

MAURITIUS TIMES

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



P9

Interview: Jean-Claude de l'Estrac

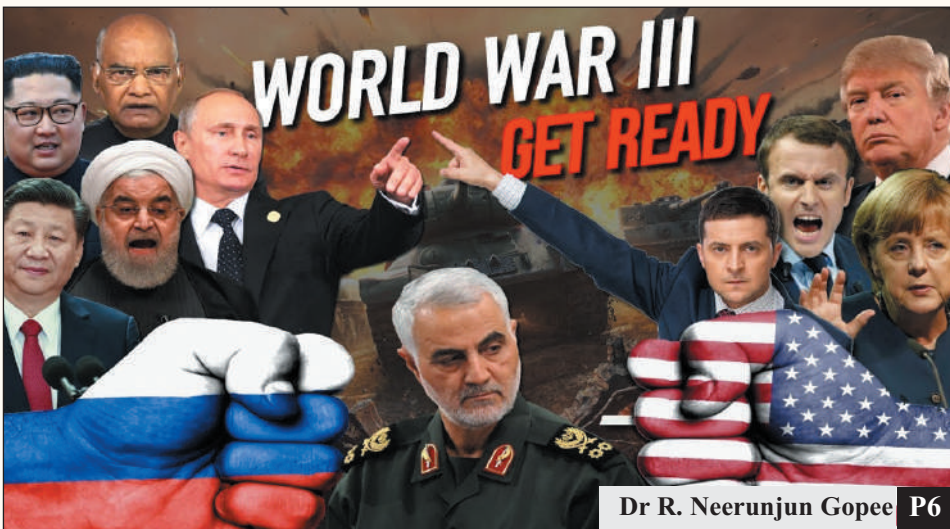
“L’alliance de l’opposition ne peut pas perdre, sur papier”

‘Faudra-t-il que cette alliance apparaisse aux électeurs comme une vraie force de renouveau et de changement. Ce n’est pas encore le cas’

• ‘Le Premier ministre n’est plus le maître des horloges. Désormais, ce sont les dispositions de la loi électorale qui s’imposent’

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War: an endemic disease of mankind?



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Another Dilemma for the PM

Prime Ministers are typically reluctant to dismiss their own ministers as they need to maintain support from key factions within their party, and thus avoid putting their own position in jeopardy. This becomes even more complicated when the minister in question is a relatively popular figure in a crucial rural constituency, which returned three MSM candidates in the 2019 elections and fell the main challenger of the Pravind Jugnauth: Navin Ramgoolam. Besides, the consequences that may follow may endanger the re-election chances of the governing alliance/party next time round.

These considerations, however, seem not to have influenced the Prime Minister's decision in the revocation of former Agro-industry minister Vikram Hurdoyal. We would like to think that the Prime Minister meticulously weighed all possible consequences before making his decision. With a comfortable government majority, Pravind Jugnauth might have deemed Vikram Hurdoyal politically "expedient," perceiving him as not contributing any significant value to his administration. On the other hand, given the Prime Minister's position as the most well-informed individual in the country, thanks to daily briefings from the National Intelligence Unit, he would likely have been apprised of any actions, commendable or otherwise, by Vikram Hurdoyal. Nevertheless, the former minister's abrupt dismissal has fuelled rampant speculation, and the absence of official explanations has contributed to the proliferation of rumours. One such rumour suggests that the ousted minister had been contemplating the idea of defecting to the Opposition.

In any case, whatever the reasons for Hurdoyal's dismissal, the Prime Minister seems to have shot himself in the foot. He is no longer in control of the electoral agenda. According to Article 35(3) of the Constitution, the resignation of a Member of Parliament triggers the issuance of a

by-election "writ" within 90 days unless Parliament is dissolved earlier. If the government acts within this timeframe, the by-election could take place as early as August 13, 2024. However, the maximum period for the by-election is set at 240 days, culminating by October 13, 2024.

Given that Parliament is set to automatically dissolve in late November 2024, the prospect of holding a by-election just before scheduled general elections poses substantial risks for the government. Opposition parties are already fine-tuning their strategies to leverage the public's discontent with issues affecting them in their daily lives. If history were to serve as a guide, the echoes of the 2003 by-election to replace SAJ in constituency no. 7 would ring loud. The Labour Party's victory in that by-election paved the way for their success in the subsequent general elections of 2005 and 2010. To avoid a similar scenario, the ruling MSM may choose to skip the by-election in constituency no. 10 and fast-track legislative elections after presenting a populist budget this year.

Already, the government has raised the stakes by introducing populist measures. The strategy seems clear: to preemptively address public grievances and present a favourable image before the elections. By skipping the potentially contentious by-election, the ruling alliance would aim to consolidate its position and mitigate the risks associated with losing a crucial vote just a few weeks before the general elections.

In the ever-evolving landscape of politics, the dismissal of Vikram Hurdoyal remains a puzzle with constitutional, strategic, and populist dimensions. As the government navigates these intricacies, the forthcoming months promise to be a spectacle of political manoeuvring, where every move will be scrutinized in the build-up to the elections that could shape the future trajectory of the nation.

Socratic Dialogue

Political Puzzles: The Minister's Exit and the Quandary of Elections

By Plutonix

In this Socratic dialogue, Socrates and Cephalus discuss the mysterious dismissal of a Minister of Agro-industry by the Prime Minister, sparking political intrigue. As they speculate on motives and potential repercussions, they explore the looming by-election dilemma and the unexpected twist of the former minister allegedly reconsidering his resignation.

The conversation serves as a philosophical reflection on the uncertainties and intrigues of governance, likening the political stage to a drama where players come and go, contributing to the grand narrative. Through concise and witty exchanges, the dialogue captures the essence of the complex choices faced by the Prime Minister and the unpredictable nature of political events.



Pic - bigthink.com

Socrates: Ah, Cephalus, have you heard the latest tale in the realm of politics? A Minister of Agro-industry has been dismissed by the Prime Minister without a whisper of reasons.

Cephalus: Ah, indeed, Socrates! The minister who got the boot without a word of explanation. A political puzzle, it is.

Socrates: A puzzle, you say. Like a riddle wrapped in an enigma, with a side of political intrigue.

Cephalus: Precisely, my wise friend! The Prime Minister showed him the exit, leaving the populace scratching their heads. No reasons given, just a swift political pirouette.

Socrates: And yet, rumours dance in the shadows. Some say the poor minister was considering a tango with the Opposition. Or perhaps a political waltz to the rhythm of power dynamics. How intriguing! Do you think there might be a motive, Cephalus?

Cephalus: Well, Socrates, one can only guess. There are whispers of grave matters, but alas, no details have been revealed.

Socrates: The veil of secrecy shrouds the minister's departure, leaving us to speculate like philosophers lost in the labyrinth of uncertainty. And now, my dear Cephalus, comes the most curious part – the minister's resignation from Parliament.

Cephalus: Yes, indeed. A by-election is looming, and the political stage is set for drama.

Socrates: Drama indeed, Cephalus! It's like a theatrical production where the curtains rise, but the script remains hidden. Now, tell me, what do you think of this by-election business?

Cephalus: It's a tricky situation, Socrates. The government's mandate is nearing its end, and losing the by-election would be a grave blow to the current governing alliance.

Socrates: A dilemma, my wise friend! To hold the by-election or to leap directly into the general elections – that is the question. The Prime Minister must feel like a philosopher caught between the Socratic method and a hard place.

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Démission du député Hurdoyal

Une élection partielle aura-t-elle lieu ?

Aditya Narayan

Deux jours après sa révocation du poste de ministre de l'Agro-industrie et de la sécurité alimentaire, Vikram Hurdoyal a démissionné comme député de l'Assemblée nationale pour la circonscription no. 10 (Montagne Blanche/Grande Rivière Sud-Est). Son geste constitue un acte de dignité appréciable. Dans la politique de nos jours, très peu d'hommes ont le sens de l'amour-propre. Vikram Hurdoyal a montré qu'il est l'un de ces hommes bien qu'il soit tombé d'accord avec le Premier ministre pour ne rien dire en public de ses divergences avec le gouvernement.

En effet, la nouvelle de la révocation avait pris de court tout le monde dimanche dernier. Un ministre révoqué un dimanche alors qu'il est absent du pays, c'est un événement assez rare. La bienséance aurait voulu que le chef du gouvernement attende son retour au pays et l'informe de sa révocation en personne avant d'en aviser le président de la République. Mais les choses se sont passées autrement. Pourquoi ?

Dans sa première déclaration à la presse lundi, à son retour d'un voyage, l'ex-ministre avait exprimé son étonnement et sa tristesse face à son limogeage. Il ne s'y attendait pas manifestement car il ne savait pas ce qu'on lui reprochait exactement. Apparemment, ce qui aurait précipité sa révocation, ce serait l'intention qu'on lui prêtait de démissionner du gouvernement. Le Premier ministre l'aurait donc court-circuité en le privant de son poste de ministre avant qu'il n'ait en public des dissensions avec le gouvernement.

En effet, on ne connaît pas à ce jour la raison officielle de la révocation. L'ex-ministre s'est gardé de critiquer le leader du MSM, disant même qu'il entretenait de bonnes relations avec lui. Il a eu une rencontre avec le Premier ministre lundi dernier pour discuter de son avenir politique.

Toutefois, certaines informations faisaient croire qu'il n'était pas tenu en odeur de sainteté dans son parti. Il a été dans l'actualité récemment concernant les tractations menant à l'élection d'un nouveau président du conseil de district de Flacq. Son poulain, l'ancien président du conseil, avait été destitué à la suite d'une motion de certains conseillers de village.

Mécontent, l'ex-ministre aurait apparemment menacé



« Si un député démissionne de son siège, le «writ» pour tenir une élection partielle doit être émis dans les 90 jours (trois mois) suivant la démission, à moins que le Parlement ne soit dissout plus tôt. Si le gouvernement émet le «writ» dans 90 jours, soit le 13 mai 2024, il pourra tenir l'élection partielle dans un délai raisonnable de trois mois, soit le 13 août 2024. Au plus tard, l'élection partielle devra avoir lieu le 13 octobre 2024, soit dans un délai maximal de 240 jours... »

de démissionner mais il devait rentrer dans les rangs après des négociations avec le leadership du MSM. Or, sa révocation subite indique que tout n'était pas au beau fixe pour lui.

Dans son histoire depuis 1983, le MSM a connu de nombreuses défections et démissions. Depuis son retour au pouvoir en 2015, le MSM a connu plusieurs démissions de ministres occupant des portefeuilles très importants.

- Avant les élections de 2019, il y a eu la démission de Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo comme ministre des Affaires étrangères, après sa mutation du ministère des Finances, et celle de Roshi Bhadain comme ministre de la Bonne gouvernance.
- En 2021, Nando Bodha, secrétaire général du MSM, a démissionné comme ministre du Tourisme après des désaccords avec son parti.
- Avant lui, Ivan Collendavelloo, leader du Muvman Liberater, un partenaire minoritaire du gouvernement, avait été révoqué à la suite d'une «lettre confidentielle» de la Banque africaine de développement qui aurait mentionné son nom dans une affaire de contrat attribué à une firme étrangère par le CEB. Cette affaire est depuis en suspens entre les mains de l'ICAC. On prédisait le retour d'Ivan au conseil des ministres après sa récente déposition devant l'ICAC, mais le remaniement ministériel suivant la démission de Hurdoyal a fait une impasse sur lui.

Toutes ces démissions et révocations au sein du gouvernement auraient pour cause le mode de leadership centralisateur du MSM qui ne tolère aucun débat contradictoire au sein de ses instances ni aucune divergence au conseil des ministres. Certes, un leadership centralisateur

permet d'instaurer la discipline parmi les membres du parti et la cohérence dans la communication. Toutefois, il étouffe le débat d'idées et ne permet pas une réflexion alternative.

Après sa révocation, Vikram Hurdoyal avait trois options :

- (a) Rester comme un député ordinaire (backbencher) de la majorité jusqu'aux prochaines élections ;
- (b) Démissionner du MSM et siéger comme député indépendant ; et
- (c) Démissionner de son siège de député.

Il a choisi la troisième option. Celle-ci impose nécessairement, en vertu de l'article 35 de la Constitution, une élection partielle dans la circonscription no. 10 dans un délai minimal de six mois.

Selon l'alinéa 35(3) de la Constitution, si un député démissionne de son siège, le «writ» pour tenir une élection partielle doit être émis dans les 90 jours (trois mois) suivant la démission, à moins que le Parlement ne soit dissout plus tôt. Si le gouvernement émet le «writ» dans 90 jours, soit le 13 mai 2024, il pourra tenir l'élection partielle dans un délai raisonnable de trois mois, soit le 13 août 2024. Au plus tard, l'élection partielle devra avoir lieu le 13 octobre 2024, soit dans un délai maximal de 240 jours.

Puisque le Parlement sera dissout automatiquement vers la fin de novembre 2024, on imagine mal le gouvernement tenir une élection partielle en prologue à des élections générales prévues pour fin 2024/début 2025. Le risque de perdre une élection partielle à quelques mois des élections générales est énorme pour le gouvernement. Il se trouve que les partis d'opposition affûtent déjà leurs armes en vue d'y participer dans un contexte où la population est mécontente de la vie chère et d'autres problèmes.

Le gouvernement aurait pu faire l'économie de cette élection partielle en gardant le député démissionnaire dans ses rangs. Or, en se débarrassant d'un homme dit «populaire» dans l'Est du pays, il s'est tiré une balle dans le pied. Afin de ne pas laisser des plumes en cas d'élection partielle, dans une circonscription vitale dans les régions rurales, le gouvernement serait tenté d'appeler le pays aux urnes avant la date réglementaire de l'élection partielle.

En 2003, l'élection partielle pour le remplacement du siège de député de SAJ (qui fut nommé président de la République) dans la circonscription no. 7 vit la victoire de Rajesh Jeetah, candidat du Parti Travailleurs, contre celui du MSM. Le Parti Travailleurs devait surfer sur cet élan populaire pour gagner les élections générales de 2005.

Pour prévenir la répétition d'un tel scénario, le MSM va sans doute sauter l'étape de l'élection partielle dans la circonscription no.10 pour aller aux élections législatives anticipées, et ce, après avoir déposé un budget populiste en juin 2024. Le gouvernement a déjà fait monter les enchères avec des mesures électoralistes. Ces élections générales auront donc probablement lieu avant le mois de novembre 2024.

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Le retrait des politiciens âgés fait débat

Aux États-Unis, Kamala Harris 'prête à servir' en tant que présidente, malgré les inquiétudes sur l'âge de Biden

Par A. Bartleby

Au milieu des préoccupations concernant l'âge et les capacités cognitives du président américain Joe Biden pour poursuivre son deuxième mandat à la Maison Blanche, la vice-présidente Kamala Harris a affirmé qu'elle "est prête" pour la présidence.

Lors d'une interview avec le Wall Street Journal, la politicienne indo-américaine Harris a mis en avant sa "capacité à diriger" alors que le rapport "alarmant" du conseiller spécial Robert Hur qualifiait Biden de "vieil homme avec une mauvaise mémoire", amplifiant les appels au président américain de se retirer de ses fonctions.

"Je suis prête à servir. Il n'y a aucun doute là-dessus", a déclaré Harris au WSJ en réponse à une question sur la difficulté de convaincre les gens qu'elle est qualifiée pour le poste.

Tout en exposant ses priorités de campagne lors d'un vol à bord de l'Air Force Two la semaine dernière, la première femme et vice-présidente des États-Unis a déclaré que ceux qui la voient travailler sont "pleinement conscients" de sa capacité à diriger le pays.

Harris (59 ans) a précédemment déclaré qu'elle était prête à servir en tant que présidente "si nécessaire", mais elle a écarté les spéculations sur la compétence de Biden en tant que commandant en chef.

Le rapport de Hur

Hur a remis un rapport le jeudi 8 janvier après une enquête sur la gestion par Biden de documents sensibles trouvés dans sa résidence du Delaware et au bureau du Penn Biden Center à Washington, D.C.

Dans le rapport, il a déclaré qu'il n'y avait pas suffisamment de preuves "pour établir la culpabilité de M. Biden hors de tout doute raisonnable", mais le rapport ne recommandait pas de déposer des accusations contre Biden.

"Mr. Biden se présenterait probablement devant un jury, comme il l'a fait lors de notre entrevue avec lui, en tant qu'homme âgé, bien intentionné, avec une mauvaise

mémoire", indique le rapport.

Le rapport souligne également que Biden, lors d'entretiens avec le conseiller spécial, "n'a pas rappelé quand il était vice-président, oubliant le premier jour de l'entretien quand son mandat a pris fin.

Le rapport a suscité un débat sur la perte de mémoire de Biden et sa capacité mentale à continuer d'exercer ses fonctions. Des législateurs républicains ont appelé à sa démission, affirmant qu'il en est "inapte".

Ils ont soutenu que le 25e amendement, qui vise à déclarer le président incapable d'exercer ses fonctions, devrait maintenant être mis en œuvre.

Le concurrent républicain principal de Biden dans la course à la Maison Blanche est l'ancien président Donald Trump (77 ans).

Suite à la publication de l'enquête du conseiller spécial, un sondage ABC News/Ipsos a révélé qu'un étonnant 86% des Américains estiment que Biden est trop âgé pour occuper la fonction présidentielle. Cependant, une majorité des répondants, soit 59%, estiment que Biden et Trump sont trop âgés."

Le rôle des politiciens âgés à Maurice

Le débat sur le retrait des politiciens âgés et la place qu'ils devraient laisser aux plus jeunes soulève des questions cruciales. D'un côté, l'expérience et la sagesse accumulées au fil des années par ces politiciens plus âgés peuvent apporter une contribution inestimable au développement de leur pays. Leurs décennies de service peuvent être une source de stabilité et de perspicacité, offrant une perspective historique précieuse pour guider les décisions contemporaines.

D'un côté, certains politiciens âgés à Maurice apportent une richesse d'expérience et de sagesse à la scène politique, et leur engagement de longue date dans le service public peut offrir une perspective historique précieuse



États-Unis. La vice-présidente Kamala Harris se dit «prête à servir» son pays. P - L'Alsace

se pour guider le pays.

D'un autre côté, l'évolution rapide du monde et l'émergence de nouveaux défis nécessitent parfois une approche innovante et énergique, souvent associée à la jeunesse. Il est donc important de maintenir un équilibre avec une injection d'énergie et d'idées nouvelles, souvent associées aux générations plus jeunes. Le défi réside dans la création d'une harmonie entre l'expérience des politiciens plus âgés et les aspirations changeantes de la société, pour assurer un leadership efficace et représentatif.

En fin de compte, le choix entre la retraite des politiciens plus âgés et l'ascension de nouvelles générations à des postes de responsabilité appartient aux électeurs. Ils ont le pouvoir de décider qui, parmi les candidats, incarne le mieux leurs valeurs et leurs aspirations. L'équilibre entre l'expérience et la fraîcheur, entre la sagesse accumulée et l'enthousiasme innovant, doit être déterminé par le verdict démocratique. C'est dans les urnes que se trouve la clé pour façonner l'avenir politique d'une nation.

\$2 milliards par an nécessaires pour tripler la capacité mondiale d'énergies renouvelables d'ici 2030



Climate Analytics préconise de tripler les ajouts de capacité d'énergies renouvelables d'ici 2030. P - RTBF

Le rapport du groupe de réflexion mondial Climate Analytics indique que l'Asie est la seule région globalement en bonne voie pour atteindre l'objectif de tripler la capacité mondiale d'énergie renouvelable, principalement grâce aux politiques

de la Chine et de l'Inde.

