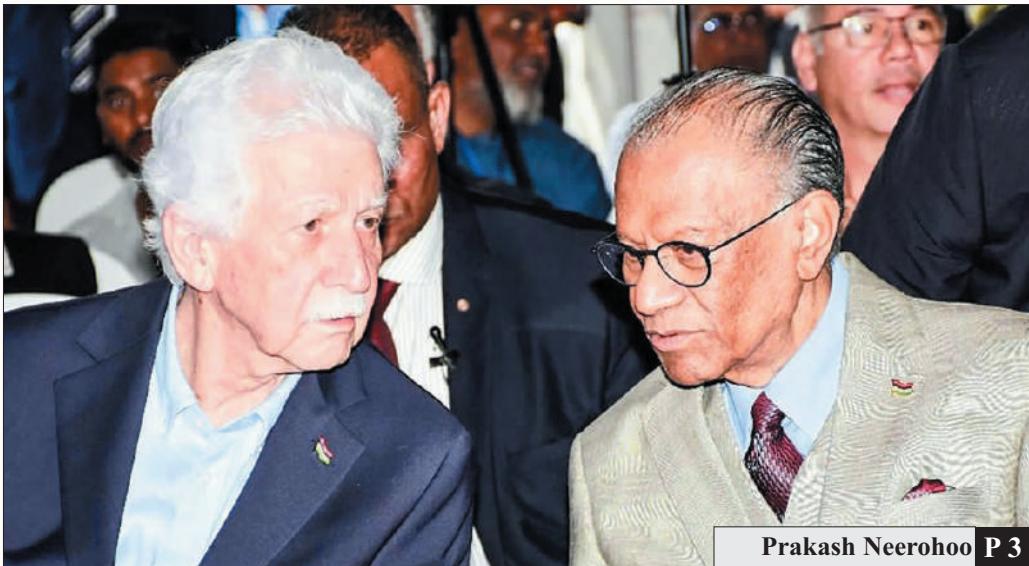


MAURITIUS TIMES

• *The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionable integrity. — Dwight D. Eisenhower*

Opinion

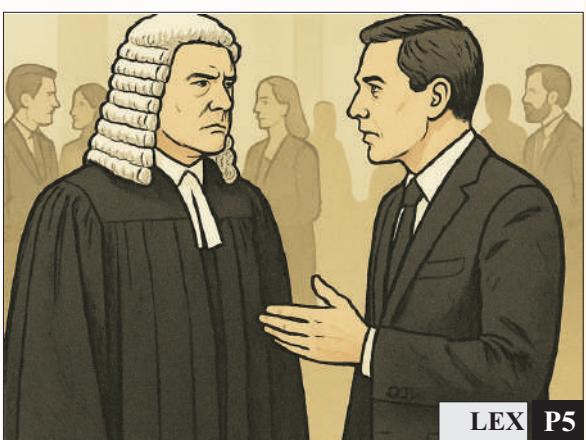


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Beyond Reproach:
Why Public Confidence Demands Restrictions on High Officials' Social Lives

'Judges, magistrates, and officials in sensitive positions must accept stricter limits on their social lives as part of the sacrifice that comes with the job'

Will the Epstein Files Be Released? Maybe Not

It is tempting to speculate, but so far, truth has proved more tantalizing than fiction or speculation

WILL TRUMP RELEASE THE EPSTEIN FILES?



Pic - newindianexpress.com

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"La cassure a été évitée, mais n'est-ce pas une partie remise à plus tard?"

'Joanna Bérenger détient plus que tout autre au sein du parti toutes les qualités requises pour devenir le leader du MMM'

• **'La politique n'est pas une question d'amitié et de bons sentiments...**

c'est essentiellement une question de rapport de forces'



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The Evolving Crisis: Electoral Reform and Political Self-Interest



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Socratic Dialogue In the Shadow of the Father

A Dialogue on Dynastic Succession in Mauritius

The Evolving Crisis: Electoral Reform and Political Self-Interest

The recent political tremors within the Alliance du Changement government — culminating in the reported threat by the leader of the Mouvement Militant Mauricien (MMM), Paul Bérenger, to resign — have momentarily subsided. After what were described as two decisive meetings, the tension between Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam and his Deputy has been “defused,” and the immediate crisis of government stability averted. Yet, the underlying fault lines remain. In our view, the real issue of discord points directly to the thorny issue of electoral reform, with the other matters canvassed by the MMM leader being merely a diversion from this single, central political goal.

According to those close to the ruling alliance, the MMM leader's real concern was the Prime Minister's perceived reluctance to commit to the electoral overhaul that suits the MMM's interests, eclipsing any other ministerial friction. For the MMM leader, who has championed this cause for decades, the government's promise of reform must be a credible path to implementation, not just a political talking point. The crisis was thus less about present governance and more about securing the MMM's future through a proper reform from the Prime Minister.

Party Interest vs. National Interest

It is a truism that we should not be against electoral reform simply for the sake of opposition. A nation's political architecture demands periodic maintenance to ensure its continued fitness for purpose. Indeed, the government's stated aim to consult the public on a system “adapted to the 21st century” and “corresponding to the aspirations of all Mauritians” is laudable. However, the Mauritian history of constitutional change teaches one indelible lesson: every proposed reform is viewed through the prism of **political self-interest** before it is judged on national merit.

The MMM's specific agenda — like that of most parties advocating reform — is the introduction of a measure of Proportional Representation (PR). This is not altruistic; it is a calculated political necessity. Mauritius's current hybrid system of First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) supplemented by the Best Loser System (BLS) is often criticized for producing disproportionate results. It consistently produces “sweep” results — like the historic 60-0 scores — where the winning coalition secures a massive parliamentary majority with only a narrow lead in the national popular vote.

For a party like the MMM, which has

seen its national vote share diluted into political irrelevance under FPTP, a dose of PR is survival. It would guarantee a significant, permanent presence in the National Assembly, securing both influence and a clear opposition function, regardless of whether it is in government or out. The reluctance of any leader of a dominant party, to accelerate such a reform is therefore understandable: introducing PR directly translates to diluting their own power and ceding seats to the opposition, thereby reducing the scale and ease of their parliamentary majorities.

The Reality of the Reform Timeline

The recent, brief political crisis and its “resolution” might wrongly suggest that major reform is about to happen. This is highly unlikely, and perhaps even desirable, given that the timeline for such a complex undertaking is measured in years, not months — a reality often overlooked by the political class.

International best practice and the Mauritian context underscore the difficulty:

Review and Drafting Phase (Years): While the government can fast-track a consultation paper, the entire history of Mauritian reform — from the Sachs Commission (2002) to the Carcassonne Report (2011) — spans over two decades without a breakthrough. The issue is not the lack of technical reports, but the political consensus required to move forward.

Legislative Approval (Years): A major constitutional amendment, required for electoral reform, demands a daunting three-quarters majority in the National Assembly. This single, high hurdle gives the opposition or a dissenting coalition partner immense blocking power, leading to what analysts call “power-sharing immobilism.”

Implementation Buffer (Minimum 12-18 Months): Even if a law were passed tomorrow, the Electoral Commission needs at least a year and a half to revise rolls, train staff, and educate voters on a fundamentally new system.

The current announcement of forthcoming public consultations is a step, but it is merely the opening move in a protracted political game. Given the complexity, the fact that reform has been a recurring stalemate since the pre-independence era shows that it is not a quick fix to a political spat, but a generational challenge.

A proper reform is not merely about adding a few PR seats; it requires resolving the enduring challenge of the Best Loser System (BLS). The BLS, which allocates up to eight seats to unreturned candidates from

their members.

Transparency and Finance: Mandate financial transparency and curtail the pervasive and often corrosive influence of financiers and big business on political decision-making and public policy formulation.

The Constitution of Mauritius, for all its



underrepresented communities, was the essential compromise that guaranteed minority representation and allowed for independence in 1968.

However, the BLS is now seen by many as a constitutional anomaly:

It institutionalizes communalism by requiring every candidate to declare their community (Hindu, Muslim, Sino-Mauritian, General Population), which critics argue runs counter to national unity.

It faces legal challenges for allegedly violating the constitutional guarantee of non-discrimination.

Any reform that introduces PR inevitably involves a trade-off with the BLS. Minority groups, particularly the General Population and the Muslim community, fear that abolishing the BLS without a guaranteed mechanism for their representation under a new PR system would leave them politically exposed. This trade-off — retaining community representation while improving proportionality — is the deep-seated dilemma that has been the true reason for the stalemate for decades.

The Path Forward: Doing What is Best for the Country

We should only undertake a reform if it is a proper one, meticulously designed after a thorough examination of all details, and demonstrably acting in the best interest of the entire nation, not just particular political parties. A proper electoral reform initiative must therefore be broad and go beyond the mere addition of PR seats to satisfy the MMM's proportional aspirations.

It must encompass genuine democratisation:

Equal Franchise: Address the significant discrepancies in constituency sizes to better adhere to the principle of “one person, one vote.”

Party Democratisation: Introduce measures to make political parties more internally democratic and accountable to

imperfections, has served the nation well, allowing for stability and relative communal harmony since independence. It should not be tampered with merely to suit the narrow, short-term interests of parties that may be losing favour with the electorate.

Electoral reform is not the exclusive preserve of politicians. The government is right to commit to a broad consultation exercise. But this must be genuine, including the input of municipal and district councils, civil society, youth, and the elderly. If the government's consultations are merely a hollow exercise leading to the implementation of a politically expedient, hastily constructed amendment intended to appease a coalition partner, they risk damaging the stability of the Constitution without achieving the fundamental fairness the nation truly needs. Such an initiative is ultimately doomed to fail, joining the long list of previous attempts that have stalled due to a lack of genuine consensus.

The true test of leadership lies not in defusing a cabinet crisis, but in building the national consensus required to strengthen the foundation of Mauritian democracy for the next fifty years.

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Prakash Neerohoo

Alliance du Changement

Est-ce un nouveau départ pour le gouvernement?

Il est temps que l'Alliance du Changement aplanisse ses obstacles, retrouve l'esprit du compromis et passe à l'action. Sinon, en 2029, ce sera un autre coup de balai du peuple

La décision du comité central du MMM, deuxième partenaire de l'Alliance du Changement, de maintenir le parti au sein du gouvernement a été accueillie par un soupir de soulagement par la population. Celle-ci a été tenue en haleine pendant plusieurs semaines avec la menace de démission du vice Premier ministre, ce qui allait être suivi probablement d'un retrait du parti du gouvernement, sur fond des divergences avec le Premier ministre sur bien des dossiers d'actualité.

Cette décision est-elle un répit en attendant d'autres secousses menaçant la stabilité du gouvernement ou présage-t-elle un nouveau départ pour le gouvernement après un an de gouvernance mi-figue mi-raisin?

Avant d'analyser les causes profondes des divergences, il faut faire un bref historique des alliances politiques qui ont gouverné le pays depuis 1982, avec le MMM comme partenaire, en vue de tirer les enseignements pertinents.

Contexte historique

Dans le passé, aucune alliance impliquant le MMM n'a terminé ou survécu à son mandat de cinq ans, à l'exception de l'alliance MMM-MSM de 2000-2005 qui fut fondée sur un partage du pouvoir (SAJ et Bérenger occupant le poste de PM pour trois ans et deux ans respectivement).

- L'alliance MMM-PSM, élue en 1982 avec 60 sièges, éclata en juin 1983 avec la création du MSM comme un parti dissident du MMM.
- La première alliance MSM-MMM, élue en 1991 avec 57-3 sièges, éclata en 1993 lorsque le MMM passa dans l'opposition et un groupe dissident du MMM créa son propre parti (Renouveau Militant Mauricien) pour rester aux côtés du MSM.
- En 1997, l'alliance Parti travailliste-MMM, arrivée au pouvoir deux ans plus tôt avec 60 sièges, fut rompue avec la révocation de Bérenger comme ministre, et fut suivie du passage du MMM dans l'opposition.

Le troisième gouvernement, élu avec 60 sièges en novembre 2024, celui de l'Alliance du Changement, était au bord de la cassure la semaine dernière en raison des divergences qui semblaient irréconciliables entre le leader du PTR et celui du MMM. Beaucoup de gens s'étaient résignés au fatalisme qui veut qu'un gouvernement à la majorité absolue ne dure pas longtemps. Jamais 2 sans 3, avait-on soupiré par cynisme! Il a fallu, semble-t-il, beaucoup de pressions de part et d'autre, des pourparlers francs entre les deux leaders et surtout des compromis mutuels pour colmater les brèches et sauver le gouvernement.



Pic - You Tube

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Concentration des pouvoirs

Un premier enseignement à tirer de cette crise passagère est que le MMM n'est pas un parti qui se contente du rôle de second couteau dans une alliance. Il n'a jamais voulu être un participant passif au sein d'un gouvernement et a toujours essayé de peser de tout son poids dans les prises de décisions.

Lorsqu'il n'est pas satisfait, il claque la porte ou se fait expulser du pouvoir après avoir exprimé une opposition interne. Il veut être partie prenante des décisions cruciales qui affectent l'avenir du pays. Certains observateurs attribuent la crise politique récente à une dyarchie (avec deux capitaines à bord) dans le présent régime donnant lieu à des conflits inévitables entre deux chefs de parti, chacun ayant son agenda.

Or, rien n'est plus faux. Comme Premier ministre suppléant, le leader du MMM n'a pas pris de décision cruciale au nom du gouvernement même s'il a exprimé ses opi-

nions sur certains sujets (Banque centrale, Air Mauritius, réforme électorale, etc.). D'ailleurs, tout observateur objectif est d'accord avec les critiques contre les dérives de certaines organisations publiques.

Il n'y a pas de pouvoir bicéphale dans le gouvernement, mais plutôt une concentration des pouvoirs entre les mains du Premier ministre, fondée sur le cumul de portefeuilles ministériels. Maurice est sans doute le seul pays où un chef de gouvernement s'occupe des finances nationales, des affaires intérieures (police et défense), des communications extérieures (port et aéroport) et d'importants dossiers nationaux (par exemple, la rétrocession des Chagos). Intentionnelle ou pas, cette concentration des pouvoirs a pour résultat de ralentir le processus de décision en subordonnant toutes les décisions importantes à l'approbation du bureau du Premier ministre. Si une seule personne doit tout décider, peu importe sa bonne foi, il se prive d'avis et de conseils différents provenant des partenaires.

Ainsi, pendant six mois, certains corps paraétatiques ou entreprises d'État ont été sans direction parce que toutes les nominations (directeurs et membres du conseil d'administration) sont faites par le bureau du Premier ministre. Il est vrai que dans

notre système de gouvernement, le Premier ministre a certaines prérogatives incontestables (par exemple, la nomination du gouverneur de la Banque centrale ou du commissaire de police). Il n'en demeure pas moins que le concept de «Government by Cabinet» dans le modèle parlementaire Westminster exige une certaine collégialité ministérielle pour les grandes décisions. A fortiori, dans une alliance, le parti majoritaire a le devoir de consulter ses partenaires sur les dossiers primordiaux afin d'assurer le consensus. Autrement, les voix dissidentes se feront entendre à l'extérieur.

Toute alliance est fondée sur un programme commun négocié par les partenaires avant les élections et ce programme a des engagements qu'il faut respecter pour garder sa crédibilité auprès de l'électorat. Certes, la situation économique peut imposer certains rajustements aux promesses faites, mais l'essentiel des réformes promises (réforme électorale, Appointments Committee, Freedom of Information Act, etc.) devrait être accompli aussitôt que possible. On ne peut pas attendre cinq ans. Si un an est trop court pour le faire, il faut que l'intention de la réforme soit inscrite sur l'agenda parmi les priorités. Ce gouvernement partait avec un capital politique important pour améliorer la gouvernance générale, et la majorité absolue de 60 sièges ne lui donnait aucune excuse pour tergiverser.

Bilan après un an

Or que constate-t-on après un an? On voit une approche cahin-caha sur bien des dossiers cruciaux qui font l'objet de divergences entre les partis. Voyons quelques exemples.

Premièrement, l'ordre public (*law and order*) ne s'est pas amélioré et il y a une insécurité généralisée dans le pays avec la criminalité en hausse, les accidents fatals quotidiens et la résurgence du trafic de drogue malgré les saisies de drogue. La police n'a pas changé ses méthodes et des récidivistes ou malfaiteurs dangereux sont relâchés après une première arrestation. A telle enseigne que le DPP a attiré l'attention sur les inepties de la police dans un cas de libération sous caution d'une personne responsable d'un accident fatal sous l'effet de la drogue.

Une réforme de la police s'impose plus que jamais. Quant au trafic de drogue, l'agence centrale chargée de s'en occuper cherche toujours sa voie. Elle se fourvoie dans la controverse avec son obstination obsessionnelle contre la dépénalisation du cannabis avant même de faire une étude scientifique.

Deuxièmement, les nominations faites n'ont pas donné les résultats escomptés dans certains cas (Banque centrale, Air Mauritius, MTPA, etc.) et les nominés ont dû démissionner. Il ne suffit pas de nommer des directeurs ou présidents de conseils d'administration selon leurs compétences ou expérience. Encore faut-il des gardes-fous contre les abus de pouvoir et les conflits d'intérêt.

● Suite en page 4

Alliance du Changement

Est-ce un nouveau départ pour le gouvernement?

• Suite de la page 3

La pratique de nommer des chefs de service sur une base contractuelle de neuf mois ou un an (exemples: FCC et la police) n'assure pas la permanence nécessaire de ces postes, une condition sine qua non de l'indépendance voulue du titulaire. Plus que jamais, un *Appointments Committee* est nécessaire pour choisir les meilleurs éléments pour les postes de direction en fonction des compétences avérées, et non pas de quelque affinité partisane.

