

MAURITIUS TIMES

● *"Power is okay, and stupidity is usually harmless. Power and stupidity together are dangerous." -- Patrick Rothfuss, The Name of the Wind*

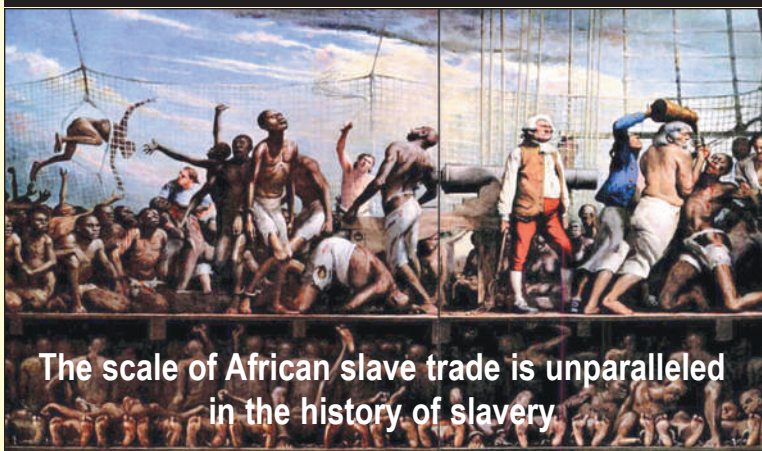


“We have to act now”

'Waiting four more years is tantamount to putting the entire nation at greater risk'

* See Pages 7-8-9

Slave Trade in Africa



The scale of African slave trade is unparalleled in the history of slavery

By Nita Chicooree-Mercier * See Page 18

Governance on Trial



Deafening silence: 'The recent disquieting events relating to suspect deaths and the killing of a person by gunshot have jolted the nation. How can the government and the Prime Minister remain deafeningly silent and not reassure the nation in the wake of such an unprecedented gun attack on a citizen?'

By Mrinal Roy * See Page 4

Education for Life

The Tripundra or three horizontal lines made using holy ash represent respectively: purity in thought, purity in speech and purity in action.

Photo - The Tripundra or three horizontal lines made using holy ash represent respectively: purity in thought, purity in speech and purity in action.



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee * See Page 3

Why the West is morally bound to offer reparations for slavery

By Rhoda E. Howard-Hassmann, Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science, Wilfrid Laurier University

See Page 2

Dangerous Speech and Divisiveness

The people of this country are being daily bombarded with an overload of coverage in print and online about the Soopramanien Kistnen case and the events (including the killing of Manan Fakoo) that have followed after an insulting post attributed to a certain Okeep that went viral on social media.

Of the many comments that have appeared on social media, most are tit-for-tats that are as vulgar and deplorable, and reflect a mindset that aligns with a kind of reporting in print that tends to exacerbate polarization and divisiveness.

However, a ray of sanity surfaced in a post by someone who declared his belonging to the same community as Mr Okeep. In a calm voice, he said the remarks made by Okeep to be entirely condemnable and unwarranted, and should not have been made. Equally condemnable, however, would be similar remarks coming from any community against any other community. But also unacceptable, he added, was the brutal way in which the police is alleged to have dealt with Okeep. They have to treat him – or any other person – with the respect due to any citizen, even as they proceed with charging or arresting him, which must be done according to proper procedures. And the rule of law must prevail at all times and let the courts decide.

It is sobriety and maturity of this level that is most required on the part of all who have a stake and an interest in maintaining stability and peace in the country, at a time when there is so much of hotheadedness around and a single spark may be enough to precipitate the country into chaos.

An article in The Conversation of January 26 by H. Colleen Sinclair, Associate Professor of Social Psychology, Mississippi State University makes a very thoughtful analysis of the phenomenon of dangerous speech. Although it focuses on statements by politicians, the contents are relevant broadly to all similar social situations and contexts.

Defining dangerous speech as ‘communication encouraging an audience to condone or inflict harm’, the author adds, ‘Usually this harm is directed by an “ingroup” (us) against an “outgroup”.’

Prof Sinclair refers to studies made by psychologists who found that the following emotions, particularly when combined, could ignite violence:

- **Anger:** The speaker gives the audience reasons to be angry, often pointing out who should be held responsible for that anger.
- **Contempt:** The outgroup is deemed inferior to

the ingroup, and thus unworthy of respect.

- **Disgust:** The outgroup is described as so revolting they are undeserving of even basic humane treatment.

The author points to how, ‘Commonly, outgroups are depicted as evil, due to their alleged lack of morality. Alternatively, they may be portrayed as animalistic or worse’, citing the example of the Rwandan genocide, when ‘Tutsis were referred to as cockroaches in Hutu propaganda’. Allusion is also made to ‘competitive victimhood’, which is ‘used to portray the ingroup as the “real” victim’. But more ominous is, ‘a particularly dangerous fabrication is when outgroups are accused of plotting against the ingroup the very deeds the ingroup is planning, if not actually committing, against the outgroup’.

Observing that ‘these are just some of the hallmarks of dangerous speech identified through decades of research by historians and social scientists studying genocide, cults, intergroup conflict and propaganda’, she continues that this ‘is not an exhaustive list’. ‘Nor do all these elements need to be present for a speech to promote harm.’ Further, the writer underlines that ‘the elements described above are warning signs a speech is intended to promote and justify inflicting harm’ but that ‘people can resist calls to violence by recognizing these themes’ and ‘prevention is possible’.

If we analyse what is happening locally within this framework, we will realise that it captures the challenges that we too are battling, and that we must take the cue of resisting further calls to violence. Stakeholders who are intervening in the current matters must therefore be very mindful of their language so as not to cause more tension. By the same token, the excessive focus on the ‘punishment’ to the person amounts to denying that it is the offence caused that led to this reaction. And here, we condemn most vehemently this act too, for it should have been left to the police and the ICTA to take the necessary action. Under no circumstances is it acceptable that people should take the law in their own hands.

By the same token, as much as Mr Sawmynaden has a right to a fair trial, the presence of political heavyweights outside the court is apt to provoke a reaction, as it did, with sympathizers mobilizing to support Mrs Kistnen who was surely the person deserving of most empathy for having been widowed in addition to her other woes.

It is time to stop this dangerous slide towards divisiveness and polarization.

The Conversation

Why the West is morally bound to offer reparations for slavery

The 20th anniversary of the UN World Conference on Racism, held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001, will be celebrated this August. There was much discussion at the conference about reparations to Africa for the trans-Atlantic slave trade, in which millions of Africans were captured to provide free labour in North and South America and the Caribbean for over four and a half centuries.



Kwame Akoto-Bamfo's sculpture dedicated to the memory of the victims of the Transatlantic slave trade on display in Montgomery, Alabama. Raymond Boyd/Getty Images

Unfortunately, the conference was overshadowed by the 9/11 attacks on the US several days after it ended. The question of whether reparations should be paid to the continent of Africa for the trans-Atlantic slave trade is still being debated.

It is unlikely that former Western slave-trading countries will engage in reparative measures in the near future. The turn toward authoritarianism, xenophobia and racism in Western democracies makes it unlikely that even well-intentioned governments will propose reparations to Africa.

But, despite these political changes in slave-trading nations, there remains a strong case for why the fight for reparations shouldn't be abandoned.

Our mission is to share knowledge and inform decisions.

Apology for the slave trade

A 2005 United Nations document discusses different aspects of reparations, including apologies for past harms, the right to know the truth, and financial compensation.

Over the past 15 years (following the 2005 UN report) there has been no progress on these issues, not even over the issuing of an apology.

At the 2001 conference a Dutch representative spoke of his government's “deep remorse” for the slave trade and enslavement. In 2006, British Prime Minister Tony Blair issued a statement expressing “sorrow” for the slave trade, but not apologising.

None of these amounted to an apology. Nor has the US issued one. President Bill Clinton acknowledged the horrors of the slave trade in 1998 during a visit to Uganda. But he didn't apologise. On a visit to Senegal in 2003, President George W. Bush said that the trans-Atlantic slave trade had been one of the greatest crimes in history. Again, there was no apology.

Some people might object to their government apologising for the slave trade on the grounds that neither they nor their ancestors were involved. But as the late Kenyan-American scholar Ali Mazrui argued, if you are a citizen of a country, you must take on its responsibilities as well as its benefits.

Rhoda E. Howard-Hassmann, Professor Emeritus,
Department of Political Science, Wilfrid Laurier University

Mauritius Times

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

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

This paper has been produced with the assistance of

Doojesh Ramlallah, Sultana Kurmally and Kersley Ramsamy

Pearl House 4th Floor Room 406 - Sir Virgil Naz Street, Port Louis
Tel: 5-29 29301 Tel/Fax: 212 1313

mtimes@intnet.mu

www.mauritiustimes.com

facebook.com/mauritius.times



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

There are two types of education: education for a living and education for life.

— Sri Mata
Amritanandamayi Devi,
Chancellor, Amrita
Vishwa Vidyapeetham

All Mauritians know about Maa Amrita who has visited Mauritius several times and conducted yoga, prayer and meditation sessions, as well as her signature hugging sessions which last for hours altogether, at the end of which she still looks as fresh as when she started, with no sign of tiredness. I was blessed to receive such a hug many years ago at the local centre in Quatre Bornes. She went on non-stop from 8 pm to 4 am, and I learnt afterwards that she got ready to leave for the airport by 5 am to catch a flight to Reunion, accompanied by her devotees belonging to several nationalities. Being from Kerala in South India, she speaks only Malayalam, but the connect between her and her devotees who have different mother tongues 'surpasseth' ordinary understanding.

Like a true Mother, she knows the children who come to her and their minds. Not only did I receive a hug, but she signalled to the devotee channelling the crowd there to make me come on stage and sit on her left side. She gave me a smile as I sat down cross-legged. After a while, she put out her left hand and handed me a small book, one of the several that contain her addresses to various bodies worldwide, the UN included.

I took a look at the book, and for a moment I froze! A few minutes earlier, before joining the session, I had gone around the exhibition of books in the space next to the main hall, and had spotted one that I told myself I would come back and buy after the session was over.

It was the exact same title that she had given me...

Education for Life

Our dharmic festivals lift us to another level of understanding, that of the symbolisms that connect us to the cosmic dimension, and it is only an exalted form of knowledge that can do that



Our dharmic festivals lift us to another level of understanding, that of the symbolisms that connect us to the cosmic dimension, and it is only an exalted form of knowledge that can do that, what is referred to as 'Gnana' or 'jnana Shakti'. This is what the Vel that is carried symbolizes, Gnana Shakti or the Power of Higher or Divine Knowledge. Its pointed top end signifies a sharp mind that enables us to discern the good from the bad and think critically. Photo - molon.de/galleries/Malaysia

Maa Amrita never received any formal education, and yet her organisation runs renowned educational institutions. There, 'education doesn't just prepare students for a bright career; it also develops their understanding of the world to create **better human beings**.'

And if there is one thing that the world needs most – always, but especially in these times – that surely is better human beings.

So many events and incidents that are taking place around the world – starting at home, here to begin with! – confirm that it is the worse types of human beings that are having a field day, insulting, maiming, killing wantonly both one-to-one and at scale, often at the behest of equally sickly ones. For power or money grab, for greed, for hate and jealousy.

Alas, we can no longer rely on our current education

and when I was leaving, the book exhibition had closed already!

How did she know which book I had selected out of the dozens of titles there? And there was no particular reason for her to have singled me out to come and sit next to her, out of the hundreds that were filing past and receiving her *darshan* that last but a few seconds, but leave a forever imprint in one's being.

She had read my thoughts, and that was her *shakti*. As Sri M, mystic and Guru explains, it is the primordial conscious energy that pervades the whole of existence. Those who can attune to it by means of rigorous and demanding spiritual discipline (*sadhana*) know the past, the present and the future – like Sri M himself in fact. But they don't go about showing off. If you ever come in contact with such enlightened beings, though, and approach them with what we call *shraddha*, that is a conviction that they are specially endowed and can grace you, the *shakti* will manifest in some form. This is what happened in my case on that day, nearly twenty years ago.

system to impart that education for life that will counter such tendencies and the genesis of such rogue elements, and instead produce better human beings, so heavily focused has it become on career orientation alone. Of course, this is important, but it is not enough. We are producing intelligent machines with the only objective that they will compete to outdo – if not eliminate -- each other. What is needed instead are rounded human beings, equipped both to be machine efficient and to cooperate with one another so as to build a better society.

This is what such sublime occasions like Thaipoozam Cavadee and the other festivals spread in our calendar year can help to inculcate in us. By their very nature they bring people together to prepare for the celebration which, as I have had opportunity to explain earlier, is as much of the mind as it is of the body. The myriad little things that have to be done demand devotion, discipline and attention, and working together in a spirit of joy and sharing, helping out, volunteering. In the past, the Boy Scouts movement fulfilled much of that role, though the emphasis was rather on the more material, practical aspect. That was equally valuable, no doubt.

But our dharmic festivals lift us to another level of understanding, that of the symbolisms that connect us to the cosmic dimension, and it is only an exalted form of knowledge that can do that, what is referred to as 'Gnana' or 'jnana Shakti' (*gn/jn* being pronounced like in the French *poignet* for example).

“The Tripundra or three horizontal lines made using holy ash represent respectively: purity in thought, purity in speech and purity in action. When we speak and do as we think, then we create and live in an environment of truth around us that is conducive to peace and harmony; when, on the contrary, our words and actions are not aligned with our thoughts, we generate falsehood and fakeness which have destructive potential. This is what we are currently witnessing on several fronts. The broad base and length of the Vel symbolize respectively the breadth and depth of Knowledge that we need to attain wisdom...”

