

MAURITIUS TIMES

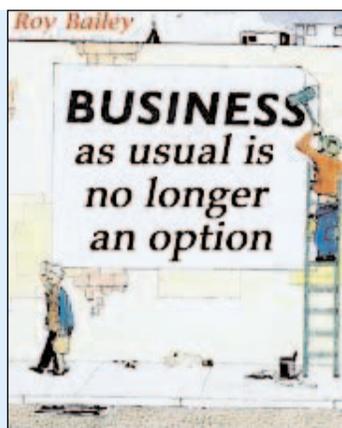
"The most prudent thing that people can do at this time, is to take commonsense approaches to reduce your risk of exposure." -- Asa Don Brown



From denial to lockdown...

By S. Callikan

* See page 5



In the wake of Covid-19

By Samad Ramoly

* See page 2



Covid Frays Nerves

By Nita Chicooree-Mercier

* See page 12

Développement économique

Le modèle auto-centré est-il possible ?

Une des conséquences de la pandémie du coronavirus est la rupture des chaînes de valeur qui sous-tendent le commerce international. Du coup, bien des pays tributaires des fournisseurs extérieurs ont eu des difficultés d'approvisionnement en biens de consommation et biens de production.

Cette crise a provoqué une nouvelle réflexion sur le modèle de développement néolibéral et sur sa capacité à absorber les chocs exogènes. Faut-il diminuer la dépendance sur les marchés extérieurs dans certains domaines de l'approvisionnement stratégique (produits alimentaires et médicaments) ?

Telle est la question qui interpelle les responsables nationaux, confrontés aux défis que posent l'interruption des chaînes d'approvisionnement, avec pour conséquence, une pénurie d'articles, de longues files d'attente devant les supermarchés et le mercantilisme opportuniste de certains commerçants qui augmentent les prix pour tondre les consommateurs vulnérables.

Par Aditya Narayan * Voir Page 4



Plus que jamais, la réforme agraire s'impose afin de libérer aux fins de production alimentaire des terres qui autrement serviraient à aménager des agglomérations"

The Food Crisis during the War



Photo - jstor.org

Few people nowadays remember the food crisis that occurred during the Second World War, although the phrase 'eating sweet potatoes and maize' reminds us of the permanent emotional scar it left on important segments of the population. In the 1940s, Mauritius was threatened with a serious food crisis, and the colonial government responded by setting up a Food Control Board.

With the outbreak of the War, the government had to take drastic measures to ensure food supply in the island. On 12 April 1941, the Secretary of State inquired from colonial governors about arrangements that had been made to maintain the various services. As regards food supplies, the directive was to store foodstuffs for a period of 90 days. After discussions with the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture, the Food Control Board was set up with the necessary executive powers to handle these matters.

Compulsory planting of food crops was implemented in September 1942 despite stiff resistance from sugar estates. The Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture was opposed to the measure, and Plantation House cabled the Colonial Office arguing that compulsory planting of food crops meant sacrificing 75,000 tons of sugar worth one million pounds..."

By Sada Reddi * See page 3

Achieving self-sufficiency a national priority

One of the stark realities that have forced itself brutally on most countries in the developed world as the Covid-19 pandemic rolled on is that they had become so dependent on external sources for several of their needs. The most pressing one was of course about healthcare, with masks of both medical and non-medical grade top of the list as a protective equipment. So much so that even with ramping up indigenous capacity, several countries, from the US to France and even Germany had to order importation from China.

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, this healthcare aspect is certainly something that we too will have to carefully look into. But there are other essential needs that will have to be addressed as well and with an equal concern, two major ones being food security and energy security, which are both linked besides to environmental sustainability.

As regards food security, there is no doubt that there are items that we will always have to import, such as rice and flour, although as far as rice is concerned past attempts at local production show that there may yet be a potential to meet at least a substantial portion of our needs. So too is the case as regards meat, where imports are an important component, but here there is a more serious consideration: that of the environmental impact being caused by meat production. In his latest film, the British naturalist David Attenborough has made a fervent appeal to the effect that mankind must drastically reduce meat consumption if we want to avert catastrophe caused by the climate change that it is significantly contributing to. Whether our political and other society leaders are prepared to take this call is surely a matter of some urgency, and we hope that there will be an enhanced awareness that can lead to demonstrable action on this front.

There can be no gainsaying the fact that it is the State that must be the driver as regards the food security of the country. This automatically implies taking the right policy decisions, which in turn are based on the model of development that the country decides to follow. It is inconceivable that a country with such an agricultural potential should have to import basic commodities like potato, onions and garlic from outside.

In the past few decades, the accent has been so tilted towards real estate development as a

matter of policy that it has turned attention away from the more essential aspect of living, in fact of survival - which is meeting our food needs. If we have any doubt that these must be met mostly through local capacity, the Covid-19 crisis should be a wake-up call to dispel this doubt and to propel a change of course so that we are prepared for the next crisis - which will inevitably come. And this preparation must begin now.

As this column has noted before, one must seriously begin to think beyond the crisis on this important aspect of our supplies, lest it be forgotten when the crisis has passed. This may well be a beneficial aspect of the pandemic, as it will force us to decide on the model of development that is most needed and suitable to guarantee our basic needs and essentials as the priority of priorities. All other development must be centred around this fundamental.

Symptomatic of this policy gap is perhaps the absence of the Minister of Agriculture, whose name was not mentioned as forming part of the interministerial committee set up to make recommendations about the opening of supermarkets, when Joe Lesjongard was spelling them out in the modalities being announced after the lockdown was declared. This at a time when our fallback will inevitably have to be on local produce, in particular vegetables and fruits, and clearly the agricultural sector has the most crucial role to play.

It goes without saying that the production, supply and distribution of such local produce is a crucial consideration because it is related to thousands of livelihoods. This is a reality which escapes the decision makers of the latter generations who have all grown up in an environment of plenty and of 'suffisance' such that, despite their best spins and sound bytes to garner votes during electoral campaigns, they are completely cut off from the grass roots realities of those whom they completely forget once they are installed in power. And hence their insouciance as they pushed further the supermarket culture in forcing buyers towards supermarkets in this period of crisis, generating another crisis of penury in the process.

They cannot afford the luxury of waiting until after the crisis to start cogitating on our essential needs and security for the future. The future is already upon us.



Samad Ramoly

In the wake of Covid-19

The time could not be riper to unleash the change agency capable of turning fake messiahs redundant. It is about breaking the chain of despair, dumping knowledge silos and bracing ourselves for a war on status quo

By internalising a development model where the Wall Streets of the world, the price of a barrel of oil and the swings in the price of luxury real estate act, on the one hand, as benchmarks in structuring public policies, and on the other hand, as a barometer of our well-being, we have transformed ourselves into an echo chamber of the whims and desires of the Growth Addicts, a cynical partnership between Big Business and governments. Social media is still overwhelmingly a platform that "incentivises engagement and disincentivises truth", as in the words of researcher Gordon Pennycook, to lay out the desired channel for a paradigm shift.

"History, so we are reminded, teaches us that after a catastrophe, the world changes. To what extent the future will tell us. Alternately, we must realize that it will be in an era of intensifying geopolitical conflicts and in a climate of mistrust in governments and the mainstream media, multinationals..."

Now that our systemic failures are cruelly exposed by Covid-19, any societal metamorphosis will depend on our awakening and the scale of our reaction. To begin with, we will have to cure ourselves of the virus that has trickled down among the majority of us: FOMO (Fear of missing out). Once embarked in this coveted comfort zone and spiritual void that has enabled some of the most privileged to play God (the means of acquiring an entry visa being irrelevant), it is the feeling of being immune to any harm that has spread simultaneously with the quasi-denial of the pervasive social divide.



As long as this virus plagues our ecosystem, we will have to learn to bear with the expansion of psychological disorders, environmental damage, economic turbulence, and settle for palliative measures to mitigate collateral damage. History, so we are reminded, teaches us that after a catastrophe, the world changes. To what extent the future will tell us. Alternately, we must realize that it will be in an era of intensifying geopolitical conflicts and in a climate of mistrust in governments and the mainstream media, multinationals and conglomerates, and "experts".

The time could not be riper to unleash the change agency capable of turning fake messiahs redundant. It is about breaking the chain of despair, dumping knowledge silos and bracing ourselves for a war on status quo. This lockdown is providing us with ample opportunities to ponder a systemic overhaul.

The situation is begging for radically modified consumption habits that can potentially alleviate the impact of market failure and reduce our carbon footprints while also contributing to the emergence of a world less toxic. Because it is far from granted that after the Covid-19 catastrophe it won't be business as usual for the Growth Addicts, with nothing but a mere rewiring to accommodate the disruption of supply chains and a revamped Corporate Social Responsibility pledge to camouflage greed.

(www.tchombo.blogspot.com)

Mauritius Times

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

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

This paper has been produced with the assistance of

Doojesh Ramlallah, Sultana Kurmally and Kersley Ramsamy

Pearl House 4th Floor Room 406 - Sir Virgil Naz Street, Port Louis

Tel: 5-29 29301 Tel/Fax: 212 1313



Sada Reddi

The Food Crisis during the War

The failure to provide adequate food supplies to the population intensified social conflicts, and these were to force the colonial government to address the issue of the health of the population and put political reforms on the agenda

a result of growing malnutrition. Some of the estates that refused to grow food crops were prosecuted before the Profiteering Court. Many sugar estates opposed the cultivation of food crops on the ground that they no longer knew how to grow such crops; the main reason was that sugar fetched higher profits during the War.

Local food production during the War was a failure, but according to Dr Clyde,

• Cont. from page 1

A Food Comptroller was appointed to monitor food supply in the island. He was confronted with a number of challenges, namely how to make the island potentially self-supporting in foodstuffs, prepare for the prolonged interruption of overseas communications, and provide for the defence of the island. Several measures were taken to increase food supply with the setting up of new institutions, provision of financial support, extension of agricultural education, etc.

