

MAURITIUS TIMES

"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less." - Marie Curie



Interview:
Kugan Parapen

Air Mauritius:
**'Vulture investors
are already lined up
to devour the injured
animal'**

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Pandemic controversies: Trump, WHO & China



The WHO reputation may take years to rebuild, but in view of its vital health and sanitary importance to the world, a full independent post-pandemic inquiry should be on the cards

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Diagnostic d'Air Mauritius

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**"We are in
a pandemic
situation:
this means we
have to remain
vigilant"**

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Putting the Country First

If the pandemic crisis has been seen as a wake-up call to change the way we do things, and change for the better, then this logic must apply to all aspects of the running of the country, and across all sectors. Change does not occur in the abstract – it should be self-evident that it is people who must first change for it to become a movement that then spreads throughout an organisation, the country, its institutions and so on.

We are currently confronted with some critical issues upon which the future of the country hinges.

As if Covid-19 was not enough, we now have the Air Mauritius downfall on our hands. This flagship of the Mauritian nation ought not to have been subjected to this fate – for indeed, the airline has been a victim since the *caisse noire* affair was uncovered in the wake of the fraud at the MCB involving NFP funds at the beginning of the 21st century. From then on, the top concern of those running the company and other stakeholders, including some union representatives, seems to have been how much to extract from it in terms of money and perks. Dubious appointments on the governing board, political interference in the day-to-day running of the airline, questionable recruiting practices, hedging with respect to fuel provision, ill-judged fleet expansion without any long-term vision – all were aligned with the same mindset of using the company as a *vache-à-traire*. Unfortunately, it is not the only organisation or institution which has seen rot infiltrating it from both the top and the bottom. The question that arises is: will there be a wake-up call on the part of the decision makers and the leadership? Nothing is so uncertain.

Now another danger is coming from the call made by some parties to form a *gouvernement d'unité nationale*. This is certainly the last thing we need at this critical juncture, because there are some hard questions to be asked, precisely about Air Mauritius to start with. This is the job of the Opposition in Parliament, which must be convened with the urgency which the situation demands.

By its very nature the role and functions of a government in a representative democracy is to govern – make laws, arbitrate, create the conditions for economic development and for a just, equitable and free society, etc, as enshrined in our Constitution, and the Opposition's role is to scrutinize the work of government. A *gouvernement d'unité nationale* will not, for instance, be in a position to seek the answers about the decision to put Air Mauritius under voluntary administration, or to press for a commission of

enquiry, for example, into the gross mismanagement practices as regards human resources, procurements, governance and finance that have plagued the company for the past several years. What were the duty and the role of the country's leadership? These and other queries are likely to be swept under the carpet if there is a *gouvernement d'unité nationale*, which is definitely a bad idea.

One must separate the call for a unity of purpose and a spirit of national solidarity that the pandemic has imposed on us, which are valid subjective sentiments, from the need to press for in-depth investigations into the chronic malfunctions in organisations and institutions, make them accountable and demand the implementation of the changes that are needed to get things going in the right direction again – and for good, with regular parliamentary oversight, including about the fate of the stimulus packages, from an aware Opposition. Or patriotic backbenchers.

On the other hand, of major concern is the easing of the lockdown that is forthcoming. It will have to be carefully calibrated, and it goes without saying that the public health framework that will underpin this phase of the pandemic is going to be crucial. In an interview to this paper, Dr Pierrot Chitson, a Consultant Physician who has wide experience in nationwide screening and epidemiological surveillance – which he pioneered in setting up following the first NCD survey by WHO in 1987 – shares his insights on the way forward. This is a time when we need all the expertise that we can cull to assist the country in transitioning smoothly, with a bumpy ride ahead not ruled out.

But we must also be guided by the experience of other countries, and here Singapore can be a guide. Hailed as a model for its successful response to Covid-19 initially, it was compelled to impose a lockdown subsequently because of a second wave of cases that caught it too unawares. Among other things, there have to be legally enforceable measures spanning several sectors of activity as they open up, and accrued vigilance without fear or favour, including vis-a-vis visitors – but without any form of brutality.

There is a price to pay as regards modes of interaction for a return to a semblance of normality. If we are not willing to pay that price, then we must be prepared for the loss of lives as a consequence. The warning is dire – but justified.

What causes a 'second wave' of disease outbreak?

Following the emergence and rapid spread of Covid-19, several countries have succeeded in bringing local outbreaks under control. The most dramatic of these is China, where large scale restrictions on people's movement appear to have halted domestic transmission.

South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan also had early success containing local outbreaks, using a combination of extensive contact tracing, testing, border measures and differing degrees of social distancing.

However, Covid-19 is now widespread across the globe, and these countries remain at risk of a second wave of infections, sparked either by overseas arrivals or undetected pockets of infection.

What causes a second wave of a disease outbreak?

Infectious diseases spread via contact between infectious and susceptible people. In the absence of any control measures, an outbreak will grow as long as the average number of people infected by each infectious person is greater than one.

If people who recover generate a protective immune response, the outbreak will leave a growing trail of immune people. Once enough people are immune, there are fewer susceptible people to become infected and the outbreak will die away.

When an outbreak is brought under control by social distancing and other measures, it's possible only a small proportion of the population will have been infected and gained immunity.

If a population has not achieved herd immunity, enough susceptible people may remain to fuel a second wave if controls are relaxed and infection is reintroduced.

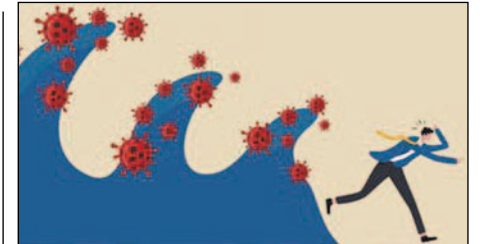
Will we see a second wave?

Despite the scale of the outbreak in Hubei and other Chinese provinces, it's likely most residents remain susceptible to infection.

Even for those people previously infected, immunity to Covid-19 is an open question. Reinfection appears uncommon, and a study in rhesus macaques suggests a protective immune response does occur. But we need more data to understand if this is common in humans, and how long immunity might last.

The strong social distancing measures used to control Covid-19 in China have a human cost, and cannot be maintained indefinitely.

As China winds back social distancing measures, new infected cases could, if not quickly detected and isolated,



ted, trigger a second wave of Covid-19.

A recent modelling study indicated a second peak of infection might arrive in Wuhan by mid-year if interventions were lifted too quickly.

During the 1918 influenza pandemic, it was the second wave that was the largest and most deadly. But that probably won't happen today. As we learn more about Covid-19, we become better placed to control its transmission.

If a rapid increase in transmission is detected in China, it's likely authorities would quickly reintroduce the restrictions that successfully contained the first wave.

Preventing a second wave of Covid-19

When the first wave of an outbreak is sufficiently large, then enough of the population could become immune that there are too few susceptible people remaining to fuel a second wave. But the potential human cost of an uncontrolled outbreak is immense and unacceptable.

Alternatively, a globally coordinated response that eradicated the virus could prevent a second wave, as was achieved for SARS in 2003. However, the milder nature of many infections, and the broad global spread of Covid-19 make it a much greater challenge to eradicate.

Another end point is the rapid development of a vaccine that could help achieve herd immunity without extensive infection.

In any event, after the first wave has passed, preventing a second wave will require ongoing surveillance and testing to detect and isolate any new cases as control measures are unwound.

We use mathematical models to explore the dynamic behaviour of infectious diseases. They can help explore how factors such as the strength and timing of control efforts might affect the likelihood and timing of a second wave.

However, models provide a simplified view of reality. One of the complexities they often (but not always) omit is human behaviour and how it might change in response to government and media communication, social and economic realities, and direct experience of Covid-19.

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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 paper has been produced with the assistance of Doojesh Ramlallah, Sultana Karmally and Kersley Ramsamy

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Aditya Narayan

Avant l'avènement de la pandémie, Air Mauritius (MK) allait lentement mais certainement vers un crash financier. Les signes annonciateurs d'un désastre imminent étaient présents : un bilan financier viré au rouge depuis deux ans, la mise sur pied d'un comité présidé par un novice de l'aviation pour se pencher sur la transformation de la compagnie, et la démission subséquente du directeur général. La pandémie n'a fait que précipiter la chute en privant la compagnie de ses vols indispensables à la poursuite des activités et, partant, de revenus cruciaux.

Administration volontaire

Mise sous administration volontaire en vue d'une restructuration, Air Mauritius parviendra-t-elle à sortir la tête hors de l'eau? Essentiellement, cette mesure de précaution prise sous l'article 213 de l'*Insolvency Act*, 2009 vise à assurer l'existence continue de la compagnie (*going concern*). Il s'agit pour la compagnie de trouver un compromis avec les créanciers en vue de réduire ou de rééchelonner ses dettes en attendant qu'elle puisse réorganiser ses opérations, diminuer ses coûts d'exploitation et réaliser des revenus.

Techniquement, Air Mauritius voulait éviter une **cessa-tion de paiement**, une situation dans laquelle les valeurs d'actifs courants (*current assets*) réalisables et disponibles sont insuffisantes pour régler les dettes échues. Elle s'est donc mise en état d'**insolvabilité**, une situation dans laquelle elle n'est pas en mesure de payer ses dettes au moment où elles deviennent exigibles (parce que la réalisation de la totalité des actifs ne permet pas de rembourser intégralement les créanciers). Il appartiendra donc aux créanciers soit d'accepter les propositions de la compagnie, soit de les rejeter et d'exiger la vente d'actifs pour recouvrer les dettes en partie ou en totalité, ce qui mettrait la compagnie en état de faillite.

“Le diagnostic est sévère, indiscutable et irréfutable. Pour sauver la compagnie, il faudrait une thérapeutique non moins sévère. Tout le monde est d'accord que le pays ne saurait abandonner sa ligne aérienne, qui lui assure la connectivité avec le monde et la capacité de soutenir le tourisme et l'exportation (fret-cargo). Avoir une ligne aérienne est surtout une question de souveraineté nationale. Cette compagnie était le fleuron du patrimoine mauricien. S'il faut la sauver à tout prix, il faut prendre des mesures draconiennes...”

Le bilan financier donne le tournis. Pour l'année se terminant le 31 mars 2019, la compagnie a subi des pertes de 21,7 millions d'euros contre des bénéfices de 4,5 millions d'euros en 2017-18 (selon le rapport annuel 2018-19). Au 31 mars 2019, elle avait des dettes de 12 millions d'euros et des dettes provisionnées (*provisions*) de 5,9 millions d'euros. Le fonds de pension de la compagnie avait un déficit de 59,4 millions d'euros, soit Rs 2,4 milliards. En 2018-19, elle avait une charge salariale de 91,3 millions d'euros (soit Rs 3,9 milliards) pour environ 2 929 employés, soit un salaire annuel en moyenne de Rs 1,3 millions par employé. Les pertes ne tiennent pas compte du manque à gagner à partir des billets d'avion gratuits accordés chaque année aux présents et anciens directeurs.

Diagnostic irréfutable

Les problèmes de la compagnie ne datent pas d'hier. Elles remontent loin dans le passé. Dans un article publié le 19 mars dernier (*Air Mauritius: un autre modèle de gouvernance est-il possible?*), nous avons analysé les déboires de la compagnie, qui sont les résultats d'une accumulation d'erreurs et d'échecs provenant d'une mauvaise planification stratégique. Récapitulons les faiblesses majeures :

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MK opère dans un environnement concurrentiel où la maîtrise des coûts, l'offre et les prix sont des facteurs cruciaux. Aucune dose d'amateurisme n'est de mise.



que cela comporte de dégraissage des effectifs, à commencer au niveau de la direction et de la supervision.

Les administrateurs provisoires ont pour mission de prendre les mesures qui assureraient un *cash flow* adéquat à la compagnie pour honorer ses obligations envers les créanciers. Il s'agirait sans doute de couper dans le gras, de fermer les routes non-rentables, de vendre des actifs non-essentiels et de maintenir les vols essentiels afin de renflouer la compagnie à court et moyen termes. Si le modèle d'affaires peut être modifié pour assurer l'équilibre des coûts-revenus (*break even*) à court terme en attendant le

retour à la rentabilité après la reprise des vols, c'est surtout le modèle de gouvernance qui pose problème. L'actuel modèle de contrôle politique de la compagnie est périmé et désastreux.

Si l'on acceptait le postulat de base que la compagnie devrait rester une entreprise publique avec l'Etat comme actionnaire majoritaire pour des raisons stratégiques, il serait absolument essentiel d'assurer l'autonomie de gestion avec un conseil d'administration indépendant et professionnel qui ne prend pas des ordres du pouvoir. Une nouvelle gouvernance exige que l'on ne retourne pas aux anciennes pratiques de gestion, de direction et de délégation de pouvoirs qui ont plombé les ailes de la compagnie.

