

MAURITIUS TIMES

• Successful leaders see the opportunities in every difficulty rather than the difficulty in every opportunity. -- Reed Markham

Interview: Nita Deerpalsing

“Leadership with Vision can achieve many things thought to be impossible”

‘Look at what Rwanda accomplished in 20-30 years after a painful genocide which touched every core of human existence’

- “The Labour Party has to go back to its roots of working for the dignity of the population...
... then that would not result with “more of the same”



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An Agenda for Meaningful Change

It is not yet known when the details of the electoral programmes of the mainstream parties ahead of the next elections will be publicized. These are tools both for informing the electorate and guiding the political agenda, and in light of significant aberrations observed in various sectors of public life and governance of the country over the past five or more years, the Labour Party-MMM-ND alliance's programme will be particularly important and indicative of what could be expected in terms of meaningful change should the Opposition win the elections.

Addressing these issues and preventing their recurrence will require a thorough and comprehensive review of the system to close loopholes and curb abuses. Reaching agreement on ensuring a level playing field in the economic sector and reducing the market power of monopolies may be more challenging than achieving broad consensus on governance and law and order issues, which should be relatively straightforward. But for that to take happen, it would be necessary to review whether the guiding principles that went into the drafting of our Constitution are still valid or whether they need to be updated to reflect modern trends specially in the area of protection of fundamental rights.

There have been many articles in this paper, and initiatives taken by concerned opinion makers and jurists who have an interest in bettering and extending the scope of our present Constitution calling for a full-fledged review of our Constitution in light of what has been happening in recent years, and which, if left unchecked, could lead to the fragilisation of our constitutional democracy, the rule of law and good governance.

There is no argument about the fact that the harmony, relative peace and progress that Mauritius has known during the past decades are in a large measure due to the fundamental guiding principles enshrined in our Constitution and the adherence by the different stakeholders to the values and respect for such principles as regards the rule of law and other constitutional protections. In support of these principles, the Constitution of Mauritius does provide for some form of protection to those officials operating in specific areas of public life and administration – law and order, justice, etc — with a view to empowering them to exercise their powers in the public interest, without fear or favour. Instances where these powers seem to be usurped by the Executive - such as a sitting Minister publicly threatening a politician and getting away with it -, or where those who are allowed to use them fail to do so for fear of reprisal by the Executive, are examples that call for serious consideration and redress or even reform with a view to perfecting our democracy.

Another area that calls for review and potential reform is the conduct and organization of elections. The organization of elections involves several key aspects: the proper compilation and updating of electoral registers, supervision of polling by the Electoral Supervisory

Commission, the hearing of election petitions by the Supreme Court, and the earliest resolution of complaints that arise before and during polling. All these aspects will need to be revisited. It does not make sense that unreturned candidates should have to wait for three or four years for their petitions to be determined when the next elections are almost round the corner. Moreover, the recourse to processes and equipment (for example, the notorious computer rooms set up at Counting Centre during the last elections) without prior and due consultations with all stakeholders should be banned at all costs.

Combating corruption is another aspect where the concerned institutions have failed miserably. We have also witnessed during the past recent years a number of outrageous aberrations happening in the procurement processes of government agencies because of arbitrary discretion exerted by those who are in a position to take or influence decisions. In most cases where questionable dealings are suspected, there are two common factors: a compliant bureaucracy and the absence of transparency. It is unfortunate that the anti-corruption agency, ICAC, is widely perceived as having failed to fulfill its mandate in many cases involving individuals in positions of power.

Scandals usually come to the surface following whistleblower tip-offs – which in the case of the St Louis Redevelopment project led to the investigation by Burmeister & Wain Scandinavian Contractor (BWSC) into allegations of misconduct and effective public sanctions. Potential scandals would otherwise be swept under the carpet. For a long time, we have been promised a Freedom of Information Act, which could serve as a crucial deterrent against abuse. We hope that this will be included in the Opposition alliance's redress agenda.

On the other hand, in its present form and content it does not appear that the Constitution provides the possibility and the right to any concerned citizen - unless the latter can demonstrate his *locus standi* in the matter - to question the application of the law, or unjust administrative action. There is a case here for the establishment of a specialised Constitutional Bench so that any concerned citizen and, a fortiori, legal minds and scholars, can seek constitutional redress in a wider range of cases than the present relatively restrictive rules would allow them to do.

There are undoubtedly many other areas that call for meaningful reform, and civil society, along with public-spirited jurists, can contribute valuable insights to facilitate this change amidst ongoing issues in governance and public administration. The challenges ahead are substantial, but with a concerted effort to update and refine our guiding principles, there is a genuine opportunity to strengthen the stability, fairness, and integrity of our constitutional democracy. The involvement of all stakeholders in this process will be crucial in shaping a future that reflects the values and aspirations of the Mauritian people.

The Conversation



Pic - Washington Post

The Claim that Democracy Fares Better in the West Than in Africa is a Fallacy

The argument isn't whether African democracies are better than those in the West. It's simply that the idea of "real" and "not yet real" democracies expresses a colonial mentality, not reality

One day, if they follow instructions, Africa's new democracies will grow up to be "real" like those of Western Europe and North America. This assumption makes little sense – but it influences the way many people in the West and in Africa think about African democracies.

Challenging this myth is a central theme of my book '*Power in Action: Democracy, Citizenship and Social Justice*', which has just been published by Wits University Press.

Over the past two decades, the book notes, democracy has blossomed in Africa: in 1990, the continent housed, at most, four democracies. Today, countries in which the government is not at least elected in a free vote in which opposition parties contest are a small minority. But there is still a deep-rooted feeling among Western academics, policymakers and journalists that African democracies are not yet "the finished product" – that they are still on their way to becoming full democracies.

This view gave birth to a field of academic study in the West – the search for "democratic consolidation". It emerged because academics assumed that the new democracies were not yet "complete", even though they called themselves democratic. And so they set out to discover whether democracies in Africa (and Asia and Latin America) were "consolidated", which meant that they were the finished product.

The academics have never said how we would know a "complete" democracy when we saw one. They don't have to – it is obvious from their writing that, to become the "finished article", democracies have to become like those in the West.

The academics are reflecting a widely held view. Western governments that set out to make the world democratic were trying to "help" democracies outside the West to become just like those in it. European and US politicians who care about democracy elsewhere share this view. So do many Africans.

Steven Friedman, Professor of Political Studies,
University of Johannesburg

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Mauritius Times

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

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

This epaper has been produced with the assistance of

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Electoral Promises

Interest-free housing loans: At what cost?



Prakash Neerohoo

Government would be compelled to increase taxes in its next mandate to fund all the promises being implemented now or to be implemented in the future.

In the run-up to the next legislative elections, likely to be held in November-December, the incumbent government is targeting the youth as a significant electoral constituency, amongst other segments of the population (old age pensioners, civil servants, women, etc.), in its segmentation marketing strategy.

First, since early 2024, it has been providing a grant of Rs 20,000 to young people on their 18th anniversary. Then last week it introduced the provision of free Internet for young people in the 18-25 age group. Now the government has announced another electoral promise for the youth: if re-elected to office, it would pay the bank interest on housing loans taken by individuals in the age group of 18-35 years to build or buy a home (house or apartment).

In this article, I would not discuss whether the latest promise is an electoral bribery although making a promise conditional upon being re-elected to office sounds like one (in spite of the Privy Council ruling that promises made to the general population are not acts of bribery but public policy statements). I would leave that debate to lawyers and political analysts. Instead, I would focus on the financial implications of interest-free housing loans for debtors and their economic implications for Government's Treasury.

It is estimated there are about 250,000 people in the 18-35 age group, which is a significant vote bank if it can be nurtured and wooed at the right time. How many would catch the bait depends on a lot of issues such as personal income, housing affordability, civil status (married or unmarried), family size, access to land and the goal of home ownership.

Policy intent

The apparent policy intent behind the new promise is to promote access to housing for the targeted age group. Home ownership is indeed a dream for every household, specially for the working class and middle-class people who have no inter-generational wealth in real estate transmitted to them. Buying a home is a desirable opportunity for anyone who wants to get a foothold in society. It is the first step towards personal independence and eventually helps towards wealth creation for the family. While renting is always a stopgap measure in the short- or medium-term to get a roof over one's head, in the long term a mortgaged home allows the owner to build equity in the property, which could serve as a leverage for getting bank financing for other purposes. One measure of an egalitarian society is the high rate of home ownership.

Ultimately, a mortgage-free house is a vital asset and a big part of the net worth of an individual (assets less liabilities). We know that High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs) always include real property in their investment portfolio (real estate, cash, stocks, bonds) with the objective of reaping capital appreciation (capital gains realized upon resale) over the long term. Such is the case with all those foreign HNWIs who buy luxury residences on the coast in Mauritius thanks to the IRS/PDS projects (Integrated Resort Scheme/Property Development Scheme) promoted by the Economic Development Board (EDB).



P - properties.lefigaro.com

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Pertinent questions

This new promise, announced seemingly without detailed planning, raises several pertinent questions:

1. What rates of interest would Government accept to finance: 5%, 6% or 7%? Would Government impose a specific interest rate across the board for all loan applicants or would commercial banks be free to set their own mortgage rates?
2. Who would manage the funding program to process applications from prospective home buyers and finance the interest cost on housing loans? Would it be the MRA who has access to individual tax filings or another institution?
3. Would the interest-free benefit be granted to Mauritian citizens only or to all residents in the 18-35 age group, including foreigners who have citizenship or permanent residence in the country? The EDB provides citizenship/residence to foreigners who invest or work in Mauritius.
4. Would there be a ceiling on the housing loan eligible for zero interest: Rs 3, 4 or 5 million? Considering the high prices of real property in Mauritius, would the ceiling be an upper limit?
5. Would the benefit be granted only to first-time buyers who want to acquire a primary residence (i.e., personal use property)? Or would it be extended to those who acquire a secondary residence for own use (e.g., a seaside vacation property) or who acquire a property for rental purposes (i.e., income-producing property)?
6. When would the present government, if re-elected to office, implement the promise: in the first year of a new mandate or later? It is worth noting that the government's promise to raise old age pension from Rs 9,000 to Rs 13,500 per month (for pensioners in

the age group 60-64 years) was made in 2019 but was implemented in April 2024, i.e., with a time lag of five years.

Housing market

If the promise were to be implemented by a future government, the above questions would have a significant impact on the scope and coverage of the funding program. While interest-free loans might boost demand for housing, supply is faced with severe constraints in a small country of 720 square miles. The housing market is coping with some structural issues:

If the promise were to be implemented by a future government, the above questions would have a significant impact on the scope and coverage of the funding program. While interest-free loans might boost demand for housing, supply is faced with severe constraints in a small country of 720 square miles. The housing market is coping with some structural issues:

1. The high cost of building due to inflation, which is fuelled by the depreciation of the rupee (35% with respect to the US dollar since 2014) that increases constantly the prices of imported materials.

2. Competition from foreign investors or expatriates who acquire real property in Mauritius, thus pricing Mauritian residents out of the market. Private builders are catering to foreign demand for luxury residences, which are a source of high profits, rather than investing in social housing. They are more concerned about return on investment than social needs. The government has stepped in to build houses through the New Social Living Development Ltd (NSLD) but its original target of 12,000 houses will not be met this year (apparently only 3,500 units will have been delivered by the end of the year).

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Electoral Promises

Interest-free housing loans: At what cost?

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3. Land scarcity in a country with a high population density is bound to encourage the trend to build high-rise buildings of multiple apartments. However, living in an apartment may not suit the lifestyle of families with children who need more space. But buying a plot of land may be beyond their reach in a country where real estate keeps appreciating in a linear way. The prices of land are going through the roof with competing demands for commercial, industrial, agricultural and residential uses.

4. Affordability remains a big issue for many people. New homes are too expensive for prospective home buyers. A house of modest size (2,000 square feet) for an average family (four persons) cost from Rs 3 to Rs 5 million. According to a financial rule of thumb, the mortgage repayment per year should not be more than 30% of gross income (pre-tax) or 40% of net income (after-tax). In table 1, we see that a person who takes a loan of Rs 5 million without interest will need to make a repayment of Rs 20, 833 per month over 20 years, which would require a gross income of Rs 833,333 per year at 30% debt servicing. A person who takes a loan of Rs 5 million at 5% interest will need a gross income of Rs 1,319,880 to make a monthly repayment (principal plus interest) of Rs 32,997.

Scenario		A	A(1)	B	B(1)
Interest applicable (Yes/No)		Yes	No	Yes	No
Loan amount	Rs	3,000,000	3,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000
Number of instalments in 20 yrs		240	240	240	240
Interest rate %	%	5.00	0.00	5.00	0
Monthly repayment (principal/interest)	Rs	19,799	12,500	32,997	20,833
Total repayment in 20 yrs	Rs	4,751,760	3,000,000	7,919,280	5,000,000
Cumulative interest for 20 yrs	Rs	1,751,682	0	2,919,468	
Gross annual income required	Rs	791,960	500,000	1,319,880	833,333
Debt repayment as % of gross income	%	30%	30%	30%	30%

Funding program

The funding of the promise remains a big question mark at a time when the government is running a big budget deficit (Rs 63 billion for 2024-25 or 6% of GDP). Where would the money come from to finance the cost of interest on housing loans? Obviously, the money would come from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to which are credited all tax revenue (direct and indirect taxes) and non-tax revenue (grants and transfers from the Bank of Mauritius).



“Private builders are catering to foreign demand for luxury residences, which are a source of high profits, rather than investing in social housing. They are more concerned about return on investment than social needs. The government has stepped in to build houses through the New Social Living Development Ltd (NSLD) but its original target of 12,000 houses will not be met this year (apparently only 3,500 units will have been delivered by the end of the year)...”

Considering the current deficit, the government would need to borrow money or raise taxes to fund the interest cost. In table 2, we outline two scenarios where we assume that 5,000 applicants (uptake of 2% over 250,000 eligible applicants) would apply for an interest-free loan of Rs 3 million or Rs 5 million in Year 1 in the new mandate. With annual

take away by any government.

		Scenario A	Uptake rate	Scenario B	Uptake rate
Eligible applicants		250,000		250,000	
Loan amount	Rs	3,000,000		5,000,000	
Interest rate	%	5.00		5.00	
Interest payable in Year 1	Rs	147,964		246,607	
Case A: Number of applicants in Year 1		5,000	2.0%	5,000	2.0%
Total interest payable	Rs	739,820,000		1,233,035,000	
Case B: Number of applicants in Year 1		10,000	4.0%	10,000	4.0%
Total interest payable	Rs	1,479,640,000		2,466,070,000	

Fiscal policy versus monetary policy

Currently taxpayers are allowed to deduct interest on a housing loan from their taxable income subject to income tax. It's a great benefit as annual interest on a loan may be a substantial amount, as we see in tables 1 and 2. Interest deductibility is allowed in some countries under fiscal policy. If government were to pay the interest cost on housing loans for 18-35 age group, there would be no interest deduction for them and income tax revenue from this group would increase, assuming they all file a tax return under the Income Tax Act. In many countries, the government uses fiscal policy to help home buyers with such measures as complete or partial exemption from Land Transfer Tax for a first-time buyer, a cash grant of 5% or 10% of the value of a loan

(up to a maximum), and a tax credit of a specific amount deductible from income tax.

By proposing to finance interest cost charged by banks, the government would be interfering with the operation of a monetary policy instrument in a market economy. Interest forms part of the cost of capital in any economy and it is used by the central bank to raise or lower the cost of credit to fight inflation or ease out of a recession. Subverting monetary policy sends the wrong signal to the economy.

Besides, providing the interest-free benefit to one age group amounts to economic discrimination on grounds of age. A 36-year-old person who has saved money all his life to come up with a down-payment on the purchase of a home would be disgruntled to find that his younger neighbour gets a freebie from the State while he pays interest on his loan.

The promise does not differentiate between classes of income, that is between low-income and high-income

earners. It is not a progressive choice. Ideally all social benefits (old age pensions, allowances, transfers and other handouts) should be income-based and income-tested. Universality of benefits irrespective of income or wealth creates a heavy burden for the State which must increase taxes (both direct and indirect) or incur debts to fund them.

With public debt on its way to reach 100% of GDP, the government cannot afford to continue increasing public debt without incurring a credit downgrading by international credit agencies due to lack of fiscal capacity. Therefore, the government would be compelled to increase taxes in its next mandate to fund all the promises being implemented now (e.g., free Internet for 18-25 age group) or to be implemented in the future.