Troisièmement, la FCC semble être débordée dans le combat contre les crimes financiers avec le nombre croissant d'enquêtes lancées et le manque d'inculpations formelles de suspects. L'affaire du magnat malgache a démontré des insuffisances dans les procédures. Le gouvernement propose une *National Crime Agency* pour la chapeauter ou la remplacer. Aucune institution n'est efficace si elle n'est pas

bœufs avec la mise sur pied d'un comité technique chargé d'étudier les options de retraite (après avoir déjà introduit la réforme). Il n'y a pas d'autre solution à la soutenabilité financière de la pension de vieillesse que le ciblage social ou la récupération fiscale de la pension auprès des gens nantis.

Par ailleurs, la réforme électorale peut ne pas être une priorité pour certains, vu la prédominance des problèmes économiques. Toutefois, elle touche au cœur de la démocratie avec son potentiel de rééquilibrer les pouvoirs politiques grâce à l'introduction d'une dose de proportionnelle dans le système électoral. Une réforme électorale juste peut éviter l'impératif de l'alliance pré-électorale qui est devenu un mal du système politique. Le système de FPTP (*First Past The Post*) oblige les partis de s'engager dans une alliance avant les élections pour maximiser leurs chances d'accéder au pouvoir. Une fois élus, ces partis se découvrent des



“L'ordre public (*law and order*) ne s'est pas amélioré et il y a une insécurité généralisée dans le pays avec la criminalité en hausse, les accidents fatals quotidiens et la résurgence du trafic de drogue malgré les saisies de drogue.

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dotée de cadres performants et indépendants opérant avec des méthodes sûres et inattaquables devant une Cour de justice. De l'ex-ECO (*Economic Crime Office*) à la FCC en passant par l'ICAC, le pays cherche toujours la formule idéale après 40 ans.

Quatrièmement, les réformes structurelles promises (exemple, la réforme électorale) ou en voie de réalisation (exemple, la réforme de la pension de vieillesse) demandent une meilleure approche fondée sur la consultation avec les parties prenantes, y compris la société civile. La controverse sur le relèvement de l'âge d'éligibilité à la pension de vieillesse démontre un manque de pédagogie communicationnelle. Le Gouvernement a mis la charrue devant les bœufs avec la mise sur pied d'un comité technique chargé d'étudier les options de retraite (après avoir déjà introduit la réforme). Il n'y a pas d'autre solution à la soutenabilité financière de la pension de vieillesse que le ciblage social ou la récupération fiscale de la pension auprès des gens nantis...”

divergences de vues fondamentales qui mettent à mal le gouvernement. Les partis devraient pouvoir briguer les élections seuls, quitte à faire une coalition après, comme cela se passe ailleurs.

Ce gouvernement, par sa légitimité populaire, est la meilleure chance que le pays a eue pour renverser la vapeur après dix ans de marasme économique, de dérives anti-démocratiques, de fraude et de corruption, et de laisser-aller généralisé dans les institutions. Il n'y a pas d'alternative. La population a beaucoup d'attentes en termes de justice économique et sociale.

L'Alliance du Changement avait promis le changement, voire la rupture avec un système dépassé. Les recettes archi-



Pic - youtube.com

“La controverse sur le relèvement de l'âge d'éligibilité à la pension de vieillesse démontre un manque de pédagogie communicationnelle. Le Gouvernement a mis la charrue devant les bœufs avec la mise sur pied d'un comité technique chargé d'étudier les options de retraite (après avoir déjà introduit la réforme). Il n'y a pas d'autre solution à la soutenabilité financière de la pension de vieillesse que le ciblage social ou la récupération fiscale de la pension auprès des gens nantis...”

éculées du néo-libéralisme ne marchent plus. Un nouveau paradigme économique et fiscal est nécessaire pour sortir le pays de l'ornière.

Il est temps que l'Alliance du

Changement aplatisse ses obstacles, atténue ses divisions, retrouve l'esprit du compromis et passe à l'action. Sinon, en 2029, ce sera un autre coup de balai du peuple.

Prakash Neerohoo

TENDER NOTICE OPEN NATIONAL BIDDING



INVITATION TO BID

Replacement of one Air Cooled Chiller at AML Corporate Office REF NO: RFQ/WK/TSD/VB/SG/25/151 - TC (17 Dec 2025)

Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd (AML), a member of AHL Group, invites proposals from eligible bidders for the Replacement of one Air Cooled Chiller at AML Corporate Office.

Interested bidders may obtain further information and download the complete set of bidding documents free of charge from the AML website URL <https://aml.mru.aero/index.php/business/procurement/tender-notices>. Prospective bidders should regularly visit this website to take cognizance of any addendum/clarification issued.

A site visit has been scheduled on Thursday 27 November 2025 at 10.00 hrs. The venue shall be AML Corporate Office, SSR International Airport Plaine Magnien. Bidders are kindly requested to confirm their presence to the Chairperson Tender Committee by e-mail at tendercommittee@aml.aero at least two days prior to the scheduled date.

Proposal(s) in sealed envelope clearly marked “**Replacement of One Air Cooled Chiller at AML Corporate Office- RFQ/WK/TSD/VB/SG/25/151 - TC (17 Dec 2025)**” should be addressed to the Chairperson Tender Committee, Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd, and deposited in the Tender Box located at AML Corporate Office, SSR International Airport, Plaine Magnien, on or before Wednesday 17 December 2025 by 13:00 hrs at latest.

Electronic bidding and late bids will not be considered.

14 November 2025

Beyond Reproach: Why Public Confidence Demands Restrictions on High Officials' Social Lives

'Judges, magistrates, and officials in sensitive positions must accept stricter limits on their social lives as part of the sacrifice that comes with the job'

The foundational principle of any effective justice system or anti-corruption body rests on public confidence. When the integrity of its leaders is called into question, the entire institution is undermined. This discussion explores the stringent ethical principles and codes of conduct that govern judges and chief investigators. We examine how and why their need to avoid even the *suspicion* of bias, conflict of interest, or undue influence necessitates significant restrictions on their private social lives — restrictions that ordinary citizens do not face — and what happens when those lines are blurred.

LEX

* The acting head of the Financial Crimes Commission (FCC) has come under criticism in some quarters for attending a non-official diplomatic reception where he was photographed interacting socially. Among those present was a former Minister whom the FCC had arrested and charged with corruption in Feb 2025. Based on established codes of good conduct and good governance principles, would the acceptance of invitations and attendance at non-official functions be generally considered improper?

The sensitive mission of the FCC requires its officers to be totally above any suspicion of impropriety. This principle is violated when an official's conduct creates a reasonable perception of bias or undue influence.

* Does this mean that a judge or a high official of an anti-corruption body is free to accept a friendly dinner invitation from a private person or company, the way an ordinary person might?

As long as their position is not undermined by any suspicion of impropriety, judges or high officials can accept invitations such as attending a dinner, wedding, or funeral. While they have the right to a normal life, their actions are strictly subject to the ethical restrictions their office demands.

The acceptance of such invitations must be assessed to ensure it does not undermine their position by creating any reasonable suspicion of impropriety, conflict of interest, or influence.

* Doesn't this raise a critically important ethical issue for both judges as well as for heads of anti-corruption agencies — especially the need to maintain impartiality and the appearance of impartiality?

Judges and other officials must be impartial. This is a foundational principle of the rule of law and a fair judicial system. Impartiality ensures that decisions are based solely on objective criteria, the facts, and the law, rather than on bias, prejudice, or improper influence.

* Do codes of conduct require judges and anti-corruption heads to observe "significant restrictions on their social lives" — restrictions that do not apply

“Judges, magistrates, and officials occupying sensitive positions have to accept more limits on their private social lives than the rest of their fellow citizens. That is the sacrifice that comes with the job..."



“Judges and other high-ranking officials should not become completely isolated from the community. They are expected to remain connected to the world in order to be effective. This balance is achieved by carefully navigating public life to ensure it does not compromise their role as neutral judges or officials..."

to ordinary citizens? If so, why?

With or without a formal code of ethics, common sense and prudence require judges and other officials who occupy important functions to conduct themselves in society in a manner that avoids opprobrium.

* In balancing a judge/an official's need to "participate in society" against the duty to avoid impropriety, which duty is ultimately given paramount importance by prevailing codes of conduct?

Judges and other high-ranking officials should not become completely isolated from the community. They are expected to remain connected to the world in order to be effective. This balance is achieved by carefully navigating public life to ensure it does not compromise their role as neutral judges or officials.

* If an official says, "I didn't know the bad guy would be there," is that a good enough excuse under these rules?

An official's statement of "I didn't know the bad guy would be there" is unlikely to be a sufficient excuse on its own. A lack of knowledge can only be considered an excuse in very limited circumstances, primarily when the

official's actions are judged by a standard of reasonableness.

* It could be argued that officials in sensitive posts — such as those dealing with prosecution, anti-corruption, money laundering, and taxation, as well as judges and magistrates — have to accept more limits on their private social lives than the rest of us. That's the sacrifice which comes with the job, isn't it?

Yes. Judges, magistrates, and officials occupying sensitive positions have to accept more limits on their private social lives than the rest of their fellow citizens.

That is the sacrifice that comes with the job.

* What is the main danger if a judge or chief investigator attends a non-official party and meets people who have cases in their courts or are under investigation?

The main danger is the perception of partiality or impropriety, which can undermine public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judicial system and the work of the high official.

* If a judge meets a lawyer or a business leader at a social event, how does that create an "unfair opportunity" for the other side in a court case?

When a judge meets socially with a lawyer or business leader involved in a case before them, it can create an unfair opportunity by raising doubts about the judge's impartiality. This is due to the ethical principles requiring judges to avoid even the appearance of impropriety.

* When an official gets an invitation, do codes of conduct require that the official should take steps to check the host and the event before they agree to attend?

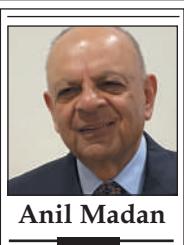
It is best practice for officials to research the host and the event to avoid conflicts, ensure legitimacy, and prevent reputational damage.

* What is the precautionary principle? Does it mean they should almost always say "no" if they're not 100% sure?

Yes. It is much better to politely decline an invitation than risk being criticized for improper conduct.

* If a judge or investigator attends a low-risk event and accidentally bumps into someone involved in a case, what is the safest way to handle that quick, unexpected conversation?

The safest way for a judge or investigator to handle an accidental encounter and quick, unexpected conversation with someone involved in a case is to immediately excuse themselves politely, avoid discussing the case, and document the interaction as soon as possible in an official record.



Anil Madan

Will the Epstein Files Be Released? Maybe Not

It is tempting to speculate, but so far, truth has proved more tantalizing than fiction or speculation

Late on Wednesday, November 19, President Trump announced on his social media site that he had signed the bill passed 427-1 by the House of Representatives the previous day. Trump's signing of the bill was done quietly, muted almost, without the customary celebratory gaggle of acolytes hanging around as he flourishes his Sharpie at bill signing events.

Following passage in the House, the Senate agreed to fast track the bill and enact it by unanimous consent, an initiative by Minority Leader Chuck Schumer designed to avoid debate and, worse yet, amendments that would then have sent the bill back to the House and caused further delays.

The House bill is now law. It directs the Attorney General to make publicly available in a searchable and downloadable format all unclassified records relating to Jeffrey Epstein in the possession of the Department of Justice, including the FBI and US Attorneys' offices within 30 days.

So, does this mean that the Epstein Files, so-called, will in fact be released to the public? Maybe, and maybe not. One would think that with such an overwhelming vote for release, the Attorney General would populate an online database with alacrity. Don't hold your breath. There are many subtexts here.

The push for disclosure

Let us start with the forces behind the push for disclosure. One subtext here is that the pleas for disclosure come from Epstein's victims, the young girls, subjected to his paedophilia and sex trafficking. These victims see "justice" in disclosure and accountability. Another subtext is about what is more a putsch than a push and that comes from the Democrats. It's not really a hope to overthrow Donald Trump, but more to embarrass him as much as possible and those who stuck with him to prevent disclosure of the Epstein files.

Another subtext evinces itself in how rapidly Congressional Republicans turned from resisting mandated disclosure of the Epstein files because Trump was opposed, to their near unanimous vote in favour of the bill. To be sure, Trump had urged Republicans to vote for the bill, but that was clearly after it became clear that the battering ram had busted through the gates, and the ramparts of the fortress were no longer



guarded against those climbing them and clamouring for passage. In short, the subtext here is about whether Donald Trump has suddenly grown webbed feet and transitioned to the status of a Lame Duck? He certainly went from quacking against a House vote in favour of releasing the documents to being a half-hearted cheerleader for the vote — the Republicans following a sort of mallard as would ducklings.

Now that Congress has directed the Attorney General (AG) Pam Bondi to release the Epstein files, will she release all the files and is any of it likely to be embarrassing to the President? Putting aside the question whether such information exists — we simply do not know — AG Bondi can fall back on the text of the law that the House passed to be quite selective about what she puts into the public domain.

The House bill is facially sweeping. It requires the AG to release information that relates to Epstein, Ghislaine Maxwell, flight logs and other travel-related documentation, individuals including government officials named or referenced in connection with Epstein's criminal activities and legal and investigatory proceedings, entities tied to Epstein's financial or trafficking activities, and investigation materials in general. Moreover, the House bill admonishes that no record shall be withheld, delayed or redacted based on embarrassment, reputational harm, or political sensitivity, including to

any government official, public figure, or foreign dignitary.

But there is a catch. Isn't there always a catch? The AG is given authority to withhold or redact that portion of any records that contains "personally identifiable information of victims or victims' personal and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy" or that "depicts or con-

“The House bill is facially sweeping. It requires the Attorney General to release information that relates to Epstein, Ghislaine Maxwell, flight logs and other travel-related documentation, individuals including government officials named or referenced in connection with Epstein's criminal activities and legal and investigatory proceedings, entities tied to Epstein's financial or trafficking activities, and investigation materials in general. Moreover, the House bill admonishes that no record shall be withheld, delayed or redacted based on embarrassment, reputational harm, or political sensitivity, including to any government official, public figure, or foreign dignitary...”

tains child sexual abuse materials," or that "would jeopardize an active federal investigation or ongoing prosecution.", provided that such withholding is narrowly tailored and temporary.

So, those hoping that the Epstein files would suddenly disgorge salacious videos are going to be disappointed.

The AG is also authorized to withhold classified information that might affect the national security of the United States. Why the activities of a convicted paedophile, who died six years ago in a prison, should still affect national security is not clear. In any event, President Trump has the unfettered authority to declassify the Epstein files if he chooses to do so. So far, there has been no declassification order from the White House.

A losing proposition

Let us go back to the one vote against the bill in the House. That vote came from Rep. Clay Higgins, a Republican from Louisiana and is a staunch Trump supporter. Speaker Mike Johnson, also from Louisiana, is likewise a staunch Trump acolyte. Higgins' statement about the bill is intriguing: "I have been a principled 'NO' on this bill from the beginning," he wrote on social media. He went on: "As written, this bill threatens to reveal and injure thousands of innocent people—witnesses, people who provided alibis, family members, and others. If enacted in its current form, this broad release of criminal investigative files to a rabid media will absolutely result in innocent people being hurt." It is not clear how Mr Higgins knows this to be so since he has not seen the Department of Justice (DOJ) or FBI files. And if he had read the bill, he would know that materials relating to ongoing criminal investigations are exempt from disclosure.

Rep. Higgins may have been running interference for Speaker Johnson and, therefore, indirectly for Trump. Johnson, who voted for the bill in the House, was asked for his reaction to Senate Leader John Thune's release of the bill without any amendments in the upper chamber. Johnson said: "I am deeply disappointed in this outcome. I think... I was just told that Chuck Schumer rushed it to the floor and put it out there pre-emptively. It needed amendments, I just spoke to the president about that. We'll see what happens."

Cont. on page 7

Will the Epstein Files Be Released? Maybe Not

It is tempting to speculate, but so far, truth has proved more tantalizing than fiction or speculation

Cont. from page 6

Of course, Trump had already said that he would sign the bill when it got to his desk and now, he has.

Johnson was so set against a bill to release the Epstein files that he tried to thwart an effort by Representatives Thomas Massie, a Republican and Ro Khanna, a Democrat to force a vote on the measure by initiative petition. Such a petition required 218 votes. With 217 votes in place, Adelita Grijalva, the newly elected representative from Arizona (she won in a special election when the seat became vacant on the death of her father who had represented the Arizona district in the House) vowed to provide the 218th signature as soon as she could take the oath of office and officially take her congressional seat. But Johnson kept the House in recess and out of session for weeks on end and refused to swear Grijalva until the House was back in session. Eventually, with the need to pass a continuing resolution to reopen the government after the recent shut down, Johnson was forced to swear Grijalva in and she signed the petition.

Then Trump tried to dissuade three Republican congresswomen from voting to release the Epstein files. Representatives Khanna and Massie maintained that a signature could not be removed from such a petition once affixed to it. Regardless, the Republican congresswomen refused to back down under pressure from Trump.