Options de réforme

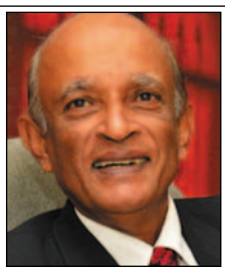
Seules trois options en matière de restructuration de la compagnie sont envisageables:

- L'interventionnisme politique qui impose sur la compagnie l'embauche d'employés sans tenir compte du critère de compétence, des contrats d'approvisionnement en biens et services qui ne répondent pas aux besoins d'économie et d'efficacité, et des routes non-viables à desservir.
- La servilité des directeurs qui courbent l'échine devant le pouvoir pour avaler des décisions sans aucun rapport avec la rationalité d'une entreprise commerciale qui est en proie à la concurrence coupe-gorge avec d'autres lignes aériennes plus grandes et ayant des économies d'échelle significatives.
- Les compétences douteuses des experts qui recommandent des contrats de location d'avions ou de couverture du prix du carburant (*hedging*) avec des pertes conséquentes.
- Les émoluments/honoraires prodigieux et autres privilèges octroyés aux directeurs et aux membres du conseil d'administration qui seraient sans commune mesure avec leur niveau d'efficacité.
- Un personnel surnuméraire avec de multiples niveaux de supervision et de direction qui ne tiennent pas compte de la taille de l'entreprise. Le personnel administratif est pléthorique avec 1,258 employés.
- L'achat d'avions coûteux dont le coût d'amortissement annuel pèse lourd dans le bilan financier en l'absence de revenus suffisants tirés de leur exploitation. La surcapacité opérationnelle entraîne des coûts d'exploitation fixes et des coûts variables énormes.
- Les frais de location d'avions à prix fort sous un contrat de location-exploitation (*operating lease*) ou un contrat de location-acquisition (*capital lease*) sans une étude de viabilité économique sérieuse, incluant une étude de marketing sur les marchés potentiels. Faute de routes rentables, la compagnie a sous-loué deux avions à une ligne aérienne (South African Airways) aujourd'hui en faillite.

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- L'injection de nouveaux fonds par les actionnaires afin d'augmenter le capital et le fonds de roulement, suivie d'une restructuration visant à baisser les coûts d'exploitation.
- L'apport d'un partenaire stratégique qui prend une participation d'au moins 40% au capital afin de pouvoir exercer une influence significative. Le modèle de Mauritius Telecom où 40% du capital furent cédés à un partenaire français est valable. Grâce à ce partenariat, Mauritius Telecom a pu faire des progrès techniques bien que la gestion laisse à désirer dans certains domaines.
- Le redimensionnement (*right-sizing*) de l'entreprise pour lui permettre de se focaliser sur ses compétences propres (*core competencies*) et vendre les filiales qui ont des activités accessoires telles que l'hôtellerie, le centre d'appels, le transport par hélicoptère, et les immeubles de location.

La débâcle prévisible de la compagnie est emblématique de la mauvaise gouvernance des entreprises d'Etat. Tous les gouvernements qui ont présidé à sa destinée y ont leur part de responsabilité. D'autres entreprises publiques comme le CEB, la CWA et la MBC ont eues aussi des problèmes de gestion, mais elles ne risquent pas l'insolvabilité ou la faillite parce qu'elles opèrent chacune dans un marché monopolistique qui leur assure une clientèle stable à des tarifs fixes. Par contre, Air Mauritius opère dans un environnement concurrentiel où la maîtrise des coûts, l'offre et les prix sont des facteurs cruciaux. Aucune dose d'amateurisme n'est de mise.



S. Callikan

Pandemic controversies: Trump, WHO & China

The WHO reputation may take years to rebuild, but in view of its vital health and sanitary importance to the world, a full independent post-pandemic inquiry should be on the cards

President Donald Trump has edged rapidly away from his (and WHO's) initial stance throughout most of January and February, lauding the Chinese government for its early handling of the epidemic storm of unprecedented scale that was building up. Despite his new high-profile announcement of US intelligence investigations on the origins of the Covid-19 and China's role in minimizing its importance, we can safely bet that controversies will rage about the actions of all three, but that concretely neither the world, nor us at our island-nation level, may see much light in the setting of high-stakes geopolitical affairs, news channels, social networks, fake news, conspiracy theories and other spin-doctoring already being rolled out across continents.

China's early self-congratulatory kudos on its improved prospects as the world's future manufacturer as a result of this pandemic, has rapidly shifted to more empathy and PR considerations. It is understandably busy now using its financial clout and the marshalled abilities of its industries or its billionaires to offer protective gear (PPEs), testing equipment, ventilators and strategic supply packages to various destinations, including such hard-hit countries like Italy in Europe, the African continent or OBOR-friendly countries (One Belt, One Road staple acronym for China's geopolitics). China has evidently to try and restore international goodwill, even while cuddling favoured players, but no one can predict how Italian public opinion or, for that matter, public opinion in many countries badly hit both by the terrible death tolls and the succeeding debacle of their economy, will digest the post-pandemic shocks. Such geopolitical matters will take their course but one can

acknowledge that China, as a world superpower, remains one of our traditional allies and a friendly nation.

Astute and even right-wing US intelligentsia may rue President Trump's vacillating foreign policy stances and strategies on Putin, North Korea, China, Iran and the Middle East or the dismay he has caused to the NATO council. They may ponder the consequences of US retreat from multilateral agencies (like FAO, UNESCO or WHO), leaving geopolitical space filled up by its only international competitor, China. They may chaff at his obsession with dismantling Obama legacies (Obamacare or,

“The “China-centric” accusation has been levelled by President Trump recently while some countries are miffed by the exclusion of Taiwan, or the participation of WHO in the Chinese diplomatic OBOR initiative. The failure to demand any, let alone, immediate access by specialists to the secret level-4 virology research laboratories at Wuhan, the PR exercises by the director-general and a few colleagues late in the day with President Xi, are cited as more examples of political game-playing at high WHO headquarters that may have had terrible consequences...”

tragically the special Pandemic Unit created following previous world health epidemics), his minimalist understanding of basic sciences (as illustrated both by his dismissal of the Paris Environment accord or, more recently, his dabbling with UV, heat or disinfectant recommendations to his top CDC medical staff). They probably recognize that response delays to the pandemic, incompetency, focus on spin-doctoring and futile fights with reporters or State governors will cost far more US lives than necessary. They may even have lost the forlorn hope that there's an adult in the room, somewhere. But Trump's fierce rhetoric and finely honed political flair means that what promises to be a hard-hitting campaign to the November 2020 elections may not yet be a *fait accompli*.

What perhaps could and should worry us more on another geopolitical front are the controversies surrounding the role of WHO, its director-general (who is not a medical practitioner or specialist) and his top echelon team throughout the corona crisis. We will not go into these controversies here as volumes can and will be written about them by far more informed health specialists, epidemiologists, media and those with intelligence information about WHO's inside operations and management structures. As the pandemic has brutally revealed failings of national health systems even in major league countries, scores of smaller and less well-

endowed countries around the world naturally have come to depend on the Geneva institution for the best sanitary, health, treatment or epidemic advice and advance warning systems.

They probably employ many hundreds of first-class medical, sanitary, epidemiological specialists, statisticians and analysts and have established a network of representatives around the globe as local conduits for sharing and disseminating expert advice and knowledge on such matters. What would be deeply troubling, were that to be the case, is for the best technical and medical advice to be eroded as they make their way up the hierarchy to WHO top spheres where other considerations have been allegedly polluting the narrative. The “China-centric” accusation has been levelled by President Trump recently



while some countries are miffed by the exclusion of Taiwan, or the participation of WHO in the Chinese diplomatic OBOR initiative. The failure to demand any, let alone, immediate access by specialists to the secret level-4 virology research laboratories at Wuhan, the PR exercises by the director-general and a few colleagues late in the day with President Xi, are cited as more examples of political game-playing at high WHO headquarters that may have had terrible consequences.

Whatever the merit of such accusations, most nations require an institution that operates without fear or favour either from powerful political patrons or from very powerful Big Pharma lobbies. It is worth reminding readers that, according to Biospace estimates, the combined market capitalization of the top twenty pharmaceutical giants (all European and US-based by the way) stood at a staggering 2.63 trillion US\$ in 2019 before the pandemic wreaked havoc on stock markets.

Epidemiological experts and medical specialists may have their own views on highly contagious bouts of disastrous epidemics that have rocked humanity in localized areas over time. With internet and the lockdown, many of us are now even familiar with the plagues and Black deaths in Antiquity to London, to those that rocked Marseille, Russia and the USA, to the polio and yellow fever epidemics or the Spanish Flu in early twentieth century. But we have to recognize that the global village has made potentially ravaging infectious diseases more frequent and more disruptive: HIV/AIDS, SARS, Ebola, Mexican swine flu, Latin America's Zika or Chikungunya are only a few in the recent fifty years or so. They may all have sprouted from animal origins and, through an intermediate vector or not, jumped aboard the human bandwagon so to speak from vastly different regions.

Yet, it is the “wet markets”, an economic activity worth billions and a traditional pillar of rural China, that have been repeatedly in the dock, a state of affairs that may require their national authorities to give far more attention to the problem. Epidemics in one form or another may stay to haunt us every so often and if only for that reason the WHO should have fail-proof structures and functioning. The WHO reputation may take years to rebuild, but in view of its vital health and sanitary importance to the world, a full independent post-pandemic inquiry of any failings and urgent consequential restructuring to avoid any such recurrence in the future should be on the cards.

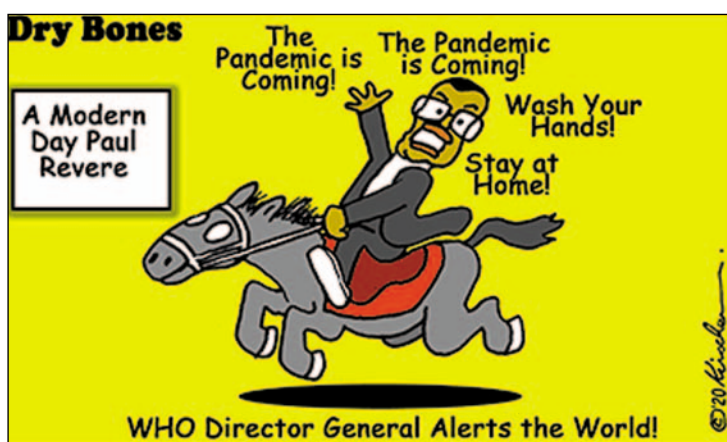


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Interview: Dr Pierrot Chitson

'We have a significant elderly population making our...**...fellow citizens a very high-risk target for the virus with consequent high morbidity and mortality'**

Dr Pierrot Chitson MBBS, FRCP (Lond) has had a long career in the public service as Consultant Physician and Head, NCD/Health Promotion Division Ministry of Health and Quality of Life 1998-2000, and Adviser, Health Sector Reform 1993-97. Currently he is in private practice and is Chairman, Clinical Research Regulatory Council. With several publications to his name on the Non-Communicable Diseases and given his wide experience in their screening and epidemiological surveillance, a methodology which will be required as the country moves towards lockdown, we sought his views on this and other aspects of Covid-19.

*** 46 days of lockdown: that should be enough, isn't it, especially in view of the relative success of bringing local outbreaks of infections from Covid-19 under control?**

Well, it can't go on forever! But we need a plan ready so as to prevent a second wave which could be worse than the first one, because we don't know the prevalence (spread) of the disease in the community. 'Test. Test' on a larger scale is needed, and isolate positive cases. It will be a long "guerrilla warfare" because a) asymptomatic people carry and spread the virus silently, b) we are still learning about the disease. Asian countries are using artificial intelligence to track and warn people of the danger but a balance will have to be struck between individual privacy and personal/state security. The aim is to 'flatten the curve' i.e. bringing the infection to insignificant levels which some countries managed to do followed by precise surveillance and quick isolation/treatment. It's not too late for us to be relatively virus free if we act resolutely. A second wave might overwhelm the health services.

*** Given the population size of Mauritius and the resources available locally, would you say that we have indeed managed the Covid-19 situation here rather well?**

We are all always wiser after the event, but we had some unfortunate deaths! I think Government took the right decision in the nick of time. But no man is an island: as we re-open up, the same scenario may haunt us again unless there is widespread community mobilisation and strong community leadership led by medical professionals. The world is still on a learning curve for Covid-19 - intensive care of critical patients on invasive respiratory support does not appear to be the right solution. This disease is quite complex and hopefully medical science will have new methods of treating the disease soon in a more rational and humane way.

*** In what way is this pandemic different from the AH1N1 pandemic?**

The H1N1 virus has been with us since the beginning of at least the 1918 Spanish flu which killed millions of people. It disappeared and came back many times; in 2009 re-combined with the porcine species killing thousands of people, especially the younger ones as the elderly people had some past immunity from previous H1N1 epidemics (1950s). However Covid-19 is around 10 times nastier (according to WHO) being a new virus and it is currently creating havoc in old people's homes in 'advanced' countries. Children and youth are relatively spared but young obese adults and those with chronic illness are also at risk. We don't know how the virus will mutate and whether we will have immunity after

infection; this makes vaccine development uncertain.

*** The lockdown is due to end on May 3, and government has announced that tests are going to be carried out on 35000 'frontliners' in the health services, supermarkets etc. What else needs to be done so as to end the lockdown safely and effectively?**

It is the right direction and these tests will give us an idea of the situation in Mauritius - probably the prevalence will be on the low side (<1%) but one single case like elsewhere if not isolated, will silently spread in the community. That's why we have to keep 'Testing, testing' the community especially later when we open up our ports.

We are in a pandemic situation: this means we have to be vigilant until the world sorts out this disease. This might take some time, hopefully before the end of the year. We also have to hope that a vaccine will work or that the virus will gradually become less virulent. In the meantime Mauritians will have to be more disciplined in social distancing and hygiene, and we will need to change our working habits by working more at home using digital technology.

