

# MAURITIUS TIMES

*"There are still those of us who work to overcome corruption and believe it to be possible" - Padmé Amidala, Star Wars*



## De Ringadoo à Padayachy, la même résistance des contribuables aisés

Ce sont les vested interests des uns et des autres qui ont la primauté et dictent l'agenda officiel. Aidés par l'urgence économique de sauver les emplois ou le clientélisme politique

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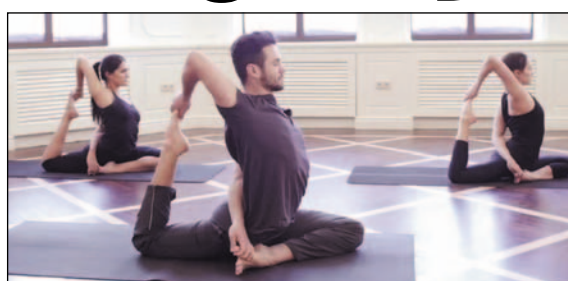
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'If we had a governance and accountability culture as Singapore does, no one would hesitate to trust its government to run the affairs of the country'

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## Of academic freedom and inconvenient truths

A senior staff of the University of Mauritius, Rajen Narsinghen of the Faculty of Law has been convened to appear before a disciplinary committee set up regarding views he has expressed publicly about certain issues that are currently of great concern to the country and are in the public domain. Among others, it is the provisions of the Covid-19 Act that have been the target of his comments.

We are not aware of what, if any, specific charge, has been made against him. Whatever that be, what draws our attention are both freedom of speech and academic freedom. In this respect, we may allude to some material from Wikipedia relating to two countries which are held up as examples of mature democracies, the US and UK.

One view is that 'academic freedom is a moral and legal concept expressing the conviction that the freedom of inquiry by faculty members is essential to the mission of the academy as well as the principles of academia, and that scholars should have freedom to teach or communicate ideas or facts (including those that are inconvenient to external political groups or to authorities) without being targeted for repression, job loss, or imprisonment', adding that 'while the core of academic freedom covers scholars acting in an academic capacity - as teachers or researchers expressing strictly scholarly viewpoints -, an expansive interpretation extends these occupational safeguards to *scholars' speech on matters outside their professional expertise*. It is a type of freedom of speech'. (italics added)

Another view is that 'academic freedom is a contested issue and, therefore, has limitations in practice'. Reference is made to the 'widely recognized "1940 Statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure" of the American Association of University Professors, whereby 'teachers should be careful to avoid controversial matters that are unrelated to the subject discussed. When they speak or write in public, they are free to express their opinions without fear from institutional censorship or discipline, but they should show restraint and *clearly indicate that they are not speaking for their institution*'. (italics added)

As for Academics For Academic Freedom (UK), it follows two main principles: 1) that academics, both inside and outside the classroom, have unrestricted liberty to question and test received wisdom and to put forward controversial and unpopular opinions, whether or not these are deemed offensive, and 2) that academic institutions have no right to curb the exercise of this freedom by members of their staff, or to use it as grounds for disciplinary action or dismissal. They also 'believe that it is important for academics to be able not only to express their opinions, but also to

put them to scrutiny and to open further debate'.

It is generally accepted that where there is freedom of expression societies prosper economically, and people are more open to ideas and opinions that differ from their own, and even more importantly, are willing to accept that these may be put to scrutiny and further debate. Which implies that if these ideas find their way into legislation, other than analyzing them, it is quite possible that in the public interest they may also need to be contested by means of due legal process. Provided that this is adhered to, one presumes that this should not pose any problem to the national authorities.

In the present case, the provisions of the Covid-19 Act have already been the subject of much public discussion by several stakeholders, which include political observers and analysts, opposition politicians, trade unionists and NGOs. What they have been particularly vocal about are the amendments that have been brought to allow making freer use of the reserves of the central bank by the State, amendments to labour laws that facilitate redundancy and the fate of Mauritians who are stranded abroad. Preventing them from returning to their country, which is their constitutional right, has been deemed to be a serious and unacceptable breach of that right. Further, international human rights organizations are likely to be alerted about these developments.

Surely one of the points that will cause a major *casse-tête* and require elucidation, for future guidance as well, will be '*scholars' speech on matters outside their professional expertise*' for, in this case, the academic concerned is a professional in the same subject matter, that is the legal field. Where to draw the fine line is the conundrum here, one that will not be easy to resolve.

As to the other point, that scholars should 'clearly indicate that they are not speaking for their institution', probably this will be less problematic - but here again there may be nuances that may be brought up to support the case for disciplinary procedure.

It is a fact that there are past and current instances of UOM staff giving their opinions on political matters, as well as their political positioning being known. But what perhaps demarcates the present case is the fact that it is a piece of legislation that has already been passed, on the motivated grounds of a dire public health emergency (which Article 12 provides for), that is being publicly challenged.

The outcome of this case will hopefully bring much needed clarification of this subject of academic freedom, but either way, inconvenient truths cannot be wished or whisked away. They somehow surface to prick our collective conscience - and so much the better for our democracy.

## The Conversation

## 5 ways the world is better off dealing with a pandemic now than in 1918

Near the end of the First World War, a deadly flu raced across the globe. The influenza pandemic became the most severe pandemic in recent history, infecting about one-third of the world's population between 1918 and 1920 and killing between 50 and 100 million people.

Now a century later the world is amidst another global pandemic caused by a zoonotic disease that "jumped" from wildlife to people, a novel coronavirus known as SARS-CoV-2. While we do not want in any way to diminish the hundreds of thousands of personal tragedies caused by this virus, we see reasons to be optimistic. There have been vast advancements in communications, science and medicine over the past 100 years, which may create a better outcome in today's pandemic.

### Communication

A hundred years of innovation in communication has dramatically changed our ability to quickly exchange vital data. Back in 1918, early phone lines were still being laid, and in many places the telegraph was the only way to communicate.

By contrast, the world has been able to track this epidemic in real time, and scientists have quickly identified those most at risk of adverse outcomes.

Rapid dissemination of research on this novel virus has alerted doctors to serious symptoms, including its ability to trigger blood clots and strokes as well as symptoms similar to Kawasaki Syndrome in young children - important information for assessment and treatment of patients.

### Better social distancing

One of the reasons the influenza pandemic thrived in 1918 was because of overcrowded living conditions.

With today's response protocols in place, countries including Germany, Singapore and South Korea were able to rapidly enact measures to prevent contagion by enforcing lockdowns, shelter-in-place rules and social distancing orders. To date, these interventions have prevented or delayed about 62 million confirmed cases and averted 530 million infections across Asia, Europe and North America.

### Nutrition

In 1918, India's colonial adminis-

trators noted that the poor and malnourished were much more likely to succumb to flu than the more affluent. Overall, people across the world are better nourished today. While malnutrition remains a global crisis, the World Health Organization reports that daily food consumption rose by 25% between 1965 and 2015.

### Disease demographics

During the 1918 pandemic, pregnant women were at particularly high risk. Statistics reported monthly from Buffalo, New York, show the extent of the tragedy. At the height of the pandemic in October 1918, premature births more than doubled, reaching 57 a month; stillbirths rose to 76, an 81% jump. In Massachusetts, the number of women who died during or right after childbirth more than tripled to 185. In a study in Maryland, half of all pregnant women who developed pneumonia died.

They were part of a particularly hard-hit demographic: This flu disproportionately affected healthy women and men in the prime of their lives, 20-40 years old. It also killed many children under five years of age.

This is not the case with COVID-19. While expectant mothers are at greater risk from infectious disease outbreaks and should take extra precautions, there is scant evidence that COVID-19 infection impacts childbirth, the growing fetus, babies or young children in the same way that the influenza pandemic did. COVID-19 is also far less deadly for young adults.

### Better medical science

Today's medical technologies are infinitely more advanced than they were a century ago. During the 1918 pandemic, medical researchers were debating whether the disease was viral or bacterial. Doctors didn't yet know influenza viruses existed. Without tests or vaccines, there was limited ability to prevent or contain the spread.

There were few treatment options for those who developed pneumonia, a common complication: Antibiotics were still years away, and mechanical ventilation wasn't available.

Today's innovations allow us to rapidly detect outbreaks, inoculate large numbers of people and better treat severely ill patients.

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## Histoire économique

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Aditya Narayan

## L'histoire répétée en 2020

En 2020, après la présentation du budget, les contribuables n'ont pas fait de grève contre la proposition du ministre des Finances de majorer la taxe de solidarité de 5% à 25% pour introduire un taux d'imposition marginale de 40% sur le revenu supérieur à Rs 3 millions par an.

Toutefois, la révolte des contribuables les plus aisés était forte et a été relayée efficacement dans la presse écrite et parlée par des porte-parole attitrés et des économistes du secteur privé. Ils ont fait des pressions soutenues sur le gouvernement, avec l'aide du patronat et de certains partis d'opposition, afin de l'amener à alléger la mesure. Finalement, le ministre des Finances a dû céder pour ramener la proposition du taux d'imposition marginale de 40% à 25%.

Il y a des similitudes et des différences entre 1974 et 2020 qui nous permettent de comprendre ce qui a changé chez les partis politiques et ce qui n'a pas changé chez les contribuables.

En 1974, l'enjeu était la progressivité de l'impôt et la nécessité que les plus aisés fassent un effort de solidarité. En 2020, le même enjeu s'est posé. Toutefois, les partis qui, en 1974, se disaient socialistes sont devenus entre-temps des partis sociaux-démocrates qui veulent ratisser large dans l'électorat et ne

torique, contrôlaient l'économie mauricienne par le biais des conglomérats dans l'agriculture, l'industrie et le tourisme.

Depuis, d'autres entrepreneurs sont parvenus à faire leur petit bout de chemin. Toutefois, un conglomérat non-historique, en l'occurrence la BAI, qui avait la chance d'opposer une rude concurrence à la bourgeoisie historique a été dismantelé sans aucune forme de procès. La concentration des richesses reste intacte entre les mains de grands conglomérats, surtout avec le développement immobilier qui leur assure des rendements inespérés sur l'investissement (projets IRS, RES, etc.) sans qu'ils paient les taxes foncières (taxe de conversion ou taxe sur les plus-values).

Un récent rapport du ministère des Finances, en date du 29 novembre 2019, a révélé que les 50 plus grandes sociétés ont déclaré des dividendes de près de Rs 130 milliards au cours des quatre dernières années (voir le tableau plus loin). L'impôt sur les bénéfices a totalisé Rs 8,7 milliards pour la même période.

Top 50 companies	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Total
	Rs M.	Rs M.	Rs M.	Rs M.	Rs. M.
Turnover	221,729	223,427	225,519	239,173	
Tax paid	2,045	2,097	2,153	2,468	8,763
Dividends declared	30,430	80,573	6,930	11,918	129,851
Net assets	1,030,521	1,073,764	1,244,224	1,308,519	
Retained earnings/(loss) c/fwd	45,859	46,658	56,514	61,215	
Net profit	20,590	22,088	25,393	28,593	

Le fil conducteur entre 1974 et 2020 est que les contribuables les plus aisés défendent efficacement leurs intérêts et ne consentiront pas à des sacrifices comme tout le monde dans le cadre de l'austérité généralisée. Et ils ont trouvé des alliés objectifs chez des partis qui veulent toujours les caresser dans le sens du poil.

Seuls les mouvements de gauche et les syndicats ont soutenu la proposition fiscale. La question est de savoir jusqu'à quand les partis sociaux-démocrates s'opposeront aux réformes primordiales au nom du clientélisme. N'est-ce pas ce refus de la réforme qui a amené le pays dans la situation actuelle avec ses inégalités économiques criantes?

## Rupture frustrée

Pourtant, quand on parle de rupture avec l'ordre établi, la progressivité de l'impôt sur le revenu est un des "points de rupture" qu'il fallait envisager, discuter et mettre en place sans peur ni faveur.