Though sugar production remained the priority of government, measures were taken so as to ensure the food security of the population. Rice supplies for six months were stocked in the granary and adequate stocks of oil and fat were maintained. 2000 acres of land were earmarked for growing maize and sweet potatoes; 28 acres were allocated for growing rice, and planting materials were distributed freely. It was estimated that 34,000 acres of land would be required for food production, including the production of 56,000 tons of rice.

Although Article 3 of the Food Control Regulations required proprietors with more

"In 1942, the situation became critical. More land was required for food crops, and the government enforced compulsory growing of maize and other root crops; it also introduced the rationing and subsidization of rice and other foodstuffs. Attention was also given to livestock and milk production. Compulsory planting of food crops was implemented in September 1942 despite stiff resistance from sugar estates. The Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture was opposed to the measure, and Plantation House cabled the Colonial Office arguing that compulsory planting of food crops meant sacrificing 75,000 tons of sugar worth one million pounds. The colonial government had to opt for the gradual conversion of lands for food production..."



"There were a number of problems that cropped up to increase local food production but also a lot of excuses. There were problems regarding the quality of the soil, droughts, crop diseases, high cost of labour and decline in labour as a result of growing malnutrition. Some of the estates that refused to grow food crops were prosecuted before the Profiteering Court. Many sugar estates opposed the cultivation of food crops on the ground that they no longer knew how to grow such crops; the main reason was that sugar fetched higher profits during the War..."

than 100 acres of land to grow sweet potatoes, manioc and maize, there was no compulsion. It was only after the Japanese had overrun the East that it became important to implement drastic measures. Additional ones became necessary to keep the cost of living low. Retail prices of commodities were fixed, prices of foodstuffs were stabilized through subsidies, a Nutrition Unit was set up to provide instructions to prepare food to which the people were unaccustomed.

In 1942, the situation became critical. More land was required for food crops, and the government enforced compulsory growing of maize and other root crops; it also introduced the rationing and subsidization of rice and other foodstuffs. Attention was also given to livestock and milk production. Compulsory planting of food crops was implemented in September 1942 despite stiff resistance from sugar estates. The Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture was opposed to the measure, and Plantation House cabled the Colonial Office arguing that compulsory planting of food crops meant sacrificing 75,000 tons of sugar worth one million pounds. The colonial government had to opt for the gradual conversion of lands for food production.

By February 1943, it was realized that the target for food production would not be attained. In July 1943, the Government legislated for the compulsory planting of food crops on all estates of 20 acres or

more. Food production plans for sugar estates were revised to 34,000 acres and were implemented as from 1 July 1943. As a result, the projected area under cane cultivation was reduced from 128,000 acres in 1942 to 122,000 in 1944, and 121,853 in 1945. The figures indicate that of the 150,000 acres under sugarcane in 1940, the compulsory planting of food crops by sugar estates was undertaken on 33,200 acres between September 1942 to September 1943. By June 1944, compulsory planting of food crops was abandoned, and by 1945, 8000 acres under food crops had been replanted with sugarcane.

Of the 28 acres allotted to rice cultivation in 1939, only 9.8 acres came to fruition. There were better yields at Yemen due to irrigation. The rice varieties harvested included: Patna 1785 kgs, Bangtulsie 2808 kgs, and Milchar 2200 kgs. Under non-irrigated land, the yield was 600 kgs per acre for Patna. The cost of production was much higher for plots under irrigation with the cost coming to 15 cents per kg. Even with these initial efforts, rice cultivation could not be extended because of shortage of land.

There were a number of problems that cropped up to increase local food production but also a lot of excuses. There were problems regarding the quality of the soil, droughts, crop diseases, high cost of labour and decline in labour productivity as

the Food Adviser of the Colonial Office, the failure was a relative one. He argued that 49,000 tons of foodstuffs were harvested during the period 1942-1944 while sugar production was not only maintained but increased. While great efforts were made to increase food production, government hesitated to make food production a priority. Though food production equivalent to 56,000 tons of rice was projected, it was revised to 33,000 tons in the second year and only 19,000 tons in the third year. As a result there were shortages of manioc, sweet potatoes and maize and this was evident in the high prices of food. The problem of price control was particularly acute in those circumstances of food scarcity.

The failure of the food programme nearly plunged the island into a crisis in 1943, and it was only averted thanks to the timely arrival of manioc starch and wheat from Madagascar and Australia. Food shortages increased the cost of living and malnutrition among the population. More fundamentally, the failure to make the island self-sufficient in food was due to the dominance of King Sugar. The failure to provide adequate food supplies to the population intensified social conflicts, and these were to force the colonial government to address the issue of the health of the population and put political reforms on the agenda.

Développement économique

Le modèle auto-centré est-il possible ?

Aditya Narayan

• Suite de la page 1

Economie extravertie

Maurice a une économie extravertie qui est intégrée dans la mondialisation fondée sur l'interdépendance économique des nations. La théorie derrière la mondialisation est fondée sur deux principes :

- les pays se spécialisent dans la production des produits et des services pour lesquels ils ont des avantages comparés (théorie de Ricardo), et
- ils adhèrent à des règles qui leur permettent de faire des échanges commerciaux librement.

Maurice a suivi un modèle de croissance tiré par l'exportation afin d'obtenir les devises étrangères nécessaires au financement des importations. Ce modèle est fondé sur quatre pôles :

- l'industrie manufacturière d'exportation,
- l'industrie agricole d'exportation,
- le tourisme, et
- les services financiers offshore.

Au cours des dernières décennies, les exportations du pays ont suivi une courbe descendante (Rs 82 milliards en 2019 contre Rs 97 milliards en 2015) tandis que les importations ont suivi une courbe ascendante (Rs 200 milliards en 2019 contre Rs 168 milliards en 2015), fouettée par la surconsommation. Le ratio d'exportations nettes de produits et services en proportion du Produit Intérieur Brut a atteint un taux négatif de 15% en 2019, selon le rapport de la Banque de Maurice. Cela a

« Les terres inexploitées pour la canne, le thé et les fruits devraient être converties aux cultures vivrières et aux pâturages pour l'élevage. Si l'Etat devrait réquisitionner des terres privées aux fins de production alimentaire, comme le propose Lalit, qu'il le fasse dans l'intérêt supérieur de la nation. Si le Gouvernement a pu nationaliser les avoirs de l'ex-BAI, il n'y aucune raison pour lui de ne pas pouvoir engager les établissements sucriers dans un effort national de production alimentaire... »

engendré un déficit commercial chronique (Rs 124 milliards en 2019), lequel est financé par l'apport de capitaux extérieurs, dont l'investissement direct extérieur (IDE) dans le secteur immobilier (villas de luxe sur le littoral construits pour résidents étrangers).

Le pays finance donc son train de vie démesuré par la braderie de pans entiers du territoire national. L'industrie d'exportation s'essouffle sous l'effet de la perte de compétitivité face à des concurrents plus performants et avec la délocalisation d'usines textiles de Maurice à des pays à



«Le secteur agricole a connu une régression sévère avec la perte de l'accès garanti au marché européen pour le sucre, mais il a des potentialités qui doivent être exploitées. Il convient de donner un coup d'arrêt à la conversion de terres agricoles en morcellements immobiliers et de plafonner la construction d'hôtels et de villas de luxe du type IRS/RES...»

bas coûts de production (Bangladesh, Madagascar).

Une faiblesse de la mondialisation est que les grands pays, en temps de crise, se replient sur eux-mêmes dans un accès subit de protectionnisme, quitte à réduire leurs exportations (l'Inde cessant d'exporter certains médicaments, par exemple) et leurs importations (les Etats-Unis frappant les importations en provenance de la Chine de tarifs douaniers). La rupture des chaînes de valeur internationales a exposé la grande dépendance de certains pays, dont Maurice, sur les marchés extérieurs.

Modèle auto-centré

Dans les années 60-70, des théoriciens

du développement alternatif préconisaient l'industrialisation par la substitution d'importations (complémentaire à l'industrialisation orientée vers l'exportation) pour les pays pauvres afin de réduire leur position dépendante dans l'économie mondiale comme producteurs périphériques de matières premières pour les pays riches au centre.

C'est Samir Amin, économiste égyptien, qui a mieux développé la théorie de la dépendance en proposant un développement auto-centré (*self-reliance*) autant que possible pour les pays périphériques ('Le

développement inégal', 1976). Il postule que le développement auto-centré ne signifie pas l'autarcie mais plutôt le découplage (*delinking*) d'un pays du système mondial dans la mesure du possible en vue de mieux exploiter ses potentialités pour satisfaire les besoins locaux.

Pour sa part, René Dumont, agronome français, avait déjà sonné l'alerte ('L'Afrique noire est mal partie', 1962) au moment de la décolonisation africaine pour souligner que le continent noir s'y prenait mal pour assurer l'auto-suffisance alimentaire. Aujourd'hui, les travaux de ces deux penseurs ont une valeur prophétique et demeurent une référence dans l'analyse de la problématique du développement dans le Tiers-monde.

Toutes les recherches sur le développement alternatif se résument dans la conception alternative du développement proposée en 1975 par la Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation ('What Now ? Another Development'). Ce concept est :

- Orienté vers les besoins (matériels et non-matériels),
- Endogène (venant de l'intérieur de la société),
- Auto-centré (en termes de ressources humaines, naturelles et culturelles),
- Durable sur le plan écologique, et
- Fondé sur les transformations structurelles (de l'économie, de la société, du rapport hommes-femmes et des rapports de pouvoir).

Opportunité de réforme

Chaque crise offre l'opportunité de réviser le système en place afin de déterminer s'il est efficient et durable à long

terme. Un modèle de développement auto-centré a objectivement des limites dans un pays dépourvu de ressources naturelles.