However we know as doctors how difficult it is to avoid contamination even in a medical set up! And the elderly will need to be protected, especially those in homes, and elderly doctors will have to make more use of telemedicine eventually as they are needed to guide the younger generation.

*** Can you throw some light on the types of tests, their importance in the control of the pandemic, and their relative merits?**

No laboratory tests are 100% reliable; that is why all doctors have been trained in the art of using clinical and epidemiological data to make diagnostic decisions together with the help of laboratory or other technology. Currently the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) is a method used widely in molecular biology to identify actual virus infecting the person but the test is quite expensive, complicated and slow. There may be false negatives (patient having the disease but the test is negative) due to a host of factors and doctors have to take this in consideration in the management of any patient.

Rapid diagnostic tests are being developed. One type of RDT detects the presence of viral proteins (antigens) of Covid-19 virus in a swab from the respiratory tract of a patient. The antigen(s) detected are found only when the virus is actively multiplying and indicate acute or early infection. The test takes around half an hour, is easier and less costly. This antigen will probably be used as a screening test backed up by PCR for confirmation.



"The lockdown was a necessary shock therapy for our population who I hope will realise that things won't be the same again in the near future and that we will have to adapt to the new habits of social distancing. The vaccine is in the distant future and hopefully it will be effective especially in the elderly population who are already at very high risk. Just like AIDS, I hope we can have an effective drug treatment soon, and affordable. Best is to hope for the virus to weaken with time..."

We must note that most adult Mauritians already have at least one underlying health problem like diabetes, obesity, hypertension, heart disease, autoimmune disorders, cancer in remission, chronic lung disorders, alcoholism, etc. We also have a significant elderly population making our fellow citizens a very high-risk target for the virus with consequent high morbidity and mortality. Our health system might become under huge siege as in Europe and America at the moment..."

"We are in a pandemic situation: this means we have to remain vigilant until the world sorts out this disease. This might take some time, hopefully before the end of the year. We also have to hope that a vaccine will work or that the virus will gradually become less virulent. In the meantime Mauritians will have to be more disciplined in social distancing and hygiene, and we will need to change our working habits by working more at home using digital technology..."

Children in Spain allowed to play outdoors as country eases Covid-19 lockdown



On Sunday, children under 14 years old will be allowed to take walks with a parent for up to one hour and within one kilometer from home, ending six weeks of complete seclusion. (AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti)

Shrieks of joy rang out Sunday in the streets of Spain as children were allowed to leave their homes for the first time in six weeks, while residents of Italy and France

were eager to hear their leaders' plans on easing some of the world's strictest coronavirus lockdowns.

The sound of children shouting and the rattle of bikes on the

pavement after the 44-day seclusion of Spain's youngest citizens offered a first taste of a gradual return to normal life in the country that has the second-highest number of confirmed infections behind the United States, reports Joseph Wilson and Geir Moulson of Associated Press.

Wary of igniting new infection flare-ups, nations around the world have been taking divergent paths on when to reopen their economies after weeks at a standstill under coronavirus lockdowns.

Spain, Italy and France, which have Europe's highest death tolls from the virus, all imposed tough lockdown rules in March. All have reported significant progress in bringing down

infection rates and are ready — warily — to start giving citizens more freedom.

"Maximum caution will be our guideline for the rollback," Spanish Prime Minister Sánchez said Saturday evening as he announced that Spaniards will be allowed to leave their homes for short walks and exercise starting May 2. "We must be very prudent because there is no manual, no road map to follow."

So far, Spanish adults were allowed out only for essential shopping or to go to work. Children under 14 have been in complete seclusion, but as of Sunday morning they were allowed to take walks with one parent for up to an hour.

Covid-19 global progression & Response

The latest update (at the time of publication of this column) from Albright Stonebridge Group, a global strategy and commercial diplomacy firm, regarding Covid-19 global progression and response indicates:

- Since the heavy economic toll of COVID-19 was felt earlier in China than elsewhere, some economists predict that China's economy may be in a strong position to recover more quickly than others and help put a floor under the global economic recession.

- Countries that were initially lauded for their quick and decisive responses to the Covid-19 outbreak are facing renewed challenges. Singapore's case in particular demonstrates how quickly a widely praised response can begin to fail. The Singaporean government was slow to respond to the danger of spread among low-wage foreign workers in overcrowded dormitories and is now seeing a spike in cases — more than 70% of which are

among foreign workers.

- The beginning of Ramadan marks a new challenge for global leaders managing pandemic response. Across the Middle East, governments have taken the unprecedented step of preemptively banning religious and family gatherings that normally mark the most important time in the Islamic calendar. In Pakistan, however, religious leaders have successfully petitioned the government to keep mosques open for the month, sparking fears of greater potential for transmission.

- This week, the Paul Ehrlich Institute in Germany, in conjunction with Pfizer and local German company BioNTech, announced its intention to start human clinical trials for its Covid-19 vaccine candidate. The effort will include "200 healthy volunteers between the ages of 18 to 55" and is the first vaccine effort so far in Germany. Additionally, the Oxford University's Jenner Institute of Vaccine Research will begin Phase I clinical trials for its vaccine candidate. The Jenner Institute is

one of four labs worldwide to have a coronavirus vaccine currently at the human trial stage (the others being Moderna and Inovio, which both have candidates in Phase 1 clinical trials, and Chinese company CanSino, which moved to Phase II clinical trials last week).

Last week, Albright Stonebridge Group reported on the study of Gilead Science's antiviral drug Remdesivir published in the New England Journal of Medicine. The study found that the drug improved breathing in some COVID-19 patients, hinting at the promise of a drug that is thought to work by blocking the virus from replicating itself in the body. This study did not have a control group, but a more recent trial at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, currently being conducted in association with dozens of other medical centres globally, does. Results are expected soon — investigators on the study say they are working as quickly, and accurately, as possible.

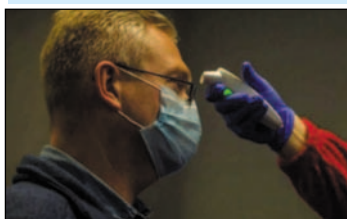
As Italy prepares to emerge from the West's first and most extensive coronavirus lockdown, it is increasingly clear that something went terribly wrong in Lombardy, the hardest-hit region in Europe's hardest-hit country.

Italy had the bad luck of being the first Western nation to be slammed by the outbreak, and its total of 26,000 fatalities lags behind only the US in the global death toll.

Italy's first homegrown case was recorded Feb 21, at a time when the World Health Organisation was still insisting the virus was "containable" and not nearly as infectious as the flu.

But there's also evidence that demographics and health care deficiencies combined with political and business interests to

As virus lockdown eases, Italy ponders what went wrong



expose Lombardy's 10 million people in ways unseen anywhere else, particularly the most vulnerable in nursing homes.

Virologists and epidemiologists say what went wrong there will be studied for years, given how the outbreak overwhelmed a medical system considered one of Europe's best.

Prosecutors are deciding whether to lay any criminal blame for the hundreds of dead in nursing

homes, many of whom aren't even counted in Lombardy's official death toll of 13,269.

By contrast, Lombardy's frontline doctors and nurses are being hailed as heroes for risking their lives to treat the sick under extraordinary levels of stress, exhaustion, isolation and fear.

Even after Italy registered its first homegrown case, doctors didn't understand the unusual way COVID-19 could present itself, with some patients experiencing a rapid decline in their ability to breathe.

Unions and mayors of some of Lombardy's hardest-hit cities now say the country's main industrial lobby group, Confindustria, put enormous pressure on authorities

to resist production shutdowns, claiming the economic cost would be too great in a region responsible for 21% of Italy's GDP.

On Feb 28, a week into Italy's outbreak and well after more than 100 cases had been registered in Bergamo, the province's branch of Confindustria launched a social media campaign aimed at reassuring skittish investors. It insisted the outbreak was no worse than elsewhere and that production in provincial steel mills and other industries were unaffected.

Even after the national government locked down all of Lombardy March 7, it allowed factories to stay open, sparking strikes from workers worried that their health was being sacrificed.

Coronavirus: How India will play a major role in a Covid-19 vaccine

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said last fortnight that India and the US were working together to develop vaccines against the coronavirus. Mr Pompeo's remark didn't entirely come as a surprise.



Half a dozen Indian companies are developing vaccines for coronavirus

The two countries have run an internationally recognised joint vaccine development programme for more than three decades. They have worked on stopping dengue, enteric diseases, influenza and TB in their tracks. Trials of a dengue vaccine are planned in the near future reports Soutik Biswas of BBC.

India is among the largest manufacturer of generic drugs and vaccines in the world. It is home to half a dozen major vaccine makers and a host of smaller ones, making doses against polio, meningitis, pneumonia, rotavirus, BCG, measles, mumps and rubella, among other diseases.

Now half a dozen Indian firms are developing vaccines against the virus that causes Covid-19. One of them is Serum Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine maker by number of doses produced and sold globally. The 53-year-old company makes 1.5 billion doses every year, mainly from its two facilities in the western city of Pune. (It has two other small plants in the Netherlands and the Czech Republic.) Around 7,000 people work for the firm.

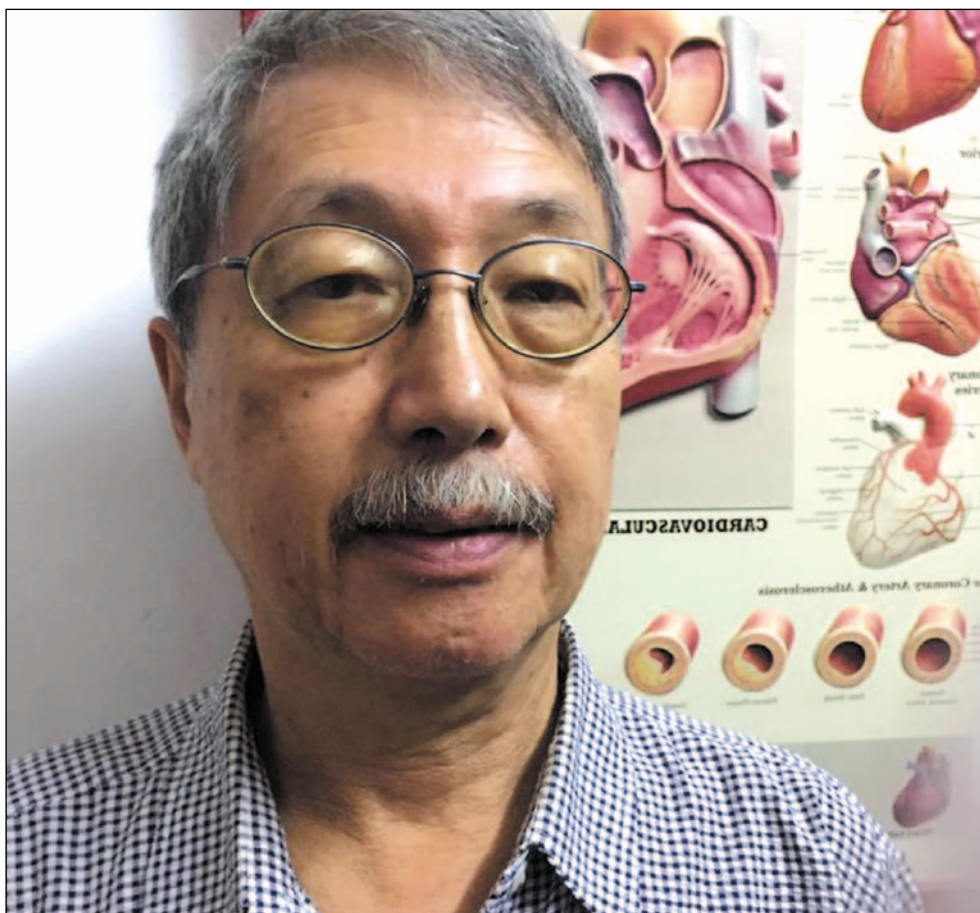
The company supplies some 20 vaccines to 165 countries. Some 80% of its vaccines are exported and, at an average of 50 cents a dose, they are some of the cheapest in the world. Now the firm has stitched up collaboration with Codagenix, an American biotech company, to develop a "live attenuated" vaccine, among the more than 80 reportedly in development all over the world.

"It's pretty clear the world is going to need hundreds of millions of doses, ideally by the end of this year, to end this pandemic, to lead us out of lockdown," Prof Adrian Hill, who runs the Jenner Institute at Oxford, told the BBC's Health and Science correspondent James Gallagher.

This is where Indian vaccine makers have a head start over others. Serum Institute of India alone has an extra capacity of 400 to 500 million doses.

Compiled by
Doojesh Ramlallah

"We are in a pandemic situation: this means we have to remain vigilant"



* Contd from page 5

Rapid antibody tests (antibodies are proteins produced to fight against the virus) can be detected in the blood of most patients around a week after first symptoms of infection, and the IgG component stays many months in the patient. Thus the antibody test can be a useful tool in epidemiological studies but not good enough for actual diagnosis. However, it may help in patients who are antigen/PCR negative but still suspicious of Covid-19. Previously a case in Singapore was diagnosed from the antibody test. We still don't know if a positive antibody test indicates immunity and for how long.

*** What next after the tests in terms of accompanying measures based on the results they yield?**

Soon these rapid tests when well validated will become important tools for surveillance of the disease - present and past. The **antibody test** will be able to help the decision makers as it will give timely information on the progress of disease in a given population as many patients don't know if they had the disease (asymptomatic). The **antigen test** will help the health authorities to detect, isolate and treat patients rapidly, and the **antibody test** will indicate the spread of the disease in the community. Both will be important. Eventually if around 60-80% of the population are antibody positive, then 'herd immunity' is achieved meaning that the virus will be contained and might disappear from the community for some time.