Prakash Neerhoo

True North Lost and the Search for a Moral Compass



Anil Madan

For too long, we have been content to point in the wrong direction. Worse, we have been content to let our so-called "leaders" point us in the wrong direction

The other day, a friend wrote and asked me why I am so adamantly opposed to Trump. I wrote back:

"I am truly frightened and astounded by the sheer stupidity of Americans who saw what Trump did on and around January 6. And it makes no difference.

"They see his fraud and crimes, hear his lies. Makes no difference.

"They see the sexual predator and rapist. Makes no difference.

"They see the con artist. Makes no difference.

"They hear and see examples of his hatred, bile, xenophobia, racism, division, venality, and abuse. Makes no difference.

"This country has lost its moral compass."

I lament the fact that out of 335 million people, the choice we have for president has devolved to Harris and Trump.

The other day, Dick Cheney who was George W. Bush's Vice President and an ardent provocateur in bringing about the war on Iraq, said: "In our nation's 248-year history, there has never been an individual who is a greater threat to our republic than Donald Trump. As citizens, we each have a duty to put country above partisanship to defend our Constitution. That is why I will be casting my vote for Vice President Kamala Harris."

I never thought that the day would come when I would agree with someone named Cheney, but I do. His daughter Liz Cheney is a profile in courage.

It is truly sad to see Americans in large crowds, with their open mouths, little baby birds in a nest, beaks open, ready to swallow whatever Trump throws at them.

What is going on here?

Racism, xenophobia, and greed are powerful motivators — have been since the dawn of man. It is easy for Americans, indeed for people of any nation, to feel that they are victims. And Trump specializes in making his followers feel like victims. And they are stupid enough to play the role.

We see similar phenomena when those who seek to exploit organized religion for their own profit or power, form cults and indoctrinate their followers. These are little different from opportunistic pre-computer age Facebook groups chanting mumbo jumbo together and finding ways to control the thoughts of others. So, it has been with abortion. Making that a moral and religious issue has allowed the Republicans to exploit religion in their quest for power and money. Untold millions of dollars have been donated by people in the cause to end abortion when the sensible response would be "Why should I care if someone gets an abortion? If I don't want an abortion no one can compel me to have one." But have you noticed that it is often men who

are the most vociferous opponents?

This is not the first time that America has lost its moral compass. We lost it with slavery. Let me pause to point out that the Africans who rounded up and shipped their own people out to be slaves, were just as guilty. And it was the British and Americans who fought to end not just the slave trade, but the very idea of slavery itself, at least in the Western world.

I think America found its moral compass on this issue in the Civil War and the constitutional amendments to end slavery and guarantee equality. True, in some respects it is still a work in progress. But the half-life of slavery is shorter than that of nuclear fuel waste.

America lost its moral compass with the near genocide of the indigenous peoples of this continent. We are still engaged in finding our True North on that score.

America lost its compass again with the development and use of nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. There is a reasonable argument that it was prudent, and indeed advisable, to develop nuclear weapons before the Nazis did, and I acknowledge the argument that the use of nuclear bombs in Japan brought a swift end to the war. But demonstration of destructive power can be achieved without destroying a city. Or two.

America lost its moral compass again in Vietnam. We are engaged in finding our True North on that score as well. But along the way, we lost our moral compass when we invaded Iraq and caused the death or displacement of untold millions.

America lost its moral compass with Richard Nixon's Watergate shenanigans, when Reagan made the hostage deal with Iran before the election, and when Bill Clinton sullied the presidency.

But no one has smeared the Office of the President of the United States as Donald Trump has.

A case study in a lost moral compass

Losing one's moral compass is a human trait. Britain lost its moral compass when it went about exploiting its colonies and committing atrocities from India, across Africa and even in America.

China is a case study in a lost moral compass. China's conquest of Tibet and the ruthless destruction of its culture and people are as close to genocide as one gets unless we consider the genocide against the Uyghurs. China's loss of its moral compass extends to the abusive repression of its own citizens and its conquest of Hong Kong with the objective of spreading repression. And Taiwan remains in China's sights. Never mind that China has no need for the land or people of Taiwan.

India and Pakistan lost their moral compass when each, instead of finding a way to live in peace, found ways to distance each from the other. The result is that there are very few Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan, and in India, the Muslims are often marginalized. And, of course, there was the original shame of the caste system that designated millions as "untouchable."

How can one ignore Hitler and Nazi Germany when speaking of lost moral compasses? Or how can one ignore the Turkish genocide of the Armenians?

France too lost its moral compass in North Africa and in

so many countries where it committed atrocities and brutal repression. Spain had its share of atrocities around the world, with the Spanish Inquisition and the banishing of Muslims.

Perhaps Tsarist Russia never had a moral compass and perhaps Leninist Russia, Stalinist Russia, and now Putinist Russia merely reflect what is in the DNA of that state's rulers.

The Middle East has no shortage of exploitative and abusive regimes and governments. Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, etc., all have shame on their records. This is not to ignore the terrorism of Hamas or Al Qaeda or Osama bin Laden, ISIS, and so forth.

Of course, when one mentions Iran, Afghanistan and the repression of women come to mind. Let us not forget about Belarus, Venezuela, or Pinochet's Chile.



Pic - AFP

"America lost its compass again with the development and use of nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. There is a reasonable argument that it was prudent, and indeed advisable, to develop nuclear weapons before the Nazis did, and I acknowledge the argument that the use of nuclear bombs in Japan brought a swift end to the war. But demonstration of destructive power can be achieved without destroying a city. Or two. America lost its moral compass again in Vietnam. We are engaged in finding our True North on that score as well. But along the way, we lost our moral compass when we invaded Iraq and caused the death or displacement of untold millions..."

Getting back to the U.S. We are at a precarious moment in our nation's history. Our government has lost its moral compass and is largely dysfunctional as the Republican Speaker of the House genuflects at every Trumpian demand. The Supreme Court itself has lost its moral compass and too many judges have engaged in questionable ethical behaviour. The recent decision on presidential immunity has upended the rock-solid idea that propped up this nation: that all men are created equal. Now, we have our highest court telling us that one is more equal than the rest.

Our major corporations are accused and convicted of massive antitrust violations and billions of dollars in tax evasion. Pharma companies and financial service companies extort and cheat and consumer companies sell dangerous products. American companies lobby to have the right to pollute the air, water, and load our food with dangerous chemicals.

Donald Trump even claimed that he had every right to interfere in the election.

If that doesn't tell you there is no moral compass there, what will?

Can any nation in the world find its True North?

For too long, we have been content to point in the wrong direction. Worse, we have been content to let our so-called "leaders" point us in the wrong direction.

It is time to reorient this nation, and ourselves, to True North.

Cheerz...
Bwana



Dr Vinaye Ancharaz

Interest-free loans to youths: What impact?

There's no free lunch. Any money given by the government, whether directly or indirectly, is paid out of tax revenue. So, ultimately, the burden of the measure will fall on taxpayers

The PM's proposal to offer interest-free home loans to youths aged 18-35, if re-elected, has provoked much debate across the populace. The proposal follows the launch of free Internet for the same group of voters and the announcement that the PRB report to be published in December 2025 will come into effect retroactively as from January 2025. It is clear that the interest-free home loan proposal is part of a bigger package of electoral bribes meant to woo voters.

But why this measure, and why now?

Is it really a perk, or just some sort of compensation for the government's failed policies? I tend to believe it's the latter. Prices since 2020 have increased so much that a decent house is beyond the reach of most youths aspiring to settle down into family life. And don't blame it on the pandemic! Much of it is home-made. Land prices have skyrocketed due to IRS projects and not-so-smart cities. Construction costs have flared up largely because of the persistent depreciation of the rupee, and repeated hikes in the minimum wage. The proposal to exempt young mortgagors from interest payment is thus a palliative measure that bypass-

es the real problem. It's like someone set your house on fire and then helps you put it out. You thank the person for helping, but you conveniently ignore the fact that he was the arsonist.

Who will benefit from the proposal?

Considering that the average price of the recently inaugurated social housing units comes to Rs3.7 million, excluding the price of land, a modest dwelling will not cost less than Rs5 million. How many of our youths can afford to take out a loan of this amount to acquire a property? Based on information I have gathered from different borrowers, I estimate that the monthly repayment for a Rs5 million home loan over 25 years will be in the vicinity of Rs30,000. Suppose Rs10,000 of this amount is the interest charge, which will be paid by the government. That still leaves the borrower with a monthly liability of Rs20,000. If we assume that the loan repayment does not account for more than 40% of the borrower's salary, as per current industry practice, the salary must be at least Rs50,000 for someone to be eligible for a Rs5 million home loan.

At what age will the average youth reach this salary to qualify for an interest-

free loan? The median salary in 2023 was Rs18,000. With the *revenu minimum garanti* at Rs20,000 and the recent salary adjustments, let's say that the median salary has today increased to Rs30,000. This means that half of the working population earns less than Rs30,000, with most of our youths falling into this category. As a result, the majority of individuals aged 18-35 are unlikely to benefit from the proposal.

“Prices since 2020 have increased so much that a decent house is beyond the reach of most youths aspiring to settle down into family life. And don't blame it on the pandemic! Much of it is home-made. Land prices have skyrocketed due to IRS projects and not-so-smart cities. Construction costs have flared up largely because of the persistent depreciation of the rupee, and repeated hikes in the minimum wage. The proposal to exempt young mortgagors from interest payment is thus a palliative measure that bypasses the real problem. It's like someone set your house on fire and then helps you put it out. You thank the person for helping, but you conveniently ignore the fact that he was the arsonist...”

Moreover, with shifts in culture, rising expectations, and demonstration effects, the typical young worker often prioritizes owning a car over acquiring a house. Additionally, the plethora of financing facilities available has made achieving this goal all too easy. A few years later,

the youth would borrow to finance his wedding. By the age of 30 or so, many young professionals are already burdened with debt to the extent that they may become ineligible for additional loans. As a result, only a few — primarily those who are already well-off — will actually benefit from the proposal. Thus, there is a risk that the proposal creates two categories of youths. The handful who benefits from it, and the many who will foot the bill.

Institutional risks

The modalities of the proposed measure are yet to be defined. At this stage, it is unclear whether commercial banks, or the Mauritius Housing Corporation (MHC), or some other government organization will be implementing the scheme. The risk with government intervention is that it opens the doors to corruption and favouritism. Similar to social housing, it's not necessarily the most deserving who will get the opportunity to become a homeowner on the back of interest-free mortgages.

Furthermore, the proposal may create both an adverse selection and a moral hazard problem. Adverse selection occurs when ineligible borrowers are given loans based on their political affinity rather than their financial capacity. Moral hazard is the thinking that the government will bail out bad mortgage payers. Together, these problems could lead to high default rates and bad debt, with adverse consequences for financial stability and governance.

Finally, there's no free lunch. Any money given by the government, whether directly or indirectly, is paid out of tax revenue. So, ultimately, the burden of the measure will fall on taxpayers. Will taxes be raised to finance this and other populist measures? Time will tell.

Begging the nation?

The current predicament reminds us of Michael Hopf's famous quote: "Hard times create strong men. Strong men create good times. Good times create weak men. Weak men create hard times." Is the MSM government creating 'un peuple assisté' by constantly doling out freebies to the people? If so, will they have the grit to steer the economic course of the country into the future, or will they, as Hopf warns, become weak pawns who lead the country to disaster?



Pic - Moawin.pk

“The monthly repayment for a Rs5 million home loan over 25 years will be in the vicinity of Rs30,000. Suppose Rs10,000 of this amount is the interest charge, which will be paid by the government. That still leaves the borrower with a monthly liability of Rs20,000. If we assume that the loan repayment does not account for more than 40% of the borrower's salary, as per current industry practice, the salary must be at least Rs50,000 for someone to be eligible for a Rs5 million home loan. At what age will the average youth reach this salary to qualify for an interest-free loan?”

Nita Deerpalsing

“Leadership with Vision can achieve many things thought to be impossible”

‘Look at what Rwanda accomplished in 20-30 years after a painful genocide which touched every core of human existence’

With the announcement of the next election date on the horizon, the political landscape in Mauritius is heating up after five years of contentious rule. In this context, the political landscape is marred by a troubling trend: the exploitation of vulnerabilities for electoral gain. The normalization of this practice, where vulnerabilities are cynically leveraged for votes, reflects a deeper malaise in our political culture. The media’s role becomes crucial in calling out these practices and ensuring transparency and accountability. As we delve into the specifics of the opposition alliances and the broader implications for our political future, we seek insights from Nita Deerpalsing on how the main parties, particularly the Labour Party and the MMM, are positioning themselves. We also explore the prospects for meaningful change, the challenges of breaking the cycle of entrenched politics, and the need for fresh perspectives and leadership.

Mauritius Times: After five long years of controversial and tumultuous rule by the current government, we are almost there: the political landscape is gradually heating up, with the contesting parties refining their strategies and finalizing alliance discussions in anticipation of the announcement of the date of the next elections. How do you assess the current state of affairs as the elections approach?

Nita Deerpalsing: With all the confetti of promises falling from the sky, it is clear that the battle for power is fully on and with undoubtedly more promises yet to be announced, it would seem that these are accompanied by a whiff of despair to ensure that the ‘bait’ is taken and the ‘fish’ can be securely held tight in the net once it grabs on to the bait.

I have used the above image not with intended sarcasm but rather to underscore the sadness of the situation of the population at large.

Let us coldly and objectively look at some facts.

We have in this country more than 60% of households with earnings of less than Rs 36,000 per month. These are the official figures as per one of the answers in Hansard. With a rupee losing its value by the day.

We also have some 70% of school children who are filtered out of the education system year after year. Therefore, a sizeable portion of the future generation is being quashed even before they get to be 18 years old. I leave it to your imagination and thoughts as to what meaningful life chances these youths will tangibly have. And what the consequences will be for the nation.

More than half the population suffer from all kinds of health problems like diabetes, hypertension, obesity and other kinds of non-communicable diseases. At the same time, possibly more than 90% of our population is consuming ever-increasing amounts of ultra-processed foods, with little (and very expensive) access to wholesome food. This presages a future population with even more physical illness and behavioral issues. I don’t know in which economics books or thesis there is a recipe for a nation which can produce sustainable prosperity with an ever-increasingly literally sick population. Perhaps the ever-increasing constructions of hospitals and private clinics is supposed to be a palliative proxy for some GDP numbers.

The household debt levels are very high and are on the

rise, not to mention national debt but that’s another story altogether. The number of requests for housing is ever on the rise, which leads you to question whether the evidence on the ground tallies with the survey figures that policy makers use to formulate policies.

I could go on, but I think this is enough to objectively affirm that more than some 60-65% of the population is in a situation of vulnerability of some kind.

This unfortunately provides fertile ground for any cynic to exploit. We can rightly ask ourselves this question: what kind of society are we living in where vulnerabilities are ruthlessly exploited for votes? And when I hear some commentators say that oh well, even the other side would do the same, I think this is even more serious.

Not that I believe that there is one “side” which is only angelic and another “side” which is the devil incarnate. What I am saying is that if even neutral commentators have already interiorized that this is fair “game” in times of elections, we have then come to another level of collectively accepting, even condoning that people’s utmost vulnerabilities can and should be exploited for the sake of obtaining votes. And that it is absolutely “normal” to do such things.

The acceptance of this narrative is what is shocking and extremely sad for those who are not in the top third decile.

Of course, no one can contend that this practice of fil-

“Possibly more than 90% of our population is consuming ever-increasing amounts of ultra-processed foods, with little (and very expensive) access to wholesome food. This presages a future population with even more physical illness and behavioral issues. I don’t know in which economics books or thesis there is a recipe for a nation which can produce sustainable prosperity with an ever-increasingly literally sick population. Perhaps the ever-increasing constructions of hospitals and private clinics is supposed to be a palliative proxy for some GDP numbers...”



ling in some gaps of social advancement here and there only at times of elections started only 5 or 10 years ago. So, it is clear that we cannot point fingers only at one side of the political colour spectrum. However, this practice has now taken gigantic proportions, and it seems that anything goes. I think it would be fair to say that it has now moved on from an amateur league to a professional league. And that every contender whether in opposition or current executive should follow suit and blindly adopt the model. This, if anything, is a recipe for sure collapse. And the more we use this recipe, the faster the collapse is approaching us.

*** We are unsure whether people are concerned about these issues, as they do not openly express their electoral preferences. This lack of clear majority support on either side of the spectrum is not very reassuring for the various political alliances. What’s your take on that?**

This is why the few remaining ‘neutral’ media has an even greater responsibility to bear. The exploitation of people’s vulnerabilities **only** at times of elections must be called out without fear or favour of any single contender of whichever political colour it is.

Unfortunately, even this space is shrinking as people – even in the media – are scared to rub the princes of the day or of tomorrow, the wrong way. With the result that once again results in a disservice, specially to the people on the lower 60-70% of the socio-economic ladder. Not to mention ruining the quality of democracy itself which normally means plurality of opinion to start with.