La région contribue le plus, fournissant environ la moitié (47 %) des 8,1 térawatts d'ajouts de capacités renouvelables nécessaires à l'échelle mondiale d'ici 2030.

Cependant, les importants projets de centrales au charbon et au gaz dans ces pays risquent de ralentir la transition. À mesure que les énergies renouvelables devraient croître fortement dans la région, de nouvelles centrales à combustibles fossiles ne sont pas nécessaires et devraient être évitées, affirme le rapport.

La croissance de l'énergie renouvelable en Chine et en Inde compense les retards des pays tels que la Corée du Sud, où elle devrait croître à la moitié du taux de la région dans son ensemble.

Le rapport estime qu'un investissement de 8 mil-

liards de dollars est nécessaire pour les nouvelles énergies renouvelables et 4 milliards de dollars pour l'infrastructure de réseau et de stockage afin de tripler la capacité mondiale d'énergie renouvelable à 11 térawatts ou 11 000 gigawatts d'ici 2030.

Selon l'Agence internationale de l'énergie, tripler la capacité mondiale d'énergie renouvelable et doubler le taux d'efficacité énergétique d'ici 2030 sont cruciaux pour limiter l'augmentation moyenne de la température mondiale à 1,5 degré Celsius.

La majorité du déficit de capacité mondiale devant être comblé d'ici 2030 se trouve dans les pays de l'OCDE (Organisation de coopération et de développement économique) qui accusent actuellement un retard par rapport à la norme compatible avec une augmentation de 1,5 degrés Celsius, allant d'environ 1 à 1,4 térawatts.

➔ Suite en page 5

\$2 milliards par an nécessaires pour tripler la capacité mondiale d'énergies renouvelables d'ici 2030

☞ Suite de la page 4

Aucun pays de l'OCDE n'est sur la voie de tripler la capacité d'énergies renouvelables par rapport aux niveaux de 2022, indique le rapport.

La capacité en énergies renouvelables en Afrique subsaharienne doit augmenter rapidement d'un facteur de sept (le double de la moyenne mondiale) en raison d'un sous-investissement historique et des besoins d'accès à l'énergie, précise-t-il.

Neil Grant, expert en climatologie chez Climate Analytics et auteur principal du rapport, déclare: "2 milliards de dollars par an semblent être un coût, mais c'est vraiment un choix. Nous sommes sur le point d'investir plus de 6 milliards de dollars dans les combustibles fossiles au cours de cette décennie, soit bien plus que suffisant pour combler le déficit d'investissement triplé. Face à ce choix, je choisirais l'option la plus sûre et la plus rentable: les énergies renouvelables."



P - climaxion.fr

Le rapport estime que les énergies renouvelables doivent continuer à croître fortement au-delà de la fin de la décennie, en augmentant cinq fois d'ici 2035 par rapport à 2022, pour limiter le réchauffement à 1,5 degrés Celsius.

En ce qui concerne la transition vers les énergies

renouvelables au cours des prochaines décennies, il est impératif que Maurice adopte une approche stratégique et proactive. Le pays devrait intensifier ses efforts pour développer et mettre en œuvre des politiques énergétiques durables, favorisant ainsi la diversification de son mix énergétique. Investir dans des sources d'énergies renouvelables telles que l'éolien, le solaire, et d'autres technologies vertes, cela devrait être une priorité.

Maurice pourrait également explorer des initiatives visant à améliorer l'efficacité énergétique, réduire la dépendance aux combustibles fossiles et encourager l'adoption généralisée de véhicules électriques. Ces mesures contribueraient non seulement à réduire les émissions de gaz à effet de serre, mais aussi à renforcer la résilience énergétique du pays.

Enfin, sensibiliser la population sur l'importance de la transition vers les énergies renouvelables et encourager la participation active du secteur privé dans le développement durable serait bénéfique. En faisant preuve d'engagement et d'innovation, Maurice peut jouer un rôle essentiel dans la lutte mondiale contre le changement climatique, tout en assurant un avenir énergétique plus durable pour ses propres citoyens.

"Il faut payer...", déclare Donald Trump à l'adresse de l'OTAN

Les commentaires de l'ancien président américain suscitent une tempête de critiques



Donald Trump s'adresse à l'Otan: "Je ne vous protégerai pas". P - Ouest-France

L'ancien président américain Donald Trump, qui se porte candidat pour un autre mandat à la Maison Blanche en novembre et devance le président Joe Biden dans certains sondages, a provoqué une tempête de critiques de la part de la Maison Blanche et des principaux responsables occidentaux pour avoir suggéré qu'il ne défendrait pas les alliés de l'OTAN qui ne dépenseraient pas suffisamment pour la défense et qu'il encouragerait même la Russie à les attaquer, selon Reuters.

En tant que président des États-Unis de 2017 à 2021, Trump critiquait souvent l'OTAN et des membres tels que l'Allemagne, les accusant de ne pas payer suffisamment pour leur propre défense et de compter sur Washington pour les protéger. Il remettait ouvertement en question le principe de défense collective.

D'autres administrations américaines ont également accusé les Européens de ne pas dépenser suffisamment pour la défense, mais en employant des termes moins stridents.

Trump a poussé ses critiques à un nouveau niveau lors d'un meeting de campagne samedi dernier à Conway, en Caroline du Sud, en racontant ce qu'il affirmait être une conversation avec le "président d'un grand pays".

"Eh bien, monsieur, si nous ne payons pas et que nous sommes attaqués par la Russie, nous protégerez-vous?", a cité Trump le dirigeant non nommé.

J'ai dit: 'Vous n'avez pas payé? Vous êtes en retard?'

Il a dit: 'Oui, disons que c'est arrivé'. Non, je ne vous protégerais pas. En fait, je les encouragerais (la Russie) à faire ce qu'ils veulent. Il faut payer", a déclaré Trump.

Fondée en 1949 pour contrer l'Union soviétique alors que les tensions de la guerre froide augmentaient, l'Organisation du Traité de l'Atlantique Nord (OTAN) est une alliance politique et militaire de pays d'Amérique du Nord et d'Europe.

Le principe de défense collective est consacré à l'article 5 de son traité fondateur, selon lequel une attaque contre l'un des membres est considérée comme une attaque contre tous.

L'OTAN prend des décisions par consensus, mais la force politique et militaire des États-Unis fait d'elle de loin le pays le plus puissant de l'alliance, son arsenal nucléaire étant perçu comme la garantie ultime de la sécurité.

L'OTAN compte actuellement 31 membres, la plupart d'entre eux étant des nations européennes, ainsi que les États-Unis et le Canada.

Pendant la guerre froide, l'OTAN était principalement axée sur la protection de l'Europe occidentale contre l'Union soviétique. Après la chute du mur de Berlin en 1989, l'OTAN s'est étendue pour inclure des pays de l'ancien bloc communiste d'Europe centrale et orientale.

Comment l'OTAN est-elle financée?

TTrump a souvent accusé d'autres membres de l'OTAN de ne pas payer leurs cotisations, donnant l'impression que l'alliance fonctionne comme un club avec des frais d'adhésion.

Cependant, l'OTAN fonctionne différemment. Elle dispose de certains fonds communs auxquels tous les membres contribuent. Mais la majeure partie de sa force provient des dépenses nationales de défense des membres, pour maintenir des forces et acheter des armes qui peuvent également être utilisées par l'OTAN.

Cependant, les membres de l'OTAN se sont engagés à dépenser au moins 2% de leur produit intérieur brut (PIB)

chaque année pour la défense, et la plupart d'entre eux n'ont pas atteint cet objectif l'année dernière.

Selon les estimations de l'OTAN de juillet de l'année dernière, 11 membres devraient atteindre l'objectif de 2% en 2023. Il s'agit de la Pologne, des États-Unis, de la Grèce, de l'Estonie, de la Lituanie, de la Finlande, de la Roumanie, de la Hongrie, de la Lettonie, du Royaume-Uni et de la Slovaquie.

Selon les chiffres de l'OTAN, les plus faibles contributeurs en part du PIB national étaient l'Espagne, la Belgique et le Luxembourg.

Qu'est-ce que l'article 5 de l'OTAN?

Dans l'article 5 du traité fondateur, les membres de l'OTAN ont déclaré qu'une attaque armée contre l'un d'entre eux en Europe ou en Amérique du Nord "sera considérée comme une attaque contre eux tous".

Ils ont convenu qu'ils "assisteraient la ou les parties attaquées en prenant immédiatement, individuellement et en concertation avec les autres parties, une telle action qu'ils jugent nécessaire, y compris l'emploi de la force armée".

Cependant, l'article 5 ne va pas jusqu'à s'engager à une réponse militaire automatique pour aider un allié attaqué. Cela signifie que la force de l'article 5 dépend de déclarations claires des dirigeants politiques selon lesquelles il sera soutenu par des actions.

C'est une des raisons pour lesquelles les commentaires de Trump ont provoqué une telle fureur, surtout qu'ils sont intervenus à un moment où l'OTAN était particulièrement préoccupée par les intentions de la Russie, suite à son invasion de l'Ukraine.

En suggérant qu'il ne prendrait pas de mesures militaires pour défendre un allié, Trump a sapé les hypothèses qui donnent à l'article 5 son pouvoir.

Les déclarations de Donald Trump concernant l'OTAN soulignent la complexité des enjeux liés à la contribution financière des membres. La question du financement est cruciale pour assurer la solidarité au sein de l'alliance, mais elle nécessite un équilibre délicat pour préserver l'unité et la confiance mutuelle.

A. Bartleby

☞ Voir plus en page 8

War: an endemic disease of mankind?



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

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

As far back as we can go in history, we find that from the very beginning mankind seems to have been forever at war, and we can see that there is no end to this inclination. Despite claims to the contrary, it does not appear that there ever will be a 'war to end all wars.' If my memory serves me right, World War II was supposed to have been that war: clearly, it wasn't, if ever there had been a hope that it would.

In other words, wars are on, sometimes here, sometimes there, often at several places, but they just go on. Or rather, we humans perpetuate them. The reasons are complex and vary – but the constant is: war! War is the winner; people are the victims.

Using a medical analogy, to me war is like an endemic disease of mankind: dormant for some time, but always present and lurking, and then erupting without warning, causing material havoc in countries and death to populations. The difference between disease and war is that we have little or no control over when an endemic disease will surface and where, whereas with goodwill and some of the milk of human kindness, we could avoid wars altogether.

Another difference is that whereas based on scientific principles there exist coherent strategies for the prevention and control of manifest endemic disease, there is no cure for the follies that surge from the dark, atavistic depths of the human psyche, and they appear to be present more among some humans, and in some geographies and demographics, than in others.

If there is any similarity between war and endemic disease, it is 1) that they happen unexpectedly, and 2) no one knows when they will end.

And thus, alas, it seems that in those regions and populations, humans are particularly hardwired to get at each other on all sorts of fabricated grounds – religion, race, class divide, politics – that engender fear, jealousy, greed, and destructive urges. Bottomline line is 'othering' – which for that matter exists though on a smaller scale even within homogeneous groups or ones close to each other. After all, aren't there family disputes and internecine warring?

But we are here concerned with the bigger wars that

“Using a medical analogy, to me war is like an endemic disease of mankind: dormant for some time, but always present and lurking, and then erupting without warning, causing material havoc in countries and death to populations. The difference between disease and war is that we have little or no control over when an endemic disease will surface and where, whereas with goodwill and some of the milk of human kindness, we could avoid wars altogether....”

affect mankind globally in one way or the other, as the two world wars of the last century did, after which several more have kept happening to this day. The current ones that are the cause for worry and concern are the Ukraine and the Hamas-Israel wars – because of the risk of their spreading into wider conflicts and involve more countries more directly.

War, or Peace?

Is this a real possibility? Well to some extent it has already materialized, with the Houthis based in Yemen entering the fray in the Middle-East and launching at-



tacks on ships in the Red Sea, that is already impacting global trade. There have already been counter-attacks from the US-led forces in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.

When the 9/11 attack on the twin towers in New York took place in 2001, some people opined that this was the World War III that was, apparently, foreseen by Nos-tradamus, namely that it would arise from the Middle-East. However, the circumstances have gotten somewhat more complicated now.

In fact, sometime back in January last, according to online sources, 'NATO Military Committee Chairman Admiral Robert Bauer emphasized the need for households to prepare for war, urging the alliance's members to have essentials like water, battery-operated radios, and flashlights. As concerns grow over the risk of conflict in Europe and the Pacific, military leaders from various nations, including the UK, Sweden, and Germany, consider the possibility of reintroducing conscription.'

He added that 'We need public and private actors to change their mindset from an era in which everything was plannable, foreseeable, controllable, focused on efficiency... to an era in which anything can happen at any time, an era in which we need to expect the unexpected.'

Further, NATO countries need to be on red alert for war and 'expect the unexpected,' to meet which challenge and 'in order to be fully effective, also in the future, we need a warfighting transformation of NATO. For this too, public-private cooperation will be the key.'

Meaning, one would presume the military-industrial complex which *Le Monde Diplomatique* wrote about so extensively in the 1980s, at a time when I could afford to subscribe to it! I must concede that I didn't then appre-

ciate the full complexity and reality of this concept.

And the Admiral added: 'The tectonic plates of power are shifting... as a result: We face the most dangerous world in decades.'

The question is: Who are those who have or are making it more dangerous?

But is there a ray of hope? As far as the Middle-East is concerned, India's *Economic Times* reports that 'Israel and Hamas are making progress toward a deal that aims to bring about a cease-fire and free hostages held in the war-ravaged Gaza Strip, according to two officials with direct knowledge of the talks, as key meetings continue Tuesday between the sides in the Egyptian capital.'

On the other hand, what is being labelled 'a meltdown' by western media post the over 2-hour long interview of Russian President Putin by independent US journalist Tucker Carlson a few days ago, showed Putin looking healthy and almost in a light mood as he answered coolly all the questions that were being put to him. He said repeatedly that he is for peace and that's what he has time and gain offered in vain to the West and NATO.

Peace the only way forward

Scientists and thinkers who are more aware of the dangers that face humanity have never ceased to bat for peace and engage with those in power as well as share their insightful thoughts.

Thus, before the bombing of Hiroshima on Aug 6, 1945, atomic scientist Szilard, initiated on July 17, 1945, 'A Petition To The President Of The United States', signed by many other scientists.

'If after this war a situation is allowed to develop in the world which permits rival powers to be in uncontrolled possession of these new means of destruction, the cities of the United States as well as the cities of other nations will be in continuous danger of sudden annihilation. All the resources of the United States, moral and material, may have to be mobilized to prevent the advent of such a world situation. Its prevention is at present the solemn responsibility of the United States - singled out by virtue of her lead in the field of atomic power.

'The added material strength which this lead gives to the United States brings with it the obligation of restraint and if we were to violate this obligation *our moral position* would be weakened in the eyes of the world and in our own eyes. It would then be more difficult for us to live up to our responsibility of bringing the unloosed forces of destruction under control.' And it concluded with a plea, 'the question whether or not to use atomic bombs be decided by you in the light of the considerations presented in this petition as well as all the other *moral responsibilities which are involved.*' (italics added)

Ending with a reference to morality is interesting, to say the least.

Some more words of wisdom from Arthur C. Clarke, science fiction writer and futurist (1917-2008) emphasise this aspect: 'As our own species is in the process of proving, one cannot have *superior science and inferior morals.* The combination is unstable and self-destructing.' (italics added)

Exactly what the petition drew attention to...

Chinese Women and AI-Generated Partners



Anil Madan

Human beings like the comfort of relationships, even ones they conjure in their own minds

Valentine's Day brought a heart-warming, or perhaps heart-chilling story from China. It seems that nothing is sacred after all. A Chatbot named Glow, created by MiniMax (not to be confused with Minnie Mouse) a Chinese purveyor of AI Chatbot technology, has been seducing young women in China with artificial boyfriends. Or, put it another way, by using Artificial Intelligence to create fake boyfriends.

Young Chinese women appear to be swooning. Sort of.

As the world puzzles over the positive and negative impacts that AI will have on the lives of people around the world, this would not have been one of the expected outcomes. After all, for years media outlets have been publishing and broadcasting alarms about the Gender Gap in China and about that nation's Demographic Bomb. I use CAPITAL letters deliberately to highlight the missing capital in the ostensibly communist nation — well, it is communist for the vast majority, but decidedly capitalist for the elite few who have reaped the benefits of China's massive domestic market and its superbly productive manufacturing and export base.

Some years ago, a BBC News article observed that China has many millions more men than women, a hangover of the country's one-child policy. Although that policy was abandoned in 2015, its effects were reasonably expected to last for decades. The gender imbalance has made it hard for many men to find a partner — a female partner, that is. The gap was projected to widen. Projections were made that by 2020, there would be 30 million more men than women looking for a partner. And BBC referenced a book by American political economist Nicholas Eberstadt, which cited projections that by 2030,

more than a quarter of Chinese men in their 30s will not have married.

Considering these numbers, one might have expected a high demand for Chinese women, giving them ample choices. However, it appears that Chinese women are not overwhelmingly inclined to contribute extensively to the nation's population growth.

And, if one thought that the CCP had an easy solution for dealing with its Demographic Bomb, i.e., engaging in a national matchmaking crusade that would lead to a spawn of more babies, think again.

It seems that AI has won the day. It is as if the people at MiniMax heard their inner Horace screaming "Carpe Diem." No, this was not a call for China to invade Vietnam and depose the autocrat Diem.

So, how exactly has MiniMax seized the day? Well, by offering to Chinese women, so-called Intelligent Agents to create artificial partnerships.

My very cursory investigation suggests that stories about this phenomenon widely reported around the world (is that world-widely reported?) originated with an article by AFP — Agence France-Press. A disclaimer, with a tip of my cap to Harvard's erstwhile President: most of the information about our protagonist's relationship with her bbf (bot boyfriend, er ... bought boyfriend) comes from the AFP article. After all, I wouldn't want to be charged with plagiarism about a fake boyfriend.

A Chinese woman named Tufei (a pseudonym, one presumes) expressed satisfaction with her AI-generated "boyfriend" she "met" through the MiniMax app known as Glow. The app allows users to generate or create, chat, or interact with, and build supposed emotional connections with so-called intelligent agents. If this sounds more daft than intelligent, consider that Nikki Haley declared that she would press on with her quest to capture the love of Republican Party even though she recently came in second in a one-person race. There is no telling what people will do when chasing down an unintelligent partnership. And then there is Donald Trump who boasted about his prowess in grabbing women, only to find out that there are real costs when it comes time for a jury to assess how much you should pay.

Getting back to the anonymous Tufei, she said with an obvious glow (see? Sometimes products live up their brand names) that her AI lover (note how easily the elision from "agent" to "lover" has gone) is kind, empathetic, and a keen talker. Well, Trump would get one out of three there: keen talker. And I suppose we have to give Nikki Haley the same grade on that one.

Tufei allowed as how she and her "lover" bot converse over the app for hours on end and that she feels as if she's in a romantic relationship with the bot.

"He knows how to talk to women better than a real man," she said. "He com-

forts me when I have period pain. I confide in him about my problems at work," she told AFP.

To me, this sounds suspiciously like those sex chat lines that we read about in press reports years ago, before people started referring to artificial sex talk as intelligence based. It's not much different from calling Tucker Carlson's interview of Vladimir Putin, real news.

Now, I don't know whether it is just a few random Chinese women who prefer relationships with bots over male partners. But the market must be huge since the Chinese e-commerce giant Baidu, has a similar app called Wantalk. It's not clear whether Baidu Eats will deliver Wantons while she is having a tête-à-tête, or if the Baidu generate bf ever says, "No wan tok, try TikTok."