*** If there are good reasons for eas-**

"Can we let the young out and keep the elderly confined for so long? And can we afford to close the island for a long time with no movements of students, tourists, or foreign workers? We will need to learn from other countries which are at 'war' with this dangerous virus at different stages using different strategies..."

"As we re-open up, the same scenario may haunt us again unless there is widespread community mobilisation and strong community leadership led by medical professionals. The world is still on a learning curve for Covid-19 - intensive care of critical patients on invasive respiratory support does not appear to be the right solution. This disease is quite complex and hopefully medical science will have new methods of treating the disease soon in a more rational and humane way..."

ing the lockdown with a view to reviving the economy as well as to mitigating its psychological effects on the population, what happens if a vaccine takes a long time coming?

I think the lockdown was a necessary shock therapy for our population who I hope will realise that things won't be the same again in the near future and that we will have to adapt to the new habits of

social distancing. The vaccine is in the distant future and hopefully it will be effective especially in the elderly population who are already at very high risk. Just like AIDS, I hope we can have an effective drug treatment soon, and affordable. Best is to hope for the virus to weaken with time.

Can we let the young out and keep the elderly confined for so long? And can we afford to close the island for a long time with no movements of students, tourists, or foreign workers? We will need to learn from other countries which are at 'war' with this dangerous virus at different stages using different strategies.

*** China, South Korea and Singapore are already going through it and some other Asian countries face a possible second wave of coronavirus infections. Is it likely to happen here, and can it get worse in terms of its spread and death toll?**

We shall be lucky if we can avoid a second wave when we open up the economy and the country provided Mauritians decide to behave like the East Asians with discipline and comply with the health authorities. I think the population seems to be well aware of the situation and if Government/private sector/religious bodies and the community/'forces vives' work in tandem, then we may avoid the coming health catastrophe.

We must note that most adult Mauritians already have at least one underlying health problem like diabetes, obesity, hypertension, heart disease, autoimmune disorders, cancer in remission, chronic lung disorders, alcoholism, etc. We also have a significant elderly population making our fellow citizens a very high-risk target for the virus with consequent high morbidity and mortality. Our health system might become under huge siege as in Europe and America at the moment.

*** What lessons do you think should we draw from the coronavirus pandemic which may allow us to strengthen our preparedness for any future virus outbreak?**

I think that international collaboration is crucial and the epidemic preparedness mechanisms must be reinforced through the WHO. Unfortunately there was no political will from the richer powers in funding for epidemiological preparedness, research in pathogenic micro-organisms, and future vaccines. I well remember in the 1990s when I was attending WHO meetings, the control of re-emerging infectious disease was on top of the agenda but not much seems to have been done considering the unpreparedness of most countries. We must also learn to respect nature especially the animal kingdom and be less greedy in our food choices!

Forum

Work from Home

I have read your article in the newspaper on work from home ('Le télétravail, un nouveau phénomène ?' by Aditya Narayan). Very interesting indeed.

Let me tell you our story. We are in the Outsourcing and BPO sector. We had our office in Ebene. We were finding it difficult to get people to work although we did receive many applications when we advertised for jobs. The problem was that applicants lived too far and the cost of bringing them to Ebene to work would be high. We had to find a solution as we were expanding. We had already started looking at different ways to reduce operational costs. Having an office in Ebene was already one of the major costs of running a BPO. We started a pilot project and introduced the work from home offer. This helped us get the necessary staff to work as we were not limited to only the nearby towns for recruitment. We were able to increase our numbers and needed less space.

Then another idea cropped up: why not help young mothers in Mauritius? As you are aware many young mothers have to leave their jobs as they have to look after their young kids. They would therefore stop earning and a reduction in income would be terrible in a young family. So we started looking for young mothers that would be interested to work from home. Surprisingly we were overwhelmed by CVs. This helped the family retain a good level of income.

Very quickly we moved our operations into a virtual office and all staff started working from home. We now do not have an office, all our staff work on online platforms. We do not have any transport costs; we have helped to reduce the emission of carbon in the atmosphere. We have gone green.

Work from home will have a huge impact on our environment, people will have to travel less, they will be less tired, more people will get jobs, incomes will be nearly the same therefore people will not have to make lifestyle changes.

For us our project was a success and I wish that many more companies and government offices start allowing their employees to work from home.

Sadiq Ebrahim Dawood
CEO - Multitask Outsourcing Ltd
Wakefield - United Kingdom

Kugan Parapen, economist and a member of *Resistans ek Alternativ* analyses the contemporary socio-economic landscape in the context of the Covid-10 pandemic and makes some suggestions for a way forward to cope with the hardships that the country and the people as a whole are going to face as a result. This is an opportunity to implement some pragmatic solutions, but they will involve bold measures to be taken about land reform and a reorientation of the economy towards import substitution so as to make it less dependent on sectors such as tourism, among others.

Mauritius Times: Can it be said that the decision to place Air Mauritius under voluntary administration constitutes a foreboding of the bad things to come on the economic front, or does it merely add up to what was already considered inevitable?

Air Mauritius: 'Vulture investors are already lined up to devour the injured animal'

Kugan Parapen: Airline companies have one of the most leveraged business models in the business world given the high fixed costs involved. So it is with no surprise that we see airline companies worldwide being among the first economic victims of the pandemic. However, it must be said that Air Mauritius has been among the first of these aviation companies to wave the white flag. It therefore beckons the question as to whether the company was already in a bad shape going into the crisis. I believe readers are savvy enough to know the answer to this question.

“In such dire times, solidarity must be the key concept guiding our actions. We need to beware of the boomerang effect. If those who hold the wealth do not cooperate, they will find themselves in a hole which they would have dug themselves. If in such exceptional and crucial moments, the holders of wealth insist on receiving their interest, dividend and rent as in normal times, they will be exacerbating the crisis and will deeply regret doing so in the future...”

Our national carrier has been one of the worst managed public entities over the years. Internal rife, political interference, nepotism and sheer incompetence have created a toxic situation which was bound to end in tragedy. Many will say that it is only a 'voluntary administration' and that there are chances that the company will re-emerge from the abyss it finds itself in. That could well be so. But in any case, the public funds invested in this company will either be wiped out or at best, be revalued significantly downwards. But there seems to be more to the Air Mauritius story. To some well-informed observers, there are a few potential private investors already lined up to devour the injured animal. In financial jargon, they are called 'vulture investors', you wonder why.

If our government were to sell the public stake in Air Mauritius in the worst crisis the company has ever found itself, it will be a major act of treason. You do not get rid of

Interview: Kugan Parapen



your most prized assets when they are at their lowest valuation ever. Unless you find yourself in default. If the country is in default, then the government needs to say so and tender its resignation as well!

*** To come back to the situation on the economic front, how deep will the downturn be -- and how long will it last?**

From a global perspective, the quarterly contraction over the second quarter of 2020 will be the deepest on record. So, there cannot be any doubt as to the magnitude of the crisis on our hands. For Mauritius, relative to the 2008 Financial Crisis, the tables have turned. While global GDP contracted by 1.69% in 2009, Mauritius was left better off and even registered a growth rate of 3.3% that year. In the current crisis, the latest IMF forecast growth to decelerate by 3.0% while it expects the Mauritian economy to contract by 6.9%. This is quite a change of fortune, isn't it?

It is also worth pointing out that the local economy has not experienced such a downturn since 1980. That is forty years ago. While there have been periods where the recessionary environment has been masked by the artificial depreciation of the Mauritian rupee, it will be the first time on record that the economy will contract since 1980. For many generations, this will be a first-hand experience of a recession and unfortunately it will not be a pleasant one. I'm afraid the horizon is quite gloomy for the foreseeable future.

As to the length of the downturn itself, it is still quite uncertain and anyone's guess to be honest. In the best-case scenario, assuming a V-shaped recovery, the global economy could regain the lost economic value by end of 2021. The likelihood that the downturn is more prolonged and far-reaching is high though. Economies follow cycles of booms and busts and since the world economy emerged from the 2008 crisis, it hasn't encountered any major crisis bar the 2012 European sovereign debt crisis and maybe the initial collapse in oil prices to USD 40 per barrel in 2016.

Over the last months, many have warned about the current economic cycle reaching a matured stage and as such, the Covid-19 pandemic could prove to be the catalyst to a bigger economic crisis that has been forthcoming. If that is the case, we should expect the length of the downturn to be much longer than expected.

*** Consumer spending on goods and services other than grocery purchases is taking a hit; tourism is on its knees and is likely to remain at that level through the end of the year, but things may take a different turn once a vaccine is developed and people feel safe to go out or**

travel. Do you nevertheless subscribe to the view expressed by some economists that things are not going to rebound back to exactly as they were before?

A vaccine will be a major breakthrough in this crisis as it will probably spell the beginning of the end of the pandemic. But such a vaccine will take time as it needs to undergo thorough clinical tests that take at least six months to complete in the best of cases. We can compare this pandemic to a cyclone in that they are both exogenous factors which affect an economic model. Does life go back to normal straight after a cyclone or is there a rebuilding period before life resumes normality?

We can say that this pandemic is a trauma which has affected the psyche of many around the world and as trauma goes, there is bound to be post-traumatic syndromes. If you are involved in a serious car accident, does your driving behaviour change after the accident? Of course, it does, at least for the immediate time following the accident. In extreme cases, some may never want to drive a car again. These economists suggesting that things are not going to rebound back to exactly the way they were before are right in their approach I believe.

From a local perspective, you can be sure that many households will be storing a spare cooking gas bottle after their queuing experience. It is difficult to predict the extent of the change in human behaviour even though we know that human behaviour will certainly be altered when the pandemic comes to an end. The same goes for our economic model for it is a mere reflection of human behaviour and psychology.

“Our economy will be among the most severely affected from the pandemic worldwide and the degree of contagion to other sectors of the economy could be severe. The tourism industry will likely be shut down for the rest of the year at least; our offshore sector will suffer from the global risk aversion while the real estate sector could crater due to a dual demand and supply shock. In such times, it is usually up to the government to step in and splash out on capital projects and deploy the welfare safety net ...”

*** In the meantime how bad is it going to get for the country – for consumers, businesses, investors and for workers, especially for those of us who do not benefit from the security of government jobs?**

We need to prepare ourselves for the worst. I hate to be the bearer of such grim news but there is no other way to put it. The main pillars of the economy are in for a severe downturn while the main contributors to economic growth in recent years will suffer significantly. As previously mentioned, our economy will be among the most severely affected from the pandemic worldwide and the degree of contagion to other sectors of the economy could be severe. The tourism industry will likely be shut down for the rest of the year at least; our offshore sector will suffer from the global risk aversion while the real estate sector could crater due to a dual demand and supply shock. In such times, it is usually up to the government to step in and splash out on capital projects and deploy the welfare safety net to cushion the shortfall in expenditure elsewhere. Can it play its role though?

When the central government decided to raid the reserves at the Central Bank last year, it was akin to breaking the 'piggy bank' and was a measure of last resort. Such a move underpinned the frailty of our public finances and suggested that the country's financial reserves were running dry. We could not be in a more unprepared situation to face this crisis. Hence my concern about the current situation. In such dire times, solidarity must be the key concept guiding our actions. We need to beware of the boomerang effect.

☞ Cont. on page 9

'If those who hold the wealth do not cooperate, they will find themselves in a hole which they would have dug themselves'

• Cont. from page 8

If those who hold the wealth do not cooperate, they will find themselves in a hole which they would have dug themselves. If in such exceptional and crucial moments, the holders of wealth insist on receiving their interest, dividend and rent as in normal times, they will be exacerbating the crisis and will deeply regret doing so in the future.

For example, if all house tenants insist on being paid their rental, we could potentially have a situation whereby the whole rental market collapses and the price of houses fall sharply on the market. Because let us not forget that the government is only guaranteeing the salaries of most employees in the private sector (for how long?) while those in the informal sectors are only receiving a meagre allocation. Which, by the way, is outrageous given the burden of the fiscal model which resides on their shoulders.

sensible situation as opposed to the much-debated helicopter money. The latter is a moral hazard concern in that once it has been used in this instance, we can be sure that politicians will revert to it again and again to mask their governance shortcomings in the future.

The idea of a perpetual bond issuance with callable optionality is one to explore in that it wouldn't disrupt the short- to medium-term debt profile of the country. It remains to be seen who finances such an issue, given that the sheer magnitude of the issuance (possibly more than 10% of GDP, that is above Rs. 50bn) would make it difficult to generate enough demand in Mauritian Rupee terms without crowding out the banking sector. Issuing debt in hard currency should also be considered because it will act a future deterrent for



one on multiple counts. We suffer from so many structural imbalances that our policy-makers should be embarrassed about their legacy. With the pandemic, the chickens have come home to roost.

The first major takeaway from the looming economic crisis is that our export-oriented economic model needs to be changed. This is not even a choice but rather a necessity. Numerous economists have been highlighting the risks inherent to such a model but unfortunately policymakers did not pay heed to them. In a nutshell, when an economy relies too much on exports, its corollary is that the needs of the domestic economy are ignored and not catered for such that those needs must be imported. The case for food and energy security are major examples of this shortfall.