Cont. on page 8

“The Labour Party has to go back to its roots of working for the dignity of the population..

... then that would not result with “more of the same”

☞ Cont. from page 7

* Let's talk about the Opposition alliance. This may be partly because the Labour Party leader is keen to avoid a repeat of the 2014 deal with Paul Bérenger, which left the LP and the MMM in political wilderness for the following decade. Are you hopeful that this new alliance can and will succeed?

The fundamental problem with the opposition parties (with very few exceptions), is that they too are seemingly focused on packaging rather than serious content. Again, while we have heard so far a string of “measures”, we still don't see the overall holistic vision in order to address some of the thorny issues I mentioned earlier. To add insult to collective intelligence, we are told that ‘manifests’ cannot be released too early because others will copy some of the ideas!

This is very revealing in itself. This may also be read to mean that they too are interested only in “throwing bait” and what is really meant is that they don't want any of their appetizing “bait” to be copied.

Come on, let's say you were one of the opposition parties. If you were to come in front of the population and say:

- We will put in place XYZ mechanism (with details) to close all the possible ways in which drugs are entering on the Mauritian soil. Would you care if your opponent copied this? Do you think they will, if they themselves are allegedly feeding off for party finances on drug barons? Or are you also thinking you may need some of this much needed political financing? Which is which? If Singapore or Dubai has closed in on drug trafficking with the whole world recognizing them as no-go zones for drugs, why can't Mauritius do it? Do you feel there is an overzealous will to root out the drug problem?
- We will immediately stop all these IRS/RES/Smart City schemes which entails the selling out of the restricted amount of land/villas to foreigners which are there only because various Executives have seen in them a supposedly easy way to earn forex. Except that we can still question, exactly what proportion of forex really comes into the country with the sale of smart city villas. Would those who are benefitting from giving permissions for conversion of land copy this?
- We will immediately unpack in front of the population's eyes the fat built-in to every single electricity bill where by each household is providing huge subsidies to Independent Power Producers (IPPs). And we will work with all stakeholders to ensure that the population is not unfairly fleeced on the price they are paying for each kilowatt-hour of electricity that they consume. Would you fear that your opponents will copy such an intended policy? Or do you hope that you too will be part of the policy capture network so that you too get some handsome political ‘donations’ when needed?
- We will immediately lift up the ridiculous restriction of 15 MWh of electricity production by individual house holds. Why do you want to have such a nonsensical restriction anyway. Should there be even one affluent household who can afford to put solar power production on their villas to produce more than 15 MWh for their own consumption, why would we want to stop even that

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one person to do so? In order to ensure that IPPs have some sort of guaranteed level of production to sell to CEB? And would you care that this policy proposition would be copied by your opponents?

Or do you want as potential future policy maker to earn your membership in the policy capture club?

- We will take the issue of ultra-processed food consumption with utmost seriousness and formulate short-, medium- and long-term policies which will address the fallouts of food consumption that is producing an increasingly sick population.
- We will rally all positive energies in the country in order to formulate solid policies for nation building. Not only to ensure that no one ever threatens our plural society but

more positively to keep building and solidifying our sense of 'lakorite' which makes of us such a beautiful plural nation. This includes National Civil Service schemes (government programmes or initiatives aimed at engaging citizens in various forms of public service or community work). as was already introduced as pilot projects in 2012-2013. Now these have to be solidified and replicated. But this of course will not be enough. We need to have a society where each and every citizen sees, perceives, feels and knows deep in their bones that they have exactly the same equal right as every other citizen. That one will require much more than a National Civil Service, but it is well worth starting for any one that has a real Vision for our country's future.

If there is seriousness of purpose and if you truly want to achieve anything concrete and meaningful, nothing stops the main Opposition parties from using their press conferences to publicly take these kinds of commitments and detail them out to demonstrate their seriousness of purpose. Instead of all those useless press conferences, with 3 people speaking and 25 mute mommies as background, nodding or sleeping, to say nothing very profound if it is not to openly criticize Tony Blair, Keith Starmer... As if this is now international diplomacy works

* **Both the LP and the MMM must have reached agreements on crucial issues such as electoral reform, the rule of law, the protection of human rights, social inequality and welfare, the fight against corruption, and increased transparency in government, in order to ensure the viability and effectiveness of any prospective alliance. What else would it take to ensure that the alliance delivers on its promises?**

As I just mentioned, it would be better for the population to be informed concretely on the Vision for the future and the details of the policy portfolio of such a vision.

This is what brings credibility in the sense of purpose. At this point, when talking to people from across the country, you get the sense that people are jaded and do not attribute much noble intent to any political party or alliance.

This is where the opposition has a responsibility to show a real sense of purpose if it is really serious on a plan for the country to change course from a cyclical every 5 years cynical exploitation of the vulnerabilities of 60-70% of the population.

* **It has been argued that the only way for positive change to occur is through regime change, and many hope that this will not result in “more of the same.” What do you think are the key factors that would determine whether a new regime can truly bring about meaningful change?**

This is precisely why political parties which have shaped the History of this country have the burden and responsibility of demonstrating content over packaging.

And this is especially so for the Labour Party which was set up in 1936 with one word being key: Dignity. So, as far as the Labour Party is concerned – to which I have a profound attachment even if I am not politically active — I would think that Dr Ramgoolam is very conscious that there are all kinds of sharks - left, right and centre - in the neighbourhood; whose eyes are beyond this upcoming election to the after-Ramgoolam horizon. Who are hatching plans to perhaps give it a try to eventually cannibalize the Labour Party.

☞ Cont. on page 9

'If Singapore or Dubai has closed in on drug trafficking with the whole world recognizing them as no-go zones for drugs, why can't Mauritius do it?'

☞ Cont. from page 8

There are already some signs of this from the one who has been "waiting for Godot" all his political life. But I think all of them grossly underestimate the Labour Party's core.

Against this backdrop, Dr Ramgoolam will have a tightrope to walk. However, no matter what, in my opinion, I think he fully knows that he has no moral right to lead the Labour Party — with its 88-year history — down a path that makes it indistinguishable from any of the other blokes on the road. Like the other parties, it is also somewhat tainted by a few 'arrivistes' who only seek positions as MPs or Ministers for all the wrong reasons. Nevertheless, only the Labour Party still has enough of its core Soul remaining to go back to politics with purpose.

It is time to go back to the politics of conviction and not politics of opportunism to show off the spoils of power such as duty-free cars, etc., which in any case, by the way, should now be abolished along with many other such perks.

The Labour Party has to go back to its roots of working for the dignity of the population. Then that would not result with "more of the same" as you mention. I do not mention any other party because I certainly do not expect politics of conviction from the other party which publicly sings that song but finds a false sense of emboldenment via an oligarchy parachute.



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By the way, the manner in which the Dave Kisoondoyal case was handled speaks volumes. It is to be well noted that none of the protagonists have come forward to deny that they equated comrade Dave Kisoondoyal as an “employee” to whom an “employer” would no way ever make any apologies. In the absence of any such public “mise au point”, we can only draw the conclusions based on Dave Kisoondoyal's evidence.

*** Critics of the current regime argue that the MSM-led government has, over the past decade, fundamentally altered the traditional political playbook followed by most mainstream parties in earlier decades. This new playbook introduces revised strategies for governance and methods for leveraging economic policies to achieve political goals. Do you really think this approach be reversed?**

Yes, this is exactly what we have been talking about earlier in this conversation. The imperative is to go back to politics of conviction. Where people want to be in politics for the right reasons and not just to obtain a seat in Parliament for all kinds of other reasons. Of course this will not happen

by magic. This is where leadership is a key determining factor.

*** What are the most pressing socio-economic imbalances currently affecting the nation, and what do you expect from the current contenders for political power, in particular the LP and the MMM, regarding their proposals for addressing these challenges?**

I am tempted to repeat what I have mentioned earlier as possible policy announcements which any political party should not fear that their opponents would copy. Because they address some of the fundamental distortions.

I would add on the drug issue, a more overall law and order issue, the indiscipline on our roads is just a mirror image of the situation of law and order in the country. There are many other pressing issues like fixing an education system which is weaning out 70% of the youth of this country. And a healthcare 'system' which is only about the construction of ever more and more hospitals.

And let us start targeting all subsidies. Starting from those that the fat cats at the top benefit from. Let us start by putting out in all transparency the quantification of all such subsidies which moves from each and every citizen's purse to the “too big to fail” club.

We need to do this for the sake of having real free market forces where productivity and entrepreneurship, innovation stems from genuine competition. Because, as the saying goes, cats fed on cream cannot catch mice. And cats which cannot catch mice outside of a protected subsidy-led environment cannot produce sustainable prosperity through their subsidy-dependent profits.

*** Assuming that the main Opposition parties were elected to power next time, wouldn't it be a challenging and uphill task to sanitize the prevalent political culture established over the past decade in view of the fact that the electorate today seems more focused on their well-being, living conditions, and material needs rather than on ideological considerations?**

Of course, it will be a tall order and an uphill task. There is no free lunch anywhere. It will take a strong sense of purpose and hard work. But look at what Rwanda accomplished in 20-30 years after a painful genocide which touched every core of human existence. It goes to show once again that Leadership with Vision can achieve many things thought to be impossible. We could also draw inspiration from Mandela's leadership and belief in a noble purpose. At that time, who could have thought that such a toxic system as apartheid could be dismantled?

*** At the end of the day, it appears we are still entrenched with the same teams and ideas, leaving little room for a renewal of both ideas and political figures. What would it take to break this cycle and introduce fresh perspectives and leadership into the political arena?**

I do not subscribe to focusing on personalities. It is imperative to focus rather on politics of ideas. Whoever comes with wholesome policies with authenticity and genuine sense of purpose should draw our attention. And the media and neutral observers have a duty to then keep probing for authenticity and hold them accountable for their commitment to wholesome policy making.

*** Last Monday's edition of L'Express features an interview with Sudesh Rughoobur, a former MSM candidate who joined the MMM in 2019. He has been**

“Possibly more than 90% of our population is consuming ever-increasing amounts of ultra-processed foods, with little (and very expensive) access to wholesome food. This presages a future population with even more physical illness and behavioral issues. I don't know in which economics books or thesis there is a recipe for a nation which can produce sustainable prosperity with an ever-increasingly literally sick population. Perhaps the ever-increasing constructions of hospitals and private clinics is supposed to be a palliative proxy for some GDP numbers...”



denied a ticket on the LP-MMM-Nouveaux Démocrates platform for the upcoming elections, citing “casteist considerations” as the reason. Mr Rughoobur has been blunt and forthright, but he should know better. This raises questions about the politics of representation and merit in the country, doesn't it?

I have just mentioned politics of ideas. But truly, in a plural nation, for the sake of nation building and “Lakorite”, this has to be intertwined with the politics of representation. The parliament, public and private institutions and companies should look like what the Mauritian nation looks like. That is, eminently plural.

And I certainly do not subscribe to the narrative of one single jacket notion of “Morisianism”. To me that resembles a page taken from Hitler's book. You must think like me and subscribe to my definition of “Morisianism” then I will grant you the belonging to my notion of “Morisianism”.

Because within plural nations, there is no such thing as a single overarching identity. And there should not be either. I see many who want to assert the narrative which says: “I am Mauritian before being of XYZ ethnic community”. This is flawed because identities in plural societies are inextricably intertwined. This is precisely the beauty of plural identities. That you cannot tweak out one single identity which has overarching ascendancy.

And from a nation-building perspective, no one should try to force the narrative of one single 'appartenance' on anyone. In a beautifully knitted or crocheted tapestry with several intertwined threads, we should never demand that one particular thread be pulled out to supposedly demonstrate an academic construct which would pass off as “true” Morisianism. Because the question will always arise: Whose definition of “true” amongst the 1.3 million citizens do we choose as flag bearer for a certain “Morisianism”? In fact, the several threads themselves are part and parcel of what we would call “Morisianism”.

That said, of course we should have large consultations for a national Constitutional Assises, in order to figure out the proper way by which we can root out these 4 anachronistic straight jacket boxes from our current Constitution. Which would be a great opportunity to collectively write a new Constitution for Mauritius 2050 and beyond.

Education is about life-long learning



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

A couple of weeks ago over lunch I met up with two former classmates who were with me at the Royal College Curepipe. They were both visiting from abroad. One lived in Geneva and had had a career in aviation, the other who had in fact been the laureate of our 1957 batch had settled in Toronto as a physician after studies in London. We were meeting after quite a few years, and at that time there were about 7 of us.

Understandably, much of our conversation was about reminiscences – of those who had passed since the last meeting, and of others about whom we exchanged whatever we knew regarding their whereabouts and careers. Inevitably, the talk turned towards our teachers. We shared our favourite stories, impressions, and jokes about those who had most marked us. Since both my friends had lived and worked abroad, unlike me they hadn't had a chance to catch up with any of them after leaving school, whereas I was able to do so as I returned to practise in the country. I told them about my later encounters with a couple of our teachers.

All those who go through the educational system will have come across teachers who have made a difference in their lives – fostering interest in a particular subject, inspiring them to give the best of themselves and to aim higher and higher, or influencing a career choice as happened in my own case. They valued their teachers' experience and pedagogic skills. But those who were passionate about their subject and transmitted that passion to their students generated an emotional connect which heightened the latter's respect – even awe – and liking for them.

Down the generations, to this day, and in spite of the pervasive feeling that there has been a gradual but sure general degradation in many aspects of the educational system, there have been and always will be teachers

“All those who go through the educational system will have come across teachers who have made a difference in their lives – fostering interest in a particular subject, inspiring them to give the best of themselves and to aim higher and higher, or influencing a career choice as happened in my own case. They valued their teachers' experience and pedagogic skills. But those who were passionate about their subject and transmitted that passion to their students generated an emotional connect which heightened the latter's respect – even awe – and liking for them...”



who will be remembered and talked about long after their students have left school or college.

However, while our teachers may have equipped us to pursue a career, it is only as we go through life and have to fight our way through circumstances and different situations as we strive to earn a living that we perforce realise that there are other skills that we need to cope and move ahead both in our chosen career and in life generally. These were not taught to us in the formal school system – they had to be picked up the hard way in the multitude of experiences that we continuously undergo, consisting of both failures and successes, minor and/or major, depending on our expectations. In other words, it does not take us long to face the hard reality that education in the true sense of the word is about life-long learning.

These reflections came to me after I had parted ways with my friends. As I looked back over my own career and life to date, I imagined myself as a teacher facing eager students poised for a take-off on their own life course and pondered what all I would pass on to them besides the specific subject matter. In fact, I have also been involved in nursing and medical education, in the course of which I have had to propose some life lessons to my students as they approached their final exams, readying themselves to take the leap into the wide world, of seeking work and pursuing career and building a family.

Towards this end, I have collected a few thoughts that, I hope in a more general sense, can help prepare students of whatever category to better face the world. I leave these to their appreciation:

- Revere your parents and your teachers.
- 'Want to be': set your goal, the path will open up.
- Be a global citizen: speak many tongues, so that you will be at ease in several different settings.
- If you study/make a career abroad: Come back to Mauritius. Or keep in touch.

- Work hard: don't chase money, but pursue excellence: perfection and money will inevitably follow
- Build Mauritius – it's your future and that of your children; Mauritius is you and yours. Get involved. Criticise if you must – but constructively.
- Don't lose hope and heart: put in the right effort and amount of time in all your endeavours, make allowance for the unknown constant k as in mathematics, then accept the result as being your responsibility and yours alone. More importantly: be prepared – (the Boy Scouts' motto, which I learned when I was a Boy Scout for about five years in my teens) - to bounce back if need be.
- Be good: think, talk and do good. Done every day that's 3 'goods' per day, multiply by 365 and if you start now, over a lifetime which is now on an average beyond 70 years that's over 65000 bits of goodness! You know that according to Newton's Law to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. That's in physics: in human relations the reaction can be much more and not necessarily opposite, so you have nothing to lose and everything to gain in being good, doing good.
- Bond with others - family, friends and society: it keeps you young, prevents disease and premature ageing.
- Do volunteer work – it adds meaning to life.
- Eat less – do more exercise.
- Remember always: You are an ambassador – of your country, your profession.
- Never stop learning. Question all the time, everything. Never accept anything without thorough questioning.
- Read widely - don't rely only on social media.
- Take nature walks, to soak in its grandeur, and to observe and learn from the living.