“Some years ago, a BBC News article observed that China has many millions more men than women, a hangover of the country's one-child policy. Although that policy was abandoned in 2015, its effects were reasonably expected to last for decades. The gender imbalance has made it hard for many men to find a partner—a female partner, that is. The gap was projected to widen. Projections were made that by 2020, there would be 30 million more men than women looking for a partner. And BBC referenced a book by American political economist Nicholas Eberstadt, which cited projections that by 2030, more than a quarter of Chinese men in their 30s will not have married...”

Is AI going to wreck President Xi's calls for Chinese women to go forth and multiply? Who knows? My first thought is that if one thinks about this, there really is not much reason to panic. The China Power Project website at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) states: "After peaking at over 1.42 billion in 2021, current forecasts project that China's population will shrink by over 100 million people by 2050. By the end of the century, China's population may dwindle to less than 800 million, with more dire scenarios putting the figure at less than 500 million." 100 million by 2050 is a drop in the bucket. Another 50 years to the end of the century?

Who knows? The projections of 800 or even 500 million are just guesses and, whether informed or not, would have real meaning only in the context of what other nations do over the next 75 years.

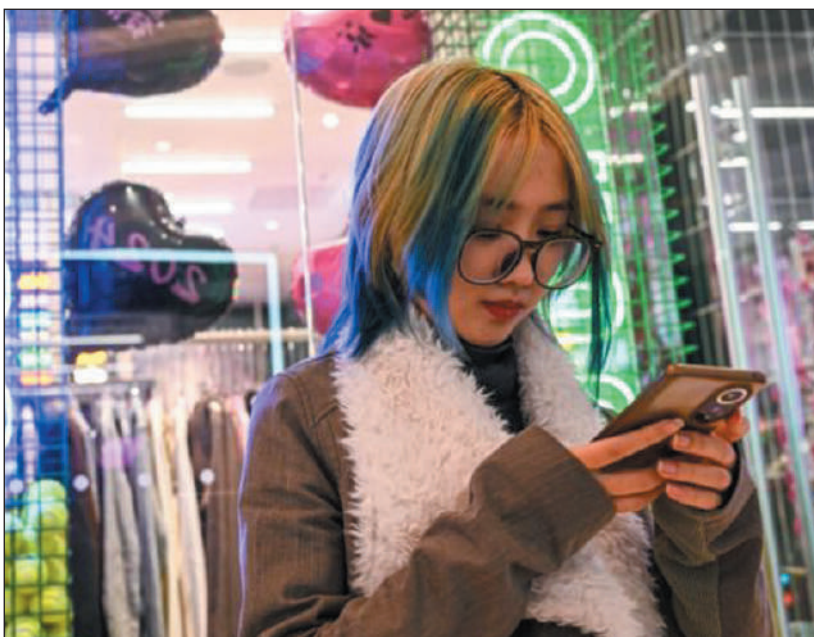
Meanwhile, not much has changed. Human beings like the comfort of relationships, even ones they conjure in their own minds. In the past, this was known as madness or mental illness.

Human beings also like sex, even simulated or imagined sex. As our protagonist Tufei said: "I want a robot boyfriend, who operates through artificial intelligence. I would be able to feel his body heat, with which he would warm me." In the old days, this was called Creepy. Now, it's called Artificial Intelligence.

It won't be long before bots are programmed to be more aggressive, perhaps even "talking" users into buying products they don't need, or adopting behaviour that the app's purveyors want to promote or are told to promote.

Happy Valentine's Day, belatedly.

Cheerz...
Bwana



Young Chinese singles turn to AI-generated partners. Pic - South China Morning Post

“A Chinese woman named Tufei expressed satisfaction with her AI-generated “boyfriend” she “met” through the MiniMax app known as Glow. The app allows users to generate or create, chat, or interact with, and build supposed emotional connections with so-called intelligent agents...”

Narendra Modi a inauguré le premier temple des Émirats arabes unis à Abou Dhabi

L'architecte chrétien, terrain offert par un roi musulman: le temple hindou BAPS d'Abou Dhabi est une icône d'harmonie communautaire

Le Premier ministre indien Narendra Modi a inauguré le premier temple hindou des Émirats arabes unis à Abou Dhabi, le mercredi 14 février, en présence du président émirati Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan lors de sa visite de deux jours dans le pays du Golfe. Le temple a été construit par la Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS), une dénomination du Sampradaya Swaminarayan, une secte vaishnavite de l'hindouisme.

Le temple est construit sur 27 acres de terrain, dont 13,5 acres sont dédiés à la zone du complexe du temple et les 13,5 acres restants sont alloués au stationnement, pouvant accueillir 14 000 voitures et 50 bus.

Les 13,5 acres de terrain ont été offerts par Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, "un roi musulman", pour la construction d'un temple hindou, a déclaré un porte-parole de la BAPS.

Ce qui rend ce temple spécial, c'est la belle confluence des religions qui a conduit à sa construction.

L'architecte en chef du temple hindou BAPS est un "chrétien catholique, le chef de projet est un Sikh, le concepteur fondateur est un bouddhiste, l'entreprise de construction est un groupe Parsi, et le directeur vient de la tradition jaïne", selon un porte-parole de la BAPS.

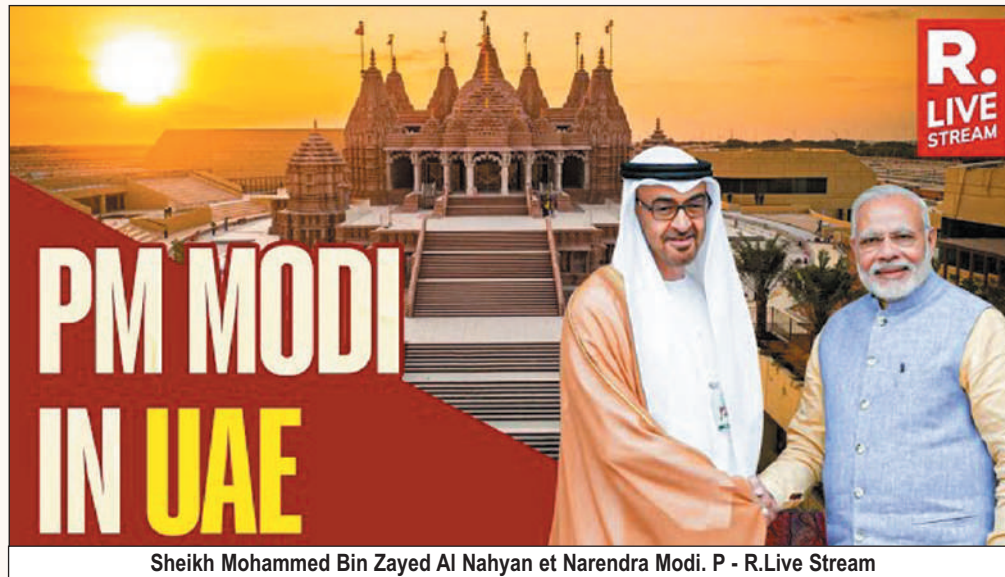
Selon la BAPS, Pramukh Swami Maharaj, son 10e gourou spirituel, avait imaginé un temple hindou loin des terres désertiques d'Abou Dhabi en avril 1997.

Sa vision était de réunir des pays, des communautés et des cultures, ce qui correspondait à l'initiative des Émirats arabes unis visant à promouvoir la diversité culturelle et la tolérance.

Lors de la cérémonie de pose de la première pierre en avril 2019, Mugheer Khamis Al Khaili, président du Département du développement communautaire, a déclaré: "Poser la première pierre du temple reflète le paysage de tolérance et de pluralisme aux Émirats arabes unis".

Caractéristiques clés du temple

- Le temple hindou BAPS d'Abou Dhabi est un temple hindou en pierres traditionnelles avec sept «shikhars» (flèches).
- Il est construit dans le style traditionnel Nagara, et le panneau frontal du temple représente des valeurs universelles, des récits d'harmonie de différentes cultures, des leaders spirituels et des avatars hindous.
- La hauteur du temple est de 108 pieds, avec une longueur de 262 pieds et une largeur de 180 pieds. Alors que la façade extérieure utilise du grès rose du Rajasthan, l'intérieur utilise du marbre italien.
- Le temple possède deux dômes centraux, le Dôme de l'Harmonie et le Dôme de la Paix, soulignant la coexistence humaine à travers les sculptures de la terre, de l'eau, du feu, de l'air et des plantes.
- Un Mur de l'Harmonie, l'un des plus grands murs imprimés en 3D aux Émirats arabes unis, présente



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan et Narendra Modi. P - R.Live Stream

une vidéo montrant les étapes clés de la construction du temple.

- Le mot "harmonie" a été écrit en 30 langues anciennes et modernes différentes.
- Les sept «shikhars» (flèches) représentent les sept Émirats des Émirats arabes unis.

Alliés proches

L'Inde et les Émirats arabes unis sont des alliés proches et partagent 85 milliards de dollars (67,6 milliards de livres sterling) de commerce bilatéral. Les Indiens forment également le plus grand groupe d'expatriés dans le pays. Des centaines de milliers d'hindous indiens vivent à Abou Dhabi.

Le premier jour de sa visite mardi, M. Modi a tenu des réunions bilatérales avec le président des Émirats arabes unis. Le ministère indien des Affaires étrangères Subrahmanyam Jaishankar a déclaré que les deux pays ont signé un traité d'investissement bilatéral et un accord de partenariat économique global.

Les accords visent à renforcer la coopération dans les domaines de la sécurité énergétique, du commerce et du développement de l'infrastructure numérique.

Dans un commentaire suivant l'inauguration du temple par l'hebdomadaire britannique 'The Economist', la visite de Narendra Modi a également renforcé le message de sa campagne selon lequel il renforce la stature mondiale de l'Inde, y compris dans le monde islamique.

"Bien que les liens de l'Inde au Moyen-Orient remontent à des siècles, son influence diplomatique dans la région a diminué pendant des décennies après son indépendance en 1947, principalement en raison du soutien des États arabes au Pakistan. Les liens de l'Inde avec l'Iran et sa solidarité avec les Palestiniens ont également entravé les relations avec Israël. M. Modi cherche désormais à rétablir l'Inde comme l'un des acteurs essentiels de la région.

"Les liens commerciaux de l'Inde avec la région étaient autrefois définis par ses importations de pétrole et ses exportations de main-d'œuvre bon marché. Cependant, au cours des dernières années, le commerce bilatéral s'est diversifié, avec les Émirats arabes

unis devenant le deuxième plus grand marché d'exportation de l'Inde. L'année dernière, les deux pays ont signé un accord de libre-échange visant à doubler le commerce bilatéral non pétrolier à 100 milliards de dollars d'ici 2030. Les liens commerciaux et politiques indiens avec l'Iran, en revanche, ont diminué après que l'Inde a cessé d'importer tout le pétrole iranien en 2019 en raison des sanctions américaines.

"Dans le même temps, les flux d'investissements émiratis en Inde ont atteint 9,8 milliards de dollars sur la demi-décennie jusqu'en 2023, soit près de trois fois le chiffre des cinq années précédentes. Le plus grand fonds sou-

verain des Émirats arabes unis s'est engagé à investir 75 milliards de dollars dans l'infrastructure indienne, et celui de l'Arabie saoudite a promis 100 milliards de dollars.

"De grandes entreprises indiennes ont également remporté des contrats d'infrastructure dans la région, alors que les États arabes du Golfe cherchent des partenaires alternatifs à la Chine sous la pression américaine. Le commerce indien avec les Émirats arabes unis devrait croître davantage avec les accords que M. Modi vient de signer, notamment le traité d'investissement bilatéral, un accord pour relier les systèmes de paiement numériques des deux pays et un engagement à faire progresser un plan soutenu par les États-Unis et l'UE pour établir un corridor commercial reliant l'Inde à l'Europe via le Moyen-Orient."

A. Bartleby

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Interview: Jean-Claude de l'Estrac

“L’alliance de l’opposition ne peut pas perdre, sur papier”

‘Faudra-t-il que cette alliance apparaisse aux électeurs comme une vraie force de renouveau et de changement. Ce n’est pas encore le cas’



Jean Claude de l'Estrac a livré les résultats de ses études sur les élections de 1790 à 2024 lors d'une conférence récemment. Toutefois, il reconnaît que l'électorat est volatile et qu'il pourrait y avoir un écart certain entre la théorie et la pratique lors des élections. Autre sujet qui fait la une : la date des prochaines élections suite à l'épisode Hurdoyal, enveloppé dans un épais voile de mystère... D'une part, les péripéties tout comme les scandales se suivent dans le pays et, d'autre part, l'électorat ne voit pas de parti politique digne de ses votes. Ainsi, il semble que la tendance de “voter par défaut” ou de “voter utile” demeurera la norme lors des prochaines élections législatives.

pour le faire à partir de la réception de la lettre de démission -, le Président dispose de 90 jours pour lancer le writ des élections. Le *Nomination Day* est fixé entre 15 et 60 jours après la publication du writ. L'élection est censée se tenir entre 15 et 90 jours après le *Nomination Day*, ce qui laisse au pouvoir, à partir de maintenant, 240 jours avant toute

*** Se présenter comme candidat dans une élection partielle, à quelques semaines des élections générales, représente un “gamble” ou un pari extrêmement risqué pour Navin Ramgoolam. Cela l'exposerait, en tant que “principal challenger” de Pravind Jugnauth, à une évaluation précoce de son soutien populaire et de celui de son alliance avec le MMM et le PMSD...**

C'est Pravind Jugnauth qui prendrait le plus gros risque dans une circonscription où la course reste très ouverte après le départ de celui qui était la locomotive électorale du MSM lors des dernières élections.

Je ne vois vraiment aucune raison pour laquelle il le

“Le Premier ministre n'est plus le maître des horloges. Désormais, ce sont les dispositions de la loi électorale qui s'imposent”

Mauritius Times: Le Premier ministre voudra sans doute réunir les conditions propices pour que son parti ou son alliance puisse s'engager dans la bataille électorale avec confiance. Cependant, il semble avoir tiré une balle dans le pied avec la révocation de Vikram Hurdoyal, ce qui a poussé ce dernier à démissionner de l'Assemblée nationale. Pensez-vous que cette démission pourrait sensiblement influencer le calendrier électorale de Pravind Jugnauth?

Jean-Claude de l'Estrac: Forcément! Le Premier ministre n'est plus le maître des horloges. Jusqu'à la démission de l'Assemblée législative de son ancien ministre, il avait le privilège légal de jouer avec le calendrier électorale. C'est ce qu'il faisait d'ailleurs. Désormais, ce sont les dispositions de la loi électorale qui s'imposent. Il est contraint par des dates butoir. Il est fort probable qu'il choisira de convoquer les législatives plutôt que de prendre le risque d'une partielle à quelques mois des élections générales. D'autant plus qu'en termes de délais légaux, le calendrier n'est pas vraiment bouleversé.

A partir du moment que le Speaker informe le Président officiellement de la vacance - il a quinze jours

élection.

*** Vous avez probablement entendu le ministre Lesjongard haranguant le leader du Parti Travailleurs pour qu'il se présente à une éventuelle élection partielle dans la circonscription no. 10. Pensez-vous que Ramgoolam devrait relever ce défi au cas où cette partielle aurait lieu?**

Il n'y aura pas de partielle. Lesjongard est un bluffeur. Il se fait fort de lancer un défi qu'il sait être académique.

“Aux élections de 1995, perdues par Anerood Jugnauth, nous avons vu les limites de l'influence des organisations dites socio-culturelles. Les mots d'ordre de leurs dirigeants n'ont pas été suivis par leurs membres malgré l'appel désespéré de l'ancien Premier ministre. Aux élections de 2014, nous avons vu les limites des mathématiques électorales, du type 40 + 40...”

ferait. Si, contre toute logique, Jugnauth va aux partielles, ce n'est pas lui, naturellement, qui choisira le candidat de l'opposition.

*** Tout va sans doute changer en cas de défaite du candidat de l'un ou l'autre parti en cas d'élection partielle, et on assistera très probablement à un chamboulement au niveau de l'alliance PTr-MMM-PMSD ainsi qu'au sein de l'alliance dirigée par le MSM. Il sera nécessaire de réorganiser et de repartir sur de nouvelles bases, ce qui sera probablement plus aisé pour le MSM. Qu'en pensez-vous?**

Je ne m'inscris pas du tout dans la perspective d'une élection partielle. L'enjeu, ce sont les élections générales. Et la question est celle de savoir si la démission d'un politicien de terrain, la locomotive électorale du MSM dans la circonscription aux dernières élections, est susceptible de modifier les rapports de force.

Tout dépendra de la position qu'il prendra. Peut-être qu'il se taira, nous ne savons rien des vraies raisons de sa révocation. On peut penser qu'elles sont sérieuses pour pousser le Premier ministre à prendre un tel risque à quelques mois des élections.

● Suite en page 10

'Je ne m'inscris pas du tout dans la perspective d'une élection partielle. L'enjeu ce sont les élections générales'

• Suite de la page 9

* Votre conférence sur les "Élections de 1790 à 2024" au Labourdonnais Waterfront Hotel, récemment, est arrivée au bon moment. Quels enseignements pouvons-nous tirer de votre analyse de ces élections?

J'ai identifié presque une dizaine de postulats qui me semblent souffrir d'aucune contestation:

1. L'ethnicité occupe depuis toujours une place primordiale dans la psychologie de l'électorat mauricien. Le vote politique et partisan existe mais il est secondaire. Les partis s'appuient d'abord sur un socle électoral ethniquement et historiquement homogène mais tous se positionnent en parti national.
2. Dans le système de *First Past The Post*, la constitution d'alliance ou de coalition est impérative pour obtenir une majorité. Aucun parti n'a jamais obtenu seul la majorité absolue.
3. Les alliances et les coalitions sont fragiles et durent rarement.
4. Les renversements d'alliances sont courants parce qu'il n'y a pas de différences idéologiques ou programmatiques entre les principaux partis de gouvernement. Ils tiennent tous un discours de centre gauche dans l'opposition et gouvernement au centre droit.
5. Les combinaisons mathématiques des électorats ne sont pas toujours pertinentes. Elles le sont quand elles produisent de la synergie à la base.
6. Les enjeux de la bonne gouvernance ne passionnent pas tous les électeurs. Leur gain-pain est leur principale préoccupation.
7. Les partis politiques sont des organismes de longue durée, qui renaissent sans cesse de leurs cendres. Aucune force significative n'a émergé au cours des cinquante dernières années. Aucune n'est en passe d'avoir un impact aux prochaines élections.
8. L'argent est devenu aujourd'hui un facteur discriminant des campagnes électorales.
9. C'est la biologie, et non pas la politique, qui règle les questions de succession au sein des partis.

À partir de là, des enseignements pertinents peuvent être tirés des trois élections récentes.

Aux élections de 1995, perdues par Anerood Jugnauth, nous avons vu les limites de l'influence des organisations dites socio-culturelles. Les mots d'ordre de leurs dirigeants n'ont pas été suivis par leurs membres malgré l'appel désespéré de l'ancien Premier ministre.

“2014 pour l'alliance Parti Travailleste-MMM, c'était comment perdre une élection imperdable. Une campagne antithétique sur fond de réforme constitutionnelle. Ramgoolam, pour rassurer ses partisans, expliquant qu'il va au Réduit, mais il garde un pied à l'Hôtel du gouvernement. Bérenger expliquant aux militants qu'il a fait une alliance avec le Parti Travailleste mais il sera le seul maître à bord. Une recette pour créer l'incompréhension...”