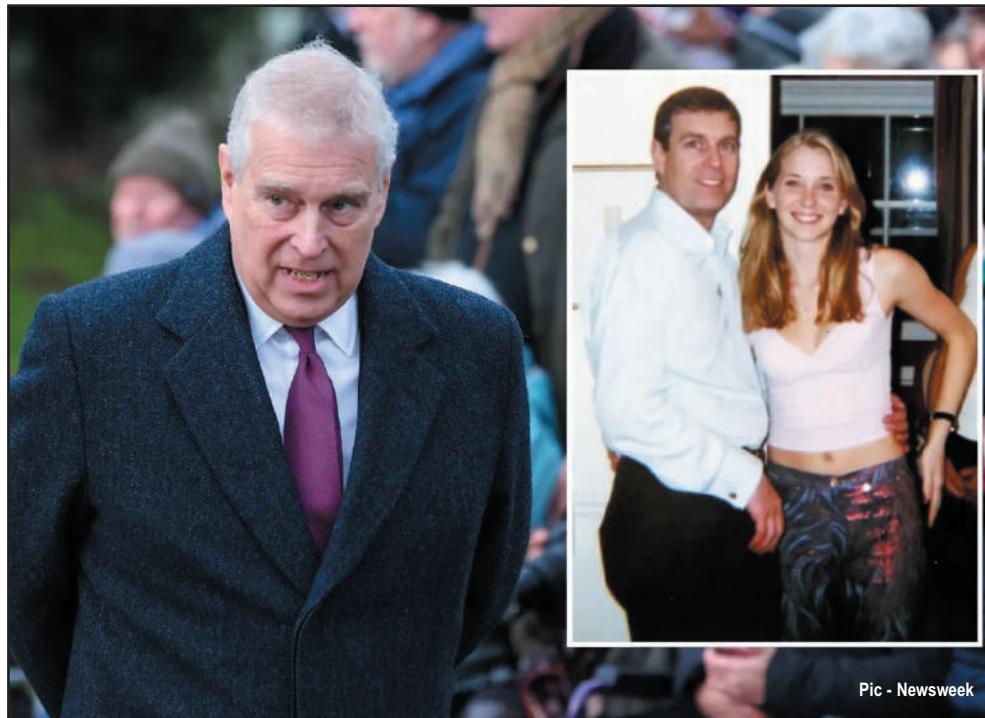
Ultimately, sensing that fighting the bill in the House was a losing proposition, Trump urged Republicans to vote for it. And they sure did.

The fallout could be immense. Massie, in an apparent challenge to Speaker Johnson's leadership, called him out: "Yesterday the House did the People's will by voting overwhelmingly to release the Epstein files, overcoming Mike Johnson's five-month long obstruction. His last hope was that the Senate would insert a loophole to kill the intent of the bill, but the Senate was having none of it."

Schumer appears to have outmaneuvered Thune. But then, Thune probably has presidential ambitions and the last thing he would want on his record is a vote against disclosure of information about a convicted paedophile. "I think when a bill comes out of the House 427 to one, and the president said he'd sign it, I'm not sure that amending it is in the cards," Thune said, thus deftly ensuring that the bill would never return to the House.

Schumer argued on the floor that the Senate "should pass this bill as soon as possible, as written and without a hint of delay. Republicans must not try to change this bill or bury it in committee or slow walk it in any way." Schumer added: "Any amendment to this bill would force it back to the House and risk further delay. Who knows what would happen over there?"

And that is precisely what Speaker Johnson had in



Pic - Newsweek

“The fallout from the Epstein capers continues. Aside from Mr Windsor, the King of England's brother, more recently known as Prince Andrew, there is Larry Summers more recently known as Professor. He has expressed his embarrassment at having maintained ongoing communication with Epstein even after the latter was convicted. Now, Summers has resigned from the board of OpenAI and says he will step down from his teaching duties at Harvard. A House of Representatives committee released thousands of documents included among which were emails between Summers and Epstein. Summers was trying to seduce a younger Chinese economist and asking Epstein for advice on how he might get horizontal with her...”

mind. But he too was outmanoeuvred.

Trump ventriloquist's dummy

There is more to this story. Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene who has been for all intents and purposes, a Trump ventriloquist's dummy, found herself on the outs with Trump as she declared her support for the victims of Epstein's predations. When Trump challenged her, she refused to back down. It will be a strange irony, if Green's stomping on Trump's webbed feet caused him to limp away into lame duck status.

Meanwhile, recall that Trump had called for investigations of Democrats, including former President Clinton, former Harvard President Lawrence Summers and Reid Hoffman, founder of LinkedIn and a robust contributor to Democrats. As one might expect, Bondi, not worrying about doing so in public, assured him that she would jump to it. What this means is that the Department of Justice could easily claim that it has ongoing investigations which prevent it from releasing information relating to the same. Theoretically, the House bill requires the AG to notify Congress and justify any withholding or redacting of documents, but good luck with enforcing that.

Spencer Kuvin is an attorney who has represented Epstein's victims for two decades expressed the hope that the world will see the breadth and scope of this sexual

pyramid that Jeffrey Epstein had built, "exactly who was involved ... everyone that was involved in this or complicit in this." But he said his clients are sceptical about the government because they have been denied justice for so long. And he added: "I don't put it past the government to withhold whatever they think is damaging to them."

The fallout from the Epstein capers continues. Aside from Mr Windsor, the King of England's brother, more recently known as Prince Andrew, there is Larry Summers more recently known as Professor. He has expressed his embarrassment at having maintained ongoing communication with Epstein even after the latter was convicted. Now, Summers has resigned from the board of OpenAI and says he will step down from his teaching duties at Harvard. A House of Representatives committee released thousands of documents included among which were emails between Summers and Epstein. Summers was trying to seduce a younger Chinese economist and asking Epstein for advice on how he might get horizontal with her. Really.

Then there are those who were involved at JP Morgan Chase where James Edward "Jes" Staley, who eventually became a group chief executive at Barclays, was a champion for Epstein despite warnings of shady activities and signs of money

laundering. *The New York Times* reported that Epstein "had long been a treasured customer at JP Morgan. His accounts were brimming with more than \$200 million. He generated millions of dollars in revenue for the bank, landing him atop an internal list of major money makers. He helped JPMorgan orchestrate an important acquisition. He introduced executives to men who would become lucrative clients, like the Google co-founder Sergey Brin, and to global leaders, like Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel. He helped executives troubleshoot crises and strategize about global opportunities."

Britain's ambassador to the US, Lord Mandelson was fired after emails revealed a deep ongoing relationship with Epstein even after the latter had been convicted.

What seems clear is that Epstein and his money opened doors for him. And in return, he opened the doors of his home and island estate to those seeking the pleasures of his sex trafficking.

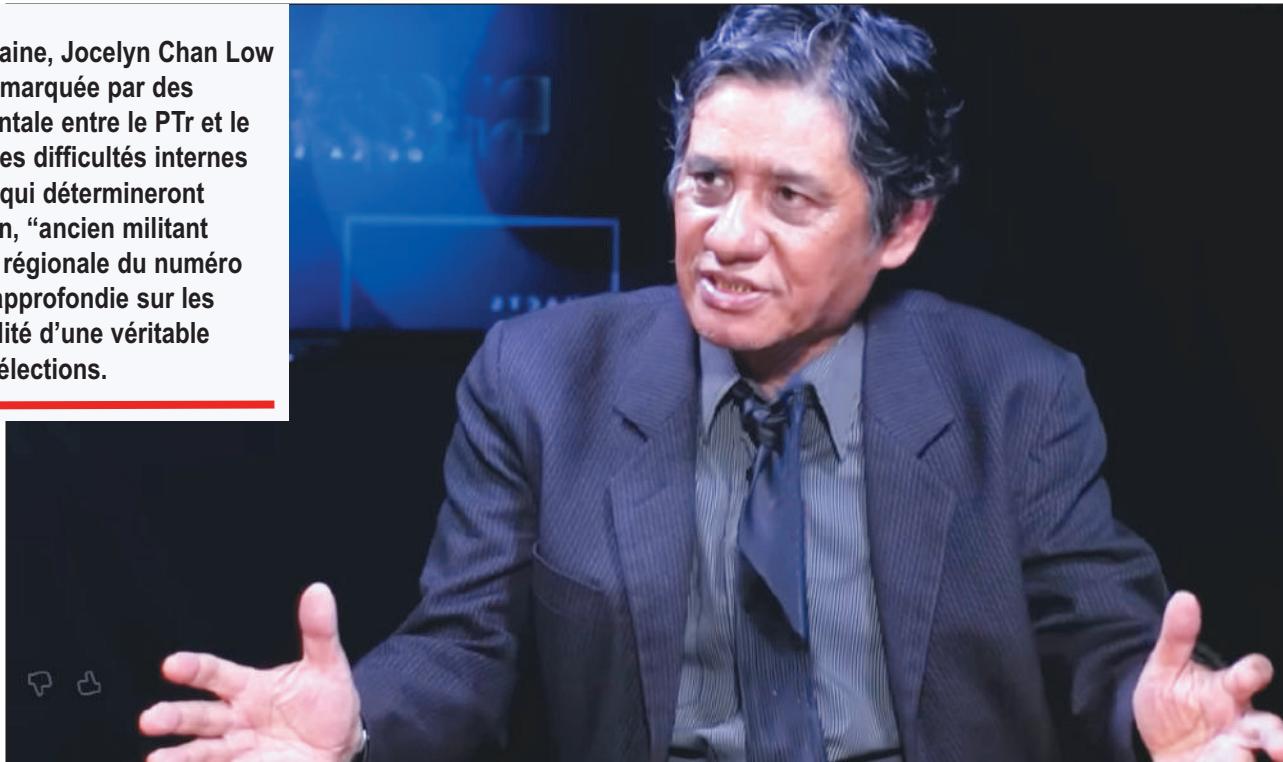
Where will all this lead? It is tempting to speculate, but so far, truth has proved more tantalizing than fiction or speculation.

So, let us wait for it play out.

Cheerz...
Bwana

“La cassure a été évitée, mais n'est-ce pas une partie remise à plus tard?”

Dans une interview à *Mauritius Times* cette semaine, Jocelyn Chan Low analyse la situation politique actuelle, marquée par des tensions au sein de l'Alliance gouvernementale entre le PTr et le MMM. Il revient sur les stratégies de Paul Bérenger, les difficultés internes au sein de l'Alliance et les réformes essentielles qui détermineront l'avenir du gouvernement. M. Chan Low, historien, “ancien militant coalter pendant plus de 25 ans et ex-président de la régionale du numéro 17 dans une ancienne vie” offre une perspective approfondie sur les enjeux à venir, les rapports de force et la probabilité d'une véritable réforme électorale avant les prochaines élections.



Mauritius Times: Vous avez déclaré, dans une intervention à la presse cette semaine, que «personne ne souhaite se retrouver dans la même situation que celle qu'a connue le pays ces deux dernières semaines... mais, connaissant les habitudes de Paul Bérenger, il faut s'attendre à tout». En d'autres termes, bien que les tensions des derniers jours aient été dissipées, l'alliance entre le PTr et le MMM se révèle aujourd'hui plus fragile qu'elle ne l'était il y a un an... C'est bien cela?

Jocelyn Chanlow: Toute alliance entre partis politiques est sujette à des dissensions et à des soubresauts internes au fil du temps, et cela est encore plus vrai au sein d'une alliance regroupant le MMM et le PTr. La cohabitation entre ces deux partis a toujours été difficile, tumultueuse, comme l'a démontrée l'histoire récente en raison des grandes divergences de culture politique et de l'incompatibilité des méthodes de gouvernance entre les deux leaders.

D'ailleurs, non seulement l'Alliance du Changement mais le gouvernement lui-même a été *very long in the making*, ce qui aurait dû nous avertir de l'appréciation des discussions pour constituer le Cabinet. Et il a été évoqué, lors de cet exercice, que le MMM n'a pas eu de *fair deal*. Il faut souligner que même si le cadre institutionnel donne les pleins pouvoirs au Premier ministre et que la responsabilité collective doit primer au sein du Cabinet, Bérenger avait prévenu au cours de l'une de ses conférences de presse que le MMM ne s'est pas transformé en “Mouvement Militant Mouton”.

En effet, le MMM – tout au moins Paul Bérenger et ceux qui lui sont fidèles — n'entrera jamais dans une relation de vassalité avec le Premier ministre, comme l'ont fait les membres du Muvman Liberater, de la Plateforme

Militante ou du parti d'Alan Ganoo avec Pravind Jugnauth. Et les événements récents ont démontré une énorme fissure au sein du gouvernement. Certes, la cassure a été évitée, mais n'est-ce pas simplement une remise à plus tard?

* Que répondriez-vous à cette question?

Il faut d'abord se dire que le “On/Off” que certains — qui n'ont rien compris et qui le ridiculisent comme les sautes d'humeur d'un politicien capricieux — est, en fait, une stratégie politique bien rodée et, en vérité, c'est l'application de la stratégie de *brinkmanship* dans le contexte local.

Cette stratégie, applicable à la fois en relations internationales et en politique intérieure, fut définie par le secrétaire d'État américain John Foster Dulles pendant la guerre froide et fut théorisée par nul autre que le prix Nobel d'économie Thomas Schelling, l'un des éminents théoriciens de la théorie des jeux (*Game Theory*). Grossièrement, la stratégie consiste, dans le cadre de négociations ardues, à manipuler délibérément la crise vers l'escalade au risque d'entraîner un conflit ouvert et dangereux pour les deux protagonistes afin que l'un des deux cède à la dernière minute pour ne pas tomber dans l'abîme.

C'est une véritable guerre des nerfs entre les protagonistes, où celui qui n'a pas peur de regarder l'abîme et de s'y jeter, ainsi que celui qui ose prendre des risques, gagnent à coup sûr. Comme l'écrivait John Foster Dulles: ‘If you try to run away from it, if you are scared to go to the brink, you are lost.’

Évidemment, vu le caractère de Bérenger, forgé par des années de lutte sur le terrain, et sa capacité à abandonner un fauteuil ministériel par fidélité à ses principes, il est le gagnant quand il emploie cette stratégie...

* Jouera-t-il la même partition si jamais d'autres macadams surgissent?

C'est fort probablement le cas. Mais, comme l'écrivait

« Le MMM – tout au moins Paul Bérenger et ceux qui lui sont fidèles — n'entrera jamais dans une relation de vassalité avec le Premier ministre, comme l'ont fait les membres du Muvman Liberater, de la Plateforme Militante ou du parti d'Alan Ganoo avec Pravind Jugnauth. Et les événements récents ont démontré une énorme fissure au sein du gouvernement. Certes, la cassure a été évitée, mais n'est-ce pas simplement une remise à plus tard? »

Bertrand Russell, la stratégie de *brinkmanship* est sujette à des accidents imprévisibles. L'escalade pourrait se révéler difficile à maîtriser et, si c'est le cas, alors on arrive à la cassure et au conflit ouvert entre les deux protagonistes.

* Il se pourrait aussi que l'élément de confiance se soit érodé, et que ce soit désormais le rapport de forces qui détermine l'avenir de cette alliance. Quelle analyse faites-vous du rapport de force à l'issue de cette crise?

Croyez-vous toujours que la politique est une question d'amitié et de bons sentiments et non essentiellement une question de rapport de forces, surtout quand on a affaire à des politiciens chevronnés et non à des novices nés de la dernière pluie? La confiance n'est plus là depuis longtemps, depuis 1997 ou encore depuis la campagne électorale de 2014, et encore plus depuis les événements de ses derniers mois...

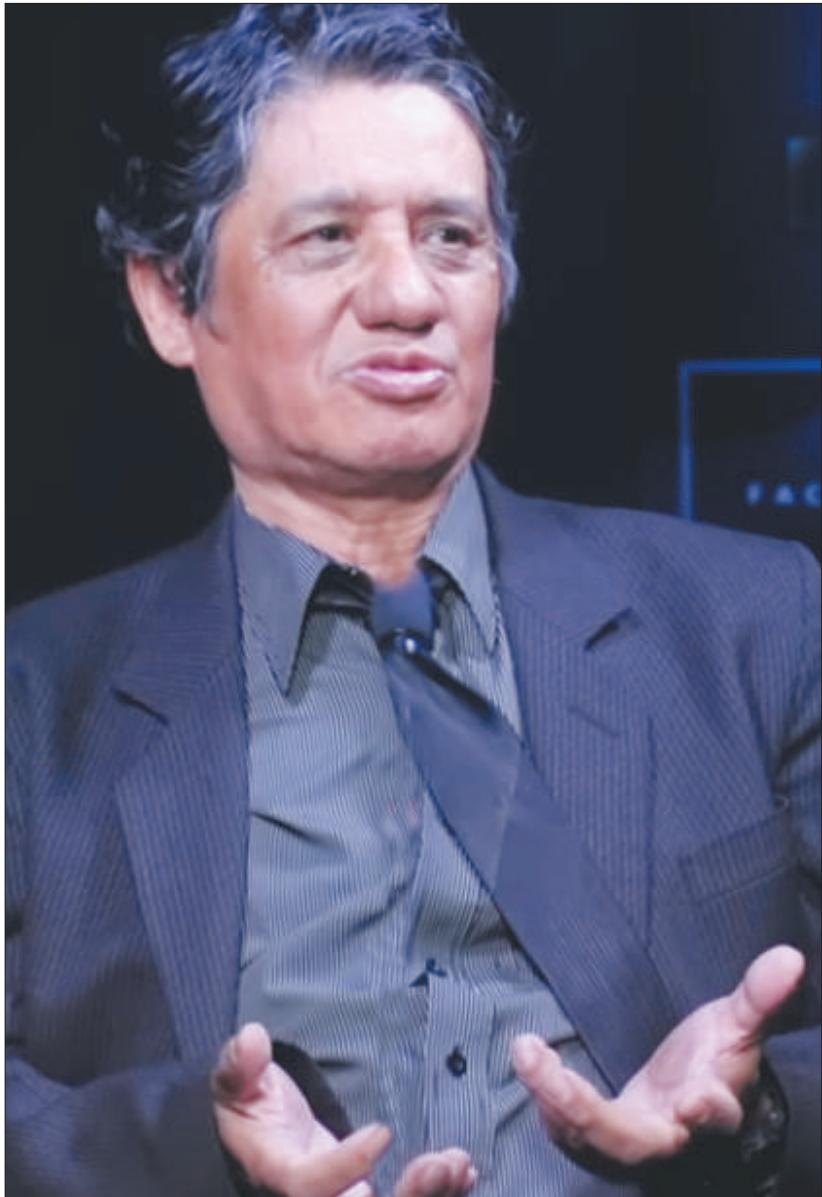
D'ailleurs, à la fois le langage corporel et les déclarations de Paul Bérenger à l'issue du Comité Central de lundi dernier démontrent clairement que le DPM reste au gouvernement principalement pour que les engagements pris envers l'électorat soient honorés.