Toutefois, on ne peut plus retarder le développement durable si l'on veut assurer un niveau soutenable de sécurité alimentaire et de sécurité énergétique au pays tout en conciliant les besoins du développement et la nécessité de préserver les écosystèmes naturels dans le combat contre le changement climatique.

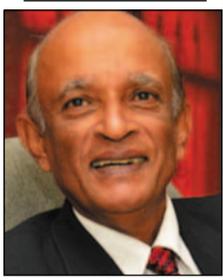
A cette fin, l'industrialisation par la substitution d'importations est un passage obligé. Si 50 ans après l'indépendance, le ratio d'autosuffisance alimentaire est moins de 30% dans le pays, c'est un constat d'échec de toute la stratégie de production.

Plus que jamais, la réforme agraire s'impose afin de libérer aux fins de production alimentaire des terres qui autrement serviraient à aménager des agglomérations. Le secteur agricole a connu une régression sévère avec la perte de l'accès garanti au marché européen pour le sucre, mais il a des potentialités qui doivent être exploitées. Il convient de donner un coup d'arrêt à la conversion de terres agricoles en morcellements immobiliers et de plafonner la construction d'hôtels et de villas de luxe du type IRS/RES, lesquels enlèvent des surfaces substantielles à l'exploitation alternative.

Faute de perspectives d'exportation, l'industrie sucrière ne produit pas plus de 320,000 tonnes de sucre par an et préfère faire du développement immobilier qui garantit un meilleur rendement sur le capital investi. La capacité du secteur cannier devrait être exploitée ou optimisée en termes de production d'électricité à partir de la bagasse (autant pour la sécurité énergétique), d'éthanol comme supplément à l'essence (un ratio ethanol/essence de 10%/90% est faisable), d'alcools divers et de sucres spéciaux. Les terres inexploitées pour la canne, le thé et les fruits devraient être converties aux cultures vivrières et aux pâturages pour l'élevage. Si l'Etat devrait réquisitionner des terres privées aux fins de production alimentaire, comme le propose Lalit, qu'il le fasse dans l'intérêt supérieur de la nation.

Si le Gouvernement a pu nationaliser les avoirs de l'ex-BAI, il n'y aucune raison pour lui de ne pas pouvoir engager les établissements sucriers dans un effort national de production alimentaire. Ces derniers peuvent soit s'adonner aux cultures vivrières, soit louer des terres à bas prix aux planteurs et métayers.

Le développement durable viserait aussi à exploiter davantage les sources d'énergie alternatives (solaire et éolienne) et à démarrer enfin l'économie bleue avec une industrie de la pêche digne de nom. Pour un million d'habitants, Maurice a un vaste territoire - composé d'îles et d'une zone marine - qui est sous-exploité.



S. Callikan

From denial to lockdown...

There are many lessons to draw from leaders around the globe and we trust they will not be lost on our leadership and authorities

Many years back during my management functions, I had the opportunity to acquaint myself briefly with Grief Management, a topic familiar to psychologists and several other disciplines. The four personal stages or "sisters" that they more or less agree upon, are not faced by all of us or in the order below, and their separation is often blurred and fluid. But they may provide a slightly different perspective on the way countries, societies, populations and ourselves have coped with the heartbreaking issues and multi-fold damages the Covid-19 pandemic has been engineering across the world.

Denial is undoubtedly, they concur, the first sister.

The immediate reaction when confronted with disturbing personal loss and, inundated as we are by clips, videos and 24-hr news channels, we cannot have failed to observe the phenomenon of denial of Covid-19 or its impact at most levels of societies around the world. Many ordinary citizens across the developed world, tourists in Italy and elsewhere, have exhibited their illusory bravery or nonchalance throughout the explosive weeks of February-March: "We are young, healthy, brave, we have nothing to fear!" was a regular narrative.

Maybe they were just echoing their political top-brass who, for their own reasons, jumped squarely into the denial mode. Pandemics like SARS or Ebola in recent years had come and gone and life had pretty much resumed as usual. European or US political top-brass could not envisage that their health systems, their preparedness for pandemics, their strategic stockpiles of protective equipment, their supplies of essential drugs, their underfunded hospitals and medical personnel could be stretched to bursting point in a matter of weeks.

For some, notably in the USA, it was election year and Trump clung on to the denial phase far longer than most leaders. In similarly boisterous Boris Johnson's UK, perhaps overconfident in its insularity, or in Mediterranean Europe, used to the gregarious outdoor lifestyles, denial was taking its toll. Meantime several



"For some, notably in the USA, it was election year and Trump clung on to the denial phase far longer than most leaders. In similarly boisterous Boris Johnson's UK, perhaps overconfident in its insularity, or in Mediterranean Europe, used to the gregarious outdoor lifestyles, denial was taking its toll. Meantime several other countries, mainly in South-East Asia, all more intimately familiar with SARS or the risks of high population densities with frail national health systems, had swung into emergency preventive strategies. Today, it is painfully obvious that the USA and Europe generally are paying a heavy price for the prolonged denial phase..."

other countries, mainly in South-East Asia, all more intimately familiar with SARS or the risks of high population densities with frail national health systems, had swung into emergency preventive strategies, varying from context to context. Today, it is painfully obvious that the USA and Europe generally are paying a heavy price for the prolonged denial phase.

For reasons of their own, with an incoming government and inexperienced ministers barely out of their electoral victory in November, the Mauritian authorities and the corridors of power clung on to the blissful narrative of denial, keeping the population, the country and its administrations in sleepwalking eeriness for several long weeks even though Opposition party leaders had rung the alarm bells as early as mid-January. Those calls were ignored, undoubtedly, at some cost to national preparedness and adequate planning for the tsunami that by mid-March had already engulfed the nation.

Anger is the second grieving sister that comes hard on the heels of denial.

Most of us will have gone through this stage, in one form or another, as we grappled with the unexpected and unbearable sorrows of life. Generally shorter-lived, we have seen it nonetheless

exhibited on the international stage too as political personnel fired volleys and outbursts of uncontrolled wrath at this pandemic. Trump again heads that list, but in more sedate terms the ire was palpable elsewhere in Europe. And on our shores too, anger on the social front followed when the streets and townships, when those who were not internet-addicted were thrown to panic stations around the ides of March. Anger was aggravated by the nightly lockdown notice and by manifold dysfunctions at various key ministries: Agriculture, Commerce and even Health's handling and management of quarantine centres.

The blame game therefore towards those laymen who had not been prepared for the mega-shift in narrative from denial to lockdown was a leaden stone. Though perhaps understandable from frontline police officers or overworked and overstretched highly competent medical specialists and personnel taking the brunt of the frontline risks for our collective safety, it was verging on the unacceptable from Ministers and advisers worth their salt.

Past studies on the psychological impact of outbreaks, such as Ebola, indicate that stress, panic and traumatic reactions are nor-

mal to uncertainty. The helplessness involved in the entire process and the realization of the inability to save one's self and loved ones kicks in hard during such times. Pandemics therefore call for social psychologists to be heard, to guide the authorities, emergency teams and the country at large towards unity in a common resolve to fight the scourge while showing empathy and solidarity for the weak and those left out.

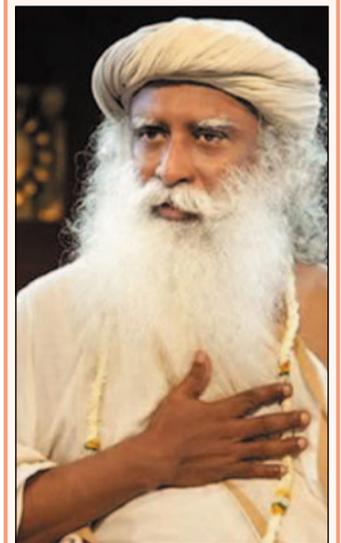
Resignation, the third sister, sets in only after some of the anger, frustration and venting out of emotional reactions have begun to ebb. As the emotional turmoil ebbs and the mental fog begins to clear, we either turn inwards or see how best to help fellow countrymen less fortunate.

Resignation is the prelude to the fourth sister, **Acceptance**, when we can only hope the authorities have got it right, have settled their messaging, have adequate plans and supplies for the sanitary and health spike stalking our near future.

That they are with some degree of competence starting to ready plans to ease the exit from the pains and sufferings that will have had major repercussions on the economy, on the employees, on the elderly and vulnerable, on ourselves and our pockets and on the business sectors that have been badly mauled by the tsunami. The population has yet to be convinced that such is indeed the case.

Leaders round the world recognize that such a desirable state could be hastened by various means. Restoring battered credibility is essential when narratives and dysfunctions have taken a toll. President Trump has stopped dishing blame and now acknowledged bluntly that hundreds of thousands of US citizens may die over the coming weeks. Recognizing painful consequences, humility and contrition are more palatable than communicative or political arrogance. PM Modi was epoch-making in his request for advance forgiveness for the inevitable coming difficulties. Finding ways to engage parties beyond the pale and narrow has been evidenced by both PM Modi's personal calls to major Opposition leaders or Boris Johnson's appeal to Opposition parties. There are many lessons to draw from leaders around the globe and we trust they will not be lost on our leadership and authorities.

Food for Thought



'The more you feed the energy of fear the more profound it becomes'

-- Sadhguru

“Whatever we are talking about is what we are perpetuating in our experience. The only way to keep any kind of illness or virus or flu away is to not talk about it and it will dissipate itself. What we do instead is keep checking the statistics or keep spreading the "awareness" messages on social media without noticing it that the more we talk about it the more it becomes active in our vibration.

