sally Hawkins, Rowan Atkinson, Jim Carter, Tom Davis, Olivia Colman, and Hugh Grant. *Wonka* will release in the UK on December 8 and in the US on December 15.

7) Kadak Singh

Starring Pankaj Tripathi, the film will be



out on ZEE5 on December 8. It also stars Parvathy Thiruvothu and Sanjana Sanghi in pivotal roles. *Kadak Singh* follows the perplexing journey of AK Shrivastav (Pankaj) as he battles retrograde amnesia, uncovering a web of conflicting



narratives from his past.

8) Aquaman and The Lost Kingdom

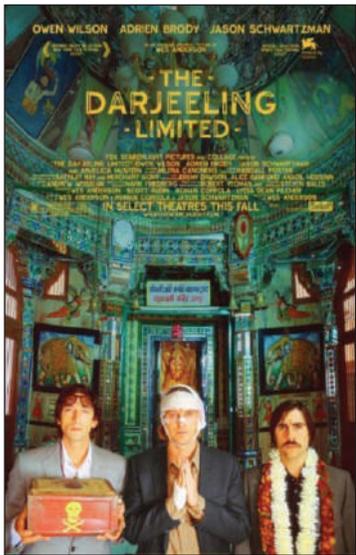
The upcoming fantasy action film will release in cinemas on December 21. Helmed by James Wan, the film stars Jason Momoa, Patrick Wilson, Amber Heard, Yahya Abdul-Mateen II and Nicole Kidman in the lead roles. The film is a sequel to the 2018 action film *Aquaman*.

More films

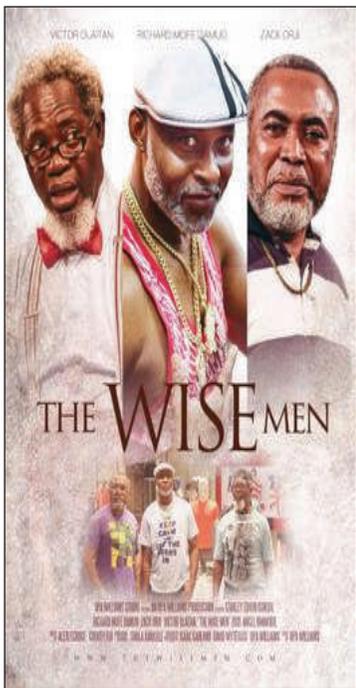
Kastoori, directed by Vinod Kamble and presented by acclaimed filmmakers Anurag Kashyap and Nagraj Popatrao Manjule, will also release in December. *Kastoori* tells the poignant story of a 14-year-old boy, who is a manual scavenger by profession and grapples with prejudice and teasing due to the scent of his body. The narrative unfolds as he navigates the challenges of education and self-discovery, all while encountering the enigmatic aroma of *Kastoori*. The film is set to hit cinemas on December 8.



Vendredi 8 decembre - 21.22



Samedi 9 decembre - 20.30



dimanche 10 decembre - 20.30



Programme TV



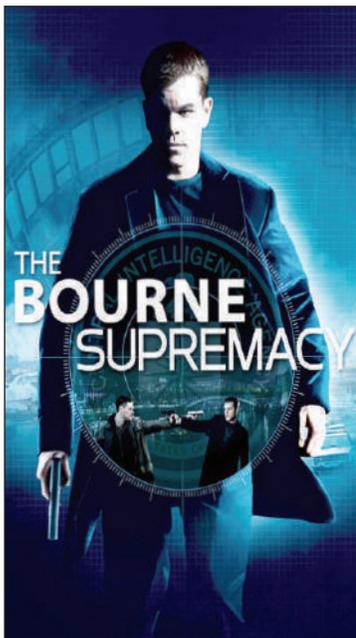
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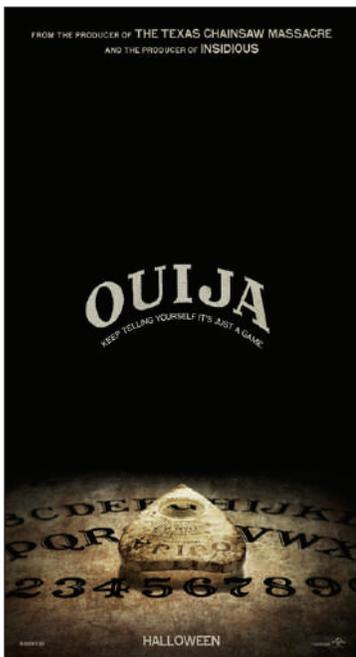
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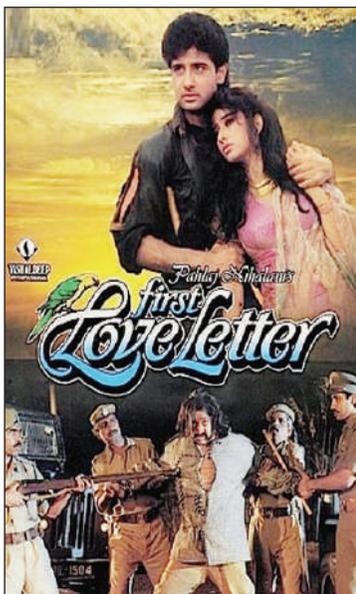
Mardi 12 decembre - 20.30