This is what the Vel that is carried symbolizes, Gnana Shakti or the Power of Higher or Divine Knowledge, lower knowledge being the knowledge of things material required to transact with the world (skills, professions, etc – can also be termed *transactional* knowledge). Its pointed top end signifies a sharp mind that enables us to discern the good from the bad and think critically.

The *Tripundra* or three horizontal lines made using holy ash represent respectively: purity in thought, purity in speech and purity in action. When we speak and do as we think, then we create and live in an environment of truth around us that is conducive to peace and harmony; when, on the contrary, our words and actions are not aligned with our thoughts, we generate falsehood and fakeness which have destructive potential. This is what we are currently witnessing on several fronts. The broad base and length of the Vel symbolize respectively the breadth and depth of Knowledge that we need to attain wisdom.

According to our holy scriptures the Puranas, the Vel was given to Lord Murugan by Maa Parvati, Consort of Shiva. Our next major festival in the Hindu calendar is Maha Shivaratri, and it is exactly the same symbolism paradigm that applies.

Vel Muruga, Vel Muruga, Vel...



Mrinal Roy

Governance on Trial

Elected MPs worth their salt can be bulwarks against the excesses of party leaders and those in power who are driven by their own parochial interests instead of the interests of the nation

Despite the government rhetoric, democracy in the country is in an appalling state. So many key elements of democracy have gone awry. In essence, democracy is a model of government in which power and civic responsibility are exercised by all adult citizens directly or through their freely elected representatives. For too long, this cardinal principle of representative democracy has been throttled and thwarted because MPs once elected to power by the people opt to unconditionally support the party and the policies and measures proposed by the government leadership even when these are against public interest and the interests of the people they represent. Such blind and decried subservience to those in power is the bane of democracies.

How can nepotism or the appointment of the coterie to key government posts instead of strictly applying the rules of meritocracy be in the public interest? Why favour the party faithful and deny the bright and the competent? How can the lack of transparency and accountability of

“The recent disquieting events relating to suspect deaths and the killing of a person by gunshot have heightened fears about security and law and order in the country. In the light of the press reports relating to the circumstances surrounding this gunshot death, questions have been raised by the public as to why a person wounded by gunshot was allowed by the police to drive himself from the police station to hospital. How can the government and the Prime Minister remain deafeningly silent?”



Buttressing democracy: 'When compelled to choose between the Constitution of the US and support to President Trump in his rejection of the results of the US presidential elections, Mike Pence who has been a loyal Vice-President opted to choose the US Constitution over Donald Trump. Democracy in Mauritius would have been continuously buttressed if elected MPs were to unswervingly oppose policies or legislative measures which flout public interest'. Photo - tampabay.com

government actions and decisions or the opacity surrounding billions of Rupees of government spending, procurement tenders and costly projects be in the public interest?

How can government extol the state of democracy in the light of the shameful manner parliamentary debate is conducted in the country or the deplorable manner national TV is monopolized by the government for abject daily partisan propaganda at public expense? How can government tom-tom about high standards of democracy when MPs once elected kowtow to their diktats instead of robustly upholding the public interest whenever government policies and legislative measures are contrary to the interests of the people who elected them?

How can government boast of safeguarding basic democratic principles and values when the standard of governance is plummeting?

The recent disquieting events relating to suspect deaths and the killing of a person by gunshot have jolted the nation. They have heightened fears about security and law and order in the country. In the

light of the press reports relating to the circumstances surrounding this gunshot death, questions have been raised by the public as to why a person wounded by gunshot was allowed by the police to drive himself from the police station to hospital. How can the government and the Prime Minister remain deafeningly silent and not reassure the nation in the wake of such an unprecedented gun attack on a citizen?

Bulwark against the excesses of power

In contrast, it was comforting to note that, when compelled to choose in a deeply divided America between the Constitution of the United States and support to President Trump in his rejection of the results of the US presidential elections, Mike Pence who has been a loyal Vice-President opted to choose the US Constitution over Donald Trump. Democracy in Mauritius would have been continuously buttressed if elected MPs were to unswervingly oppose policies or legislative measures which flout public interest and the interests of the people or are contrary to fundamental democratic principles in their countries.

Political leaders and MPs must realize that they are elected by the electorate to serve the interests of the people and the country. Their mandate remains valid so long as they diligently honour their pledge of service to the people and the country. Elected MPs committed to altruistically serve the people and worth their salt can be bulwarks against the excesses of party leaders and those in power who are driven by their own parochial interests instead of the interests of the nation and the country.

Politicians hold their position in government through the will of the people. This will and choice can be changed at any moment through the vote of the people. No politician, let alone a highly contested or disavowed one, can arrogantly presume that he/she is more important than the country and the people who elect them. Donald Trump was elected President of the United States in 2016 through the will and vote of the people because the majority of voters were disillusioned with the traditional US political parties and their leadership. The same people mobilized in larger numbers to defeat Donald Trump in 2020. The people have consistently demonstrated in our political history that they have the collective wisdom and will to make or undo governments and political leaders.

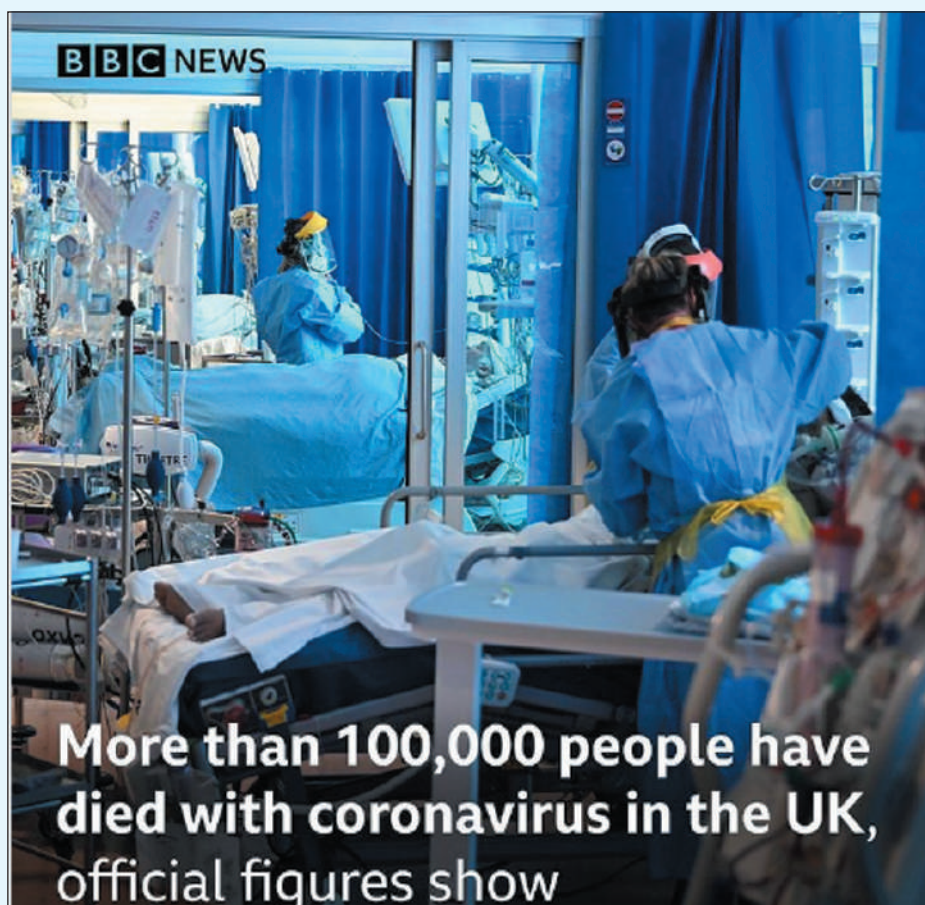
The fundamental problem with Mauritius is that too many political leaders feel that they are indispensable and do not want to give up their leadership or hold over their parties when it is the people's vote and will which decide who to elect or reject at the polls. No leader or party can be more important than the supreme interests of the people and the country.

Power corrupts

America which was the first constitutional democracy to wisely limit the maximum number of terms of office of US Presidents to two was bang on. There is compelling evidence that the longer a President or Prime Minister remains in power, there is a higher risk that fuelled by the trappings and heady exercise of power, standards of governance and democratic values start to be seriously watered down.

Although three quarters of sub-Saharan African countries have limitations to presidential or prime ministerial terms of office, those in power in some 13 African countries have since 2015 'sidestepped or weakened term limits', according to the US Pentagon's Africa Centre for Strategic Studies. Political dynasties or ageing politicians have ruled Cameroun, Gabon, Togo, Equatorial Guinea or Uganda over decades and are more and more intolerant towards democratic forces in their countries.

The erosion of democratic values and plummeting standards of governance in Mauritius stem from the political history of the country.



More than 100,000 people in the UK have now died from Covid-19 - a heart-wrenching, incomprehensible figure that many experts and scientists believe to be rooted in the failures of a "reckless" government that has overseen one of the largest "avoidable" losses of lives in generations, reports The Independent.

Few ever envisioned the UK reaching such a grim milestone, yet nearly 12 months on from the beginning of the pandemic - and despite countless opportunities and warnings to take corrective action - the country stands alone with the highest daily death rate in the world. More than a quarter of all UK deaths have been reported in the last month alone, the culmination of the government's failed tier system, pre-Christmas mixing and the emergence of the new coronavirus variant, critics say.

Against this backdrop, the NHS has found itself overwhelmed by a surge of hospitalisations previously unseen throughout the pandemic. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has pledged to launch an inquiry into Britain's handling of the pandemic but insisted on Tuesday evening that "we truly did everything that we could, and continue to do everything that we can, to minimise [the] loss of life and to minimise suffering."

* * *

Britain and EU on the brink of 'vicious vaccine war'

Britain and the EU stand on the brink of a vicious vaccine war, after Brussels demanded the diversion of coronavirus jabs produced in Oxford and

Keele to make up for shortfalls on the continent.

Europe's health commissioner, Stella Kyriakides, sent a blunt message to pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca (AZ) after it announced a 60 per cent cut in projected supplies for the EU, telling the Anglo-Swedish company that it was obliged to hand over doses intended for the UK. But AZ insisted that its contracts made clear that Britain had the first claim on vaccines produced domestically and said its agreement with the European Commission was based on a promise to make "best efforts" to deliver the doses, but did not commit the company to a specific timetable, reports The Independent.

Boris Johnson has so far steered clear of confrontation with the EU, dodging a question at a Downing Street press conference on Wednesday on whether he might slap an export ban on UK-produced vaccines.

* * *

Schools in England will remain closed until 8 March

Schools in England will remain closed until at least 8 March, Mr Johnson told MPs on Wednesday. The prime minister dashed the hopes of millions of parents by announcing that classrooms will not reopen to all children after the February half-term as originally planned. And, with ministers promising that schools will be the first to leave lockdown, his comments signalled that no other relaxation of social and economic restrictions can be expected in England next month.

Speaking to the House of Commons, Mr Johnson made clear that the return of

schools in the second week of March will be dependent on coronavirus hospitalisation and death rates falling and the current vaccination programme remaining on track. The prime minister pledged to set out a wider roadmap to lifting England's lockdown in the week after parliament returns from its own half-term holiday on 22 February.

* * *

Biden to set a new tone for the US in relationship with Russia

Joe Biden called his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Tuesday for the first time since taking office, pressing his fellow president on the arrest of opposition political leader Alexei Navalny, the Kremlin's alleged cyberattack last year that compromised the files of multiple US federal agencies and the Russian military's alleged bounty scheme against US troops in Afghanistan.

Mr Biden is eager to set a new tone for the US in its relationship with Russia, its Cold War adversary throughout the second half of the 20th century that has sought to undermine American democracy and re-establish itself on the world stage under Mr Putin these last two decades.

Mr Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump, routinely gave Mr Putin the benefit of the doubt - despite objections from American intelligence officials - on everything from Russian interference in the 2016 and 2020 elections, the massive 2020 SolarWinds cyber attack, the Afghan bounty scheme and Mr Navalny's poisoning last summer.

* * *

Unaccompanied child refugees will no longer be given sanctuary in the UK, the immigration minister has said - sparking claims that Britain has "turned its back" on vulnerable youngsters in need of protection.

The Dubs Amendment, passed in May 2016 by David Cameron's government in the wake of an increase in refugees arriving in Europe during the Syrian war, required ministers to relocate and support asylum-seeking children from the continent. But Chris Philp, the immigration minister, said that although the Home Office took the "responsibility for the welfare of children very seriously", there would no longer be a legal route to Britain for these minors.

The only children still able to seek help in the UK are those who have relatives in Britain, who Mr Philp said would be able to come to Britain through the existing immigration rules. Campaigners warned that the decision meant hundreds of vulnerable children would instead turn to people smuggling gangs to assist them with travelling to Britain, placing them at greater risk of trafficking.

Poland to implement near-total ban on abortion

A controversial Polish court ruling that imposes a near-total ban on abortion will come into force this week, the government said, in an announcement expected to spark major protests. "The ruling will be published in the Journal of Laws," the government information centre said on Twitter.

Poland was rocked by massive demonstrations when the Constitutional Court ruling was first issued in October. The ruling said abortions in cases of foetal abnormalities were "incompatible" with the constitution.



Ruling said that abortions in cases of foetal abnormalities were "incompatible" with constitution. Photo - thebharatexpressnews.com

It means that all abortions in Poland will now be banned except in cases of rape and incest and when the mother's life or health are considered to be at risk. The ruling is in line with the policies of the governing right-wing Law and Justice party (PiS). The government said the reasoning behind the October 22 ruling would also be published.

Women's Strike, the organisation behind the demonstrations, called for a protest outside the Constitutional Court in Warsaw.

"Express your anger today as you see fit," Marta Lempart, a leading protest organiser, told a press conference. "We are calling on everyone to go into the streets," she said.