History is full of evidence of epidemics because of the mass consciousness created by fear of the disease. Fear is a very strong vibration and more fearful we are of any epidemic it becomes a reality very fast... it's the law. The more you feed the energy of fear the more profound it becomes. Ignore the things you don't want to participate in. Stop discussing it with family and friends; stop checking out the latest statistics. Stop watching incessantly the news about coronavirus. Take your attention away and it has no power on you.

The creation of anything is to give thought to it by keeping it active in our vibration by being afraid of it. Hook yourself up with ever flowing stream of well-being.

Love and light to all.

Coronavirus death toll in France nears 14,400

Aljazeera reports that France has reported a drop in coronavirus deaths on the previous 24 hours, with the total toll from the coronavirus epidemic in the country now 14,393.

There were 315 deaths in hospital over the last day, compared with 345 the day earlier.

Italy's Civil Protection Agency has reported the lowest number of coronavirus deaths since March 19, with 431 fatalities recorded in the last 24 hours, down from 619 the previous day.



In Spain, the number of fatalities rose by 619 on Sunday from a nearly three-week low of 510 on Saturday, breaking a three-day streak of daily declines and taking the country's death toll to 16,972.

Globally, more than 109,000 people have died from the new coronavirus and confirmed infections topped 1.7 million.

The death toll in the UK has surged passed the 10,000 mark after 737 fatalities were recorded overnight. The figure now stands at 10,612.

With virus death tolls in Italy and Spain on a downward slope, there are growing fears that the UK will end up being the country with the most virus deaths in Europe.

Australia, New Zealand won't relax restrictions despite drop in cases

Australia and New Zealand plan to keep coronavirus-inspired restrictions in place despite a sharp slowdown in new cases, officials said Monday.

In Australia, where travel bans were enforced with helicopters and police checkpoints over the Easter weekend, 33 new confirmed cases were reported on Monday. That number represented the smallest increase in a month, which Australia's health ministry credited to widespread self-isolation and social distancing.

"Now is the time to stay the course," Health Minister Greg Hunt said in a news conference. "We are now seeing consolidation of the flattening of the curve. That doesn't mean we're out of our challenge."

New Zealand reported only 15 new cases Monday, the 19th day of a nationwide lockdown. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said at a news conference that a decision about whether to extend the state of emergency will be made next week.

"We are very aware of the need to get more of our economy running," she said, adding that caution was needed and there were no immediate plans to ease restrictions on the country's borders, which remain closed to most travelers.

"Our battle with this virus is far from over," Ardern said.

Hydroxychloroquine consignment from India reaches US after Trump's intervention

A consignment of hydroxychloroquine from India arrived in the United States on Saturday, days after New Delhi lifted a ban on the export of the anti-malaria drug, seen as a possible cure for Covid-19, to the US and some other countries on humanitarian grounds, reports Press Trust of India.

Earlier this week, India at the request of President Donald Trump cleared the export of 3,500,000 tablets of hydroxychloroquine to the US along with nine metric tons of active pharmaceutical ingredient or API required in the manufacturing of the drug.

"Supporting our partners in the fight against Covid-19. Consignment of hydroxychloroquine from India arrived at Newark airport today," India's Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu tweeted.

Trump, during a phone call last week, asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to lift the hold on American order of the anti-malarial drug, of which India is the major producer. India, which manufactures 70 per cent of the world's supply of hydroxychloroquine, lifted the ban on



Photo - gumlet.assettype.com

April 7.

Hydroxychloroquine has been identified by the US Food and Drug Administration as a possible treatment for the Covid-19 and it is being tested on more than 1,500 coronavirus patients in New York.

Anticipating that it will work, given initial positive results, Trump has bought more than 29 million doses of hydroxychloroquine for the potential

treatment of Covid-19 patients.

The arrival of the consignment was welcomed by Americans. "US will never forget this great humanitarian gesture by India. Under President Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the two largest democracies of the world have come together than ever in the past," said New York-based AI Mason, a real estate consultant and a Trump supporter.

'We are social animals': Hong Kong residents flout virus rules



People in Hong Kong thronged beaches, ferries and outlying islands on Sunday, many of them violating a ban on gatherings of more than four people aimed at containing the spread of the new coronavirus, reports Reuters.

Clear blue skies lured

people to popular areas across the territory over the long Easter weekend and many of them were without surgical masks. People in the city of 7.4 million have made a point of wearing masks in the past months.

"We always stay at home and it is quite boring," said Banny Mak, 24, a local resident. "We are social animal(s), we need to go out for some fun. I think with proper protection (for) ourselves and to protect other people. I think it is already ok to go out."

Hong Kong has recorded 1,005 cases of COVID-19, which has killed four people in the city.

China reports highest number of new coronavirus cases in nearly six weeks

China on Monday reported its highest number of new coronavirus cases in nearly six weeks the previous day, with the majority involving people returning from other countries. After a period where the number of infections seemed to level off, the uptick has heightened fears of a second wave and led to new constraints on travel.

Meanwhile, U.S. experts continue to debate when and how to roll back restrictions that have closed portions of the economy, with some members of the Trump administration cautioning that May 1 may not be a realistic target,

reports Washington Post.

Here are some significant developments:

- Chinese cities near the Russian border introduced more stringent quarantine requirements and stricter border controls amid an uptick in new coronavirus cases, many involving people returning from Russia.
- Oil-producing nations, including the United States, Russia and Saudi Arabia, agreed to cut their output by 10 percent in response to the

significant drop in demand during the global pandemic. The cutback of 9.7 million barrels is slated to go into effect on May 1. Oil futures rose more than 4 percent Monday.

- President Trump retweeted a call to fire Anthony S. Fauci, his top infectious disease specialist, on Sunday evening.
- Smithfield Foods, one of the largest pork processing facilities in the United States, said it will close until further notice, a foreboding sign of how the coronavirus may affect the labor-intensive meatpacking industry.

Compiled by
Doojesh Ramlallah

Here is why you might be feeling tired while on lockdown

It takes a period of mental adjustment to get over such big changes but optimism and structure could help



Experts say the monotony of lockdown could be making you tired. Picture: istockSource:istock

A lot of people have been posting on social media saying they have been feeling tired earlier than usual while on lockdown. Normally able to stay up into the small hours, they are hitting the pillow at 10 o'clock now. Many are wondering how this can be when we are all doing less.

The feelings of fatigue that you are experiencing are more likely to be related to the mental workload associated with COVID-19 rather than the physical burden. Fatigue can have both physical and non-physical causes. After we have completed a 5km run we deserve a rest, or after an illness we can feel run down and tired for a few weeks.

But research has also shown that tiredness can be caused by psychological states, such as stress and anxiety. In the current situation, it could even be the monotony of the situation that causes us to feel tired. Therefore, dealing with the psychological strain associated with Coronavirus could be wearing us out. So how do we go about getting our energy back?

The phases of adjustment

When we look at major changes, such as students starting university or people moving to a new country, a period of adaptation and transition is needed. This takes time and comes in phases.

The first week of adapting involves disengaging from former ways of living and working, and establishing new interactions. These are usually achieved by the fourth or fifth day, after which life begins to become more settled and predictable.

People in the first few weeks of lockdown may feel low and could be tearful. This is a normal adaptation stage. Please don't worry too much but be reassured that this will pass for most people and next week you will feel better. Transition to a new environment can be helped by writing a reflective journal. It can be helpful to note down your thoughts and feelings. You can then review your progress and see how you adjust.



Full functional adaptation to a new way of life will happen after about three months. However, there is one period to be aware of that can occur around three weeks after the start, when a person can succumb abruptly to a bout of melancholy and a loss of morale. The worry in this case may be that the lockdown situation has now become permanent. But once this phase has passed these feelings of despondency tend not to return.

Prioritising structure

The next lesson on how to keep your energy up comes from observing people in survival situations. To avoid a drift into a state of apathy and feeling low and unmotivated, it is important to establish a clear structure to your day. Structure allows us to gain some control over our lives. It helps prevent a buildup of "empty" time that could make you very aware of confinement, and cause a grow-

ing sense of "drift". This can make people feel withdrawn and apathetic, sleep badly and neglect their personal hygiene.

One extreme case from the survival world shows the benefits of structure when we are suddenly faced with time to fill. In 1915, when Sir Ernest Shackleton's ship *Endurance* became trapped in the Antarctic ice, he imposed strict routines on his crew. He was well aware of a previous expedition ship, the *RV Belgica*, which had become trapped over winter in the Antarctic ice in 1898. The captain did not establish any routine and as a result the crew suffered from low morale, especially after the death of the ship's cat, Nansen.

Shackleton insisted on strict meal times and ordered everyone to gather in the officers' mess after dinner to have an enforced period of socialisation. These scheduled activities prevented a social monotony that can occur when a small group of people are confined together for significant periods.

So although it might feel good to have the odd morning lie-in, it is better for your energy levels to set up your day with a clear structure and make time for social activities, even if they need to be undertaken online.

Another non-physical cause of fatigue is anxiety. The pandemic has made people confused and uncertain, and given some a sense of trepidation. All these feelings can lead to poor sleep quality, which in turn can make people more tired and anxious.

To break this cycle, exercise is a useful tool. Going for

a walk or doing an online exercise class can make you feel physically tired but in the longer-term it will reduce feelings of fatigue as your sleep quality improves.

Planning ahead and setting goals is now both possible and necessary. Aim for a set future date for release from the lockdown but be prepared to reset that date as necessary. Being optimistic about the future and having things to look forward to can also help reduce anxiety and reduce fatigue.

Sarita Robinson

University of Central Lancashire

John Leach

University of Portsmouth

Stuck at home with your partner? Look to retirees for how to make it work

Cooped up with a partner and nowhere to go to break it up? Research on older couples holds tips for everyone else on how to deal



An unprecedented number of couples are suddenly spending every waking and sleeping hour of the day with one another.