Mercredi 13 decembre - 21.15



Mercredi 13 decembre - 15.30



Programme TV



MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	MBC 5	Bollywood TV
mardi 12 decembre 04.45 Tele: Amour Secret 05.08 Tele: Le Chemin Du Destin 07.20 Serial: Pearson 08.09 Serial: Seal Team 08.50 Serial: Absentia 09.30 Tele: Le Chemin Du Destin 10.05 Tele: Amour Secret 10.30 The Gardener's Daughter 10.50 Tele: L'Envers Du Paradis 11.15 Tele: La Reina Del Flow 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Barbarita 13.15 Tele: Fierce Angel 13.45 Tele: Imperio De Mentiras 14.10 Serial: Gout De L'Amour 15.25 Film: Sugar! 17.30 The Gardener's Daughter 17.59 Live: Samachar 18.31 Serial: Wagle Ki Duniya 20.30 Film: The Bourne Supremacy 22.20 Tele: Barbarita	07.20 Local: Business Connect 09.05 Rodrig Prog - Zenn Aktif 10.23 Local: Rodrig: Saver Lokal 11.04 Local: Le Rendez Vous 12.00 Rodrig: Feminin Pluriel 12.33 Local: Voyage Au Feminin 13.47 Rodrig Mo Pei- D'Huille Coco 14.26 Local: Itinerer Moris 15.06 Rodrig Prog: Zenn Aktif 15.44 Le Rendez Vous Avec... 16.48 Local: Aktiv 18.08 Tele: Imperio De Mentiras 18.29 Tele: Amour Secret 19.00 Journal Kreol 19.20 Le Magazine De L'Emploi... 19.48 Local: Son Ladan Mem 20.03 Local: ONG An Eta Dalert 21.30 Local: Radio Vision 22.27 Local: Mots & Ecrits 22.45 La Journee Sous Le Regard 23.20 Journal Kreol	07.00 Serial: Gadget Guru Ganesha 09.46 Local: Charcha 10.03 Serial: Kundali Bhagya 12.02 Film: Lakshmanrekha 14.59 Live: Samachar 15.30 Badki Malkaain 16.00 Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 17.28 Radha Krishna 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.36 Local: Tark Vitark 19.00 Local: Bhojpuri Dhamaka 19.30 Local: Hindi Sahitya... 20.00 Chikitsa Aur Swasthya 20.27 Film: Raja Saab 22.38 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 23.00 Serial: Yeh Teri Galiyan 23.47 Local: Tark Vitark 00.13 Local: Bhojpuri Dhamaka 01.35 Serial: Badki Malkaain 02.03 Local: Tark Vitark	08.46 D.Anime: Patamuse 09.15 D.Anime: Wonder Grove 09.35 Film: Le Cygne Et La Princesse 11.11 Mag: Sand Tales 12.30 Doc: Hotels 13.20 Mag: In Good Shape 14.40 D.Anime: Kid's Planet 15.07 D.Anime: Li'l Santa 15.13 D.Anime: Petit Pingouin 15.40 D.Anime: Les Schtroumpfs 15.49 D.Anime: Miraculous... 16.18 D.Anime: Li'L Santa 16.42 D.Anime: Hunter X Hunter 17.27 Mag: Recipes For Kids 17.35 Serial: The Wish 18.05 Doc: Smoothie Mania 18.31 Mag: Healthy Living 19.31 Mag: Global Us 20.02 Tele: Le Chemin Du Destin 20.50 Tele: La Reina Del Flow	14.25 Serial: Radha Mohan 15.00 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 2 15.30 Film: Sarpshira Starring Vinod Mehra,Sanjay Dutt 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 19.03 Udaariyaan 19.33 Kuch Rang Pyar Ke Aise... 20.06 Sasural Simar Ka 2 20.38 Radha Krishna 21.08 Anupama 21.30 Mere Sai 22.08 Kismat Ki Lakiron Se 22.29 Kabhi Kabhie Ittefaq Sey 22.55 Serial: Shaurya Aur Anokhi Ki Kahani 23.30 Film: Sarpshira 02.07 Kundali Bhagya