☞ Suite en page 9

« Il faut souligner que le Premier ministre n'est pas un président élu au suffrage universel avec pouvoir exécutif et, dans le Cabinet des ministres, il n'est que *primus inter pares*.

D'ailleurs, il est à la tête d'une alliance politique élue sur un programme électoral qui est le socle de sa légitimité populaire. Bérenger ne fait que réclamer la mise en œuvre de ce qui a été avalisé par l'électorat... »

‘Joanna Bérenger détient plus que tout autre au sein du parti toutes les qualités requises pour devenir le leader du MMM’



« Croyez-vous toujours que la politique est une question d'amitié et de bons sentiments et non essentiellement une question de rapport de forces, surtout quand on a affaire à des politiciens chevronnés et non à des novices nés de la dernière pluie? La confiance n'est plus là depuis longtemps, depuis 1997 ou encore depuis la campagne électorale de 2014, et encore plus depuis les événements de ses derniers mois... »

☞ Suite de la page 8

Il n'y a pas eu d'envolées lyriques sur la solidité de l'Alliance ni sur le travail formidable du PM...

* L'apaisement repose-t-il sur des concessions concrètes par rapport aux réformes demandées, ou s'agit-il plutôt d'une manœuvre du Premier ministre visant simplement à calmer le jeu?

Il est évident que le Premier ministre s'est vu contraint

à faire un grand nombre de concessions pour que Bérenger reste au sein du gouvernement. La déclaration de Paul Bérenger sur la liste de points abordés — son *shopping list* — a bien résumé cela.

En outre, des rumeurs circulent au sujet d'autres concessions majeures qui ne figurent pas sur la liste officielle. Évidemment, ces concessions ne sont que des intentions verbales et tout peut changer du jour au lendemain. *A day is a long time in politics*. D'ailleurs PRB lui-même a souligné à demi-mots qu'il reste vigilant.

Mais Navin Ramgoolam a tout intérêt à faire en sorte que PRB reste au sein du gouvernement. Dans toute cette équation, on a tendance à faire abstraction de l'essentiel: la côte de popularité du gouvernement auprès de la population est à son niveau le plus bas.

Par ailleurs, le MSM, en raison des divers scandales du passé, peine à se relever. Paul Bérenger dans l'opposition — même sans ses ministres qui, d'ailleurs, verront automatiquement leur influence flétrir aussi bien auprès de l'électorat que du gouvernement --, c'est une toute autre paire de manches!

* La plupart des demandes de Paul Bérenger — entre autres, remplacement du Commissaire de police et du chef des Prisons, création d'une 'National Crime Agency', assainissement d'Air Mauritius et, surtout, réforme électorale dans le cadre d'une large réforme constitutionnelle — tout cela relève essentiellement des prérogatives du Premier ministre d'où la question: comment mettre tout cela en œuvre sans fragiliser davantage l'Alliance et maintenir sa cohésion?

Institutionnellement, c'est le cas. Mais il faut souligner que le Premier ministre n'est pas un président élu au suffrage universel avec pouvoir exécutif et, dans le Cabinet des ministres, il n'est que *primus inter pares*. D'ailleurs, il est à la tête d'une alliance politique élue sur un programme électoral qui est le socle de sa légitimité populaire.

Bérenger ne fait que réclamer la mise en œuvre de ce qui a été avalisé par l'électorat en ce qu'il s'agit de la restauration de la bonne gouvernance, du *law and order* et de la mise en place de réformes institutionnelles

* Au-delà des nominations contestées, la situation d'Air Mauritius a été un point de friction. Pourquoi la gestion d'une entreprise de l'État a-t-elle pris une telle importance dans cette crise politique? Est-ce une question de gouvernance ou s'agit-il au fond de désaccords majeurs concernant le partenariat stratégique à long terme que le gouvernement pourrait envisager, ce qui attiserait la convoitise des intérêts d'affaires puissantes?

« Il est arrivé que ceux qui décident de rester — dans l'éventualité d'un retrait de Bérenger du gouvernement — contrôle le Bureau Politique du parti comme en 1993. Mais le Comité Central et surtout l'Assemblée des délégués (qui est l'instance suprême du parti) sont toujours restés loyaux au leader historique du parti, ce qui fait que ceux qui partent se retrouvent à créer des partis qui deviennent finalement des coquilles vides, sans ancrage dans l'électorat. A l'exception de SAJ. Mais n'est pas SAJ qui veut... »

On ne peut que spéculer à ce stade en l'absence d'éléments sérieux et précis. Dire le présent demande autant de rigueur que d'écrire le passé. Sans preuves concrètes, on ne fait qu'ajouter aux spéculations. Il est cependant certain que toute décision majeure, par exemple, un partenariat stratégique avec Qatar Airways, a d'énormes ramifications financières et commerciales, surtout que l'arrivée de Qatar Airways ferait partie d'une stratégie visant à dynamiser les investissements qataris à Maurice dans des secteurs autres que l'aviation.

De ce fait, elles sont suivies de près par les milieux d'affaires soit avec beaucoup d'intérêt ou des appréhensions. Si la gestion de l'entreprise suscite autant de polémiques, c'est sans doute parce que son devenir est lié à des secteurs clés du pays à l'instar de l'industrie du tourisme et du fret aérien sans compter les services auxiliaires liés à l'aviation et à l'aéroport qui brassent des milliards et il semblerait que certaines entreprises y ont fait fortune rapidement. Trop rapidement, entend-on chuchoter...

* Par ailleurs, la presse fait état de tensions internes au MMM, M. Bérenger se montrant "particulièrement amer" (selon *l'express*) envers ceux qui ne l'auraient pas soutenu dans l'hypothèse d'un retrait de l'Alliance. M. Bérenger sortira-t-il affaibli ou renforcé de cet épisode? Qu'est-ce que l'histoire nous enseigne de telles dissensions?

D'abord, le fait que Bérenger soit amer est compréhensible. Alors qu'il engageait un bras de fer avec le PM sur des dossiers importants pour la bonne gouvernance du pays, on aurait attendu une solidarité sans faille de la part de ses lieutenants. Mais tel ne fut pas le cas. Toutefois, en fin stratège, PRB a maintenu la pression comme il le fallait, en déclarant qu'il démissionnerait même si les autres ne le suivaient pas.

Il était évident que l'option qu'il siège en *backbencher* du gouvernement était institutionnellement farfelue. Ce scénario avait été discuté et rejeté en 1983 et 1993. C'est une vérité de la Palice que Bérenger, libéré de toute contrainte de responsabilité collective, fera feu de tout bois sur les décisions du Cabinet où siègent des ministres MMM... Et c'est cette pression psychologique intense qui a amené les résultats que l'on sait.

Quant à la réaction de certains au MMM, c'est en partie du déjà-vu.

☞ Suite en page 10

'La politique n'est pas une question d'amitié et de bons sentiments...

c'est essentiellement une question de rapport de forces'



☞ Suite de la page 9

À chaque retrait du MMM du gouvernement, que ce soit en 1983, 1993 ou 1997, des ministres et des députés, et non des moindres, ont refusé de suivre Bérenger en sortant les mêmes prétextes: qu'ils avaient été élus pour travailler au sein d'un gouvernement, qu'ils ont à cœur l'intérêt de leurs mandants, blablabla... C'est toujours la même rengaine. Cela n'a pas empêché Bérenger de partir...

Deuxièmement, il est arrivé que ceux qui décident de rester — dans l'éventualité d'un retrait de Bérenger du gouvernement — contrôle le Bureau Politique du parti comme en 1993. Mais le Comité Central et surtout l'Assemblée des délégués (qui est l'instance suprême du parti) sont toujours restés loyaux au leader historique du parti, ce qui fait que ceux qui partent se retrouvent à créer des partis qui deviennent finalement des coquilles vides, sans ancrage dans l'électorat. A l'exception de SAJ. Mais n'est pas SAJ qui veut...

« À travers le monde, tout projet de réforme électorale et constitutionnelle suscite des réactions contradictoires. D'un côté, il y a ceux qui veulent maintenir le statu quo parce qu'à leur avis, ils bénéficient du système en place et, de l'autre côté, il y en a qui croient que le statu quo les pénalise. Malheureusement, à Maurice, ces types de réactions peuvent prendre des connotations communales... »

Est-ce que cette fois-ci Bérenger en sortira renforcé ou affaibli? Cela ne dépend pas seulement de ce qui se passe dans les instances du parti, mais surtout si le gouvernement peut créer un *feel-good factor* de nouveau et renverser cette immense impopularité dont elle fait l'objet aujourd'hui ...

* Les tensions autour de l'avenir politique de Joanna Bérenger, soutenue par les jeunes contre les "anciens", soulèvent la question de la succession à la tête du MMM. La crise récente a-t-elle, selon vous, accéléré ou complexifié la transition de leadership au sein du parti?

Il est rare que les successions dans les partis politiques se fassent sans remous à l'exception des partis dynastiques comme le MSM. Et le MMM n'en est pas un. Toutefois, cela ne disqualifie pas pour autant Joanna Bérenger qui, à mon avis d'ancien militant coaltar pendant

Le nom Bérenger est associé au MMM comme Ramgoolam est associé au PTr. Et, ce nom, Joanna le porte avec hargne et fierté. En outre, elle symbolise la jeunesse engagée, la Gen Z, au moment où, à travers le monde, la Gen Z se réveille... A cela, il faut ajouter que d'autres personnalités émergent qui puissent dans ce bassin, notamment Roshi Bhadain qui - de par sa verve, son intelligence et sa personnalité - peut facilement écrabouiller tous ses compétiteurs...»

plus de 25 ans et ex-président de la régionale du numéro 17 dans une ancienne vie, détient plus que tout autre au sein du parti, toutes les qualités requises pour devenir le leader du MMM.

Qu'on ne se trompe pas : le nom Bérenger est associé au MMM comme Ramgoolam est associé au PTr. Et, ce nom, Joanna le porte avec hargne et fierté. En outre, elle symbolise la jeunesse engagée, la Gen Z, au moment où, à travers le monde, la Gen Z se réveille. 2025 a été l'année de la jeunesse et les jeunes veulent du renouveau, pas du réchauffé.

A cela, il faut ajouter que d'autres personnalités émergent qui puissent dans ce bassin, notamment Roshi Bhadain qui - de par sa verve, son intelligence et sa personnalité -- peut facilement écrabouiller tous ses compétiteurs comme on l'a vu dans une émission diffusée sur le net récemment.

Évidemment, c'est aux militants de base du parti de



choisir leur leader en temps voulu. À mon avis, je suis sûr que les militants vont privilégier la fougue et la jeunesse pour l'avenir et le renouveau du parti.

* Paul Bérenger a réussi à faire prioriser plusieurs de ses dossiers clés. Cependant, la cohésion dépendra de la mise en œuvre de ses priorités. Quel est le délai maximal que l'Alliance peut se permettre avant que l'absence de résultats tangibles sur ces réformes (réforme électorale, Air Mauritius, NCA, etc.) ne déclenche une nouvelle crise?

Difficile à dire, mais définitivement ces réformes ne doivent pas arriver à pas de tortue. Le public est déjà impatient à cause du changement qui tarde à venir. Même Resistans ek Alternativ a signifié publiquement que les réformes sont trop lentes à venir. On ne peut qu'espérer qu'elles seront dans le bilan du gouvernement après deux années au pou-

voir...

* Compte tenu de l'historique difficile des initiatives précédentes concernant la réforme de notre système électoral, quelle est, selon vous, la probabilité réelle que l'Alliance parvienne à un consensus sur une réforme profonde avant les prochaines élections?

À travers le monde, tout projet de réforme électorale et constitutionnelle suscite des réactions contradictoires. D'un côté, il y a ceux qui veulent maintenir le statu quo parce qu'à leur avis, ils bénéficient du système en place et, de l'autre côté, il y en a qui croient que le statu quo les pénalise.

Malheureusement, à Maurice, ces types de réactions peuvent prendre des connotations communales. Ouvrir le débat va sans doute démontrer aussi cet aspect. Mais il y a eu un grand nombre de rapports d'experts et l'Alliance du Changement a pris des engagements avec la population sur le sujet. Ne pas se conformer à ces engagements serait trahir la population.

* En conclusion, l'Alliance a-t-elle été sauvée par la force des arguments et des concessions ou par la faiblesse des alternatives pour les deux partis? Et, comment évaluez-vous le risque d'une rupture définitive de cette alliance d'ici la fin de l'année 2026, si les réformes ne progressent pas comme promis?

Dans un contexte d'une véritable cassure entre le gouvernement et la population, avec l'impopularité grandissante du régime, une cassure du gouvernement aurait créé une grande instabilité dans le pays, le régime ne disposant plus de la légitimité des urnes. C'est sans doute cela qui a fait que la stratégie de *brinkmanship* de Bérenger a fonctionné.

Évidemment, la crise a été résolue par des promesses fermes quant à la mise en place rapide de réformes tant attendues. Et si ces réformes avancent très lentement, on sera de retour à la case départ...

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In the Shadow of the Father

A Dialogue on Dynastic Succession in Mauritius

Plutonix

Characters:

- Socrates:** The eternal inquirer, now wandering the digital agora of the 21st century.
- Cephalus:** A successful, though slightly cynical, businessman and political observer, currently relaxing at a beachside veranda.

Setting: A cool, digital rendering of a veranda overlooking the turquoise lagoon of Mauritius. The sound of distant waves and a particularly loud, philosophical seagull can be faintly heard.

Socrates: (Appearing suddenly next to a plate of half-eaten *gâteaux piment*) Greetings, esteemed Cephalus! The air here is as sweet as the promise of a long, undisturbed sunset. Tell me, what great question occupies the mind of a citizen in this prosperous little isle?

Cephalus: (Startled, nearly dropping his glass of *alouda*) By the beard of Zeus, Socrates! Are you still about? I was merely contemplating the latest political melodrama — a local delicacy, you understand. Our problem is not profound philosophy, but simply who gets to run the sweet shop next.

Socrates: Ah, the perennial question of governance! But I hear whispers of a specific flavour of political confectionery here — something you call “Dynastic Politics.” It seems that in this modern, democratic republic, the mantle of leadership often falls, as if by magnetic force, upon the children and nephews of former leaders. Is this not so?

Cephalus: It is, regrettably, our national pastime. We are a nation of rotating political families. The names change slightly, but the surnames remain remarkably consistent. The Jugnauths, the Ramgoolams, the Duvals and now, the talk is all about the Bérenger clan and the MMM, a party once considered the *enfant terrible* of Mauritian democracy.

Socrates: The MMM? Ah, the Mauritian Militant Movement! A fine, fiery name, suggesting a perpetual struggle against the established order. Yet, I am informed that the daughter of its venerable leader, Paul Bérenger, a certain Joanna, is now rising through the ranks. Tell me, Cephalus, is the *Militant Movement* now simply a *Militant Monarchy* in waiting?

Cephalus: (Chuckles dryly) That is the very question stirring the pot! The irony is exquisite. The MMM was born to dismantle the old guard, yet its own structure now appears to be congealing around one fami-

ly nucleus, much like the others. Joanna Bérenger, a newly elected parliamentarian, is now Vice-President of the party. The murmurs are inescapable: Is the leader grooming his heir?

Socrates: A compelling accusation! Let us pursue it. The core of the matter, as I perceive it, is this: Is a son or daughter of a political leader disqualified from high office solely by reason of their birth?

Cephalus: No, Socrates, of course not. That would be an absurd form of political ostracism! We are not living in the age of inherited titles, where talent is irrelevant.

Socrates: Excellent! Then we agree that the child must be judged upon the merits of their **soul**, not the merits of their **surname**. But tell me, Cephalus, what if the politician's offspring is genuinely the most meritorious candidate? The most skilled, the most eloquent, the most dedicated? Should they decline the post merely to avoid the appearance of dynastic favouritism?

Cephalus: Ah, you pierce the veil of cynicism! That is the great defence, is it not? “She is the **best candidate**! She proved herself! The party elected her!” And Joanna herself has denied any ambition to take over, stating clearly: “*La dynastie n'a aucune place chez les militants.*”

Socrates: A noble denial! But now we must examine the nature of **merit** in politics. In the ordinary selection of a shoemaker, we judge his skill by the quality of his shoes. How do we judge political merit in a system where the candidate carries one of the most famous political brand names in the land?

Cephalus: We don't. That is the problem. Their father's name grants them three crucial things an ordinary citizen must spend a lifetime acquiring:

First is instant recognition: She does not need to introduce herself. Her name is the brand.

Second is access to networks: She inherits the father's allies, contacts, and party structure.

Third is media gravity: Every move is a story, while the genuinely meritorious non-dynastic candidate toils in obscurity.

Socrates, the political arena is warped. A dynastic candidate begins the race on the finishing line. Even if she is meritorious, how can we prove her merit was the sole, or even the primary, factor for her success?

Socrates: So, the shadow of the father is so large that it obscures the true talent of the child. It seems the political market is not truly free but is distorted by inherited political capital. But let us return to the claim that the party freely voted her in.