• Suite en page 4

Lors de son discours sur le budget 2020-21, le leader du PMSD a lancé une boutade à l'effet que les gens se demandaient si, de Veerasamy Ringadoo (premier ministre des Finances post-indépendance) à Renganaden Padayachy (ministre des Finances en exercice), il y avait un lien en matière de politique économique. Cette boutade ne manque pas de pertinence dans le contexte de l'histoire économique du pays. En effet, les deux hommes ont fait face à certains défis similaires sur le plan fiscal lorsqu'ils ont présenté le budget, l'un en 1974 et l'autre en 2020.

S'il y a certaines similitudes dans l'approche fiscale adoptée par les deux hommes à des époques différentes, c'est surtout la nature des réactions que leurs propositions en termes de mesures budgétaires ont suscitées dans le secteur privé qui est intéressante. Et édifiante!

## Echos de 1974

En 1974, le ministre des Finances Ringadoo avait proposé d'augmenter de 10% l'impôt sur le revenu, de maintenir la taxe de sortie sur le sucre et de majorer les droits de douane sur tous les produits importés à l'exception des produits alimentaires, des médicaments et des engrais. L'annonce de ces mesures provoqua une levée des boucliers dans le secteur privé et les contribuables, regroupés au sein de la Mauritius Tax Payers Association (MTPA), organisèrent une action massive de protestation.

Le patronat se mit de la partie et organisa un *lockout* complet le 16 juillet 1974 en fermant toutes les entreprises pour un jour en signe de révolte. Au Parlement, le ministre des Finances accepta finalement de faire certaines concessions aux contribuables pour apaiser les tensions. Lors des débats, l'ancien secrétaire parlementaire travailliste Beekrumsingh Ramlallah devait faire remarquer que "c'est une tragédie que dans un pays qui connaît un moment de boom économique, 15 000 personnes seulement paient des impôts" (selon le compte-rendu dans *L'Express* du 17 juillet 1974).

A l'époque, le MMM, parti d'opposition extra-parlementaire, se solidarisa avec les contribuables mais dénonça le *lockout* des patrons. Les militants de ce parti suivaient alors avec inquiétude la situation au Chili où l'armée avait renversé un an plus tôt le gouvernement socialiste de Salvador Allende, qui fut élu démocratiquement, avec l'approbation du patronat. Ils se méfiaient des patrons.



“En 1974, le ministre des Finances Ringadoo avait proposé d'augmenter de 10% l'impôt sur le revenu, de maintenir la taxe de sortie sur le sucre... L'annonce de ces mesures provoqua une levée des boucliers dans le secteur privé et les contribuables, regroupés au sein de la Mauritius Tax Payers Association (MTPA), organisèrent une action massive de protestation. Le patronat se mit de la partie et organisa un *lockout* complet le 16 juillet 1974 en fermant toutes les entreprises pour un jour en signe de révolte...”

sont pas prêts à perdre aucune de ses composantes, quitte à sacrifier certains principes.

Ainsi, on a vu le MMM et le Parti Travailliste s'opposer à la proposition de majorer la taxe de solidarité. Leurs porte-parole économiques, qui sont d'ailleurs bien ancrés dans le secteur des services financiers comme opérateurs ou gérants de compagnies de gestion, n'ont raté aucune occasion de critiquer la proposition du ministre des Finances. Quelle alternative proposent-ils?

Dans les années 1974-75, la Banque de Maurice avait fait une étude économique, sous la direction de l'économiste anglais Percy Selwyn, qui avait établi que cinq familles mauriciennes, issues de l'oligarchie his-



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S. Callikan

# Corruption of Public Procurement

*Given its track record, ICAC has the undoubted opportunity to redress its perception at a time when the country remains more firmly than ever under the scrutiny of all international agencies*

In all corruption practices, there is a private sector corrupter determined to maximize its profits or thwart competitors and a corrupt element in the politico-administrative nexus that, against monetary or non-monetary favours, will bend or bypass the rules to help the corrupter achieve those ends. Governments, as massive purchasers and sometimes importers of a large variety of goods from pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, to essential commodities like rice and flour, to energy and fuel fossil supplies, not to mention large infrastructure projects, are therefore particularly prone to corruption of the public procurement processes, a well-known phenomenon.



“It would be somewhat mystifying to portend in the CEB-St Louis affair, that without the collaboration or report of either the African Development Bank or Burmeister & Wain Scandinavian Contractor that won the turbine contract, ICAC would somehow be handicapped. The affair is simple in its tenets: the bidding firm's offer was turned down late 2014 by the Central Procurement Board for some 80 serious inadequacies. End 2014, with the change of government, comes a new Minister, new Chairman and General Manager at the CEB, new personnel at the CPB and IRP and clearly the incoming government holds all the cards...”

Consumers and taxpayers end up either paying above market value or getting lower quality goods and services. A supposedly free-market competition is distorted to the benefit of the unscrupulous few, and inordinate amounts of corrupt, black monies circulate which need laundering or sheltering in secretive havens. Not surprisingly, all major funding agencies, the European Union, the OECD and large international banking lenders are increasingly intolerant to persistent fraudulent practices, corruption and money-laundering which become so ingrained as to be systemic or organic.

The situation is of course worsened when accompanied by a culture of impunity, the absence of credible, independent investigative agencies or the lack of outcome or observable sanctions in many mediated cases. That's not Opposition voices but part of the considered view of the IMF/FATF when short-listing our country's strategic deficiencies in 2017. In view of the degradation since, we can read those views to mean, in blunt terms, the following: (a) FSC/FIU has little or no idea what a risk-based supervision of the global business sector meant, (b) ICAC has little or no capacity to conduct the necessary money-laundering and financial investigations, and (c) there has been little or no evidence of demonstrable implementation of targeted financial sanctions. We may gripe and moan but nothing of substance was achieved to correct these deficiencies since 2017. We have been unfortunately grey-listed by the FATF in February this year and now, to the despair of our banks, financial institutions, operators and by 15-20% of our economy, we have been blacklisted by the EU.

With all due respect for the incoming Minister of Financial Services, and with hope that we may be wrong, these are not issues that can be addressed by a hastily drafted legal amendment, promulgated upon, implemented and shown to be effective over a few weeks before the 1st October deadline for the

EU blacklist regime to take full effect. Effectiveness we suspect means not only having the basic legal and instrumental bits in place, but a demonstrable change in FSC structure, personnel, culture of kow-towing political masters or a demonstrable track-record of intransigent independence, a mega shift in its up-to-now more than paltry record.

By 2017, Senor Sobrinho's adventures here, his dalliance with high State and political offices and amendments to the law to grant him investment banking licenses under FSC gaze are known to all country-watchers. On a larger plane, so were probably the dismantling of a business group (BAI/Bramer Bank) without any judicial process or condemnation pronounced. So was the refusal of international arbitration rulings in the Betamax case, where the appeal still has to be heard at the Privy Council. Government since 2015 has been clearly demonstrating the overlordship of political considerations over institutions and other processes, with little checks and balances.

Effectiveness also means a track record of successful investigations by ICAC, more particularly in all high-profile cases where big bucks, top politico-administrative brass, well-heeled insiders, advisors and consultants are dancing hand in hand, locked in pacts of secrecy, to thwart the investigation process or influence its outcome even before any case is brought before the judiciary. Under considerable battering from all quarters, ICAC has recently issued a list of high profile cases which only highlights the deficiencies already referred to. Even allowing for the implicit pact of secrecy and mutual self-interest bonding the partners which have decided to tango together, experienced inquirers, if free to do so, can have access to all documentary evidence, can commandeer financial audits or trails, can ask for judicial mutual assistance and, naturally, can audition various parties.

It would therefore be somewhat mystifying to portend in the CEB-St Louis affair, that without the collaboration or report of either the African Development Bank (ADB) or Burmeister & Wain Scandinavian Contractor (BWSC) that won the turbine contract, ICAC would somehow be handicapped. The affair is simple in its tenets: the bidding firm's offer was turned down late 2014 by the Central Procurement Board (CPB) for some 80 serious inadequacies, a rejection later confirmed by the Independent Review Panel (IRP). End 2014, with the change of government, comes a new Minister, new Chairman and General Manager at the CEB, new personnel at the CPB and IRP and clearly the incoming government holds all the cards.

In 2015, tender specifications are altered, a new tender launched with ADB input and BWSC's offer is found to be a perfect fit, albeit at some Rs 700 m more. On a whistleblower input, months following project completion in 2018, BWSC conducts an inquiry which concludes to substantial corruption and monies paid out to ensure its bid met all the revised tender requirements of the client CEB. Five staff members are sacked and two senior staff are under police investigations. Corrupters have been sanctioned at some cost to BWSC, while it is incumbent on local investigators to identify the corrupt, among the key players in “*Mauritian administration and others*” wherever they might be: Ministry, CEB, advisors, consultants, tender drafters...

Having resisted demands for a commission of enquiry, the Prime Minister and his No 2, the DPM and Minister of Public Utilities and government as a whole are now tied to the credibility and celerity of the investigation by ICAC. Given its track record and the strategic deficiencies listed previously, it may be a tall order for ICAC. Conversely, despite the heavy political intricacies, it has the undoubted opportunity to redress its perception at a time when the country remains more firmly than ever under the scrutiny of all international agencies.

## De Ringadoo à Padayacy, la même résistance des contribuables aisés

● Suite de la page 3

Tout le monde est conscient que le système néolibéral depuis 2005 est à l'origine des déficits budgétaires (15% du PIB), des dettes publiques (80% du PIB), de la surconsommation alimentée par les importations (déficit commercial colossal) et de la régression de la production locale.

La fiscalité légère, commencée par Vishnu Lutchenaraidoo et accentuée par Rama Sithanen, a produit des inégalités de revenu et de richesse entre les classes sociales. Ces inégalités sont évidentes de par les signes extérieurs de richesse (villas de luxe, berlines dernier cri, bateaux de plaisance, deuxième ou troisième résidence à Maurice ou ailleurs) dans un paysage doté de poches de pauvreté absolue dans certains quartiers.

En même temps que le gouvernement fait marche arrière sur la politique fiscale, il est prêt à déboursier des milliards de roupies pour venir en aide aux entreprises en difficulté grâce au plan de sauvetage que la Mauritius Investment Corporation (MIC) a eu la charge de mettre sur pied. Déjà, les entreprises dans l'hôtellerie, l'industrie textile et la construction ont déposé des demandes d'aide de Rs 25 milliards auprès de la MIC.

L'assistance financière de la MIC serait sous la forme de prêts remboursables, de l'achat d'actions dans les entreprises ou de l'achat d'obligations d'entreprises. Toutes ces entreprises qui paient des dividendes ou ont accumulé des réserves (Rs 61 milliards en 2018-19 pour 50 Top Companies) demanderont de l'aide uniquement sur la base d'une déclaration des pertes subies durant la pandémie. Les bilans financiers précédents ne comptent pas pour elles.

A ce jour, le gouvernement n'a pas dit s'il exigera le gel du paiement des dividendes dans le secteur privé en contrepartie de l'aide publique. Il faut donc supposer que les entreprises continueront leurs pratiques de gestion et de gouvernance comme par le passé sans devoir rendre compte de l'utilisation de l'aide publique.

Les entreprises renflouées par l'Etat continueront à payer des salaires (ou des dividendes) supérieurs à Rs 3 millions par an à leurs cadres (ou actionnaires) sans que ces derniers ne soient assujettis à un taux d'imposition marginale raisonnable (plus de 25%). Injecter Rs 80 milliards dans l'économie sans réformer les structures de production, d'échange, de gestion et de distribution des richesses serait un énorme gaspillage.

Voilà où nous en sommes en 2020 avec une crise qui pourtant exige des remises en question, des réformes profondes et des valeurs communes de partage et de solidarité. Au-delà des récriminations politiques de part et d'autre, ce sont les intérêts économiques (*vested interests*) des uns et des autres qui ont la primauté et dictent l'agenda officiel. Aidés par l'urgence économique de sauver les emplois ou le clientélisme politique.