Predominantly Catholic Poland already has one of Europe's most restrictive laws on abortion.

There are fewer than 2000 legal abortions every year and women's groups estimate that an additional 200,000 women abort either illegally or abroad.

The government had delayed publishing the ruling after nationwide demonstrations held in defiance of coronavirus restrictions banning rallies.

The protests sparked by the abortion ruling soon became an expression of wider anti-government sentiment.

The biggest protests brought together tens of thousands of people in what organisers said was a generational "revolution" against the status quo, including against Poland's Catholic hierarchy.

The government has defended the verdict, saying it will halt "eugenic abortions", but human rights groups have said it would force women to carry non-viable pregnancies.

☞ Cont. on page 6

Prepare for next pandemic like a "war": Bill Gates & Wife Melinda

Billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates has warned that the world must prepare for the next pandemic as it would for war, including the investment of tens of billions of dollars each year, in a letter released Wednesday.

"We can't afford to be caught flat-footed again," wrote the Microsoft co-founder and his wife Melinda in an annual missive.

"The threat of the next pandemic will always be hanging over our heads -- unless the world takes steps to prevent it."

To avoid future destruction on the scale of that caused by Covid-19, "pandemic preparedness must be taken as seriously as we take the threat of war," Gates said, reports AFP.

"Stopping the next pandemic will require spending tens of billions of dollars per year -- a big investment, but remember that the COVID-19 pandemic is estimated to cost the world \$28 trillion," he added.



Bill Gates, wife said threat of the next pandemic will always be "hanging over our heads".
Photo - cdn.primedia.co.za

"The world needs to spend billions to save trillions (and prevent millions of deaths)."

The American, ranked the third-wealthiest person in the world by Forbes, urged rich countries to provide the bulk of the investment, pointing out that their governments stand to benefit most.

Investments in future diagnostic and vaccination technologies should be supplemented by "a global alert system, which we don't have at large scale today," allowing epidemics to be detected and responded to early, the letter said.

Gates famously sounded the alarm about the risk of global pandemics at a 2015 TED conference.

He now advocates the creation of a team of around 3000 fully trained, professional pandemic "firefighters" available on permanent alert.

India's farm protests losing their legitimacy



After a rally against farm reforms unexpectedly turned violent on Tuesday, India's farm protests have lost their legitimacy, said one. Accept the government's offer to put the reforms on hold and return home, advised another. Yet another described it as "India's Capitol insurrection" moment, reports Soutik Biswas of BBC.

To be true, a group of protesting farmers did divert from agreed routes, clash with the police and break through barricades to storm Delhi's historic Red Fort complex. One protester died and some 400 policemen were injured.

At the same time, given the scale of the agitation - hundreds of thousands of protesters, many of them riding tractors - the violence could have been much worse. The majority of protesters and the police exercised restraint, with the latter bearing the brunt of the violence. As the protesters called off the rally and dispersed in the evening, traffic gridlocks in the capital eased.

Farm union leaders have condemned the violence and blamed the chaos on rogue elements among an otherwise peaceful march. It is increasingly clear that

they might have misread the mood within groups in their fold. The night before the Delhi rally, a bunch of young protesters reportedly took over the stage at a protest site and opposed the routes agreed upon between their leaders and the police. That should have been a warning to the leaders.

Police use tear gas against farmers during a "parallel parade" on tractors and trolleys amid their ongoing protest against the new agricultural laws, on the outskirts of New Delhi, India, 26 January 2021.

Many believe the long-drawn and physically draining protests - hundreds of thousands of farmers camped out in cold and rain for two months, some 60 of them dead so far, and 11 rounds of failed talks with the government - could have resulted in growing frustration in the "young radicals" amongst them. "Maybe the radical approach was finding currency with many followers. The government also allowed the pressure to build up. After the violence the leaders have lost credibility. Their right to represent the farmers will be questioned," KC Singh, a former diplomat, told me.

The farm leaders have said they will isolate the rogue elements. What is clear is that the protesters have lost considerable public goodwill and their leaders have a lot of work to do to restore it. "It has been an orderly, peaceful, lawful protest until now. If some elements have broken the peace and created a situation of anarchy, the leaders will have to do some damage resolution and rise to the challenge," says historian Mahesh Rangarajan.

China tells Taiwan that independence 'means war': report



China on Thursday said Taiwan's independence would result in war. Photo - Daily Express

China on Thursday intensified its rhetoric directed towards Taiwan and said its independence would result in war.

Reuters reported that Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman Wu Qian was holding his monthly press conference when the subject turned to regional tensions.

Taipei accused Beijing of flying a dozen military jets in its airspace on Sunday in an act of intimidation. U.S. observers said China was intent on testing President Joe Biden, who had been sworn in just days before.

Wu said the "military activities" in the Taiwan Straits "are necessary actions to address the current security situation" there and then he warned, "Those who play with fire will burn themselves, and 'Taiwan independence' means war."

Taiwan and China separated amid civil war in 1949 and China says it is deter-

mined to bring the island under its control by force if necessary. The U.S. switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979, but is legally required to ensure Taiwan can defend itself and the self-governing democratic island enjoys strong bipartisan support in Washington.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who served as then-Vice President Biden's national security advisor before being elevated to deputy secretary of state under Barack Obama, said in a confirmation hearing Tuesday: "President Trump was right in taking a tougher approach to China," said Blinken, who served as then-Vice President Biden's national security advisor before being elevated to deputy secretary of state under Barack Obama. "Not the way he went about it in a number of ways, but the basic principle was right."

Compiled by Doojesh Ramlallah

Sheila Bunwaree



Mauritius Times: The Avengers group of lawyers with Rama Valayden in the lead together with a few others have announced their intention to go into politics. The Avengers would probably want to build upon the popularity and goodwill they have earned for having taken up the Soopramanien Kistnen case and demonstrably going to great length to go to the bottom of this matter. That's not good news for the MMM and the Labour Party, for there's going to be some serious competition now, isn't it?

Sheila Bunwaree: Considering the personalities and background of the 'Avengers' group of lawyers, the announcement of their intention to go into politics is no surprise. In 2014, analysing what was happening on the political scene, prior to the general elections, I wrote on the necessity for new political parties, new blood, new ideas, innovative ways of engaging in politics to emerge. And now with the rapidly decaying political system, more than ever before, we need competent and ethical citizens, to come together to work for the common good.

That the Avengers would want to surf on the popularity they have earned, through the Kistnen case, should not be seen with negativity. Let us be honest, anyone else in their shoes would have done so as well. In all objectivity, I believe that is rather demeaning to define or describe anyone fighting for the fundamental rights of people, as *'faire politics lors cadavre dimoune.'*

"We have to act now"

'Waiting four more years is tantamount to putting the entire nation at greater risk'

Our interviewee this week is sociologist Sheila Bunwaree who, while despairing at the current dispensation and governance of the country, sees as a positive development the possibility that a new political group could emerge. The country is in dire strait in many respects and it only by the infusion of new blood and new ideas that we salvage it.

Searching for the Truth, for Justice and assisting the oppressed is a component of a different kind of engagement in politics, so badly needed in our society.

It is important to remember that the different layers of the Kistnen case symbolise all that is morally reprehensible with the current system. If certain politicians are shying away from denouncing these wrongs, ordinary citizens who are concerned about the Mafioso democracy that we are becoming, should not hesitate a single minute to bring their contribution for a much needed moral renaissance.

And if the Avengers' move brings in more competition to a system that remains blocked with electoral reforms apparently stalled for ever, with little possibility for greater inclusion and a diversity of ideas, a system which remains 'unfree and unfair' due to the prevalence of money politics, I cannot see any true democrat be it from the MMM or Labour Party or elsewhere unable to appreciate the significance of such competition. The latter can contribute towards getting rid of the rot. Competition can be healthy at times and can consolidate democracy.

*** The 'Avengers' might have rightly gauged the existence of a vacuum on the political front at this point in time for want of a credible alternative to the current government, and feel that with the right political message and theatrics they might make some headway in the opposition camp. What do you think?**

The existence of a vacuum on the political front has certainly been gauged not only by the Avengers but a number of other groupings/new political parties, not satisfied with the way that the mainstream parties and the current regime are handling the affairs of the country. The question to ask however at this critical juncture of our history is 'what is the right political message' and 'from whose perspectives is it right or wrong?'

True, denouncing how law and order has become topsy-turvy is of utmost importance but not sufficient in these very trying times. We have some serious challenges and people want to know how you will improve their daily existential conditions, what the new normal in the post-Covid and post-Wakashio era, will look like.

"More than any other time in our post-Independence history has the phrase 'justice delayed is justice denied' been made so relevant. As citizens searching for the truth, we must clamour for justice to follow a JUST course. Is it following a JUST course right now?"

For people to start building up hope again, to feel that they belong, that opportunities are truly equal and that there is a fairer and more secure future, the country needs serenity, competence, ethical governance in all spheres, capacity to innovate and bring out the best in each unit of the country's human capital.

A credible alternative requires a right policy mix built on technology, innovations, new economic pillars, empathy, compassion - a policy mix which ensures that people are free from want, from disease, joblessness and homelessness. In short, we should be hospitable to the politics of the common good as described by Professor Sandel and Vandana Shiva.

"We have an arsenal of laws but enforcement remains poor. We often catch the small fish while the big ones are left untouched. And for that matter, if we think of the annual budget that goes to ICAC - some 200 million rupees, if I am not mistaken, then we have every right to ask where and who is doing the oversight work? Clearly the system is not functioning..."

If I remember correctly, it was Albert Einstein who said that we should free ourselves from the prison of the '... delusion of consciousness'. And this can only be done by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and nature. Needless to say that such a societal project can only be built if transparency, accountability and humility serve as the scaffolding of such a societal project.

No room whatsoever for theatrics and falsities in such a paradigm!

*** As regards the need for a credible alternative to the government of the day, there seems to be a growing perception that the main political parties of the country - the Labour Party and the MMM - seem to be unable to challenge the ruling alliance. Do you think that's a correct perception, and why is it so?**

Perhaps we should start looking at - who forms part of this ruling alliance? A former vice Prime Minister whose name is apparently cited in the ADB report regarding the St Louis scandal, who has been revoked but is still sitting in Parliament. It is the same person who looked right in the eyes of Alvaro Sobrinho and doing his own due diligence, facilitating Sobrinho's entry on our land. It is no exaggeration to say that this man's little party has been reduced to nothingness.

*** Cont. on page 8**

'More than any other time in our post-Independence history has the phrase 'justice delayed is justice denied' been made so relevant'

* Cont. from page 7

Then we have a Senior Minister from the so-called 'Plateforme militante' who justifies the bulldozing of the shelters of the homeless during the lockdown by saying that he will not tolerate any form of illegality and allow the country to turn into a Far West. But now that we are truly becoming a Far West, with so many mysterious deaths/horrific crimes, putting our security at stake, this highly legalistic minister seems to have no voice. Silence is complicity.

The ruling alliance headed by the Angus Road master also includes a bunch of newcomers to the world of politics. Many of them seem to have blinkers on their eyes, unable to discern between right and wrong.

“The resurfacing of Minister ‘Mentor’ on MBC, a few weeks ago, testifies to the fact that the ruling alliance is feeling so very challenged, that it sought support and assistance from SAJ. The latter referring to his son’s leadership as ‘fort’, at a time when the multiple indicators of poor governance, opacity, mismanagement are systematically calling for people to take to the streets is revolting...”

*** Do you think it’s really difficult for the Labour Party and the MMM to challenge such a ‘ruling alliance’?**

Judging by the number of brilliant interventions from members of the opposition denouncing the multiple scandals, highlighting the incompetence, the poor and inadequate policy making, the malfunctioning of our institutions, it is clear that it is just a perception and not the reality.

Moreover, the resurfacing of Minister ‘Mentor’ on MBC, a few weeks ago, testifies to the fact that the ruling alliance is feeling so very challenged, that it sought support and assistance from SAJ. The latter referring to his son’s leadership as ‘fort’, at a time when the multiple indicators of poor governance, opacity, mismanagement are systematically calling for people to take to the streets is revolting. I prefer not to comment any further on this scenario.

Anything morally wrong, false and unjust can and should be challenged. The march of 13th Feb. as well as the Avengers meeting of 31st Jan speak to this. Every single citizen who has the interest of the nation at heart should give a helping hand, especially at a time when the Speaker has hollowed out democracy by all sorts of strategies to shut the opposition out.

*** It’s possible that a majority of the people are not comfortable with the government’s doings and misdoings, but that remains to be ascertained. But there might also be a dichotomy between those who have already made up their minds about whom to support next time round and the others who feel they have no choice than make do with the current team. What’s your take on that?**

Recent studies by Afro Barometer and Kantar highlight the extent to which people are uncomfortable and

dissatisfied with the current state of governance. Talking to people on the ground also points to a similar situation. There is almost no need for any further ascertaining.

The accumulation of scandals, the injustices of the system, the lack of transparency and accountability, the differential treatment of citizens in front of the law, the different excluding mechanisms of our society disempowering the poor and vulnerable even further, imposes an obligation on us to defend the fundamental human rights of fellow citizens, particularly if we want durable peace.

Hopefully enough, the dichotomy you refer to would get smaller with at least some in the current team actually speaking to their conscience and exercise the choice of being on the right side of history. Otherwise, they may not be able to look in the eyes of their children when the latter ask them where were they when the entire nation was under siege.

*** But isn’t it premature and odd to talk about an alternative to the current government, which has only completed one year in its mandate and has four more years to go?**

Premature and odd? Not at all. This is a government by default. It is important to remember that only some 28% of the population voted for them.

Some people may continue to describe those who oppose this government as bad losers, but this is not a question of bad or good losers. The disgust with the government started since 2014 - when some of us could see what was being plotted. The transfer of power from father to son widely decried as illegitimate by some led to the manufacturing of PKJ - a weak leader - increasingly seen as a danger for our society in certain quarters.