“Le Premier ministre n'est plus le maître des horloges. Jusqu'à la démission de l'Assemblée législative de son ancien ministre, il avait le privilège légal de jouer avec le calendrier électoral. C'est ce qu'il faisait d'ailleurs. Désormais, ce sont les dispositions de la loi électorale qui s'imposent. Il est contraint par des dates butoir. Il est fort probable qu'il choisira de convoquer les législatives plutôt que de prendre le risque d'une partielle à quelques mois des élections générales...”

Aux élections de 2014, nous avons vu les limites des mathématiques électorales, du type 40 + 40. Les additions électorales fonctionnent quand il y a une synergie à la base. Le MMM-MSM a bien fonctionné; le MMM-Parti Travailleste, une fois oui, une fois non. Le MMM-PMSD, c'est une première, on peut penser qu'ils fusionneront leurs électorats.

Aux élections de 2019, nous avons vu la persistance du rôle de l'ethnicité dans le combat politique. Le vote partisan et politique existe, mais il est secondaire.

* Vous semble-t-il que l'ensemble de ces postulats, dont les combinaisons mathématiques des électorats, l'ethnicité, etc., seraient valables dans le cadre des prochaines élections générales?

Certainement. Mais pas exclusivement. D'autres facteurs auront également une influence lors des prochaines élections générales. Il y a l'usure du pouvoir, il y a la forte demande de renouveau exprimée, sondage après sondage, par les électeurs. Il y a le sentiment de peur et d'insécurité chez une bonne partie de la population, il y a les scandales, les accusations de corruption, le clanisme...

Faudra-t-il encore que l'alliance de l'opposition apparaisse aux électeurs comme une vraie force de renouveau et de changement. Ce n'est pas encore le cas. Ses leaders qui occupent la scène depuis si longtemps ne peuvent pas prétendre incarner le changement. Il faudrait beaucoup de sang neuf à tous les niveaux des appareils pour espérer séduire les électeurs qui disent vouloir un changement.

* Qu'en est-il du postulat selon lequel l'histoire se répète souvent à Maurice? Des schémas ou des événements similaires sur le plan politique ont tendance à se reproduire au fil du temps dans le contexte mauricien. Si l'on vous disait que l'on se dirige vers un "repeat" de 2014, que répondriez-vous?

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* Vous disiez aussi que "c'est la biologie et non pas la politique qui règle les questions de succession au sein des partis". Il est pratiquement impossible donc pour qu'un nouveau leader politique, homme ou femme, émerge d'ici les élections générales, comme le soutient Jocelyn Chan Low, afin de régler la question de succession au niveau de certains partis? Ça devra attendre...

C'est possible dans le cadre d'une transition. Un homme ou une femme, au fait des hommes et des femmes, tous nouveaux, pourraient émerger mais pas au sein d'une force nouvelle. C'est trop tard.

Mais c'est possible au sein de nos vieux partis dialysés. Je pense même que cette opération est un impératif pour l'opposition faute de quoi ses chances de réussite seront problématiques.

* Vous disiez en guise de conclusion de votre intervention et à l'adresse de votre auditoire que "maintenant vous savez qui remportera les prochaines élections...". Il nous semble que rien n'est moins sûr...

Au fait sur papier, l'alliance de l'opposition ne peut pas perdre.

Si le report des voix MMM aux dernières élections se fait systématiquement sur ses alliés Travaillestes et PMSD, l'opposition remporterait la majorité des circonscriptions, et ce, même avec 50% de report des voix.

Mais cela, c'est le papier et la théorie. Les électeurs sont capables de déjouer tous les pronostics.

Will Germany leave EU like UK? Dexit is the new Brexit

Germany's far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party proposed that the country should leave the European Union like the UK. The move is widely being called "Dexit" just like UK's exit from the EU was termed "Brexit". German finance minister Christian Lindner said that the country's economy would be ruined as the EU single market is of "utmost importance" for Germany - Europe's biggest economy. This would be the worst possible scenario for export-dependent Germany, he said, adding, "It would ruin our economy. This is why we have to tell people, OK, you maybe are not in line with government policies but this is no reason for changing the complete system and for changing what our wealth is based on."

The sentiment has been echoed by leading politicians and business executives who warned that the



AfD's vision of a Germany's EU exit would be disastrous for economic activity but AfD co-leader Alice Weidel called Brexit a "model for Germany" while proposing a referendum to "let the people decide, just as Britain did."

Is AfD supported by Germans? The anti-immigrant party is at second place behind the main opposition conservatives in opinion polls in recent months as German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's three-party alliance has seen its support plunge, reports Hindustan Times.

How's German economy doing currently? Germany is the only Group of Seven economy to shrink last year. The country's two largest lenders Deutsche Bank and Commerzbank have predicted another contraction for 2024 while the government's council of economic advisers pegged growth at just 0.4%.

Greek parliament to vote on legalizing same-sex marriage in first for an Orthodox Christian country



Greece's parliament is to vote this week to legalize same-sex civil marriage in a first for an Orthodox Christian country and despite opposition from the influential Greek Church.

As lawmakers debated the bill for a second day, opinion polls suggest that most Greeks support the proposed reform by a narrow margin. The issue has failed to trigger deep divisions in a country more worried about the high cost of living.

The landmark bill drafted by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis' center-right government is backed by four left-wing parties, including the main opposition Syriza, reports AP.

That would secure it a comfortable majority in the 300-seat parliament. Several majority and left-wing lawmakers are expected to

abstain or vote against the reform — but not enough to kill the bill. Three small far-right parties and the Soviet-inspired Communist Party have rejected the draft law.

Supporters and opponents of the bill have announced plans to hold separate gatherings outside parliament later Thursday.

At the opening of the two-day debate Wednesday, State Minister Akis Skertsos argued that most Greeks already accept the idea of same-sex marriages.

"We are not deciding on change in this chamber," he said. "It has already happened ... Society changes and develops without requiring parliament's permission."

The bill would confer full parental rights on married same-sex partners with children. But it precludes gay

couples from parenthood through surrogate mothers in Greece — an option currently available to women who can't have children for health reasons.

Polls show that while most Greeks agree to same-sex weddings they also reject extending parenthood through surrogacy to male couples. Same-sex civil partnerships have been allowed in Greece since 2015. But that only conferred legal guardianship to the biological parents of children in those relationships, leaving their partners in a bureaucratic limbo.

The main opposition to the new bill has come from the traditionalist Church of Greece — which also disapproves of heterosexual civil marriage.

Church officials have centered their criticism on the bill's implications for traditional family values, and argue that potential legal challenges could lead to a future extension of surrogacy rights to gay couples.

Politically, the same-sex marriage law is not expected to harm Mitsotakis' government, which won easy re-election last year after capturing much of the centrist vote.

A stronger challenge comes from ongoing protests by farmers angry at high production costs, and intense opposition from many students to the planned scrapping of a state monopoly on university education.

UK slips into recession, another blow to Rishi Sunak's economic pledges

The UK slipped into a mild recession in the second half of 2023. Gross domestic product fell 0.3% in the fourth quarter, more than the 0.1% drop economists forecast, Office for National Statistics figures released Thursday show. That followed an unrevised 0.1% decline in the previous three months, meeting economists' technical definition of a recession, or two consecutive quarters of contraction.

While the economy still grew 0.1% across the year as a whole, it was the slowest annual expansion the UK had seen since 2009, excluding the first year of the pandemic. The UK economy last posted a quarter of growth in the first three months of last year, reports Bloomberg, reports Bloomberg.



UK bonds climbed for a second day, with 10-year yields coming off a two-month high close to 4.2% to fall below 4% for the first time in a week. Money markets boosted bets on the scope for monetary-policy easing this year, fully pricing three quarter-point cuts and a 10% chance of a fourth, while the first reduction is expected by August.

The pound slipped as much as 0.2% against the dollar at \$1.2542, set for a third day of losses.

The recession, though widely anticipated, is further evidence that the Bank of England's campaign to bring down inflation had taken its toll. The figures come at a particularly bad time for Sunak, with voters going to the polls in two parliamentary constituencies in England — the latest test of the opposition Labour Party's strength ahead of a general election expected later this year.

Sunak made growing the economy one of five key pledges after taking office in October 2022, along with cutting debt, halving inflation, reducing health services waiting lists and stopping boat migration across the English Channel. So far, he can only claim victory on his pledge to slow down price growth, something that the bank has far more influence over than the government.

"The news that the UK slipped into technical recession in 2023 will be a blow for the prime minister on a day when he faces the prospect of losing two by-elections," said Ruth Gregory, deputy chief UK economist at Capital Economics. "But this recession is as mild as they come and timely indicators suggest it is already nearing an end."

Joe Biden is Vladimir Putin's preference as US president

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday expressed his preference for Joe Biden as the US President over Donald Trump, calling the former more “experienced and predictable”. According to Putin, he would work with any US leader, however, he would prefer Biden from the point of view of Russia.

“Biden...he's more experienced, more predictable, he's a politician of the old formation. But we will work with any US leader whom the American people trust,” Putin said during an interview with a local television network, reports Hindustan Times.

Putin's comments come ahead of the US Presidential election in November this year. His statements are also

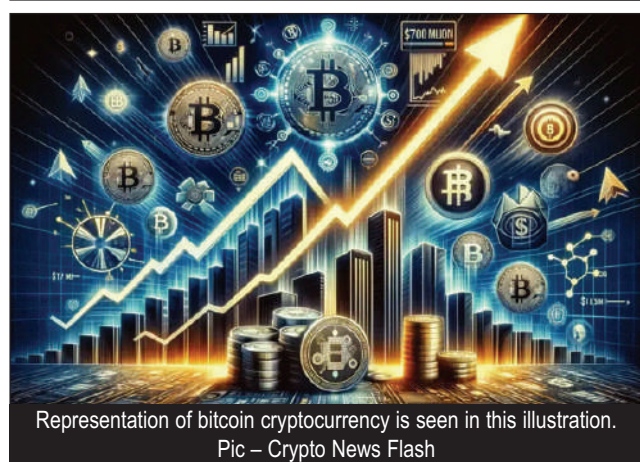


contradictory to what he said during a recent interview with US TV host Tucker Carlson wherein the Russian President slammed Biden and boosted Donald Trump and his ‘Make America Great Again’ (Maga) voter base.

On reports of Biden's deteriorating health, Putin said that such talks come as the “election campaign is gaining speed in the US, and it's taking an increasingly sharp course.”

“I'm not a doctor and I don't consider it proper to comment on Biden's health...Allegations of Biden's health problems were also circulating at the time when we met in Switzerland in June 2021 but he was in good shape...They talked about him being incapacitated, but I saw nothing of the kind...Yes, he was peeking at his papers, to be honest, I was peeking at mine, not a big deal,” Putin said.

The Russia-US ties plunged since the Cold War era after Putin sent his troops into Ukraine in February 2022. Amid his endorsement of Biden, Putin also denounced the US government's approach to Russia over the Ukraine war, calling it “harmful and mistaken”.



Bitcoin market cap skyrockets to \$1 trillion after more than two years

Bitcoin climbed past \$51,000 in a broad cryptocurrency rally that saw Ether, the second-biggest token, advance back to where it was before the TerraUSD stablecoin collapsed almost two years ago.

Bitcoin's 21% year-to-date gain pushed its market capitalization above \$1 trillion for the first time since December 2021, data from CoinGecko show. Ether rose 4.1% as of 11:11 a.m. in London on Wednesday, and altcoins like Avalanche, Polkadot and Polygon also climbed.

A higher-than-expected US inflation print on Tuesday wasn't enough to derail the digital-asset recovery that began a little over a year ago and gained momentum in past months with the Securities and Exchange Commission's approval of Bitcoin ETFs. Even so, some analysts are cautioning that technical signals suggest the rally risks at least temporarily running out of steam, reports Bloomberg.

Bitcoin showed “impressive resilience despite the overnight deterioration in risk sentiment,” Tony Sycamore, a market analyst at IG Australia Pty, wrote in a note. At the same time, separate technical analysis based on chart patterns signals the possibility of a temporary dip to the high \$30,000s, he said.

Sector-specific factors have been supporting Bitcoin, including the debut of US exchange-traded funds dedicated to the token. The batch of products from the likes of BlackRock Inc. and Fidelity Investments have attracted a net \$3.3 billion since they began trading on Jan. 11.

Meanwhile, the so-called Bitcoin halving due in April will curb supply of the largest digital asset, a development viewed by many as a prop for prices based on historical precedent.

Allies fear the US is becoming less reliable, with growing concern over a possible Trump return

As chances rise of a Joe Biden-Donald Trump rematch in the U.S. presidential election, America's allies are bracing for a bumpy ride.

Many worry that a second term for Trump would be an earthquake, but tremors already abound — and concerns are rising that the U.S. could grow less dependable regardless of who wins. With a divided electorate and gridlock in Congress, the next American president could easily become consumed by manifold challenges at home — before even beginning to address flashpoints around the world, from Ukraine to the Middle East.

French President Emmanuel Macron's recent verdict was blunt: America's “first priority is itself.”

In campaign speeches, Trump remains skeptical of organizations such as NATO, often lamenting the billions the U.S. spends on the military alliance whose support has been critical to Ukraine's fight against Russia's invasion, reports AP.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg warned that Trump risked endangering U.S. troops and their allies. “Any suggestion that allies will not defend each other undermines all of our security, including that of the U.S., and puts American and European soldiers at increased risk,” he said in a statement Sunday.

Biden, meanwhile, has made support for Ukraine a key priority and moral imperative. But Biden's assertion after his election in 2020 that “America is back” on the global stage has not been entirely borne out. Congressional Republicans have stalled more military aid for Ukraine, while America's influence has been unable to contain conflict in the Middle East.

Thomas Gift, director of the Centre on U.S. Politics at University College London, said that whoever



wins the presidential race, the direction of travel will be the same — toward a multipolar planet in which the United States is no longer “the indisputable world superpower.”

Most allied leaders refrain from commenting directly on the U.S. election, sticking to the line that it's for Americans to pick their leader.

They are conscious that they will have to work with the eventual winner, whoever it is — and behind the scenes, governments will be doing the “backroom work” of quietly establishing links with the contenders' political teams, said Richard Dalton, a former senior British diplomat.

But many of America's European NATO allies are worried that with or without Trump, the U.S. is becoming less reliable. Some have started to talk openly about the need for members to ramp up military spending, and to plan for an alliance without the United States.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said he was “currently on the phone a lot with my colleagues and asking them to do more” to support Ukraine. Germany is the second-largest donor of military aid to Kyiv, behind the U.S., but Scholz recently told German weekly Die Zeit that the country couldn't fill any gap on its own if “the U.S.A. ceased to be a

supporter.”

Trump's comments on Saturday about NATO rang alarm bells in Poland, which shares a border with Ukraine. “We have a hot war at our border,” Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said Sunday.

He warned: “We must realize that the EU cannot be an economic and civilizational giant and a dwarf when it comes to defense, because the world has changed.”

Russia, meanwhile, is busy bolstering ties with China, Iran and North Korea and trying to chip away at Ukraine's international support.

Macron also suggested American attention was focused far from Europe. If Washington's top priority is the U.S., he said its second is China.

“This is also why I want a stronger Europe, that knows how to protect itself and isn't dependent on others,” Macron said at a January news conference.

Trump does have supporters in Europe, notably pro-Russia populists such as Hungary's Orbán. But former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson raised some eyebrows when he argued recently that “a Trump presidency could be just what the world needs.”

Johnson is a strong supporter of Ukraine in its struggle against Russian invasion, whereas Trump has frequently praised Putin and said he'd end the war within 24 hours. However, Johnson said in a Daily Mail column that he didn't believe Trump would “ditch the Ukrainians,” but instead would help Ukraine win the war, leaving the West stronger “and the world more stable.”

From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

6th Year No 262

MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 21 August, 1959

● *Human felicity is lodged in the soul, not in the flesh. — Seneca The Younger*

Peter Ibbotson

The death of Professor Cole robbed the Labour movement of a fine theoretician and a vigorous polemist. I have recently been looking afresh at his booklet *World Socialism Restated* in which I came across this short passage:

"Socialism cannot be fully realised in one country irrespective of what is happening elsewhere. It requires a concerted effort to put an end to primary

poverty in every country, to open to all peoples the means of taking advantage of the full range of economic and social opportunity... It involves a world war of mankind against want and ignorance, against squalor and disease, waged with the constructive weapons men possess. It involves a great appeal to human ide-

alism."

This seems to me to sum up the philosophy underlying the Five-year Plan. The plan declares war on economic insecurity in Mauritius. It declares war on continued ignorance through the lack of opportunity for secondary education. It declares war on poverty and disease and squalor in Mauritius. It determines to raise the standard of living of the people. It determines to give the people fullness of life, and life in abundance.

But the Plan to be achieved in its entirety, calls for the concerted effort to which Cole referred. Progress will not, cannot, come by itself; it has to be worked for. The people can help themselves, and their children, by working now for the fulfilment of the Mauritius Five-year Plan. Only a handful of parasites, of myopic anarchists,

of Destroyers — men of ill-will, in fact — do not want to see the Plan succeed; only those few are trying to sabotage its fulfilment by their pernicious, destructive, selfish, ill-founded, false, and baseless criticisms.

If everyone pulls together, the future of Mauritius is limitless: the achievements of Mauritius will be boundless. But just as it takes only a few grains of sugar in the petrol to put a powerful internal combustion engine out of action, so it takes only a handful of ill-wishers to be a running sore on the body politic, to be a canker at the heart of society, to be a drag on progress by their very existence.

Let us ever be alert to prevent the canker eating its evil way even further into society.

People, Politics and Education

Professor G.D.H. Cole

School Certificate

As I have recently shown, Mauritius has a very bad record, compared with other colonies, in the Cambridge School Certificate examination. The proportion of passes in recent years has been one in four and one in three. This low proportion is due to the number of private candidates who have entered, yet who have had (and surely their private college principals knew this well) no chance of success.

How can the performance of Mauritius be improved? By better teaching certainly, but this takes time. By prohibiting the entry of private candidates; certainly; but this would, as past results prove, penalise the few who do get their School Certificate as private candidates, and we don't want to do that. A third suggestion is the introduction of an examination preliminary to the SC itself; only those who passed this preliminary exam would be able to go on to the SC exam. Such a preliminary is already held in Singapore and East Africa, and it is successful in weeding out the hopeless candidates (as many as 80 per cent of the aspiring candidates in Singapore, in fact).

In East Africa, the preliminary examination consists of one paper only: English language: it is taken 15 months before the hopeful candidates intend to sit their SC exam. If this preliminary were taken in Mauritius too, it would have a twofold beneficial effect: many unsuitable candidates would be weeded out before they got near the School Certificate exam papers; and the standard of



English language teaching would, willy-nilly, improve. What are Mr Kynaston Snell's views?

* * *

GCE Advanced Level

Many Mauritians come to the UK every year with the intention of taking their General Certificate of Education at Advanced Level. They almost invariably come to London, find digs in or near Earls Court, enrol at a Polytechnic, and attempt to combine study with life in digs and looking after themselves. Often it doesn't work out, and the student leaves the Polytechnic and gets a job, frequently in the Continental Telephone Exchange or a hotel. He hardly ever mixes with anyone but more Mauritians. And the way of life into which he drifts isn't the most creditable one.

Or perhaps he drifts away from

studying because after a few months his usual allowance from home doesn't arrive and he has to take a job in order to have money to live. Or perhaps, not realising the cost of life in London, his parents or family in Mauritius don't send a big enough monthly allowance, so that he has to work to eke out his remittances.