The Six-Million-Dollar Man

A Socratic Examination of Scandal and Perception

In our bustling city, a scandal involving a former royal servant has captivated public attention. This individual, once in the service of the King and now an alleged recipient of a substantial donation from an Arab prince, is at the centre of a heated debate. The donation, amounting to six million dollars, was intended to promote religious and moral values. Yet rumours swirl that the funds might not have been used as intended, leading to widespread speculation and controversy. In this Socratic dialogue, Socrates and his friend Cephalus delve into the heart of the matter, exploring the nature of trust, integrity, and the role of public perception in amplifying scandals.

By Plutonix

Characters:

- **Socrates:** The classical philosopher known for his method of questioning.
- **Cephalus:** Socrates' friend, a wealthy and somewhat amused observer of the scandal.

Socrates: Good day, Cephalus. It seems that our city is abuzz with tales of scandal and intrigue. Have you heard the latest gossip about the former slave of the king?

Cephalus: Ah, Socrates, indeed I have! The tale is quite the sensation. It's said that this erstwhile slave and servant of the king, now reportedly kept at a safe distance by the 'Prince héritier,' has received a sizeable donation from an Arab prince. Allegedly, a sum of six million dollars was intended for promoting religious and moral values. Quite the dramatic turn of events, wouldn't you say?

Socrates: Dramatic indeed! It seems that in the grand theatre of life, this former slave has been cast in quite the leading role. But tell me, Cephalus, what makes this tale so compelling? Is it the princely sum, or the rags-to-riches plot twist?

Cephalus: Both, I suppose! The sheer scale of the donation and the former slave's meteoric rise from servitude to collector of donations make it a gripping narrative. But what has really caught everyone's attention is the rumour that the former slave might have pocketed the funds instead of channelling them to the intended causes.

Socrates: Ah, the classic plot twist: from humble servant to high-profile collector! So, let us dissect this as we would a philosophical enigma. What is the essence of this scandal, in your view?

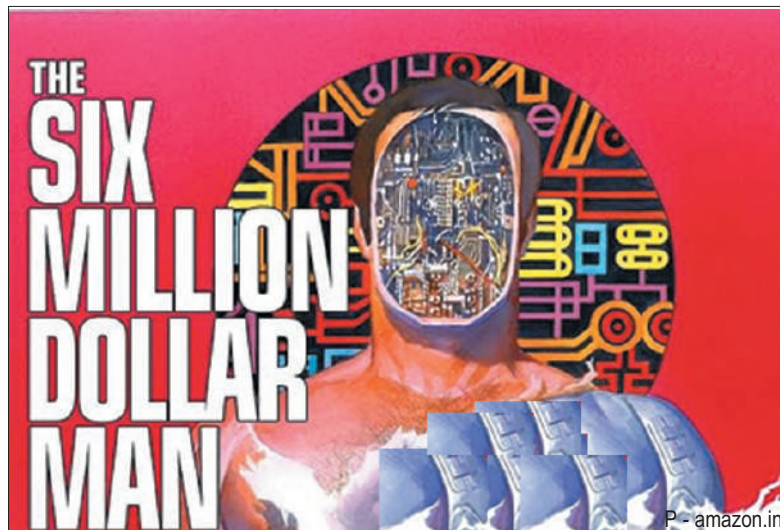
Cephalus: At its heart, it's a matter of trust and integrity. The organizations anticipated funds for noble causes, and if the former slave's alleged retention of the money proves true, it's a betrayal of epic proportions.

Socrates: A betrayal indeed. So, based on the evidence — or lack thereof — what can we conclude? Is it clear whether the former slave actually received the donation?

Cephalus: Ah, therein lies the conundrum. We have no concrete evidence that the former slave received the donation. It's all speculation. The organizations are in the dark, and the only certainty is the public's furious reaction and a deluge of memes on social media.

Socrates: Social media memes, you say? The modern-day equivalent of Athenian satire, perhaps? Let us then consider, what is fuelling the anger of the organizations and followers?

Cephalus: If the former slave did indeed receive



such a princely sum and chose to keep it rather than use it for its intended purpose, it would be a grave injustice. And let's not forget, everyone loves a good scandal with a side of outrage.

Socrates: But is it not also possible that the public's ire is amplified by the very uncertainty of the situation? When faced with ambiguity, does not human nature fill the void with the most colourful and sensational scenarios?

Cephalus: Absolutely! The lack of concrete evidence invites wild speculation and sensationalism. The public's imagination runs rampant, turning the scandal into a media circus with a cast of characters more exaggerated than in any ancient Greek tragedy.

Socrates: So, is it the uncertainty that fans the flames of scandal? If the truth were known — whether the money was received and how it was used — would the matter remain as scandalous?

Cephalus: Perhaps not. Certainty tends to douse the flames of rumour. As it stands, the scandal thrives on ambiguity, feeding public curiosity and the amusement of those who revel in the spectacle.

Socrates: Let us delve deeper. Suppose the former slave did receive the donation. What if he used it for a globe-trotting tour, spreading moral and religious teachings while sipping juice cocktails on a beach? Could such an action redeem his questionable alleged retention of the funds?

Cephalus: Now that's a twist worthy of a soap opera! If he were using the money for a higher cause, albeit in a way not initially intended, could it be viewed as a form of noble deception?

Socrates: A noble deception, indeed! This raises the perennial question: do the ends justify the means? If the former slave's actions, though ethically dubious, lead to a greater good, does this transform our judgment of his character?

Cephalus: It certainly complicates matters. The notion that he might be using the funds for a higher purpose — despite the initial breach of trust — could shift the narrative. Yet, the lack of transparency and the disappointment felt by the public remain significant issues.

Socrates: And what of the humour and jokes that have emerged from this scandal? Do they not serve as a societal pressure-release valve, helping the public cope with the uncomfortable ambiguity?

Cephalus: Precisely! Humour often helps people deal with the absurdity of situations. It's a coping mechanism, a way to navigate the murky waters of scandal with a grin and a chuckle.

Socrates: So, in this case, the humour functions as a mirror to the public's reaction, reflecting their frustration and the inherent ridiculousness of the scandal. How fascinating! But returning to the core issue, should we not consider the role of the former slave himself?

Cephalus: Indeed. If he is innocent, then the allegations are unfair and his reputation is unjustly marred. If he is guilty, then the consequences should be fair and fitting. Either way, clarity and justice should prevail.

Socrates: A wise perspective. As in all matters of justice, the truth must be pursued with vigour, and actions judged with discernment. The former slave's intentions and actions must be examined with both fairness and integrity.

Cephalus: Agreed, Socrates. Until then, the public's reaction — its outrage and humour — will continue to shape the story. The former slave's future actions and the resolution of this matter will ultimately determine the true nature of the scandal.

Socrates: Indeed. And so, we are left with the paradox of human nature — our yearning for certainty and justice intertwined with our tendency to fill voids with speculation and entertainment. Such is the nature of our societal dynamics.

Cephalus: Quite so, Socrates. This scandal, though amusing in its absurdity, reminds us of the importance of seeking truth and understanding amid the cacophony of public opinion.

Socrates: Well said, Cephalus. And as we reflect on this, let us remember that in every scandal lies an opportunity for deeper inquiry into the nature of justice, trust, and human behaviour.

Cephalus: Absolutely. Thank you for this enlightening discussion, Socrates. It has given me much to ponder about both the nature of scandals and the responses they provoke.

Socrates: The pleasure is mine, Cephalus. The case of the six-million-dollar donation, shrouded in ambiguity, highlights how uncertainty can fuel speculation and transform a straightforward issue into a media spectacle. Until our next discourse, may we continue to seek wisdom and clarity in all matters, no matter how scandalously entertaining they may be.

Belgium Accused of Colonial-Era Crimes Against Humanity in Congo

Five mixed-race women, now in their 70s, have brought their case to a Brussels appeals court, seeking reparations from Belgium. They allege that Belgium committed crimes against humanity by forcibly removing them from their families in Congo between 1948 and 1961 and placing them in religious institutions.

The women claim this practice, part of a broader racial policy by the Belgian colonial administration, aimed to erase their identities and marginalize them from both African and colonial societies. Belgian authorities estimate that between 14,000 and 20,000 children were affected.

Their initial claims were rejected in 2021 on the grounds that the crimes were not recognized at the time. The women are now appealing, arguing that their treatment should be classified as a crime against humanity, similar to those judged at the Nuremberg



King Baudouin and Queen Fabiola of Belgium take a walk on their palanquins during a visit to Kisangani, north-eastern Congo, in 1970. Pic - AFP

Tribunal.

Belgium had apologized in 2019, acknowledging the abduction and mistreatment of these children. King Philippe also expressed "deepest regrets" in 2022 but did not issue a formal apology for exploitation or racism. Critics, including opposition MP Geneviève Inagosi, argue that Belgium should provide reparations and help rebuild the DRC rather than just expressing regrets.

China's New Strategy in Africa: Is the Continent Getting a Fair Deal?



The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Summit in Beijing, September 4, 2018. Pic - Flickr

China has unveiled an ambitious new strategy to enhance its influence in Africa, raising questions about the continent's real benefits. At the recent China-Africa Cooperation Forum, Beijing introduced a comprehensive plan aimed at boosting African development while securing its own strategic interests.

The Beijing Action Plan, covering the next three years, allocates €46 billion in aid, investments, and credit lines. This plan builds on the 2021 Dakar Action Plan and promises €27 billion in credit, €10 billion in assistance, and €9 billion in direct investment from Chinese companies, according to Radio France Internationale.

Although these figures are impressive, concerns remain about their actual impact. "Monitoring these commitments is challenging, and it's uncertain when or if they will be fully

realized," notes economist Ibrahim Xalil Niang from Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar. He highlights the lack of clear oversight and evaluation as a major issue.

China's new strategy also extends into political and security realms, including promises to train African military forces, engage in peacekeeping, and combat terrorism. Additionally, Beijing aims to foster political exchanges, raising concerns that it might encourage African governments to adopt elements of its own authoritarian model.

China's Global Security Initiative offers an alternative to the Western "rules-based order," emphasizing territorial sovereignty and noninterference. This resonates in regions frustrated by Western intervention. The Beijing Declaration also taps into anti-colonial sentiments, referencing a February 2024 African Union state-

ment that demands an end to Western sanctions on countries like Zimbabwe, Eritrea, and Sudan, asserting their right to self-determination.

In his keynote address, President Xi Jinping framed China and Africa's struggle against colonialism as a shared experience. He criticized the Western approach to development, which he claimed caused "immense suffering" to Global South nations, and highlighted the historical injustices faced by developing countries, including China's own experience of foreign domination.

China's current strategy is part of a long-term trend dating back to the Cold War, when Beijing emerged as a leader of the non-aligned movement. Today, China positions itself as a leader of the Global South, appealing to nations disillusioned with Western partners. Economist Niang observes that this partnership is strategically driven, with China aiming to secure its own goals as well as support Africa.

For African nations, China offers vital access to finance, infrastructure, and technology. "China's contributions are crucial for closing the infrastructure gap and providing needed resources," says Niang. However, as anti-Western sentiment grows, especially towards countries like France, this dynamic could influence how Africa interacts with global powers, including China.

The impact of the Beijing Action Plan will shape the future of Africa-China relations, revealing whether this evolving partnership will genuinely benefit both sides.

Prince Harry's visa drug case records to remain confidential, US Court rules

A lawsuit filed by the conservative think tank The Heritage Foundation challenging Prince Harry's visa status has been "terminated," according to Newsweek.

Earlier this year, Judge Carl J. Nichols reviewed Prince Harry's visa records privately, and in April, the Biden administration confirmed compliance with this request.

The case focused on admissions in Harry's memoir, *Spare*, where he discussed past use of illegal drugs, including cocaine, marijuana, and magic mushrooms. In the memoir, Harry admitted to using cocaine during a shooting weekend at a country house.

The Heritage Foundation aimed to reveal Harry's visa documents, arguing that his drug admissions could make him inadmissible to live and work in the U.S. They filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit against the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), seeking to make his visa records public.



The Heritage Foundation's lawsuit over Prince Harry's visa status has been terminated. (AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth, File)(AP)

Heritage's lawyers contended that Harry's admissions of drug use, made for profit, could have immigration consequences and questioned whether he received preferential treatment. They argued, "The Duke of Sussex made these admissions despite knowing the potential adverse immigration consequences."

In response, government attorneys argued that disclosing Harry's visa records would violate his privacy, revealing sensitive details about his status, travel documents, and any immigration benefits.

The lawsuit was officially "terminated" on September 9, following sealed orders by Judge Nichols in Washington, D.C. The reasons for the dismissal and the confidentiality of Harry's visa records remain unclear.

Kyle Brosnan, chief counsel for The Heritage Foundation's Oversight Project, stated, "Prince Harry admitted to using illegal drugs, which could make him inadmissible to the U.S." He noted that the lawsuit aimed to determine if Harry received preferential treatment upon entering the country.

Brosnan added that the ruling remains sealed, and no details about the judge's decision are available. "We will continue to monitor the situation," he said.



Joe Biden poses with kids wearing pro-Trump shirts in Pennsylvania.
Pic – The Independent

Biden Poses with kids in pro-Trump shirts: Is this an endorsement?

On September 11, President Joe Biden found himself in an unusual photo op at a Pennsylvania firehouse, posing with a group of children wearing pro-Donald Trump attire. The president was in Shanksville to mark the 23rd anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

The photo, shared on X by conservative influencer Benny Johnson, shows Biden surrounded by about 16 kids, many sporting Trump-themed shirts. One shirt features Trump in Terminator sunglasses with the slogan "I'll be back."

After a wreath-laying ceremony at the memorial for United Airlines Flight 93—flown by Al Qaeda terrorists and diverted by passengers—Biden visited the firehouse with beer and pizza.

Johnson's post, which captioned the photo, "Joe Biden looking absolutely shook surrounded by Pennsylvania kids rocking Trump and MAGA gear," prompted a flood of reactions. Comments ranged from jokes about the MAGA gear making Biden "look more alive" to others humorously noting the kids' joy at seeing Trump support.

Some reactions included: "Is it me or is MAGA making him look more alive?" and "The kids with their Trump shirts omg." One user wondered, "So he's a Donald fan now??" while another added, "The fact that he took the picture with them gains just a LIL bit of respect. Just a little."

Additionally, Biden was filmed briefly wearing a red "Trump 2024" hat at the firehouse. The White House later clarified that the hat was donned in the spirit of bipartisanship, not as an endorsement.

The encounter has sparked debate online, with some questioning if Biden's actions might be interpreted as a political statement or simply a gesture of goodwill.

From Elon Musk to Brittany Mahomes: Celebrities endorsing Donald Trump in 2024

With the 2024 U.S. presidential election on November 5th approaching, the race is intensifying. While Democratic candidate Kamala Harris seems to have strong support, Republican contender Donald Trump is also drawing notable endorsements. Here's a look at some high-profile Trump supporters:

Elon Musk: Elon Musk has consistently supported Trump and made headlines with his reactions to anti-Trump statements. Recently, he mocked Taylor Swift's endorsement of Harris with a controversial post on X.

Brittany Mahomes: Soccer star Brittany Mahomes has sparked speculation about her support for Trump after liking and later un-liking Trump's Instagram post and a pro-Trump comment. She has addressed the backlash, attributing it to "deep-rooted issues." Trump has publicly praised her, further fueling the discussion.

Azealia Banks: Rapper Azealia



From Elon Musk to Brittany Mahomes, Donald Trump's most keynote celebrity endorsers. Pic - HT

Banks, who previously endorsed Trump in 2016 before retracting, has reaffirmed her support this year. She cited her views on gun laws and appeared at a Trump rally in Florida.

Lil Wayne: Rapper Lil Wayne received a pardon from Trump in January 2021, and has since expressed gratitude publicly. The two have discussed criminal justice reform, and Lil Wayne remains a vocal supporter.

Jon Voight: Actor Jon Voight, a long-time Trump supporter, has been vocal about his belief in Trump's leadership. He has called Trump the "greatest president since Abraham Lincoln" and has consistently defended him.

These endorsements highlight the significant support Trump continues to receive from various prominent figures as the election draws near.

Brazil calls on EU to suspend 'punitive' anti-deforestation law

Brazil has asked the EU to suspend its upcoming anti-deforestation law, set to take effect at the end of December, describing it as "punitive." The legislation will ban imports of various goods—such as coffee, cocoa, soy, timber, palm oil, cattle, and rubber—if produced on land deforested after December 2020.

The Brazilian government, a major supplier of many of these products, expressed serious concerns over the new rules. In a letter to the European Commission, Brazil's foreign affairs and agriculture ministers requested a postponement and reevaluation of the law to avoid negative impacts on trade.

The law has faced criticism from other countries, including the U.S., and from within the EU. Agricultural ministers from about 20 EU member states, led by Austria and Finland, have warned that it could create bureaucratic hurdles and distort competition.