Aditya Narayan





Dr Rajagopal Soondron

Is it a coincidence that the latest coronavirus should splash out onto the world scene during Donald Trump's reign? Coming out victorious against Hillary Clinton in 2016, Trump's insistent motto of "America First" prompted him to target China's economy during his disguised diatribe; he openly named China as the threat to the American economy. Of course that was a total slip in diplomatic relationship. He committed the same blunder that the Ayatollahs of Iran did in the 80s, when they blared out that they would wipe Israel from the surface of the world. For the latter it was officially an open war declaration; so they systematically boycotted Iran's plan for developing nuclear weapons.

Like Israel, China reacted aggressively against Trump's ambitious intention of lashing back. So she cunningly prompted and abetted her young inexperienced puppet neighbor Kim Jong-un to start the missile fireworks, in order to frighten and scare the wits out of South Korea and Japan, USA's staunch allies. North Korea by herself would not have the mettle to exhibit such military ambitions without Chinese sanction.

So the final outcome was that Donald Trump the multimillionaire, swallowing his pride and feeling humiliated, had to come down to Singapore to meet his opponent, to shake hands reluctantly, and to pacify that missile-trigger-happy young dictator.

Suddenly the Chinese Communist Party politburo realized that they have a crafty genius at their head and decided to name Xi as their president for life.

### Power Politics

The Western elites, having dominated the world scene for centuries under the belief that they are superior, and after enslaving the psychology of many indigenous peoples for ages, could no longer stomach that nauseating ascertainment that the centre of civilization was slipping away towards the East. More so as China is hijacking their imperialistic blueprint to win Third World countries to her economic cause, decades after having annexed Tibet with impunity; after all the latter had no fossil fuel to lure any international sympathy and intervention.

What could the West do? If China was poor they would have sidelined her and kept accusing her condescendingly of human rights violation. But as the latter was the second economic power, the West and

# The Corona Puzzle

*We lay people are mired in the vortex of the tragedy of this century. Or is it that Mother Nature is simply taking matters in her hand and setting the clock right?*



Coronavirus and power politics - Photo - ichef.bbc.co.uk

**As the elephants indulge in a bull fight, the grass below would be trampled upon. The poor people of the world are suffering the collateral damage triggered by the superpowers - hundreds of thousands are already paying with their lives, millions will lose their job, becoming poorer and hungrier, while many others will suffer all sorts of psychosomatic diseases. The world will be a bleaker place to live in..."**

allies conveniently and cunningly forget about that noble goal of theirs and queued obediently like schoolchildren to gain access to the Chinese market.

### Toxic Reaction

Maybe some superpower think-tanks could not resist borrowing from those virtual scenarios outlined in some fiction books: trigger secretly a biological warfare.

Could China have started first; ready to sacrifice a few thousands of her 1.3 billion people? With the hope that her modified synthetic coronavirus would move westward and decimate Trump and his allies' economies? Or could the American army which participated in a competition fair in

Wuhan around October 19 have capitalized on the occasion to infiltrate its spies in Wuhan with a sample of Covid-19 - and make the Chinese a sitting duck?

Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic we have had all sorts of media posts celebrating the concept that the virus is the work of a calculated strategy from a superpower. Some people even suggested that Putin, not willing to be sidelined in that fight for supremacy, had looked with a jaundiced eye at those other two powers which were vying to dominate the world without counting on the Russian's Machiavellianism.

And social media even threw another spanner in the wheel: a Japanese Noble Prize winner in physiology had vowed to give back his prize if someone could prove that the coronavirus is not a synthetic chimera. He is convinced it is; while Indian researchers found that the seventh coronavirus indisputably contains four synthetic molecules pinned to it.

The latest is that the USA, UK and France are ready to sue China for delayed warning about the threat of the Covid-19 virulence, with the former accusing China of synthesizing the virus in her Wuhan lab; but the Chinese are surely having a good laugh at the West. She has already intimated that she would not investigate the Wuhan source of the virus; after all it was France which heavily helped China to build the very sensitive P4 biological laboratory in Wuhan.

Speculations as to the real origin of that virus are many. Is it a convict escaping from a secret biological warfare laboratory or an experimental vaccine gone wrong? Is it a plan concocted by one superpower to throw the scare into the enemy camp? Is it a natural consequence of the eating habit of the Chinese? Or is it the social media

amateur hackers - ready to create mischief - who are concocting all sorts of conspiracy theories and scenarios to keep us guessing about the unbelievable tragedy striking the human race?

Mr Trump, so sure of his country's capacity to deal with a simple flu, coupled with his utter ignorance of basic medicine, finally found himself face to face with the blunder he had let himself into. And as the presidential election is behind the door he desperately looked for a scapegoat - and saw the right one in the WHO, accusing it of being in connivance with the Chinese.

And we laymen come to realize, yet again, that the powerful and the rich were always ready to fool and sacrifice us while they would be juggling with deadly ammunitions -- biological or chemical -- to satisfy their thirst for world domination. In the East we have the highly intolerant secretive Chinese Communist Party dictatorship overtly displaying its expansionist ambitions on the Indian northeast frontier; in the West the American ignoramus at the head of the greatest democracy but highly capitalistic contraption - all in all the right formula to stir deadly world mischief.

As the elephants indulge in a bull fight, the grass below would be trampled upon. The poor people of the world are suffering the collateral damage triggered by the superpowers - hundreds of thousands are already paying with their lives, millions will lose their job, becoming poorer and hungrier, while many others will suffer all sorts of psychosomatic diseases. The world will be a bleaker place to live in since the last world war 75 years ago.

We lay people are mired in the vortex of the tragedy of this century. Or is it that Mother Nature is simply taking matters in her hand and setting the clock right?



# South Korea confirms second wave of infections

Health officials in South Korea believe the country is going through a second wave of coronavirus, despite recording relatively low numbers.



South Korea seemed to have a grip on the virus.  
Photo - bbcnews.com

The country had been a success story in dealing with Covid-19, but now expects the pandemic to continue for months.

Head of the Korea Centers for Disease Control (KCDC), Jung Eun-kyeong, said the first wave lasted up until April.

Yet since May, clusters

of new cases have grown, including outbreaks at nightclubs in the capital, Seoul.

Between those periods, daily confirmed cases had fallen from nearly a thousand to zero infections recorded for three days in a row.

Officials on Monday said that over the last 24 hours, 17 new infections had been recorded, from different clusters in large offices and warehouses.

Dr Jeong said the recent resurgence had led her to conclude that the country was in the grip of a second wave of the virus, and that she expected it to continue.

Until now, the KCDC had said that South Korea's first wave had never really ended.

But Dr Jeong said it was now clear that a holiday weekend in early May marked the beginning of a new wave of infections focused in the greater Seoul area, which had previously seen only a few cases.

The mayor of Seoul also warned that the capital may have to return to strict social distancing, should cases top 30 on average over the next three days and the bed occupancy rate of the city's hospitals exceeds 70%.

## Coronavirus: Spain welcomes tourists back as emergency ends

Spain has lifted its state of emergency, reopening its borders to visitors from most of Europe and allowing British tourists in without having to quarantine.



Tourists are starting to flock to Majorca again. Photo- bbcnews.com

Spain has lifted its state of emergency, reopening its borders to visitors from most of Europe and allowing British tourists in without having to quarantine.

For three months Spain has been under one of Europe's toughest lockdowns to stop the spread of coronavirus.

Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez warned that hygiene controls must be observed strictly, despite the easing.

Spain's Covid-19 death toll stands at 28,322 - the third-highest in the EU.

The state of emergency was decreed on 14 March, and for several weeks people could not go out to exercise and children were not allowed to leave their homes for any reason.

Spain normally attracts 80 million tourists a year, with tourism providing more than 12% of the country's GDP.

Opening up the holiday market again before the summer season is over is seen as crucial to the Spanish economy.

Arrivals will have their temperature taken at the airport, state if they have had the virus and provide contact details. Spain is opening up again to the rest of the EU and Schengen zone countries outside the EU.

And now Spaniards can once again enjoy unrestricted travel in their own country.

But social distancing rules remain in place: people have to stay 1.5m (5ft) apart in public, wear masks in shops and on public transport, where that rule cannot always be kept, and clean their hands frequently.

\* \* \*

## France goes back to school

In France millions of children have gone back to school yesterday, for the last few weeks before the summer holidays, having spent about three months at home.

Classes are reopening for all pupils in primary and secondary schools up to the age of 15, though there has been limited attendance by some groups of children in recent weeks.

France also reopened cinemas from Monday and stadiums for team sports.

Meanwhile, in Italy long-awaited Serie A football matches resumed on Saturday, after a three-month coronavirus shutdown.

According to the latest official figures, Italy's death toll is 34,610 - the second-highest in Europe after the UK's 42,461 - and France's toll is 29,633. The figures have to be treated with some caution, however, as countries vary in the way they calculate deaths from Covid-19.

Compiled by  
Doojesh Ramlallah

# Museum to remove Roosevelt statue decried as white supremacy

The American Museum of Natural History will remove a prominent statue of Theodore Roosevelt from its entrance after years of objections that it symbolizes colonial expansion and racial discrimination, Mayor Bill de Blasio said Sunday.

The bronze statue that has stood at the museum's Central Park West entrance since 1940 depicts Roosevelt on horseback with a Native American man and an African man standing next to the horse, reports AP.

"The American Museum of Natural History has asked to remove the Theodore Roosevelt statue because it explicitly depicts Black and Indigenous people as subjugated and racially inferior," de Blasio said in a written statement. "The City supports the Museum's request. It is the right decision and the right time to remove this problematic statue."

The museum's president, Ellen Futter, told the New York Times that the museum's "community has been profoundly moved by the ever-widening movement for racial justice that has emerged after the killing of George Floyd."

"We have watched as the attention of the world and the country has increasingly turned to statues



This aerial shot taken on September 15, 2010 shows the disputed islands known as Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China in the East China Sea. Photo - edition.cnn.com

as powerful and hurtful symbols of systemic racism," Futter told the Times.

"The composition of the Equestrian Statue does not reflect Theodore Roosevelt's legacy," Theodore Roosevelt IV, a great-grandson of the president, said in a statement to the Times. "It is time to move the statue and move forward."

Futter said the museum objects to the statue but not to Roosevelt, a pioneering conservationist whose

father was a founding member of the institution and who served as New York's governor before becoming the 26th president. She said the museum is naming its Hall of Biodiversity for Roosevelt "in recognition of his conservation legacy."

In 2017, protesters splashed red liquid on the statue's base to represent blood and published a statement calling for its removal as an emblem of "patriarchy, white supremacy and settler-colonialism."





Ashvin Ramgoolam

# Mauritius FATF and EC Listing Controversies and Double Standards



Financial Action Task Force in session - Photo -i0.wp.com

**M**auritius was placed in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) list of increased monitoring and subsequently in the European Commission (EC) High-Risk countries that have deficiencies in their Anti-Money Laundering and Combating of Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) framework. On 19th June 2020, the European Council and Parliament approved the aforementioned list which was adopted on 7th May 2020. These lists are considered as a 'soft sanction' for countries which have either failed to be compliant with the FATF 40 recommendations which are international AML/CFT norms and standards, or are unable to demonstrate effectiveness with the 11 FATF Immediate Outcomes, which rate the effectiveness of the AML/CFT regime of an assessed jurisdiction.

## Methodology

To understand the unfair situation which Mauritius and other jurisdictions are facing, a comparative analysis has been undertaken by having recourse to a comparative table. The data which are used are publicly available in the FATF consolidated table of assessment ratings, while for countries that do not appear in the abovementioned table, information has been extracted individually from their latest Mutual Evaluation Reports and Follow-Up Reports. The data give an bird's eye view of the level of compliance and effectiveness of the AML/CFT framework of 20 countries which are linked to this situation.