Also, the major risk with an export-led model is that the whole economic model is subjected to international risks. When an

orating terms of trade, our trade deficit just kept on worsening such that we suffer from a chronic hard currency deficit on our trade book. We can only print Mauritian Rupees; the hard currencies we desperately need to finance our import bill can only be earned through exports or Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). No one outside our borders will accept Mauritian Rupees as a token for payment. With the deteriorating trade deficit, the need for these hard currencies has kept on increasing such that we increasingly rely on foreign investors to provide us with them.

In this current crisis, we could face a major currency crisis, especially if the downturn persists over a relatively long time period and the economy is deprived of the much-needed foreign income. Our Central Bank does have satisfactory currency reserves but those are decreasing as our imports are more inelastic than our exports. Also, we've heard stories of a few big players in the offshore industry becoming increasingly uneasy with their exposure to the domestic financial system, especially in light of Moody's latest report about the exposure of some major players to the oil sector. Considering the above, the case for import substitution industries has never been more relevant such that we de-risk our economic model and move towards a more sustainable economy. Such a model would have fared better in such a crisis, or any crisis for that matter. We need to develop our local economy much more and make it more buoyant by developing such sectors as arts and leisure, sports, agriculture, and fishing. The SME sector should also be greatly empowered and given the means to become pioneers in these new fields.

“There seems to be more to the Air Mauritius story. To some well-informed observers, there are a few potential private investors already lined up to devour the injured animal. In financial jargon, they are called ‘vulture investors’, you wonder why. If our government were to sell the public stake in Air Mauritius in the worst crisis the company has ever found itself, it will be a major act of treason. You do not get rid of your most prized assets when they are at their lowest valuation ever...”

We are a society – be it the government, the corporate sector, or the household sector - which has lived beyond our means for such a long time that our economic model is similar to a debt house of cards. If a few of those cards start to give way, the whole structure could disintegrate. And this is why the government must make sure that the economic contagion is kept to a minimal.

*** The Government has indeed already stepped in with its wage assistance scheme and other business support schemes. How much more will it be able to do to mitigate the damages of a recession on family finances and to support the main pillars of our economy?**

The government must be prepared to do WHATEVER it takes to support our economy and minimise the economic impact. From an absolute perspective, we find ourselves in a dire situation, but we should not forget that this is also the case for the rest of the world. Therefore, from a relative perspective, the situation is not as bad as it is from an absolute standpoint. If we were asked to run a 100 metre race and given an extra 10m penalty at the start, we should be concerned. But in the current situation, everyone racing the 100 metre race has been given a penalty such that, in the grand scheme of things, none is really heavily disadvantaged.

Can we say that if everyone faces the same problem, then it isn't that much of a problem? Yes and no. Different economies have different structures and while some are designed to cope under stress, others might not survive. However, given the global nature of the problem, I believe that at some point, supra-national solutions will have to be found. Increasing the debt level would be the more

irresponsible currency manipulation by local authorities and bring about the much-sought structural reforms.

Assuming the government can assemble such a formidable monetary arsenal, it should however ensure that there is no free lunch. In that economic actors should not be able to benefit from such State largesse without the State being fairly compensated for the bail out. Many have floated the idea of the State taking significant equity stake in the distressed businesses, but this should be carefully assessed, especially for already highly leveraged business entities.

*** The view has been expressed that the Covid-19 pandemic provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to revisit our economic model, correct a number of dysfunctions in the system and bring about a good measure of structural reforms. Where should the works start?**

History teaches us that the process of land democratization in Mauritius has never been more relevant than when economic crisis has hit our shores. Whenever the economic elite has had to endure economic downturns (either due to collapse in sugar prices on global markets or devastating cyclones hitting Mauritius), it has always resorted to selling part of its land to resolve its cash flow problems. We could have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to further the land reform agenda on the horizon and instead of equity stakes, a land-for-cash scheme could also be envisaged for the land-rich but cash-poor companies.

As for the economic model, if we do not learn now, we will never learn. Anyone with a sound knowledge of economics will tell you that the Mauritian economic model is a flawed

“The local economy has not experienced such a downturn since 1980. That is forty years ago. While there have been periods where the recessionary environment has been masked by the artificial depreciation of the Mauritian rupee, it will be the first time on record that the economy will contract since 1980. For many generations, this will be a first-hand experience of a recession and unfortunately it will not be a pleasant one. I'm afraid the horizon is quite gloomy for the foreseeable future...”

industry as volatile and sensitive as the tourism industry becomes the main pillar of your economy, you put yourself in a situation whereby a shift in sentiment against that particular industry can derail your whole economic model. Had it not been a pandemic, it could have been something else, may be the impact of climate change, an ecological catastrophe, a terrorist attack or simply a change in preference of holiday goers.

We are not arguing against the tourism industry here but rather for the need to strike a right balance within the economic model. As risk management goes, diversification of the economic sectors is essential, a feature sorely lacking within our current model.

The export-led model has also meant, over the years, a worsening trade deficit with the rest of the world. With the lapse of preferential quotas and AGOA, we should have revisited our model but instead we tried replacing one industry with another and thought that things would be the same. Unfortunately, with deteri-

Last but not least, we need to find a long-lasting solution to the public governance conundrum. This is an issue which has cost us billions over the years and will cost us much more going forward if we do not find a concrete solution to it. Take the Air Mauritius saga for example – many are in favour of privatising the carrier because they have resigned themselves to the fact that all governments are going to produce the same results – that is gross mismanagement of public affairs amid corruptive and nepotistic behaviours.

How do you call a population which democratically elects a government which it knows will invariably engage in such poor governance practices? What would you say of that same population that will eventually favour some form of privatisation of the public institutions rather than letting the government which it elected continue mismanaging these public institutions? Must be a Mauritian paradox! Unless and until we have the solution for this paradox, our collective pain will unfortunately endure...



Krishan LK Deeljore

A State of Emergence

As simplistic as it may sound, this 'Giga-normous' system which we like to call World has re-booted itself, reset to default settings and no one holds the manual;

in fact there is no manual to set it back to its previous settings. Most experts even seem to believe that we will never actually go back to the previous settings. We will therefore inevitably see the Emergence of a post-coronavirus system. And for this to happen, we will need a Novel way of thinking and problem-solving which is beyond everything that we knew and understood about our previous world.

This is exactly why it is becoming less and less likely that an individual human mind will have the capacity to come up with the ground-breaking or miracle solution to make this all go away... not because we are not smart or wise enough, but because whatever we will think or design will always be biased by our past and present paradigms and constructs which have now become obsolete anyway. So where do we start?

What defines us as human beings is that we have the innate and primary ability to adapt to our external environment and find opportunity in adversity. Except that this time around we need to adopt a completely different approach, unlike anything that we have tried or tested (in this generation at least), but which is within all of us.

"The whole is greater than the sum of the parts" -- Aristotle

What this quote probably means for us in this context is that we should be focusing on the Whole rather than on the individual parts of the system which have collapsed. Before reaching a state of Emergence, we must take a few steps to create the optimum conditions for this Novel design to Emerge:-

“This 'Giga-normous' system which we like to call World has re-booted itself, reset to default settings and no one holds the manual; in fact there is no manual to set it back to its previous settings. Most experts even seem to believe that we will never actually go back to the previous settings. We will therefore inevitably see the Emergence of a post-coronavirus system. And for this to happen, we will need a Novel way of thinking and problem-solving which is beyond everything...”

1. We must understand and recognise the concept of 'bottom-up' intelligence and self-organising systems. A system which is made up of individually average components can collectively operate at an above average level and work in an extremely efficient manner without someone 'in charge': the ant colony, for example.
2. We must separate the Whole from its parts. In engineering terms, when a system is broken, you must find the fault



and fix that part of the system for the system to start working again. But when you want a new system, you cannot focus on the parts. The parts can also mean the different fields of research and business which we have created over the last 100 years.

3. We must promote and foster intellectual alliances and coalitions; subject matter experts from different fields must come together and make their thoughts and ideas converge. We must break industry silos and leave egos aside, and come together with one common goal - go beyond ourselves to imagine and build a new system for at least the next 100 years.

Additional reading:

The Black Swan

by Nassim Nicholas Taleb (2007)

Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities, and Software
by Steven Johnson (2001)

Krishan L.K Deeljore is the Founder and Managing Director of BI Instruments Ltd, a boutique consulting firm providing coaching and advisory services to SMEs in the Indian Ocean and East Africa region. Holder of a BSc (Hons) in Psychology and a Master's in Business Administration, Krishan has more than 20 years of experience in Human Resources. During his career, he held Senior HR positions in multinational companies like Accenture and Barclays, and most recently Ciel Textile. His main areas of expertise are Performance Coaching, Talent Management and Managing Change.

Hear me out, please Motherland of mine

Kushida D. Fulena

Glory to thee, Motherland for raising many brave, unflinching heroes and sheroes, who are committed to finding every possible means to save us all from the life-threatening Covid-19.

O Motherland of mine, Sweet is thy beauty, Sweet is thy fragrance. Indeed, you have shown us during this calamitous moment that religion, caste, class, status, power, money, which used to divide us, are finally insignificant. Instead, today, your children regardless of their political affiliation, caste, religion are working hand in hand, with courage, determination, and without any fear towards the same goal: exterminate the virus once for all.

Dearest Motherland of mine, you have made us realise that this is a collective battle which can be won if only we brace ourselves as one people, as one nation and work out our best strategy to defeat the enemy in peace, justice and liberty.

My beloved Motherland, may God bless thee forever and ever. May all your children be granted another chance to appreciate those blissful moments they spend walking barefoot on the soft golden sand. May you hear one more time your grandchildren playing and laughing in the waves lapping on the shore.

We do regret for having taken you for granted during those past 52 years. We have uprooted so many of your beautiful trees, we have polluted the air, killed many of your children - we acknowledge the chaos we have created. Kindly grant us a chance to rectify our mistakes. Maybe today, it has dawned upon of many of us the continuous harm we have inflicted on you. May we be given an opportunity to become the heroes and sheroes and mend our ways to become better persons in saving you from any further destructions.

My dear patriots, please understand that the only way we can mend our mistakes is by protecting ourselves from Covid-19. If you refrain from adhering to what has been constantly advised to you, you are no more different from the virus. Instead, you are helping in the extermination of your own people. We should understand that confining ourselves is the best strategy to vanquish our enemy, which remains the one and only Covid-19. Only then, as one people, as one nation, we can be declared victorious.

Until then, you will have to decide on whose side you are going to fight: Covid-19 or our undaunted heroes and sheroes?

VERDE launches free online support service platform to businesses

VERDE launches BFC19, a free online support service platform to businesses, including SMEs who are looking to reinvent and restructure themselves. All those who register on the platform can also have the possibility of obtaining financing, collaborations and other opportunities in this difficult context.

The link to the platform is www.mauritius.bfc19.com

The platform allows all businesses to register and join a community where there are experts from different fields to advise and support them with respect to the issues which they are facing or which they are likely to face because of the Covid-19. The platform is open to all types of businesses from any sector of activity.

"Based on the numerous dis-

cussions held with entrepreneurs from many sectors and different company sizes during the past four weeks, we had to intervene to provide support to all those businesses which find themselves in varying difficulties. We spoke to many partners within our network, and they were all enthusiastic to join our initiative and to help those who are today in difficult situations, and those who require help in reinventing themselves", says Dirish Noonaram, Co Founder and Partner of VERDE.

VERDE partnered with Ogment, a specialist software development and digital transformation company to develop the platform with the support of the MRIC. To formulate the service offering, VERDE undertook qualitative interviews and discussions with close to 70 businesses,

including SMEs.

Ganesha Moorroogan, Founder of Ogment, mentions that: "Once we understood the requirements of businesses, our team of developers decided to build a simple and efficient platform. The platform is easy to access and register. Once registration is complete, users can submit their requests and our team will then initiate contact. We have also included a cutting-edge business matching algorithm to find, evaluate and make powerful partnership recommendations for those who have joined the BFC community."

Dr Vickram Bissonauth, Research Coordinator at the MRIC, says: "Through the MRIC's involvement in the National SME Incubator Scheme (NSIS) we have managed to develop an

interesting relationship between the public and the private sector. By launching BFC19, VERDE, which is one of our NSIS-accredited incubators, is helping to further strengthen the support to the entrepreneurial ecosystem. On the other hand, Ogment was the first start-up to benefit from the NSIS- acceleration programme and we are today very proud that the company has continued its progress and has come up with the online platform. I also invite other support entities such as crowdfunding platforms and other incubators to join BFC and the VERDE team in its nation-wide initiative, which is critical in these difficult times."

For further information, please contact: Ganesha Moorroogan – Partner, Ogment on 5936 6706, or Dirish Noonaram, Co-Founder and Partner, VERDE on 214 1900, or send an email at info@verdefrontier.mu

Why do we dream?



During times of stress and anxiety we either dream more or remember our dreams more often, as a way of coping with challenging circumstances and new information

Although science knows what dreams are, it is still not known exactly why we dream, although plenty of theories exist.

Dreams are patterns of sensory information that occur when the brain is in a resting state - as in asleep. It is generally assumed that dreams only occur during rapid eye movement (REM) sleep - this is when the brain appears to be in an active state but the individual is asleep and in a state of paralysis. But studies have shown that they can also happen outside of REM.