The European Parliament's largest group has also



A farmer carries a chainsaw at a plantation after cutting down trees in Colombia. France is looking to reduce deforestation in Europe in a bid to tackle climate change. Pic - AFP

called for a delay. Brazil argues that the law disregards national deforestation efforts and increases costs, particularly for small producers.

The EU confirmed receipt of Brazil's letter but has stated it will not delay the law, which aims to address the 16% of global deforestation attributed to EU imports, according to WWF. The EU is working on implementing the regulation and providing technical assistance to importers.

Bangladesh: Yunus emphasizes importance of communal harmony

Bangladesh's interim government has requested the Hindu community to suspend Durga Puja festivities, especially music, during azaan and namaz. Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Md Jahangir Alam Chowdhury announced that puja committees have agreed to turn off musical instruments and sound systems during these times, starting five minutes before azaan.

Chowdhury made these remarks following a law and order meeting ahead of Durga Puja, the largest Hindu festival in Bangladesh. He also noted that this year, 32,666 puja mandaps will be set up nationwide, slightly



Bangladesh's interim government's chief adviser, Muhammad Yunus. Pic – Free Press Journal

fewer than last year's 33,431. In Dhaka, 157 mandaps will be in the South City and 88 in the North.

Chowdhury assured that security measures are in place for the festival, including round-the-clock protection at puja mandaps to prevent disruptions and criminal activities.

In a national address, interim Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus emphasized the importance of communal harmony, urging against actions that could disrupt religious peace. He warned that those who create chaos will face legal consequences.

MT @ 70

British interests in the 40s**To uphold built-in privileges of ruling classes, not of the working class**

Dr K. Hazareesingh

The *Mauritius Times* was born at a time when the country was facing a major crisis insofar as its future constitutional development was concerned. Although the general election of 1948 had significantly changed the political landscape, it was not until 1953 that the Labour Party consolidated its position under the leadership of Ramgoolam. It had increased its strength in the Legislature and was

poised to start major battles for independence when the retiring Governor Hilary Blood, modified the verdict of the electorate by the appointment of ten nominated members, who according to a time-honored custom, were expected generally to vote in accordance with the wishes of the Government.

As a legacy of the many years, the Labour Administration was still functioning as a Political Department. One morning, a few days after the election results of the poll were declared, Hilary Blood asked the Labour Commissioner to send him a list of about fifteen persons from whom he would select ten to sit as nominees in the new council.

Those pundits who have such a distorted view of our political history would be surprised if I were to tell them in those days the British had not the slightest interest in the working of the Parliamentary system nor the securing an equitable representation of the views of the various sections of the population.

Their main concern was to ensure law and order and to uphold the built-in privileges of the ruling classes. And so the list contained only the names of those Mauritians who could be trusted to support the official line.

The country was on the eve of the great constitutional reforms and Labour's strength in the Council having been substantially reduced, the need arose to mobilise outside resources. It was in response to this urgent call for direct action that the *Mauritius Times* came to be established.

It was while he was in London in 1953, the year of the Queen's Coronation, Ramlallah had the idea of starting a weekly newspaper dedicated to the promotion of socialist ideals. The West Indian Territories and the African Colonies were seething with unrest. The Mow Mow rebellion had threatened the very basis of the old Commonwealth. Jagan, Burnham, and other British Guyanese leaders were in London, fighting the British government for having abrogated the constitution of British Guiana. Beekrumsing Ramlallah was with them for a few days and was inspired by their struggle.

Dr Kumria, a noted Trinidadian publicist, was also editing in London a journal devoted to the defence of

colonial people and introduced him to some British leaders. Later, he also discovered Ibbotson, his devoted collaborator, who for almost three decades stood at the front-line and gave no quarters to those reactionaries like NMU who were undermining the efforts of the freedom fighters.

Proportional Representation

Ramlallah was fortunate to have around him a group of intellectuals who became the standard-bearers of this emerging progressive movement. Their campaign gathered momentum, the editorial policy of the paper reflected a growing concern for a change in the social and political structure of the country.

One of the first encounters in which the *Mauritius Times* was engaged was to oppose a move for the introduction of the Proportional Representation (PR) in our electoral system as a pretext to protect minority rights. If the full benefit accruing from the adult suffrage, in the aftermath of the elections of 1953, was of such incalculable value to ensure the growth of the democratic process for the future of our people, the credit must go as well to the sustained campaign and indomitable effort of the *Mauritius Times*.

The ideals that continually impressed the progressive elements, including the editors and contributors of *Mauritius Times*, owe much to the teachings of liberal European thinkers such as Keir Hardie, Laski, and Lansbury in England, as well as to Thoreau and Jaurès in France, and to Gandhi, Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, and M. N. Roy in India. They had a profound faith in the spread of knowledge and enlightenment. They were, in a way, advocating for free education at the secondary level, which they rightly thought were the prerequisites for the flowering of a mature and responsible society. The creation of the State Secondary Schools, which became the cornerstone of progress and development in the rural areas will be an enduring movement to Kher Jagatsingh's vision and to the inspiring leadership he was to give to a whole generation.

Shadows of the West

This concern for self-awareness was also revealed in the paper's advocacy for the expansion and development of ancestral cultural values. The *Mauritius Times* called attention effectively to the fact that in each and every community the only way an individual can make sense of his dignity in society was by reference to the cultural order in which he was born. In other words, we should not, the paper suggested, become pale shadows of Western concepts.

Before I conclude I should like to make just another brief reference to B. Ramlallah's sense of commitment to the cause of the common man. He was a social and cultural worker long before the creation of the *Mauritius Times*. Although he was an activist of the Labour Party, he did excellent work in local welfare organisations in the village of Long Mountain.



“The ideals that continually impressed the progressive elements, including the editors and contributors of *Mauritius Times*, owe much to the teachings of liberal European thinkers such as Keir Hardie, Laski, and Lansbury in England, as well as to Thoreau and Jaurès in France, and to Gandhi, Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, and M. N. Roy in India. They had a profound faith in the spread of knowledge and enlightenment. They were, in a way, advocating for free education at the secondary level, which they rightly thought were the prerequisites for the flowering of a mature and responsible society.”

Sacrifice & patriotism

I was a student in Cambridge when, right in the middle of the War, I received a large envelope. The packet contained papers written by Hurrparsing Ramnarain and entrusted to Beekrumsing Ramlallah to be forwarded to me. It was opened by the censors, but they could not make much of the contents as the enclosures were all papers relating to Ramnarain's activities in the trade-union movement emphasizing the spiritual dimension of his campaign and invoking, in the pursuit of his goal, the blessings of Lord Shiva. And so the letters were safely delivered to me.

I passed on the documents to Rita Hinden, who was then Secretary of the Fabian Society, and they eventually found their way to the House of Lords. That was the origin of the memorable debate initiated by Lord Farrington on Mauritius in April 1944.

I saw Lord Farrington just a few days before the matter was raised in the Upper House and I was able to give him first-hand information about the state of affairs in Mauritius affecting the working classes. I could speak in defence of Ramnarain because of my personal experience of his involvement with the labour movement. The debate which had an important bearing on subsequent labour legislation was itself a tribute to his sacrifice and sense of heroism when, as a lone warrior, he could challenge the organised might of the entire establishment.

Dr K. Hazareesingh's article was published in the Mauritius Times of Friday 17 August 1984 in our 30th Special Anniversary Issue. Dr Hazareesingh was a notable figure in the context of Mauritian politics and education.

The Claim that Democracy Fares Better in the West Than in Africa is a Fallacy

● Cont. from page 2
Colonial mindset

Academics on the African continent are keen to study whether their democracies are on the way to being “consolidated” and much commentary on the continent assumes that a “grown up” democracy looks like Britain, France or the US. This is particularly so in countries like South Africa which house a significant minority of people of Western origin, many of whom believe that the West is the home of civilisation to which the rest of the world should aspire.

This view has a distinctly colonial flavour. The moral excuse for colonialism was that it was bringing to the colonised “civilisation”, which meant whatever people in the colonising country valued. There is no difference between this and trying to persuade the formerly colonised that their democracies can only become “real” if they mimic those in the West.

But it makes very little sense to claim that Western democracies are the “finished product”.

First, Western democracies differ between themselves. So which version are people in Africa meant to mimic? Must their countries become unitary states like Britain or France, or federal like the US and Germany? Must African states give unions and business associations a say in decisions as Sweden, Austria and Switzerland have done? Must language or religious groups be allowed a special say as Belgium and Holland have done? It is not clear which of the many forms of Western democracy Africans are meant to want to be.

Second, the “finished products” of the West are not that finished. Britain has an unelected house of traditional leaders and clergy – the House of Lords. The US system allows the half million residents of one state to have the same say in the Senate as the 35 million of another.



Pic - UN

Several Western democracies detain suspects without trial – the US has done this for nearly two decades at Guantanamo Bay, far longer than South Africa’s apartheid state ever detained anyone without trial.

The media in several Western countries is judged by specialists to be less free than those in some non-Western democracies. To show the absurdity of claiming that Western democracies are always better, think what would happen if an African president was elected because he won the vote in a state where the voting machines were faulty, and the governor was his brother? This happened in the US in 2000 – and no-one has declared it an “incomplete” democracy.

Third, the democratic idea is that every adult should have an equal say in the decisions which affect them. Where does that happen? Nowhere. So, no democracy is a “finished product”. All fall short of the democratic goal and so Western democracies are no more real than those elsewhere. It also makes little sense to claim that one democracy is further down the road to “completion” than another – democracy has many aspects and on some, newer democracies outside the

West are further down the road than those they are meant to want to be.

More people vote in some African countries than in some in the West. South Africa does more to promote women’s participation than most Western countries. A study of Botswana complained

that its people did not value democracy because only 45% of voters knew the name of their member of Parliament – but the equivalent figure in Sweden was only 33% and several other European countries lagged far behind Botswana, whose voters are better informed than Swedes.

Inferiority complex

In sum, the democratic inferiority complex of many Africans is unwarranted. The idea that our democracies are “B Grade” and those of the West are prime quality is false.

None of this means that African democracies are better than those in the West. It means that the idea of “real” and “not yet real” democracies expresses a colonial mentality, not reality.

Like all democracies, Africa’s have much room for improvement. But they will never become what they could be if they struggle to become a copy of a romanticised Western democracy. Africa’s democracies will progress if they concentrate on the core democratic principle – giving more and more people a say over more and more issues – and debate how to do that in their particular conditions.

Steven Friedman, Professor of Political Studies, University of Johannesburg

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You Can Do It

Navigating Life's Chaos: 10 Lessons from '12 Rules for Life'

In a world often characterized by uncertainty and chaos, many seek guidance on how to lead a more disciplined and meaningful life. Jordan B. Peterson's self-help book, "12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos," offers precisely that — a practical roadmap for navigating life's challenges and finding purpose amidst turmoil. Here, we delve into ten key lessons from the book, each offering invaluable insights into personal growth and fulfillment.

Stand up straight with your shoulders back: Peterson's first rule emphasizes the power of posture as a reflection of inner strength and confidence. By standing tall, we not only project assurance to the world but also symbolize our willingness to take responsibility for our own lives.

Treat yourself like someone you are responsible for helping: Often, individuals neglect their own well-being while prioritizing others. Peterson urges us to extend the same care and compassion to ourselves as we would to a loved one, recognizing the importance of self-care in fostering personal growth.

Make friends with people who want the best for you: Surrounding ourselves with positive and supportive individuals is essential for our emotional well-being and growth. Peterson advocates for cultivating relationships with those who uplift and encourage us, steering clear of toxic influences that hinder our progress.

Compare yourself to who you were yesterday, not to who someone else is today: Rather than succumbing to the trap of comparison with others, Peterson advises focusing on our own journey of self-improvement. By striving to be better than our past selves, we can foster a sense of continuous growth and development.

Do not let your children do anything that makes you dislike them: Parenting requires discipline and setting boundaries to nurture well-adjusted individuals. Peterson underscores the importance of instilling values and behaviors in children that contribute to their positive development and character.

Set your house in perfect order before you criticize the world: Before attempting to address external chaos, Peterson suggests first addressing our internal struggles and shortcom-



Pic - linkedin.com

ings. By achieving personal order and stability, we become better equipped to enact positive change in the world around us.

Pursue what is meaningful (not what is expedient): True fulfillment stems from pursuing meaningful endeavours rather than opting for immediate gratification. Peterson advocates for choosing paths aligned with our values and long-term goals, even if they require patience and sacrifice.

Tell the truth or, at least, don't lie: Honesty forms the bedrock of personal integrity and trust. Peterson emphasizes the importance of truthfulness in all aspects of life, warning against the chaotic consequences of deceit and falsehood.

Assume that the person you are listening to might know something you don't: Approach every interaction with humility and openness to learning. Peterson highlights the value of respecting others' perspectives and knowledge, fostering meaningful dialogue and growth.

Be precise in your speech: Clear and precise communication is essential for avoiding misunderstandings and conflicts. Peterson encourages articulating our thoughts and feelings with clarity, promoting effective interpersonal relationships.

These ten rules, distilled from "12 Rules for Life," offer a comprehensive framework for leading a structured, responsible, and meaningful life. By incorporating these principles into our daily existence, we can navigate life's chaos with resilience, purpose, and stability.

Jordan B. Peterson

Tree of Knowledge

Words Have Weight



Madisyn Taylor

The more conscious we become, the more we deepen our relationship to the words we choose to use.

Words carry energy, and this gives language its power and its potential to heal or hurt. Most of us can remember a time that someone sent a word our way, and it stuck with us. It may have been the first time we received a truly accurate compliment or the time a friend or sibling called us a name, but either way, it stuck. This experience reminds us that what we say has weight and power and that being conscious means being aware of how we use words.

The more conscious we become, the more we deepen our relationship to the words we use so that we speak from a place of actually feeling what we are saying. We begin to recognize that words are not abstract, disconnected entities used only to convey meaning; they are powerful transmitters of feeling. For the next few days, practice noticing how the words you say and hear affect your body and your emotional state. Note how the different communication styles of the people in your life make you feel. Also, watch closely to see how your own words come out and what effect they have on the people around you.

You may realize that when we speak quickly, without thinking, or rush to get our ideas across, our words don't carry the same power as when we speak slowly and confidently, allowing those receiving our words time and space to take them in. When we carefully listen to others before we speak, our words have more integrity, and when we take time to center ourselves before speaking, we truly begin to harness the power of speech. Then our words can be intelligent messengers of healing and light, transmitting deep and positive feelings to those who receive them.

YOUR STARS

SAGITTARIUS: NOV 22 - DEC 21

You're craving excitement and new experiences. Early in the week, a spontaneous opportunity might present itself.

Be mindful of your finances, however, and avoid impulsive spending. Relationships will thrive if you embrace honesty and direct communication.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 11, 13, 19, 26, 32

CAPRICORN: DEC 22 - JAN 19

A slow and steady approach will serve you well this week. Focus on building long-term strategies rather than short-term gains. In your personal life, don't hesitate to open up about your feelings—it will bring you closer to someone. Financially, this is a good time to review your investments or savings.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 9, 16, 20, 28, 34

AQUARIUS: JAN 20 - FEB 18

Your innovative ideas are front and center, and people around you are paying attention. This is the time to pitch a new idea at work or take a leadership role. Be careful, however, of neglecting your personal relationships. A bit of one-on-one time with loved ones will balance things out by the weekend.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 5, 10, 23, 27, 39

PISCES: FEB 19 - MAR 20

Your intuition is heightened this week, guiding you through any challenges that arise. Pay close attention to your dreams and gut feelings, as they may offer valuable insights. Midweek, you may need to make a tough decision in your personal life—trust your heart. The weekend brings peace and relaxation.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 7, 13, 18, 24, 36

ARIES: MARCH 21 - APRIL 19

You're driven to tackle new challenges, but don't rush. Balance ambition with patience, especially in professional matters. Midweek, focus on relationships—whether personal or professional—before a misunderstanding escalates. Your energy levels peak by the weekend, so plan some outdoor activities or hit the gym.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 9, 14, 22, 30, 37

TAURUS: APR 20 - MAY 20

This week calls for steady progress in work and finances. Expect some delays, but persistence will pay off. Don't shy away from asking for support where needed. Romantic relationships will blossom, but don't push too

hard. Enjoy the simple moments, and everything will fall into place.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 9, 13, 21, 26, 34

GEMINI: MAY 21 - JUNE 20

Communication is key this week, Gemini. A work-related project or important conversation will require clarity, so stay sharp. Midweek, you might feel the urge to try something new—be it a hobby or a travel plan. Keep things light in your personal life; avoid overthinking and just go with the flow.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 7, 11, 19, 23, 36

CANCER: JUNE 21 - JULY 22

You may feel emotional highs and lows. It's crucial to focus on self-care, especially at the beginning of the week. Challenges at work may require you to be more assertive. By the weekend, the energy shifts, and you'll feel more in control.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 6, 12, 20, 27, 33

LEO: JULY 23 - AUG 22

This week, your social life takes the spotlight. You'll be drawn into group projects, gatherings, or even events that put your charisma on display. Be mindful, however, of potential friction with a close friend or colleague.