The slide towards new forms of authoritarianism, surveillance and control is not auguring well. It is good that last week through the debate organised by the PMSD on the role of the DPP, we were reminded of the dangers associated with this regime especially when they wanted to bring in the Prosecution Bill. Being concerned by the erosion of democratic norms and seeing Duval’s sacrifices for democracy, I can recall saluting his initiative in a press article a couple of days after he left government.

Waiting four more years is tantamount to putting the entire nation at greater risk and directly threatening the future of the younger generation; we have to act now.

*** We were talking earlier about the Soopramanien Kistnen case and the determination of the ‘Avengers’ lawyers to resolve this murder case. But we have also seen some institutions appearing unwilling to take the bull by the horns in relation to this and other cases. Do you think we’ll ever get to the bottom of this matter?**

I cannot but agree more with you that certain institutions seem to be unwilling to take the bull by the horns.

Let us, for example, take the pretty straightforward case of the fictitious employment of Mrs Kistnen as



“The existence of a vacuum on the political front has certainly been gauged not only by the Avengers but a number of other groupings/new political parties, not satisfied with the way that the mainstream parties and the current regime are handling the affairs of the country. The question to ask however at this critical juncture of our history is ‘what is the right political message’...”

Constituency Clerk. The law is very clear regarding such cases. I certainly do not wish to substitute myself for the court nor engage in any form of contempt of court but suffice it to say that a ten-year-old kid, if informed of what the law says and if presented with all the evidence gathered so far, would not find it difficult to see what is just.

More than any other time in our post-Independence history has the phrase ‘justice delayed is justice denied’ been made so relevant. As citizens searching for the truth, we must clamour for justice to follow a JUST course. Is it following a JUST course right now? I leave it to the intelligence of the average objective Mauritian to make his/her own judgement.

If machinations and high political connivances are at work, if people leading our institutions do not have the necessary moral fibre and the efficiency required to stop all the nonsense that has been going on for years and do not put some order in the mess that we are in, there is little chance for us to get to the bottom of this matter and yet we desperately need to.

* Cont. on page 9

'Comfortable majorities often mean the rise of authoritarianism, populism and the clamping down on certain fundamental rights'



“Who forms part of this ruling alliance? A former vice Prime Minister whose name is apparently cited in the ADB report regarding the St Louis scandal, who has been revoked but is still sitting in Parliament. It is the same person who looked right in the eyes of Alvaro Sobrinho... It is no exaggeration to say that this man's little party has been reduced to nothingness...”

* Cont. from page 8

If we fail to do so, the country will enter in one of its darkest chapters.

Despite the difficulties, I believe the 3 Rs – **Resilience, Resolve** and desire to **Re-engineer** state-society relations by many of us will assist in the process of deciphering the truth and help in getting to the bottom of this matter. It may however take a long time!

* **As regards the St Louis Redevelopment Project being investigated by ICAC, a former Vice Prime Minister has been kept on a leash - outside of the Cabinet - , and Prof Kasenally has lately been hauled up for questioning by the anti-corruption agency. The credibility of ICAC itself has taken a hit with the long list of high profile cases which remain unresolved to date. Is there a problem therefore with the oversight such institutions that are deemed by virtue of the related legislations to function independently of political proximity?**

There are far too many cases that remain unresolved, and as Transparency international Mauritius bureau's director reminds us that there is no national strategy to combat corruption. We have an arsenal of laws but enforcement remains poor. We often catch the small fish

“We have a Senior Minister from the so-called 'Plateforme militante' who justifies the bulldozing of the shelters of the homeless during the lockdown by saying that he will not tolerate any form of illegality and allow the country to turn into a Far West. But now that we are truly becoming a Far West... this highly legalistic minister seems to have no voice...”

while the big ones are left untouched. And for that matter, if we think of the annual budget that goes to ICAC - some 200 million rupees, if I am not mistaken, then we have every right to ask where and who is doing the oversight work?

Clearly the system is not functioning leading the Parliamentary Committee to contest the way things are being done and asking for change. The method of nominations at institutions such as ICAC should definitely be revisited - it can no longer be in the hands of the PM if we truly want an independent, well functioning institution.

* **All this would mean that in our present set-up a**

government with a comfortable parliamentary majority can, with the support of some institutions, do as it pleases and operate in a manner that makes it almost unaccountable to anyone, isn't it?

The perversion of our current electoral system often leads to a government with a comfortable majority. Such tyranny of numbers is very unhealthy for our democracy. Comfortable majorities often mean the rise of authoritarianism, populism and the clamping down on certain fundamental rights. Yes, they can do as they please - the emergency procurements/pack and blister story during lockdown, Safe City project with millions of rupees going down the drain without ensuring our safety, the white elephant that the Cote d'Or Stadium represents - just a few examples, to show how unaccountable they can be. This cannot go on. We must stop it.

* **2021 will no doubt be a very challenging year for the economy, for the middle and working classes and the jobless and society as a whole. It's also likely to be tough times for the government. Are you worried that our social peace might be jeopardised?**

Yes, being 'une militante de paix et du développement', I am deeply worried and concerned. As you may know, I had several years back founded the Institute of Social Development and Peace. We researched and studied how exclusion in various forms could pose a threat to peace and development. And now with Covid-19, the economic crisis, the ecological crisis, and new forms of poverty arising and people competing for the few resources available, there is bound to be conflicts and violence.

This is why I referred to the necessity of reengineering state-society relations earlier and in so doing ensure more inclusion and justice for all. Without justice, there can be no peace, particularly in a multiethnic society as ours. We need to shift from what Johann Galtung calls 'negative peace' to 'positive peace' - if we want to hold the nation together in a lasting manner.



Protecting lives, ensuring happiness



1956-2020

LIC Centre, 1st Floor,
John Kennedy Street,
Port Louis



marketing@licmauritius.intnet.mu



208 1485, Ext 24 [Port Louis]
4674960 [Qautre Bornes]

Your gut microbiome may be linked to dementia, Parkinson's disease and MS

Our gut microbes play a key role in sending and receiving signals that influence the brain

Within our body and on our skin, trillions of bacteria and viruses exist as part of complex ecosystems called microbiomes. Microbiomes play an important role in human health and disease - and even help us maintain a healthy metabolism and immune system. One of the most important microbiomes in our body is our gut microbiome. It helps us maintain overall wellbeing by helping us to absorb all the vitamins and minerals from the food we eat.

But when our gut microbiome's balance becomes disrupted (from things like stress, illness, or poor diet), it can not only result in digestion and gut problems, but has even been linked to obesity, diabetes, and surprisingly, brain disorders. This shows us that it might be time to look outside the skull to understand the cause of some brain conditions.

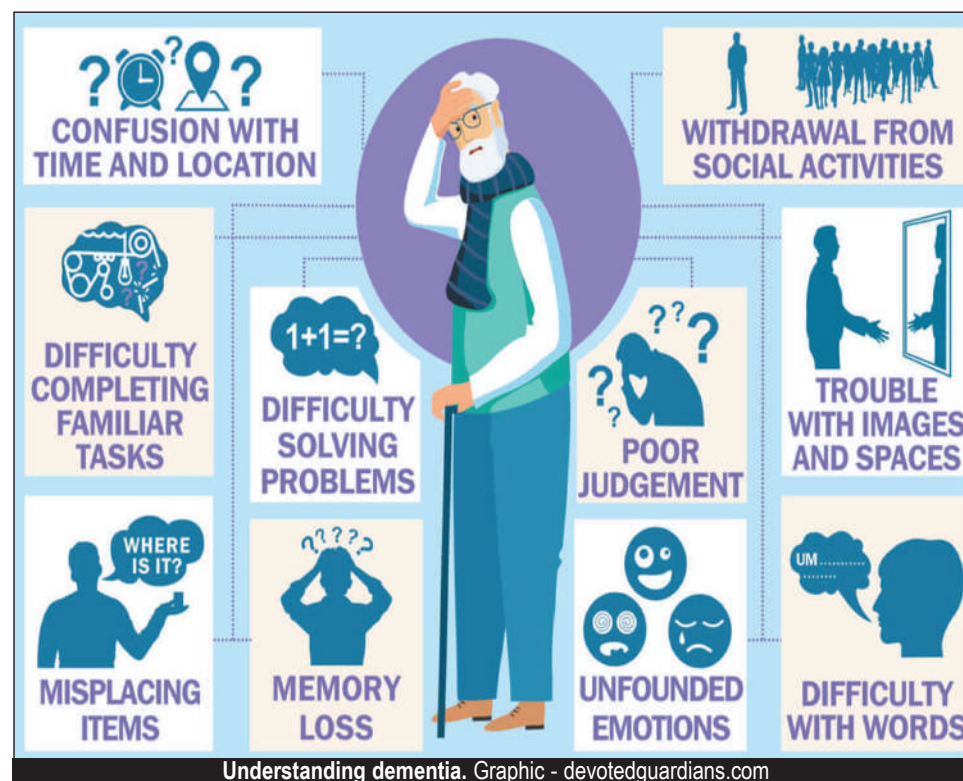
Our gut and brain are closely connected. They communicate with each other through the system known as the gut-brain (or brain-gut) axis. This axis influences the digestive system's activity and plays a role in appetite and the type of food we prefer to eat. It's made up of brain cells (neurons), hormones, and proteins that allow the brain to send messages to the gut (and vice versa).

The gut-brain axis is known to play a role in irritable bowel syndrome, celiac disease, and colitis. Stress signals from the brain can influence digestion through this axis, and the gut can also send signals that similarly influence the brain. Gut microbes appear to play a key role in sending and receiving these signals.

One way they do this is by making proteins that carry messages to the brain. The microbiome can also influence brain activity through the vagus nerve, one of the brain's 12 cranial nerve pairs. This nerve snakes through the body connecting internal organs - including the gut - to the brainstem at the base of the brain. In this way, the vagus nerve provides a physical pathway between the gut and brain, enabling a different route to the chemical pathways of the gut-brain axis for communication between brain and gut. Through this connection, an unhealthy microbiome can transmit harmful pathogens and abnormal proteins to the brain, where they may spread.

Dysbiosis

When the microbiome becomes unbalanced, the first sign is usually digestive problems - known as gut dysbiosis. Symptoms can include, intestinal inflammation, leaky gut (where the gut wall begins to weaken), constipation, diarrhoea, nausea, bloating and other gut-based metabolic changes. Immune



response and normal bodily functions such as liver, heart and kidney function may also be negatively affected by dysbiosis. Dysbiosis can be reversed depending upon cause. For example, a stomach bug or poor diet can be more easily fixed than disease or illness such as cancer, obesity, or diabetes.

Scientists have investigated the impact of dysbiosis on different neurological disorders, including Alzheimer's, Huntington's and Parkinson's disease, and multiple sclerosis, with early research finding a link between the two. For example, researchers found that in patients with Parkinson's disease gut dysbiosis, often

as constipation, is common. Gut problems may be present several decades before typical symptoms appear, with evidence showing the microbiome is altered early in the condition. Research also shows that the mix of bacterial species present in the gut is different compared to people without the disease.

Gut dysbiosis, in the form of diarrhoea and constipation, is also associated with multiple sclerosis (MS). Researchers have found that patients with MS have a different microbiome compared to those who don't have the condition. Other research has found that patients with dementia-like conditions, including mild

cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's disease, have dysbiosis compared to those without memory problems.

All of this early research suggests a disrupted microbiome contributes to the development of neurological disorders by negatively affecting the gut-brain axis. It does this by transmitting abnormal proteins and pathogens along the vagal nerve route. However, the initial cause of microbiome disruption in those with neurological conditions is not yet known.

But on a positive note, our gut microbiome can be modified. A diet rich in fibre, limiting stress, alcohol use and smoking, exercising daily, and using a probiotic can all bolster our gut microbiome's health.

It's currently uncertain whether daily probiotic use can help prevent neurological diseases, which is something we're currently investigating. We are the first team to investigate probiotic use in Parkinson's disease patients to study their microbiome before and after use.

As our knowledge increases, microbiome-targeted therapies might present a new way of treating or minimising diseases. Probiotic use is a promising approach because there are few adverse effects, medications are likely to be better absorbed in a healthier gut environment, it's less complicated than changing your diet, and is quick and easy to implement. It's early days, and there is still much to learn, but based on current research it appears that gut microbiome health is more intimately tied to our brain health than we imagine.

Lynne A Barker & Caroline Jordan
Sheffield Hallam University

Food for Thought

The Leaking Bucket

The leaking bucket is an amazing way to describe how people can erase their good deeds by either accompanying their good deeds with bad deeds or by following up their good deeds with bad deeds. This is something we all need to be mindful of when intending to do something.

Leaking bucket examples

- ~ You wake up early morning trying to do your pooja/prayers/yoga, but your mind is elsewhere and before you know it, you're done with it, without being mindful of it.
- ~ You're very kind to outsiders/people in general and speak with them gently, but with your own family you're always harsh/rude.
- ~ You honour and treat your guests well but when they leave, you gossip about them and talk about their flaws.

- ~ You try to read many religious books, listen to Satsang/Kirtan, participate in social services/Sewa but you swear, insult, curse daily.
- ~ You help others but you're doing it to gain something in return from them and not doing those acts of kindness selflessly.
- ~ You frequently give advice or preach to others, but practise none yourself.
- ~ You slander other devout persons out of hatred/spite when your views do not meet one another.
- ~ You look down on others and feel more superior than them, judging their level of knowledge, based on external appearances.

We struggle to fill our "lives"(the bucket) with "earnings" of religion and knowledge (the water), hoping it will retain inside but it is leaked by the many flaws (the holes) that we commit daily.