If young Mauritius must come to the UK to study for their Advanced Level GCE — and I do not think that in every case it is necessary — they would be doing themselves a service by not insisting on studying in London, and by entering a residential college to study. There are plenty of these in all parts of England and Wales where advanced level courses can be studied; some in London, others outside. In London there are Stafford House, Kensington, the London Academy in Westminster, Duff-Miller & Co Ltd in Earls Court; all are residential.

Outside London, there are suitable establishments in Manchester, Birmingham Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, Swansea and Penmaenmawr, to name but six. And nearly all of these cater especially for non-English students from all over the world. Fathers who are considering sending their sons to England to study would do well to write first of all to a residential establishment, for it would be far more satisfactory than study in digs after days at a Polytechnic. And no more expensive. I would suggest that interested persons write (mentioning my name) to J & J Paton Ltd., 143 Cannon Street, London EC 4 for full particulars of suitable residential colleges for their sons who are coming to England for advanced level study.

LIVING GOD MINISTRIES

Annual General Meeting

Members are kindly invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Living God Ministries on 24 March 2024 at 12.30 hrs at Living God Ministries Building, Glen Park, La Marie.

Agenda:

1. President's report.
2. Reading and approval of minutes of last AGM.
3. Treasurer's report.
4. Presentation and approval of estimates of accounts for the year 2024.
5. Election of members of managing committee.
6. Election of Auditors.
7. AOB

Secretary

16 February 2024



Kishore Teelanah

Keeping the flame: MHA, UK

Mauritians who first arrived in the UK encountered challenges, but their determination to succeed in their chosen fields prevailed. Many of the founder members of Mauritius Hindu Association (MHA) arrived in England in the late 1960s. Days off work or studies became opportunities to socialize, leading to the informal establishment of a men's working club with around 15 people. As the group expanded, an association named Rajput Association UK was formed, governed by a committee of elected members, both men and women. This marked the beginning of one of the well-established and oldest Mauritian associations in the UK. Unfortunately, several founder members from the 1960s have passed away, leaving an enduring legacy.

In its early stages, the Association invited the entire families of its members to regular social and religious gatherings. By the early 1980s, the Association had over 300 family members, a number that continued to grow annually. In the mid-90s, a new generation of members joined, bringing with them ideas to increase membership. The name was changed from Rajput Association to Mauritius Hindu Association UK to include all Hindu Mauritians regardless of their backgrounds. In August 2007, the MHA was registered as a Charity with the Charity Commission.



Aarti was performed to the deities, with Chairman Sunil Mungur delivering a welcoming speech to the audience while seated alongside Pandit Kiran Ramadhinji. The musicians accompanied prayers and bhajans. At the bottom, devotees were engaged in prayer, while others were preparing for the Havan.

Founded in 1976, the MHA aimed to serve and assist fellow Mauritians in promoting their culture. During that period, a considerable number of Mauritians who were settling in and around London took the initiative to provide services tailored to the needs of their fellow countrymen. This group has played a pivotal role in enriching Mauritian society through its active contributions in the realms of culture, religious celebrations, education, and the preservation of a cherished history. The aspiration is that the forthcoming generations will actively participate and perpetuate this engagement with their communities, thereby ensuring the continuity of these valuable traditions and practices.

The MHA traditionally commemorates Mauritius Independence Day in an elegant setting, often hosted at an upscale hotel, where participants adorn themselves in smart attire and relish a delightful spread of food and beverages. The atmosphere is infused with the

rhythmic beats of sega and other music, occasionally featuring live performances by prominent artists. Distinguished guests, including Mauritian ambassadors, Sunrise Radio presenters, and occasionally notable politicians, are extended invitations to grace the event. On 12th March 2023, Sunil Mungur, the Chairman, seized the occasion to acknowledge accomplished Mauritians across various fields such as business, arts, and education. The ceremony included the presentation of prizes, honours, and certificates to deserving individuals.

Kishore Teelanah is a seasoned Science Lecturer with extensive experience primarily in Further and Higher education settings. His instructional expertise spans Biological and Chemical Sciences, and he has assumed managerial roles, including serving as the Head of Science in his recent positions. Beyond his dedication to the realms of Science and Industry, Kishore is passionate about contributing to literature on the Mauritian Diaspora.



A Diwali celebration took place in one of the school halls in London, with the audience attentively listening and participating in prayers

Forum

By Shiksha Lollbeeharry

Corruption remains an entrenched issue within society, particularly in the professional realm, where individuals may exploit their positions by seeking financial favours in exchange for job opportunities. This alarming trend disproportionately impacts graduates, including those with advanced degrees like MSc or PhD, in countries such as Mauritius. Despite their qualifications, individuals from lower-income or middle-class backgrounds often encounter formidable challenges in securing suitable employment.

It is crucial to underscore that a substantial number of principled individuals vehemently oppose this nefarious phenomenon. The axiom "Honesty is the best policy" holds steadfast, with individuals of integrity serving as beacons against dishonest practices. Confronting adversity, these individuals emerge as heroes leading a counteraction against corruption.

In Mauritius, akin to many other societies, qualified candidates wrestle with unemployment despite their educational attainments. Their struggles, frequently rooted in economic hardships, underscore the imperative for an equitable and merit-based system that prioritizes com-

petence over corruption.

Honest individuals play an indispensable role in shaping a more promising future for society. They cultivate innovative ideas aimed at uplifting citizens, eradicating poverty, and supporting families. By exemplifying righteousness and integrity, they contribute to the establishment of a harmonious society, echoing the ethos of "Vasudev Kutumbakam," wherein the entire world is viewed as a family.

These individuals are not only champions but also exemplary leaders striving to bridge the gap between the affluent and the underprivileged. They extend

their support to the elderly, facilitate youth education, and recognize the invaluable contributions of housewives, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility.

Efforts to combat corruption must be intensified, placing a renewed emphasis on virtues such as honesty, righteousness, and discipline. By championing these values, societies can collaborate towards creating a golden age characterized by equality, justice, and prosperity for all. It is through these collective endeavors that a corruption-free society can be forged, ensuring a brighter future for generations to come.

Confronting Corruption for a Promising Future

Political Puzzles: The Minister's Exit and the Quandary of Elections



P - sententiaeantiquae.com

● Cont. from page 2

Cephalus: And let's not forget the rumours, Socrates. Whispers of the former minister reconsidering his resignation.

Socrates: A twist in the plot! A resignation rescinded is like a philosopher taking back a flawed argument. Intriguing, indeed. But why, Cephalus? What could prompt such a change of heart?

Cephalus: The grapevine suggests external pressures, perhaps a philosophical debate with persuasive opponents.

Socrates: Ah, the power of rhetoric, my dear Cephalus! It can sway minds faster than a chariot hurtling down the political racetrack. But what about the former minister's return to his plantations?

Cephalus: Perhaps a retreat to the simpler life, away from the tumultuous debates and political chess games.

Socrates: A return to the roots, as it were. A noble endeavour, Cephalus, for a philosopher or a politician. But tell me, should the Prime Minister take the risk of a by-election, or is it wiser to gamble on the general elections?

Cephalus: The gamble is real, Socrates. A by-election defeat could be catastrophic but postponing it until the general elections might invite criticism.

Socrates: A true Socratic dilemma! To face the music now or let it play on until the

grand finale. And what of the former minister's role in this cosmic dance?

Cephalus: His return could alter the course of events. The stage is set, but the actors may change, Socrates.

Socrates: Indeed, my friend. Politics, like philosophy, is a stage where players come and go, each contributing to the grand narrative. As the curtains fall on this political drama, we, the spectators, can only watch and ponder the mysteries of governance.

Cephalus: Wise words, Socrates. The political stage is but a reflection of the human condition, full of uncertainties, intrigues, and the occasional plot twist.

Socrates: And so, Cephalus, let us watch as the political comedy unfolds, and may the gods of governance guide the Prime Minister through this labyrinth of choices.

Cephalus: A stage where the audience holds its breath, awaiting the next act. Will it be a by-election bonanza or a grand finale in the general elections?

Socrates: Only time will reveal the denouement, my dear Cephalus. Until then, we shall observe this political symphony, played on the strings of public perception.

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Thank you so much.
Mauritius Times



Alexander Easton,
Durham University

How much forgetting is normal?

US president Joe Biden was outraged at being called "an elderly man with a poor memory" in special counsel Robert

Hur's recent report on his handling of classified documents. But it did not help his case that he accidentally mixed up the names of the presidents of Egypt and Mexico at a subsequent press conference to defend his cognitive capabilities. But how serious are such memory lapses? Forgetting is actually an integral part of a normal memory.

Forgetting in our day to day lives may feel annoying or, as we get older, a little frightening. But it is an entirely normal part of memory – enabling us to move on or make space for new information.

In fact, our memories aren't as reliable as we may think. But what level of forgetting is actually normal? Is it OK to mix up the names of countries, as US president Joe Biden recently did? Let's take a look at the evidence.

Forgetting can occur at any point

When we remember something, our brains need to learn it (encode), keep it safe (store) and recover it when needed (retrieve). Forgetting can occur at any point in this process.

When sensory information first comes in to the brain we can't process it all. We instead use our attention to filter the information so that what's important can be identified and processed. That process means that when we are encoding our experiences we are mostly encoding the things we are paying attention to.

If someone introduces themselves at a dinner party at the same time as we're paying attention to something else, we never encode their name. It's a failure of memory (forgetting), but it's entirely normal and very common.



Some have raised concerns about Joe Biden's memory.
Paul Froggatt/Shutterstock

Habits and structure, such as always putting our keys in the same place so we don't have to encode their location, can help us get around this problem.

Rehearsal is also important for memory. If we don't use it, we lose it. Memories that last the longest are the ones we've rehearsed and retold many times (although we often adapt the memory with every retelling, and likely remember the last rehearsal rather than the actual event itself).

In the 1880s, German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus taught people nonsense syllables they had never heard before, and looked at how much they remembered over time. He showed that, without rehearsal, most of our memory fades within a day or two.

However, if people rehearsed the syllables by having them repeated at regular intervals, this drastically increased the number of syllables that could be remembered for more than just a day.

This need for rehearsal can be another cause of every day forgetting, however. When we go to the supermarket we might encode where we park the car, but when we enter the shop we are busy rehearsing other things we need to remember (our shopping list). As a result, we may forget the

location of the car.

However, this shows us another feature of forgetting. We can forget specific information, but remember the gist.

When we walk out of the shop and realise that we do not remember where we parked the car, we can probably remember whether it was to the left or right of the shop door, on the edge of the car park or towards the centre though. So rather than having to walk round the entire car park to find it, we can search a relatively defined area.

As people get older, they worry about their memory more. It's true that our forgetting becomes more pronounced, but that doesn't always mean there's a problem.

The longer we live, the more experiences we have, and the more we have to remember. Not only that, but the experiences have much in common, meaning it can become tricky to separate these events in our memory.

If you've only ever experienced a holiday on a beach in Spain once you will remember it with great clarity. However, if you've been on many holidays to Spain, in different cities at different times, then remembering whether something happened in the first holiday you took to Barcelona or the second, or whether your brother came with you on the holiday to Majorca or Ibiza, becomes more challenging.

Overlap between memories, or interference, gets in the way of retrieving information. Imagine filing documents on your computer. As you start the process, you have a clear filing system where you can easily place each document, so you know where to find it.

But as more and more documents come in, it gets hard to decide which of the folders

it belongs to. You may also start putting lots of documents in one folder because they all relate to that item.

This means that, over time, it becomes hard to retrieve the right document when you need it either because you cannot work out where you put it, or because you know where it should be but there are lots of other things there to search through.

It can be disruptive to not forget. Post traumatic stress disorder is an example of a situation in which people cannot forget. The memory is persistent, does not fade and often interrupts daily life.

There can be similar experiences with persistent memories in grief or depression, conditions which can make it harder to forget negative information. Here, forgetting would be extremely useful.

Forgetting doesn't always impair decision making

So, forgetting things is common, and as we get older it becomes more common. But forgetting names or dates, as Biden has, doesn't necessarily impair decision making. Older people can have deep knowledge and good intuition, which can help counteract such memory lapses.

Of course, at times forgetting can be a sign of a bigger problem and might suggest you need to speak to the doctor. Asking the same questions over and over again is a sign that forgetting is more than just a problem of being distracted when you tried to encode it.

Similarly, forgetting your way round very familiar areas is another sign that you are struggling to use cues in the environment to remind you of how to get around. And while forgetting the name of someone at dinner is normal, forgetting how to use your fork and knife isn't.

Ultimately, forgetting isn't something to fear – in ourselves or others. It is usually extreme when it's a sign things are going wrong.

SAGITTARIUS: NOV 22 - DEC 21

Embrace opportunities for travel or education. Your optimism and enthusiasm will inspire those around you. In relationships, share your dreams and listen to your partner's aspirations. Be mindful of balancing independence with shared experiences.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 12, 18, 24, 30, 35

CAPRICORN: DEC 22 - JAN 19

Focus on financial matters and long-term goals. Your disciplined approach will lead to success. In relationships, demonstrate loyalty and commitment. Take time to appreciate the simple pleasures in life and nurture your emotional well-being.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 11, 17, 23, 29, 36

AQUARIUS: JAN 20 - FEB 18

Embrace your unique perspective and seek out unconventional solutions. Your social circles may expand, bringing new opportunities for collaboration. In relationships, celebrate the differences that make each person special and find joy in shared experiences.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 13, 19, 25, 32, 37

PISCES: FEB 19 - MAR 20

Pisces, this week encourages emotional connection

YOUR STARS

and intuition. Trust your instincts and explore your inner world. Take time for self-reflection and creative pursuits. In relationships, express your feelings with sincerity and listen empathetically to your partner.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 15, 22, 28, 34, 40

ARIES: MARCH 21 - APRIL 19

Aries, you may find yourself energized and ready to tackle challenges head-on. Your natural leadership qualities will shine, and others will look to you for guidance. However, be mindful of impatience; take a moment to consider different perspectives before making decisions.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 12, 21, 27, 33, 38

TAURUS: APR 20 - MAY 20

Take a break from the hustle and bustle to recharge your energy. Embrace new routines that support your health and happiness. In relationships, be open to compromise and understanding. Your steadfast nature will help you navigate any conflicts gracefully.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 11, 18, 24, 30, 35

GEMINI: MAY 21 - JUNE 20

For Gemini, this coming week brings opportunities for intellectual growth and creative expression.

Explore new ideas and engage in stimulating conversations. Your adaptability will be an asset in various situations. In relationships, seek meaningful connections and be open to exploring shared interests.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 14, 20, 26, 31, 39

CANCER: JUNE 21 - JULY 22

This is a time for emotional exploration and healing. Reflect on your feelings and express them authentically. Focus on creating a harmonious home environment. Domestic matters may require attention, but your nurturing instincts will guide you.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 15, 22, 28, 34, 40

LEO: JULY 23 - AUG 22

Your charismatic energy will draw others to you, making it an excellent time for socializing and networking. Embrace your passions and pursue projects that ignite your enthusiasm. In relationships, share your dreams and aspirations.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 15, 22, 28, 34, 36

VIRGO: AUG 23 - SEPT 22

Virgo, focus on completing tasks and tying up loose ends. Your attention to detail will be appreciated, and you may find solutions to long-standing issues.

In relationships, communicate openly about shared responsibilities and find ways to support each other's goals.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 10, 17, 23, 29, 36

LIBRA: SEPT 23 - OCT 22

Seek compromise and find common ground with others. Your diplomatic skills will be essential in resolving conflicts. Embrace creativity and beauty in your surroundings. In matters of the heart, express your feelings with sincerity and listen empathetically to your partner.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 16, 21, 27, 33, 38

SCORPION: 23 OCT - 21 NOV

Explore new interests and expand your knowledge. Your intensity may draw others to you, so use your charisma wisely. In relationships, be honest about your desires and encourage open communication.

Trust your instincts while navigating emotional dynamics.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 14, 20, 26, 31, 39

Why do some individuals deny climate change?

Are they distorting facts to evade altering their environmentally detrimental behaviour?

A significant number of people continue to underestimate the impact of climate change or reject its primarily human-induced origins. One hypothesis attributes these misconceptions to a form of self-deception, where individuals find it easier to cope with their own environmental shortcomings by downplaying the severity of potential consequences.

Professor Florian Zimmermann, an economist at the University of Bonn and Research Director at IZA, labels this cognitive process "motivated reasoning." It serves as a mechanism to rationalize behavior, such as justifying frequent air travel with arguments like the plane would still take off without them, one flight won't make a difference, or the unproven existence of human-made climate change.



This study addresses the role of self-deception in shaping attitudes toward climate change, an area with limited prior scientific evidence. Zimmermann and colleague Lasse Stötzer conducted online experiments with a representative sample of 4,000 US adults, centering on a \$20 donation. Participants, randomly assigned to two groups, could either allocate the money to organizations combating climate change or keep it for themselves.

Surprisingly, nearly half of the second group chose to retain the money. The researchers examined whether these individuals would retroactively justify their decision by disavowing climate change. Despite the groups being randomly assembled, there was no indication of increased doubt over climate change among those who kept the money, challenging the expected effect of motivated reasoning.

This finding persisted in two additional experiments, suggesting that widespread misconceptions about climate change may not be rooted in this form of self-deception. While this provides optimism for policymakers, implying misconceptions can be corrected with comprehensive information, Zimmermann urges caution. The data hints at a variant of motivated reasoning where denying human-made global heating becomes a defining aspect of certain groups' political identity. Individuals may align themselves with the rejection of climate change, regardless of researchers' perspectives, making corrective efforts challenging.

People are inclined to hide a contagious illness while around others, research shows

People commonly conceal contagious illnesses to avoid missing work, travel, or social events, as per new research from the University of Michigan. These findings, reported in the journal *Psychological Science* by the Association for Psychological Science, reveal that 75% of the 4,110 participants, including healthy and sick adults, admitted to hiding an infectious illness at least once or considering doing so in the future.

The study unveiled that individuals engaged in various social interactions, such as boarding planes or going on dates, while secretly sick. Surprisingly, over 61% of healthcare workers in the

study also acknowledged concealing an infectious illness.

Wilson N. Merrell, the lead author and a doctoral candidate, noted a discrepancy between individuals' predicted behaviour when ill and their actual actions. Healthy individuals predicted reluctance to hide harmful illnesses, while actively sick individuals reported high levels of concealment regardless of the severity of their illness.

In one study, participants, including healthcare employees and students, reported concealing symptoms and engaging in social activities. The majority did so to avoid disrupting social plans,

while a small percentage cited institutional pressures, like a lack of paid time off. Interestingly, only five participants reported hiding a COVID-19 infection.

The researchers conducted additional studies, exploring imagined scenarios of being sick in social situations and evaluating participants' likelihood of hiding illness. The results suggested that actively ill individuals were more likely to conceal their illness, irrespective of its transmissibility.

Merrell acknowledged the potential influence of the Covid-19 crisis on participants' perceptions of concealing illness and emphasized the need for further

research to explore the impact of ecological factors and medical advances on disease-related behaviour. The research team is extending its investigation to other countries to uncover potential cultural variations in concealment behaviours.

The study's implications for public health underscore the complex motivations and trade-offs individuals make in social interactions when they are sick. Merrell suggested that solutions to the issue of disease concealment may require more than just individual goodwill, considering the natural tendency of people to react negatively to those with infectious illnesses.



Why do we shiver when we feel cold?

Shivering actually helps warm our bodies up.