mercredi 13 decembre 06.01 Tele: Love And Wealth 07.15 Film: Life Gets In The Way 08.45 Serial: Airwolf 09.35 Tele: Le Chemin Du Destin 10.05 Tele: Amour Secret 10.25 The Gardener's Daughter 10.50 Tele: L'Envers Du Paradis 11.15 Tele: La Reina Del Flow 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Barbarita 13.15 Tele: Fierce Angel 13.40 Tele: Imperio De Mentiras 14.15 Serial: Airwolf 15.21 Film: Juste Un Peu D'Alchimie 17.30 The Gardener's Daughter 18.31 Serial: Wagle Ki Duniya 18.55 Serial: Mere Dad Ki Dulhan 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.30 Serial: Under Pressure 21.15 Film: Ouija 22.45 Tele: Barbarita	07.05 Local: C Care 09.00 Local: Rodrig Prog: Rod'Art 10.30 Local: Koze Zom 11.01 Extraits Du Festival Lamisik 12.09 Rodrig: Plat Du Chef 12.42 Local: C Care 13.12 Local: Priorite Sante 13.53 Local: Koze Zom 16.00 Local Glwar Dantan 16.39 La Journee Sous Le Regard 16.56 Extraits Du Festival Lamisik 18.01 Tele: Imperio De Mentiras 18.28 Tele: Amour Secret 19.00 Journal Kreol 19.20 Le Magazine De L'Emploi... 20.00 Mon Jardin Ma Maison 20.30 Local: Toc Toc Doc 21.11 Local: Agir Ensemble 21.26 Local: Les Klips 22.50 La Journee Sous Le Regard 00.12 Rodrig: Pran Kont Ou Lasante	07.00 Gadget Guru Ganesha 08.26 Local: Bhojpuri Dhamaka 08.56 Local: Hindi Sahitya 09.23 Chikitsa Aur Swasthya 10.00 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 11.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 12.00 Film: Uljhan Starring: A. Kumar, S. Kumar, Sulakshana Pandit, Ranjeet 15.30 Serial: Dulhin Uhe Jo Nanad Man Bhave 16.01 Serial: Suhani Si Ek Ladki 17.30 Serial: Radha Krishna 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.39 Local: Yatra South 20.00 Mon Local: Kala 19.37 Local: Zindagi Ka Safar 20.02 Local: Virasat 20.32 Film: Hum Hai Hero Hindustani 22.25 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 23.03 Serial: Yeh Teri Galiyan	06.26 Mag: Made In Germany 07.22 D.Anime: Cat & Keet 09.32 Mag: Lab 360 09.39 Film: The Enchanted Mountain 11.17 Mag: Sad Tales 13.35 Mag: Business Africa 14.40 D.Anime: Kid's Planet 16.42 D.Anime: Hunter X Hunter 17.05 Serial: The Avatars 17.28 Mag: Recipes For Kids 17.30 Serial: The Wish 17.53 Doc: World Capitals 18.00 Doc: Smoothie Mania 18.30 Doc: That's Just Life 18.58 Doc: Fine Arts Sculptures 19.00 Mag: Arts Unveiled 19.30 Mag: The Inside Story 20.00 Tele: Le Chemin Du Destin 20.30 Live: News 21.50 Film: What The Night Can Do 23.20 Mag: Close Up	14.25 Radha Mohan 14.58 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 2 15.27 Film: First Love Letter Starring: Vivek Mushran, Manisha Koirala, Dalip Tahil 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 21.06 Anupama 21.36 Mere Sai 22.05 Kismat Ki Lakiron Se 22.31 Kabhi Kabhie ittefaq Sey 23.00 Serial: Shaurya Aur Anokhi Ki Kahani 23.26 Film: First Love Letter 02.11 Serial: Kundali Bhagya 02.33 Serial: Udaariyaan