An excellent reminder for all, including myself, to try and patch these holes up so we may progress further on this beautiful path of life.

Governance on Trial



Photo - wdrb.com

● Cont. from page 4

The ethos, ideology and seminal values and principles which underpinned the battle for freedom and the fundamental rights of the people as from 1937 have been supplanted after Independence by an endless battle to keep or wrest power by every means including a continuously changing permutation of political alliances prior to each general elections.

“When compelled to choose in a deeply divided America between the Constitution of the US and support to President Trump in his rejection of the results of the US presidential elections, Mike Pence who has been a loyal Vice-President opted to choose the US Constitution over Donald Trump. Democracy in Mauritius would have been continuously buttressed if elected MPs were to unswervingly oppose policies or legislative measures which flout public interest and the interests of the people...”

In short, the idealism and lofty ideals of establishing a significantly better socio-economic and political order have post-Independence given way to dynastic parties and leadership, a no-holds-barred battle for power, an endless musical chair of political alliances, the stifling stranglehold of political leaders over their parties, clan wars and continuously falling standards of governance.

The patent lesson from this deplorable situation is that democracies will be better protected if beyond the necessary limitation on presidential or prime ministerial terms of office, people through their vote opt to choose to entrust govern-

ment and the running of the affairs of the country to a new breed of altruistic politicians committed to serve the people and the country instead of their own interests and reboot our democracy to the highest standards of governance prevailing?

The country is at a crossroads. Entrenched poor governance and ineptitude have hindered the realization of our loftiest ambition as a nation. Decades have been lost. The choices we have to make to meet the daunting socio-economic and health challenges faced by the country in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic will determine the future prospects of the country. The hotchpotch alliance of ageing political has-beens is not a credible way forward. It will comfort and maintain the status quo and its widely decried governance.

We have as a nation the clout to denounce the culpable failings of government and the collective wisdom of identify-

ing and choosing a credible alternative team having the credentials, professional track record, ability and intellect to fathom the new opportunities open to us, recast our economic model and chart and realize a far better future for all. There is a real window of opportunity. The time is now.

* * *

The stalemate over the Rs 375 compensation

The government decision to allocate Rs 375 as compensation in 2021 in a Covid-19 affected year when large swathes of the economy were not even operational as opposed to Rs300 allocated in normal 2019 begged quite a few legitimate questions as to its rationale.

It was generally thought that this decision was taken to help the finances of the most vulnerable in a pandemic affected year in a context of continuously escalating prices of consumer goods fuelled by the unchecked depreciation of the Rupee. What is then the government rationale of not paying the Rs 375 of compensation to the 224,000 pensioners of the country, most of whom depend on their pension to eke out a living in a context of rising prices?

Mrinal Roy



COMMUNIQUE

FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO SMEs FOR PAYMENT OF SALARY COMPENSATION 2021

Following Government's decision to provide financial support to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) for the payment of **Salary Compensation 2021** for the months of **January to June 2021**, the measures mentioned below are being taken by the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA).

SMEs wishing to benefit from this financial support are required to apply to the MRA and this facility will be made available on the MRA website: www.mra.mu shortly. After appropriate verifications of the application, the MRA will credit the bank account of the SME with the refund of the salary compensation amounting to **Rs 375** for each full-time employee earning a basic wage or salary of up to **Rs 50,375**.

Where the SME is an Export Enterprise, the refund of the salary compensation will be **Rs 235** in respect of each full-time employee who is a Mauritian citizen. A Special Allowance of **Rs 140** will be credited directly to the bank account of these employees.

Export Enterprises are required to submit a Special Allowance Statement (SPAS) in respect of every month, on or before the 20th of that month, giving the details of:

- Mauritian employees deriving a basic wage or salary of up to Rs 50,235; and
- Expatriate employees deriving a basic wage or salary of up to Rs 10,235,

to enable the MRA to credit the applicable Special Allowance to their bank account.

SMEs including Export Enterprises benefitting from the Government Wage Assistance Scheme (GWAS) in respect of a month, are not eligible to the financial support for payment of salary compensation 2021 for that month.

For the purpose of this financial support, an SME is an enterprise whose turnover for the accounting year ended in the year 2020 did not exceed Rs 50 million.

For further information, kindly visit the MRA website: www.mra.mu or phone the MRA Helpdesk on **207 6000** during working hours.

MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY

27 January 2021

Ehram Court, Cnr Mgr. Gonin & Sir Virgil Naz Streets, Port Louis, Mauritius

T: +230 207 6000 | F: +230 207 6048 | M: headoffice@mra.mu | W: www.mra.mu



Sanlam Central Agency Ltd

Accredited Agency

Contact: Mrs V. Gopal

1st floor, ARC Building, c/r SSR & Sir William Newton
Streets, Port Louis Tel: 208 0289 / 5782 5678 - Fax: 213 0961
Email: centralagency@orange.mu

Home



☛ Cont. from page 2

Western slave-trading countries have a moral, if not a legal, obligation to apologise.

A truth commission on the slave trade

One way to identify the responsibilities of former slave-trading Western states might be through a truth commission on the slave trade.

Critics might argue that such a truth commission should discuss all actors in African enslavement. About 14 million people were taken from Africa in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, but another 10 million were taken in the Arab trade.

Africans also participated in the trans-Atlantic trade and held their own slaves. The Nigerian writer Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani was shocked to learn that her great-grandfather was a slave trader, selling slaves to Cuba and Brazil after the trade was abolished by the US and Great Britain. When her great-grandfather died, six slaves were buried alive with him.

Acknowledging both Arab and African participation in enslavement, a truth commission on the slave trade could explain that internal African slavery was generally much more benign than American slavery. Enslaved people within Africa were frequently incorporated into the families of their owners. Similarly, Arab slave-owners were more likely to free enslaved children than were Western enslavers.

This type of information would counter arguments that the trans-

Why the West is morally bound to offer reparations for slavery



1833: Slaves in Barbados march through the streets as they celebrate their emancipation. Photograph: Hulton Archive/Getty Images

Atlantic slave trade was no worse than internal African slavery or Arab slavery.

In any event, the fact that other entities committed similar wrongs is not an excuse for a perpetrator state not to apologise.

Financial reparations

One problem in the discussion of financial reparations for the trans-Atlantic slave trade is which former slave trading and slave-holding nations might owe financial reparations to Africa. About a quarter million enslaved Africans disembarked in the US between 1626 and 1875, whereas 5.1 million disembarked in Brazil between 1401 and 1875. Does Brazil owe reparations to Africa? Or does Portugal, a slave-trading nation, owe reparations to Brazil, which was then its colony?

Similarly, do Arab countries and African slave-traders owe reparations for their part in the slave trade? The case of philosopher Anthony Appiah is instructive. He is of mixed Ashanti (Ghanaian) and British ancestry. Both his British and Ashanti ancestors traded in slaves. Do the Ashanti owe reparations to other ethnic groups within Ghana from whom they took slaves?

As with apologies, however, these questions don't absolve Western slave-trading powers of their particular responsibilities. The US, the UK, the Netherlands, France, Spain and Portugal still bear collective ethical responsibility for the wrongs their societies committed in the past.

Yet even if these countries are responsible to pay financial repa-

rations, critics might ask who should be the recipients of reparations. Yet it is now possible through genetic research and research on slave-trading ships for Western slave-trading countries to determine where the bulk of their captives originated (for example Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal or Angola). Western states could then compensate those countries.

Western critics might still ask why they should pay reparations to Africa. The trans-Atlantic slave trade ended in the mid-19th century.

In reply, some scholars and activists argue that, without the slave trade, Africa would be much more developed today. Moreover, the West could not have developed without the trans-Atlantic trade. According to this argument, Western slave-trading states should compensate African states because the West developed while Africa was actively underdeveloped.

Western countries willing to pay reparations could finance specific projects connected to the slave trade. They could donate funds to maintain African museums and historic sites of the trade. They could also fund educational programmes to study the trans-Atlantic trade, or fund a truth commission on the slave trade.

The small amounts dedicated to this type of reparation would not satisfy advocates who argue for reparations in the billions, even trillions, of dollars. But they would at least be a material acknowledgement of the harms the slave trade caused.

The question of whether aid should be part of the equation also raises a host of tricky issues. Have, as some might argue, Western countries not already compensated for the slave trade via foreign aid? And what of the misuse of aid which has been stolen by corrupt governments?

Whether reparations or aid, the same problems of mismanagement, lack of transparency, and corruption emerge.

Making amends

Whatever celebrations the UN organises to mark the 20th anniversary of the Durban conference, former Western slave-trading states bear moral responsibility to offer reparations to Africa.

Apologies, a truth commission on the trans-Atlantic trade, and symbolic financial compensation will not solve the problems of Africa's continued underdevelopment. But they would at last constitute an admission that the West should never have engaged in this trade. They would also be an acknowledgement of the West's responsibility to try to remedy the continued legacy of the slave trade in Africa.

Rhoda E. Howard-Hassmann,
Wilfrid Laurier University

Beverages Industry Workers' Union

1st Floor, Pearl House, Sir Virgil Naz Street, Port Louis
Tel./Fax: 208-0320

Annual General Meeting

Members are kindly requested to attend the Annual General Assembly of the Beverages Industry Workers' Union to be held on Sunday 21 February 2020 at its registered seat – 1st Floor, Pearl House, Sir Virgil Naz Street, Port Louis at 10.00 am. In case of lack of quorum, the AGM will be held on Sunday 07 March 2021 at same place at 10.00 am.

AGENDA:

1. Reading & approval of minutes of proceedings of last AGM
2. Matters arising out of minutes
3. President's report
4. Treasurer's report
5. Election of Executive members for years 2021-2023
6. Appointment of Auditors for years 2021-2023
7. A.O.B

Any member who wishes to stand as candidate in the election should forward his/her letter of candidature to the Secretary on the above address by registered post by Friday 19th of February 2021 at latest.

K. Teeluck
Secretary

Building & General Construction Workers' Union

1st Floor, Pearl House, Sir Virgil Naz Street, Port Louis
Tel./Fax: 208-0320

Annual General Meeting

Members are kindly requested to attend the Annual General Assembly of the Building & General Construction Workers' Union to be held on Saturday 27 February 2021 at its registered seat – 1st Floor, Pearl House, Sir Virgil Naz Street, Port Louis at 3.00p.m.

AGENDA:

1. Reading & approval of minutes of proceedings of last AGM
2. Matters arising out of minutes
3. President's report
4. Treasurer's report
5. Election of Executive members for years 2021-2023
6. Appointment of two Auditors for years 2021-2023
7. A.O.B

Any member who wishes to stand as candidate in the election should forward his/her letter of candidature to the Secretary on the above address by registered post by Tuesday 23rd of February 2021 at latest.

Devanand Kodai
Secretary

Cleaning Enterprises Workers' Association

1st Floor, Pearl House, Sir Virgil Naz Street, Port Louis
Tel./Fax: 208-0320

Annual General Meeting

Members are kindly requested to attend the Annual General Assembly of the Cleaning Enterprises Workers Association to be held on Thursday 25 February 2021 at its registered seat – 1st Floor, Pearl House, Sir Virgil Naz Street, Port Louis at 3.00 pm.

AGENDA:

1. Reading & approval of minutes of proceedings of last AGM
2. Matters arising out of minutes
3. President's report
4. Treasurer's report
5. Election of Executive members for years 2021-2023
6. Appointment of one Auditor for years 2021-2023
7. A.O.B

Any member who wishes to stand as candidate in the election should forward his/her letter of candidature to the Secretary on the above address by registered post by Monday 22nd of February 2021 at latest.

Julmain Dalambé
Secretary



Gems from actual test papers from a British school

1. Water is composed of two gins, Oxygen and Hydrogin. Oxygen is pure gin. Hydrogin is gin and water.
2. Blood flows down one leg and up the other.
3. Dew is formed on leaves when the sun shines down on them and makes them perspire.
4. Mushrooms always grow in damp places and so they look like umbrellas.
5. Momentum: What you give a person when they are going away.
6. To prevent milk from turning sour, keep it in the cow.
7. The parts of speech are lungs and air.
8. The inhabitants of Moscow are called Mosquitoes.
9. A census taker is a man who goes from house to house increasing the population.
10. Most of the houses in France are made of plaster of Paris.
11. The spinal column is a long bunch of bones. The head sits on the top and you sit on the bottom.
12. The word trousers is an uncommon noun because it is singular at the top and plural at the bottom.
13. Iron was discovered because someone smelt it.
14. Syntax is all the money

collected at the church from sinners.

15. Beethoven wrote music even though he was deaf. He was so deaf he wrote loud music. He took long walks in the forest even when everyone was calling for him. Beethoven expired in 1827 and later died for this.

16. The sun never set on the British Empire because the British Empire is in the East and the sun sets in the West.

17. Gravity was invented by Issac Walton. It is chiefly noticeable in the fall when the apples are falling off the trees.

18. The Greeks were a highly sculptured people, and without

I don't want a share in your property, just share 100GB from your data package!



them we wouldn't have history. The Greeks also had myths. A myth is a female moth.

19. Queen Victoria was the longest queen. She sat on a thorn for 63 years. Now Queen Elizabeth is beating her.

Covid vaccine

A Bengali, a Punjabi, a Gujarati and a Keralite were reluctant to take the Covid vaccine. The doctor called them in one by one.

He told the Bengali, "You must take your vaccine." The Bengali said "no". The doctor said: "Every man of culture and civilisation takes the vaccine." The Bengali took his vaccine.

Then the Punjabi came in. The doctor said: "Here is your vaccine." The Punjabi said "no". The doctor said, "Your neighbours have all taken the vaccine." So the Punjabi took the vaccine.

Then the Gujarati came in. The doctor said: "Take your vaccine." The Gujarati said "no". And the doctor said: "It's an order from Prime Minister Modi." The Gujarati took his vaccine.