Cephalus: (Sighs) Ah, the party vote. The party machinery, Socrates, especially in the Mauritian context, is rarely an engine of

the very malady it was founded to cure?

Cephalus: It loses its moral authority. It becomes just another vehicle for power. The young militants who once chanted slogans of revolution must now cheer for the leader's daughter, reinforcing the very order they were supposed to overthrow.



pure democratic choice. It is often a finely tuned instrument for executing the will of the leader.

Socrates: Meaning that the majority vote inside the party might be a manufactured consensus?

Cephalus: Precisely. A political party, even in a democracy, is composed of loyalists, aspirants hoping for nominations, and those who know better than to cross the man who signs the paycheques — or at least, the Nomination Papers.

The leader merely whispers a preference, and the majority suddenly discovers the unparalleled merit of the leader's child. The vote becomes a mere ceremony of loyalty, not a genuine selection of the best.

Socrates: So, we are left in a dilemma:

If the child is truly the best, we must allow them to lead, or else we lose the best possible ruler.

But if we allow them to lead, we reward a system that prioritizes **birth** and **name recognition** over the cultivation of **unconnected merit**.

Which, Cephalus, is the greater crime against the republic: To forgo the best possible ruler, or to undermine the very principle of **meritocracy**?

Cephalus: The latter, I fear. The purpose of a democracy is to provide a channel for the best people, from *any* background, to rise. Dynastic politics, by concentrating power, suggests that talent is a family inheritance, a genetic predisposition for governance. This creates a political caste that fosters cynicism among the general populace. They stop believing that their vote or their own effort can truly change the system.

Socrates: And cynicism, as we know, is the acid that corrodes the foundations of the polis. Now, consider the MMM's historical reputation. They were once the party of radical change, the antidote to the old, entrenched families. What happens to the soul of a political party when it succumbs to

Socrates: A tragic transmutation! The Militant Movement becomes merely the Managerial Monopoly of a single surname.

Cephalus: (Nods solemnly) And that is why Joanna Bérenger had to take to Facebook to issue her rebuttal — a modern-day oracle addressing the citizens. She must use social media to desperately declare she is *not* an heiress. The very necessity of the denial proves the depth of the suspicion.

Socrates: So, the answer to our initial question is not simply “Yes” or “No.” The answer is: The son or daughter is not disqualified by blood, but they are forever subject to a higher standard of proof, a double jeopardy of scrutiny. They must not only be meritorious, but they must prove that their merit overcame the gravitational pull of their name, not merely exploited it.

Cephalus: A fair judgment, Socrates. It seems the true challenge for a political dynasty is not winning elections but winning the trust that their success is due to skill alone, and not merely the surname stencilled on the ballot paper.

Socrates: Indeed. Until that trust is fully earned, the whispers will follow them like a persistent tropical shadow. But Cephalus, I perceive your glass is empty. Tell me, if this dynastic trend continues, what will happen when a completely *unmeritorious* son or daughter rises solely on the father's name?

Cephalus: (Sighs and gestures to his waiter) Then, Socrates, we will all move to the opposition — at least until the next generation of the dynasty decides to stage a coup.

Socrates: (Taking the last *gâteau piment*) Indeed. It seems the political drama in this paradise island is as spicy as its snacks. And until you choose merit over magic surnames, my dear Cephalus, I shall return to continue this inquiry. Good fortune, and may your next leader be chosen by wisdom, not by parentage!



Nandini Bhautoo

The Songs that Shaped a Generation

Why the music of 1950s India still haunts the baby boomers

There are people in their sixties and seventies today - retired teachers, shopkeepers, civil servants, engineers, mothers and fathers - who can still hum a Talat Mahmood tune or a Kishore Kumar melody with startling clarity. Ask them what the song means, and a softness comes over the eyes. Something far deeper than nostalgia stirs within them. It is as if the music of the 1950s and early 1960s hasn't merely survived in memory; it has lived there, shaping the emotional worlds of an entire generation.

Why did this particular strand of Indian song -- delicate, melancholy, steeped in longing -- leave such a profound mark on the so-called baby boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964? The answer, surprisingly, lies in a convergence of history, technology, and the inner lives of people navigating a rapidly changing world.

In our age of instant streaming, it is almost impossible to imagine how rare a song used to be. There was a time when hearing a melody was not a casual act but an occasion. A song belonged to the cinema hall, to the single screening you might afford that month, or to the fragile disc played carefully on a turntable, the whole family leaning in as though listening to a secret. It was an age when the visit to the cinema was a rare event, when cinemas were not just entertainment spaces but community-making institutions.

Even the radio -- crackling, temperamental, and utterly unreliable -- turned every broadcast into a small miracle. A favourite song caught on the radio at the right moment could feel like a blessing, especially when the broadcasts were rare and people had to tune in at specific times, on their bulky, old-fashioned devices, to catch All India Radio for a tiny broadcast window per day.

Scarcity heightens emotion. In a world where songs were precious, each listening became unforgettable. Melodies lodged themselves in the mind, not because



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people replayed them on demand, but because they *had to remember them*.

While Mauritius was going through the pre-independence throes, the India of the 1950s, that the protagonists of this story nostalgically referred back to, was still shaking off the dust of war, Partition, and colonial rule. Poverty was widespread, opportunities were few, and families carried unspoken wounds. Into this landscape came a wave of Hindi film songs that seemed to speak directly to the heart's hidden chambers.

Talat Mahmood's tremulous softness, Mukesh's poignant depth, Mohammed Rafi's sweetness, Lata Mangeshkar's ethereal clarity -- these voices offered a vocabulary for emotions that had no outlet in ordinary life. There was a romantic depth in those songs, a sense of longing so large it could lift the listener out of daily hardship and place them, momentarily, inside a more exquisite universe.

Films of the era, especially those of Dilip Kumar and Guru Dutt, carried an aura of elegant sadness. Their songs distilled that emotion and gave it a timelessness. For a generation raised amid struggle, the melancholic beauty of these lyrics provided not an escape, but a way to understand their own inner turbulence.

Psychologists say the music we hear between adolescence and young adulthood creates emotional templates that last a lifetime. For the baby boomers of India and its diaspora, those formative years coincided with the golden age of the Hindi film song.

These melodies were communal experiences. They echoed through wedding halls, tea stalls, verandas at dusk, bus journeys, and school courtyards. People learnt to sing before they learnt to speak of their feelings. A song was the emotional glue of family life, something that held people together across class, region, language, and faith.



“In our age of instant streaming, it is almost impossible to imagine how rare a song used to be. There was a time when hearing a melody was not a casual act but an occasion. A song belonged to the cinema hall, to the single screening you might afford that month, or to the fragile disc played carefully on a turntable, the whole family leaning in as though listening to a secret. It was an age when the visit to the cinema was a rare event, when cinemas were not just entertainment spaces but community-making institutions...”

When this generation hears those songs today, they are not just revisiting old favourites. They are revisiting who they were -- their parents' faces, the lanes they grew up in, the first stirrings of love, the dreams they carried, and the anxieties they could not express.

The 1950s and early 1960s were emotionally earnest decades. Desire was not yet masked by irony. Heartbreak was not yet softened by cynicism. Songs spoke directly, without cleverness or detachment, and audiences received them in the same spirit.

The emotional landscape of that era -- gentle, aspirational, vulnerable -- has never fully returned. Every generation has its music, of course. But for the boomers, the songs of Talat, Rafi, Kishore, Mukesh and Lata were not background noise; they were the emotional furniture of life itself.

So why do the songs of this era continue to haunt those who lived through it?

Because they grew up in a world rebuilt from hardship, where beauty was scarce and therefore sacred. Because the songs carried the emotional weight that everyday life refused to hold. Because they learned to recognise themselves through these melodies. Above all, because those songs were the first mirrors in which they saw their own hearts. Through the song, they are not simply remembering a film but returning to the emotional homeland of their youth.

And that is why the music of the 1950s continues to endure: not as nostalgia, but as the living archive of a generation that learned to feel -- deeply and delicately -- through songs.



“Talat Mahmood's tremulous softness, Mukesh's poignant depth, Mohammed Rafi's sweetness, Lata Mangeshkar's ethereal clarity -- these voices offered a vocabulary for emotions that had no outlet in ordinary life. There was a romantic depth in those songs, a sense of longing so large it could lift the listener out of daily hardship and place them, momentarily, inside a more exquisite universe...”

Pic - YouTube



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Across the Globe

Pakistan army chief grows more powerful



Pakistan Army Chief Gets More Powers, Immunity for Life. Pic - Bloomberg

sions, and Pakistanis "fear a multifront conflict," an expert wrote, pointing to border clashes with Afghanistan. By contrast, Islamabad has turned around its rocky relationship with Washington; President Donald Trump called Munir his "favorite field marshal."

India looks to China for air purifiers

Indians suffering from heavy air pollution are increasingly sourcing air purifiers from China. The capital of New Delhi in particular is seeing worsening air quality, making indoor air purifiers more commonplace, especially in upper-and middle-class households. Chinese brands offering cheaper models are increasingly popular among online shoppers on a budget, *Nikkei* wrote, exacerbating a class divide in India: Western brands still dominate high-value purifier sales. Some homegrown companies offer purification services but their prohibitive prices only attract elite customers. US tariffs make India a promising market for Chinese hardware and electronics; some Chinese smartphone manufacturers are also stepping up their presence in the country.



Chinese air purifier sales rise in India as clean air becomes a luxury. Pic - Nikkei Asia

India, US strike energy deal

India agreed to source nearly 10% of its liquefied petroleum gas from the US, as New Delhi works to finalize its long-awaited trade deal with Washington. Monday's agreement, which an Indian minister called a "historic first," will bolster India's energy security and also mollify the US, *The Times of India* wrote, after Washington slapped New Delhi with punishing tariffs over its trade surplus and purchases of Russian crude.

The deal also helps India diversify its supply of LPG, a key cooking fuel, away from Gulf countries like the UAE and Saudi Arabia, even as New Delhi increases its Middle East crude oil imports following sanctions on Russia. It reflects "the delicate balance India is trying to achieve," Bloomberg reported.

Bitcoin fall prompts 'crypto winter' fears



Crypto Winter Ahead. Pic - Crypto News

The price of bitcoin fell below \$90,000 on Wednesday, marking a 27% plunge from its October high and erasing the digital token's gains for the year. Investors this week withdrew a record \$523 million from BlackRock's flagship bitcoin ETF, and the stock of pioneering digital asset firm Strategy tumbled further than bitcoin itself did over the same period, raising concerns of a "crypto winter."

The slide could imperil a slew of planned digital currency IPOs that aimed to capitalize on the higher valuations and favorable regulatory environment fostered

by US President Donald Trump, *The Information* noted. "Investors have never had more ways to place complex wagers on crypto," *The Wall Street Journal* wrote, and "the dangers of those bets are becoming apparent."

Russia-Ukraine war to end soon? Trump 'quietly' approves peace plan, says report

US President Donald Trump is learnt to have "quietly" approved a peace plan for the Russia-Ukraine conflict in what can be a breakthrough to eventually bring the fighting between the two countries to a halt.

Trump this week approved a 28-point plan for peace between Russia and Ukraine, NBC News reported, citing a senior administration official.

The report said top administration officials have "quietly developed" the plan over the last several weeks in consultation with Russian envoy Kirill Dmitriev and Ukrainian officials, reports *Hindustan Times*.

The plan was first reported by Axios, which had said that the proposal of the United States had drawn inspiration from Donald Trump's 20-point Gaza peace plan.

The official cited in the NBC report declined to share specifics of the peace proposal, noting that it is still subject to negotiation among key stakeholders.

Three US officials told the portal that the peace deal framework has yet to be formally presented to Ukrainian leaders, and that the timing of the draft's completion aligned with a visit to Ukraine by an American Army delegation.

The US delegation landed in Ukraine's Kyiv on Wednesday morning with two goals, according to two US officials, a European official, and a source close to the Ukrainian government: to discuss military strategy and technology, and to help rein-



Trump approves plan for peace between Russia and Ukraine. Pic - NBC News

vigorize the stalled peace process.

Russia-Ukraine war

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has become Europe's most significant war in decades. The fighting has centered on eastern and southern Ukraine, where intense battles, drone strikes, and long-range attacks continue to cause widespread destruction and humanitarian losses.

Ukraine, backed by Western military and economic support, has focused on defending territory and fighting back Russian advances, while Russia has aimed to consolidate control over occupied regions and pressure Ukraine through military and infrastructure attacks.

The conflict has led to massive displacement, thousands of casualties, and a prolonged stalemate with no clear end in sight.

Pfizer, Tris Pharma settle for \$41.5 million in Texas ADHD drug case

Texas's top prosecutor on Wednesday announced the state had reached a \$41.5 million settlement with US drugmakers Pfizer and Tris Pharma, over allegations of drug adulteration and defrauding the state's Medicaid program.

The settlement resolves a 2023 lawsuit that accused the pharmaceutical companies of manipulating quality control tests of a medication used to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), according to a statement from Ken Paxton, the southern US state's Republican attorney general, reports AFP.

Under the settlement, Pfizer and Tris Pharma both expressly deny "any and all liability and wrongdoing," the companies said in statements.

Between 2012 and 2018, tests showed the liquid drug Quillivant XR frequently did not dissolve in the body as it was meant to do -- and therefore did not work, Paxton said.

"Pfizer and Tris Pharma provided adulterated drugs to children for years and changed test results in order to obtain the benefit of taxpayer-funded Medicaid reimbursement," Paxton said in a statement.

"Under my watch, Big Pharma will not escape justice for lying about the effective-

ness of its drugs."

According to its statement, New York-based Pfizer "did not find any impact on the safety of the product for patients."

"Pfizer is deeply committed to the safety and well-being of the patients it serves and takes any allegations about the quality of its products very seriously," the company added.

New Jersey-based Tris Pharma also said it "did not find any impact on the safety of the product for patients. We fully stand by the quality of our Quillivant, now and in the past, and the positive benefit it can have on patients."

NextWave Pharmaceuticals developed Quillivant XR, and Pfizer acquired the company in 2012. Tris Pharma manufactured Quillivant on behalf of Pfizer until 2018, when the former company purchased the product line.

Pfizer confirmed that timeline, saying it "divested and stopped marketing in 2018."

Tarik Ahmed, the technology chief of Tris Pharma from 2013-2017, made a whistleblower complaint that led to the lawsuit.

* Contd on page 15

As Sundar Pichai lauds immigrants, Trump says will take 'little heat' to welcome skilled ones

Sundar Pichai, the chief executive officer of Google's parent company Alphabet, described the contribution of immigrants in technology development in the United States as "phenomenal", noting that the H-1B visa programme has shortcomings which the US government is working to address.

The remarks of Sundar Pichai, who himself moved to the US as an international student before shifting to an H-1B visa, come weeks after Donald Trump announced a \$100,000 H-1B visa fee for new applicants, reports Hindustan Times.

"If you look at the history of technology development, the contribution of immigrants to the sector has been nothing but phenomenal," Pichai said in an interview with the BBC on Wednesday, when asked about the impacts of the crackdown by Trump on H-1B visa holders.

"I think there's a framework by which we all can still bring talented individuals. I think they're making changes to address some of the shortcomings in the current programme," Pichai added.



Immigrants Contribution...: How Google CEO Sundar Pichai Reacted to US Govt's H1-B Visa Crackdown. Pic – MSN

This is not the first time Pichai has lauded the contribution of immigrants to US's economic progress. In June 2020, following the Trump administration's move to suspend immigrant work visas, he had said on X, formerly Twitter, that immigration has "contributed immensely to America's economic success, making it a global leader in tech, and also Google the company it is today".

"Disappointed by today's

proclamation - we'll continue to stand with immigrants and work to expand opportunity for all," he had said.

Trump says will welcome skilled immigrants

In an unrelated yet parallel development, President Donald Trump on Wednesday said he will "welcome" to the US skilled immigrants who will "teach" American workers developing complex products like chips and missiles,

noting he may take a "little heat" over this from his base which supports immigration restrictions.

"And I may take a little heat. I always take a little heat from my people, the people that love me and the people that I love, they happen to be toward the right of centre, sometimes they are way right," PTI news agency quoted as saying Trump, addressing the US-Saudi Investment Forum on Wednesday.

Trump said that a large number of plants, including "extremely complex" ones, are being built in the US that will contribute significantly to the country's economic growth.

Trump added that, given the complex nature of products that will be manufactured in these plants, like telephones, computers, and missiles, companies will have to bring in skilled workers from abroad who can share their knowledge and teach American workers.

The event in New York was attended by visiting Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman.

London housing crisis hits UK economy

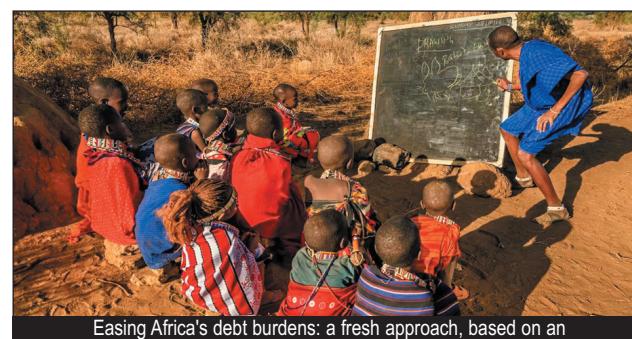
London's housing crisis is holding back the entire British economy, figures show. The capital is now the UK's weakest-growing region, a problem when it accounts for almost a quarter of the country's economy. London's economy relies on a skilled workforce, an economist told the BBC, but it has missed house-building targets, and the shortage means that many workers cannot afford to live there. Many of the city's primary schools are closing as families are unable to afford suitably sized homes. London is not alone: Housing affordability has declined sharply in the last decade, a recent Goldman Sachs report found, driven by land use restrictions, and the costs of mortgage payments and rent have risen relative to income.