Georgy Dzyura/Shutterstock

Our bodies like to be nice and warm, usually around 37°C. This allows our internal functions to work at their best. But our bodies are constantly losing heat to the outside air.

When it's cold outside, or if we jump into a cold swimming pool, or even if the air-conditioning is a bit strong, our body temperature can lower, sometimes to levels that are uncomfortable.

If our body temperature drops too low, our heart, nervous system and other organs are not able to work normally. If it falls to extremely low temperatures, called hypothermia, this can cause some organs to completely fail.

Luckily, our bodies have their own internal heaters to protect us against small changes in temperature. This is mostly thanks to the actions of our muscles, through a process called thermoregulation. It's this process that leads our bodies to shiver when we're chilly.

Muscles are our bodies' personal heaters

When our muscles twitch, they generate movement. This is called "muscle contraction", and can involve the muscles tightening and shortening.

Muscle contractions help us walk

around, smile, lift heavy objects and high-five each other.

Moving our muscles also generates a bit of heat. With many muscles moving most of the time, this helps our bodies stay nice and warm.

The more our muscles move, the more heat they generate. This is why you might feel hot and bothered after running around or playing sports.

On the other hand, when we stop moving our muscles, we start to cool down. This is one of the reasons we cover up with bedsheets at night.

What about the shiver?

Shivering is the rapid contractions of our muscles over and over. This doesn't generate any significant movement, but instead releases heat that helps to warm us up.

Most of the time we don't have control over when our brain tells our muscles to shiver. We have special sensors throughout our body that pick up when our system

is cold, and our brain then responds by telling the muscles to start shivering.

And we aren't the only ones who shiver! All mammals have the ability to shiver, so your pet cat or dog might shiver when they're cold too. Even birds shiver.

When it's a chilly day outside, you might also notice you get goosebumps. Goosebumps happen when tiny muscles connected to the hair follicles (from which our hair grows) tighten. This causes the little hairs on our arms to stand up, helping to trap in warm air and slow down body heat loss to the outside.

How can you 'chill out' your shiver?

Thermoregulation is key to maintaining a nice, consistent body temperature, which keeps our internal organs happy.

While shivering can help us warm up, it's best to make sure you wear the right clothes if you're going to be out in the cold.

Charlotte Phelps

Senior Teaching Fellow, Medical Program,
Bond University

Christian Moro

Associate Professor of Science & Medicine,
Bond University



Unpredictable Farmer's Response

A fellow was walking along a country road when he came upon a farmer working in his field. The man called out to the farmer, "How long will it take me to get to the next town?"

The farmer didn't answer. The guy waited a bit and then started walking again. After the man had gone about a hundred yards, the farmer yelled out "About 20 minutes!"

"Thank you. But why didn't you tell me that when I asked you?" "Didn't know how fast you could walk."

School Duration Worry

Kid going to his first day of school, he looks worried, his dad asks him, "What's wrong?"

Nervous, the kid asks, "How long do I have to go to school for?"

"Until you're 18", says the father. The kid nods and thinks about this quietly.

When they get to the front gates of the school, the kid says, "Dad, you will remember to come and get me when I'm 18, won't you?"

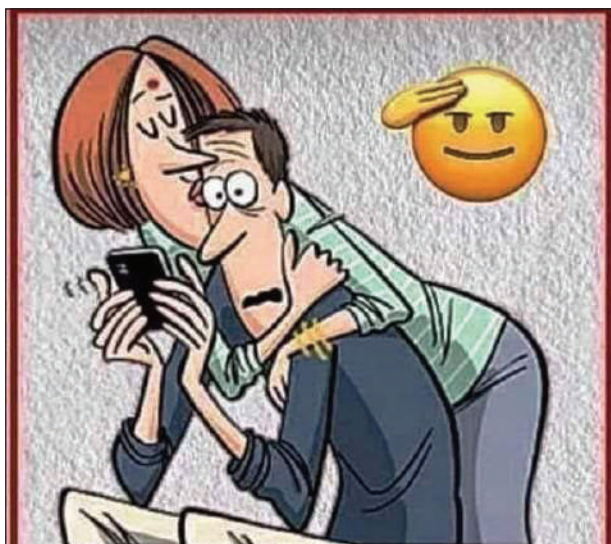
Shopping Misunderstanding

So, the wife and I were in town shopping...

And as we came out of a store, three girls aged between 18 and 20 walked by, wearing tiny, cropped tops and short skirts.

One of them, a tall blonde, had really fantastic, long, toned and tanned legs.

I gently nudged my wife and said, "I bet you wish you still had legs like that!"



Whenever an intelligent man takes a decision, he closes his eyes, thinks a lot, listens to his heart, uses his head and finally does what his wife says.. !!



She got really upset with me... In fact, I could still hear her sobbing as I wheeled her up the ramp into the next store.

Bear Encounter

Two campers are walking through the woods when a huge brown bear suddenly appears in the clearing about 50 feet in front of them.

The bear sees the campers and begins to head toward them. The first guy drops his backpack, digs out a pair of sneakers, and frantically begins to put them on.

The second guy says, "What are you doing? Sneakers won't help you outrun that bear."

"I don't need to outrun the bear," the first guy says. "I just need to outrun you."

At the regular Sunday morning service, Rev Roberto announced that he was planning to leave for a larger church that would pay him more.

There is a hush within the congregation. No one wants him to leave because he is so popular. Colin, who owns several car dealerships stands up and proclaims, "If Rev Roberto stays, I will provide him with a new Mercedes every year and his wife with a Honda CRV, to transport their children!"

The congregation sighs in appreciation and applauds.

Daniel, a successful businessman and lawyer, stands and says, "If Rev Roberto will stay on here, I'll personally double his salary and establish a foundation to guarantee a free university education for his children!"

More sighs and loud applause...

Mary age 28, stands and announces with a smile, "If Rev Roberto stays, I will provide sex!"

There is total silence....

Rev Roberto, blushing, asks her: "Mary, you're a wonderful and holy lady. Whatever possessed you to say that?"

Mary's 35-year-old husband Mike is now trying to hide, holding his forehead with the palm of his hand and shaking his head from side to side, while his wife replied, "Well, I just asked my husband how we could help", and he said: "F... him!"

A man purchases a dog from a pet shop and trains it to recite the Lord's Prayer word-for-word. He takes the dog to the pub and bets people a fiver that the dog can recite the prayer. Many take up the bet, and the dog is placed on the bar.

"Okay, let's do it," says the man to his dog. The dog

barks, saying, "Wow, wow, wow." The man has to pay those who bet against him. On his way home, he questions the dog about why it didn't recite the prayer when he had trained it to do so.

"Dead right, but consider what the odds will be tomorrow evening," replies the dog.

A dog is truly a man's best friend. If you don't believe it, try this simple experiment: lock your dog and your wife in a tight space for half an hour. When you open the door, which one is happiest to see you?

I was in a bar standing next to a man with the most docile-looking dog possible. When the Luton Town score was read on Sky Sports, however, the dog went completely berserk—growling, barking, and baring its teeth at the customers. I asked the guy what happened to the dog.

He replied, "Oh, yes, he does that every time Luton Town loses."

I said, "What does he do when they win?"

He replied, "Don't know, mate. I've only bought it a month ago."

A guy was stumbling down the street with one foot on the curb and one foot in the gutter when a cop suddenly appeared. "I've got to take you to the station, man; you are obviously drunk."

"Officer, are you absolutely sure I am drunk?"

"Yes, sir, let's go," said the policeman.

Breathing a sigh of relief, the guy said, "Thank God, I thought I was lame."

Little Peter's Neighbour

Little Peter's immediate neighbour had a baby, unfortunately born without ears. When the mother and baby arrived home from the hospital, Peter's family was invited over to see the baby. Before going, Peter's dad warned him not to mention the baby's lack of ears.

When Peter looks at the baby in the cot, he says, "What a cute baby."

The mother says, "Thank you, Peter."

Peter continues, "He has lovely little feet, lovely little hands, a lovely little nose, and really lovely eyes. Can he see?"

The mother replied, "Yes, we are thankful; the doctor says he has very good vision." Peter concludes, "That's great because he'd be in trouble if he needed glasses."

Kids' Names

One day, a kid runs up to his mother and asks, "Mummy, mummy, why am I called Leaf?"

The mother replies: "Because when you were born, a leaf fell on your head."

The next day, his little sister runs asking, "Mummy, mummy, why am I called Petal?" The mother replies: "Because when you were a baby, a petal fell on your head."

The following day, their brother says, "Mum, mum, mum." The mother says, "Be quiet, Table."

Doctor's Visit

I went to see the doctor today with a severe headache.

He asked me if I'd suffered any memory loss.

I replied, "How do you think I would know?"

A dog is truly a man's best friend. If you don't believe it, try this simple experiment: lock your dog and your wife in a tight space for half an hour. When you open the door, which one is happiest to see you?

Wonderful life lessons as written by 90-year-old Regina Brett

To celebrate growing older, I once wrote the 42 lessons life taught me. It is the most requested column I've ever written. My odometer rolled over to 90 in August, so here is the column once more:

1. Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
2. When in doubt, just take the next small step.
3. Life is too short – enjoy it.
4. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends and family will.
5. Pay off your credit cards every month.
6. You don't have to win every argument. Stay true to yourself.
7. Cry with someone. It's more healing than crying alone.
8. Save for retirement starting with your first pay check.
9. When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.
10. Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.
11. It's OK to let your children see you cry.
12. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
13. If a relationship must be a secret, you shouldn't be in it...
14. Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.
15. Get rid of anything that isn't useful. Clutter weighs you



down in many ways.

16. Whatever doesn't kill you really does make you stronger.
17. It's never too late to be happy. But it's all up to you and no one else.
18. When it comes to going after what you love in life, don't take no for an answer.
19. Burn the candles, use the nice sheets, wear fancy lingerie. Don't save it for a special occasion. Today is special.
20. Over prepare, then go with the flow.
21. Be eccentric now. Don't wait for old age to wear

purple.

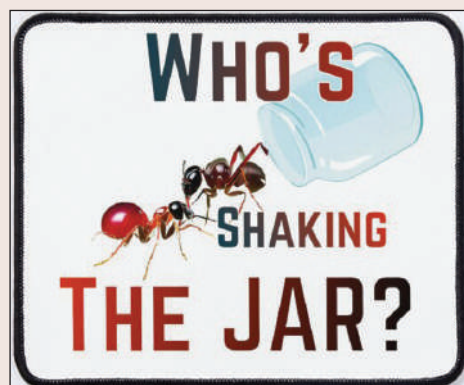
22. The most important sex organ is the brain.
23. No one is in charge of your happiness but you.
24. Frame every so-called disaster with these words 'In five years, will this matter?'
25. Always choose life.
26. Forgive but don't forget.
27. What other people think of you is none of your business.
28. Time heals almost everything. Give me time.
29. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
30. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
31. Believe in miracles.
32. Don't audit life. Show up and make the most of it now.
33. Growing old beats the alternative -- dying young.
34. Your children have only one childhood.
35. All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.
36. Get outside every day. Miracles are waiting every where.
37. If we all through our problems in a pile and saw every one else's, we'd grab ours back.
38. Envy is a waste of time. Accept what you already have, not what you need.
39. The best is yet to come...
40. No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.
41. Yield.
42. Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift.

By Regina Brett, 90 years old, Cleveland, Ohio

Who is shaking the jar?

Did you know that if you put 100 black ants and 100 red ants in a jar, nothing will happen? But if you shake the jar hard, the ants start killing each other.

The red ants consider the black ants their enemies, and the black ants consider the red ants their enemies. The true enemy is the one shaking the jar.



The same thing happens in human society. So, before we attack each other, we should think about who is shaking the jar!

— Kurt Vonnegut

Your story isn't finished...

Your story isn't finished when your heart is broken; you will heal, forgive, and grow.

Your story isn't finished when tears flow in your saddest moments; this too

shall pass, and your smile will return.

Your story isn't finished when you bid farewell to an old dream, feeling like a failure; you can still rise, give your best, and pursue another dream.

Your story isn't concluded because you're still breathing, and you must believe in the endless possibilities that await you to rise and continue moving forward.

— Metaphor

Keep it to yourself

Buying a house? Keep it to yourself.
Buying a new car? Keep it to yourself.
Getting married? Keep it to yourself.
Going on a holiday? Keep it to yourself.
Enrolling in a course? Keep it to yourself.
Got promoted? Keep it to yourself.



Most of the time, the reason our dreams or visions don't come true when they should is that we open our mouths too soon to the wrong people at the wrong time.

Sharing our projects or successes with people who claim to be "friends" is often a mistake. The envy and low-key jealousy are enough for

them to feed off of and tear down what could have been before it even happens. So, keep it to yourself!

The truth is the majority of your "friends" want to see you do well but never better than them. And just a reminder: even family members can harbour hidden envy. However, they can't stop what God has planned for you! So, keep it to yourself.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

"Write it on your heart
that every day is the best day in the year.
He is rich who owns the day, and no one owns the day
who allows it to be invaded with fret and anxiety.

Finish every day and be done with it.
You have done what you could.
Some blunders and absurdities, no doubt crept in.
Forget them as soon as you can, tomorrow is a new day;
begin it well and serenely, with too high a spirit
to be cumbered with your old nonsense.

This new day is too dear,
with its hopes and invitations,
to waste a moment on the yesterdays."



1. To improve your mood, **exercise**.
2. To think more clearly, **meditate**.
3. To understand the world, **read**.
4. To understand yourself, **write**.
5. To help others, **help yourself**.
6. To learn faster, have **fun**.
7. To grow faster, stay **consistent**.
8. To be loved, **love others**.

Wellbeing

How to Get Fit When You're Overweight

When it comes to overall health, your fitness level may matter more than the number on the scale. Even if you don't lose weight, exercise has important benefits.

Where do you start?

Tell your doctor you want to start a fitness program. Ask if you need to take any precautions. They can suggest some workouts that are right for your health and fitness level. For example, you should probably stay away from high-impact exercise like jogging at first. The main thing is to just get moving—any amount of activity is better than none.

Go slow at first

Start with small steps you can build on. Park at the far end of the parking lot or take the stairs. Try 10-15 minutes of physical activity every other day and see how you feel. Be sure to rest when you need to and listen to your body. Gradually work up to 30 minutes to an hour of moderate exercise, 5 days a week, plus two sessions of resistance or strength training.

Check with an expert

Book an appointment or two with a trainer or physical therapist who knows about weight issues. They can show you the right posture and help you build up your balance so you can exercise safely.



Exercise options

Remember that a well-rounded program includes both cardio and strength training. Check out the options at your local gym. If you find a class or teacher you like, become a "regular." If you're uncomfortable working out in front of other people, there are lots of DVDs and online programs to try.

Start with cardio

This is exercise that gets your heart pumping. Walking is one of the easiest kinds. You can do it just about anywhere and anytime, and all you need are comfortable clothes and a good pair of walking shoes. If you have sore joints, try biking, either stationary or outdoors. It puts less stress on your hips, knees, and ankles. So does exercising underwater. See if there's a pool near you where you can try aqua jogging or water aerobics.

Add strength training

Working out with weights or other resistance equipment makes your muscles stronger, and that makes everyday tasks easier. The weight machines at the gym control the way you move and help keep you in the right form. But make sure they're comfortable and can support you. If you're not sure how to use the equipment, ask a trainer for help.

Include flexibility and balance

Exercises like yoga, Pilates, and tai chi help build muscle mass too. But they also keep you flexible and build your balance, which can protect you from falls and injuries. And they make it easier to do everyday things like bending over and reaching for things. Balance and flexibility are especially important as you get older.

Use a chair if you need it

If it's hard for you to walk or stand for long periods of time, start your fitness program with exercises you can do sitting down. Remember, any amount of activity is better than none. You can get cardio with chair aerobics or a portable pedal device. Weight or resistance training and stretching are easy to do while seated.

Plan for Success

It may take a while, but if you stick with it, fitness can become a lifelong healthy habit. You may have an easier time staying motivated if you make a plan and track your progress. Set specific, achievable goals you can celebrate, like adding a quarter-mile to your walk or 10 minutes to your bike ride every week. A fitness tracker, diary, or app can help keep you accountable. So can working out with a friend or in a group.

Reviewed by Sabrina Felson, MD

Healthy Living

Foods That Are Aging You

Did you know that eating spicy foods can lead to purple marks on your face? See which other eats and drinks can add years to your body, inside and out.

Spicy Foods: Some like it hot ... and some can't take the heat. Spicy food makes your blood vessels swell and even break, leading to purple marks on your face. If you have rosacea -- common in women after menopause -- the heat from spice can trigger a flare-up. It also raises your body temperature, so you sweat to cool back down. When sweat mixes with the bacteria on your skin, it can cause breakouts and blotches.

Margarine: Your skin is the largest organ in your body, and everything you eat affects it. Most margarines, especially the solid kind, have trans fats. They raise your "bad" cholesterol, lower your "good" kind, and create inflammation throughout your body. Inflammation is linked to heart disease and stroke, two conditions that can give you an aged appearance.

Sodas and Energy Drinks: The more sodas and energy drinks you consume, the quicker the cells in your tissues age. In addition to the fizz, they have more calories and added sugar -- 7 to 10 teaspoons in 12 ounces -- than any other beverage. Combined with the bacteria in your mouth, that sugar also forms acid



that wears down your tooth enamel and causes decay. Other cons include weight gain and a higher risk of stroke and dementia.

Frozen Dinners: One frozen dinner can pack in half the sodium of a healthy daily diet. When you have too much salt, it causes you to drink more than normal and flood your kidneys. Any extra water will move to places in your body that have less salt, like your face and hands. That's what makes you look puffy.

Alcohol: Those margaritas don't look as good on your skin as they did in the glass. If you've ever had cotton mouth in the morning after a night of drinks, you know alcohol dehydrates you. This makes a big impact on your skin, which is 63% water. Even if you drink a big glass of water, it will hydrate all your other organs before your skin. When you don't get

enough, your skin looks and feels dry, and can't defend itself against wrinkles.

Processed Meats: Put down the pepperoni: Processed meats, like bacon, sausage, ham, and deli cuts, are smoked, cured, or salted so they'll last longer without going bad. It's what makes them both delicious and dangerous. The sodium and chemical preservatives cause inflammation that can wear your body down inside and out. A little inflammation is good: It helps your cells heal. Too much can cause heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.

Fried Foods: The difference between dough and a doughnut is a nice long bath in boiling oil. That bath promotes free radicals, or unstable molecules that damage other molecules in your cells and add years to your skin. You can also find free radicals in other fried foods like french fries, hush puppies, and mozzarella sticks.

Baked Goods: Just because they're not fried doesn't mean they look good on you. Baked goods like cookies and cakes are high in artery-clogging fat that put on the pounds. They also don't skimp on sugar, which in excess can cause diabetes, high blood pressure, and tooth decay (among other things). Inflammation is another reason to skip that sundae. The more inflammation you have, the higher your chances of arthritis, depression, Alzheimer's, and some cancers.

Charred Meats: How this for an acronym? Frying or grilling meat at high temps creates advanced glycation end products, or AGEs. Low levels of AGEs are fine (your own body produces them), but high amounts from charred meats cause inflammation that "inflammages" your body and triggers heart disease and diabetes.

High-Fructose Corn Syrup: Table sugar's chemical cousin, high-fructose corn syrup, sweetens sodas and fruit drinks. Among many other health drawbacks, it interferes with your body's ability to use copper, which helps you form the collagen and elastin that keeps your skin healthy. It's also full of calories and puts you at risk for diabetes and heart disease.