Finally the Keralite came in.

The doctor said: "Take your vaccine." The Keralite said "no". The doctor said: "Any man of culture and civilisation will take the vaccine." The Keralite said: "Go away, no." The doctor then said: "All your neighbours have taken it." The Keralite replied, "I don't care." The doctor, now desperate, said: "It's an order from Prime Minister Modi". The Keralite replied "Po Mone Modi."

Finally the doctor asked, "Who are you?" The Keralite said, "I am from Kerala." The doctor said, "Oh then you are not entitled to have the vaccine." The Keralite said: "What? Who are you to tell me that I cannot have a vaccine? How dare you deny me my rights! Give me the vaccine or I will conduct a protest outside your clinic!"

The doctor gave in. The Keralite took his vaccine...

Vaccine Thoughts

Choice is between the deep sea and the devil.

Compared to the humble seat belt in your Maruti 800 or a helmet in Hamara Bajaj, take a hard look at the vaccine:

Does a seat belt/airbag/helmet afford good protection?

Yes. Just like vaccine.

Does it protect you 100%?

No. Just like vaccine.

Does it prevent you from getting an accident?

No. Just like vaccine.

If at all we get into an accident, does it reduce severity?

Yes. Just like vaccine.

Does it mean you can be reckless and fast?

No. Just like vaccine. It does not mean that masks can be avoided.

Does a seat belt mean you won't injure others on road?

No. Just like vaccine. But you can still infect others.

When I wear a seatbelt do I think of the company making money?

No. Just like vaccine.

Am I happy that someone invented seatbelt?

Oh yes, just like vaccine.

Does seatbelt itself cause problems?

Yes, seatbelt injuries are possible. Just like vaccines can have side-effects.

Should we still wear a seatbelt?

Yes, yes, yes. Just like a vaccine.

Just like a seatbelt, a vaccine doesn't mean you can be careless and stupid; it just gives you some amount of protection.

I am willing to take the risk of minor side-effects for the 70% chance of that protection.

Quotable Quotes

We can save many relations if we understand a simple fact

That people are not wrong. They are just different from our expectations.

Life is unpredictable. And you never know what is coming next.

Don't ever get too comfortable. Always be ready for change.

Do not let any other's mood swings spoil your day. You may be having plenty of important things in a day, therefore set your priority, motivate yourself and be the one that inspires others.

That's the attribute of a good leadership

Facing your failures and overcoming your fears is the only way to succeed.

Never abandon the one guarding your goal post

Life's LESSONS

In December 1937, a match between Chelsea and Charlton football clubs at the Stamford Bridge stadium London was stopped in the 60th minute due to heavy fog.

Charlton's legendary goal keeper Sam Bartram remained unaware and kept on guarding the goal 15 minutes after the game had stopped, as he did not hear the referee's whistle because of the crowd behind his goal post.

He stood there with his arms



outstretched and completely focused, looking forward so as not to be surprised by the opponent's shots.

Fifteen minutes later, when the stadium police approached him and informed him that the match had been abandoned, Sam Bartram said these famous words with great

sorrow,

"How sad that my friends forgot me when I was guarding their goal post."

Bartram thought his team was attacking and not allowing the opposing team to get close to the goal post.

There are so many players in the field of life whose goal post one defends with enthusiasm and support, but when the situation becomes like a wave of fog, they walk out of the field and leave us alone. Always pay attention to the goal keepers of your lives. Never abandon the one guarding your goal post.

Substance Abuse

4 behavioural signs your loved one may need help

When people are confronted about their substance abuse, they often underestimate how much and how often they use. If you're wondering whether a loved one - be he/she a family member or someone close to you - is struggling with substance abuse, changes in behaviour can signal something is wrong. Here are some key signs to look for when assessing a loved one's need for outside help.



Failure to fulfill obligations

Repeated absences from work, school, family events, and more is not like them. They're usually dependable, but now promises are broken and they can't seem to do what they say they will do.

"They repeatedly show up to social engagements inebriated or are unable to show up at all due to the level of intoxication," says Dr Kasey Nichols NMD who is trained in administering both conventional and naturopathic medicine.

Quick shifts in emotion

"Another behavioral sign to keep an eye on if you suspect your loved one has a substance abuse disorder is the new onset of rapid shifts in emotion for seemingly benign reasons," says Dr Nichols. "These quick shifts in emotions can be a sign your loved one is either craving the substance or experiencing withdrawal and its accompanying anxiety."

Denial of addictive behaviours

They refuse to acknowledge the severity of their drug dependency. They may lie about where their money went or where they spend their time.

"One sign is the person is lying a lot, making you feel as though you are crazy. The situation is turned on you," says certified alcohol and drug counsellor, Charity Collier. Research shows that when people are confronted with facts about their drinking habits, they

tend to underestimate the amount they drink, how often, and deny the impact drinking has had in their lives.

Isolation



According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, when a person is abusing drugs or alcohol, they often pull away from family and friends. They spend most of their time at home and decline invitations to social outings.

Are they more distant and reserved? Often when someone is abusing alcohol more, they spend much of their free time drinking and want to spend less with friends and family. They also might feel ashamed of this behaviour which also causes isolation.

Here's what happens if your substance abuse goes untreated

Seeing treatment for addiction can seem like a daunting task at first, but letting substance abuse go untreated can lead to a variety of negative consequences beyond just your health.

Addiction can eventually affect all areas of life, from work to relationships to finances, causing deep and lasting damage.

"When substance abuse or addiction is not treated, it can lead to a snowball effect in one's life, including increased health problems, disability, and failure to meet major responsibilities at work, school, or home," Lisa Westerson, Senior Clinical Supervisor at Mountain-side Treatment Center in Connecticut, says.

Long-term brain damage

The physical effects of long-term addiction include damage to major organs, including the heart, lungs, liver, kidneys and brain. Alcohol, for example, can cause symptoms that mimic those of dementia. Drugs can affect the brain's regions that control impulses, pleasure seeking, and other cognitive functions needed for daily life.

However, brain damage from drugs can be reversed. Abstaining from the addictive substance for long periods of time while sticking to treatment can eventually repair brain function.

The disease gets worse

Substance abuse is a chronic disease, and treating it like one can help with treatment. For instance, addiction can be a lifelong battle, and like other life-long conditions, it requires a commitment to treatment and maintaining good health.

"If [an addiction] goes untreated for a long period of time, there is typically relapse and progression of the disease," Dr Joseph DeSanto, a doctor of internal medicine who is also a former addict, says. "There is a small percentage of individuals that achieve spontaneous sobriety and recovery, but these are seen less frequently because of the availability and potency of illicit and prescription drugs."

But this doesn't mean treatment isn't possible. Addiction can be managed successfully. The key is maintaining the tools you learned in treatment through support groups and counselling.

Relationships suffer

Substance abuse can wreak havoc on relationships. Addiction can also make other mental health conditions worse while masking them. For instance, more than a quarter of those living with addiction also have a mental health condition that needs addressing.

"People who seek addiction treatment often have characteristics of co-occurring disorders such as depres-



sion, anxiety, and trauma," Patrick Dunn, a licensed therapist and President of Recovery Services at Landmark Recovery in Kentucky, says. "All of these issues including addiction block people off from creating relationships with others."

However, treatment can mean getting to the core of these problems. A dual diagnosis can mean addressing mental health and substance use disorder at the same time.

Advice on kicking the habit for good

Tackling a substance abuse problem can be overwhelming, but with the proper treatment it can be done. The

first step, admitting you have a problem and asking for help, is often the hardest.

"The greatest myth about addiction is that people 'struggle' with it their whole life, [but] 60% of all people entering treatment for addiction will achieve sustained remission," Brad Lander, PhD, a clinical psychologist and addiction medicine specialist in the Department of Psychiatry at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, says. "This number is better than rates for other chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and asthma."

Neha Kashyap - WebMD

Local Authorities Workers' Association

1st Floor, Pearl House, Sir Virgil Naz Street,
Port Louis
Tel./Fax: 208-0320

Annual General Meeting

Members are kindly requested to attend the Annual General Assembly of the Local Authorities Workers' Association to be held on Saturday 27 February 2021 at Rose Belle Village Council at 2.00p.m. In case of lack of quorum, the AGM will be held on Saturday 13 March 2021 at same place at 2.00 p.m.

AGENDA:

1. Reading & approval of minutes of proceedings of last AGM
2. Matters arising out of minutes
3. President's report
4. Treasurer's report
5. A.O.B

Sutyandarsing Runglall
Secretary

5 divas and their fashionable maternity wardrobe

Gone are the days when actresses were seen fleeing away because of their pregnancy. With modern times, there are modern changes and Bollywood ladies are here to slay it with their maternity style files. From baggy jumpsuits to strappy midi-dresses to glamorous thigh slit gowns - Bollywood divas have donned all kinds of silhouettes and fabrics and owned their pregnancy looks with utmost style and glamour. Flaunting your baby bump has become a trend altogether in tinsel town and these Bollywood beauties are surely acing the field with some enviable fashion choices.

Let us have a look, courtesy of Filmfare, at a few of the actresses who have set a high standard for fashion in the department of maternity outfits.

Anushka Sharma

The newest mommy in town has had quite a few fashionable moments in her first pregnancy. Known for her effortless fashion picks that completely go with her personality, her maternity wardrobe was nothing short of sartorial elegance. She kept it simple and relatable. Her wardrobe was seen to showcase the latest trends of oversized t-shirts, easy-breezy dresses, kurtas, and dungarees.

The actress was glowing with happiness in one of the most loved pictures where she is seen wearing a salmon pink dungaree over a classic white t-shirt. The diva looked as elegant as ever in an Anita Dongre white Anarkali for Diwali and chaandbaalis to add a little bit of drama. From prints to florals to comfortable cotton dresses and billowing sleeved midi dresses, she made a strong case for fun and chic maternity fashion.

Lisa Hayden

You cannot get past Lisa Hayden when talking about iconic fashion statements made by some of Bollywood's beauties. A successful model and mother of two, Lisa Hayden has broken stereotypes more than once. She is one of those actresses who was seen unabashedly embracing her baby bump in bikinis and halter-neck dresses.

Flaunting her baby bump gleefully, Lisa had a gala time in wearing out of the box outfits. Her street style is always on point and was even more so during her pregnancy. She opted for unheard of wardrobe essentials like Activewear, bicycle shorts and paired them up with chic combat boots. Camisoles and jackets were also quite common in her maternity wardrobe. Looking at the list, we can clearly say Lisa Hayden was all about comfort, functional and relatable outfits throughout her pregnancy.

Neha Dhupia

Fashion is one of the strongest weapons you can use as a reflection of your personality. Exactly what Neha Dhupia was seen doing. Sticking close to her

everyone is envious of. Shilpa Shetty Kundra has always been vocal about her fitness and she



sense of style, she was spotted in a lot of bold and vivid hues and stylish dresses. She had fun with various silhouettes and colours throughout her pregnancy. She did not shy away from wearing fitted dresses with her baby bump.

Fashion is all about comfort for Neha and that reason made it obvious for us to spot comfy midi dresses, jackets, and oversized shirt dresses in her maternity wardrobe. She made sure to have a lot of happy and bright colours that would instantly grab attention and be wowed at.

Aishwarya Rai Bachchan

The most gorgeous woman in the world has had her time in the limelight too for her pregnancy looks. She however didn't experiment much but stuck to her all-time favourite throughout the tenure of her pregnancy. It is a well-known fact that the Aishwarya is extremely fond of ethnic wears, sarees are her all-time favourite.

During her period of pregnancy, she was seen in her favourite, mostly designed by the ace designer duo - Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla. Her glamorous avatar was very much intact even during her pregnancy. For casual outings, she kept it simple in baggy pants and easy-breezy tees mostly. Being effortlessly resplendent did not require her to wear something over the top as she seems to be turning heads in the simplest of outfits that were all about comfort during her pregnancy.

Shilpa Shetty Kundra

One of the fittest Bollywood moms that

maintains herself very well. Way back when she was carrying her first child, she was still spotted going out and about and attending events in chic outfits. From vividly hues anarkalis to off-shoulder dresses. She aced both ethnic and western wear. Glowing in whatever she wore, she took the fashion game up a notch with how effortlessly she carried every outfit she donned.

Appartement à louer - long terme



Appartement meublé de 3 c.a.c, climatisé, cuisine équipée, piscine et parking, sécurité (24/24) à Trou aux Biches - Complexe Fleury sur Mer
Tel: 57809413 - 57530881

The Livestock & Allied Industries Workers' Union

1st Floor, Pearl House, Sir Virgil Naz Street,
Port Louis
Tel./Fax: 208-0320

Annual General Meeting

Members are kindly requested to attend the Annual General Assembly of The Livestock & Allied Industries Workers Union to be held on Friday 26 February 2021 at Bambous Village Hall at 4.00 p.m.

AGENDA:

1. Reading & approval of minutes of proceedings of last AGM
2. Matters arising out of minutes
3. President's report
4. Treasurer's report
5. A.O.B

Christophe Colfir
Secretary

Union of Workers of Animal Farms

1st Floor, Pearl House, Sir Virgil Naz Street,
Port Louis
Tel./Fax: 208-0320

Annual General Meeting

Members are kindly invited to attend the Annual General Assembly of the Union of Workers of Animal Farms to be held on Wednesday 24 February 2021 at Flic en Flac Village Hall at 4.00 p.m.

AGENDA:

1. Reading & approval of minutes of proceedings of last AGM
2. Matters arising out of minutes
3. President's report
4. Treasurer's report
5. Election of Executive members for years 2021-2023
6. Appointment of one Auditor for years 2021-2023
7. A.O.B

Any member who wishes to stand as candidate in the election should forward his/her letter of candidature to the Secretary on the above address by registered post by Monday 22nd of February 2021 at latest.