The methodology is not scientific though, yet is statistically simple. The compliance and effectiveness status of some of the jurisdictions which have recently been listed, delisted or not listed in the FATF and the EC Lists have been compared and analysed. Also, their ranking for the last three (2017, 2018, and 2019) in the Basel AML Index (Index) was included. This Index independently ranks the AML/CFT framework of countries around the world based on their latest FATF ratings.

## Comparative Analysis

Referring to the comparative table, Mauritius is the second most compliant

jurisdiction with 26 fully compliant FATF recommendations, just after Spain, which scored 28. The Basel AML ranking for both Cyprus and Luxembourg further adds to the confusion. While Cyprus has on record some 16 fully compliant and 21 largely compliant recommendations, Luxembourg, on the other hand, is fully and largely compliant in 1 and 9 recommendations respectively, yet the latter has a much better ranking of 85th than the former which is ranked 74th.

Moreover, there is an interesting fact with respect to five other European countries, namely Netherlands, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Luxembourg. In the event that both the number of fully and largely compliant recommendations are added, the total does not equal to the number of recommendations to which Mauritius is fully compliant, except for the Czech Republic which is fully compliant with respect to 27 recommendations. Another aspect that the Czech Republic has inherited is the fact that the level of effectiveness for its AML/CFT regime is transparent and publicly available.

Additionally, these abovementioned five countries are highly AML/CFT compliant jurisdictions and three of the five countries are ranked above 100 in the Index, while Luxembourg is ranked 85th in 2019. In 2018, Mauritius was ranked 85th, but in 2019, the country does not appear in the Index due to lack of data, as stated in the Basel AML Index Report 2019. At some point in time, these ratings and rankings start to give rise to questions about the methodology of these international institutions.

Furthermore, Iceland and Albania seem to be playing in the same league as Mauritius, particularly when their level of

compliance and effectiveness is compared. These two jurisdictions have escaped through the big net of the EC. Iceland is a European country and Albania is a candidate for membership to the European Union. Both Iceland and Albania are on the FATF list of jurisdictions under increased monitoring, but the EC appears to be contradicting its own methodology by not including these two countries in its list.

To further add to the contradiction, there are the cases of Iraq and Afghanistan, which surprisingly are not listed in any of the FATF lists, yet they are in the EU list. What makes it incompre-

hensible is that the sum of the number of the fully, largely and partially compliant recommendations for each of these countries does not equal the number of fully compliant recommendations for Mauritius. Meanwhile, Trinidad and Tobago, which has been delisted by the FATF is still in the EC list.

Furthermore, there are six countries namely Ethiopia, Tunisia, Sri Lanka, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Guyana, and Laos that have benefited from a delisting. If the first three countries have won the battle with regard to the number of compliant recommendations, however these jurisdictions scored a draw against Mauritius when it came to their level of effectiveness. Moreover, it can be observed that these countries have more or less the same level of effectiveness just like Mauritius, whereas for the last three countries, not only their level of compliance is insignificant, but their level of effectiveness is not even publicly available.

In light of the above findings, the methodology which the FATF and the EC use in updating their respective lists is questionable. It is of utmost importance to clear all the inconsistencies which have cropped up after going through the analysis. Moreover, the ranking of the Basel AML Index is also difficult to understand, given that the ranking and the score do not reflect the latest FATF ratings. With all these incoherences, a small island state like Mauritius cannot but continue working to prove that it does not play in the same league as Syria, Iran, Iraq, and North Korea.

*Ashvin Ramgoolam is a Compliance professional with extensive experience in the financial services sector. He is the co-author of the first-ever Financial Crime Threat Assessment Report for Mauritius and he is specialised in financial crime compliance, data protection (GDPR), governance, FATCA and CRS.*

Table 1: Comparative Table of the Listed, Non-Listed and Delisted Countries

Jurisdictions	FATF 40 Recommendations Status				FATF 11 Immediate Outcomes Status			
	Compliant	Largely Compliant	Partially Compliant	Non-Compliant	High Effectiveness	Substantial Effectiveness	Moderate Effectiveness	Low Effectiveness
<b>Jurisdictions that have been included in the EC List</b>								
Spain	28	10	2	0	1	9	1	0
Mauritius	26	9	4	1	0	0	4	7
Zimbabwe	22	10	7	1	0	0	2	9
Cyprus	16	21	3	0	0	3	8	0
Panama	15	23	2	0	0	2	6	3
Ghana	14	20	5	1	0	1	4	6
Bahamas	13	17	10	0	0	0	5	6
Portugal	12	22	6	0	0	6	5	0
Netherlands	5	17	17	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Poland	5	21	14	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Czech Rep.	4	23	13	0	0	3	8	0
Slovakia	4	16	19	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Luxembourg	1	9	23	7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Countries that are appear on the FATF List but not on EU List</b>								
Iceland	14	14	11	1	0	1	4	6
Albania	5	29	5	1	0	2	7	2
<b>Countries that are appear on the EU List but not on FATF List</b>								
Iraq	2	5	12	21	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Afghanistan	1	14	1	24	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

N/A: Not Available



Interview – Raj Ramlugun - Listed Companies Minority Shareholders' Ass

# Air Mauritius & SBM : “The setting up of a commission of enquiry will put an end to the culture of impunity”

**R**aj Ramlugun of the Listed Companies Minority Shareholders' Association, gives his opinion on the problems that have led to the downfall of Air Mauritius and SBM. For him, the central concern is one of governance and accountability, which have been messed with down the years by the connivance between board/management and the successive governments. They preferred to maintain the *status quo* which served their interest instead of that of the SOEs they were responsible for. And still there seems to be no will to seize the opportunity to turn around these entities by appointing a commission of inquiry as LCMSA has been asking for? Why? - questions Raj Ramlugun. Read on...

**Mauritius Times:** There are certainly lots of unanswered questions as regards the “crash” of Air Mauritius and the dire situation in which SBM finds itself today, with its profits tumbling down to Rs 15 M in 2019-20 from Rs 1.2 billion in 2018. But you would not expect the Government shooting itself in the foot by setting up a commission of inquiry as it is being requested by the Listed Companies Minority Shareholders' Association (LCMSA)?

**Raj Ramlugun:** Indeed there are many unanswered questions. Both for Air Mauritius (MK) and SBM. Foremost, we should understand what those questions are and answering them in all transparency would be in whose interests? Likewise, not willing to answer them would mean what for all the stakeholders?

In both the cases of MK and SBM, there is the widespread perception that there has been dereliction of duties by the Board and Top Management in the way certain important decisions have been taken and approved over the years. These have seriously damaged the financial status and integrity of these organizations in terms of good governance and sound management practices. In view of the extent of the damage and prejudices caused, would it not warrant a fully-fledged independent enquiry in order to probe the weaknesses in the decision-making process and hold to account those who might have failed to exercise due diligence in the performance of their duties?

The government has the ultimate fiduciary duty to safeguard the interests of the nation. It delegates this duty and responsibility via Board members and officers that it appoints in various state-owned enterprises or state-controlled entities via its majority shareholding. If those appointed officers or directors fail to protect the interest and integrity of the organizations, is it not a serious breach of trust and dereliction of duty? Would it not be in the interest of all stakeholders, including the government, that they support this call of the LCMSA for a commission of enquiry? Being against or refusing to consider our request would mean that the government is condoning the *status quo* and the way things have been going on in these two listed companies.

In our view, if the government is reluctant to support us in this endeavour, only then it will be shooting itself in the foot as it will be perceived by the nation as being an accomplice of the rotten *status quo* that is eating away at the governance and accountability culture in the country. The urgent setting up of a commission of enquiry will be a tremendous opportunity for the government to send the right signal and put an end to the culture of impunity at the highest level and restore trust in our governance mechanisms. The ball is in their court!

**\* Would the LCMSA's campaign for a commission of inquiry suggest that other avenues for redress of the situation at the level of Air Mauritius and SBM have failed to bring to light what you suspect are gross irregularities and corrective measures not implemented?**



“Politicians in power (under all governments) should learn to hear the inconvenient truth. They enjoy taking all the credit when things go right in SOEs and SCEs. More so at MK with all the glamour it carries. They should also have the humility to take with dignity an equal measure of blame when things go wrong...”

Over the years, we have been drawing attention publicly and via official correspondences to Board Members and Executive Management about what we considered to be abuses, mismanagement and dereliction of duties. We have even been to the ICAC on several occasions in the past to report alleged wrongful HR practices. At General Meetings of Shareholders (especially MK), year in, year out, we have been raising our concerns. But it's all been to no avail.

Those in control seem bent on treating the shareholders meetings as mere formalities as they display an arrogance and diffidence in their treatment of minority shareholders' queries and concerns. Simply because they take it that they have the full mandate of the majority shareholder (the state via the government) to act as suits their agenda (or prescribed agendas). Even the other minor shareholders represented at Board level would tend to be part of the rubberstamping culture imposed by the representatives of the majority shareholder. That's the gover-

nance culture that is rampant in state-controlled entities (whether listed or not) since decades and under all governments.

**\* Does this mean that there is a legal void in the related laws governing companies and in the judicial arsenal that allows the boards of directors and management of State-Owned Enterprises to run the affairs of these bodies without let and hindrance and as it pleases them?**

“Ideally, we would prefer that the State remains a major and active player in areas of the economy that have high potential in generating wealth for the nation. But over the years the heavy-handedness of politicians in power and the performance of those they handpick to lead these entities tend to make people more inclined towards privatization. Is this the solution to addressing the problem of incompetency and mismanagement through state ownership? I do not think so...”

Definitely, this is the case and that's why so many who are at the helm of SOEs can so easily walk away or stay put with total impunity, even when the entity is failing or has crashed. You are hitting at the very heart of the problem. It is very true that accountability is central to an effective governance culture - from top down. But it does not suffice to just throw textbook or academic prescriptions about those concepts.

In corporate settings, these concepts of Good Governance and Accountability should be living values, part and parcel of the organizational culture. Not simply a matter of laws. There are the more proactive and lasting values of personal and professional ethics alongside the legal framework. MK had initiated some good steps in that direction in the early 2000s. Especially after the *caisse noire* saga in 2001, a new corporate conscience had emerged as a reaction to restore trust and accountability.

MK had its code of ethics in place and disseminated throughout the organization, various board mechanisms/committees were put in place in order to ensure greater control and accountability in all aspects of the business. From Finance, Risk to HR Management. Internal Audit was made more independent of the Executive Management and reported directly to the Board Audit Committee rather than to the CEO. Special arrangements were made at board level for unions or employees to report any matter they felt required to be 'whistle blown'.

At national level, the 'National Committee of Corporate Governance (NCCG)' was set up, with Tim Taylor (who was also simultaneously a MK board member) as its first Chairman. From 2005 onwards, what has happened to all these watchdog and good governance mechanisms? The heavy-handed politicization under every government in terms of appointments and interference in strategic decision-making kept undermining all the sound principles of Governance and Management. We went back to square one, if not worse. It simply killed the sense of business continuity and work ethics. Even the most committed employees inside those organizations got highly demotivated and surrendered to the agendas imposed by political nominees or blue-eyed boys/girls.



# 'If we had a governance and accountability culture as Singapore does, no one would hesitate to trust its government to run the affairs of the country'

☞ Cont. from page 8

Competent leadership succession planning from inside was anathema. All should be a matter of political prerogative and political loyalty. Every new government means a new CEO, a new Board with new chairperson, a new clan with new protégés ruling the roost. What matters is not what you bring to the organization but to whom you are connected in the political power hierarchy and inside the organization. All boiling down to endless power games, organizational politics and rapport de force that one could establish through public opinion or political connections in order to impose a given agenda that serves vested interests more than the utmost needs of the organizations.

Given these disturbing realities, how can we be surprised that most, if not all, state-owned and state-controlled entities are in an utter state of decay as far as competent leadership, governance and accountability are concerned? But who cares? The blame game at the political level is endless for all the ills that afflict our SOEs, including MK and SBM. But no one among our politicians who have been or are in power will confess and own up to their share of responsibility in the chronic mismanagement or crash of those State Owned/Controlled Enterprises.