Iraq's democratic disillusionment

Iraqis began casting ballots in parliamentary elections that analysts fear may entrench disillusionment with democracy in the country. Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani is seen as having balanced ties between Washington and Tehran -- Iraq's two dominant patrons -- while delivering a modicum of improved

services and security. But turnout has been persistently low, months of horse-trading to form a government are likely to follow, and voters are weary of high levels of corruption. Sectarianism also remains embedded in the political system, if not in the voter base, while a coterie of Shia armed groups retain extralegal power. The "ballot may do little more than endorse a familiar political order," one analyst told Reuters.

Across the Globe



Easing Africa's debt burdens: a fresh approach, based on an old idea. Pic: The Conversation

nations needed immediate debt relief, with interest payments ballooning in recent years amid rising inflation.

While developing countries' debt remains moderate compared to wealthier nations, their government revenues are far smaller and their interest rates far higher, meaning they spend a huge share of their national income servicing debt. Unless these burdens are eased, Africa will never exploit its potential, a former Ethiopian prime minister said. This G20 "will long be remembered for its determination — or for its failure — to rise to the challenge," Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe wrote.

Africa's persistent debt burden

A group of Africa experts said the upcoming G20 meeting in Johannesburg should focus on debt refinancing for low-income countries hit by soaring debt payments. The panel said developing

countries point to widespread reports of torture and forced disappearances through to his overthrow in 1998. Yet proponents note Indonesia's economy grew at an average rate of 7% during his rule, and he largely corralled inflation. That he was conferred the honor by a president who himself is accused of rights abuses amplified anger over the announcement, though public protests have so far been muted.

Indonesia's divisive leader honoured

Indonesia's president named the country's late former ruler -- whose time in power was characterized by corruption, rights abuses, and economic growth -- a national hero. Suharto, who is also the current leader's father-in-law, came to power following brutal bloodletting in 1965 in which at least half a million people alleged to be communists were killed, and



High blood pressure can affect kids but often goes undiagnosed. Pic – Science News Explains

Hypertension rates grow among youth

High blood pressure rates recorded among young people worldwide nearly doubled in 20 years, research found. The work collated existing research

and found that between 2000 and 2020, the percentage of under-19s with hypertension went up from around 3% to around 6%. The condition is associated with raised risk of cardiovascular disease in later life.

The researchers said that rising childhood obesity, salt intake, and sedentary behaviour could be driving the increase. Another recent paper found broadly similar results. A likely factor is that screening and measurement have improved, meaning more cases of hypertension are detected than in the past, but the evidence suggests the rise is largely real.

critics point to widespread reports of torture and forced disappearances through to his overthrow in 1998. Yet proponents note Indonesia's economy grew at an average rate of 7% during his rule, and he largely corralled inflation. That he was conferred the honor by a president who himself is accused of rights abuses amplified anger over the announcement, though public protests have so far been muted.

Compiled by K. Ramlallah



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RETIREMENT
PLANNED OUT
ALREADY**

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- Men of science should leave controversy to the little world below them. — Oliver Goldsmith



Peter Ibbotson

Civil Servants are not Dupes

The finances of Mauritius are at present in a pretty bad state. The revenue of the colony has fallen sharply because of the two cyclones - Cyclone Alix (January 1960) and Cyclone Carol (February 1960). The first definite piece of economic news to be published in London which demonstrated the terrible effect of the cyclones on the island's economy appeared in the October issue of Barclays Bank's **Overseas Review**: "A factory situated in one of the regions which suffered most from the cyclones early this year completed crushing on 12th September, with a production 85 per cent lower than last year." The same periodical carried the news that up to 20th September, only 72,771 metric tons of sugar had been shipped, against 136,982 metric tons by the same date in 1959.

The estimates for the current financial year, 1960-61, due to be debated in the Legislative Council early in November, show for the first time since 1948 a big deficit. It is imperative that in the straitened financial circumstances of the colony all Civil Servants and all Departments are extra careful about expenditure and avoid waste. In the past there has been a lack of strict control in certain Departments (notably the Public Works Department and Architects Department) over certain expenditures. The new set-up, the integration of the Architects and Public Works departments, should show improvement.

political' trade union. He along with the Vallonvillistes, undertook a trade union recruiting campaign and promised that no political speeches would be made either attacking or supporting any political party. To see the assistant secretary of the TUC allying himself, for any reason whatever, with members of the anti-Labour party was bad enough; but now we see that same assistant secretary, this time in his capacity of secretary of the Central Joint Council of Trade Unions, signing a letter to the press urging Civil Servants to rally to Rose Hill *afin de... lancer un mouvement de résistance passive et de travail au ralenti* (go-slow).

Arch-anarchs of Vallonville street, Saint Georges Street and PM.

In calling on Civil Servants to go slow in their work, the Central Joint Council is acting as a puppet troupe, with politicians pulling the strings to make the Civil Servants dance a *vallonville* to the well-known political tune "St Georges." Members of the Civil Service are among the best educated people in Mauritius; they should not allow themselves to be duped by political ignoramuses, by self-

seeking demagogues, by incipient King Frogs. This call for a go-slow is not designed to further the ends of the Civil Servants who respond to the ill-advised call; it is designed, instead, to further the evil ends of the anti-Governmental politicians, whose insidious machinations pervade, and lurk in, many unsuspected places.

Any Civil Servant who indulges in a go-slow protest movement will be doing a grave disservice to the recovery of his country. Civil Servants may feel disgruntled and underpaid; but let them reflect on the man who grumbled because he had no boots to his feet; until he met a man who had no feet. Go slow, and harm your country; don't go slow, and don't harm your country. That is the real choice behind the go-slow call put forth by the Central Joint Council; this Council would be well advised to have second thoughts and to abandon paying heed to its Destructive *éminences grises*.

Mauritius Times

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Thank you so much.
Mauritius Times

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Meanwhile, when we look at the colony's expenditure, what do we find?

That over half the total expenditure, about 55 per cent in fact, goes on salaries and so on to members of the Civil Service. This is a staggering percentage indeed, 55 cents out of every rupee collected in tax goes to the emoluments of civil servants.

In June of last year, we had the unedifying spectacle of the assistant secretary of the Mauritius TUC openly allying himself, in a letter to the press, with Vallonvillistes urging sugar plantation workers to become members of a 'non-

Nothing could be more calculated to harm the country's recovery than such action by Civil Servants. Nothing could harm the Civil Servants themselves more than such action at the behest of the Central Joint Council whose secretary is a man closely associated (through his past association with its leaders) with the anti-Labour, anti-Government party. The signatures may be the signatures of Messrs so and so; the words may be the words of the Central Joint Council; but the inspiration behind those words, and the course of action put forward in those words, is the inspiration of the Destroyers, of the



Tree of Knowledge

The Miracle of Soul-Body Healing

Positivity, grace, and mindful choices nourish not just the mind and body but also the deep recesses of our souls

Deeper exploration reveals a profound energetic link between the body and soul that significantly impacts our well-being. The physical body, with its tangible sensa-



tions and needs, acts as a vessel for our soul, the intangible essence of our being. This connection can influence our health in miraculous ways. We can begin to see our journey toward health as not just a physical endeavour, but also as an exploration that equally engages the soul.

Every thought and reaction within us holds a ripple effect across our being. Positivity, grace, and mindful choices nourish not just the mind but also the deep recesses of our souls. In nurturing the soul, we unlock an abundant source of healing energy. This energy

flows through us, forging pathways to greater physical health, emotional clarity, and inner peace. Experiencing life with such awareness allows us to shift our focus and create harmonious balance within, connecting the dots between what we think, feel, and become.

By integrating these facets, we cultivate a holistic view of wellness that transcends the superficial and dives into the essence of our existence. As we nurture this powerful path of connection, we pave the way toward a life where true well-being is both lived and felt in every breath and heartbeat.

Daily Om



Wastewater Management Authority

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

(Authorised under Section 16 of the Public Procurement Act 2006 (as amended))

Open International Bidding

Contract WW 545W - Completion and Commissioning of Works in Zone CP 20, Zone CP 21 including Pumping Station PS 1A and Refurbishment of Existing Pumping Station PS 2 under the Grand Baie Sewerage Project Phase 1B – LOT 2

(Relaunch of Contract WW 516W)

Procurement Reference: CPB/26/2025

GRAND BAIE SEWERAGE PROJECT PHASE 1B

The **Wastewater Management Authority (WMA)** is inviting bids from eligible and qualified local & international bidders through the Government E-Procurement System for the **Contract WW 545W - Completion and Commissioning of Works in Zone CP 20, Zone CP 21 including Pumping Station PS 1A and Refurbishment of Existing Pumping Station PS 2 under the Grand Baie Sewerage Project Phase 1B – LOT 2 (Relaunch of WW 516W)** as more fully described in the bidding document.

Bidding documents may be downloaded from the E-Procurement System

<https://eproc.publicprocurement.govmu.org>.

Reference Number on the system: **WMA/IFB/2025/1630**.

Note: It is mandatory for prospective bidders to have a Digital Certificate (DSC) which can be procured from MAUSIGN on <https://mausign.govmu.org> to be able to submit bid on the E-Procurement System.

A Pre-Bid Meeting followed by a site visit shall take place on **Tuesday 16 December 2025** as detailed in the Bidding Document.

The closing date for submission of bids online on the e-Procurement System has been scheduled for **Wednesday 14 January 2026 up to 13:30hrs (Mauritian Time) at latest**.

Bidders who have submitted bids online by the closing date and time shall **decrypt and re-encrypt** their bids on **Wednesday 14 January 2026 as from 14:30hrs till Friday 16 January 2026 up to 14:00hrs (Mauritian Time)**.

Bidders shall submit an Original Bid Security amounting to **MUR 3,500,000** at the address mentioned below on or before the deadline for submission of bids. The bids security shall be valid up to **12 June 2026**.

Bids will be opened online on e-Procurement system on **Friday 16 January 2026 as from 14.01 hrs. up to 18:00hrs** in the Conference Room of the Central Procurement Board at the address hereunder

**1st Floor, Social Security House
Julius Nyerere Avenue
Rose Hill
Mauritius**

The **Wastewater Management Authority** reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to award of the Contract, without thereby incurring any liability to any Bidder.

18 November 2025

YOUR STARS

Sagittarius (22 Nov – 21 Dec)

A motivating week pushes you to finalise plans you've delayed. Conversations with colleagues or partners become clearer, giving you confidence to set boundaries. Financially, a small opportunity opens—take it but be practical. Emotionally, you feel lighter and more optimistic.

Lucky numbers: 3, 7, 12, 19, 28, 34

Capricorn (22 Dec – 19 Jan)

Responsibilities increase, but your discipline helps you stay ahead. A career-related development boosts your credibility. Family matters require patience; avoid reacting too quickly. Midweek brings clarity on a long-term goal.

Lucky numbers: 5, 9, 14, 20, 31, 39

Aquarius (20 Jan – 18 Feb)

A refreshing shift in perspective helps you break a routine that no longer serves you. Creative ideas flow easily. Social interaction brings unexpected support. Focus on improving health habits.

Lucky numbers: 2, 11, 18, 23, 29, 36

Pisces (19 Feb – 20 Mar)

You become more assertive about your needs. Work matters improve as you manage time better. Financial caution is necessary; avoid impulse spending. A meaningful conversation strengthens an important bond.

Lucky numbers: 4, 10, 17, 22, 30, 37

Aries (21 Mar – 19 Apr)

This week highlights relationships. Collaboration works in your favour, and an old misunderstanding clears up. Career motivation increases, helping you regain momentum. A short trip or outing brings inspiration.

Lucky numbers: 1, 8, 15, 24, 32, 40

Taurus (20 Apr – 20 May)

You focus on stabilising finances and reorganising your daily routine. Productivity rises, helping you complete pending tasks. Someone may offer helpful advice—listen carefully. Romance feels more grounded and reassuring.

Lucky numbers: 6, 13, 16, 21, 27, 33

Gemini (21 May – 20 Jun)

Communication has become your strength this week. Expect productive discussions, smart decisions, and renewed motivation in studies or projects. A social event or invitation brings joy. Creativity peaks.

Lucky numbers: 3, 12, 18, 25, 29, 38

Cancer (21 Jun – 22 Jul)

Your focus turns inward. Home, family, and emotional wellbeing take priority. You may resolve a lingering issue with someone close. Work matters progress slowly but steadily. Trust your intuition.

Lucky numbers: 7, 14, 19, 26, 31, 35

Leo (23 Jul – 22 Aug)

A busy and dynamic week brings new contacts and fresh ideas. You shine in teamwork or presentations. Financial planning pays off. Someone may seek your guidance—your words make a difference.

Lucky numbers: 2, 9, 16, 23, 28, 34

Virgo (23 Aug – 22 Sep)

Career and finances take centre stage. Recognition for a past effort is possible. You feel determined to improve stability and efficiency. Personal relationships become smoother as communication improves.

Lucky numbers: 1, 11, 20, 24, 30, 37

Libra (23 Sep – 22 Oct)

A positive, uplifting week brings confidence and momentum. You're ready to take a bold decision regarding career, studies, or travel. A supportive person plays a key role in your progress.

Lucky numbers: 5, 10, 17, 25, 33, 39

Scorpio (23 Oct – 21 Nov)

You enter a transformative phase, clearing emotional blocks and renewing motivation. Financial matters become clearer, allowing better planning. A private conversation could spark new insights or a fresh direction.

Lucky numbers: 4, 8, 15, 22, 27, 36



Is Autism the Price of Human Intelligence?

A new study published in *Molecular Biology and Evolution* by Oxford University Press suggests that

the relatively high prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in humans may be an inescapable consequence of the unique way the human brain evolved. Researchers propose that the very genetic changes that powered the rise of complex human cognition and language also made humans more neurodiverse.

The investigation focused on rapid genetic changes that occurred in the human lineage after splitting from other apes. Using single-cell RNA-sequencing data, the team found that a specific and abundant type of outer-layer brain neurons, L2/3 IT neurons, evolved exceptionally quickly in humans.

Genes That Confer Advantage and Vulnerability

This accelerated neural evolution was accompanied by dramatic, naturally selected changes in autism-associated genes. From an evolutionary standpoint, the persistent rates of ASD -- estimated at about one in 31 children in the U.S. -- suggest that these genes must have conferred a fitness benefit to our ancestors, even while

creating vulnerability.

Researchers speculate that this evolutionary trade-off may have contributed to slower postnatal brain development in humans compared to chimpanzees. This extended developmental time in early childhood could have been advantageous, allowing for more complex thinking and sophisticated cognitive traits, such as the capacity for speech production and comprehension -- abilities that are often affected by ASD.

The findings establish a deep connection between human cognitive advancement and neurodiversity, indicating that the genetic makeup that makes the human brain unique also inherently increases the risk for conditions like autism. As lead author Alexander L. Starr noted, "Our results suggest that some of the same genetic changes that make the human brain unique also made humans more neurodiverse." This perspective frames autism not as a disorder of random mutation, but as an integral part of the trade-off that fuelled the rise of complex human thought.



A pediatric dentist and an anthropologist explain how baby teeth and adult teeth help humans chomp their food over a long lifespan.

Teeth help animals bite and chew food. Meat-eating carnivores tend to have sharp teeth to sink into their prey, while herbivores tend to have flatter teeth to grind down their plant-based meals.

Some animals also use their pearly whites for specialized purposes like digging or fighting. Tusks, like you see in elephants, walruses and warthogs, are one special kind of teeth -- they grow continuously for as long as the animal is alive.

Over time, no matter what you use them for, teeth wear down. This is good news if you're a rodent, such as a beaver or a rat. Because their teeth never stop growing, rodents rely on gnawing and chomping to grind their teeth down so they don't grow so long that they cause problems.

Some animals deal with wear and tear by continuously developing new teeth as their old ones fall out. Sharks and crocodiles, for example, are what scientists call polyphyodont: They can grow nearly infinite sets of teeth.

Like most mammals, humans are diphodont: We have two sets of teeth -- baby teeth and adult teeth. The technical term for our baby teeth is deciduous teeth because they fall out, the same way deciduous leaves fall off trees in autumn.

We are a dentist who focuses on treating kids and an anthropologist who studies how humans' teeth and faces grow. We are both passionate about teeth and oral health care, and love thinking and learning about teeth. How did two sets become standard for human beings?

How human teeth develop

Most people are born with no teeth showing in their mouths at all, even though your baby teeth start developing before you're even born. Baby teeth usually start poking through the gums when you're between 6 and 8 months old. Sometimes when dentists take X-rays to check for cavities or other problems, they

can see adult teeth growing within the gums.

Baby teeth are relatively small because they need to fit in the small faces of babies and little kids. As you grow older and your face gets bigger, you have room in your mouth for more and larger teeth. Teeth have different sizes and shapes, depending on their purpose. Human front teeth are good at biting into things and tearing off a piece of food. Your back teeth are good at chewing foods into smaller bits before you swallow.

Most kids lose their first baby tooth when they're between 5 and 6 years old, and the process slowly continues until you're between 10 and 12 years old and all 20 of your original choppers have fallen out.

During that same time, your adult, or permanent, teeth gradually take their spots in your mouth. They're bigger than your baby teeth and can help you chew more food at once. Eventually you have a set of 28, with the potential of four more wisdom teeth at the very back. Some people just naturally don't ever grow wisdom teeth, some have wisdom teeth that don't fit their jaws and need to be removed, and some have big, wide smiles with 32 teeth.

So, getting two sets of teeth means your teeth fit the size of your face as you grow, and helps make sure you can chew food your entire life.