jeudi 14 decembre 04.40 Tele: Amour Secret 07.15 Serial: The Good Doctor 08.09 Serial: Under Pressure 08.45 Serial: Riviera 09.30 Tele: Le Chemin Du Destin 10.05 Tele: Amour Secret 10.30 The Gardener's Daughter 10.50 Tele: L'Envers Du Paradis 11.15 Serial: Timeless 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Barbarita 13.15 Tele: Fierce Angel 13.40 Tele: Imperio De Mentiras 14.05 Tele: Gout De L'Amour 15.25 Film: What The Night Can Do 17.15 The Gardener's Daughter 17.59 Live: Samachar 18.31 Serial: Wagle Ki Duniya 18.55 Serial: Mere Dad Ki Dulhan 20.30 Film: Goodbye Starring :Amitabh Bachchan, R. Mandanna, Neena Gupta	08.04 Rodrig Prog: Kot Nou 08.54 Local: Come On Let's Dance 09.47 Rodrig Prog: Komanter 11.09 Local: Rodrig Spor 15.43 Local: Aktiv 15.56 Local: Radio Vision 16.48 Tele: Imperio De Mentiras 17.08 Tele: Amour Secret 18.16 Rodrig: Li Bon Ou Konnin 18.46 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 19.16 Emotion en Avant Plan 19.36 Local: Evasion: Le Pere Noel En Vacances A Maurice 20.45 Local: Rodrig: Sa Lavi-La 21.42 Local: ONG An Eta Dalert 21.57 Rodrig - Klip Seleksion 22.40 Journal Kreol 23.00 Local: Groov'in 23.54 Local: Generations J 00.24 Local: Artizan 00.37 Local: Nou Later Nou Lamer	07.00 Gadget Guru Ganesha 07.12 Serial: Kisna 07.36 Serial: Lambu G Tingu G 09.50 Local: Gyan Vigyan 10.01 Serial: Suhani Si Ek Ladki 11.14 Serial: Radha Krishna 12.00 Film: Sajna Saath Nibhana Starring: Danish Khan, Neelu, Nutan 15.30 Serial: Badki Malkaain 15.58 Serial: Agniphera 17.31 Radha Krishna 18.45 Talk By Mahamandleshwar 19.02 Satguru Kabir Ke Gyan 20.00 Local: Hunarbaaz 20.28 Mag: Dharam Yatra 21.28 Mag: Dev Bhumi 21.59 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 22.20 Serial: Yeh Teri Galiyan 23.07 Local: Amrit Vaani 23.40 Swami Dayanad Saraswati	07.22 D.Anime: Cat & Keet 09.41 Film: Christophe Colomb 11.10 Mag: Sand Tales 11.35 Serial: The Wish 12.55 Doc: Motorweek 13.25 Doc: That's Just Life 14.40 Mag: Kid's Planet 14.40 D.Anime: Kid's Planet 15.05 D.Anime: Li'l Santa 15.12 D.Anime: Petit Pingouin 16.41 D.Anime: Hunter X Hunter 17.28 Mag: Recipes For Kids 17.30 Serial: The Wish 17.52 Doc: World Capitals 18.00 Doc: Smoothie Mania 18.30 Mag: Shift 19.00 Mag: Border Crossing 19.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today 20.00 Tele: Le Chemin Du Destin 21.40 Film: All About Nina Avec Mary Elizabeth Winstead, Brodie Reed	14.25 Radha Mohan 15.27 Film: Zulm Ki Hukumat Stars: Dharmendra, Moushumi Chatterjee, Govinda 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 21.02 Anupama 21.30 Mere Sai 22.01 Kismat Ki Lakiron Se 22.31 Kabhi Kabhie Ittefaq Sey 22.59 Shaurya Aur Anokhi Ki Kahani 23.30 Film: Zulm Ki Hukumat Stars: Dharmendra, Moushumi Chatterjee, Govinda 02.00 Kundali Bhagya