Research from sleep studies, for example, shows that REM-related dreams tend to be more fantastical, more colourful and vivid whereas non-REM dreams are more concrete and usually characterised in black and white. Recent studies on dreaming show that during a dream (and in particular a REM-related dream) the emotional centre of the brain is highly active whereas the logical rational centre of the brain is slowed. This can help explain why these dreams are more emotive and surreal.

Evolutionary theory suggests the purpose of dreams is to learn, in a safe way, how to deal with challenging or threatening situations. Whereas the "memory consolidation" theory suggests that dreams are a byproduct of reorganising memory in response to what has been learned throughout the day.

Both theories have at least one thing in common - during times of stress and anxiety we either dream more or remember our dreams more often, as a way of coping with challenging circumstances and new information. This is also in line with another theory of dreaming - the mood regulatory function of dreams theory, where the function of dreams is to problem-solve emotional issues.

Anxiety and stress dreams

While there is no evidence that we dream more when we are stressed, research shows we are more likely to remember our dreams because our sleep is poorer and we tend to wake in the night more frequently.

Studies show the dreams of people with insomnia (a disorder largely characterised by stress) contain more negative emotion and are more focused on the self, in a negative light. Also, the dreams of people with insomnia tend to focus on current life stressors, anxieties and can leave an individual with a low mood the following day.

Outside of insomnia, research has found that people who are depressed, while going through a divorce,

appear to dream differently compared to those who are not depressed. They rate their dreams as more unpleasant. Interestingly though the study found that those depressed volunteers who dreamt of their ex-spouse were more likely to have recovered from their depression a year later compared to those that did not dream of the ex-spouse. Participants whose dreams changed over time, to become less angry and more pragmatic, also showed the greatest improvements. The question is why?

Although our senses are dampened during sleep (with vision being completely absent), strong sensory information, such as an alarm, will be registered and in some cases incorporated into the dream itself. We also know that during times of stress we are more vigilant to threat (on cognitive, emotional and behavioural levels), so it stands to reason that we are more likely to incorporate internal and external signals into our dreams, as a way to manage them. And this may account for these changes in our dreams, when we are anxious, depressed or sleeping badly.

How to sleep better

The current thinking is stress reduction before bed and good sleep management - such as keeping a consistent sleep routine, using the bedroom only for sleep, making sure the bedroom is cool, dark, quiet and free from anything arousing - will reduce awakenings at night and so the frequency of stress-related negative dreams.

That said, using a technique called Imagery Rehearsal Therapy (IRT), mainly used for treating nightmares in people with post-traumatic stress disorder, it appears stress and anxiety associated with nightmares and bad dreams as well as the frequency of bad dreams can be reduced. This is achieved by re-imagining the ending of the dream or the context of the dream, making it less threatening.

There is also evidence that IRT is effective for reducing nightmares in children. Although IRT is thought to be successful by giving the dreamer a sense of control over the dream, this hasn't been well studied in people who are stressed or anxious.

That said, a recent study showed that teaching people with insomnia to be aware while they were dreaming and to control the dream, as it occurs - known as lucid dreaming training - not only reduced their insomnia symptoms but also reduced their symptoms of anxiety and depression. Perhaps then the key is to manage the dreams as opposed to trying to manage the stress - especially in uncertain times.

Jason Ellis,

Professor of Sleep Science,
Northumbria University, Newcastle

In A Light Vein

Effects of drinking too much whisky during confinement

This is alarming! Whisky produces female hormones in men! Yes, that's right, FEMALE hormones! Montreal University scientists revealed this. Men should take a concerned look at their whisky consumption.

The theory is that whisky contains female hormone producing agents (it contains phytoestrogens) and that by drinking enough whisky men turn into women.

To test the theory, 100 men each drank 8 cups of whisky each within a one (1) hour period.

It was then observed that 100% of the test subjects, yes, 100% of all these men:

- 1) Argued over nothing.
- 2) Refused to apologize when obviously wrong.
- 3) Gained weight.
- 4) Talked excessively without making sense.
- 5) Became overly emotional.
- 6) Couldn't drive.
- 7) Failed to think rationally, and
- 8) Had to sit down while urinating.

No further testing was considered necessary.

Pass on this alarming research finding to all the men you know to warn them about drinking too much whisky.

* * *

A touching love story



Wife: What would you do if I die? Would you get married again?

Husband: No... how can I think of marrying?

Wife: Why not? You would need company... for good and bad moments. Please marry again

Husband: You are so sweet.... even after death you are worrying about me.

Wife: So promise me, you will remarry if I die...

Husband: Ok, ok, I will get married again... just for you.

Wife: Would you live in our house with your new wife?

Husband: Yes, but I will never let her use your room.

Wife: Would you let her drive my car?

Husband: No, it's yours... I will keep it as your memory... and buy her a new one.

Wife: Would you give her my jewellery?

Husband: No, how can I? It has your memories attached. I am sure she would want her own.

Wife: Would she wear my shoes?

Husband: No, never. Her size is 7, and yours is 9.

Wife: silence.....

Husband: Oh Shit!!!

Husband's funeral is tomorrow, please attend...

In A Light Vein

To sum up Covid-19

1. Basically, you can't leave the house for any reason, but if you have to, then you can.
2. Masks are useless, but maybe you have to wear one, it can save you, it is useless, but maybe it is mandatory as well.
3. Stores are closed, except those that are open.
4. You should not go to hospitals unless you have to go there. Same applies to doctors, you should only go there in case of emergency, provided you are not too sick.
5. This virus is deadly but still not too scary, except that sometimes it actually leads to a global disaster.
6. Gloves won't help, but they can still help.
7. Everyone needs to stay HOME, but it's important to GO OUT.
8. There is no shortage of groceries in the supermarket, but there are many things missing when you go there in the evening, but not in the morning. Sometimes.
9. The virus has no effect on children except those it affects.
10. Animals are not affected, but there is still a cat that tested positive in Belgium in February when no one had been tested, plus a few tigers here and there...
11. You will have many symptoms when you are sick, but you can also get sick without symptoms, have symptoms without being sick, or be contagious without having symptoms. Oh, my...
12. In order not to get sick, you have to eat well and exercise, but eat whatever you have on hand and it's better not to go out, well, but no...
13. It's better to get some fresh air, but you get looked at very wrong when you get some fresh air, and most importantly, you don't go to parks or walk. But don't sit down, except that you can do that now if you are old, but not for too long or if you are pregnant (but not too old).
14. You can't go to retirement homes, but you have to take care of the elderly and bring food and medication.
15. If you are sick, you can't go out, but you can go to the pharmacy.
16. You can get restaurant food delivered to the house, which may have been prepared by people who didn't wear masks or gloves. But you have to have your groceries decontaminated outside for 3 hours. Pizza too?
17. Every disturbing article or disturbing interview starts with "I don't want to trigger panic, but..."
18. You can't see your older mother or grandmother, but you can take a taxi and meet an older taxi driver.
19. You can walk around with a friend but not with your family if they don't live under the same roof.
20. You are safe if you maintain the appropriate social distance, but you can't go out with friends or strangers at the safe social distance.
21. The virus stays in the air - well no, or yes, maybe, especially in a closed room, in one hour a sick person can infect ten, so if it falls, all our children were already infected at school before it was closed. But remember, if you stay at the recommended social distance, however in certain circumstances you should maintain a greater distance, which, studies show, the virus can travel further, maybe.
22. We count the number of deaths but we don't know how many people are infected as we have only tested so far those who were "almost dead" to find out if that's what they will die of...
23. We have no treatment, except that there may be one that apparently is not dangerous unless you take too much (which is the case with all medications).
24. We should stay locked up until the virus disappears, but it will only disappear if we achieve collective immunity, so when it circulates... but we must no longer be locked up for that?

Anonymous

Food for Thought

Uganda President Kaguta Museveni warns against misbehaviour

during this Covid-19 period. A wonderful message worth reading.



God has a lot of work. He has the whole world to look after. He cannot just be here in Uganda looking after idiots..." Below is his reported statement.

"In a war situation, nobody asks anyone to stay indoors. You stay indoors by choice. In fact, if you have a basement, you hide there for as long as hostilities persist. During a war, you don't insist on your freedom. You willingly give it up in exchange for survival. During a war, you don't complain of hunger. You bear hunger and pray that you live to eat again.

During a war, you don't argue about opening your business. You close your shop (if you have the time), and run for your life. You pray to outlive the war so that you can return to your business (that's if it has not been looted or destroyed by mortar fire).

During a war, you are thankful to God for seeing another day in the land of the living. During a war, you don't worry about your children not going to school. You pray that the government does not forcefully enlist them as soldiers to be trained in the school premises now turned military depot.

The world is currently in a state of war. A war without guns and bullets. A war without human soldiers. A war without borders. A war without ceasefire agreements. A war without a war room. A war without sacred zones.

The army in this war is without mercy. It is without any milk of human kindness. It is indiscriminate - it has no respect for children, women, or places of worship. This army is not interested in spoils of war. It has no intention of regime change. It is not concerned

about the rich mineral resources underneath the earth. It is not even interested in religious, ethnic or ideological hegemony. Its ambition has nothing to do with racial superiority. It is an invisible and ruthlessly effective army.

Its only agenda is a harvest of death. It is only satiated after turning the world into one big death field. Its capacity to achieve its aim is not in doubt. Without ground, amphibious and aerial machines, it has bases in almost every country of the world. Its movement is not governed by any war convention or protocol. In short, it is a law unto itself. It is Coronavirus. Also known as Covid-19 (because it announced its destructive presence and intention in the year of our Lord 2019).

Thankfully, this army has a weakness and it can be defeated. It only requires our collective action, discipline and forbearance. Covid-19 cannot survive social and physical distancing. It only thrives when you confront it. It loves to be confronted. It capitulates in the face of collective social and physical distancing. It bows before good personal hygiene. It is helpless when you take your destiny in your own hands by keeping them sanitized as often as possible.

This is not a time to cry about bread and butter like spoiled children. After all, the Holy Book tells us that man shall not live by bread alone. Let's obey and follow the instructions of the authorities. Let's flatten the Covid-19 curve. Let's exercise patience. Let's be our brothers' keeper. In no time, we shall regain our freedom, enterprise and socializing."



'83: Ranveer Singh starrer not releasing on OTT; to have a theatrical release, confirm makers

We are hopeful of the fact that cinema halls may start operating in the next four to six months.



Kabir Khan directorial will have a usual theatrical release, and this news has been confirmed by the film's producers. '83, based on the Indian Cricket Team's 1983 World Cup Win, was scheduled to release on April 10, however, it couldn't hit the silver screens due to coronavirus lockdown. CEO of Reliance Entertainment has denied all the reports that claimed a global OTT giant had offered them Rs. 1.43 billion to buy film's rights.

Dismissing all rumours, Shibhashish Sarkar of Reliance Entertainment, told Bollywood Hungama, "There is no truth to these reports. '83' has been made for the big-screen experience. Right now, there's no intention or interest on the part of the directors or us as producers, to take these films to the small screen."

However, there's a catch. If the condition deteriorates rapidly, the makers may have to evaluate the situation. "If the situation deteriorates rapidly or there is no visibility of normalcy even after six months, we will evaluate then. But right now, we are all quite positive and I foresee that between the next four to six months, cinema halls will start operating. So that's the hope and mindset which we currently have," said Sarkar.

We are hopeful of the fact that cinema halls may start operating in the next four to six months. As Sarkar mentioned, a film like '83' is meant for a theatrical experience, and we wouldn't really enjoy watching it on our mobile phones. We cannot even imagine watching the Indian Cricket Team lifting the World Cup on a small screen.

Meanwhile, the makers of Akshay Kumar and Kiara Advani's Laxmmi Bomb have apparently decided to release their film on a popular OTT platform.

Ranveer Singh fans can finally breathe a sigh of relief. The actor's upcoming film, '83, is not going to release on any OTT platform, contrary to what was being reported. The

Laxmmi Bomb: Akshay Kumar and Kiara Advani's film to not have a theatrical release?

Given that the theatres may continue to remain shut even after May 3 (the day lockdown ends), the makers of Laxmmi Bomb are considering having a direct-to-web release.