Suresh Dhunoo
Secretary

Salt Pan Workers' Union

1st Floor, Pearl House, Sir Virgil Naz Street,
Port Louis
Tel./Fax: 208-0320

Annual General Meeting

Members are kindly requested to attend the Annual General Assembly of the Salt Pan Workers Union to be held on Tuesday 23 February 2021 at Rivière Noire Village Hall at 3.00 p.m.

AGENDA:

1. Reading & approval of minutes of proceedings of last AGM
2. Matters arising out of minutes
3. President's report
4. Treasurer's report
5. A.O.B

Marie France Dumatin
Secretary

TV celebs reveal what they like watching on the small screen



of every human being to essentially become better.

The shows that I watch should have thrills, romance and a message: Meera Deosthale

"I like watching shows that have some substance and give out a message to the people. It should also have thrills and romance that can be watched with the entire family. My mother loves watching women-centric shows, which, I think, are largely loved by the viewers who are like my mother."

Reality shows and thrillers catch my attention immediately: Vindu Dara Singh

"I like to watch reality shows like Bigg Boss. Thrillers shows also catch my attention immediately. Since I am shooting now, I am not able to see my favourite shows in real time, but I make sure to see the recorded versions when I get time. I am also not able to tweet my reactions like I did before as I am busy shooting."

I like watching comedy and lifestyle related shows: Delnaaz Irani

"I like watching shows that do not sap me of my energy, especially after a hectic day. My go-to shows are the comedy ones for sure, but I also love watching shows related to travel and food."

TV is like a newspaper for me, it keeps me informed about things around me: Sucheta Khanna

"I haven't had a cable connection at my home for the past two years I didn't even get it repaired since everything is online now. If at all I see some show somewhere, it is only to see what my other actor friends are upto or what is happening on other shows. I also watch TV to learn new skills and keep myself informed, just like reading a newspaper."

I like to watch a lot of sci-fi movies on TV: Akshay Anand

"Everyone wants to know what is happening in the country and I think there is nothing better than a few news channels that help us keep track of that. I also watch a lot of Hollywood films as I'm a big fan of science fiction. I miss watching cult comedy shows like *Dekh Bhai Dekh*."

Ever wondered what the actors, whom we see on the screens of our televisions, like to see on their screens? Or do they even like to watch it? Farzana Patowari of Times of India spoke with actors to know what keeps them hooked to their small screens...

I can watch reality shows over and over again: Gauhar Khan

"Reality shows are my all-time favourites and these days, all I am watching is *Bigg Boss*. I can watch reality shows over and over again. I love these shows, because there is an instant human connect with them. Besides, I also like figuring out what human beings are like really, when they're put in unusual situations that are created on the show."

I like to watch shows that make me grow as a person: Sriti Jha

"I like TV shows that I can relate to, they should have stories that are honest. I now give my attention to shows that make me grow as a person. These are shows that represent the capacity

Sugar Industry Labourers' Union

1st Floor, Pearl House, Sir Virgil Naz Street,
Port Louis
Tel./Fax: 208-0320

Annual General Meeting

Members are kindly requested to attend the Annual General Assembly of the Sugar Industry Labourers' Union to be held on Saturday 20 February 2021 at its registered seat - 1st Floor, Pearl House, Sir Virgil Naz Street, Port Louis at 10.00 a.m. In case of lack of quorum, the AGM will be held on Saturday 06 March 2021 at same place and time.

AGENDA:

1. Reading & approval of minutes of proceedings of last AGM
2. Matters arising out of minutes
3. President's report
4. Treasurer's report
5. A.O.B

P. Sydamah
Secretary

Cinema Sirsa - Castel



New Tamil Movie: 'MASTER'

Saturday 30 Jan - 13:00 / 19:30
Sunday 31 Jan - Monday 1 Feb - 13:00 / 16:30
Tuesday 2 to Saturday 6 Feb - 13:00 / 19:30
Sunday 7 Feb - 13:00 / 16:30

YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

Money questions will this time be at the centre of all your preoccupations. However, take time to live, even if you must earn and possess less. Frequenting clubs and groupings will prove profitable. It's probable that a person of the other sex offers to help you in your social life.

Lucky Numbers: 16, 17, 20, 29, 31, 34

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

Beware of inopportune interventions of certain members of your family in the affairs of your couple. You'll be somewhat destabilized by your interior contradictions, but this will help you to know yourself better. Seriously examine the financial proposals which will be made to you.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 17, 20, 23, 24, 29

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

This time you'll achieve one of your dearest professional or social ambitions. If you doggedly refuse compromise, sentimental problems will be inevitable. There'll be a viper in the circle of your own intimate friends. You'll recover your smile by making

efforts to get out of your routine.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 17, 19, 21, 36, 40

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

You'll be exceptionally full of energy and ascendancy; profit by them to bring your various projects to a successful conclusion. Your friendship life will be favoured. Let your partner speak out his/her mind: he/she also has his/her word to say in decisions concerning the life of your couple.

Lucky Numbers: 20, 24, 29, 36, 37, 40

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

You'll have great chances to reconcile with yourself and with the world at large. An amorous union contracted this time will have excellent chances of success. Be careful in your investments. Refrain from expenses which would not prove indispensable.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 9, 11, 15, 20, 29

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

Tendencies to anxiety and nervousness; try to live at a slower pace, don't take stimulants, and do yoga. If you want to engage your heart durably, this is the right week to do so. Unhoped-for opportunities

will allow you to succeed in your work.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 9, 11, 14, 19, 33

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

Your finances will be rather unstable; you must refrain from expenses above your means. Your sentimental life will be highlighted: you'll have great satisfactions heartwise, and you'll live unforgettable moments of complicity with your partner.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 8, 15, 17, 22, 25

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

You'll be well supported in your love affairs; you'll live exquisite hours with the chosen of your heart. Continue to cultivate useful relations, you'll soon need them. Make your accounts, don't delude yourself. In the work field, you'll have the possibility to make good performances.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 5, 9, 12, 20, 30

Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

Stormy love affairs in perspective; don't play with the sentiments of others, for it may turn against you. Try to be more thoughtful. You'll have several opportunities to improve your material situation; you can

carry out fruitful transactions.

Lucky Numbers: 17, 20, 21, 29, 30, 36

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

Beware of confusion between realities and your personal aspirations. The family ambience will be electrified: say nothing, do nothing that can set off an explosion. Risks of cervical pains and migraines; become passionately fond of something and then those ills will disappear.

Lucky Numbers: 11, 12, 15, 19, 20, 23

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

You'll know how to profit skilfully by all the opportunities which will come within your reach. You'll set up numerous projects with your friends, but don't commit yourself beyond your possibilities. You'll enjoy privileged bonds with your children.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 5, 7, 16, 30, 32

Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

If you plan to move, you could finally find the lodgings that suits you well. At work, your renewed self-confidence will be a factor of success. Amorous relationships will be favoured. Many natives will plan to enlarge their families.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 6, 9, 18, 20, 30

CINE 12

Vendredi 29 Janvier - 21.15

Predestination

avec: Ethan Hawke, Sarah Snook,
Noah Taylor

mhc 1

Samedi 30 Janvier - 21.20



mhc 1

Dimanche 31 Janvier - 21.15

Fairfield Road

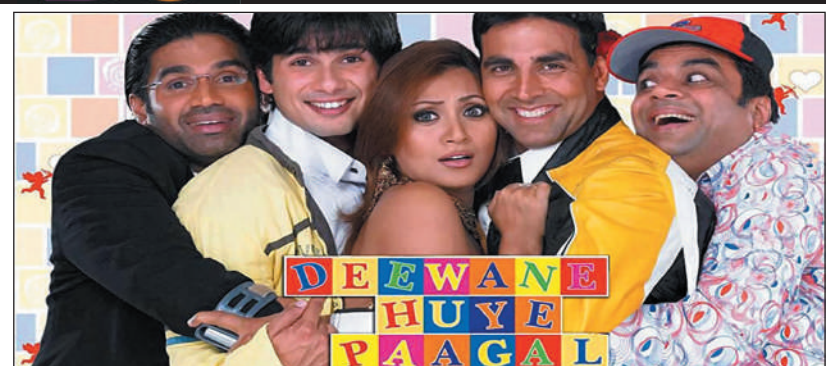
Avec: Jesse Metcalfe, Natalie Lisinska,
Derek McGrath

vendredi 29 janvier	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
	06.00 Local: Rodrig Prog 07.00 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 08.30 Local: Entrepreneuriat Au... 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 14.53 D.Anime: Dee Dee The Little... 15.13 D.Anime: La Ligue Des Super 15.37 D.Anime: Uma And Devan... 15.48 D.Anime: Invention Story 16.01 D.Anime: La Famille Blaireau 16.13 D.Anime: Yo Yo 16.21 D.Anime: Yakari 16.33 D.Anime: Little Spirou 16.39 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 16.42 D.Anime: Oum Le Dauphin... 17.20 Serial: Heidi, Bienvenida A... 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.20 Prod: Lottotech 21.10 Serial: When Calls The Heart	07.00 DDI Live 10.00 Ki Jaana Mein Kaun 11.04 Serial: Zun Mureed 12.00 Film: Rajawadi Chahiye Ame Manbhen Rahiye Starring: Vikram Thakor, Mamta Soni, Jitu Pandhya 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.21 Honaar Soon Mee Hya... 15.45 Mooga Manasulu 16.08 Appoorva Raagangal 16.30 Tu Ishq Hai 16.49 Achra Ke Moti 17.10 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.31 Chhanchhan 18.00 Bloody Romance 19.00 Journal Kreol 20.05 Serial: Band Khirkiyan 20.44 Local: Anjuman 21.10 Local: Urdu Programme- Noor-E-Iman	06.00 Mag: Eco India 06.38 Mag: Carnet De Sante 06.53 Mag: Border Crossing 07.22 Mag: Urban Gardens 07.54 Doc: Empires Of Silver 08.52 Doc: 360 GEO 09.47 Doc: Deadly Greed 11.11 Mag: Eco India 11.52 Mag: Carnet De Sante 12.07 Mag: Border Crossing 12.33 Mag: Urban Gardens 14.05 Doc: 360 GEO 15.41 Doc: The Berlin Wall?? 19.00 Live: Cavadee 2021 21.00 Local: News (English) 21.10 Doc: Farah Diba Pahlavi... 21.23 Doc: Hugo Pratt, Trait Pour... 22.02 Doc: Onibo 22.44 Fine-Tuning The Climate 23.27 Doc: Riding The Rails... 00.09 Mag: Arts And Culture	01.28 Film: The Quiet Hour 02.51 Serial: S.W.A.T 03.32 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive... 05.09 Tele: Muneca Brava 05.42 Serial: Beauty And The Beast 06.29 Film: UFO/Ovni: Sur La Piste 08.30 Mag: Close Up 09.00 Serial: The Magicians 09.54 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: S.W.A.T 12.00 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive... 14.45 Film: Ufo/Ovni 16.43 Serial: The Magicians 17.25 Serial: Beauty And The Beast 18.05 Tele: Daniella 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 19.54 Mag: Zoom In 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Series: Heroes Reborn 21.15 Film: Predestination	08.00 Film: Ishqedarriyaan 12.04 / 19.54 - Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam 12.26 / 20.11 - Radha Krishna 12.50 / 20.32 Sanjivani 13.09 / 21.09 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.28 / 21.24 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.50 / 21.46 - Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki 14.10 / 21.59 - Ikyawann 14.28 / 22.25 - Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 15.22 Film: Krantiveer Starring: Dimple Kapadia, Nana Patekar, Atul Agnihotri 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.51 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka
	06.00 D.Anime: Dragons: Par- Delà... 06.23 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 08.04 D.Anime: The Minimighty Kid 09.35 Serial: Lucas Etc. 09.50 Serial: Magic Mania 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Tele: Daniella 15.00 D.Anime: Polly Pocket 15.21 D.Anime: Teenie Weenie 15.41 D.Anime: La Ligue Des Super 16.05 D.Anime: Uma And Devan... 16.16 D.Anime: Invention Story 16.27 D.Anime: La Famille Blaireau 16.41 D.Anime: Yo Yo 16.48 D.Anime Yakari 17.20 Serial: Oh Yuck 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Entertainment: Nach Baliye 19.30 Le Journal 20.00 Prod: La Meteo 21.20 Film: Hope Dances	07.00 Film: Sorry Daddy Starring: Shameem Khan, Tinu Verma, Mukesh Tiwari 08.37 DDI Magazine 10.00 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 11.40 Dear Prince 12.07 Nanda Saukhya Bhare 12.30 Serial: High School 13.12 Annakodiyum Ainthu Pengalum 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.20 Film: Champion Starring Sunny Deol, Manisha Koirala, Rahul Dev 17.42 DDI Magazine 19.00 Journal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha 20.31 Serial: Bitti Business Wali 21.00 Film: Kesari	06.00 Doc: Riding The Rails... 06.42 Mag: Arts And Culture 06.55 Mag: Global 3000 07.57 Doc: Wildlife Heroes 08.49 Doc: Farah Diba Pahlavi... 09.41 Doc: Onibo 11.09 Doc: Riding The Rails... 12.30 Mag: Urban Gardens 15.33 Doc: Fine-Tuning The... 17.27 Mag: Urban Gardens 18.25 Doc: Zenith 19.00 Mag: Vue D'en Haut 19.30 Mag: Check In 20.05 Doc: Taste Hunters 21.00 Doc: News (English) 21.10 Doc: Destination 21.23 Doc: Car Wars 22.13 Doc: Albania's Last Trains 22.56 Doc: Tsunamis 23.38 Doc: Amazing Gardens 00.04 Doc: Zenith	01.02 Mag: Hollywood On Set 01.28 Film: Predestination 03.25 Serial: Brooklyn Nine Nine 03.46 Film: Black Wake 05.17 Tele: Esmeraldas 06.00 Serial: Heroes Reborn 06.42 Film: Mike Hammer 08.30 Serial: Midnight, Texas 09.12 Serial: Shades Of Blue 10.40 Film: Adventures Of Dally... 12.15 Serial: Brooklyn Nine Nine 13.03 Serial: S.W.A.T 15.05 Tele: Amanda 15.48 Tele: Muneca Brava 17.00 Serial: Heroes Reborn 17.45 Film: A Doggone Adventure 19.10 Mag: Hollywood Best Film... 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: Heroes Reborn 21.15 Film: The Stolen 22.53 Tele: Dulce Amor	04.05 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum 04.26 Radha Krishna 04.51 Zindagi Ki Mehek 05.08 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 05.30 Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki 05.49 Ikyawann 06.11 Bin Kuch Kahe 06.33 Kundali Bhagya 06.54 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka 07.16 Mere Angne Mein 08.00 Zindagi Ki Mehek 10.00 Yeh Pyaar Nahi Toh Kya... 14.00 Sanjivani 16.00 Pavitra Rishta 18.30 Film: Bhavesh Joshi Superhero Star: Harshvardhan Kapoor, Priyanshu Painyuli, Ashish Verma 20.55 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 21.38 Serial: Naagin
dimanche 31 janvier	06.00 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà... 06.23 D.Anime: Boule Et Bill 08.19 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 09.30 Serial: Lucas Etc. 09.50 Serial: Magic Mania 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Tele: Daniella 15.00 D.Anime: Polly Pocket 15.24 D.Anime: Dee Dee The Little... 16.03 D.Anime: La Ligue Des Super 15.57 D.Anime: La Ligue Des Super 16.03 D.Anime: Uma And Devan... 16.14 D.Anime: Invention Story 16.27 D.Anime: La Famille Blaireau 16.47 D.Anime Yakari 17.20 Serial: Oh Yuck 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 MBC Production 19.30 Le Journal 20.00 Prod: La Meteo 21.10 Film: Fairfield Road	07.00 Film: Raadha Aur Seetha Starring: Rajendra Nath , Rajendra Nath 08.49 DDI Magazine 10.00 Local Production: Excerpt 11.00 Serial: Oru Kai Osai 11.22 Serial: Santoshi Maa 12.00 Film: Ek Rishtaa Starring - Amitabh Bachchan, Rakhee Gulzar, Akshay Kumar 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.20 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 15.43 Eka Lagnachi Teesri Gosht 16.06 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 17.00 Serial: Mahakali 18.30 Local: Tipa Tipa Nu Avance 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Serial: Maharakshak 20.49 Serial: CID 21.37 Serial: Naagin Season 2	06.00 Doc: Amazing Gardens 06.26 Doc: Zenith 06.52 Vue D'en Haut 07.43 Doc: Taste Hunters 08.38 Doc: Destination 09.42 Doc: Albania's Last Trains 11.23 Doc: Amazing Gardens 12.40 Mag: Check In 16.21 Doc: Amazing Gardens 18.00 Mag: Tendance XXI 18.30 Doc: Builders Of The Future 19.00 Doc: Garden Party 19.31 Mag: Future Mag 20.05 Doc: Comme Une Envie De... 21.00 Doc: News (English) 21.10 Doc: Destination 22.52 Doc: Morocco??S 23.34 Mag: Tendance XXI 23.59 Doc: Builders Of The Future 00.24 Doc: Garden Party 00.52 Mag: Future Mag	01.28 Film: The Stolen 03.06 Serial: Hawaii Five 5-0 03.47 Film: Cassidy Red 05.18 Tele: Esmeraldas 06.00 Serial: Heroes Reborn 06.42 Film: Hope Dances 08.30 Serial: Midnight, Texas 09.13 Film: Storm Et La Lettre de... 10.51 Film: A Doggone Adventure 12.16 Serial: Hawaii Five 5-0 13.03 Serial: S.W.A.T 14.23 Hollywood Best Film 15.05 Serial: Amanda 15.47 Tele: Muneca Brava 17.00 Serial: Heroes Reborn 18.18 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 18.59 Serial: Macgyver 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: Falling Water 21.15 Film: From The Rough 22.48 Tele: Dulce Amor	00.40 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 02.22 Sanjivani 03.56 Pavitra Rishta 05.56 Film: A Gentleman 08.06 Motu Patlu 08.11 Jai Kanhaiya Lal Ki 09.54 Jaana Na Dil Se Door 11.40 Piya Albela 13.27 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum 15.30 Bin Kuch Kahe 17.01 Punar Vivaah 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Film: Deewane Huye Paagal Starring: Akshay Kumar, Shahid Kapoor, Sunil Shetty 20.30 Nach Baliye 21.12 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 23.06 Piya Albela