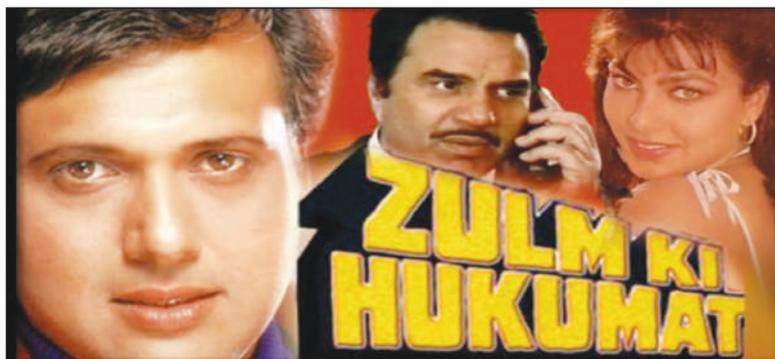
Jeudi 14 decembre - 15.28

Stars: Dharmendra, Moushumi Chatterjee, Govinda



Jeudi 14 decembre - 20.30

Stars: Amitabh Bachchan, R. Mandanna, Neena Gupta





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How sacred images in many Asian cultures incorporate divine presence and make them come 'alive'

Through the power of rituals, inanimate objects can be understood to transform into agents who can see, hear, taste and respond to the concerns of those who worship them

Walking into a favourite restaurant here in Knoxville, Tennessee, I was immediately greeted by a golden statue of Buddha, its sparkling gemstone eyes meeting my own as I made my way through the door. The aromas of Thai curries beckoned, but as I was led to a table, I kept thinking about those glinting eyes.

Sacred objects are everywhere: Statues and paintings of gods fill museum galleries and catalogue pages alike. You might also see them gracing a neighbour's yard or upon an altar in your friend's home.

Some dazzle in bejewelled splendour. Others may appear more humble, their lustre softened through generations of hands passing them down. Oftentimes, it can feel as though sacred images are looking back.

I research the ways in which objects express the power of divine presence in Asian religious contexts. Studying different perspectives on sacred objects helps us think beyond religious contexts and allows us to rethink how objects and images play an active role in our lives.

Sacred visual culture

Hindu practice is defined by "darśan" – a ritual act of interacting with the divine through the visual experience. Scholar Diana Eck describes this interaction in her seminal study of Indian visual culture, "Darśan," in the following way: "to stand in the presence of the deity and to behold the image with one's own eyes, to see and be seen by the deity."

Theravada Buddhist rituals in Southeast Asia include all-night chanting sessions to recharge statues' power. As scholar of Theravada Buddhism Donald Swearer notes in "Becoming the Buddha," monastics and laypeople in northern Thailand will gather to recite Buddhist sutras while holding cords attached to an image of the Buddha, forming an intricate web of connection between the image and the Buddhist community.

The benefits gained from these chants is understood to enter the statue, recharging its karmic power and reanimating it to once again interact with the



"Monastics and laypeople in northern Thailand will gather to recite Buddhist sutras while holding cords attached to an image of the Buddha, forming an intricate web of connection between the image and the Buddhist community..." Pic - Bangkok Post

community.

Japanese Buddhist statues contain multiple items ritually placed within their wooden cavities: bones of saints, robes from eminent monastics and even silk-fashioned replicas of visceral organs like lungs and kidneys. As art historian James Dobbins notes, certain Buddhist rituals are performed in order to transform the body of a statue into a living body.

In cases like this, inanimate objects are believed to transform into not only sacred things, but also active, living beings who can see, hear, taste and respond to the concerns of those who worship them.

'Eye-opening' ritual

There are many different ways to enliven an image, and each ritual tradition carries its own unique process. However, the most well-known across Asia is commonly referred to as the "eye-opening" ceremony. The term "eye-opening" gets its name from the culmination of an intense ritual process wherein the monk paints in the pupils of the image, thus opening its eye to see.