That's what many older retired couples do too, even when there isn't a pandemic. Their experiences are worth listening to, because many psychology studies find that marriages among the Medicare-eligible set are the happiest of any cohort across the life span.

A review of the research reveals a U-shaped pattern of marital happiness over the life cycle. Early marriage features many positive aspects interlaced with a lot of conflict, while older couples enjoy the highest levels of companionship with low levels of conflict. Midlife couples who are raising children are at the bottom of the U. They tend to see a plunge in their enjoyment of one another, along with an uptick in fighting.

Of course, you might wish you could be securely retired with a partner right now, especially if you're currently on your own. Working remotely or facing unemployment while running a one-room schoolhouse, planning three meals a day without running out of food and worrying about your family's health makes retirement look like a dreamy vacation.

But there are some important similarities between retirement and the isolation required by social distancing. Your social networks have shrunk. Without work connections and friends to meet for lunch or at the gym, a partner becomes more essential than ever. As a therapist who has been treating couples at all stages of life for almost three decades, I'm currently witnessing the relational challenges of this pandemic, a big magnifier that can bring out the very best and sometimes the worst in relationships.

Lean on me

Older, retired couples primarily focus on supporting one another: Can I depend on you when I need help, feel scared, worry about dying or don't feel well? And am I willing to be that source of comfort and stability when you need me?

No matter the age or stage of the couple, the current pandemic has revealed the need for much more mutual dependency. Can I count on you to protect yourself and us when you go to the grocery store? If I'm feeling scared about my parents' health or mine, can I tell you? If teaching algebra (a subject I struggled with the first time around) to our children has pushed me to the breaking point, can I ask you to take over, kindly and with no eye-rolling?

Now is an ideal time to develop your help-asking

muscle and, in turn, to welcome your partner's vulnerability. You can practice now for the years ahead when you'll need to be comfortable with more mutual dependency - being able to count on and be counted on in moments of need and frailty.

My colleague, psychiatrist Bob Waldinger, brings octogenarian couples into his laboratory to study their conflicts. He told me that he often has trouble getting them to reenact a fight. Having had the same fights for decades, these older couples are quite bored at the prospect of another round. They already know the other one's lines. Do we have to do this again?

When older couples do fight, they tend to handle conflict better than younger ones: They are more likely to interject expressions of affection and are less prone to voicing disgust, belligerence and whining. Because the relationship is so central, they may be more likely to forgive their partners or let a grievance slide.

So, try to catch a fight as it starts and consider saying to your partner, "Can we talk about something more interesting? We probably already know how this is going to unfold."

Or, if the conflict is important to air, try to remember that you can say something kind without surrendering, or give a warm nonverbal smile or touch.

It's also a good idea to refrain from making any contemptuous or nasty comments. Couples researchers recommend following the "magic ratio" of 5 to 1 during a fight to secure a stable relationship: Try to say five positive things to every one zinger or negative comment. This ratio, which may seem outlandish, is based on the fact that negative interactions carry more weight than positive ones.

Focus on the present reality

Studies suggest that older couples focus on the present and are better able to accept the relationship as it is, rather than looking ahead to a time when it is going to be transformed.

While they may not discuss their own mortality, older couples' perspectives are shaped by a shorter time horizon. They typically pay more attention to positive experiences, want to understand their emotions better and focus on a smaller group of close friends and family.

Try focusing on what is good about your relationship. What do you admire and feel grateful for? If you focus on the ways your partner is supportive, research shows that both you and your spouse will feel better about the relationship. Focusing on emotion will not be hard during a pandemic that elicits powerful feelings of anger, fear, worry, grief, love and gratitude. What can you learn about your partner that you didn't know before about his or her strengths, ways of coping and cracks in that coping?

Being stuck with your partner 24/7 may leave you pondering the expression "for better or worse, but not for breakfast, lunch and dinner." But you may come out the other side with some new skills. You don't have to wait for retirement to have a stronger relationship.

Anne Fishel

Associate Clinical Professor of Psychology,
Harvard Medical School

In A Light Vein

La scène : un poulet au bord d'une route

La question Pourquoi le poulet a-t-il traversé la route ?

René Descartes : Pour aller de l'autre côté.

Platon : Pour son bien. De l'autre côté est le Vrai.

Aristote : C'est la nature du poulet de traverser les routes.

Karl Marx : C'était historiquement inévitable.

Capitaine James T. Kirk : Pour aller là où aucun autre poulet n'était allé auparavant.

Hippocrate : En raison d'un excès de sécrétion de son pancréas.

Martin Luther King Jr. : J'ai la vision d'un monde où tous les poulets seraient libres de traverser la route sans avoir à justifier leur acte.

Moïse : Et Dieu descendit du paradis et Il dit au poulet "Tu dois traverser La route". Et le poulet traversa la route et Dieu vit que cela était bon.

Richard M. Nixon : Le poulet n'a pas traversé la route, je répète, le poulet n'a JAMAIS traversé la route.

Nicolas Machiavel : L'événement important c'est que le poulet ait traversé la route. Qui se fiche de savoir pourquoi ? La fin en soi de traverser la route justifie tout motif quel qu'il soit.

Sigmund Freud : Le fait que vous vous préoccupiez du fait que le poulet ait traversé la route révèle votre fort sentiment d'insécurité sexuelle latente.

Bill Gates : Nous venons justement de mettre au point le nouveau 'Poulet Office 2003', qui ne se contentera pas seulement de traverser les routes, mais couvrira aussi des œufs, classera vos dossiers importants, etc.

Bouddha : Poser cette question renie votre propre nature de poulet.

Galilée : Et pourtant, il traverse.

Eric Cantona : Le poulet, il est libre le poulet. Les routes, quand il veut il les traverse.

Charles De Gaulle : Le poulet a peut-être traversé la route, mais il n'a pas encore traversé l'autoroute !

Jacques Chirac : Parce que je n'ai pas encore dissous la route.

L'église de Scientologie : La raison est en vous, mais vous ne le savez pas encore. Moyennant la modique somme de 2000 par séance, plus la location d'un détecteur de mensonges, une analyse psychologique nous permettra de la découvrir.

Bill Clinton : Je jure sur la Constitution qu'il ne s'est rien passé entre ce poulet et moi.

Einstein : Le fait que ce soit le poulet qui traverse la route ou que ce soit la route qui se meuve sous le poulet dépend uniquement de votre référentiel.

Zen : Le poulet peut vainement traverser la route, seul le Maître connaît le bruit de son ombre derrière le mur.

Jean-Pierre Raffarin : Le poulet n'a pas encore traversé la route, mais le gouvernement y travaille.

Staline : le poulet devra être fusillé sur le champ, ainsi que tous les témoins de la scène et 10 autres personnes prises au hasard, pour n'avoir pas empêché cet acte subversif

George W. Bush : Le fait que le poulet ait pu traverser cette route en toute impunité malgré les résolutions de l'ONU représente un affront à la démocratie, à la liberté, à la justice. Ceci prouve indubitablement que nous aurions dû déjà bombarder cette route depuis longtemps. Dans le but d'assurer la paix dans cette région, et pour éviter que les valeurs que nous défendons ne soient une fois de plus bafouées par ce genre de terrorisme, le gouvernement des États-Unis d'Amérique a décidé d'envoyer 17 porte-avions, appuyés au sol par 243000 G.I. et dans les airs ... Nous avons décidé qu'ensuite, ce pays sera généreusement pris en charge par notre gouvernement, qui rebâtira des poulaillers suivant les normes de sécurité en vigueur, avec à leur tête, un coq démocratiquement élu par l'ambassadeur des États-Unis...

Emmanuel Macron : "C'est parce que le poulet a trouvé du travail".

How long are you infectious when you have coronavirus?

Most people with coronavirus will recover but how long until you're no longer infectious? Here's what the science tells us so far



As the coronavirus pandemic stretches on, a small proportion of Australians infected have now died, while most have either recovered, or are likely to recover over the next few weeks.

One thing many of us want to know is for how long people who have SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, are able to pass it on to someone else.

Let's look at what the science tells us so far.

How long does it take to get sick?

The "incubation period" is the time between being exposed to the virus and the onset of symptoms.

For COVID-19, the incubation period ranges from 1 to 14 days. But most people who develop COVID-19 symptoms do so 4 to 6 days after exposure.

How long are you infectious?

The "infectious period" means the time you're able to spread the virus to someone else.

For COVID-19, there is emerging evidence to suggest the infectious period may start 1 to 3 days before you develop symptoms.

The most infectious period is thought to be 1 to 3 days before symptoms start, and in the first 7 days after symptoms begin. But some people may remain infectious for longer.

Commonly reported symptoms for COVID-19 - such as fever, cough and fatigue - usually last around 9 to 10 days but this can be longer.

Why are some people infectious for longer?

Typically with viruses, the higher the viral load (the more virus circulating in the body), the higher the risk of transmission through known transmission pathways.

A study conducted in Hong Kong looking at viral load in 23 patients diagnosed with COVID-19 found higher viral loads in the first week of illness.

Another study from China looking at 76 hospitalised patients found that by 10 days after symptom onset, mild

cases had cleared the virus. That is, no virus was detectable through testing.

However, severe cases have much higher viral loads and many continue to test positive beyond the 10 days after symptoms start.

So the more severe the illness and the higher the viral

load, the longer you continue to shed the virus and are infectious.

When are you no longer infectious?

If someone has been symptom-free for 3 days and they developed their first symptoms more than 10 days prior, they are no longer considered to be infectious.

But we're not sure whether people are infectious when they have recovered but the virus can still be detected in their bodies.

One study from Hong Kong found the virus could be detected for 20 days or longer after the initial onset of symptoms in one-third of patients tested.

Another study from China found the virus in a patients' faecal samples five weeks after the first onset of symptoms.

But the detection of the virus doesn't necessarily mean the person is infectious. We need more studies with larger sample sizes to get to the bottom of this question.