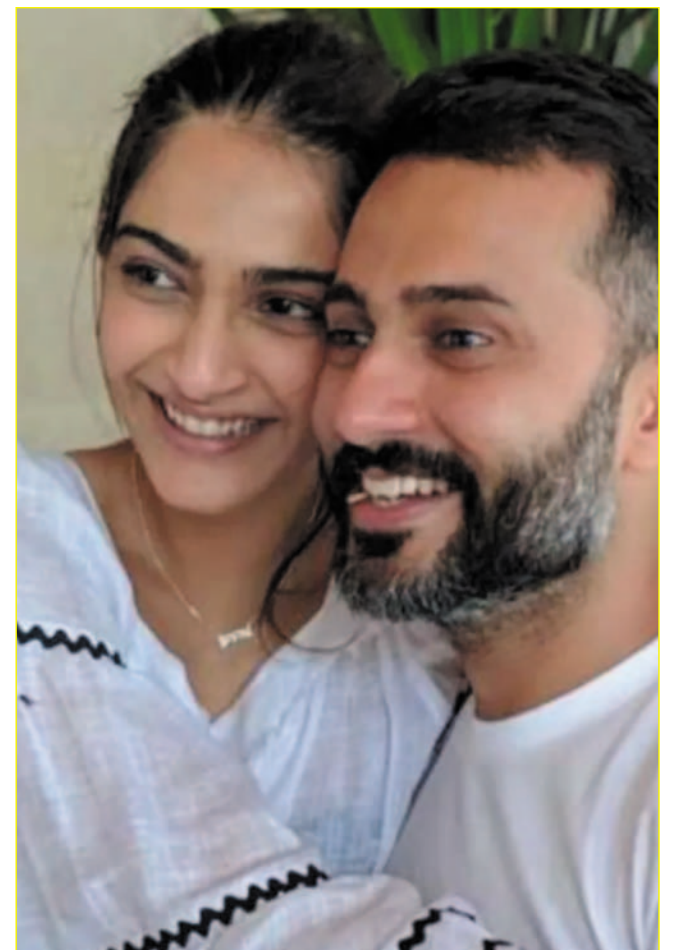
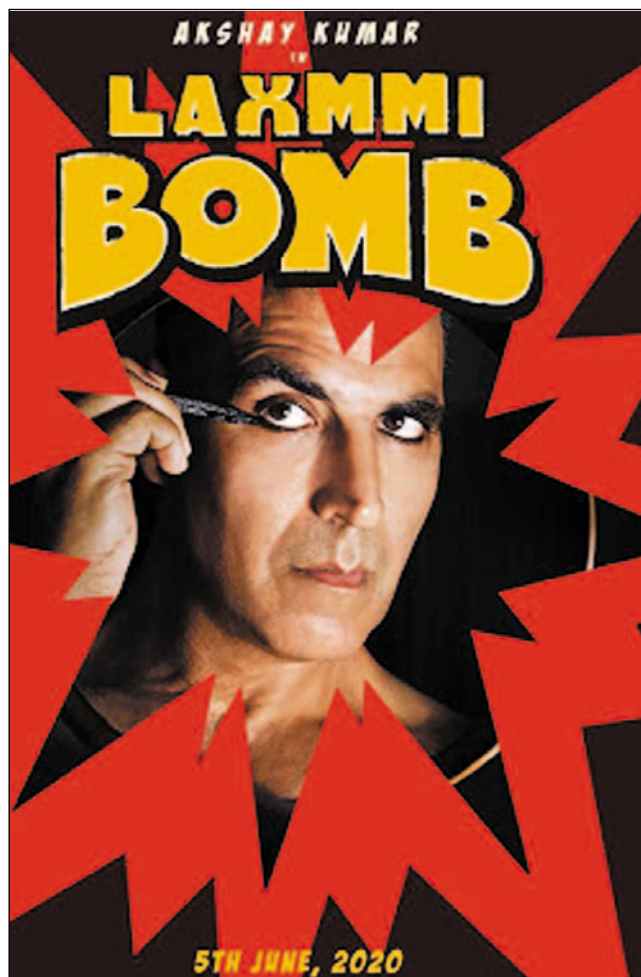
The entire world has come to a standstill because of the coronavirus outbreak. Schools, colleges, shopping malls, cinema halls and offices have been shut for a while now. And nobody has clarity on when things would get back to normal. Everybody is living with the hope that the world will be a happy place again. But when? Nobody knows. Due to this crisis, a lot of industries, including the film industry, have suffered huge losses. The films that were supposed to release in the first half of 2020, have been pushed indefinitely. However, some makers have decided to take the digital route instead of having a theatrical release.

If a Mid-Day report is to be believed, Akshay Kumar and Kiara Advani's Laxmmi Bomb, which was scheduled to release on May 22, may be released on a popular OTT platform. According to a source close to the development, "Akshay, director Raghava Lawrence and the producers are discussing the offer. There's a lot of post-production work left on the movie, including editing, background music, mixing and VFX. Since the team is working from home, the process is taking longer than usual. However, the makers are hoping to have the film ready by June."

Given that the theatres may continue to remain shut even after May 3 (the day lockdown ends), the makers are considering having a direct-to-web release. As of now, Akshay is contemplating if releasing his horror-comedy on an OTT platform would be a wise move or not.

"Akshay wants to make sure none of the invested parties make losses, and that the movie reaches a wide audience. While Disney+Hotstar ensures a worldwide reach, making the film available across small towns in India will be a concern for them," the source added.

We are simply looking forward to watch Laxmmi Bomb, and the medium really doesn't matter to us.



Sonam Kapoor reveals how she fell in love with Anand Ahuja through an emotional post; he responds in the cutest way

Sonam Kapoor was last seen in *The Zoya Factor*, which also featured Dulquer Salmaan, Sanjay Kapoor and Angad Bedi in key roles.

One of the power couples of B-Town, Sonam Kapoor and Anand Ahuja, are doing some cool stuff in their time under quarantine. From baking cookies to working out together, the duo are utilising this phase and making everyday phenomenal in their signature way. The Veere Di Wedding actress recently shared an emotional post of her monochrome picture and revealed how she fell in love with Anand. She wrote, "One of my favourite portraits, I was at my most pensive, it was a day or two after #neerja released, despite the success and adulation I wasn't feeling ecstatic.. @rammadhvani said it was a feeling of equanimity which is good. I took a year off to feel something better than what I was feeling, in that journey in falling in love with who I was, I meet my life partner @anandahuja. This picture is a symbol of a crossroads to the journey of fulfillment, that doesn't come with work or a relationship, it comes with being with someone who doesn't need any of the above to complete them but someone who is inspired by themselves to feel complete."

Husband Anand was quick to reply in a cute way as he wrote, "So emooooo my (bunny emoji)! @sonamkapoor ... not so emo now, na! #EverydayPhenomenal," to which, Sonam replied, "@anandahuja not emo now at all." Well their cute banter gives us major relationship and couple goals, isn't it?

Sonam Kapoor was last seen in *The Zoya Factor*, which also featured Dulquer Salmaan, Sanjay Kapoor and Angad Bedi in key roles. While the film received mixed reviews from critics, it turned out to be a disaster at the box office.

Randeep Rai: 'I could afford a house in Mumbai thanks to 'Yeh Un Dinon'

Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai's Randeep Rai, who has gained huge fandom as Sameer Maheshwari, got candid in an exclusive live chat with Sukarna Mondal of ETimes TV. Randeep spoke about living up to fan expectations, being trolled by them for a scene in YUDKBH and more. Here are a few interesting revelations, the actor made during the conversation.

Got trolled for a scene in YUDKBH

Male and female get equally trolled. I was once trolled for a scene in YUDKBH. I was carrying a phone in my pocket in a scene and fans noticed it. It was a 90s show and phones were not there. I posted a story about the same. I tried to cover it up saying it was a compass box but then got trolled more. I took it in a fun way as they correctly pointed it out.

Wanted to be famous

In India, cricket, politics and acting can make you famous. The first two options were out of question for me. So acting was the only option left. Thankfully, by God and my parents' grace I have got good looks. I would copy Salman Khan's style. Had kept his *Tere Naam* hairstyle and also the ear-piercing. Told in school that there's a family tradition to be followed. My parents supported me throughout.



On co-star Ashi Singh

We share a good bond. We don't talk that often. But I wished her when she signed a new project. I hope she will wish me too when I sign a new project.

I can play a grandfather also

When asked if he would be ok playing older roles in future, Randeep shared, "I can also play the role of a grandfather. But it should be convincing enough. As an actor, experience matters and it should look ok on-screen."

Ok to portray intimate scenes

I don't know. If in the entire project the character is only doing bold and intimate scenes, then no. But if the character is amazing and a few scenes require me to get intimate, then I don't mind.

Life post Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai

People's outlook towards me has changed. More people know me now. I have got some fame. Publicly I am known more now. I didn't expect so much love while doing the show. But it feels good that my work got noticed.

Don't like link-up rumours

Randeep shares that while it is not much of an issue to fan pressure but link-up rumours bother him. He shared, "If they were true then it would have at least made sense. But I have a few friends in the industry. So when people create all these link-ups then it bothers. We all have a personal life and family."

Bought a house in Mumbai while working in YUDKBH

Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai will always be closer to my heart. It's been 7 years in the industry. The fame I have experienced is because of this show. Because of that show I could afford a house in Mumbai. That has been one of the biggest achievements. I still watch a few episodes from the show.



TV industry unites for a video to cheer up people amid the lockdown

Following the footsteps of artistes from Bollywood and other film industries, members of the television fraternity have also come together to make a video to cheer people and urge them to stay at home, during the lockdown. Curated by Ekta Kapoor, several artistes and creative people from the TV industry have pitched in to produce the engaging video from their homes. It features Sidharth Shukla, Mouni Roy, Shailesh Lodha, Anita Hassanandani, Rohitashv Gaur, Maniesh Paul, Karishma Tanna, director-choreographer Remo D'Souza, Divyanka Tripathi, Erica Fernandes, Parth Samthaan, Shabir Ahluwalia, Shehnaaz Gill, Sriti Jha, Karan V Grover and Aasif Sheikh, among others.

It has been a month since the national lockdown was announced in India. Apart from making even the mightiest stars self-dependent, the phase has also added a new layer of creativity to their work. Bollywood stars came up with two unique videos, one with a story and another with a song, to pep up people during the on-going crisis, fill them with hope and promote the idea of being home-bound for as long as required.

Ekta Kapoor's video is approximately five minutes long. Using *Bigg Boss* as a theme, it promotes the idea of keeping oneself engaged while at home, completing tasks and staying home-bound, reports Rachana Dubey of Times of India.

Divyanka Tripathi: 'Never imagined I would have to work so hard for buying grocery'

Divyanka Tripathi stepped out for some grocery shopping only to realise the magnitude of the coronavirus pandemic. She took to Instagram Stories to express her thoughts.

Putting up two short video clips, one in which people are seen practising social distancing and another, a close-up of hers, in which she speaks to her audience, she says how she had never imagined buying something as simple as groceries would be so tough. She says in Hindi, "I am all pasina, pasina... Kabhi socha nahin tha ki grocery khareedne ke liye itni mehnat karni padegi (I am perspiring profusely... I had never imagined that to buy grocery I would have to work so hard.). In it, her face is covered with a mask; she also wears sunglasses since WHO directive stresses on protecting eyes, nose and mouth as prevention against Covid-19.



CINE 12

Mardi 28 avril - 21.15

Mise A L'épreuve 2

Avec: Ice Cube, Kevin Hart



Alors que le jour de son mariage approche, Ben se rend à Miami avec son futur beau-frère, James, pour faire tomber un trafiquant de drogue qui fournit des produits aux revendeurs d'Atlanta.

CINE 12

Jeudi 30 avril - 21.15

Avec: Sharlto Copley, Dev Patel, Hugh Jackman



Dans un proche avenir, le crime est patrouillé par une force de police mécanisée. Quand un des droides de la police, Chappie, est volé et se voit confier une nouvelle programmation, il devient le premier robot capable de penser et de ressentir par lui-même.