Baby teeth deserve gentle care

You might be thinking that if baby teeth are just going to fall out, they can't be that important. But that's not true.

If you were a shark, every time you got a bunch of cavities or chipped a tooth, you'd just grow a new one and keep on chewing. But unlike sharks or crocodiles or even manatees, we humans only get



A child may temporarily have baby teeth, adult teeth and gaps all at once.
Image credit: © iStock.com, Iuliia Burmistrova

two sets of teeth. By taking care of your baby teeth, you can keep them healthy and make sure they stay right where they belong until they're ready to fall out.

If you don't take care of your baby teeth, they can wind up with lots of cavities. If the cavities get too large or teeth become infected, they may need to be removed by the dentist. Not only is this process not fun, but taking out baby teeth too early can create problems for your adult teeth.

You can wind up with not enough space for your adult teeth to come in -- that is, what dentists call "erupt" -- into the right spots. This issue happens in part because the other teeth around where the baby tooth was will shift and may move into the space where your adult teeth are supposed to come in. Teeth can get stuck in the jaw and not erupt, or your teeth can be crowded in your mouth. If there is a mismatch between the size of your teeth and the size of your jaws, an orthodontist might attach braces to your teeth to reposition them so they all fit.

What is the future of teeth?

Because people can live long lives, 70 or 80 years or more, many outlive their teeth even if they do their best to take care of them. While there are lots of options for artificial teeth -- like removable dentures or even dental implants, which are fake teeth

that are screwed into your jaws -- it's not quite the same as having natural teeth.

If you break a bone, it heals because you can grow new bone to patch up the part that broke. Scientists call this process fracture healing. Human teeth aren't bone and, unfortunately, do not heal themselves. Unlike your bones, which are mostly composed of a structural protein your body makes called collagen, your teeth are primarily made up of minerals such as calcium-rich hydroxyapatite. In some ways, teeth are closer to being like hard stones than living bones.

Regenerative dentistry is the study of how teeth grow and develop, with the goal of ultimately designing new ways to repair and replace our teeth. Scientists are working hard to figure out ways to grow new teeth or help existing teeth regenerate. They're learning about the environment and materials needed to grow new teeth.

For now, the best thing you can do is take good care of the teeth you have and keep the gums and bones that support them healthy. Brush your teeth twice a day with toothpaste that contains fluoride, and floss once a day. Try to limit sugary, sticky foods and drinks -- a good diet keeps your whole body healthy, not just your teeth. See a dentist regularly, and protect your teeth from injury.

Being kind to your teeth now can help your future self have a beautiful, healthy smile.

Christina Nicholas

Associate Professor of Orthodontics and of Anthropology, University of Illinois Chicago

David Avenetti

Associate Professor of Pediatric Dentistry, University of Illinois Chicago

Laughter is the Best Medicine

The Worst Day Gets Worse

There I was sitting at the bar, staring at my drink, when a big, rough-looking biker walked up, grabbed my glass, and swallowed it in one big gulp.

He growled, "Well, whatchagonna do about it?"

And I just burst into tears.

I said, "This has been the worst day of my life. I was late to a meeting, and my boss fired me. When I went to the parking lot, my car was gone -- stolen -- and I don't have any insurance. I left my wallet in the cab I took home. Then I found my wife with another man... and to top it off, my dog bit me."

So, I came here to get the courage to end it all. I bought a drink... I dropped poison in it... I sat here watching it dissolve... and then you walked in and drank the whole thing!"

"But anyway... enough about me. How's your day going?"

The WhatsApp Blunder

John got out of the lift on the 7th floor instead of the 9th floor.

He says: "I was so busy checking messages on my WhatsApp... without realizing it, I walked into the neighbour's house and sat on their sofa."

"The lady of the house was glued to the TV, watching serials. She gave me coffee without even looking at me."

"When I started drinking the coffee, I looked up and saw the lady's husband entering the house, looking at his mobile."

"He saw me, said, 'Sorry,' and walked out of his own house!!!..."

This could easily be a never-ending story.

Teacher's Pain & Puny Gains

Teacher: Our topic for today is Photosynthesis.

Teacher: What is photosynthesis, class?

Student: Photosynthesis is our topic today.



Not easy to be a teacher!!!

Teacher: John is climbing a tree to pick some mangoes. (Begin the sentence with "Mangoes.")

Student: Mangoes, John is coming to pick you.

Definitely not easy to be a teacher!!!

Teacher: What do you call mosquitoes in your language?

Student: We don't call them -- they come on their own.

Teacher: One day our country will be corruption-free. What tense is that?

Student: Future impossible tense.

The struggle continues!



Teacher: How can we keep our school clean?

Student: By staying at home.

English Grammar Class

Teacher: What's the difference between "He cleans the plate" and "The plate is cleaned by him"?

Student: In the first sentence, **he** is not married... but in the second sentence, **he** is married.

Why don't skeletons fight each other?
They don't have the guts.

What do you call cheese that isn't yours?

Nacho cheese.

Why did the scarecrow win an award?
Because he was outstanding in his field.

What do you call a factory that makes okay products?

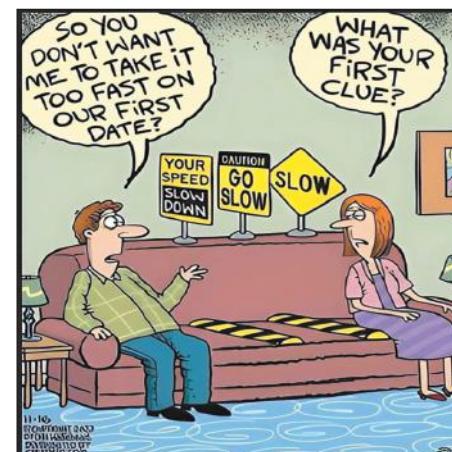
A satisfactory.

Why did the bicycle fall over?
Because it was two-tired.

How does a penguin build its house?
Igloos it together.

What do you get if you cross a snowman and a dog?

Frostbite.



Why did the tomato turn red?
Because it saw the salad dressing.

How do you organize a space party?
You planet.

Why don't eggs tell jokes?
They'd crack each other up.

What do you call a bear with no teeth?
A gummy bear.

Why did the math book look sad?
Because it had too many problems.

How do you catch a squirrel?
Climb a tree and act like a nut.

Why did the coffee file a police report?
It got mugged.

What's brown and sticky?
A stick.



Why did the computer go to the doctor?
It caught a virus.

How do you make a tissue dance?
Put a little boogie in it.

Why did the golfer bring two pairs of pants?
In case he got a hole in one.

What do you call a fish wearing a bowtie?

Sofishticated.

I used to be addicted to soap... but I'm clean now.

Why did the orange stop in the middle of the race?

Because it ran out of juice.

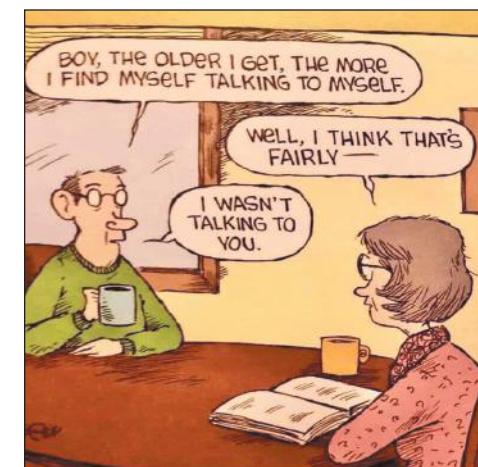
What do you call an alligator in a vest?
An investigator.

I was great at my job at the orange juice factory... but I got canned. I just couldn't concentrate.

Sending Money to a Girl

I overheard a young guy at the bank talking to the teller: "I've had my money stolen by a girl, and I want it back."

"She stole it?" the teller asked.



"I met her online. She asked for £200 and promised to meet me. She hasn't, so I want my money back."

The teller sighed. "Sir... you sent her the money. You gave it to her. That's not stealing."

"But she stole it!"

"No, you gifted it. The only thing you can do is learn from this: never send money to people online you don't trust."

The guy huffed, "Fine... I won't trust girls online anymore."

He walked off. The teller paused, shook her head, and asked, "Next?"

The Pregnant Surprise

An 80-year-old man married a 30-year-old woman.

Two months later, he rushes to his doctor with big news: his wife is already pregnant!

The doctor raises an eyebrow and says, "Let me tell you a story. A friend of mine went bear hunting. After tracking a huge bear for miles, he realized he'd made a mistake -- he'd packed an umbrella instead of his rifle. With no other choice, he raised the umbrella and pulled the handle. BAM! The bear was dead."

The man gasps, "Impossible! Someone else must have shot it!"

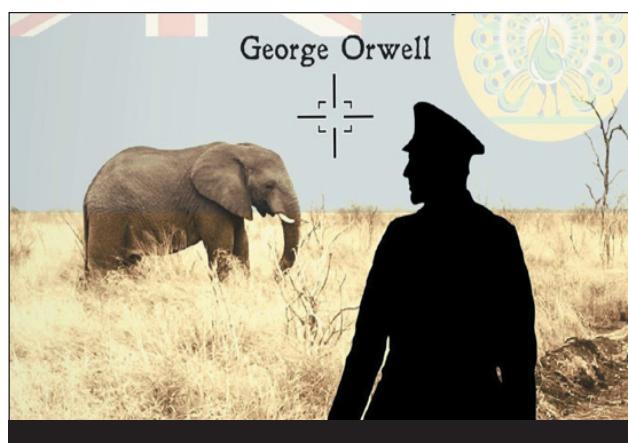
The doctor smiles, "Exactly. I'm glad we understand each other."

George Orwell and the Moral Mirror of Empire

Before he was the author of *1984* or *Animal Farm*, George Orwell was a young British officer stationed in colonial Burma -- a man already uneasy with the empire he served. *Shooting an Elephant*, his searing autobiographical essay, captures that unease with surgical honesty.

It's one of those rare essays that begins as a confession and ends as a revelation. Set in colonial Burma, it recounts the moment when a young British police officer (Orwell himself) is summoned to deal with an elephant that has run amok. Yet from the first paragraph, it's clear this is not a story about an animal -- it's a story about power, and what it does to the soul.

When Orwell finds the elephant, it has already calmed down. No longer dangerous, merely alive -- eating quietly, dignified, almost indifferent. Every instinct in him says to spare it. But behind him, a crowd gathers: 2000 Burmese villagers -- the colonized, the spectators -- watching the white officer, the empire's face, perform his role. And in that instant, Orwell understands the true weight of empire: not just the domination of others, but



the suffocating needs to appear in control.

He shoots the elephant not out of duty, but out of fear -- fear of ridicule, of weakness, of being seen as less than the myth of authority his uniform demands. The elephant dies slowly, painfully, its body collapsing under the weight of bullets and symbolism alike. In its death, Orwell sees the truth that will define his political life:

"When the white man turns tyrant, it is his own freedom that he destroys."

That line is the moral centre of the essay -- the

moment when Orwell's private shame becomes a universal diagnosis. The colonial officer may command others, but he is no longer free. He acts against his conscience, trapped by the expectations of the system he represents. Power, Orwell realizes, dehumanizes the powerful first.

What makes *Shooting an Elephant* timeless is its refusal to flatter anyone -- not the empire, not the oppressed, not even Orwell himself. He doesn't romanticize guilt or offer redemption. Instead, he exposes the machinery of domination from within -- where control and cowardice become indistinguishable.

Decades later, the essay still reads like prophecy. In every institution built on hierarchy and performance -- from governments to workplaces to digital platforms -- the same tension endures: the conflict between what's right and what is expected. Orwell's elephant is not just a colonial metaphor; it's a moral mirror.

He teaches us that tyranny begins not in palaces or parliaments, but in the moment we silence our conscience for the sake of approval.

And when that happens -- when the performance of power matters more than truth -- something larger than the elephant dies.

Classic Literature

Life's Lessons

The Joy of Giving

"Can I eat with you?" asked a homeless little girl named An to a millionaire -- and his answer changed both their lives forever.

Her voice trembled yet carried hope. A man in a tailored suit froze, seeing her small, dirty figure with eyes full of longing.

It was a warm October afternoon in Ho Chi Minh City. Mr Lam, a wealthy real estate magnate, dined alone when an, barefoot and ragged, approached. Staff moved to remove her, but Lam stopped them.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"An. I haven't eaten in two days."

Lam pointed to the empty chair across from him. "Bring her the same dish as mine. And a glass of warm milk."

An devoured the meal, hunger overpowering manners. Lam watched silently, memories of his own childhood -- sleeping on streets, abandoned, hungry -- surfacing.

"Would you like to come live with me?" he asked.

An's eyes widened. "Yes."

In Lam's home, she discovered warmth, school, and safety. Terrified of losing it, she once hid bread, crying: "I just don't want to ever be hungry again."

"You will never go hungry again. I promise you," Lam said.

Years later, An became a top graduate abroad. Before leaving, she asked: "Who were you before all this?"

"Someone very much like you," Lam replied. "I promised myself that if I met a child like me, I wouldn't look away."

A returned home to launch the 'Can I Eat with You?' Foundation, with Lam donating 30% of his fortune. Every October 15, they return to serve meals to children on the sidewalk.

Because one small question -- "Can I eat with you?" -- once shared, changed everything.

Reflections: No one has ever become poor by giving. We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

Stray Thoughts

Life's True Purpose

Perhaps our "life's purpose" has nothing to do with what job we will find, what new thing we will manifest or attract for ourselves, or what mythical awakening journey we will complete.

Perhaps the purpose of our life is to fully live -- finally -- to touch each here-and-now moment with our presence and with the gift of our one wild heart.

And to do whatever we can to help others, to hold them when they are hurting, to listen carefully to their stories and the ways they are attempting to make sense of a world that has gone a bit mad.

To speak kind words and not forget the erupting miracle of the other as it appears in front of us.

Perhaps this is the most radical gift that we can all give.

Matt Licata

People say the word 'nice' and they mean 'boring.' A lot of times nice is boring. But that's not what I mean. Roza was nice and not boring at all.

We rarely know the whole story

A shipwreck. A married couple reaches a lifeboat -- but there's only one spot left. The husband climbs aboard, leaving his wife behind in the ocean. Just before the waves pull her under, she shouts one final phrase to him.

The literature teacher paused and asked her students: "What do you think she said?"

Most answers were angry, bitter, full of betrayal: "I hate you!" "How could I have been so blind?"

Only one boy stayed quiet. "And you?" the teacher asked.

"I think," he said softly, "she told him: 'Take care of our child.'"

The teacher was startled. "Do you know this story?"

"No," he replied, "but that's what my mom told my dad before she passed away."

The teacher turned away so the class wouldn't see her tears. Then she nodded. "You're right."

The ship sank. The husband survived and raised their daughter alone. Years later, after he had passed away, his daughter found his journal:

"She was already very sick when we took that trip. The doctors had given her little time. I wished I could have gone instead of her... but for our daughter's sake, I couldn't. All I could do was leave her there in the ocean."

The classroom was silent. For the first time, the students realized how deceptive first impressions can be.

The lesson: never rush to judge someone's choices. We rarely know the whole story.

Depression
is when you keep
thinking about
the past.



Stress is
when you
constantly think
about the present,



And anxiety
is when your
mind is focused
on the future.



-Life Inspiration

Health & Well-being

Happy Ever After: 25 Ways to Live Well into Old Age

Watching loved ones struggle with dementia and chronic illness motivated Susan Saunders and Annabel Streets to take charge of their own aging process. Determined to secure healthier, happier later lives, the two women dove into the latest science, compiling their findings into what became 'The Age Well Project'. Now in their 50s and feeling better than ever, Saunders and Streets share the key "shortcuts" to well-being, proving that by making intentional changes, you can radically increase your chances of aging well.

Phase 1: Become Your Own Health Expert

True age well planning starts with personalized health data. Don't be passive about your well-being.

- Look to Your Ancestors:** Compile an ancestral health tree, listing the causes and ages of death of your direct relatives. This provides clues about your own genetic vulnerabilities.

- Know Your Numbers:** Go beyond the basics by recording your blood pressure, blood glucose, cholesterol, and Vitamin D levels. Track your BMI and waist-to-hip ratio to devise a truly personalized aging plan.

- Clear Out Your Medicine Cabinet:** Consult with your doctor about unnecessary medications, particularly those containing anticholinergics. Studies link high levels of these compounds (found in some antidepressants and bladder drugs) to an increased risk of Alzheimer's.

- Selective Supplementation:** Save your money on most supplements and invest in quality food instead. The exceptions with robust data are Vitamin D (especially in northern climates) and Zinc (to reduce cold severity).

Phase 2: Move, Fuel, and Focus

The foundation of better health rests on daily habits related to activity and nutrition.

- Walk Faster & Exercise in Green Space:** Walking is good, but pace matters. Aim to walk briskly for 30 minutes a day until you're slightly out of breath. For



maximum benefit, exercise outdoors. Trees produce stress-reducing compounds, and a 15-minute walk in green space lowers blood pressure and boosts immunity.

- Build Muscle:** Resistance training is just as vital as cardio. After age 40, we lose muscle at a rate of 1% a year. Incorporate twice-weekly strength training (rowing, lifting weights, or even using a kettlebell) to reduce the risk of heart attacks and osteoporosis.

- Build Bone Density:** Jumping 10 to 20 times a day or engaging in high-impact exercise like running or skipping, helps increase bone density in an incredibly specific way -- use it or lose it is the mantra here.

- Fast Every Day:** Intermittent fasting is a proven method for increasing longevity and fending off chronic diseases. The easiest way is an extended overnight fast of 14-16 hours (eating supper at sundown and waiting until mid-morning for breakfast).