Should you get tested again before going back into the community?

Due to a global shortage of coronavirus tests, the Commonwealth and state governments have strict criteria about who should be tested for COVID-19 and when.

People who have been self-quarantining, because they had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 and have completed their 14-day quarantine period without developing symptoms, can return to the community. There is no requirement to be tested prior to returning to the community. It is, however, recommended they continue to practise social distancing and good hygiene as a precaution.

The requirements are different for people who have been diagnosed with COVID-19.

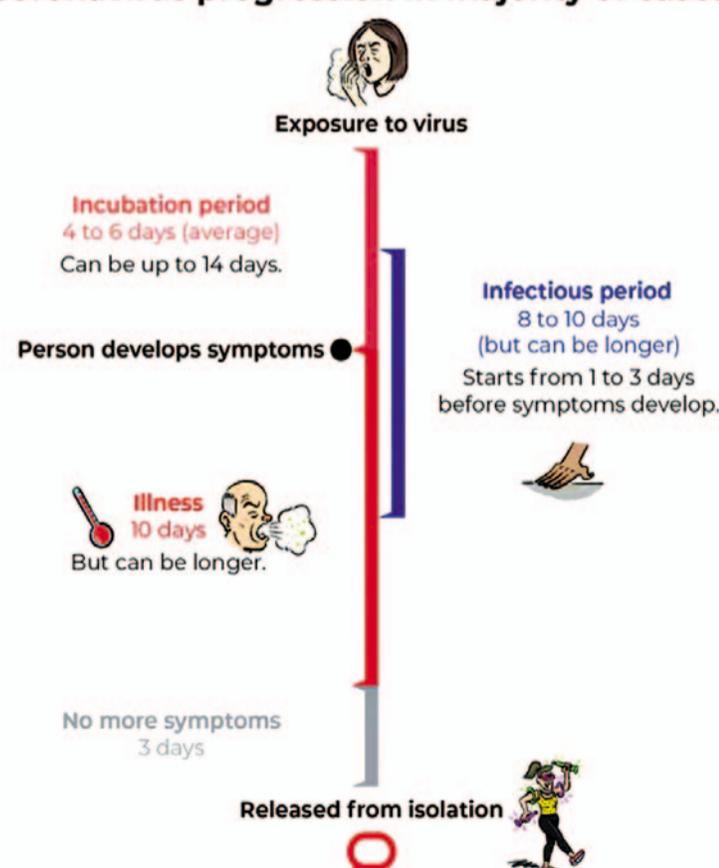
At present, re-testing people who have experienced mild illness, and have recovered from COVID-19 is not recommended. A person is considered safe to return to the community and discontinue self-isolation if they are no longer infectious. This means they developed their first symptoms more than 10 days prior and have not experienced any symptoms for at least 3 days (72 hours).

For people who have been hospitalised with more severe illness, the testing requirements before discharge are different. They will have two swabs taken 24 hours apart to check if they have cleared the virus. If the swabs are both negative, they can be discharged and don't require further self-isolation.

If one or both tests are positive but the person is well enough to go home, they must continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days since they were discharged from hospital and they have not experienced any symptoms for at least 3 days.

There are also different testing requirements for people working or living in high-risk settings. If you work or live in a high-risk setting you should consult with your health care provider on re-testing requirements.

Coronavirus progression in majority of cases



Tambri Housen, Amy Elizabeth Parry & Meru Sheel (Epidemiologists), Australian National University



Celina Jaitly gets emotional before *Seasons Greetings*' digital release, says, 'We must not wait for tomorrow and give today our best'

Celina Jaitly gets emotional before the digital release of her film, Seasons Greetings says she did not know life would change so much in nine years

Celina Jaitly has been missing from showbiz for a long time now. The lady is now in Austria with her husband, Peter Haag, who is a hotelier. Celina Jaitly's film *Seasons Greetings* is ready for release on April 5 on Zee 5. The actress shared the news on social media with an emotional post. She wrote, "When I was shooting my last film poster in 2011, I never imagined the the next film poster/ release will be at a time when ... a mutant film virus would have shut down the whole world, - The fact the my parents won't be alive to be the first to give their feedback as always. The fact that I would be married, living in Europe, and the next poster would be shot when I would be the mother of three beautiful boys, - A day in future when section 377 would have been revoked and all LGBTQI in India would have attained right to

life. -The fact that I would have the privilege to work with a trans actor."

Seasons Greetings is a tribute to Bengali filmmaker Rituparno Ghosh. He is best known for his film, *Raincoat* in Bollywood. Rituparno won the National Award 12 times for his films. He was famous as a cross-dresser. The filmmaker was one of the few people who came out openly with his sexuality when talking about it was still taboo.

Celina Jaitly has always been a champion of LGBTQI rights. She has said that there is discrimination against the community in India and one of the best mediums to bring about a change is cinema. She is mom to three sons, Virraaj, Winston and Arthur.

Sophie Turner hopes to return to the 'X-Men' franchise



Actress Sophie Turner, who stars as Phoenix in the film series 'X-Men', has said that she would relish the opportunity to reprise her role in the future.

"I don't even know what the deal is, whether Disney wants to continue on the 'X-Men' journey. I would always be down to go back to that character and that cast and that experience ... We had the best time on those movies. I would kill to go back," she said in a video chat seen on Twitter.

Sophie Turner is 'kind of loving' being in quarantine with pop star husband Joe Jonas. She stated that the only time she leaves the house is when she has to go walk their dog.

Meanwhile, the actress is reportedly expecting her first child with her singer-hubby Joe Jonas.

On the work front, the actress was last seen in 'X-Men: Dark Phoenix' where she played the role of Jean Grey aka the Phoenix.

Barun Sobti on Covid-19 crisis: 'Not the time to prove how famous or strong we are'

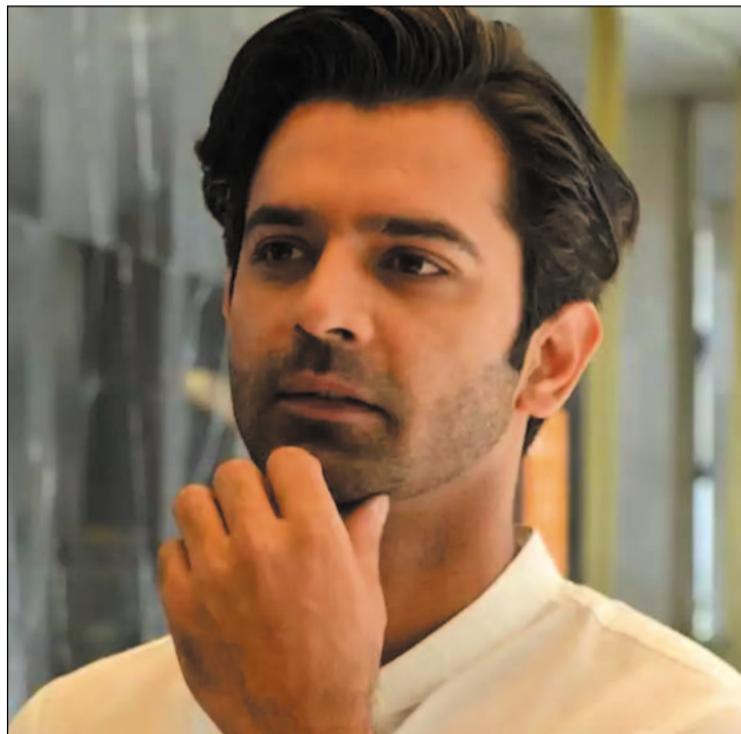
Ever since coronavirus cases have started spreading in India, actor Barun Sobti is taking extra precautions for the safety of his nine-month-old daughter Sifat and wife Pashmeen Manchanda. He has been strictly following a preventive regime at home to keep infections at bay, reports Sangeeta Yadav of Hindustan Times.

"Except me, no one else steps out of the house to buy groceries or other essential things. And when I come back, I go straight to the balcony, place all the stuff there under the sun, and go take a bath. Then I pick the stuff from the balcony after 12 hours so that if there's any virus, it dies under the sun," says Sobti, adding that "risking my child's safety is the last thing to do."

Doing the right thing is what he believes in, and he also urges his fans to do the same. "One should not be paranoid about this as fear is not going to help fight the virus. Just be in self-isolation with your family, read a book and watch a series," Sobti says.

Looking at the situation, the thought that has struck his mind is that an illness or a disease doesn't affect people looking at how strong or famous they are.

"There is no actor or star at this time and it is an existential crisis. I don't think this is the time when anyone has to prove how famous or strong they are. This can infect all of us. We should all be sensible and not take the risk by stepping out just because we're getting bored or (think) nothing will happen. The whole purpose is that everybody should stay safe, overcome this crisis and resume our lives like before," Sobti says.



Remake of Nicole Kidman-starrer 'The Others' in works

Horror classic 'The Others', starring Nicole Kidman, is getting a modern remake just in time for the original film's 20th anniversary. An Entertainment house has won the remake rights to the 2001 hit, reported a media source.

The English-language Spanish gothic supernatural psychological horror film was written and directed by Alejandro Amenabar and earned USD 200 million globally upon release.

The film followed Kidman as a war widow who hides her children away in an isolated mansion due to a rare disease characterised by photo sensitivity. The arrival of three mysterious servants unlocks the house's terrifying secrets.

The part earned Kidman nominations at Golden Globe awards, with Amenabar won Goya trophies for best director and screenplay.

The remake will be produced Renee Tab and Christopher Tuffin, as well as Lucas Akoskin.

Veteran Spanish producer Cerezo of 'Lucky Star' fame will executive produce alongside FilmSharks' Guido Rud and Miller Way's Michael and Jeeny Miller.