Why? At least, can't they come together in a bipartisan spirit in order to set up a new framework of Governance and Accountability for those state related entities. To prove that the State through its representatives appointed by the majority shareholder can deliver effectively in public interest? If that is not possible and our politicians in Parliament (and unions) are bent on perpetuating the rotten *status quo*, does it make sense to keep subsidizing quangos or other state related enterprises with government support and public funds?

**\* What would the situation be like in other State-Owned Enterprises or State-controlled companies – in Mauritius Telecom, State Investment Corporation Limited, etc., -- which fall outside the purview of parliamentary scrutiny?**

Well, I leave you to guess. I have said it all in my previous reply. I do not know up close and personally how these other SOE entities are managed and people at the helm held accountable there. Specific circumstances and leadership might explain for nuances in assessment and actual performances, but overall, I am convinced that we have a hardwired decadent governance culture throughout that is fostering vested interests and lack of public accountability in our SOEs & SCEs.

It takes two to tango. It cannot be just the board or management and government interference all the time. Very often this systemic governance issue arises out of complicity with different stakeholders inside and outside. But leaving all these state-related entities totally outside the purview and scrutiny of parliament is totally unacceptable. Laws and regulations should be amended to make them more transparent and accountable in the public interest and not be the hostage of parochial political agendas.

**\* We also hear of alleged irregularities taking place at the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Ltd and at Casino of Mauritius (incidentally one of the few loss-making casinos in the world). These and the other loss-making SOEs are making the case for their privatization. Would the LCMSA support that option?**

Ideally, we would prefer that the State remains a major and active player in areas of the economy that have high potential in generating wealth for the nation. But over the years the heavy-handedness of politicians in power and the performance of those they handpick to lead these entities tend to make people more inclined towards privatization. Is this the solution to addressing the problem of



“If we had a governance and accountability culture as Singapore does, no one would hesitate to trust its government to run the affairs of the country.

But here, I wonder if even the most stubborn ideologue would dare give any benefit of the doubt blindly to State ownership in light of the way SOEs are managed. If there is a change in governance values among our politicians in power, this will surely trickle down...”

incompetency and mismanagement through state ownership? I do not think so. But that is what successive governments are unfortunately pushing us to believe as preferred option... out of despondency.

If we had a governance and accountability culture as Singapore does, no one would hesitate to trust its government to run the affairs of the country. But here, I wonder if even the most stubborn ideologue would dare give any benefit of the doubt blindly to State ownership in light of the way SOEs are managed. If there is a change in governance values among our politicians in power, this will surely trickle down and make things better. Otherwise, a proper balance of public and private partnership, with due state safeguards, might be a better option for the survival and efficiency of these ailing entities.

**\* There is a long list of alleged irregularities and mismanagement problems within Air Mauritius relating to procurement, HR, fleet renewal and purchases, pension fund, transport services contracts, legal fees paid to outside counsels cited in the letter to the President. One would have assumed that more effective Governance and Accountability mechanisms would have been put in place at Board and Management levels in the aftermath of the 'caisse noire' episode that shook the company. Why didn't that happen?**

The constant disruption of business continuity through haphazard changes in leadership at CEO, HR and Board levels have not helped to maintain the effectiveness of good governance and accountability mechanisms that were meant to be there permanently to protect the interests of MK. Very quickly those at the helm have given in to all kinds of lobbies and short-term costly trial and error ex-

perimentations and compromises.

The governments in place have not helped to sanitize the governance and accountability framework. They have often made it worse by playing party and judge. Whether with regard to MK's business strategies, the role of Board and Executive leadership or mere HR matters, etc. MK managed to get away with all these when less harsh circumstances and unconditional government support could allow the company to keep going. But now with the fatal blow dealt by the pandemic, all the accumulated failures and the shortsightedness have come to the surface. Shockingly with no one being held to account for the crash. Be it at Board or Top Management level! The innocent employees are the first to bear the brunt for the lack of due diligence at all levels.

**\* In its letter addressed to the President of the Republic the LCMSA questions the appointment of the Voluntary Administrators. Do you consider that this was not the best option and that the MK Board and Top Management would have done a better job at rescuing the company?**

To be fair to the government, we might tend to think that by opting for the voluntary administrators (VA), it has pre-empted MK from going into direct insolvency. Thus, demonstrating its willingness to do its best to save MK as our national airline. However, as shareholders, we do not understand the true terms of reference and plan of the VA, except that all emphasis seems to be placed on employees cost and layoff while through his own admission during his press conference on 1 June 2020, the VA through stated that Covid-19 was only the final blow that caused MK's crash in April 2020.

In our view, he should have gone further in investigating and quantifying the extent of damage resulting from past mismanagement and wrong decisions.

**\* We all suspect that political interference has been a recurrent culprit in the downfall of Air Mauritius as in that of SBM or other SOEs. But does that explain everything?**

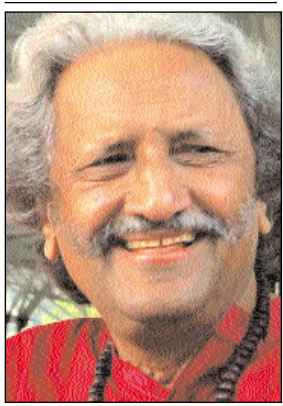
Politicians in power (under all governments) should learn to hear the inconvenient truth. They enjoy taking all the credit when things go right in SOEs and SCEs. More so at MK with all the glamour it carries. They should also have the humility to take with dignity an equal measure of blame when things go wrong.

But to be fair, though political interference is rampant, it does not explain all and absolve individual responsibilities in failing to uphold personal integrity and exercise of due diligence when doing one's duty to protect an organisation. There are many, abusing of political patronages or other high-level connections, who have played 'le calife à la place du calife' and wreaked havoc in the governance and finances of the organization.

Others, even CEOs, have connived with unethical employees, venal unions and outside lobbyists in order to solely ensure personal survival at the top. Were the politicians in power always aware of the full extent of these maneuvering and internal politics? If they were not directly involved in such culture that have gone a long way towards undermining the full potential of MK and its sustainability, they better take note going forward.

If MK is given a new lease of life, they should all (including the accomplices of the rotten *status quo*) learn their lessons and stop treating MK as a cash cow or their personal property. In any case, no one would dare use his personal property to make costly experimentations or appoint people with doubtful competence and integrity to manage it. Isn't it? So, why should MK, SBM or any of our SOEs and SCEs be subjected to such practices?





Kul Bhushan

## Sex: Tell them truth. Tell then now

**A** New Zealand porn ad designed to shake up parents to talk openly and freely about sex created big news last week. A young naked couple walks

to the front door of a house and starts talking about sex.

Parents are exhorted to keep a close watch on their children about what they surf on the net and how they interact with their friends, especially of the opposite sex. Having a discussion with your children is the key to understanding what they are going through.

Last month, a shocking news about some school kids starting a social media group, 'Bois Locker Room', raised the heckles of many parents and teachers as to what the teenagers are up to.

“Osho says, 'Just because children are small, do they have to be fed on lies? Is truth only for grown-ups? Does that mean truth is dangerous for the delicate consciousness of the child? Truth is never dangerous, untruth is dangerous.'”

A group of school kids started this group with sexual posts and made known their intention to rape a school girl. That post was leaked to the media and it went viral; the kids were questioned by the police. Another shocking case jolted the public when it was reported that the girl had created a fake account to check how the boy she was messaging to would react to the proposed sexual assault plan.

As that piece of news got traction, TV channels went into top gear with discussions about sex education or rather the lack of it and how the teenagers were badly informed about sexuality even today in the age of Internet.

Basically, the commentators urged the parents to start a dialogue with their children on sexuality, especially these days when girls get periods at the age of eleven or twelve and the boys hardly use condoms with their school girl friends.

If you think that four-year old children don't know a thing about sex, you may be mistaken. Four-year old kids in middle class families grow up playing with a mobile phone; those from lower middle class families watch TV. So their knowledge and awareness is much higher than similar children a generation ago. They are more curious, ask more questions and want honest answers.

Thus if you fob them off with vague answers like new babies are delivered by a stork, they

won't buy it. The story goes that a stork can be seen flying over rooftops with a little cloth bundle before landing at the doorstep of a happy couple who then unwrap their precious, smiling newborn-right? This myth was once a common story to tell to children who were deemed too young to be told anything different. Not anymore.

Now tell them the truth: babies are created in the stomach of the mother and come out at birth. Simple. But not for most orthodox parents and priests. And the children find out soon enough; from older friends, relatives or the Internet. This information becomes even more crucial at puberty for girls as they confide in their mothers about the physical changes they are undergoing.



Photo: hairconfirm.com

Osho says, “Just because children are small, do they have to be fed on lies? Is truth only for grown-ups? Does that mean truth is dangerous for the delicate consciousness of the child? Truth is never dangerous, untruth is dangerous.”

When you don't tell the truth, they find out by themselves and feel guilty of doing something they have been barred from. Some parents still tell their children that sex is a sin and sex is dirty. This is ridiculous in this day and age. Yes, schools do teach about reproduction in biology during the later years of primary schooling. But this does not talk about the most powerful energy for all humans: sex. The teaching is factual and comes too late when the children are confronting puberty.

Osho is the only enlightened mystic who had the courage to talk openly about sex and removed our guilt

about it. He showed us that perversion results from suppressing sex which, in turn, tempts people to go for pornography and, in extreme cases, rape. Only Osho has highlighted the ancient path of transforming sex into meditation and, finally, into superconsciousness.

Let us not sweep talk about sex under the carpet, especially with our children. Why do we force them to whisper, “Sssshhhh, do you know about that boy kissing this girl?” Before it starts to stink, let's get sex out of the secret cupboard.

*Kul Bhushan worked as a newspaper Editor in Nairobi for over three decades and now lives in New Delhi*

## Wellness

### Sixth International Day of Yoga

low human beings and nature.

Therefore, it helps contribute not only to personal physical and mental wellbeing but also to the wellbeing of the larger society living in harmony with nature.

Traditional systems of knowledge, including the natural healing traditions such as Yoga and Ayurveda, a plant-based treatment system that also originated in India, are now our collective global heritage.

The ever growing popularity of Yoga across countries, especially among the younger generation, shows the inner longing among all peoples to strive for something better, to overcome various stresses and to achieve greater balance in a contemporary world where this is becoming increasingly difficult.

Yoga and Ayurveda are no strangers to Mauritius. The Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture (IGCIC) in Phoenix has facilities for learning Yoga, which are being availed of by a large number of



**Y**oga is an ancient physical, mental and spiritual practice. The word 'yoga' derives from Sanskrit and means to join or to unite, symbolizing the union of body and consciousness.

Yoga has evolved as a philosophical system over thousands of years. Today it is practised around the world. It retains its appeal and continues to spread far and wide, simply because it 'works', for its practitioners.

Recognizing the universal appeal of Yoga, the United Nations General Assembly in 2014 adopted Resolution 69/131 that proclaimed 21 June as the International Day of Yoga, which aims to raise awareness worldwide of the many benefits of practising yoga for the individual and the society at large.

The proposal was introduced by Indian PM Narendra Modi in his address before the General Assembly, in which he said: "Yoga is an invaluable gift from our ancient tradition. Yoga embodies unity of mind and body, thought and action ... a holistic approach that is valuable to our health and our wellbeing. Yoga is not just about exercise; it is a way to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and the nature."

In view of the global pandemic, the focus for this year's celebrations is not only 'Yoga for Health' but also 'Yoga at Home and Yoga with Family'. People across the world are being encouraged to do Yoga from home and follow online demonstrations. Online digital platforms are being used to spread awareness about Yoga.

Yoga helps us experience the interconnectedness of all creation, a fundamental truth that modern science is discovering only now. Through this interconnectedness, Yoga helps tune our inner selves with our surroundings, our fel-



Mauritians. The IGCIC also held online Yoga classes during the recent curfew period here. There are also a large number of other institutions, which are active in teaching and promoting Yoga.