Diplomacy will help resolve any tension. Financial matters might also need your attention.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 10, 15, 24, 28, 35

VIRGO: AUG 23 - SEPT 22

It's time to put your famous organizational skills to use.

The week starts off with a focus on your career, and you'll see positive results if you've been diligent. Avoid being overly critical, especially in personal relationships. Plan some downtime this weekend to recharge emotionally and mentally.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 9, 16, 22, 29, 38

LIBRA: SEPT 23 - OCT 22

The cosmos encourages balance. As you juggle work, relationships, and personal time, make sure you're not neglecting your own needs. A surprise may come in the form of a professional opportunity midweek. Keep an open mind and trust that things will work out in your favour if you stay flexible.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 7, 14, 18, 25, 31

SCORPION: 23 OCT - 21 NOV

This week may bring some deep introspection. You're in tune with your inner self, but don't let overthinking lead to isolation. Midweek, a breakthrough in a project or relationship will come if you focus on collaboration rather than control. Take time this weekend to rejuvenate and regain perspective.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 8, 12, 17, 21, 37

Study explains why laws are written in an incomprehensible style

A recent study sheds light on why legal documents are notoriously difficult to understand. According to research from MIT, the convoluted language known as "legalese" may be more than just a communication obstacle—it may be a deliberate choice to convey a sense of authority.

The study, set to appear in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, suggests that legalese functions similarly to "magic spells," using complex and archaic language to create an aura of power and legitimacy. The researchers found that even non-lawyers adopt this style when asked to draft legal texts.

"People seem to intuitively understand that this is how laws should sound, and they write them that way," says Edward Gibson, an MIT professor of brain and cognitive sciences and senior author of the study. Lead author Eric Martinez, PhD '24, and Francis Mollica from the University of Melbourne also contributed to the research.

Unraveling Legalese

Gibson's research team has been exploring the intricacies of legalese since 2020. In a 2022 study, they analyzed approximately 3.5 million words from legal contracts, comparing them to other forms of writing such as movie scripts, newspaper articles, and academic papers. They found that legal documents often contain long, center-embedded definitions—complex structures nested within sentences that significantly hinder comprehension.

"Legalese has developed a tendency to embed structures within structures, which is unusual in human



languages," Gibson explains.

A follow-up study published in 2023 showed that even lawyers struggle with legalese. Lawyers preferred plain English versions of documents and found them equally enforceable as traditional legal texts.

Theories on Legalese

The researchers considered two main hypotheses for the prevalence of legalese. The "copy and edit hypothesis" suggests that legal documents start with a simple draft, which becomes increasingly complex as additional information is added. However, the study supported a different theory: the "magic spell hypothesis."

Just as magical incantations use distinctive language

to signal their power, legalese may serve a similar function, signaling a special kind of authority. "In English culture, magic spells are written with old-fashioned rhymes and specific styles. We think center-embedding in legalese might function similarly," Gibson says.

In their experiments, about 200 non-lawyers were asked to write laws and narratives. Regardless of whether they wrote laws from scratch or edited them later, they employed center-embedding. In contrast, their narrative writing was much clearer.

Investigating the Origins

Gibson's team is now exploring the historical origins of center-embedding in legal documents. They plan to examine British laws and the ancient Hammurabi Code to determine if similar grammatical structures appear in early legal texts.

"We suspect that center-embedding might have originated as a stylistic choice in early laws, which then influenced subsequent legal writing," Gibson says.

Future Implications

The researchers hope their findings will encourage lawmakers to simplify legal language. Efforts to make legal documents more understandable have been ongoing since the 1970s, when President Richard Nixon called for regulations to be written in "layman's terms." Yet, legal language remains largely unchanged.

"We have recently uncovered why legal language is so complicated, and I am optimistic about making meaningful changes," Gibson concludes.



Could we use volcanoes to make electricity?

We don't generate power directly from volcanoes, but their presence is a sign that there are good geothermal resources underground that can be tapped.

Turning red-hot lava from an active volcano into electricity would be dangerous and unreliable. Volcanoes don't erupt on predictable schedules, and lava cools too quickly. But many countries, including the U.S., have found ways to tap volcanic heat to make electricity.

Geothermal energy comes from heat generated by natural processes deep within the Earth. In most areas, this heat only warms rocks and underground water near the surface. In volcanically active regions, however, the heat is much more intense. Sometimes it melts rock, forming magma.

Volcanoes act like giant heat vents, raising magma closer to Earth's surface. Some of this molten rock may erupt, but much of it remains underground, heating the surrounding rocks and water. Where heated water rises to the surface, it creates hot springs and geysers that can last for thousands of years.

To harness this energy to generate electricity, engineers identify areas where magma is near the surface and drill deep wells down to the heated rocks and water. These wells bring steam to the surface, where it is directed into a power plant to spin turbines and generate electricity.

After it produces electricity, the steam cools and condenses back into hot water.



Lava spatters from a vent at Kilauea in Hawaii during an eruption in September 2023.
M. Patrick, USGS, via NPS, CC BY-ND

The water may be used to convert a different liquid with a much lower boiling point, such as butane, to drive a second generator. Then it is pumped back underground to be reheated.

The Earth constantly produces heat, so geothermal energy is a renewable resource. And geothermal power plants produce much less pollution, waste and greenhouse gas emissions that warm Earth's climate than burning coal, gas, oil or using nuclear energy.

Geothermal energy sources can last for decades or even longer. Unlike other renewable sources such as solar and wind power, geothermal energy is available 24/7, 365 days a year.

The world's geothermal hot spots

Geothermal energy is already used in many places around the world, especially in regions with a lot of volcanic activity. For example, almost all of Iceland's electricity comes from renewable sources, with geothermal energy supplying about 25%. The country sits on top of many active volcanoes, making it a perfect place for geothermal power plants.

Some U.S. states, including California and Nevada, have geothermal power plants, thanks to their volcanic regions. Other active geothermal sites, such as Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, are protected from development.

Challenges for geothermal power

Why isn't geothermal energy used as widely as wind or solar power? First, geothermal power plants need to be near volcanoes or other places where it is unusually hot beneath the surface. These resources aren't always near large cities or industries that use a lot of electricity.

Second, drilling deep wells and building power plants can be expensive. However, the long-term benefits of geothermal power often outweigh the initial costs.

Third, in some cases, drilling and pumping water under pressure can cause small earthquakes. Scientists and engineers are working to predict and manage this effect.

Despite these challenges, tapping into the Earth's natural heat can create a renewable, reliable and clean source of energy. As technology improves, more places around the world will turn to geothermal energy to light up people's lives. Volcanoes are reminders of a great powerhouse deep underground that's waiting to be harnessed.

David Kitchen

Associate Professor of Geology,
University of Richmond



"I love you, sweetheart"

A group of Nigerian husbands gathered at the Abeokuta conference hall to discuss the topic, "How to Maintain a Loving Relationship with Your Wife."

The men were asked: "How many of you love your wives?"

All the men raised their hands.

They were then asked: "When was the last time you told your wife you loved her?"

Some men said today, some said yesterday, but the majority couldn't remember. The men were then instructed to take out their cell phones and send the following text to their wives: "I love you, sweetheart."

After sending the texts, the men exchanged phones so that everyone could read the responses from the other wives. Here are the replies from 10 of them:

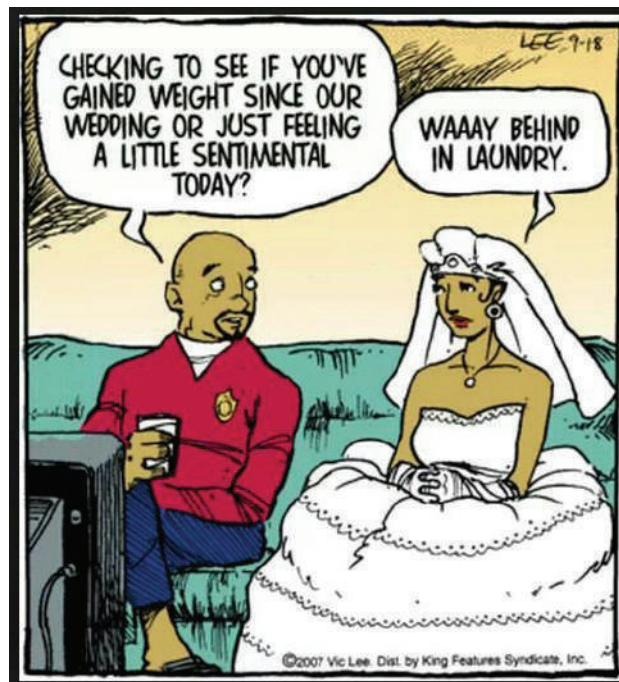
1. Have you impregnated someone again?
2. That was then, not now.
3. Are you looking to borrow money?
4. What did you do this time? I won't forgive you this time!
5. What do you mean?
6. Is this a new song?
7. Am I dreaming?
8. If you don't tell me who this message is really for, you're in trouble!
9. You this man! I told you to stop drinking!
10. Who is this?

* * *

The Workaholic's Promise

A workaholic man never wastes a second trying to make as much money as possible. He even made his wife promise that he would be buried with all his money when he passed away.

One Tuesday, he dies of a severe heart attack caused by stress and hypertension. During the funeral,



the widow approaches the coffin and inserts a small purse into his coat pocket.

Her mother asks if she has been so foolish as to bury all the money with him, and she replies, "I'm Christian, and therefore I had to keep my promise. I took all his money and put it in my account, then I wrote a check for the exact amount, which I placed inside the purse. If he can cash the check, the money is his to spend."

* * *

Beethoven's Decomposition

When Beethoven passed away, he was buried in a churchyard. A few days later, a drunkard was walking through the cemetery and heard a strange noise coming from the place where Beethoven was buried.

Terrified, the drunk ran to persuade the priest to come and listen. The holy man also heard some faint, unrecognizable music coming from the grave. The priest ran to call the magistrate.

When the magistrate arrived, he bent his ear to the grave, listened for a while, and said, "Ah, yes, that's Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, being played backward."

He listened a bit longer and said, "That's the Eighth Symphony, and it's backward too -- most puzzling."

"There's the Seventh, the Sixth, the Fifth..."

Suddenly realizing what was happening, he stood up and announced to the crowd that had gathered in the cemetery, "My fellow citizens, there's nothing to worry about; it's just Beethoven decomposing."

* * *

The Dentist's Dilemma

A woman fell in love with a new dentist and soon lured him into a series of passionate encounters in the dental clinic after hours. But one day he said sadly, "Darling, we have to stop seeing each other. Your husband is bound to get suspicious."

"No worries," she assured him. "He's as dumb as a post. Besides, we've been together for a couple of months now and he doesn't suspect a thing."

"True," said the dentist, "but you're down to one tooth."

"Agreed," the woman said. "To qualify as a dentist, you have to go through a lot of boring drills."

* * *

Fly Swatter Standoff

A woman walked into the kitchen to find her husband stalking around with a fly swatter.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"Hunting flies," he responded.

"Oh. Killing any?" she inquired.

"Yep, 3 males, 2 females," he replied.

Intrigued, she asked, "How can you tell?"

He responded, "3 were on a beer can, 2 were on the phone."

* * *

The Can Opener Dilemma

A mathematician, a physicist, and an engineer are stranded on a desert island after a shipwreck. They find an entire case of canned food, but no can opener!

The engineer says, "We can gather some flexible branches from palm trees, get a sharp rock, and attach it to a stick with palm fronds. Then we can use it like an axe to cut open the cans."

The physicist says, "We can make a fire with loose driftwood, and then put the cans in the fire. The heat will cause the cans to explode, and then we can eat the food. Plus, it'll be hot, as a bonus!"

The mathematician says, "Assume we have a can opener."

* * *

The Orange Headed Man

A regular customer walks into a bar with an orange for a head.

The bartender says, "Hey man, why do you have an orange for a head?"

The guy says, "Get me a drink and I'll tell you." The bartender pours him a drink, passes the glass, and puts his elbows on the bar. The guy takes a sip and sets the drink down.

"Last night, I was cleaning out my attic and I found an old, antique glass bottle. I rubbed it, and to my surprise, a genie popped out! He granted me three wishes. For my first wish, I asked for my house to become a mansion. The genie snapped his fingers and immediately, my modest home turned into a lavish mansion -- marble floors, high ceilings with glass chandeliers, fountains in the main entrance. It was complete luxury."

The bartender says, "That's cool, man, but why the orange for a head?"

The guy says, "For my second wish, I asked for a brand-new, high-powered sports car. The genie snapped his fingers, and a cherry-red Ferrari appeared in my driveway. It sparkles, goes 0-60 in less than a second, and handles like a champ. The first time I drove it, I hit almost 180 mph. It was amazing!"

The bartender says, "Awesome, man! But still, the orange for a head."

The guy takes another sip from his drink and puts it down. "For my third wish, I asked for an orange for a head."

* * *

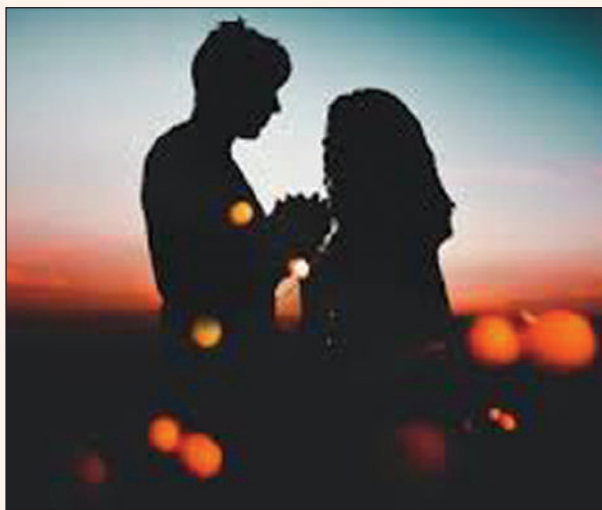
The Widow's Spending

A woman's husband passed away. He left £20,000 in his bank account. After the funeral, she told her closest friend that she had spent all the money left by her husband. The friend was surprised, as she had mentioned that her husband had left £20,000.

The widow explained, "Well, the funeral cost £6,000 six thousand, and of course, I made the obligatory donation to the church, so that was another £2,000. The rest went to the memorial stone."

The friend was again surprised, "£12,000 for the memorial stone? My goodness, how big is it?"

Showing her left arm, the woman said, "Three carats."



Let Her Go!

-- Anyona Rael

There's always a woman out there who will be more willing to embrace a supportive role and contribute positively to your life. Don't settle for a relationship marked by rudeness, disobedience, and dishonesty. It's costly to spend your life waking up next to someone who brings you constant stress and unhappiness. Men generally seek peace and contentment.

It's worth noting that sometimes it's better to be with someone who may not have a high level of formal education but is supportive and kind, rather than someone with a high-status career who may show little regard for your needs and well-being. For instance, you might find yourself asking why a PhD holder in physics divorced his equally educated wife in favour of someone from a different background. Or why a successful businessman chose to marry a village lady instead of a career woman. The same goes for individuals who, despite having financial success, chose partners from simpler backgrounds over those in high-profile careers.

A peaceful man is a free man. Men often cherish homes filled with peace and happiness rather than conflict. It's important to remember that a man's life can start anew at 40, while societal expectations often place different timelines on women. There's a significant difference in how age and relationships are perceived between genders.

If you're a man in a relationship that lacks peace, it's crucial to remember that you deserve happiness and tranquillity. Don't let yourself be bound by a relationship that causes you constant distress. With billions of women in the world, you should not feel trapped or obligated to stay in an unhappy relationship. Remember, you are not without options.

Life's Lesson

The Power of Rage

By Alison Nappi

“You don't get to bypass your anger and your rage and call yourself peaceful in your avoidance. Your ability to feel anger or rage is not an accident. On the contrary, it is a great gift.

Rage is an intelligent fire. It is infused with its own magic and born of love. And we need this intelligent fire to unfreeze ourselves from the glaciers of time.

Rage is not innately ugly. That which summons it usually is. The platitude 'Love is all there is' does not also recognize that if this is so, then all things must be born of the One Love. So how do they become so distorted and painful on their ways down from eternity to the nitty-gritty human experience?

Rage is not hate. Hate emerges from rage not recognized, responsibility not taken, the projection of blame for one's own suffering onto others who are not to blame.