- Change How You Eat (and when):** Fill your plate with vegetables, whole grains, pulses, and lean protein. Eat earlier in the evening to allow for a longer fast and better sleep, and eat slowly to let satiety hormones kick in. Avoid constant grazing.

- Fibre is Freedom:** Make fibre your single most important dietary change. High fibre intake -- from fruit, oats, and whole grains -- slows digestion, keeps insulin in check, reduces inflammation, and lowers colorectal cancer risk. The recommended daily intake is 30g.

- Enjoy Coffee & Olive Oil:** Coffee is rich in

antioxidants and may help fend off Alzheimer's. Drink it black to retain its value. Meanwhile, olive oil is "liquid gold," strongly linked to better heart health, reduced bone loss, and better blood glucose control.

- Add Turmeric:** Turmeric is a natural anti-inflammatory linked to reduced risks of cancer and Alzheimer's. Combine it with a pinch of black pepper to increase the absorption of its active ingredient, curcumin.

Phase 3: Train Your Brain and Spirit

Longevity is significantly tied to mental stimulation and social connection.

- Keep Learning:** The brain loves novelty. Force yourself to learn new, complex, and difficult things (like a new language, a craft, or dance moves) to build new neurons and synapses.

- Read Books:** Frequent reading is linked to a longer, healthier life. Readers of books, in particular, outlived others by almost two years. Just 30 minutes a day is beneficial.

- Meditate:** Regular practice strengthens telomeres (the caps that protect your DNA) and promotes empathy. Even 15 minutes a day has a positive impact on blood pressure and reduces stress.

- Cultivate Friendships:** Loneliness is as big a mortality risk as diabetes. Cultivating a large, high-quality social network strongly correlates with a longer life.

- Walk a Dog:** Dog ownership provides routine, social interaction, and exercise, leading to a lower risk of death from all causes and lower stress hormone (cortisol) levels.

- Work Longer (and Less Intensely):** People who work longer tend to live longer, likely due to the social interaction, movement, and sense of purpose that work provides. However, the sweet spot is working at a less intense pace in mid-life and beyond.

- Cultivate Optimism:** Your attitude toward aging matters. A positive outlook reduces stress on the body and is linked to better functional health and cognitive abilities.

By integrating these science-backed habits -- from managing your environment to nurturing your friendships -- you can actively build the foundation for a happier, healthier "happy ever after."

Better Living

Self-Forgiveness: A Path to Peace

Forgiving yourself for past mistakes is crucial for future well-being. This guide, adapted from Sandra Alvarez's 14-step pathway, provides practical advice on shifting from regret and shame to self-compassion and acceptance. The goal is to learn how to identify your wrongdoing, make amends, and move forward by embracing personal growth.

The initial stage of self-forgiveness focuses on clearly defining the mistake and adjusting your mindset. It's vital to get specific about the precise offense; don't deal with general guilt. By breaking down the negative consequences -- such as breaking trust, lying, or hurt caused -- you can understand the true nature of the harm.

Alongside this specificity, you must realize that you are not infallible. Accept



that nobody is perfect, as holding yourself to unrealistic standards makes self-forgiveness impossible; this is about recognizing your humanity, not condoning the action. It's also necessary to practice no hindsight judgment, meaning you must stop judging your past self with today's wisdom. Instead, judge that former self with empathy, recognizing that emotional and irrational forces may have driven the

decision at the time.

Finally, you must admit your wrongdoing openly, especially if it involved others. As Dr Brené Brown emphasizes, holding onto a secret means holding onto the emotional burden, so discussing the mistake with a trusted confidant makes it more manageable.

The next phase emphasizes kind action toward yourself and others, transitioning from reflection to amends. First, don't punish yourself. Self-punishment, like destructive behaviors or negative self-talk, is counterproductive; what you truly need is compassion, as forgiveness is meant to be a gentle and kind process. This compassion allows you to make amends. Beyond a sincere apology, identify tangible ways to correct the wrongs you've committed. This practical step shows growth and helps rebuild damaged relationships.

Crucially, you must decouple forgiveness: your self-forgiveness journey must be independent of the willingness of the person you hurt to forgive you. Work on your own emotional healing regardless of

their feelings. Ultimately, you must accept forgiveness as the way forward. Accepting that this is the only path to a better future is essential, as without it, you will be constantly consumed by regret and shadowed by your mistake.

The final six steps guide you through the necessary internal shifts for lasting peace.

Begin by learning to quieten your inner critic. This voice prevents forgiveness by convincing you that you are a failure; reason with it, reminding yourself that you are worthy of forgiveness and your mistakes do not define your entire character. A practical way to achieve this is to treat yourself like your best friend, offering yourself the same kind, empathetic, and thoughtful words you would give a loved one. View yourself from a neutral, kinder perspective.

Additionally, put things in perspective; don't blow mistakes out of proportion. Look for the benefits or lessons that have resulted from the decisions you made. This leads directly to the next step: learn the lesson.

BollyBytes**Karan Johar crowns Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padda as Bollywood's new 'It Couple'**

The phenomenal success of the film *Saiyaara* has not only cemented Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padda as Bollywood's most promising new talents but has also intensely reignited speculation about their off-screen relationship. The sizzling chemistry between the co-stars, who have yet to publicly confirm any romance, was recently brought back into the spotlight by filmmaker Karan Johar, who subtly hinted at their bond by dubbing them the industry's potential new "It couple", reports Bollywood Hungama.

The conversation gained significant traction during Karan Johar's appearance on Sania Mirza's popular podcast, *Serving It Up With Sania*.

Without making an official declaration, Johar referred to the *Saiyaara* duo as the industry's potential new "It couple." When pressed on their relationship status, the director remained playfully elusive, stating, "Well... they are not yet official, so if they are going to be, I don't know whether or not because I haven't checked." This comment, while non-committal, has sent fans and the media into a frenzy, interpreting it as a strong endorsement of their rumoured pairing.

Johar's praise for the young actors extends beyond their personal lives. He recently spoke about their rapid ascent to fame at the Mumbai press conference for

the film *Mirai*.

Reflecting on the unexpected blockbuster success of the Mohit Suri-directed *Saiyaara* — released under the Yash Raj Films banner on July 18 — Karan noted a fundamental shift in the box office landscape.

Changing Box Office Dynamics: "Every film has its own destiny. Sometimes big-star movies work wonders, sometimes fresh faces lead the way... There is no fixed formula anymore," he observed, asserting that success is no longer solely dependent on established star power.

New Faces Lead the Way: He added that newcomers with a strong vision could carry compelling stories just as effectively as seasoned actors, provided the film resonates with the audience.

While Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padda continue to focus on their upcoming projects without confirming their status, Karan Johar's latest comments have certainly cemented their position — not just as breakout stars, but as the couple everyone is talking about.

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Kajol: "Marriage doesn't stop a woman's growth anymore"

In a candid discussion on the latest episode of *Two Much with Kajol and Twinkle*, Bollywood star Kajol shared a powerful perspective on how modern women are actively redefining the institution of marriage, reports Bollywood Hungama. Highlighting a crucial societal shift, the actress asserted that for today's woman, marriage is no longer an end to personal or professional ambition, but rather a partnership that facilitates growth.

Redefining Marriage as Partnership

The conversation, which also featured actors Vicky Kaushal and Kriti Sanon, addressed the long-standing double standard where men are encouraged to marry once they are "settled," while women are often subtly conditioned to expect a slowdown in their lives post-marriage.

Kajol, known for her thoughtful and honest opinions, countered this notion by emphasizing that a woman's growth is fundamentally tied to her own evolving mindset.

"It has to do with the person themselves — with the women themselves. I know a lot of women who have gotten married and have not slowed down at all. In fact, they've taken it to another level — gone forward, gotten a promotion, had kids, and decided to live in another city," Kajol stated.

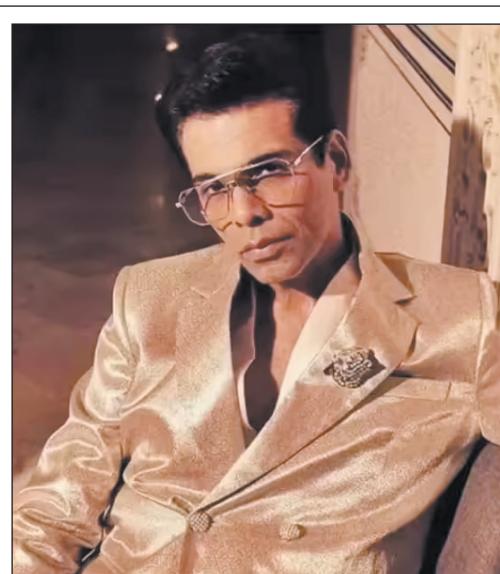
Evolving Expectations and Mutual Respect

Kajol explained that this radical shift is being driven by women's changing expectations of themselves and their relationships. Modern women view marriage not as a commitment that requires them to surrender their individuality, but as a journey built on equality and mutual respect.



"And in this day and age, women are definitely looking at marriage as a partnership. Yes, I will definitely be a daughter-in-law, a part of your family — but you will also be a part of mine," she added, underscoring the demand for a reciprocal relationship that honors both partners' roots and goals.

Kajol's reflections serve as a compelling reminder that the contemporary Indian woman sees marriage as a shared journey, continuing to define her own path of success and independence rather than viewing matrimony as a 'finish line' or a constraint on her life's trajectory.

**Karan Johar Reveals His Dream Cast for a Kuch Kuch Hota Hai Remake**

Karan Johar, the director behind the iconic 1998 romantic drama *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (KKHH), has shared his fantasy casting choices for a modern-day remake of the cult classic. Speaking in a candid conversation, Johar reimagined the film's beloved characters — Rahul, Anjali, and Tina — with some of

Bollywood's biggest current stars.

The KKHH 2.0 Dream Cast

During a chat with Sania Mirza on Myatra's Glam Stream, Karan Johar revealed the actors he believes would perfectly embody the core trio for a new generation: Alia Bhatt to replace Kajol, Ranveer Singh to replace Shah Rukh Khan, and Ananya Panday in the place of Rani Mukerji.

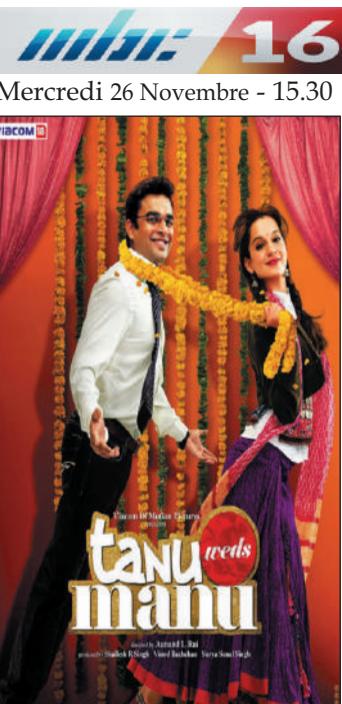
Johar also playfully suggested that the role of Tina could alternatively go to the new generation of actors like Janhvi Kapoor or Sara Ali Khan.

Emotional Trip Down Memory Lane

The filmmaker took an emotional detour during the conversation, reminiscing about the overwhelming support he received from his late father, Yash Johar, during his directorial debut.

"He thought I was the most handsome boy on the planet, and when 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai' released, he thought I was James Cameron overnight," Karan shared. "He used to tell people, 'Mera beta bilkul director number 1 hai, Hindustan main kya, globally.' I used to feel so awkward."

Karan highlighted that his father was his biggest fan, someone whose obsession with his son's success was deeply felt.

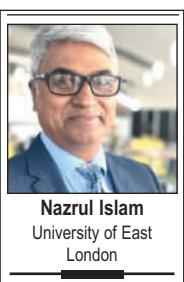


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Nazrul Islam
University of East London

AI won't replace you – but it will redefine what makes you valuable at work

'Human' skills like leadership and empathy will be increasingly prized by employers.

Across the world, workers are increasingly anxious that artificial intelligence (AI) will make their jobs obsolete. But the evidence from research and industry tells a very different story. AI is not taking over the workplace. Instead, it's quietly reshaping what human work looks like – and what makes people valuable within it.

In my research on how the workforce is being transformed by AI, I found that the most successful organisations are not the ones replacing employees with algorithms, but those redesigning their workplaces to combine human and machine intelligence.

AI excels at routine, repetitive and data-intensive tasks – scanning through thousands of records, scheduling logistics or identifying errors. Yet it still struggles with what we might call "the human edge". That is, creativity, empathy, judgement and collaboration.

AI systems depend on people to train and evaluate their outputs. My research found that when humans and AI collaborate, productivity rises – but when humans are excluded or fearful, the benefits collapse.

At cloud software company Workday, for example, nearly 60% of employees use AI tools to automate repetitive tasks. But far from reducing headcount, the company found that AI freed people up to focus on the more thoughtful and creative parts of their job, as well as nurturing relationships with clients.

These findings align with my own research, which demonstrates that worker-AI coexistence makes an organisation more resilient than automation alone.

So why are so many workers still afraid? Part of the reason lies in uncertainty. Organisations might implement AI systems without communicating clearly how they will affect jobs or performance evaluation. This lack of clarity breeds fear, rumours and resistance.

My studies show that when companies are transparent about how and why AI is being adopted – and when they involve employees in shaping its use – workers become more confident. They're even proud of their contribution to "teaching the machines". But when employees are left in the dark, they tend to hoard information



Pic - linkedin.com

or disengage – the opposite of what innovation requires.

It's true that AI will disrupt many traditional roles. But the real challenge is not mass unemployment – it's misalignment, that is, having the wrong skillsets for the AI age. The labour market must evolve faster to match emerging technological realities.

My previous study on AI and the future of work was cited in a US government policy document. In the study, I described a "perpetual race" between human skills and machine capabilities. As AI automates certain functions, workers must continuously develop new abilities to stay relevant.

In effect, this is a strategic opportunity. The workers who thrive in the AI economy will be those who can interpret, guide and collaborate with intelligent systems.

That means companies must take responsibility for reskilling and upskilling. The UN's Sustainable Development Goal 8 makes it very clear that AI should benefit workers. If AI becomes a permanent treadmill rather than a partnership for shared progress, there is a risk of deepening inequality.

Social mobility in the age of AI

I recently shared research with social mobility experts on how AI can be a catalyst for inclusion – if managed responsibly. By analysing skills rather than titles, AI-enabled hiring platforms can identify talent in overlooked communities – people who may not have formal qualifications but possess the right competencies to succeed.

Yet this promise comes with a warning.

If the same systems are trained on biased data, they risk replicating social inequalities at scale. Responsible AI must embed fairness and human oversight from the start.

Ultimately, the companies that will lead the next decade are those that move from a technology-first to a people-and-purpose-first mindset.

That means several things. AI literacy must be embedded at all levels – from frontline staff to executives – so everyone understands how it affects their roles. Organisations should also rethink governance – ensuring oversight, accountability and transparency.

Employers should also invest in hybrid skills for their staff – combining technical competence with creativity, empathy and judgement. And they should encourage experimentation and collaboration.

But what does all this mean for workers?

First, the future belongs to the adaptive, not the automated. Second, emotional and conceptual skills such as leadership and empathy are rising in value. Third, lifelong learning is no longer optional. AI literacy, understanding what these systems can and cannot do, will soon be as fundamental as digital literacy was in the 2000s.

AI is neither our enemy nor our saviour. It reflects the priorities, values and biases of the societies that build it. Responsible innovation means embedding human purpose into every algorithm, dataset and decision process. It means designing workplaces where technology amplifies human potential rather than eroding it.

This is a pivotal moment. Decisions about AI in the next five years will define the following 50 – shaping the kind of workplaces, economies and societies our children inherit. Rather than fearing AI as the enemy of human work, we should embrace it as the next stage in human collaboration.

AI won't take your job – but someone who knows how to use it just might. The challenge is not to compete with machines, but to co-evolve with them – creating a future of work that is intelligent, inclusive and above all, human.

Snippets

Family matters



Pic - worldvision.ca

Very poor people tend to

have lots of children; the average family in Niger or Mali has six kids. As incomes get higher, family sizes tend to drop; in the US, the average woman has 1.6 children in her lifetime, and places like France and the UK are similar, while East Asian countries such as Japan or South Korea are far less. On the face of it, the economist Scott Sumner says, "it seems absurd to argue that people are having fewer children because they cannot afford large families." But there's a counterpoint to that: At the very top of the distribution, among the super-rich, family sizes remain high. Billionaires average more than three kids each.

What's going on, says Sumner, is opportunity cost. People like children, and all else being equal, would have lots. The very poor have few luxuries, so children are a key focus of their lives. Upper-middle-class people in rich countries, though, can afford travel and entertainment, but – because of rising wage costs – they can't afford full-time childcare. And billionaires have so much money they can farm out the hard part of parenthood to staff while just doing the fun bits. "It's not so much that people are too poor to have large families," says Sumner, rather that people have found alternative activities that they prefer to raising children. Those who deny this fact are engaging in wishful thinking."

* * *

Sleep is on a spectrum

Scientists probing the boundary between sleep and wakefulness are expanding our definitions of consciousness. Sleep is often thought of as a binary: You're either awake, or you're asleep. But scientists say we should instead think of it as a spectrum, with myriad liminal states in between. In 2021, for example, researchers discovered that waking up suddenly from the earliest sleep stage seems to be prime people for creative thought and problem-solving, although no one is quite sure why, Quanta Magazine wrote. One potential explanation is that, in this state, many people still have "one foot in dreams and one foot in the world," one researcher said.

In Loving Memory of Mukesh Hauradhur

16 Dec 1960 - 27 Nov 2022

It has been three years without your guiding hand, yet the compass of your wisdom continues to steer us in the right direction.

We miss you tremendously.

Forever in our hearts
Isha, Sunnee & Hauradhur Family