There is a growing recognition that both Yoga and Ayurveda systems help improve strength, fitness and energy levels and boosting individual immunity to meet with the challenges of various diseases that affect physical and mental health.

Yoga aims to unite and, therefore, it is fitting that the global community through the United Nations has recognized the role that the wisdom of this ancient scientific tradition can play in building more peaceful, equitable, prosperous and harmonious world, a goal that we all cherish and should strive for.



## Beauty Care



# Building your perfect skin care routine

### Step 1: Know Your Skin Type

The right routine starts with knowing what kind of skin you have. Then you'll know how to take care of it.

- \* Dry skin is flaky, scaly, or rough.
- \* Oily skin is shiny, greasy, and may have big pores.
- \* Combination skin is dry in some spots (cheeks) and oily in others (forehead, nose, and chin).
- \* Sensitive skin may sting, burn, or itch after you use some makeup or other products.
- \* Normal skin is balanced, clear, and not sensitive.

### Step 2: Cleaning normal/combo skin

Don't just grab whatever soap is in the shower or at the sink to wash your face. And don't feel like you have to buy fancy, expensive products, either. Just find skin care that works for you. Apply a gentle cleanser or soap with your fingertips. Don't scrub your face. Rinse with plenty of warm water, then pat dry. If your skin dries out or gets oily, try a different cleanser.

#### Cleaning dry skin

For this skin type, use a gentle cleanser that doesn't have alcohol or fragrances. Those ingredients can dry you out even more. Gently wash your skin, then rinse with plenty of warm water. Don't use hot water -- it removes the natural oils from your face faster. Try exfoliating once a week to get rid of flaky skin cells. It will make your skin look clearer and more even.

#### Cleaning oily skin

Use an oil-free foaming cleanser to wash your face. Rinse with plenty of warm water. You may want to use a toner or astringent after, but be careful because it might irritate your skin. These products can remove extra oil, which makes your face less shiny, and help keep skin clean.

#### Cleaning sensitive skin

Wash your face with a gentle cleanser

and rinse with warm water. Don't rub your skin with a towel -- gently pat it dry. Exfoliating may irritate sensitive skin. Try not to use products that have alcohol, soap, acid, or fragrance. Instead, look on the label for calming ingredients like aloe, chamomile, green tea polyphenols, and oats. The fewer ingredients in a product, the happier your face may be.

### Step 3: Moisturize

You may think you're too young to need moisturizer -- or your skin is too oily -- but all skin types need one every day. Apply it while your skin is still damp from washing or rinsing to help seal in moisture. If you have acne or your skin is oily, find a moisturizer that's lightweight and oil-free, so it won't block your pores.

### Step 4: Put on sunscreen

Your moisturizer may already have sunscreen in it. But it's a good idea to use separate protection, too. The sun can damage your skin in only 15 minutes. Look for a sunscreen that gives broad-spectrum protection with an SPF of at least 30. Wear it every day, even if it's not sunny and even if it's cold. Reapply every 2 hours.

#### When should you wash?

You can dry your skin by washing it too much, so once a day is fine for most people. In the morning, rinse your face with lukewarm water. Use a soft towel to pat it dry. At night, wash with a cleanser or gentle soap gets rid of the day's dirt and makeup. If you exercise, play sports, or have PE, you may want to wash your face afterward with a gentle cleanser. Sweat can clog your pores and make acne worse.

#### Don't wear makeup to bed

When you're tired, it can be tempting to go to bed without washing your face. But leaving makeup on your skin can clog your pores and cause acne. So wash it off with a gentle cleanser or makeup remover. Use a soft wash cloth or cotton pads. If you use acne medicine, now's a good time to put it on -- when your face is clean and you won't be putting on makeup.

### All about acne

Why does acne usually start when you're a teen? Puberty causes your body to make more hormones, which lead your skin to make more sebum, an oil that comes from your pores. Too much sebum and dead skin cells can clog pores and trap bacteria inside. The germs thrive and acne starts. It can show up as whiteheads, blackheads, and pimples.

#### How to treat acne

Don't pop those pimples! That can lead to infection and scars. Instead, try acne-fighting products. They come as lotions, creams, gels, and cleansing pads. Follow the directions carefully. If you use them too much or too often, they can irritate your skin and cause more blemishes. Just be patient -- they can take 8 weeks to work. If your acne is really bad, get help from a dermatologist.

#### Hiding blemishes

To make zits less noticeable, you can cover them with oil-free makeup. Foundation may help cover large patches of acne. Concealer covers smaller areas. Green-tinted colour-correcting concealer may cancel out redness. You also can hide acne and treat it at the same time. Some tinted creams and concealers contain salicylic acid or benzoyl peroxide. Stop using any product if it bothers your skin or causes more acne.

#### The dangers of tanning

You may like to be tan, but you hurt your skin when it changes color from the sun or indoor tanning. UV exposure can make you more likely to get skin cancer -- now or later. It can also lead to wrinkly, leathery-looking skin and spots. Regularly using tanning beds raises your chances of getting melanoma (the deadliest skin cancer) by 8 times.

#### Fake tans

For a safer tan, try sunless self-tanner. It stains your skin and comes in many forms, including lotions, sprays, and towelettes. Or try airbrush tanning, where a salon expert sprays the tan right on your skin. For a quick fake tan, try some bronzer. It's a brush-on powder or tinted cream that gives the look of a fresh tan. But remember -- you'll still need to protect your

skin from the sun.

### Choosing makeup

If you wear makeup, choose products that have "nonacnegenic" or "noncomedogenic" on the label. They should be less likely to cause acne or clog pores. Look for makeup that's water-based and not oil-based. Some products have expiration dates, even though they aren't required. Most of the time, you'll need to replace eye makeup first. For example, don't use mascara longer than 4 months.

#### Makeup safety tips

Don't share makeup or makeup tools. Use fresh applicators when you try on makeup in stores. Don't apply eyeliner inside your lid, because it may irritate your eye. If you've had an eye infection, buy new makeup so you don't reinfect yourself. Never put on makeup in a car or on the bus. A bump or swerve could make you scratch your eye or get makeup and germs in it.

**False Advertising** - Seeing a model's perfect skin in an ad may make you want to buy the product. Don't be fooled. It takes a team of stylists and professionals to get her to look that great. Graphic artists can digitally remove pimples and freckles. Lighting experts use light and shadow to show the model's best features. CVS drugstores have pledged to move toward non-retouched photos in store displays.

#### Other things that bug your skin

Try to avoid habits that can cause acne, redness, and scars. Don't pick at your skin -- especially pimples. Keep hairspray and gel away from your face. They can clog pores. Don't wear tight headbands or wool hats that can irritate your skin. Don't smoke. It can age your skin and make it yellow and dry.

#### Food and sleep for healthy skin

Keep your skin healthy by eating smart. Fill your plate with veggies, fruits, and whole grains. Choose lean proteins like chicken, fish, lean meat, beans, and eggs. Avoid foods that are high in cholesterol, trans fats, saturated fats, salt, and sugar. Get plenty of sleep to avoid dark circles, fine lines, dull skin, and other side effects of bad rest. Relax! Even stress can make you break out. And stay hydrated.

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In A Light Vein

# Disorder in the Courts

The following come from the book 'Disorder in the Courts', and are things people actually said in court, word for word, taken down and published by court reporters that had the torment of staying calm while the exchanges were taking place.

**Attorney:** What was the first thing your husband said to you that morning?

**Witness:** He said, 'Where am I, Cathy?'

**Attorney:** And why did that upset you?

**Witness:** My name is Susan!

\* \* \*

**Attorney:** What gear were you in at the moment of the impact?

**Witness:** Gucci sweats and Reeboks.

\* \* \*

**Attorney:** Are you sexually active?

**Witness:** No, I just lie there.

\* \* \*

**Attorney:** What is your date of birth?

**Witness:** July 18th.

**Attorney:** What year?

**Witness:** Every year.

\* \* \*

**Attorney:** How old is your son, the one living with you?

**Witness:** Thirty-eight or thirty-five, I can't remember which.

**Attorney:** How long has he lived with you?

**Witness:** Forty-five years.

\* \* \*

**Attorney:** This myasthenia gravis, does it affect your memory at all?

**Witness:** Yes.

**Attorney:** And in what ways does it affect your memory?

**Witness:** I forget.

**Attorney:** You forget? Can you give us an example of something you forgot?

\* \* \*

**Attorney:** Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?

**Witness:** Did you actually pass the bar exam?

\* \* \*

**Attorney:** The youngest son, the 20-year-old, how old is he?

**Witness:** He's 20, much like your IQ.

\* \* \*

**Attorney:** Were you present when your picture was taken?

**Witness:** Are you shitting me?

\* \* \*

**Attorney:** So, the date of conception (of the baby) was August 8th?

**Witness:** Yes.

**Attorney:** And what were you doing at that time?

**Witness:** Getting laid

\* \* \*

**Attorney:** She had three children, right?

**Witness:** Yes.

**Attorney:** How many were boys?

**Witness:** None.

**Attorney:** Were there any girls?

**Witness:** Your Honor, I think I need a different attorney. Can I get a new attorney?

\* \* \*

**Attorney:** How was your first marriage terminated?

**Witness:** By death.

**Attorney:** And by whose death was it terminated?

**Witness:** Take a guess.

\* \* \*

**Attorney:** Can you describe the individual?

**Witness:** He was about medium height and had a beard

**Attorney:** Was this a male or a female?

**Witness:** Unless the circus was in town I'm going with male.

\* \* \*

**Attorney:** Is your appearance here this morning pursuant to a deposition notice which I sent to your attorney?

**Witness:** No, this is how I dress when I go to work.

\* \* \*

**Attorney:** Doctor, how many of your autopsies have you performed on dead people?

**Witness:** All of them. The live ones put up too much of a fight.

\* \* \*

**Attorney:** ALL your responses MUST be oral, OK? What school did you go to?

**Witness:** Oral...

\* \* \*

**Attorney:** Do you recall the time that you examined the body?

**Witness:** The autopsy started around 8:30 PM

**Attorney:** And Mr Denton was dead at the time?

**Witness:** If not, he was by the time I finished.

\* \* \*

**Attorney:** Are you qualified to give a urine sample?

**Witness:** Are you qualified to ask that question?

\* \* \*

*And last:*

**Attorney:** Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?

**Witness:** No.

**Attorney:** Did you check for blood pressure?

**Witness:** No.

**Attorney:** Did you check for breathing?

**Witness:** No.

**Attorney:** So, then it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?

**Witness:** No.

**Attorney:** How can you be so sure, Doctor?

**Witness:** Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.

**Attorney:** I see, but could the patient have still been alive, nevertheless?

**Witness:** Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practising law.

Beautiful Reflection to Friends' Groups

# Let's keep the flame alive

A man, who regularly attended meetings with his friends, without any notice stopped participating in his activities.

After a few weeks, one very cold night the leader of that group decided to visit him.

He found the man at home, alone, sitting in front of a fireplace where a bright and cosy fire burned. Guessing the reason for the visit, the man welcomed the leader. There was a great silence.

The two men only watched the dancing flames around the logs that crackled in the fireplace.

After a few minutes the leader, without saying a word, examined the embers that formed and selected one of them, the most incandescent of all, removing it to the side of the brazier with a pair of tongs. Then he sat down again.

The host was paying attention to everything, fascinated but restless. Before long, the lone ember flame subsided, until there was only a momentary glow and the fire suddenly went out.

In a short time, what was a sample of light and heat was nothing more than a black, cold and dead piece of coal.

Very few words had been spoken since the greeting.

The leader, before preparing to leave, with the pliers returned the

cold and useless coal, placing it again in the middle of the fire. Immediately, the ember was rekindled, fuelled by the light and heat of the burning coals around him.

When the leader reached the door to leave, the host said: 'Thank you for your visit and for your beautiful lesson. I will return to the group. Good night.'