Rage places responsibility where it belongs. Rage recognizes what our



part is in our suffering. Rage also recognizes when we are carrying the responsibility that belongs with someone else. Rage refuses to carry the inappropriate burden of the choices made by others. Rage fights back for a change that creates balance and justice. Rage is not the great punisher but the equalizer and the liberator.

If you do not walk through the fires of your rage, or you do not admit that rage lives within you, you cannot find the dancing prayer that opens the gates of The Wildness. You will have too many holes burned into your vessel. If you cannot hold it, you cannot experience it, and it will not free you, so you may not enter.

You will attempt to howl at the moon in all her glory, and your breath will escape from the hole in the back of your neck, or on the right side of

your chest, or out of your belly. You will wail and remember that your rage cannot be nearly as terrible as life as a piece of Swiss cheese.

Without your intelligent fire, parts of you will remain cold and isolated, separate from the hearth and home at the core of your being. They are there because you thought they were compromising your survival. But you can see now, can't you, that without them survival is as good as it gets, and you want to thrive?

So find that rage, that intelligent fire, and call your children home. Release them from the bindings of blame and shame that are not theirs. Thank them. Welcome them. Feed them. Light up the night sky. Become whole, and let your rage be cleansed of guilt and shame, so it is given back its holy shine.

Rage can protect the innocent. Defrost the frozen, traumatized parts of your experience. Defend the sacred, the wild, and the natural. Rage can inform peace, but it won't bring us all the way. No, for that, you need everything you are. But without your rage, you won't be able to retrieve yourself and become whole enough to find out.

Your journey is epic. You are a miracle. The Wildness is howling for your return. Bring your rage with you."

Thoughts to Live by

Keep going

Don't ignore that little part of you that tells you to keep going — the little voice in your head that's strong and believes in you even when you are doubting yourself.

Don't run from that beautiful, vulnerable part of who you are. That's the part that will lead you to great adventures and magical opportunities.

Let that little voice speak louder - you have too much passion and



determination to hide your gift from the world.

Run free, my love; unleash your beauty on this world, and don't stop until that burning fire inside your soul feels proud.

Charlotte Freeman

Nothing you love is lost

“Nothing you love is lost. Not really. Things, people, they always go away, sooner or later.

You can't hold them any more than you can hold moonlight.

But if they've touched you, if they're inside you, then they're still yours.

The only things you ever really have are the ones you hold inside your heart."

Bruce Coville

Quotable Quotes

When times get tough... Interesting lines that will keep you going

Challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.

— Joshua J. Marine

Accept responsibility for your life. Know that it is you who will get you where you want to go, no one else.

— Les Brown

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he

stands at times of challenge and controversy.

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.

— Confucius

When you come to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on.

— Franklin D. Roosevelt

To be tested is good. The challenged life may be the best therapist.

— Gail Sheehy, Author

When the going gets tough, the tough get going.

— Joseph Kennedy

You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise

from, how you can still come out of it.

— Maya Angelou

The brick walls are there for a reason. The brick walls are not there to keep us out. The brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something. Because the brick walls are there to stop the people who don't want it badly enough. They're there to stop the other people.

— Randy Pausch

Life may be hard, but resilient people are harder. Mirror is your best friend, because when you cry, it never laughs.

But remember that real situations reveal fake friends.

* * *

A society that tells a broke man, he is not worthy of a woman, has no right to tell a man to stick to one woman once he is rich. -- Robert Mugabe

The 13 Needs of Your Wife: A Guide to Fulfilling a Loving Marriage

-- Ebanga Rita

In any marriage, understanding and addressing the needs of your partner is crucial for a strong and fulfilling relationship. For wives, there are specific emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs that, when met, can significantly enhance the bond between husband and wife. Here, we explore the fourteen essential needs of a wife and how fulfilling them can lead to a harmonious and loving marriage.

1. The Need to Feel Cherished

A wife needs to feel truly valued and cherished. She wants to know that she holds a special place in her husband's heart and life. This can be achieved through consistent acts of love, appreciation, and affirmation. Simple gestures like heartfelt compliments, thoughtful surprises, and daily expressions of gratitude can make her feel treasured and significant.

2. The Need for Security

Security is a foundational need in any relationship. A wife requires emotional, financial, and physical security to feel stable and safe in her marriage. When a husband is dependable and committed to providing for the family, it fosters a sense of safety and stability. Ensuring financial planning, maintaining open discussions about future goals, and offering emotional support contribute to this sense of security.

3. The Need for Emotional Connection

Emotional connection is vital for a wife. This connection is nurtured through meaningful conversations, empathy, and understanding. A wife needs her husband to actively listen, engage with her feelings, and share in her experiences. Regularly spending time together and showing genuine interest in each other's thoughts and emotions helps build this deep connection.

4. The Need for Affection

Affection is crucial in reinforcing a wife's sense of love and commitment. This includes physical touch, kind words, and small gestures that convey warmth and care. Whether through holding hands, hugging, or simply offering a loving glance, regular displays of affection reassure her of her husband's love and dedication.



5. The Need for Respect

Respect is fundamental to a healthy relationship. A wife needs to feel respected in every interaction. This respect is shown through how a husband speaks to her, values her opinions, and acknowledges her contributions. It involves treating her with kindness, consideration, and honoring her feelings and perspectives.

6. The Need for Support

Support is essential for a wife's personal growth and well-being. She needs her husband to be her biggest cheerleader, offering encouragement for her dreams, ambitions, and personal development. This support includes practical help, emotional backing, and celebrating her achievements and efforts.

7. The Need for Communication

Effective communication is the bedrock of a strong marriage. A wife needs her husband to communicate openly and honestly, sharing his thoughts and feelings while also listening to hers. Regular, clear, and empathetic communication fosters trust and helps address issues before they escalate.

8. The Need for Intimacy

Intimacy extends beyond physical closeness to

include emotional and spiritual connection. A wife needs her husband to invest time and effort into nurturing intimacy in all aspects of their relationship. This involves building a deep emotional bond and engaging in shared spiritual practices, enhancing the overall closeness between them.

9. The Need for Appreciation

Feeling appreciated for her contributions to the family and relationship is crucial for a wife. Recognizing her efforts and expressing gratitude can strengthen her sense of worth and motivation. Regularly acknowledging her role and thanking her for the things she does fosters a positive and encouraging environment.

10. The Need for Fun and Playfulness

A vibrant and joyful relationship includes elements of fun and playfulness. A wife needs to experience joy and laughter with her husband. Engaging in enjoyable activities together and maintaining a sense of playfulness can keep the relationship exciting and fulfilling, helping to alleviate stress and deepen their bond.

11. The Need for Partnership

A wife needs to feel like an equal partner in the marriage. This involves sharing responsibilities and making decisions together. A sense of partnership fosters mutual respect and teamwork, ensuring that both partners feel valued and equally invested in their shared life.

12. The Need for Reassurance

There will be times when a wife feels insecure or unsure. During these moments, she needs her husband to provide reassurance of his love, commitment, and faithfulness. Offering consistent support and affirmation, especially during challenging times, helps to alleviate doubts and strengthen their connection.

13. The Need for Loyalty

Loyalty is a cornerstone of a strong marriage. A wife needs to know that her husband is loyal and faithful. This loyalty builds trust and fortifies the bond between them, making her feel secure and cherished. Demonstrating commitment through actions and consistency reinforces this vital aspect of their relationship.

Well-being

15 Ways to Feel Happier

Boosting happiness often requires small, deliberate changes in daily habits. Here are 15 strategies to enhance your mood and overall well-being.

1. Put Some Pep in Your Step

Adopting a confident posture and walking with purpose can positively influence your mood. Even if you're not feeling great, a spirited walk can help elevate your spirits.

2. Slap on a Smile

Smiling, even if it's forced, can trigger the brain's happiness pathways. This simple act can improve your mood and contribute to a more positive outlook.

3. Volunteer

Helping others can boost your mental well-being. Volunteer work or small acts of kindness improve your mood and foster a sense of accomplishment and connection.

4. Make New Friends

Building and maintaining social connections is key to happiness. Seek out new friendships and nurture existing relationships to enhance your social support network.

5. Count Your Blessings

Keep a gratitude journal to regularly acknowledge and appreciate positive aspects of your life. Focusing on what you're thankful for can shift your perspective to a more positive one.

6. Break a Sweat

Exercise has immediate and long-term benefits for mood. Even a short burst of physical activity can release endorphins and improve overall happiness.

7. Forgive and Forget

Letting go of grudges and practicing forgiveness can reduce negative emotions and increase inner peace, contributing to overall happiness.

8. Practice Mindfulness

Meditating regularly can increase feelings of joy and contentment. Mindfulness practices help you stay present and cultivate a sense of inner calm.



9. Turn on Some Tunes

Listening to your favorite music can elevate your mood. Music has a powerful effect on emotions and can help you feel more positive and energized.

10. Get the ZZZs You Need

Adequate sleep is essential for emotional well-being. Aim for 7-8 hours of quality sleep each night to support mood stability and overall health.

11. Remember Your "Why"

Reflect on your personal goals and motivations. Understanding your purpose in activities and decisions can provide deeper satisfaction and happiness.

12. Challenge Your Inner Critic

Address negative self-talk by questioning its validity. Recognize when your inner critic is unjustified and focus on positive self-affirmation.

13. Tackle Your Goals

Set realistic and specific goals, and break them into manageable steps. Celebrate your progress and achievements to maintain motivation and happiness.

14. Seek Positive People

Surround yourself with individuals who uplift and inspire you. Positive social interactions can enhance your mood and contribute to a happier outlook.

15. Ask a Pro

If persistent unhappiness affects your daily life, consider seeking professional help. Therapists and counselors can provide guidance and support for improving your mental health.

By aligning your activities with the best times and incorporating habits that enhance well-being, you can optimize your productivity, health, and overall happiness.



Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh welcome a baby girl

Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh have celebrated a major milestone, welcoming their first child, a baby girl, on September 8. The joyous arrival coincided with Ganesh Chaturthi, a festival renowned for bringing good fortune and removing obstacles, adding a special touch to their daughter's debut. Both mother and baby are reported to be in good health.

The couple was recently spotted seeking blessings at Mumbai's Siddhivinayak Temple.

Sources confirm that both mother and child are doing well, and the couple has shared their happiness with fans through a social media post reading: "Welcome baby girl. 8.09.2024. Deepika and Ranveer." The announcement has been met with an outpouring of congratulations from across the globe.

Deepika and Ranveer, who wed in a lavish ceremony at Lake Como, Italy, in December 2018, have long been a beloved couple in Bollywood. Their wedding celebrated their diverse cultural backgrounds with both South Indian and Anand Karaj ceremonies. They announced their pregnancy in February, keeping the exact due date private, though speculation about the arrival had been rife.

Looking ahead, the couple will soon return to the spotlight with their upcoming film, *Singham Again*. Deepika is expected to make a notable appearance, while Ranveer will have a cameo role. Their last public appearance featured Deepika's stunning maternity photoshoot, which dispelled any remaining rumors about her pregnancy.

Madhuri Dixit mesmerizes fans with stunning looks

Iconic actress Madhuri Dixit once again proves her timeless beauty with a series of captivating looks.

Madhuri recently enchanted her fans with a new Instagram Reel showcasing her elegant outfits. At 57, she looked stunning in a beige floral top paired with a magenta-pink skirt. Her look was completed with subtle makeup and her hair styled in a ponytail.

The Reel also featured Madhuri in a purple frilled saree with a matching embellished blouse, accessorized with green jewelry. She further showcased a pastel blue shimmer co-ord set and a white floral saree, exuding elegance in every ensemble.

In her post, she asked fans to comment on their favorite outfit, with one admirer noting, "Your outfits & you always favorite," and another adding, "Saree is best."



Madhuri, a celebrated actress with over 70 Hindi films to her credit, has been honoured with the Padma Shri award for her contributions to Indian cinema.

Why did Rekha & Amitabh Bachchan split?

Everything you need to know about their breakup

The story of Amitabh Bachchan and Rekha remains one of Bollywood's most intriguing and enduring narratives. Their close bond began during the filming of *Do Anjaane*, despite Bachchan being married at the time. Rumours of a secretive and successful affair between the two celebrities emerged, gaining traction as they grew closer while filming *Ganga Ki Saugandh*.

The speculation reached a fever pitch when Rekha attended Neetu and Rishi Kapoor's wedding wearing sindoor and mangalsutra, sparking rumours that she and Bachchan had secretly married.

The rumours intensified when Yash Chopra, director of *Silsila*, expressed concerns about how the real-life relationship between Amitabh and Rekha might impact their on-screen chemistry. *Silsila* was a love triangle film featuring Amitabh, Jaya Bachchan, and Rekha in pivotal roles.

Despite their close connection, their relationship began to unravel



after the completion of *Silsila*. Reports suggest that Rekha wanted Amitabh to marry her, but he was unwilling to leave Jaya Bachchan. This disagreement led to both actors deciding against collaborating on any further projects together.

In an interview, Rekha revealed that after a trial screening of *Muqaddar Ka Sikandar*, Amitabh Bachchan informed filmmakers that he would no longer work with her. When Rekha confronted him, he responded curtly, "I'm not going to say anything. Do not ask me about

it." In 1990, Rekha's life took a tragic turn when she married businessman Mukesh Aggarwal. The marriage was short-lived due to Aggarwal's mental health issues and eventual suicide. Rekha faced severe criticism and unjust blame from Aggarwal's family.

Despite the turmoil in her personal life, Rekha's alleged romance with Amitabh Bachchan remains a significant chapter in Bollywood history. Their intense but turbulent relationship mirrored the personal challenges they both experienced.

BollyBytes

Amitabh Bachchan reflects on changes in his routine

Amitabh Bachchan has shared that his daily routine has undergone a transformation, as he now rises and rests earlier than before.

In a recent blog post, Bachchan noted, "My work and daily routine have changed — an early rise, an early rest... and the rest be blessed... praying that this fructifies."

He reminisced about his late father, poet Harivansh Rai Bachchan, and recalled a Sanskrit verse his father



often recited. "And again Babuji's shlok in Sanskrit is remembered, on the early rise and the resting during the day, and the loss thereof... had recited it on KBC once,"

he wrote.

The legendary actor also mentioned that he was heading to the "workshop of the body" and then to the "work of the sound." Reflecting on aging, Bachchan expressed surprise at the changes he sees in the mirror, noting, "Surprised I was when I looked into the mirror; this face that I see now was something else at another time some years ago."

Bachchan mused on the fleeting nature of life and attention: "Life withers and ends, attention withers and eventually ends too... there is but one similarity — it all ends eventually!!"

On the professional front, Bachchan was last seen in Nag Ashwin's *Kalki 2898 AD* alongside Prabhas, Kamal Haasan, and Deepika Padukone. He will next appear in *Vettaian*, directed by T.J. Gnanavel, marking his Tamil cinema debut alongside superstar Rajinikanth.