MBC 2

Samedi 30 Janvier -
21.00

Stars: Akshay Kumar

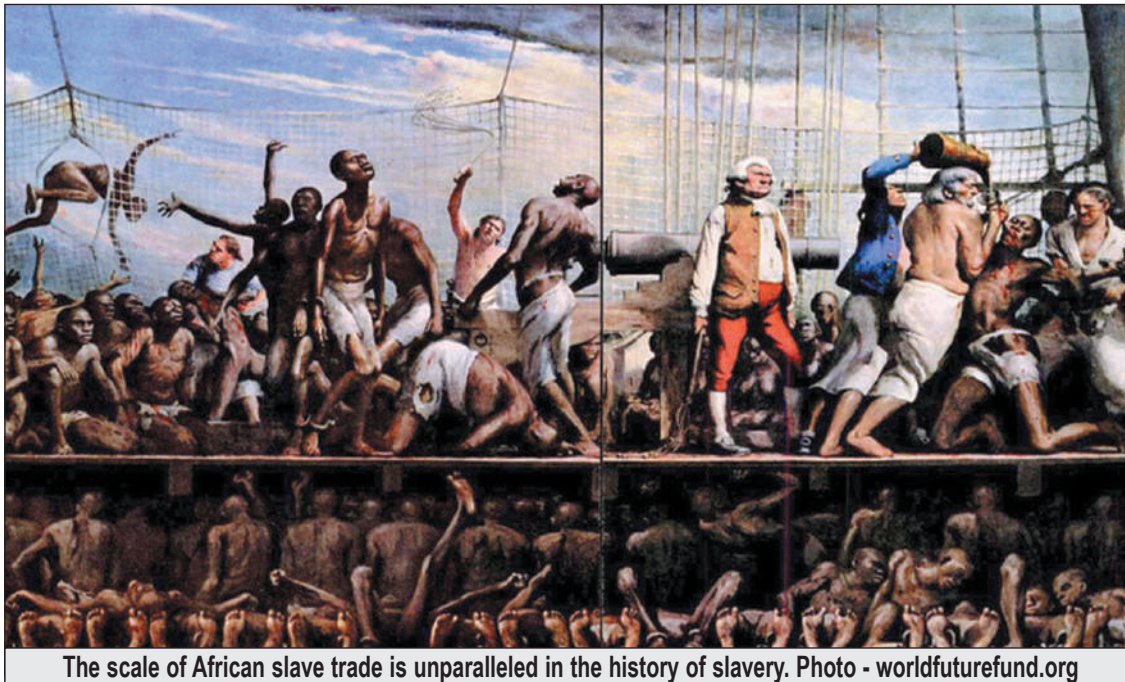
Dimanche 31
Janvier - 18.30Stars: Akshay Kumar, Shahid
Kapoor, Sunil Shetty



Nita Chicooree-Mercier

Slave Trade in Africa

There is a moral obligation to assume responsibility for one of the most inhuman trades in modern history



The scale of African slave trade is unparalleled in the history of slavery. Photo - worldfuturefund.org

The commemoration of the abolition of slavery is a day of remembrance of people forcefully taken away from Africa and sold as slaves to toil for the early settlers in the colonies. Apparently, the first slaves in Mauritius were Tamilians from South India and Africans brought here by Dutch settlers. The biggest chunk of the slave population was purchased by the French East India Company and sold to French settlers in the island.

Yearly commemoration in the US, Brazil, the West Indian islands - Trinidad, Barbados, Jamaica, Haiti, Guyana, the Bahamas, Martinique, Guadeloupe -, and the Indian Ocean islands of Madagascar, Seychelles, Mauritius and Reunion began in the late 20th century, when colonial history and slavery were serious topics of research work and study after the Second World War opened the way for decolonization and independence movements in countries ruled by European administration. Academics and descendants of slaves finally obtained a public holiday to commemorate the abolition of slavery in various countries.

The topic of slavery was analyzed and put in the light of historical context of a period of European exploration, economic competition and expansion in far-flung areas of the globe. The purchase of captives in Africa, the conditions of transportation in slave ships, their sale in the colonies, the working conditions, cruel punishment meted out to runaways, their status as commodities to be used at the free will of slave masters, and the intellectual construct to justify slavery on the grounds of racial superiority have been widely documented, published and shown in films.

Continuous research carried out in academic circles constantly supplies much valuable information which lifts the veil and sheds light on dark areas of the infamous trade across the Atlantic and in the Indian Ocean. Memorials and statues remind today's generations of slave history. Slavery is no longer a taboo subject since 40 years; it is openly debated in

Western nations and due tribute is paid to African slaves on the commemoration day of its abolition. It is widely known that the use of war prisoners as slaves was common practice in ancient Greece and Rome, and other places in the classical era. However, the scale of African slave trade is unparalleled in the history of slavery.

Zanzibar slave market

Apparently, there is not much information on the native lands of former slaves in Mauritius. Judging from linguistic similarities with the Kreol spoken in Guadeloupe and Haiti, part of the slave population must have also originated from the West African coast. What is better known is the slave central market on the island of Zanzibar, a semi-autonomous part of Tanzania, of slaves brought in from Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia.

Arab merchants from Oman settled in Zanzibar where they developed clove plantations and turned Zanzibar into a

centre of East African slave trade in the 17th century. Arab merchants and middlemen gathered in Zanzibar to trade raw materials, cloves and ivory. Oman settlers imported slaves to work in clove plantations in Zanzibar; captives from Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia were shipped through the Indian Ocean to the Persian Gulf and worked in Oman, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Europeans bought slaves from Oman merchants to work in Madagascar, Seychelles, Mauritius and Reunion, besides captives purchased in Mozambique.

The longest slave trade

Military conquests and expansion to North Africa, the Persian Gulf, Central and Eastern Europe created more demand for slaves. Arab merchants in Morocco went on expeditions to the European coast and kidnapped white males they encountered on the coast. Torture chambers in Morocco are testimony to the cruel punishment European males were subjected to when they rebelled against enslavement. Arabs in Eastern and Central Europe sold white slaves, including women, to the Arabian Peninsula. The growing military power of Europe put an end to expansion and white slavery. A shortage of slaves led Arabs to turn to black Africa.

Senegalese historian Tidiane N'Diaye writes about the humiliating and near-death experience slaves were subjected to. An estimated 50% died along the way owing to inhuman conditions, hunger and thirst. The brutal operation caused loss of lives, and many survivors committed suicide in despair. The trade stripped Africa of its population, altered the entire social, reproductive and economic life of black

people in a way that made it more brutal and painful than the trans-Atlantic slave trade, historian Tidiane N'Diaye writes.

Abolition of slavery

Slave revolts and new discourses in Europe gradually made the slave trade and slavery illegal in the 19th century: 1835 in Mauritius by the British even though the French plantocracy tried to sneak slaves into Port-Louis harbour; much later in the French colonies, and 1865 in America.

Arab countries protested against abolition of slavery. It was outlawed and suppressed in Arab lands largely due to pressure by the West, mainly Britain and France. The Sultan of Zanzibar signed the treaty in 1871, but did not enforce it until 1905. The Ottoman Empire led by Turkey outlawed slavery in 1924, Iran in 1929, Saudi Arabia and Yemen in 1962 under pressure by Britain, Oman in 1970. The African state of Mauritania was the last state to abolish it - resuming it after a first abolition in 1905, then in 1981, and ended it in 2007.

For the past decades up to now, it has been customary and convenient to blame the West. Historian Tidiane N'Diaye opines that it also is high time to talk about the past crimes of Arabs slave traders. Muammar Gaddafi, the late Libyan leader, was the only Arab statesman to have asked for forgiveness for crimes committed against Africans. Truth is a liberating factor. In brains full of make-believe narrative of a peace-and-love history, there must be room for reality and facts. There is a moral obligation to assume responsibility for one of the most inhuman trades in modern history.

GENERAL TRADE UNIONS FEDERATION

1st Floor, Pearl House, Sir Virgil Naz Street,
Port Louis - Tel./Fax: 208-0320

Annual General Meeting

Members are kindly requested to attend the Annual General Assembly of the General Trade Unions Federation (GTUF) to be held on Saturday 20 March 2021 at its registered seat - 1st Floor, Pearl House, Sir Virgil Naz Street, Port Louis at 10.00 am.

AGENDA:

1. Reading & approval of minutes of proceedings of last AGM
2. Matters arising out of minutes
3. President's report
4. Treasurer's report
5. Election of Executive members for years 2021-2023
6. Appointment of two Auditors for years 2021-2023
7. A.O.B
Any member who wishes to stand as candidate in the election should forward his/her letter of candidature to the Secretary on the above address by registered post by Thursday 18th of March 2021 at latest.

D. Ramjuttun
Secretary

“Slavery is no longer a taboo subject since 40 years; it is openly debated in Western nations and due tribute is paid to African slaves on the commemoration day of its abolition. It is widely known that the use of war prisoners as slaves was common practice in ancient Greece and Rome, and other places in the classical era. However, the scale of African slave trade is unparalleled in the history of slavery”