	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
mardi 28 avril	06.30 Local: Ecriture Mauricienne 07.00 Dessin Anime 10.29 Mag: Origami 10.50 Mag: Zoboomafoo 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Local: Autour Des Valeurs 12.35 Comme Un Poisson Dans L'eau 13.30 Local: Passerelles 14.00 Local: Wellness By Trilo 14.30 Serial: Magic Mania 14.42 D.Anime: Bugsted 15.04 D.Anime: Kuu Kuu Harajuku 16.28 D.Anime: Polly Pocket 17.00 Local: Aaj Ke Jawan 17.30 Live: Samachar 18.00 Live: Covid-19 Conference 18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.00 Local: Press Conference 20.35 Local: Extraits "Sware Maronaz Kiltirel"	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 07.27 Doc: A Question Of Science 07.32 Mag: In Good Shape 08.40 World Stamps 09.02 Live Educational Program... 18.00 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto... 18.26 Mag: Urban Gardens 18.31 Doc: Builders Of The Future 19.03 Mag: Check In 19.34 Mag: Made In Germany 20.02 Tamil Programme 20.34 Film: Semma - Tamil Film 22.31 Doc: Germany 23.13 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto 23.39 Mag: Urban Gardens 23.44 Doc: Builders Of The Future 00.09 Mag: Check In 00.35 Doc: A Question Of Science 00.41 Mag: Made In Germany	02.54 Serial: NCIS - Los Angeles 03.32 Film: Lowriders 05.11 Tele: Amanda 06.08 Serial: Dynasty 06.48 Film: She's The Man 09.00 Serial: The Good Fight 09.45 Tele: Au Nom De L'Amour 10.10 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett 10.35 Serial: NCIS 11.25 Tele: Dulce Amor 12.00 Film: Lowriders 13.30 Tele: Amanda 14.41 Film: She's The Man 16.40 Serial: Scorpion 17.20 Serial: Dynasty 18.03 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour 18.33 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett 19.00 Tele: Dulce Amor 20.05 Tele: Totalment Diva 20.30 Serial: Dynasty 21.15 Film: Mise A L'épreuve 2	09.30 Film: Meri Bhabhi 12.06 / 19.54 - Ek Deewana Tha 12.20 / 20.11 - Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 12.41 / 20.32 Radha Krishna 13.06 / 21.09 - Kaleerein 13.35 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.56 / 21.46 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.24 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan 14.45 / 22.25 - Ishqbaaz 15.03 Film: Heyy Babyy Stars: Akshay Kumar, Vidya Balan, Fardeen Khan, Ritesh Deshmukh 17.30 Live: Samacher 18.00 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 18.30 Kumkum Bhagya 18.51 Piya Albela 19.13 Mere Angne Mein 19.34 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai
mercredi 29 avril	06.00 Local: Rodrig Prog 06.32 Local: Encounter - No 36 07.00 Dessin Anime 10.29 Mag: Origami 10.45 Mag: Zoboomafoo 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Local: Autour Des Valeurs 13.30 Local: Saver Kil Tirel 14.00 Local: Wellness By Trilo 14.10 Local: Coin Jardin 14.30 Serial: Magic Mania 14.40 D.Anime: Bugsted 17.00 Local: Chikitsa Aur Swastya 17.30 Live: Samachar 18.00 Live Press Conference 18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.00 Local: Press Conference 20.35 Local: Tam Tam 20.50 Local Prod: Faya Vibes 21.45 Serial: The Enemy Within 22.35 Serial Madam Secretary	04.30 Aastha TV 07.00 Film: 11.40 Good Morning Shanghai 12.00 Nanda Saukhyia 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	06.00 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto.. 07.00 Mag: Check In 07.27 Doc: A Question Of Science 08.03 Doc: Horizon S 08.55 Doc: World Stamps 09.01 Live Educational Program... 18.00 Mag: Motorweek 18.37 Urban Garden 19.07 Mag: Arts.21 19.37 Doc: A Question Of Science 19.39 Doc: Garden Party 20.09 Local: Round Table On The.. 20.35 Film: Guru Pournima 22.32 Doc: Lift - Off - To Mars 23.15 Mag: Motorweek 23.40 Mag: Urban Gardens 23.45 Doc: Olivia's Garden 00.11 Mag: Art.21 00.37 Doc: A Question Of Science 00.39 Doc: Garden Party 01.10 Doc: Visite Guidee 01.15 Mag: Business Africa	00.20 Tele: Peau Sauvage 01.34 Film: Mise A L'Epreuve 2 03.07 Serial: NCIS 03.48 Film: Flower Shop Mystery 05.11 Tele: Amanda 05.53 Serial: Dynasty 06.35 Film: Pitch Perfect 2 09.00 Serial: The Good Fight 09.45 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour 10.10 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett 10.35 Serial: NCIS 12.00 Film: Flower Shop Mystery 13.25 Tele: Amanda 14.36 Film: Pitch Perfect 2 16.40 Serial: Scorpion 17.20 Serial: Dynasty 18.03 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour 18.37 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett 20.05 Tele: Totalment Diva 20.30 Serial: When Calls The Heart 21.15 Film: The Pretty One 22.45 Tele: Amanda	09.10 Film: Sharada 12.00 / 19.54 - Ek Deewana Tha 12.20 / 20.11 - Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 12.41 / 20.32 Radha Krishna 13.06 / 21.09 - Kaleerein 13.35 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.56 / 21.46 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.24 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan 14.45 / 22.25 - Ishqbaaz 15.01 Film: Chandni Chowk To China Stars: Akshay Kumar, Deepika Padukone and Chia Hui Liu 17.30 Live: Samacher 18.00 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 18.30 Kumkum Bhagya 18.51 Piya Albela 19.13 Mere Angne Mein 19.27 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai
jeudi 30 avril	07.00 Dessin Anime 10.28 Mag: Origami 10.45 Mag: Zoboomafoo 11.15 Local: Itinerer Rodrig 11.30 Local: Mangeons Veg 12.00 Le Journal 14.42 D. Anime: Bugsted 14.43 D. Anime: Croque Nuage 14.52 La Famille Blaireau-Renard 15.27 D.Anime: Petit Creux 15.28 D.Anime: La Famille Passiflore 16.30 D.Anime: Polly Pocket 17.00 Local: Prakriti Ki God Mein 17.30 Live: Samachar 18.00 Live Press Conference 18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja 19.30 Le Journal 20.05 Local: Press Conference 20.35 Film: Namaste England 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: Tipa Tipa 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 06.56 Mag: Arts.21 07.24 Doc: A Question Of Science 08.00 Treatment Under The Pines 08.38 Doc: World Stamps 08.44 Mag: Shift 09.01 Live Educational Program... 18.00 Mag: Eco India 18.26 Mag: Urban Gardens 18.31 Mag: Sur Mesure 18.44 Mag: Shift 19.00 Mag: Border Crossing 19.27 Doc: A Question Of Science 19.33 Mag: Tomorrow Today 19.56 Mag: Mon Histoire A Moi 20.02 Film: De Taali 22.29 Mag: Urban Gardens 22.33 Mag: Sur Mesure 22.46 Mag: Shift 22.59 Mag: Border Crossing 23.26 Doc: A Question Of Science	00.20 Tele: Peau Sauvage 01.31 Film: The Pretty one 03.03 Serial: NCIS 03.44 Bienvenue Dans La Jungle 05.22 Tele: Amanda 06.04 Serial: When Calls The Heart 06.46 Film: Incident At Phantom... 09.00 Serial: The Good Fight 09.49 Tele: Au Nom De L'Amour 10.13 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett 11.54 Bienvenue Dans La Jungle 13.36 Tele: Amanda 14.45 Film: Incident At Phantom... 16.38 Serial: Scorpion 17.21 Serial: When Calls The Heart 18.08 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour 18.31 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett 19.00 Tele: Dulce Amor 20.05 Tele: Totalment Diva 20.30 Serial: When Calls The Heart 21.15 Film: Chappie	09.30 Film: Geet Gaata Chal 12.00 / 19.54 - Ek Deewana Tha 12.20 / 20.11 - Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 12.41 / 20.32 Radha Krishna 13.02 / 21.09 - Kaleerein 13.24 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.46 / 21.46 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 14.08 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan 14.45 / 22.25 - Ishqbaaz 15.20 Film: Tanu Webs Manu Stars: Kangana Ranaut, Madhavan, Swara Bhaskar 17.30 Live: Samacher 18.00 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 18.20 Kumkum Bhagya 18.41 Piya Albela 19.03 Mere Angne Mein 19.24 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai

Mercredi 29
avril - 15.00

Stars: Akshay Kumar, Deepika Padukone and Chia Hui Liu

Jeudie 0
avril - 20.35

Stars: Parineeti Chopra, Arjun Kapoor, Satish Kaushik





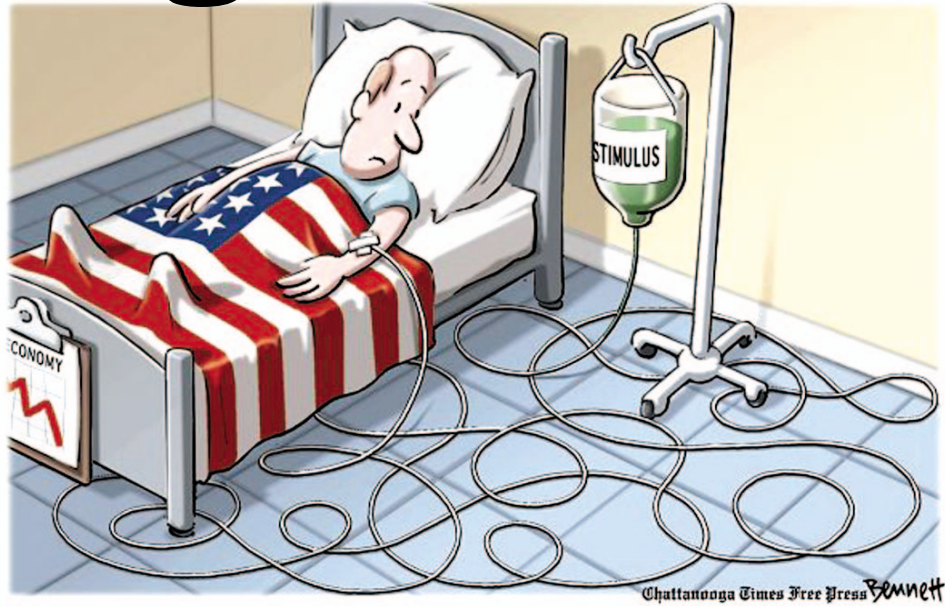
Nita Chicooree-Mercier

In light of hard times ahead and state aid to all and sundry, shouldn't the government backpedal on its decision to come to the rescue of Big Business? And instead set itself the task of envisaging deep reforms in its fiscal policy which have hitherto feathered the golden nests of the most fortunate people, creating huge disparities within our society at the expense of other segments of the population who have merely been cogs in the machinery of wealth accumulation for decades. Big business be it in the hotel industry, banking and manufacturing sectors, rentiers and speculators in real estate or in the sugar industry, etc., have filled their pockets for years by being undertaxed.

Wildcat capitalism is the iron god of corporate business. Big wigs have been in the frontline in the race to be the first to seize new opportunities and lay their hands on emerging sectors. 2003 opened a new era of golden opportunities for real estate sharks and rent collectors inaugurated with the blessing of the PMO. Up to now no one has proposed any serious study on the skyrocketing price of lands entailed by the development of luxury property, and the strain and stress on the average Mauritian who plans to purchase a plot of land for housing purposes. Successive governments endorsed the real estate property bonanza.

Apart from a few trade unionists and this paper, others kept mum. Do not expect the so-called mainstream media to take on banks for the high rate of interest charged on loans while rates went down to 2% in France, for instance, after the 2008 crisis. Because they are part of big business. Occasionally a few lines in newspapers on the destitute and homeless present them as victims of the State's failure to provide decent living conditions to the most needy. An inquiry into the struggles and woes of hardworking average citizens to obtain a bank loan with a fair rate of interest to buy a plot of land or build a house is most likely to land journalists in big trouble. Fairness is not the criteria which guides the banking system, the basis of which was founded on compensation money obtained for 300 years of

Big Business



Chattanooga Times Free Press Bennett

“Wildcat capitalism is the iron god of corporate business. Big wigs have been in the frontline in the race to be the first to seize new opportunities and lay their hands on emerging sectors. 2003 opened a new era of golden opportunities for real estate sharks and rent collectors inaugurated with the blessing of the PMO. Up to now no one has proposed any serious study on the skyrocketing price of lands entailed by the development of luxury property, and the strain and stress on the average Mauritian who plans to purchase a plot of land for housing purposes. Successive governments endorsed the real estate property bonanza...”

slavery - wealth amassed thanks to free labour. Today customer service is a negligible part of the more lucrative businesses banks invest in.

The press is much more comfortable sitting on the fence with bows and arrows opposite Parliament and taking aim at their favourite targets. A string of spokespersons from every nook of the island, economists and all are lecturing on the best solutions to sail through the tempest-tossed seas and dispel the gathering clouds around the clipped wings of the national carrier. The crash in the making was worsened by open air space policy, which did not lower fares for citizens as expected, but gave generous packages to the hotel industry, and was burdened by undue political meddling in the management for decades, ill-advised appointments and allegations of corruption and mismanagement, exorbitant packages to board members and consultants, and the summum of incompetency in recent years. It is the hour of reckoning for the national airline. Decision makers cannot walk away from it.

The way to economic take-off

A plethora of improvised economists and other pen-

pushers are coming forward with a list of bright ideas for the long overhaul. Easier said than done from their current comfort zone, especially when they are not at the helm of the country's affairs. None had ever envisaged the possibility of providing minimum wages to improve the living conditions of workers at the lowest rung for the last two decades.

Public funds to big business? What is the logic behind the decision to pay half of employees' salaries? Only a few years ago they were squeezing the juice out of their employees, barely paying them Rs 7000 monthly for long hours six days a week. Huge fortunes empower these companies to sprawl around the island. Right now customers queue up like beggars in front of all those supermarkets to buy essential items, food and other stuff. They are pouring fortunes into the coffers of big business. And to top it all, the government adds a few hundred millions drawn out of public funds on the heap of fortunes. Conversely, the Rs 5000 thrown to crowds of self-employed are derisory.

Cuts in public budget, targeting state expenses of top public administration and downsizing of public service is generally a right-wing position in the West. The other pet craze that resurfaces whenever the economy goes into fits is taxation of the super rich. Over here, the big business of private media naturally targets public expenses from top to bottom. Temporary freeze of ministers' allowances is a short-term gain. The public sector has been a source of recruitment and a factor of stability in quite a number of small islands with limited resources for economic expansion.

Overall the public service has delivered fairly well for decades notwithstanding fault lines, overstaffed departments, and criticism from the press tainted by other undertones than efficiency. As for the Rs 200,000 monthly ministerial salary, it is not a jackpot, if anything, if one were to consider the responsibility for a whole sector lying on their shoulders.

Fiscal reform needed

The point is it that the stars and tax laws have been favourable to multimillionaires in various sectors for decades. Feathering their nests with public funds is not the right option.

A fiscal reform to raise taxes on corporate business might meet with a flat 'No No No'. So was the answer in 1942 when the government under British supervision suggested to modify the then agricultural policy and reduce dependence on sugar. 'No No No' was also the answer to a request for lands to build houses for the most affected segments of the population during Cyclone Carol in 1960, a refusal which led to the creation of *cités* in the suburbs of Port-Louis. Same cry-baby protest in 2018 to compensate laid-off workers of a sugar property. Now with other flourishing modern businesses, it is time to enact new fiscal laws to tax the wealthiest to help the country brace for hard times ahead.

Time for Introspection

Very little is needed to make a happy life; it is all within yourself, in your way of thinking. -- Marcus Aurelius



Niranjana Karthigai Rajan

Our life span is short and uncertain, so let's learn to live a minimalistic, self-sustainable and a simple lifestyle. Here are a few more posters designed by Niranjana KarthigaiRajan to help create awareness of the higher purpose of life, and to help us to introspect and bring about the necessary positive changes in our lives for the betterment of the environment.