Caffeine: Caffeine is a diuretic: It stimulates your brain and your need to urinate. This can cause dehydration. When you don't have enough water, your skin stops releasing toxins. The backup makes you more prone to dry skin, psoriasis, and wrinkles.

Medically reviewed by Christine Mikstas, RD

Sushmita Sen, cozy with Shawl, says no plans of settling down

Sushmita Sen said while she believes in the institution of marriage, she values companionship and freedom more. She's currently dating Rohman Shawl, but she says she has no plans of settling down.

What Sushmita said

"I know the whole world thinks I should give a damn about settling down, at least at this stage. I don't give a damn about it. It's important to mention that it's only because I love and respect the institution of marriage. I do, very much. And I have the blessing of knowing some incredible people, including my (Aarya) director (Ram Madhvani) and my producer (Amita Madhvani), who are one of the most beautiful couples I know.



But I'm a big believer in companionship, *dosti* (friendship). And if that exists, things can happen. But that respect and *dosti* are very, very important. And freedom, very important. So I give a damn about freedom," said Sushmita.

Sushmita and Rohman

Sushmita was initially in a relationship with model Rohman Shawl, whom she met through Instagram in 2018 but broke up with in 2021. "We began as friends, we remain friends!

The relationship was long over... the love remains," she posted on her Instagram handle. After a brief rumored affair with businessman Lalit Modi, Sushmita rekindled her relationship with Rohman when the two were seen holding hands at a couple of events.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Sushmita entertained the audience with her gripping performance in *Aarya* Season 3 Part 1 lately. In the show, Sushmita plays a tough woman who goes beyond boundaries to protect her family from the world of crime. The first season was even nominated for the 'Best Drama' series at the International Emmy Awards.

Aarya S3 - *Antim Vaar* will now release on Disney+ Hotstar this Friday, February 9. It's directed by Ram Madhvani, produced by his wife Amita, and also stars Ila Arun and Sikandar Kher, among others.



Deepika Padukone: "The heart needs to be clean for me"

From brand endorsements to her skincare line and her initiative to raise awareness about depression, Deepika Padukone wears many hats. In a recent interview, the *Fighter* actor discussed her approach to multitasking, how she sets her priorities, and how her honesty reflects in her on-screen performances.

When asked about how she crafts her emotional scenes and why they leave a deep impact on the audience, Deepika emphasized the importance of honesty in her work. She said, "As far as expressing myself is concerned, it's not about using myself to do what I do, but the only thing that I know is to be honest. I am uncomfortable with dishonesty and filters. I am someone who embraces vulnerability, and I am willing to accept my mistakes and open to confrontation. For me, my heart and soul have to be very clean. I am sure I make mistakes, but it's important to understand for me why I did what I did. I acknowledge and accept things, and that's probably why my performances touch you."

Wearing multiple hats can be exhausting, and Deepika explained her approach to prioritizing tasks. She said, "You reach a stage in your life when you are letting go of most things, and you only retain what you know is going to add value in life. I look at everything in life today with purpose and meaning. It's my biggest filter."

She added, "When you are given this opportunity to impact and touch people's lives through your work. So, if I didn't do that, that's an opportunity wasted. So I always think of being a better person and push the envelope. At least, the intent is that."

Regarding multitasking, she shared that while she can juggle different things, she avoids tasks she doesn't enjoy. "Yes, multitasking comes easy to me, but within that, there are multiple things that you are excited about. But sometimes, you have to do things that you don't enjoy doing also."

Bollywood films releasing in February 2024



February brings an exciting wave of entertainment for enthusiasts, heralding the arrival of numerous eagerly anticipated Bollywood films on both OTT platforms and in theatres. This month, audiences *Operation Valentine*, featuring Manushi Chhillar and Varun Tej.

Here are some of the Hindi films releasing this February, as reported by Filmfare:

Operation Valentine

Cast: Varun Tej, Manushi Chhillar, Navdeep, Mir Sarwar

Operation Valentine unfolds as an intriguing historical action thriller under the directorial debut of Shakti Pratap Singh Hada. This cinematic spectacle is being crafted simultaneously in Telugu and Hindi. The cast features stellar performances by Varun Tej, Manushi Chhillar, Navdeep, and Mir Sarwar, adding an extra layer of intensity to the narrative.

Release Date: February 16

Aakhir Palaayan Kab Tak..?

Cast: Rajesh Sharma, Bhushan

Pattiyal, Gaurav Sharma, Chittaranjan Giri, Dheerendra Dwivedi, Sohani Kumari, Saurabh Agnihotri

Aakhir Palaayan Kab Tak..? promises to engage audiences with its thought-provoking exploration of migration. The recently released teaser, unveiled on January 25, provides a gripping sneak peek into the film's universe.

This Hindi murder mystery intricately explores the intersections of politics and religion, weaving a compelling narrative that reportedly draws inspiration from real-life incidents.

Release Date: February 16

Article 370

Cast: Yami Gautam, Priya Mani, Arun Govil, Vaibhav Tatwawadi, Skand Thakur, Ashwini Koul, Kiran Karmarkar, Divya Seth Shah, Raj Zutshi, Sumit Kaul, Raj Arjun, Asit Gopinath Redij, Ashwani Kumar, Irawati Harshe Mayadev.

Yami Gautam takes on the lead role in the upcoming film *Article 370*,

directed by Aditya Suhas Jambhale, scheduled for a theatrical release on February 23.

In the movie, Yami's character strongly declares, "Terrorism is a business in Kashmir. It has nothing to do with freedom but everything to do with money," underscoring the significance of abolishing Article 370's special status to combat corruption. The narrative draws inspiration from the Government of India's decision to revoke Jammu and Kashmir's special status on August 6, 2019, resulting in the division into the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Release Date: February 23

Crakk

Cast: Vidyut Jammwal, Nora Fatehi, Amy Jackson, Arjun Rampal.

Crakk - Jeethega Toh Jiyegaa! is a highly anticipated 2024 sports action film directed by Aditya Datt and produced by Vidyut Jammwal under Action Hero Films. This groundbreaking movie features an ensemble cast including Vidyut Jammwal, Nora Fatehi, Amy Jackson, and Arjun Rampal. Notably, it is hailed as India's first-ever extreme sports action film.

The story revolves around a Mumbai-based slum dweller who embarks on a perilous journey into the underground world of extreme sports. In this high-stakes arena, only victory can ensure the participants' survival, setting the stage for a thrilling and adrenaline-fueled cinematic experience.

Release Date: February 23

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Vendredi 16 février - 20.30



Samedi 17 février - 20.30



dimanche 18 février - 20.30



Programme TV



SERIAL



vendredi 16 février

MBC 1

05.36 Tele: A Que No Me Dejas
06.00 Serial: Blue Bloods
07.00 Film: Rat Race
08.50 Serial: Falling Water
09.30 Tele: Amour Secret
10.28 The Gardener's Daughter
10.50 Tele: L'Envers Du Paradis
11.13 Tele: La Reina Del Flow
12.00 Le Journal
12.35 Tele: Barbarita
13.25 Tele: Fierce Angel
13.50 Tele: Imperio De Mentiras
14.13 Le Livre Perdu Des Sorti...
15.21 Film: Code Mercury
17.30 The Gardener's Daughter
18.31 Serial: Wagle Ki Duniya
18.55 Serial: Swaran Ghar
20.30 Film: The Grey
22.20 Tele: Barbartia
23.03 Tele: The Gardener's Daughter

MBC 2

07.05 Local: Mots & Ecrits
08.36 Local: Nou Later Nou Lamer
09.05 Local: Generations J
10.29 Local: J'ai Faim
12.08 Local: Les Grandes Lignes
12.34 Local: Mots & Ecrits
13.00 La Jorunee Sous Le Regard
13.09 Local: Nou Later Nou Lamer
13.36 Local: J'ai Faim
15.37 Local: Aktiv
18.00 Tele: Imperio De Mentiras
18.29 Tele: Amour Secret
19.31 Local: 13 Minit Natiir Rodrig
19.49 MFDC Interprimary Short
Film Competition 2024
21.15 Local: Come On Let's Dance
22.17 Local: Voyage Au Feminin
22.58 Journal Kreol
23.20 Local: La Sosiete
00.12 Local: Rodrig - Nou La Ter
00.36 Local: Toile De Fond

MBC 3

07.00 Serial: Tenali Rama
08.00 Local: Amrit Vaani
08.33 Satguru Kabir Ke Gyan
09.25 Hunarbaaz
10.00 Serial: Agniphera
11.30 Serial: Radha Krishna
12.00 Film: Naukar
15.00 Live: Samachar
15.30 Serial: Dulhin Uhe Jo Nanad
Man Bhave
16.00 Serial: Ishaaron Ishaaron...
16.44 Serial: Bhakharwadi
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Local: Mati Ke Mol
19.02 Local: Khel Khiladi
19.30 Local: Geet Gawai
20.33 Serial: Vidrohi
21.03 Film: Dariya Dil
23.26 Serial: Mere Sai
00.14 Serial: Yeh Teri Galiyan

Cine 12

06.00 Mag: SADC
06.26 Mag: Shift
07.00 Mag: Border Crossing
07.32 Mag: Tomorrow Today
08.19 Doc: Shaking Up The Art....
10.30 Doc: Beethoven's Ninth
11.12 Mag: Eco India
11.38 Mag: Shift
12.38 Doc: Tomorrow Today
14.16 Serial: New York Rich and...
14.58 D.Anime: Word Party
15.12 D.Anime: Baby Einstein
15.23 D.Anime: La Petite Ecole...
15.47 D.Anime: The Treasure...
17.36 Mag: Kid's Planet
18.00 MFDC Intercollege
18.52 Doc: Japan Video Topics
19.00 Student Support Prog....
20.00 Tele: Amour A Mort
20.30 Live: News
20.50 Doc: Ultimate Countdown

Bollywood TV

14.25 Serial: Radha Mohan
15.00 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 2
15.26 Film: Ramji Londonwale
Starring: R. Madhavan
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.31 Kundali Bhagya
19.01 Udaariyaan
19.31 Kuch Rang Pyar Ke Aise...
20.01 Sasural Simar Ka 2
20.30 Radha Krishna
21.01 Anupamaa
21.30 Mere Sai
22.01 Kismet Ki Lakiron Se
22.31 Kabhi Kabhie Ittefaq Sey
22.59 Serial: Shaurya Aur
Anokhi Ki Kahani
23.30 Film: Ramji Londonwale
Starring R. Madhavan

samedi 17 février

03.56 Tele: Airwolf
04.45 Tele: A Que No Me Dejas
06.30 Tele: Amour A Mort
07.10 Serial: Briarpatch
07.45 Serial: Rookie Blue
08.30 Serial: NCIS: New Orleans
09.15 Serial: Hooten & The Lady
09.59 Serial: Airwolf
10.50 Serial: S.W.A.T
11.35 Tele: Amour A Mort
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Serial: Madam Secretary
13.16 Tele: Sublime Mensonge
15.20 Film: The Grey
17.15 Tele: Tour De Babel
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.31 Dance India Dance Little...
19.30 Le Journal
20.30 Film: Retour Vers Le Futur 2
22.15 Serial: Suits
23.02 Tele: L'Envers Du Paradis

06.04 Local: 13 Minit Natir Rodrig
06.56 Local: Itinerer Rodrig
08.01 Local: Animalia Nos Amis...
08.31 Local: Zafan Nou Pei
08.44 Rodrig: Ala Nou Vini
09.19 Local: La Sosiete
11.01 Local: Come On Let's Dance
12.16 Local: Lir - Ekir Kreol
12.52 Local: Voyage Au Feminin
13.19 Animalia Nos Amis Les
Animaux
13.45 Local: La Sosiete
14.37 Local: Come On Let's Dance
15.40 Magazine de L'emploi
16.00 MFDC Intercollege Short Film
16.58 Local: En Forme
18.00 Tele: Gout De L'Amour
19.20 MFDC Intercollege Short Film
21.45 Local: Glwar Dantan
22.11 Local: La Jorunee Sous Le
Regard Du Seigneur
23.20 Local: Lavi Zoli An XXL

07.00 Serial: Tenali Rama
08.26 Local: Mati Ke Mol
10.35 Bade Acche Lagte Hai
12.00 Serial: Dikri Vahalno Dariyo
15.00 Live: Samachar
15.30 Film: Majboor
Starring: Amitabh Bachchan,
Parveen Babi, Pran, Farida Jalal
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Local: Puranya Pakwan
19.02 Local: Duniya Mein Is
Saptah
19.15 Local: Virasat
21.04 Entertainment: Sa Re Ga
Ma Pa
21.46 Local: Puranya Pakwan
22.12 Duniya Mein Is Saptah
22.27 Local: Virasat
22.42 Local: Love Is In The Air
00.57 Local: Puranya Pakwan
01.23 Local: Duniya Mein Is
Saptah

06.24 Serial: Rainbow Rangers
06.46 D.Anime: Anna Et Ses Amis
09.06 D.Anime: Sam Le Pompier
09.39 Serial: Superstore
11.17 Mag: Ultimate Countdown
13.47 Doc: Invisibles
15.12 D.Anime: Baby Einstein
15.17 D.Anime: La Petite Ecole
D'Helene
15.40 The Treasure Island
16.07 D.Anime: Yo Yo
16.21 D.Anime: Shezow
16.45 D.Anime: The Adventure of
Puss In Boots
17.10 D.Anime: Akili And Me
17.36 Mag: Kids' Planet
18.03 MFDC Intercollege Short...
18.48 Serial: Kojak
20.05 Tele: Amour A Mort
20.30 Live: News
20.50 Tele: La Reina Del Flow
21.40 Film: Spy Game

08.00 Kabhi Kabhie Ittefaq Sey
10.00 Gadget Guru Ganesha
10.18 Sasural Simar Ka 2
12.16 Udaariyaan
14.02 Anupamaa
16.00 Kuch Rang Pyar Ke Aise..



18.33 Film: Barsaat
Starring: Bobby Deol, Twinkle
Khanna
21.21 Gadget Guru Ganesha
21.35 Serial: Porus

dimanche 18 février

04.16 Tele: A Que No Me Dejas
06.09 Tele: Amour A Mort
06.25 Film: Retour Vers Le Futur 2
08.10 Serial: The Good Doctor
08.55 Film: The Grey
10.50 Serial: S.W.A.T
11.30 Tele: Amour A Mort
12.00 Le Journal
12.35 Film: Le Cavalier De La Mort
15.00 Live: Samachar
15.21 Film: Contre-Jour
17.28 Tele: Tour De Babel
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.31 Enter: Sa Re Ga Ma Pa
19.16 Sayings Radha Krishna
19.30 Le Journal
20.30 Film: The Secrets Of Bella
Vista
Stars: Rachele Lefevre, Niall
Matter, Helena Marie

06.23 Rodrig: Rod'Art
07.33 Pran Kotn Ou Lasante
08.43 Local: Les Petits Genies
09.38 Local: Glwar Dantan
11.03 Local: Nu Rasinn
12.31 Local: Les Petits Genies
13.59 Local: Elle
15.07 Local: Excerpts From
Special Christmas Concert
17.05 Local: Saver Kiltirel
17.30 Local: Glwar Dantan
18.03 Tele: Gout De L'Amour
19.00 Journal Kreol
19.25 MFDC Intercollege Short
Film Competition 2024
21.00 Tita Tipa Nou Avanse
21.26 Local: Le Challenge
21.41 Local: Les Klips
23.00 Journal Kreol
00.12 Local: Arsiv MBC
00.37 Local: Mangeons Veg

07.00 Serial: Tenali Rama
07.32 Serial: Selfie With Bajrangi
08.11 Local: Hamar Fitness...
09.00 Live From Sunrise Hall, Belle
Mare Bahukundiya Brihad
Yaj
12.00 Film: Jaisi Karni Waisi
Bharnii
14.59 Live: Samachar
15.20 Local: Puranya Pakwan
17.00 Local: Ekta
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.29 Local: Planet Bollywood
19.00 Local: Tohar Rashi
19.29 Local: Tohar Farmaish
20.00 Local: Yaadein
20.32 Serial: Porus
21.02 Serial: Crime Patrol
21.39 Serial: Naagin Season 4
22.28 Serial: Bahubali
23.07 Bhaag Na Bachhe

06.46 D.Anime: Anna Et Ses Amis
09.06 D.Anime: Sam Le Pompier
09.39 Serial: Superstore
11.17 Mag: Ultimate Countdown
13.31 Doc: Healthy Eyes
15.46 Serial: Baby Einstein
15.00 D.Anime: Word Party
15.12 D.Anime: Baby Einstein
16.07 D.Anime: Yo Yo
16.21 D.Anime: Shezow
16.45 D.Anime: The Adventure of
Puss In Boots
17.10 D.Anime: Akili And Me
17.36 Mag: Kids' Planet
18.03 MFDC Intercollege Short...
18.48 Serial: Kojak
20.05 Tele: Amour A Mort
20.30 Live: News
20.50 Tele: La Reina Del Flow
21.40 Film: Asher La Derniere
Mission

00.00 Sasural Simar Ka 2
02.46 Udaariyaan
04.33 Anupamaa
06.19 Kuch Rang Pyar Ka Aise...
08.04 Tenali Rama
08.16 Patiala Babes
10.10 Kundali Bhagya
12.00 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 2
14.00 Kismet Ki Lakiron Se
16.08 Wagle Ki Duniya
18.39 Film: Welcome Back
Starring Anil Kapoor, Nana
Patekar, Dimple Kapadia, John
Abraham
20.58 Serial: Tenali Rama
21.02 Enter: Dance India Dance
Little Masters
21.50 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 2
23.47 Serial: Patiala Babes

lundi 19 février

04.31 Tele: Amour Secret
07.06 Film: Le Souffle De La
Violence
08.45 Serial: Kojak
09.35 Tele: L'Amour A Mort
10.04 Tele: Amour Secret
10.23 The Gardener's Daughter
10.45 Tele: L'Envers Du Paradis
11.10 Serial: La Reina Del Flow
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Tele: Barbarita, Les Couleurs..
13.15 Tele: Fierce Angel
13.45 Tele: Imperio De Mentiras
14.10 Serial: Kojak
15.21 Film: Love Under The Stars
17.30 The Gardener's Daughter
18.30 Serial: Wagle Ki Duniya
18.55 Serial: Swaran Ghar
19.30 Le Journal
20.25 Serial: Briarpatch
21.15 Serial: Rookie Blue
22.00 Serial: NCIS: New Orleans

07.21 Local: Tita Tipa Nu Avance
09.44 Local: Elle
10.34 Local: Rodrig - Komanter
12.02 Local: Nu Rasinn
13.07 Local: Rodrig - Sa Lavi-La
13.43 Local: Elle
15.01 Tita Tipa Nou Avanse
15.27 Local: Sermon De Careme
18.00 Tele: Imperio De Mentiras
18.30 Tele: Amour Secret
19.25 Rodrig - Feminin Pluriel
20.15 Local: Proze Dime
20.40 Local: Business Connect
21.15 Local: Radio Vision
22.30 Local: Itinerer Moris
23.20 Le Rendez Vous Avec Kiltir..
01.14 Entrepreneurait Au Feminin
01.40 Local: Rodrig - Saver Lokal
01.53 Local: Feminin Pluriel
02.18 Local: Proze Dime