INVINCIBLE
LE CHEMIN DE LA RÉDEMPTION



Programme TV



	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	MBC 5	Bollywood TV
mardi 17 septembre	05.14 The Gardener's Daughter 06.06 Serial: Tour De Babel 08.32 Tele: Amour Secret 09.25 Film: Retour Vers Le Futur 3 11.34 Tele: Your Love Is My Fortune 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Terra Nostra 13.18 Tele: Le Chemin Du Destin 13.45 Tele: Pasion Y Poder 14.10 Tele: Gout De L'Amour 15.21 Film: A Mouthful Of Air 17.00 Hollywood On Set 17.30 Tele: Your Love Is My Fortune 18.00 Samachar 18.31 Serial: Shiv Shakti 18.55 Serial: Doree 19.30 Le Journal 20.30 Film: Invincible 22.10 Tele: Terra Nostra 23.05 Tele: Your Love Is My Fortune 23.30 Le Journal	07.19 Business Connect 09.30 Morisien Konn Ou La Sante 10.37 Local: Lir - Ekriir Kreol 11.10 Local: Rodrig Mo Pei 11.59 Rodrig: Feminin Pluriel 13.07 Business Connect 14.00 Local: Tous Egaux 15.30 Rodrig: Zenn Aktif 15.56 Rodrig: Saver Lokal 17.02 Local: Le Mag 18.00 Tele: Pasion Y Poder 18.30 Tele: Amour Secret 19.20 Le Magazine De L'Emploi 19.44 Local: Son Ladan Mem 20.00 Local: An Eta Dalert 20.30 Local: Priorite Sante 21.31 Local: Le Mag 22.51 La Journee Sous Le Regard 23.20 Local: Music Tour 00.35 Local: Profil 00.50 Local: Koze Zom	07.21 Mag: In Good Shape 08.00 Doc: Ageless Gardens 08.43 Mag: Washington Forum 09.53 Doc: I Want More 11.03 Mag: Eco Africa 11.29 Mag: The 77 Percent 12.01 Mag: Africa 54 12.55 Ageless Gardens 13.17 Mag: Tomorrow Today 13.47 Mag: Washington Forum 14.15 Doc: Deep Sea Greed 15.00 D.Anime: Baby Einstein 2 15.06 D.Anime: Les Aventure Du Petit Pingouin 15.12 D.Anime Kika Et Bob 15.35 D.Anime: Wonder Grove 16.05 D.Anime: Sissi 16.40 D.Anime: Go Astro Boy Go! 19.30 Mag: Global US 20.01 Tele: Le Temps D'Aimer 20.50 Doc: Top Dive Sites	07.00 Mag: Africa 54 08.40 Mag: Washington Forum 09.08 Doc: Deep Sea Greed 11.02 Mag: Eco Africa 12.09 Mag: Africa 54 12.29 Mag: In Good Shape 12.54 Doc: Ageless Gardens 13.16 Mag: Tomorrow Today 13.46 Mag: Washington Forum 15.00 D.Anime: Baby Einstein 2 15.05 D.Anime: Les Aventures Du... 15.51 D.Anime: Anna Et Ses Amis 16.03 D.Anime: Sissi 16.17 D.Anime: Miraculous... 16.36 D.Anime: Go Astro Boy Go! 17.03 Serial: Sept Nains Et Moi 18.00 Mag: Rev 18.45 Mag: Red Carpet 19.00 Student Support Programme 20.01 Tele: Le Temps D'Aimer 21.25 Film: The Night House	14.25 Radha Mohan 14.55 Doree 15.31 Film: Marne Bhi Do Yaaron Starring Krushna Abhishek, Kashmiri Shah, Rishaab Chauhaan 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 19.03 Udaariyaan 19.33 Fanaa 20.06 Sasural Simar Ka 2 20.37 Yashomati Maiyya Ke Nandlala 21.07 Anupama 21.35 Mere Sai 22.04 Kismat Ki Lakiron Se 22.34 Serial: Swaran Ghar 23.04 Serial: Rajaa Betaa 23.29 Film: Marne Bhi Do Yaaron Starring Krushna Abhishek, Kashmiri Shah, Rishaab...
mercredi 18 septembre	07.25 Serial: The Equalizer 08.11 Tele: Le Temps D'aimer 08.38 Tele: Amour Secret 09.30 Film: The Quake 11.30 Tele: Your Love Is My Fortune 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Terra Nostra 13.20 Tele: Le Chemin Du Destin 13.46 Tele: Pasion Y Poder 14.11 Serial: The Equalizer 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.25 Film: Invincible 17.38 Tele: Your Love Is My Fortune 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.31 Serial: Shiv Shakti 18.55 Serial: Doree 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.20 Serial: Nelle Tue Mani 21.15 Film: Seberg 22.49 Tele: Terra Nostra 23.47 Local: Le Journal 00.27 Tele: Your Love Is My Fortune	07.16 Local: Les Grands Moments 08.31 Local: Mots Et Ecrits 09.30 Local: Le Mag 10.33 Local: Koze Zom 11.08 Local: Music Tour 12.15 Rodrig: Plat Du Chef 12.24 Local: Son Ladan Mem 13.36 Local: Paroles Agricoles 14.29 Rodrig: Rod'Art 15.35 Local: Glwar Dantan 16.03 Local: Mots et Ecrits 16.22 La Journee Sous Le Regard 18.00 Tele: Passion And Power 18.30 Tele: Amour Secret 19.20 Le Mag De L'emploi... 19.30 Local: Rodrig Spor 20.00 Local: Saver Kiltirel 20.30 Local: Toc Toc Doc 20.45 Local: En Forme 21.00 Local: Agir Ensemble 21.26 Local: Les Klips 22.23 Local: Proze Dime	07.00 Serial: Made In Germany 07.25 Mag: Global US 07.51 Doc: Top Dive Sites 08.18 Mag: Business Africa 08.44 Mag: Euromaxx 09.14 Doc: The Tsaaton 10.00 Doc: Glacier Express 12.00 Mag: Made In Germany 12.26 Mag: Global US 12.52 Doc: Top Dive Sites 15.00 D.Anime: Baby Einstein 2 15.11 D.Anime: Kika Et Bob 15.35 D.Anime: Wonder Grove 15.47 D.Anime: Anna Et Ses Amis 16.01 D.Anime: Sissi 16.37 D.Anime: Go Astro Boy Go! 17.02 Serial: Sept Nains Et Moi 17.30 Mag: Rev 18.00 Mag: Motorweek 18.30 Mag: Travel 18.45 Mag: Planet A 19.00 Student Support Progra...	08.43 Mag: Euromaxx 09.13 Doc: The Tsaatan 10.39 Mag: Her: Woman In Asia 12.06 Mag: Made In Germany 12.30 Mag: Global US 13.19 Mag: Business Africa 13.45 Mag: Euromaxx 14.11 Doc: Glacier Express 15.00 D.Anime: Baby Einstein 2 15.05 Les Aventures Du Petit... 15.34 D.Anime: Wonder Grove 15.36 D.Anime: Dee Dee The Little... 16.01 D.Anime: Sissi 16.15 Serial: Miraculous... 17.06 Serial: Sept Nains et Moi 17.30 Mag: Rev 18.00 Mag: Motorweek 18.30 Mag: Travel 18.45 Mag: Planet A 19.00 Student Support Prog... 20.01 Tele: Le Temps D'Aimer 21.16 Film: 12 Mighty Orphans	14.25 Radha Mohan 14.50 Doree 15.36 Film: Mere Baap Pehle Aap Starring: Akshaye Khanna, Paresh Rawal, Genelia Deshmukh 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.31 Kundali Bhagya 19.02 Udaariyaan 19.33 Fanaa 20.30 Sasural Simar Ka 2 20.31 Yashomati Maiyya Ke Nandlala 21.00 Anupama 21.28 Mere Sai 22.05 Kismat Ki Lakiron Se 22.20 Swaran Ghar 22.51 Serial: Rajaa Betaa 23.58 Film: Mere Baap Pehle Aap 02.09 Kundali Bhagya
jeudi 19 septembre	07.25 Serial: Nelle Tue Mani 08.20 Serial: Le Temps D'Aimer 08.45 Tele: Amour Secret 09.35 Film: Le Journee Des Violents 11.33 Tele: Your Love Is My Fortune 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Terra Nostra 13.20 Tele: Le Chemin Du Destin 13.45 Tele: Pasion Y Poder 14.10 Serial: Gout De L'Amour 15.25 Film: 12 Mighty Orphans 17.15 Tele: Your Love Is My Fortune 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.31 Serial: Shiv Shakti 18.56 Serial: Doree 19.30 Le Journal 20.30 Film: 83 Stars: Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone, Tahir Raj Bhasin 23.00 Tele: Terra Nostra 00.38 Tele: Your Love Is My Fortune	06.31 Local: Saver Kiltirel 07.55 Local: Agir Ensemble 11.00 Local: Les Klips 12.06 Local: Rodrig Spor 12.31 Local: Saver Kiltirel 13.06 Local: Toc Toc Doc 13.36 Local: Agir Ensemble 14.47 Local: Proze Dime 15.08 Rodrig: Kot Nou 15.27 Rodrig: A Nou Kwi 16.41 La Journee Sous Le Regard 18.00 Tele: Pasion Y Poder 18.31 Tele: Amour Secret 19.00 Journal Kreol 19.15 Le Magazine De L'Emploi 20.00 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 20.30 Emotion En Avant Plan 22.00 Rodrig: Sa Lavi-La 22.48 La Journee Sous Le Regard... 23.00 Journal Rediffusion 23.20 Rodrig: Klip Seleksion	07.09 Mag: Arts Unveiled 07.23 A Mediterranean Journey 08.15 Mag: Close Up 09.53 Will Root Save The World? 10.36 Doc: Cool & Clever 11.50 Mag: Planet A 11.59 Mag: Arts Unveiled 12.55 Doc: Submerged Universe 13.47 Doc: The Bridge Of Minor... 14.13 Doc: Legendary Hotel 15.00 D.Anime: Baby Einstein 2 15.11 D.Anime: Kika Et Bob 15.34 D.Anime: Wonder Grove 15.47 D.Anime: Anna Et Ses Amis 16.01 D.Anime: Sissi 16.15 D.Anime: Miraculous... 16.36 D.Anime: Go Astro Boy Go! 17.02 Serial: Sept Nains Et Moi 17.30 Mag: Motorweek 18.00 Mag: Eco India 18.30 Mag: Shift	08.16 Mag: Close Up 08.42 Mag: Focus On Europe 10.40 Doc: Cool & Clever 11.33 Mag: Travel 12.25 Doc: A Mediterranean... 13.48 Doc: The Bridge Of Minor... 14.13 Doc: Legendary Hotels 15.00 D.Anime: Baby Einstein 2 15.06 Les Aventures Du Petit... 15.25 D.Anime: Kika Et Bob 15.36 D.Anime: Dee Dee The Little... 15.55 D.Anime: Anna Et Ses Amis 16.06 D.Anime: Sissi 16.17 Serial: Miraculous... 17.04 Serial: Sept Nains Et Moi 17.30 Mag: Motorweek 18.00 Mag: Eco India 18.30 Mag: Shift 18.43 Mag: Carnet De Sante 20.01 Tele: Le Temps D'Aimer 21.16 Film: Destry	14.25 Radha Mohan 15.00 Doree 15.30 Film: Tell Me O Kkhudda Stars: Esha Deol, Arjan Bajwa, Sudhanshu Pandey 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 19.00 Udaariyaan 19.30 Fanaa 20.00 Sasural Simar Ka 2 20.24 Yashomati Maiyya Ke Nandlala 21.02 Anupama 21.34 Mere Sai 22.01 Kismat Ki Lakiron Se 22.29 Swaran Ghar 23.05 Serial: Rajaa Betaa 23.31 Film: Tell Me O Kkhudda Stars: Esha Deol, Arjan Bajwa, Sudhanshu Pandey

BTV Jeudi 19 septembre - 15.25 Stars: Esha Deol, Arjan Bajwa, Sudhanshu Pandey



MBC 1 Jeudi 19 septembre - 20.30 Stars: Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone, Tahir Raj Bhasin





Nita Chicoore-Mercier

Silver Linings for the Young

Greyish clouds hang heavily in the sky, moving sluggishly at the whim of intermittent winds and alternating gentle sunrays that reveal the blue dome above. Indeed, the cool winter weather is a welcome respite from the scorching sun of an unending summer that irritates many of us throughout the year. Fair tropical weather is the most egalitarian blessing that people, whether miserable, downtrodden, well-off, or super wealthy, make the best of.

Driving between the several towers of Ebene Cyber City beneath the clouds, one cannot help but think that having so many offices, businesses, private companies, public bodies, and banks packed into a single location is highly practical and was an absolute necessity during the early years of the millennium in Mauritius. Indeed, the scarcity of land will inevitably result in a trend towards vertical construction for administrative purposes and private offices in the future. Apartment buildings are likely to follow the same trend. Despite the lamentations of many, no other alternative will likely emerge in the years to come.

What is in store for the younger generation?

Honestly, building a future with the basic need for a roof over their heads is quite a challenge for the younger generation under current circumstances. The zero-interest rate for the 18 to 25 age group, already experienced in France with positive results, is a noteworthy incentive. Although such an incentive to encourage young adults to borrow and invest at a young age may leave some sceptical, it proves effective for those who want to start a business. Twenty-three-year-old university graduates embarking on promising careers with clear future goals may find it useful to invest in purchasing land, building a house, or buying an apartment. Amid the bleak prospects of global climate change, geopolitical instability, threats to democratic institutions in major countries, and uncertainties about the future, the younger generation needs positive signals to start life with encouragement and confidence.

Stress caused by high-interest loans, which have traditionally been quite high in Mauritius compared to the 1 or 2% rates in some Western countries before the Ukraine-related crises, along with the collateral damage to health from monthly repayments, discourages young people from repeating their parents' pattern of borrowing and repaying. Zero-interest loans alleviate this burden. In

France, for example, zero-interest loans did not spark controversy; rather, they were a relief to parents who had invested most of their savings to assist their children. It is about wealth distribution in forward-looking countries to create fair opportunities for an increasing number of citizens.

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Sports and Wellness

Generally, villages badly need sports facilities. At last, Triolet is set to inaugurate its first gymnasium. Now that the project, initially initiated in 2010, has materialized, inhabitants are very pleased that both the young and all citizens will have a place to look forward to at the end of the day and on weekends. At the other end of Triolet, Solitude - partly comprising former sugar estate longhouses - is a dreary, run-down place that would benefit greatly from another gymnasium. Can sports divert the youth from drugs? Currently, more than a hundred young men flock to police stations for methadone, a quite pathetic sight.

Needless to say, substantial investments need to be channelled towards the physical health and well-being of citizens. The recruitment of coaches and teachers in disciplines like yoga and jiu-jitsu to enhance the physical health and general wellness of boys and girls in schools is excellent news. Anyone concerned with improving the quality of life for our compatriots should welcome this development, regardless of political affiliation.

Internationally, fierce competition and conflict threaten global stability, with sophisticated bombings and fighter jets wreaking havoc. Western countries are overwhelmed by waves of both legal and illegal migration that threaten the social fabric of host nations. Meanwhile, life goes on, and countries do what is best for their national interests. While changing the world may be beyond our reach, we can begin by effecting changes locally.

The two disciplines the Ministry aims to promote—yoga and jiu-jitsu—focus on the flow of energy, self-control, and connecting with the self. Breathing techniques in yoga provide tremendous benefits in regulating breaths, raising awareness of the body's biological functions, and creating a balance between emotional energy and mental peace. Such practices help promote reason and logic and enlighten seekers of truth. Saudi Arabia, for example, boasts 700 yoga teachers who promote yoga and bring peace of mind to citizens in several cities, thanks to the goodwill of a single lady. It stands as a shining example of setting



Pic - Facebook

role models. Don't ask what a country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.

We were fortunate to have our first yoga class at the age of 16 as part of an extracurricular activity at QEC. It was a life-inspiring series of courses that left a lasting impression. Most of us continued with yoga and made it part of our lifestyle. In those days, I found it unfair that boys and girls from other colleges did not have access to yoga lessons. The democratization of benefits to a greater number of citizens cannot be dismissed lightly. Every measure should not be labelled as freebies, electoral bribes, or unsound budget policy.

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Looking Ahead

All is not rosy for everyone, especially for the young facing stressful unemployment issues in specific sectors despite their high qualifications. The scourge of drugs wreaks havoc in society, taking a heavy toll on youngsters despite increasing arrests by ADSU and the police force. It is a multi-headed hydra that re-emerges after every network is dismantled. This issue deprives society of workers; a shrinking demographic requires a robust workforce and creates a heavy dependence on foreign workers. Is there a political party with a magic wand to eliminate drug trafficking from the island?

The public broadly supports the principle of law and order, as do the young. They are not easily swayed by the fleeting indoctrination that undermines authority in developed nations, leading mobs to attack police forces mercilessly. Such ideologies give a free pass to wild elements and signal the decline of civilized societies. Mauritian youths are not easily swept up by transient passions

that grip minds abroad. Few attempts to imitate foreign anti-social behaviour are well received by the public and are quickly quelled to prevent the rise of anarchist groups in the name of freedom.

A few attempts to imitate foreign anti-social behaviour do not sit well with the public and are suppressed to prevent them from evolving into anarchist groups under the guise of freedom. On the other hand, there is a less flattering portrayal of our youth, despite the apparent wisdom they are said to possess in our relatively conservative society. Their lack of social interaction and complacency within overindulgent family circles hinder their full development and maturity compared to their peers in more developed countries. Additionally, their elders often react violently, seeking retaliation and revenge for anything that disturbs them, resulting in irrational and immature behaviour. This is a deplorable situation that needs to be addressed seriously.

In a climate of fierce competition for power, little thought is given to enhancing human development, promoting social interaction, and encouraging respectful dialogue to prevent emotional reactions that hinder rational thinking. Much remains to be done to uplift the quality of life for citizens. Opening natural parks with playgrounds for toddlers, children, and their parents should be a top priority. Villages and towns increasingly justify V.S. Naipaul's branding of the island as an "overcrowded barracoon." People desperately need public spaces to relax and unwind after a day's work. Such amenities are currently lacking in most areas. Hopefully, these facilities will become feasible when the clouds clear for a brighter economy, provided that warring factions in distant countries lay down their arms and alleviate global economic woes.