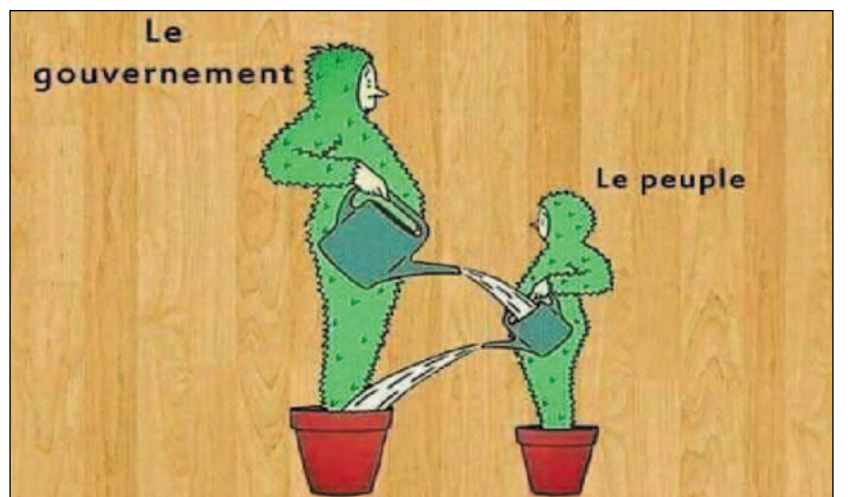
Why are the groups extinguished...?

Very simple: Because each member that withdraws takes fire and heat from the rest.

It is worth reminding members of a group that they are part of the flame. It is good to remind you that we are all responsible for keeping each other's flame burning and we must promote the union between all so that the fire is really strong, effective and lasting.

## The group is also a family

It does not matter if sometimes we are bothered by so many messages that reach the chat; what matters is to be connected, some of us are silent, others very active, the friends that we are meeting here are to meet, learn, exchange ideas, or simply know that we are not alone, that there is a group of friends, colleagues or family with whom we can count.





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## **The King's Man** trailer: Ralph Fiennes' prequel to the Kingsman franchise promises a thrilling origin story

*The King's Man* is directed by Matthew Vaughn and stars Ralph Fiennes, Gemma Arterton, Rhys Ifans, Matthew Goode, Tom Hollander, Harris Dickinson, Daniel Brühl, with Djimon Hounsou and Charles Dance.



Following two superhit films in the Kingsman franchise, *Kingsman: the Secret Circle* and *Kingsman: The Golden Circle*, with the first widely considered as one of the most innovative, energetic and most modern action movies, the third film, a prequel, simply titled *The King's Man*, has dropped its second trailer, and boy does it make up for all the reservations we had after watching the first trailer about 7-8 months ago. Assembling some of history's worst tyrants and criminal masterminds, who gather to plot a war to wipe out millions, the *King's Man* trailer promises a wild ride as one man must race against time to stop them, tracing the origin story of the very first independent intelligence agency, *The Kingsman*.

*The King's Man* is directed by Matthew Vaughn and stars Ralph Fiennes, Gemma Arterton, Rhys Ifans, Matthew Goode, Tom Hollander, Harris Dickinson, Daniel Brühl, with Djimon Hounsou and Charles Dance.

BL Verdict: Matthew Vaughn, one of the most underrated Directors working on Hollywood today, promises another adrenaline-pumping, well-crafted, thrilling action movie with *The King's Man* while also continuing the franchise's meritorious legacy.

## Is **Kangana Ranaut's Tejas** a sequel to Vicky Kaushal's **Uri: The Surgical Strike**? Producer Ronnie Screwvala clarifies



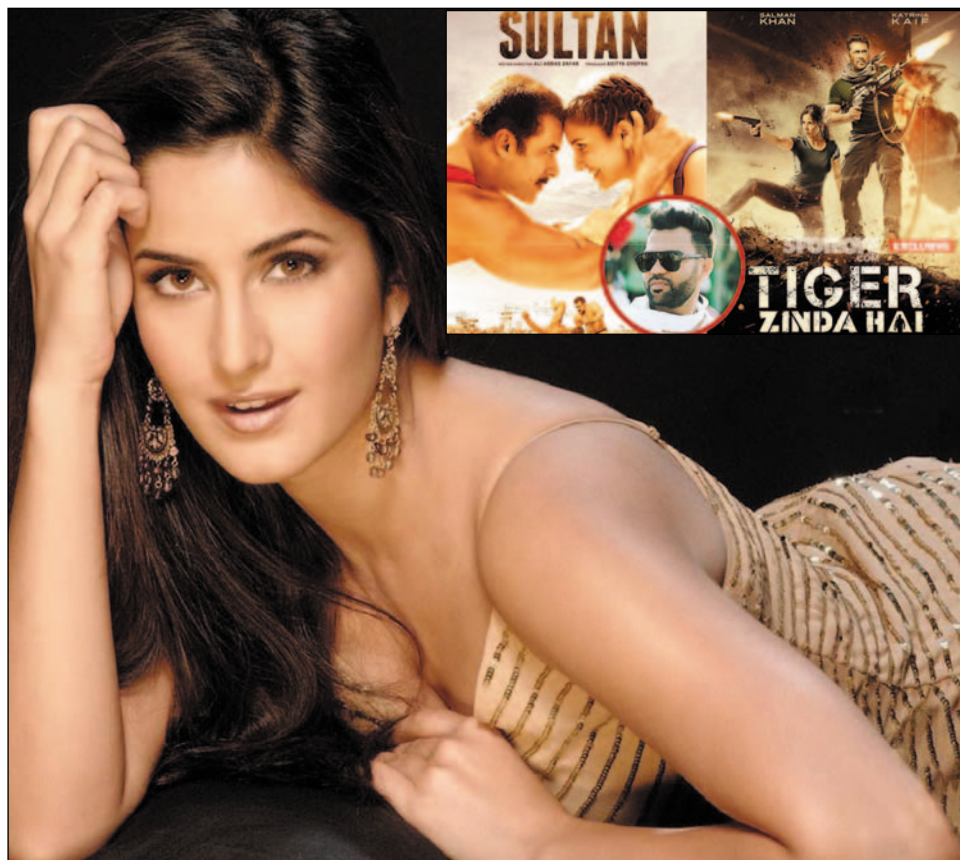
In February, the makers of Kangana Ranaut's *Tejas* released the first look of the film, where we saw the actress in the avatar of an Indian Airforce Pilot. While the film is expected to go on floors soon after the lockdown, there were speculations that it is the sequel to Vicky Kaushal's blockbuster *Uri: The Surgical Strike*. Clearing the air, producer Ronnie Screwvala told Mumbai Mirror, "We wanted to make a film about the army so *Uri* happened. *Tejas* is not a sequel to *Uri*, because that was a true story and this isn't. but it is on the same lines and on the same scale."

Talking about the film, Kangana Ranaut earlier told the tabloid, "Very often, the sacrifices made by our brave women in uniform go unnoticed by the nation. *Tejas* is a film where I have the honour of playing the role of one such Air Force pilot who puts country before self. I hope we instill a sense of patriotism and pride in the youth of today with this movie. I'm looking forward to the journey with Sarvesh and Ronnie on this one."

"We made an army-based film with *Uri: The Surgical Strike*. The film *Tejas* is our dedication to the brave fighter pilots of the Indian Air Force, who always put the country first. We are excited and honoured to share this brave story with viewers and hope it inspires many more women to join the Air Force," said Ronnie. The film *Tejas* is directed by debutant Sarvesh Mewara and is set to hit the screens in April 2021.

## **Sultan and Tiger Zinda Hai** director Ali Abbas Zafar to create his own superhero universe starting with **Katrina Kaif's** film

*Katrina Kaif and Ali Abbas Zafar worked together in films like Tiger Zinda Hai, Bharat and Mere Brother Ki Dulhan.*



Blockbuster filmmaker, Ali Abbas Zafar, who is known for delivering hits like *Tiger Zinda Hai*, *Sultan* and *Bharat*, has confirmed that he is set to make his own superhero universe starting the first part with Katrina Kaif starrer. The director confirmed this news to Mumbai Mirror, "Yes, I am creating a superhero universe, beginning with Katrina's film. We then move to *Mr India*, which will carry forward bits from Katrina's film, and we are developing two more characters. My third superhero is rooted in Indian mythology and the fourth comes from the Indian army."

Talking about his highly-anticipated *Mr India*, Ali said, "My *Mr India* is neither a remake nor a reboot of the original film. It's a completely new film, we are just calling it *Mr India*. My film is essentially about the common man fighting a mighty villain, but done in a cool, hip way, using science and technology and being relevant to today's social scenario." The filmmaker is currently working on the script of the film. "I hope to return to Mumbai with the script of *Mr India*," said Zafar.

When asked whether he will collaborate with Salman or not, he replied, "I have been working on *Mr India* since the last two years. I was committed to doing it long before *Bharat*. Ditto, Katrina's film. But yes, I love him like an elder brother and will work with him again, very soon." Katrina Kaif will be next seen in *Sooryavanshi*, which also features Akshay Kumar, Jaaved Jaaferi, Gulshan Grover, Kumud Mishra, Abhimanyu Singh, Vivan Bhatena and Sikander Khan, with special appearances from Ajay Devgn as Singham and Ranveer Singh as *Simmba*. The film was supposed to release on March 24 but has been postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak. It's been bankrolled under the banners of Rohit Shetty Picturez, Dharma Productions and Cape Of Good Films.



## Following Sushant Singh Rajput's sudden death

## Karan Patel lashes out at people for giving false hopes on social media

**Y**eh Hai Mohabbatein actor Karan Patel has lost his cool on people, who pretend to be for people during tough times. The actor penned a lengthy note where his angst is clearly visible through his words, reports Times of India.

This post came after actor Sushant Singh Rajput's sudden death, who was battling depression. Karan Patel put up a black picture on social media and wrote: "My question for everyone who suddenly, through their social media posts, finds the need to let the world know that they are available to talk in case someone is facing depression."

He further questioned, "Was someone's suicide needed for you to let others know that you are there for them? How come no one offers their shoulder to people suffering from depression until a victim of the same decides to end his/her life? Where the f\*\*k are these so-called supportive people



on a normal day to day basis?

"Why the f\*\*k don't you put up a similar 'reaching out to' post on a weekly basis so that people actually know that you genuinely want to be there for the depressed souls and not just follow the trend that happens whenever someone takes their own life. So stop this f\*\*\*\*\*g pretence of wanting

to be there for the world, your f\*\*\*\*\*g drama is more painful than someone's death," said the actor.

Karan Patel continued by adding that most of them write about helping people on social media just to follow the trend. He wrote: "The fact is that 90% of you have invited people suffering from depression to approach you only because you simply wanted to be a part of the current trend. The biggest trigger of depression is false hope, which most of you are actually giving to people who are genuinely suffering from it."

He continued, "So henceforth think ten time before you put up a f\*\*\*\*\*g post committing to be there for people because when the time does arrive, when someone needs you and you fail to be there for them, then god forbid if there is a loss of another life, then that loss shall be on you. Commit only if you have the b\*\*\*s to go through with it."

## Kumkum Bhagya's Naina Singh: My mom and I both had a crush on Shabir Ahluwalia

**N**aina Singh, who was seen in *Kumkum Bhagya* as Rhea Mehra, recently announced her decision to quit the show. Naina was seen in the role of Shabir Ahluwalia aka Abhi's daughter, and she shared an interesting bit while working in the show.

During an exclusive live interaction with ETimes TV recently, Naina revealed that initially she was scared to perform in front of Shabir.

She said, "Oh my God. I had a crush on Shabir and my mother also had a crush on him. I was so scared and told my mother about it. I told her, 'How can I call him dad?' I remember the first scene with him in *Kumkum Bhagya*. It was with the entire Mehra family. I had to come down the stairs and tell him 'Mera gift kaha hai'. My legs were shivering. He was standing in front of me and on top of that I had to call him dad. I lost my voice. Even the director started wondering what happened. I drank water so many times. Shabir then told me, 'It's ok. I am looking the other way, you say your dialogue'. For a very long time, he would close his eyes because I couldn't say my dialogues. For me it would be very difficult."