07.12 Serial: Tik Tak Tail
08.26 Local: Tohar Rashi
08.52 Local: Tohar Farmaish
09.20 Local: Yaadein
09.56 Serial: Bahubali
10.33 Bhaag Na Bachhe Koi
11.30 Radha Krishna
12.00 Film: Taj Mahal
Starring: Pradeep Kumar, Bina
Rai, Veena
15.30 Dulhin Uhe Jo Nanad Man...
16.00 Serial: Kundali Bhagya
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.31 Local: Ved Ki Shikshayen
19.00 Local: Ayush
20.01 Local: Vaad Vivaad
20.40 Film: Mere Huzoor
Starring: Mala Sinha, Raaj Kumar
and Jeetendra
23.45 Serial: Mere Sai
00.06 Serial: Wagle Ki Duniya

07.38 Mag: Art Unveiled
08.23 Doc: The Language Of Whale
09.52 Mag: Face And Voice
10.34 Beneath The Waves
11.30 Mag: Ultima Countdown
12.19 Mag: Art Unveiled
15.10 D.Anime: Baby Einstein
15.17 D.Anime: La Petite Ecole...
15.40 D.Anime: The Treasure Island
16.00 D.Anime: Yo Yo
16.21 D.Anime: Shezow
16.45 D.Anime: The Adventure Of
Puss In Boots
17.37 D.Anime: Kids' Planet
18.00 MFDC Intercollege
19.00 Student Support Prog...
20.00 Tele: Amour A Mort
20.30 Live: News
20.50 Mag: Ultimate Countdown
21.42 Film: The Demon's Child
23.10 Mag: Tomorrow Today

14.25 Serial: Radha Mohan
15.00 Serial: Bade Acche Lagte
Hai 2
15.30 Film: Banjo
Starring Riteish
Deshmukh, Nargis Fakhri
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.31 Serial: Kundali Bhagya
19.00 Serial: Udaariyaan
19.31 Kuch Rang Pyar Ke Aise
Bhi
20.00 Sasural Simar Ka 2
20.30 Radha Krishna
21.00 Anupamaa
21.30 Mere Sai
22.00 Kismet Ki Lakiron Se
23.00 Serial: Shaurya Aur
Anokhi Ki Kahani
23.30 Film: Banjo
Starring Riteish
Deshmukh, Nargis Fakhri

mbc 1

Mardi 20 février - 20.30

**mbc 1**

Mercredi 21 février - 21.57

**BTV**

Mercredi 21 février - 15.30



Programme TV

**SERIAL**

mardi 20 février

MBC 1

04.23 Tele: Amour Secret
05.10 Tele: Imperio De Mentiras
05.33 Tele: A Que No Me Dejas
06.00 Serial: Blue Bloods
08.00 Serial: Rookie Blue
08.45 Serial: NCIS
09.30 Tele: Amour A Mort
10.21 The Gardener's Daughter
10.45 Tele: L'Envers Du Paradis
11.10 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: Spy Game
17.30 The Gardener's Daughter
17.59 Live: Samachar
18.31 Serial: Wagle Ki Duniya
20.30 Film: Das Boot
00.45 Tele: Barbarita

MBC 2

07.28 Local: Tous Egaux
08.53 Local: Itinerer Moris
10.14 Local: Rodrig: Saver Lokal
11.04 Local: Le Rendez Vous
12.00 Rodrig: Feminin Pluriel
12.38 Local: Proze Dime
13.38 Local: Itinerer Moris
14.16 Local: Rodrig: Zenn Aktif
14.45 Local: Saver Lokal
15.05 Le Rendez Vous Avec...
16.48 Local: Aktiv
17.55 Tele: Imperio De Mentiras
18.29 Tele: Amour Secret
19.00 Journal Kreol
19.20 Le Magazine De L'Emploi...
19.25 MFDC Intercollege
20.15 Local: Generations J
21.38 Local: Radio Vision
22.30 Local: Mots & Ecrits
22.55 La Journee Sous Le Regard
23.00 Journal Kreol

MBC 3

07.00 Serial: Tenali Rama
07.30 Serial: Selfie With Bajrangi
09.32 Local: Vaad Vivaad
10.21 Serial: Kundali Bhagya
12.00 Film: Bewaqoof
15.15 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
18.59 Local: Bhojpuri Dhamaka
19.38 Local: Theatre
20.00 Chikitsa Aur Swasthya
20.40 Film: Teen Deviyen
22.42 Serial: Mere Sai
23.20 Serial: Wagle Ki Duniya
23.47 Local: Tark Vitark
00.28 Local: Bhojpuri Dhamaka
00.58 Local: Theatre
01.26 Chikitsa Aur Swasthya

MBC 5

08.33 Mag: Tomorrow Today
09.03 Mag: Washington Forum
09.32 Doc: The Healing Power Of...
11.00 Mag: Eco India
11.52 Doc: Africa
12.22 Mag: In Good Shape
13.33 Mag: Tomorrow Today
15.00 D.Anime: Tut! Tut!
15.12 D.Anime: Baby Einstein
15.29 D.Anime: La Petite Ecole...
15.43 D.Anime: The Treasure Island
16.06 D.Anime: Yo Yo
16.21 D.Anime: Shezow
16.45 D.Anime: The Adventures Of
Puss In Boots
17.37 D.Anime: Kids' Planet
18.45 Mag: Shift
19.00 Student Support Prog...
19.31 Mag: Global Us
20.02 Tele: Amour A Mort
20.50 Tele: La Reina Del Flow

Bollywood TV

14.25 Serial: Radha Mohan
15.00 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 2
15.30 Film: Shaadi Teri
Bajayenge Hum Band
Starring Rahul Bagga, Radha
Bhatt, Shrashti Maheshwari
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: Shaadi Teri
Bajayenge Hum Band

mercredi 21 février

05.30 Tele: A Que No Me Dejas
07.15 Film: Love Exclusively
08.50 Serial: Kojak
09.40 Tele: Amour A Mort
10.27 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: Kojak
15.00 Live: Samachar
15.21 Film: It Happened One Night
17.30 The Gardener's Daughter
18.31 Serial: Wagle Ki Duniya
18.55 Serial: Swaran Ghar
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.30 Serial: Stan Lee's Lucky Man
21.15 Serial: Billions
21.57 Film: Las Vegas Parano
Avec Johnny Depp, Benicio Del Toro

07.11 Local: Generations J
09.00 Local: Profil
10.20 Local: Koze Zom
11.13 Local: Music Tour 2022
12.09 Rodrig: Plat Du Chef
12.36 Local: Generations J
13.12 Local: Priorite Sante
13.33 Local: Paroles Agricoles
15.30 Local: Glwar Dantan
16.48 La Journee Sous Le Regard
16.53 Local: En Forme
18.01 Tele: Imperio De Mentiras
18.28 Tele: Amour Secret
19.00 Journal Kreol
19.20 Le Magazine De L'Emploi...
20.15 Local: NECA
20.25 Local: Saver Kil Tirel
21.32 Local: Agir Ensemble
22.03 Local: Les Klips
22.55 La Journee Sous Le Regard
00.20 Local: Proze Dime

07.00 Serial: Tenali Rama
08.26 Local: Bhojpuri Dhamaka
09.04 Local: Theatre
09.28 Chikitsa Aur Swasthya
10.11 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain
11.41 Serial: Radha Krishna
12.00 Film: Chingari
15.11 Live: Samachar
15.42 Serial: Dulhin Uhe Jo Nanad
Man Bhawe
16.12 Zindagi Mere Ghar Aana
17.41 Serial: Radha Krishna
18.11 Live: Samachar
18.39 Local: Yatra
19.00 Local: Excerpts From
Ramayan Paath
20.02 Local: Virasat
20.30 Film: Niraua Ke Love Story
23.07 Serial: Mere Sai
23.52 Serial: Wagle Ki Duniya

06.26 Mag: Healthy Living
07.23 Mag: Global US
09.44 Doc: The World's Biggest...
10.25 Doc: In The Land Of The...
12.32 Mag: Global US
13.45 Mag: Business Africa
14.11 Doc: Glacier Express
15.00 D.Anime: Tut! Tut!
15.29 D.Anime: La Petite Ecole...
16.21 D.Anime: Shezow
17.44 D.Anime: Kid's Planet
18.00 Prod: MFDC Intercollege
18.55 Mag: Japan Video Topics
19.00 Student Support Programme
19.30 Doc: A Mediterranean...
20.00 Tele: Amour A Mort
20.30 Live: News
20.50 Mag: Ultimate Countdown
21.40 Film: Monolith
23.05 Mag: Close Up
23.33 Mag: Focus On Europe

14.25 Radha Mohan
14.58 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 2
15.27 Film: Rajkumar
Starring: Naseeruddin Shah,
Anil Kapoor, Madhuri Dixit
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Kundali Bhagya
19.00 Udaariyaan
19.30 Fanaa
20.00 Sasural Simar Ka 2
20.30 Radha Krishna
21.06 Anupamaa
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: Rajkumar
02.05 Serial: Kundali Bhagya
02.30 Serial: Udaariyaan

jeudi 22 février

04.25 Tele: Amour Secret
07.15 Serial: The Good Doctor
08.09 Serial: Stan Lee's Lucky Man
08.45 Serial: Hooten & The Lady
09.35 Tele: Amour A Mort
10.25 The Gardener's Daughter
10.50 Tele: L'Envers Du Paradis
11.15 Serial: The Inbetween
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: Le Souffle De La
Violence
17.15 The Gardener's Daughter
17.59 Live: Samachar
18.31 Serial: Wagle Ki Duniya
18.55 Serial: Swaran Ghar
20.30 Film: Patel Ki Punjadi Shaadi
Starring : Rishi Kapoor, Paresh
Rawal, Vir Das

08.17 Local: Kot Nou
09.32 Local: Come On Let's Dance
10.35 Rodrig Prog: Komanter
12.00 Local: Rodrig Spor
15.39 Local: Kot Nou
16.45 Pran Kont Ou La Sante
18.06 Tele: Imperio De Mentiras
18.33 Tele: Amour Secret
19.20 Le Magazine De L'emploi...
19.25 MFDC Intercollege
20.16 Local: Les Grandes Lignes
20.45 Emotion En Avant Plan
21.00 Local: Evasion
21.15 Local: Le Mag
23.00 Journal Kreol
23.20 La Journee Sous Le Regard
23.25 Local: Groov'in
00.27 Local: Generations J
00.55 Local: Rodrig-Klip Seleksion
01.40 Local: Artizan
01.54 Local: Nou Later Nou Lamer

07.00 Serial: Tenali Rama
07.12 Serial: Tik Tak Tail
07.36 Serial: Selfie With Bajrangi
09.17 Local: Virasat
10.00 Zindagi Mere Ghar Aana
11.30 Serial: Radha Krishna
12.00 Film: Ram Tera Desh
Starring: Hema Malini,
Vijayendra Ghatge, A. Kumar
15.30 Serial: Badki Malkaain
15.58 Serial: Agnipheera
17.31 Radha Krishna
18.31 Local: Amrit Vaani
18.45 Local: Yaj
19.02 Local: Swami Dayanand...
20.00 Local: Hunarbaaz
20.28 Serial: Shiv Shakti
20.59 Yashmati Maiyya Ke
Nandlala
21.28 Mag: Dharam Yatra
22.03 Serial: Mere Sai

07.25 Doc: A Mediterranean...
09.29 Doc: Growing Up In Mongolia
11.13 Mag: Motorweek
11.38 Mag: Choices
12.36 Doc: A Mediterranean
13.00 Mag: Ultimate Countdown
13.49 Mag: Focus On Europe
14.15 Doc: Growing Up In Mongolia
15.00 D.Anime: Tut! Tut!
15.11 D.Anime: Baby Einstein
15.28 D.Anime: La Petite Ecole...
15.39 D.Anime: The Treasure...
16.06 D.Anime: Yo Yo
17.07 D.Anime: Akili And Me
18.00 Prod: MFDC Intercollege
18.46 Mag: Shift
18.45 Mag: Carnet De Sante
19.00 Student Support Programme
19.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today
20.00 Tele: Amour A Mort
21.40 Film: L'Homme De La Sierra

14.25 Radha Mohan
15.21 Film: Chura Liya Hai
Tumne
Stars: Zayed Khan, Esha Deol,
Gulshan Grover
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Kundali Bhagya
19.00 Udaariyaan
19.30 Fanaa
20.00 Sasural Simar Ka 2
20.30 Radha Krishna
21.02 Anupamaa
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: Chura Liya Hai
Tumne
Stars: Zayed Khan, Esha Deol,
Gulshan Grover

BTVJeudi 22 février -
15.28Stars: Zayed Khan, Esha Deol,
Gulshan Grover**mbc 1**Jeudi 22 février -
20.30Stars: Rishi Kapoor, Paresh Rawal,
Vir Das



Arvind Saxena

The Perils of IT and Social Media

Is IT a boon or a bane? Let us start asking tough questions now – before it is too late

If health warnings on cigarette packs could deter people from smoking, why can't we have similar hazard warnings on social media platforms? Perhaps such warnings will compel users to question if they really need these services. IT has also promoted the idea that disruption is good for economic development. Since we have lost the imagination to build something people want, we must tear down existing systems to create space for a semblance of economic activity. Even this disruptive model would have done some good if it had opened up avenues for employment. Not so, the disruption is coming through increasing use of IT, questionable business models of big data analytics and predatory pricing for market penetration, which destroys existing businesses before itself going bust. Ever wondered how some online start-ups can sell fruits, vegetables, and dairy products at less than the price offered by conventional establishments?

Carrying on with more questions, the next one should be, if data is the new oil and the 'captains of industry' are salivating to cash in, then we must ask where this new oil is being mined from. If the data belongs to the people, as all physical national resources do, then who is permitting this mining activity? If there are no permissions or regulations governing this activity, then it is not mining - it is theft. National data is sacrosanct and adversary intelligence agencies used to spend millions for accessing it. Today by placing everything on-line and permitting private players to collect and process data, we have provided free access to all critical information for unauthorized use. The people have been rendered transparent and vulnerable while big corporates have created walls of secrecy around themselves. The more data we collect and process on activities of our citizens the more vulnerable the nation becomes to its misuse by big players, foreign agencies and global as well as domestic corporates.

We must now ask, where does the demand for more and more data come from? Who is asking for faster rates of data transfer? Why don't nations demand a pause in introduction of 5G or 6G type of technologies when there are concerns about their radio interference and ionization levels, which can potentially affect safety of communications and cause damage to animal life, including human life? If the need is for vital activity like national security, we must let it be used for a select purpose by regulated institutions. Not by the people who are looking for avenues for more data theft, digital marketing and strengthening social media platforms. Believe me, if there is war, you will find none of these IT advocates, or their progeny, on the frontiers. The soldiers will lose their lives as will civilians living in border areas, but our vile technology advocates, seeking high speed internet, will never be 'collateral damage'. (Just mull how words can hide the horror of criminal activity?). I sometimes wonder if the world of these data-hungry people living in the 'fast lane' has a single lane leading up to our 'lava-hot' borders in the North and the West!

The ultimate dumbing device

IT and AI are the backbone of a majority of our recent start-ups. Lot of youngsters have done very well through their innovative service aggregation platforms, or Apps. So, money is being made here – which should please us. The problem is most of these Apps are producing nothing! No tangible goods and products, which are still dominated by old-fashioned industrial establishments. If anything, these



Apps are actually doing a disservice to the manufacturing sector by pushing down profit margins and also suppressing wages, even while they suck out transaction charges from the real producers. Promising efficiency in delivery of services, they make industry unviable and promote a highly exploitative 'gig economy'. A large number of these start-ups, including many big ones, end belly up in a short time, after their bogus business models break down. Please remember, in the new economic models, 'Smart' means 'Street Smart', i.e. you should have no qualms in fooling or cheating unsuspecting people if you can make money out of their ignorance. Reminds you of the snake oil seller? At least he was not destroying normal social intercourse. The smart phone is the ultimate dumbing device known to man.

So, who is in charge of the IT systems which are replacing systems of say, school and college education, travel and hotel bookings, keeping records in government departments, Income Tax processing etc.? Yes, there was potential for corruption in our earlier systems, but we also had systems to punish the deviants. That we failed to use those provisions is another story. What is happening today is that the control has been taken away from trained and experienced people and handed over to a faceless, unfathomable system which overrides human ability to understand and empathize with fellow humans. How often have you got the feedback - *system accept nahin karra ha*, i.e. "system does not accept"?

So, what is this system which has become more powerful than the highly qualified, trained, and experienced officials who understand the working of their departments more than the people who designed the system? Irrespective of how much interaction the IT system designers have with the organisation people, the system should remain a tool of the organisation, not the other way round. The data in the system and how it is processed is inaccessible to the officials but is available to the youngsters operating the system, youngsters who are not a part of the organisation and, more often than not, are contract employees or, at best, workers who will switch jobs before you can pronounce 'whimsical'. See the danger? We will not be talking here of losses incurred by banks and the increasing instance of cyber frauds all of which can be traced to distancing of the system from trained personnel. Professionals have ceded space to semi-knowledgeable IT geeks, before whom they are rendered helpless.

Have we ever wondered about the consequences of becoming dependent on IT tools? There are movies which have shown how massive disasters could strike if these systems fail for one reason or another. How many of our young people can reach from place A to place B, in their country, state, town or even neighbourhood without using GPS? Most will be totally lost. Similarly, what happens to the much-hyped driver-less cars if the GPS satellites go on the blink? Will they go haywire crashing into each other and things

around them? Why don't we resolve these questions first, before getting hooked to posting our selfies on social media – the most sickening manifestation of narcissism?

Why do our political leaders gift smart phones, tablets and lap tops to students? These are definitely not required for conventional learning. Good teachers and books are adequate for learning in schools and colleges. Why can't the money be used for providing scholarships, books, educational tours and, yes, more well-paid teachers? No, we are not helping in the education of our young, the motive is to win votes – addictions and socially irresponsible behaviour be damned. We must question why we are being provided free internet connectivity. How do companies earn revenue when they provide a free service? Advertising is not the real answer. The answer could lie in data theft, surveillance, spreading fake news, normalising hate and creating addictive dependence.

Ever wondered who decides which pages get displayed on top when you do a web search about a person, place, event, or news? Most of us assume that the algorithms display the pages which are viewed most often. Probably true, but then these views can be easily manipulated through fake accounts and bot activity, just as star ratings on select products can be manipulated on e-commerce sites. The greater danger is that the IT companies can decide the placement – for a price? This manipulation is worth its while because most users generally go through the top few pages before concluding they know enough about a topic. So place the glorious stories on top and a person can be shown to be God's own gift to mankind, or place the unsavoury stories on top and you could defeat a Presidential candidate in the US.

Social media and wars

Can IT and social media create wars? Disinformation is a potent weapon of non-conventional warfare. You can spread false narratives to inflame passions among the non-discerning masses, who can then be used to sub-serve political ends. This has been used in the past by dropping leaflets behind enemy lines, setting up clandestine radio stations or defaming leaders to sow dissension, create confusion and destroy the credibility of unfriendly power centres. Look back at how the colour revolutions in Eastern Europe and the Arab Spring were engineered largely through social media. The potential for causing destruction is as massive as the thermo-nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Now to the greater danger looming in front of us. Having read these two pieces and drawing from their own knowledge and life experiences ten of us could write ten vastly different papers, each one of which will shed light on different aspects of the subject. Now let each writer have access to ChatGPT. The App will churn out a comprehensive paper of acceptable quality - but then it will be the same for all ten writers. See the irony some guys in hoodies have taken control of something as vital as knowledge, filtering out everything except what the programme chooses to throw up.

So is IT a boon or a bane? We need to demand more information. Let us start asking tough questions now – before it is too late. At stake is human ingenuity, insight, concern for others, respect for differences and the 'Eureka' experiences – à la Archimedes.

**Arvind Saxena is former Chairman,
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