In Sri Lanka, Buddhist monks perform a version known as the *netra-pinkama*, which loosely translates to "meritorious action of the eyes."

Richard Gombrich, a scholar of Buddhism and Sanskrit, noted in his study of Buddhism in Sri Lanka that "Before consecration, a statue is treated with no more respect than one would give the materials of which it is composed... The very act of consecration indicates that a statue is being brought to life."

Enlivening an image is not a task undertaken lightly, as it is believed in some cases that any demonic spirits loitering around could interrupt the process, thereby resulting in an ineffective ritual or even a malevolent icon. Both the temple grounds and the ritual specialists must undergo purification rites before beginning. The whole process is filled with strict procedures and avoidance of taboos – a common theme among consecration rituals across Asian religious traditions.

Perhaps most importantly, the monk must refrain from looking directly into the icon's eyes, and thus uses a mirror to look over their shoulder in order to paint in the icon's pupils.

In Taiwan, statues and paintings of Buddhist, Daoist and local gods will undergo a similar kind of practice known as "kaiguang," meaning "opening the radiance." Monks, Daoist masters and even the artists who carve the statues may perform the rite on behalf of the individuals or temple communities that commission the image.

Once completed, shops will wrap a piece of red paper around to cover the statue's eyes to ensure that the first thing that the image sees is the face of the one who requested it. The power of sacred vision is such that it must literally be kept under wraps.

Living images

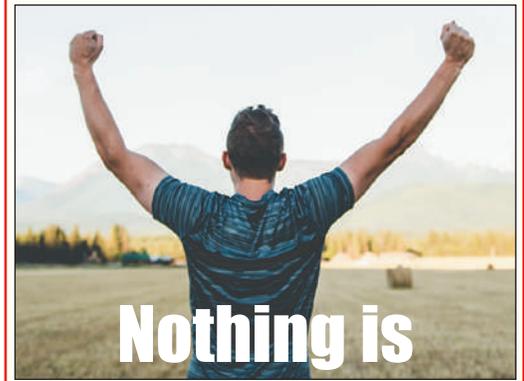
Once its eyes have been opened, the image becomes a living thing capable of performing powerful deeds. As such, people may behave much differently – making offerings of incense and taking pains to follow social etiquette lest they offend. The care with which these objects are treated once they have been "activated" suggests that there is a lot more here than meets the eye.

As Eck's observation attests, being seen is critical to understanding what images do. By seemingly looking back at us, sacred images remind us that we are not alone in this world. In so doing, they also send a message that the world is not there for our eyes only, but that other viewpoints are just as powerful as our own.



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor



Nothing is

Insurmountable

There is nothing in your life that cannot be overcome; whatever the situation or problem, there is always a solution.

When our next best course of action seems unclear, any dilemmas we face can appear insurmountable. Yet there is nothing we cannot overcome with time, persistence, focused thought, help, and faith. Whatever the situation or problem, there is always a solution. And if you remember to look within, even as you search around you for the "right" course of action, you will be able to centre yourself, clear your mind, and see that nothing has to be impossible.

The first step in overcoming any obstacle is to believe that it can be overcome. Doing so will give you the strength and courage to move through any crisis. The second step is to make a resolution that you can prevail over any chaos. Enlist your support network of family and friends if necessary. The more minds there are to consider a problem, the more solutions can be found. Don't discount ideas just because they seem impractical or "unrealistic," and don't keep searching for the "best" alternative. Often there is no "best" choice, there is only a choice to make so we can begin moving beyond whatever is obstructing our path. At the very least, making a choice, even if isn't the ideal one, can give you a sense of peace before you have to figure out what your next course of action will be.

If you feel overwhelmed by the scope of your troubles, you may want to think of other people who have turned adversity into triumph. We often gain a fresh perspective when we remember others who have overcome larger obstacles. It can be inspiring to hear of their victories, helping us remember that there is always light at the end of every tunnel.

It is during our darkest hours that we sometimes need to remind ourselves that we don't have to feel helpless. You have within and around you the resources to find a solution to any problem. And remember that if a solution or choice you make doesn't work, you are always free to try another. Believe that you can get through anything, and you will always prevail.