Mardi 14 avril - 21.19

The Huntsman

Avec: Chris Hemsworth, Jessica Chastain, Charlize Theron



Mercredi 15 avril - 10.44

Avec: Radha Mitchell, Cole Hauser, Vin Diesel

Un navire de transport commercial et son équipage sont échoués sur une planète pleine de créatures sanguinaires qui ne sortent pour se régaler que la nuit. Mais ensuite, ils apprennent qu'une éclipse d'un mois est sur le point de se produire.



PITCH BLACK



	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
mardi 14 avril	06.30 Local: Encounter 07.05 Dessin Anime 10.29 Mag: Origami 11.15 Local: Itinerer Rodrig 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Local: Autour Des Valeurs 12.30 Comme Un Poisson Dans... 13.30 Local: Passerelles 14.30 D.Anime - Teenie Weenies 14.40 La Famille Blaireau 15.04 D.Anime: Kuu Kuu Harajuku 16.28 D.Anime: Trollhunters 16.55 Local: Aajke Jawan 17.30 Local: Bhakti Saagar 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja 20.00 Journal & La Meteo 20.00 Local: Press Conference 20.45 Grup Tambour Chagos 21.05 Local: Regat, Festival... 21.40 Serial: Unforgotten	04.30 Aastha TV 07.00 DDI Live 10.00 Serial: Tumhaari Natasha 11.19 Serial: MOL 12.04 Film: 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.20 Honaar Soon Mee Hya... 15.43 Mooga Manasulu 16.03 Apoorva Raagangal 16.30 Serial: Ki Jaana Mein Kaun 16.53 Serial: Gangaa 18.00 Serial: Dr. Quin 18.30 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett 19.00 Zournal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 19.50 Local: Yaadein 20.20 Serial: Mah-E-Tamaam 21.25 Local: Anjuman 21.26 Local: Urdu Programme 22.37 DDI Live	06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa 06.44 Mag: World Stories 07.00 Mag: Voa Connect 07.26 Doc: A Question Of Science 07.30 Mag: In Good Shape 07.59 Doc: Clean Air 08.41 Doc: World Stamps 09.02 Live Educational Program... 14.05 Doc: World Stamps 15.26 Mag: Made In Germany 15.52 Doc: Ringing In The Future 16.32 Mag: Urban Gardens 16.38 Mag: Eco@Africa 17.05 Mag: Urban Gardens 17.25 Doc: World Stamps 17.28 Mag: Voa Connect 18.00 Doc: A Question Of Science 18.33 Doc: Builders Of The Future 19.03 Mag: Check In 19.37 Mag: Made In Germany 20.05 Local: Tamil Programme	00.24 Tele: Peau Sauvage 01.07 Tele: Esmeraldas 03.12 Film: Mamma Mia 05.00 Tele: Amanda 06.40 Film: Mange, Prie, Aime 09.00 Serial: Les Experts 09.45 Telenov: Au Nom De L'amour 10.10 Tele: Marina Et Scarlett 10.35 Serial: NCIS - Los Angeles 11.25 Telenovela: Dulce Amor 12.00 Film: Mamma Mia 13.35 Tele: Amanda 14.25 Film: Mange, Prie, Aime 16.40 Serial: Les Experts 17.21 Serial: Dynasty 18.10 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour 18.31 Tele: Mariana et Scarlett 20.05 Tele: Totalment Diva 20.30 Serial: Dynasty 21.19 Film: The Huntsman	09.29 Film: Aa Gale Lag Ja 12.00 / 19.54 - Ek Deewana Tha 12.27 / 20.11 - Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala 12.46 / 20.32 Radha Krishna 13.06 / 21.09 - Kaleerein 13.35 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.56 / 21.46 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.21 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan 14.42 / 22.25 - Ishqbaaz 15.29 Film: Baaghi Stars: Shraddha Kapoor, Tiger Shroff 17.30 Live: Samacher 18.00 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 18.19 Kumkum Bhagya 19.00 Tele: Dulce Amor 19.01 Mere Angne Mein 19.22 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai
mercredi 15 avril	07.00 Dessin Anime 09.37 Magazine: Origami 10.28 Mag: Origami 10.45 Massive Monster Mayhem 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Local: Autour Des Valeurs 12.35 Doc: My Life With A Robot 13.30 Local: Saver Kiltirel 14.00 Local: Pause Cuisine 14.10 Local: Coin Jardin 14.30 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies 14.40 La Famille Blaireau-Renard 17.00 Local: Chikitsa Aur Swasty 17.30 Local: Bhakti Saagar 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja 20.00 Journal & La Meteo 20.00 Local: Press Conference 20.30 Prod: Tam Tam 21.50 Serial: The Enemy Within 22.35 Serial: Madam Secretary 23.20 Le Journal	04.30 Aastha TV 07.00 Film: 11.40 Good Morning Shanghai 12.00 Nanda Saukhya Bhare 12.30 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 12.48 Serial: Brundavanam 13.10 Serial: Annakodiyum Ainthu 13.35 Serial: Anu Pallavi 14.05 Entertainment: Dil Hai Hindu 15.00 Live: Samachar 15.20 Film: Imtihaan 18.00 Mag: Check In 18.30 Mag: Eco@Africa 19.00 Zournal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.05 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha 20.21 Serial: Bitti Business Wali 21.00 Film: 23.15 DDI Live	06.30 Doc: Builders Of The Future 07.00 Mag: Check In 07.27 Mag: Made In Germany 07.53 Doc: Horizon 08.45 Doc: World Stamps 09.02 Educational Programme 14.05 Doc: A Question Of Science 14.15 Sos Animaux En Danger 15.07 Mag: Close Up 15.34 Doc: Bugs: Natures' Little... 16.16 Doc: The Last Harvest 17.02 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto... 17.28 Mag: Urban Gardens 17.32 Doc: A Question Of Science 17.44 Mag: Shift 18.00 Mag: Motorweek 18.25 Mag: Urban Gardens 18.31 Doc: Olivia's Garden 19.00 Mag: Arts.21 19.26 Doc: A Question Of Science 19.35 Doc: Garden Party 20.04 Programme In Marathi	00.35 Tele: Peau Sauvage 01.20 Film: The Huntsmen 03.20 Serial: NCIS 03.59 Film: Psych 05.23 Tele: Amanda 06.05 Serial: Dynasty 06.47 Film: The Social Network 09.00 Serial: Les Experts 09.45 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour 10.10 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett 10.35 Serial: NCIS 11.16 Tele: Dulce Amor 12.00 Film: Psych 13.30 Tele: Amanda 14.45 Film: The Social Network 16.40 Serial: Mission Impossible 17.22 Serial: Dynasty 18.07 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour 20.05 Tele: Totalment Diva 20.30 Serial: When Calls The Heart 21.15 Film: Pitch Black 22.58 Tele: Amanda	09.29 Film: Main Tulsi Tere Aangan Ki 12.00 / 19.54 - Ek Deewana Tha 12.27 / 20.11 - Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala 12.46 / 20.32 Radha Krishna 13.06 / 21.09 - Kaleerein 13.35 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.56 / 21.46 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.21 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan 14.42 / 22.25 - Ishqbaaz 15.29 Film: Second Hand Husband Stars: Gippy Grewal, Tina Ahuja, Dharmendra, Ravi Kishan 17.30 Live: Samacher 18.00 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 18.19 Kumkum Bhagya 18.39 Piya Albela 19.01 Mere Angne Mein 19.22 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai
Jeudi 16 avril	07.00 Dessin Anime 10.29 Magazine: Origami 10.45 Massive Monster Mayhem 11.15 Entrepreneuriat Au Feminin 11.30 Local: Arsv MBC - Fer Route 12.00 Le Journal 14.30 D. Anime: Teenie Weenies 14.28 D. Anime: Petit Creux 14.40 La Famille Blaireau-Renard 15.31 D.Anime: Petit Creux 16.18 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 16.30 D.Anime: Trollhunters 17.00 Local: Prakriti Ki God Mein 17.30 Local: Bhakti Saagar 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja 19.00 Local: Yatra 20.05 Local: Press Conference 20.35 Film: Shaadi Mein Zaroor... 23.00 Le Journal 23.35 Serial: Madam Secretary	04.30 Aastha TV 07.00 Film: Paapi 10.00 Local: Shree Durga... 11.00 Serial: Oru Kai Osai 12.00 Film: 15.00 Samachar 15.20 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 15.40 Serial: Eka Lagnachi Teesri 16.06 Apoorva Raagangal 16.28 Local: Yaadein 16.54 Serial: Mahakali 18.00 Lettre Pastorale Careme 18.30 Local: Tiba Tiba Nu Avance 19.00 Zournal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Serial: Maharakshak 20.42 Serial: Naagin 21.28 Serial: CID 22.15 Serial: Piya Rangrezz	06.00 Mag: Motorweek 06.57 Mag: Arts.21 07.26 Doc: A Question Of Science 07.32 Doc: Garden Party 08.42 Doc: World Stamps 09.00 Educational Programme 14.03 Doc: Visite Guidee 14.42 Mag: Business Africa 15.03 Mag: Focus On Europe 15.29 Doc: Charcoal 16.12 Mag: Motorweek 16.40 Doc: Olivia's Garen 17.06 Mag: Arts.21 18.00 Doc: Zenith 18.30 Mag: Sur Mesure 18.44 Mag: Shift 19.00 Mag: Border Crossing 19.30 Doc: A Question Of Science 19.34 Mag: Tomorrow Today 20.02 Film: Chhuti Jashe Chakka 22.30 Doc: The Climate Covers Up	00.25 Tele: Peau Sauvage 01.31 Film: Pitch Black 03.15 Serial: NCIS 03.57 Film: Royal Matchmaker 05.22 Tele: Amanda 06.02 Serial: When Calls The Heart 06.48 Film: Jurassic Park 08.30 Serial: Seal Team 09.00 Serial: Les Experts 10.35 Serial: NCIS 11.25 Tele: Dulce Amor 12.00 Film: Royal Matchmaker 13.30 Tele: Amanda 14.41 Film: Jurassic Park 16.42 Serial: Les Experts 17.30 Serial: When Calls The Heart 18.07 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour 18.31 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett 19.00 Tele: Dulce Amor 20.05 Tele: Totalment Diva 21.15 Page Eight	09.29 Film: Aandhi 12.00 / 19.54 - Ek Deewana Tha 12.17 / 20.11 - Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala 12.46 / 20.32 Radha Krishna 13.06 / 21.09 - Kaleerein 13.35 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.56 / 21.46 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.21 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan 14.42 / 22.25 - Ishqbaaz 15.05 Film: Its Entertainment Stars: Akshay Kumar, Tamannaah Bhatia, Mithun Chakraborty, Johnny Lever 17.30 Live: Samacher 18.00 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 18.19 Kumkum Bhagya 18.39 Piya Albela 19.12 Mere Angne Mein 19.33 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai

Mardi 14 avril- 15.30



Stars: Shraddha Kapoor, Tiger Shroff

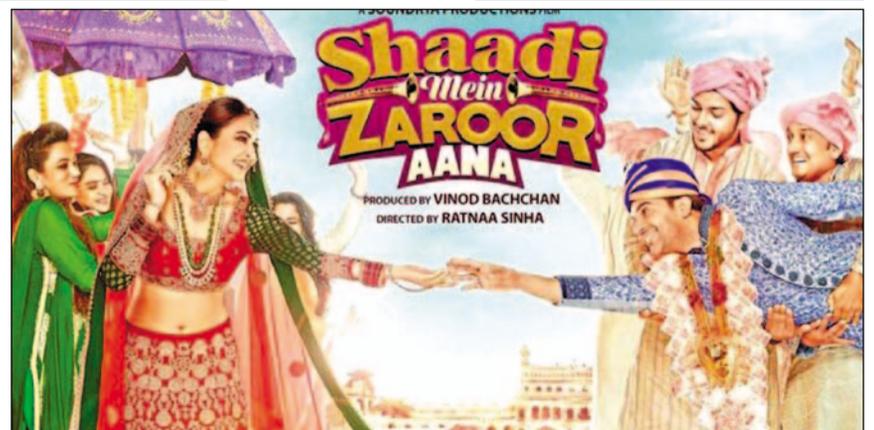
Jeudi 16 avril- 20.35



Stars: Rajkummar Rao, Kriti Kharbanda, K.K. Raina



Baaghi



Shaadi Mein Zaroor Aana

PRODUCED BY VINOD BACHCHAN
DIRECTED BY RATNAA SINHA

Covid Frays Nerves



Photo - yourlifechoices.com.au



Nita Chicooree-Mercier

While the global economy comes to a halt, the coronavirus goes on a free round-the-world trip and is now on a courtesy visit back home in Hubei. It leaves everyone in its trail - political leaders, medical staff, doctors and nurses, police forces, the army and the public at large - grappling frenzily with the effects of its presence and adopting a military stance to 'fight against a common enemy'.

Hot-tempered Philippine President Duterte goes nuts and asks the police to shoot at undisciplined folks. Wah! When you think that Filipinos are one of the nicest people in Asia! French tourists strolling merrily in Goa get a taste of *lathi* charge by Indian police. Sweet holidays gone awry.

The Indian government already has its hands full with one Sikh man who came from Switzerland and attended a religious festival gathering 10,000 people in Punjab, and was found infected with the virus after his death. An Irishman luckily escapes from an Indian hospital without being caught by the police. Less lucky are the 400 members who attended a Tablighi assembly, a highly conservative religious association, who gathered despite present police notice, and were ordered by policemen holding *lathis* having to force them to get on buses and head to quarantine centres after a few got contaminated. Their counterparts in Pakistan went in hiding to avoid public hospitals after police started looking for them. Hard times indeed. A US nuclear aircraft carrier with 4000 marines on board in the Pacific has a few cases of contamination, and it is out of question to evacuate the ship despite recommendation from the navy. Rivals might get wild ideas. A nightmare for President Trump.

* * *

Over here, after two days of confinement, the Prime Minister flies into a temper and announces a full non-negotiable shutdown order for twelve more days, an ordeal for a number of people caught unawares. The re-opening of supermarkets gives additional headache to decision-makers with radio anchors joining in the chorus of exasperated politicians, police force and doctors to ham-

mer down the 'Stay at Home' recommendation into the minds of common folks, portrayed as thick-headed. A journalist on a private radio peremptorily tells people: 'If you don't understand now, you will never understand.' A typical local form of rebuke which people do not mind. What might not go down well with the public in advanced countries with more pronounced ego is okay here. Folks are not touchy and do not take words literally and start a scene for nothing. So the unflattering compliment made by an irritated doctor, calling unruly elements who hang around and go for a ride in groups, 'empty heads' - *cocovides* -- goes like water on *brède songe*.

On radio and television the national committee often reminds the public that it is racking its brains to sort out all issues caused by the disease and its propagation, and strives to project the cool image of an overworked team which keeps everything under control. Opponents resort to social media and private radios to sling a few arrows at the government with a list of suggestions on how to do better, something that chafes the PM and his team. There are charges of delayed date for confinement for personal family reason, single-minded decision for total confinement, hardships faced by citizens, ineffective and insufficient means in dealing with quarantines and so on.

* * *

It is understandable that stocks of masks for medical staff had to be a priority. Apparently, there are insufficient stocks in such an unprecedented situation. But telling the public not to wear masks unnecessarily looks like a way of dodging the issue. International medical platforms insist on wearing masks as much as possible. Chinese medical test kits are reported not to be the most reliable.

What draws our attention after the decision of MPs to part with 10% of their salary for a year was the suggestion put forward by the leader of the Reform Party to deal with expenses at lesser costs by cutting down for a year on the various allowances ministers benefit from and which add 100 thousand rupees more to their salary, and putting them in the special funds to tackle the virus issue. Rs 42,000 for duty allowance (whatever it means), Rs 22,000 for entertainment, Rs

35,000 for petrol and Rs 15,000 for driver's allowance. Rs 35,000 for petrol per month sounds a hell of a lot. Mileage covered by ministers in normal times when they are on duty? A reasonable price looks like around Rs 10,000 monthly for 40 kms to their office and back. Present circumstances of limited travelling logically cut down petrol expenses. Rs 22,000 a month for entertaining in cocktails, receptions for foreign guests, etc., we guess. Trimming down a big part of the allowances for a year sounds quite reasonable.

Opposition members do their job, constructive criticism or noisy outbursts. They are paid by public funds, anyway. Private radios offer a platform, a *caisse savon*, to a varied number of protagonists, provide an outlet for rising level of adrenaline of disgruntled individuals and create jobs for new anchors. A means for the public to get connected, express their opinions, ask for advice and favourite songs, and share experiences. Radios meet with varying public approval. No one is fooled by partisan propaganda disguised as political analysis.

* * *

The ruling governmental team holds the privilege of wielding power, which should enable them to be above the fray, and not display low self-confidence and bristle at negative remarks aired by any private radio. The national committee probably gave laconic explanation to requests for more information concerning the deceased, contaminated citizens and their whereabouts. It was a matter of respect for the deceased and their families not to reveal their identity all the more as the deadly virus forces one and all to lay aside funeral customs, family gatherings and prayers. It is unnecessary to add more grief to bereaved families by drawing public attention to them.

It makes sense in a small island. Two weeks ago it might have been relevant to get information on the whereabouts of those who tested positive. Not so sure, though. Cases of irrational stigmatisation have been reported. Employees in essential services, medical staff, drivers, supermarkets hail from all parts of the small island, which means the best option is to follow the rules of confinement.

Patience comes easily to our compatriots, with a majority of them imbibed with an incredible amount. A valuable asset, indeed. After two weeks' confinement, they have settled down to the routine of idleness, masks, gloves, sanitizers and all. Self-employed and the underprivileged are the hardest hit. As the third week draws to an end, there are signs of nerves getting frayed. And what with being conned by supermarkets and *boutiks* as well, that's all they needed in times of pandemic crisis! Big business is getting impatient and nervous; they have the most to lose. Ordinary folks are used to living with just enough. The lobbying for going back to business as usual unleashed the fury of employees on social media, which forces the big wigs of big business to stay at home and look out of their window at patches of snowy clouds moving away in the blue sky above.



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor



Experiences We Don't Understand

All of the events in our lives lead to other events, they are all connected.

Sometimes we have an experience that we don't understand, but if we look deeply, or wait long enough, a reason for that experience will usually reveal itself. All the events in our lives lead to other events, and all that we have manifested in this present moment is the result of past events and experiences. We cannot easily tease apart the many threads that have been woven together to create our current reality. Experiences that don't make sense, as well as any that we regret, are just as responsible for the good things in our lives as the experiences we do understand or label as "good."

This is especially important to remember at times when we feel directionless or unsure of what to do. It is often at times like these that we take a job or move to a place without really knowing if it's the right thing to do. We may ultimately end up leaving the job or the place, but often during that time we will have met someone who becomes an important friend, or we may have an experience that changes us in a profound way. When all the pieces of our life don't quite make sense, we can remember that there may be some hidden gem of a reason that we are where we are having the experiences we are having.

It's fun to look back on past experiences with an eye to uncovering those gems--the dreadful temporary job in a bland office building that introduced you to the love of your life; the roommate you couldn't tolerate who gave you a book that changed your life; the time spent living in a city you didn't like that led you into a deeper relationship with yourself. Remembering these past experiences can restore our faith in the present. Life is full of buried treasures. Chances are, you're sitting on some right now.