Naina further shared how her mother told her to strictly think of him as her dad. "My mother would say, 'You don't forget that he is my crush too. So you forget your crush and think of him as your dad'. But it was so much fun shooting," shared Naina.

Naina had decided to quit in August because she felt her negative character was getting monotonous and was also missing out on many good opportunities.

## Mona Singh reveals how husband Shyam proposed her; says it's quarantine honeymoon for them!



**M**ona Singh got married to the south Indian investment banker boyfriend, Shyam Rajagopalan, on December 27, 2019. The wedding ceremony was a low-key affair with only close friends and family in attendance. While talking to Pinkvilla, the actress revealed how she met Shyam, what character about him impressed her and how he proposed her.

Mona told the portal that she has known Shyam for the last five years. The actress revealed that she met him through a friend at a friend's birthday party and they hit it off! She added that he is a funny man, which was a big tick for her. What she likes about him is that he lets her be and that he doesn't want to change a single thing about her. Mona further added that she can be very annoying at times, but he is very cool. They have mutual respect and give each other space.

When asked how Shyam proposed her, she said, "He proposed to me in October

just before my birthday. I was so surprised by the entire episode of the proposal. I was in his car and he popped out the ring in the middle of the road. He just asked me out of the blue if I would marry him and put the ring in my hand. I was like, 'Arey, at least, let me reply yes or no'. Everyone on the road was giving us *gaalis*."

When asked how is her married life going on as after the wedding, the entire country was under lockdown, the *Kehne Ko Humsafar Hain* actress said, "It is going great guns. It is a quarantine honeymoon for us. We were going to go to Spain or Italy but *ab woh toh gaya*. Now, we are cooking pizza and pasta at home."



## CINE 12

Mardi 23 juin - 21.15

## PSYCHO

Star: Vince Vaughn, Anne  
Heche, Julianne Moore

## CINE 12

Mercredi 24 juin - 21.15

## Legends Of The Fall

Avec: Brad Pitt, Anthony  
Hopkins, Aidan Quinn

## CINE 12

Jeudi 25 juin - 21.15

## S.W.A.T.: Under Siege



mardi 23 juin

## MBC 1

06.00 Local: Rodrig Prog  
07.00 Dessin Anime  
10.35 Mag: Origami  
10.45 Mag: Zoboomafoo  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.25 Doc: Autour Des Valeurs  
12.35 Doc: Comme Un Poisson...  
13.30 MBC Production  
14.30 D.Anime: Bob Le Bricoleur  
14.41 D.Anime: Le Quiz De Zack  
14.44 D.Anime: Astrology  
15.07 D.Anime: Kuu Kuu Harajuku  
16.28 D.Anime: Linkers  
17.00 Local: Satrangi  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.00 Local: Priorite Sante  
20.10 Serial: Unforgotten  
21.55 Serial: Chicago Police...  
23.00 Le Journal

## MBC 2

08.00 Karm Phal Data Shani  
09.00 Live Educational Prog...  
17.00 Zoom TV Live  
20.00 Karm Phal Data Shani  
20.45 Film: Kanoon Ki Awaaz



Starring: Shatrughan Sinha,  
Jayapradha, Asrani, Menaka  
Babbar, Prem Chopra  
22.45 DDI Live

## MBC 3

06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa  
06.26 Mag: Urban Gardens  
06.43 Mag: World Stories  
06.58 Mag: Voa Connect  
07.26 Doc: A Question Of Science  
08.00 Doc: Rhino Dollars  
09.00 Live Educational Program...  
16.02 Doc: 360 GEO  
17.19 Mag: Made In Germany  
18.10 Mag: REV: The Global Auto..  
18.43 Mag: Healthy Living  
19.00 Journal Kreol  
19.24 Doc: A Question Of Science  
20.03 Local: Tamil Programme  
20.32 Film: Junga  
22.56 Doc: Video Game Music  
00.05 Mag: Urban Gardens  
00.10 Doc: Builders Of The Future  
00.35 Mag: Check In  
01.01 Doc: A Question Of Science  
01.08 Mag: Made In Germany

## Cine 12

01.37 Tele: Esmeraldas  
02.22 Serial: The L.A. Complex  
03.44 Film: Mamma Mia  
05.33 Tele: Amanda  
05.57 Film: Bernie The Dolphin  
09.00 Serial: Line Of Duty  
09.59 Tele: Au Nom De L'Amour  
10.23 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett  
10.48 Serial: S.W.A.T  
11.29 Tele: Dulce Amor  
11.58 Film: Mamma Mia  
13.48 Tele: Amanda  
14.30 Film: Bernie The Dolphin  
16.30 Serial: Line Of Duty  
17.25 Serial: Shades Of Blue  
18.08 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour  
18.35 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett  
19.00 Tele: Dulce Amor  
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir  
20.30 Serial: Shades Of Blue  
21.15 Film: Psycho

## Bollywood TV

09.30 Film: Khamoshi  
12.04 / 19.54 -  
Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam  
12.26 / 20.11 -  
Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala  
12.46 / 20.32 Radha Krishna  
13.08 / 21.09 - Bin Kuch Kahe  
13.30 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek  
13.52 / 21.46 -  
Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
14.14 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan  
14.35 / 22.25 - Ishqbaaz  
15.10 Film: Guest In London  
Stars: Kartik Aaryan, Kriti  
Kharbanda, Paresh Rawal  
18.00 Live: Samacher  
18.30 Kumkum Bhagya  
18.51 Piya Albela  
19.13 Mere Angne Mein  
19.35 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai

mercredi 24 juin

07.00 Dessin Anime  
10.23 Mag: Origami  
11.15 Local: Itinerer Moris  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.25 Local: Autour Des Valeurs  
12.35 Doc: Master Of Engineering  
14.10 Local: Priorite Sante  
14.30 D.Anime: Bob Le Bricoleur  
14.41 D.Anime: Le Quiz De Zack  
14.45 D.Anime: Astrology  
14.47 D.Anime: Hogie The Globe...  
14.59 D.Anime: Zou  
16.03 D.Anime: Delilah Et Julius  
16.30 D.Anime: Linkers  
17.00 Local: Satrangi  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.00 Prod: Lottotech  
21.10 Serial: The Enemy Within  
21.55 Serial: Chicago Police...  
23.06 Local: Le Journal

08.00 Karm Phal Data Shani  
09.00 Live Educational Prog...  
17.00 Zoom TV Live



20.45 Film: Samraat  
Starring: Dharmendra,  
Jeetendra, Hema Malini  
23.26 DDI Live

06.00 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto  
06.26 Mag: Urban Gardens  
07.26 Doc: A Question Of Science  
07.31 Mag: Made In Germany  
08.03 Doc: Horizons S  
08.49 Mag: Japan Video Topics  
09.00 Live Educational Prog...  
16.03 Doc: World Stamps  
16.45 Mag: Close Up  
17.14 Doc: Memories Of D Day  
18.04 Mag: Motorweek  
18.30 Live: News  
18.45 Mag: Shift  
18.52 Mag: Urban Gardens  
19.00 Live: Journal Kreol  
19.24 Doc: A Question Of Science  
20.02 Programme In Marathi  
20.29 Film: Online Binline  
22.33 Mag: Focus On Europe  
23.42 Mag: Motorweek  
00.08 Mag: Urban Gardens  
00.13 Doc: Olivia's Garden

01.37 Film: Pshycho  
03.00 Serial: S.W.A.T  
03.41 Film: Pitch Perfect 2  
05.38 Tele: Amanda  
06.20 Serial: Shades Of Blue  
06.53 Film: Supercollider  
08.22 Mag: Hollywood No Set  
09.00 Serial: Line Of Duty  
09.59 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour  
10.46 Serial: S.W.A.T  
11.26 Tele: Dulce Amor  
12.00 Film: Pitch Perfect 2  
13.44 Tele: Amanda  
14.26 Mag: Hollywood On Set  
14.45 Film: Supercollider  
16.40 Serial: Mission Impossible  
18.03 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour  
19.00 Tele: Dulce Amor  
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir  
20.30 Series: When Calls The Heart  
21.15 Film: Legends Of The Fall  
23.23 Tele: Amanda

09.19 Film: Bhai Behen  
12.04 / 19.54 -  
Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam  
12.26 / 20.11 -  
Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala  
12.46 / 20.32 Radha Krishna  
13.08 / 21.09 - Bin Kuch Kahe  
13.30 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek  
13.52 / 21.46 -  
Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
14.14 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan  
14.35 / 22.25 - Ishqbaaz  
15.10 Film: Half Girlfriend  
Stars: Shraddha Kapoor, Greg  
Kriek, Arjun Kapoor  
17.30 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein  
18.00 Live: Samacher  
18.30 Kumkum Bhagya  
18.51 Piya Albela  
19.13 Mere Angne Mein  
19.24 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai  
20.05 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum

jeudi 25 juin

06.00 Klip Seleksion  
07.00 Dessin Anime  
10.23 Mag: Origami  
11.15 Local: Itinerer  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.30 Local: Autour Des Valeurs  
14.30 D.Anime: Bob Le Bricoleur  
14.41 D.Anime: Le Quiz De Zack  
14.59 D.Anime: Zou  
15.23 D.Anime: Kuu Kuu Karajuku  
15.34 D.Anime: Astrology  
15.40 Un Chien Des Flandres  
16.06 D.Anime: Delilah Et Julius  
16.36 D.Anime: Cam And Leon  
17.00 Local: Satrangi  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Jamai Raja  
19.30 Le Journal  
20.06 Film:  
22.12 Chicago Police Department  
23.02 Le Journal

08.00 Karm Phal Data Shani  
09.00 Live Educational Prog...  
17.00 Zoom TV Live  
20.00 Karm Phal Data Shani



20.45 Film: Bahu Begum  
Starring: Ashok Kumar,  
Pradeep Kumar and Meena  
Kumari  
22.25 DDI Live

06.00 Mag: Motorweek  
06.26 Mag: Urban Gardens  
07.26 Doc: A Question Of Science  
07.30 Doc: Garden Party  
08.40 Doc: World Stamps  
09.00 Live Educational Prog...  
16.03 Doc: Visite Guidee  
16.45 Mag: Initiative Africa  
17.17 Mag: Focus On Europe  
17.58 Mag: Eco India  
18.40 Mag: Sur Mesure  
19.00 Live: Journal Kreol  
19.24 Doc: A Question Of Science  
20.05 Doc: Michael Jackson  
22.13 Mag: Strictly Street  
22.36 Doc: The Woman With The  
Bloodhounds  
23.18 Mag: Eco India  
23.44 Mag: Urban Gardens  
23.49 Mag: Sur Mesure  
00.02 Mag: Shift

01.03 Film: Legends Of The Fall  
03.10 Serial: S.W.A.T  
03.51 Film: Do No Harm  
05.18 Telenovela: Amanda  
06.09 Serial: When Calls The Heart  
06.51 Film: Jem Et Les Hologram...  
09.00 Serial: Line Of Duty  
09.59 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour  
10.45 Serial: S.W.A.T  
11.29 Tele: Dulce Amor  
12.00 Film: Do No Harm  
13.37 Tele: Amanda  
14.30 Film: Jem Et Les Hologram...  
16.28 Serial: Line Of Duty  
17.27 Serial: When Calls The Heart  
18.08 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour  
18.30 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett  
19.00 Tele: Dulce Amor  
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir  
20.30 Serial: When Calls The Heart  
21.15 Film: S.W.A.T

09.31 Film: Parvarish  
12.04 / 19.54 -  
Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam  
12.26 / 20.11 -  
Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala  
12.49 / 20.32 Radha Krishna  
13.10 / 21.09 - Bin Kuch Kahe  
13.32 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek  
13.53 / 21.46 -  
Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
14.15 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan  
14.38 / 22.25 - Chota Bheem  
15.10 Film: Bareilly Ki Barfi  
Stars: Ayushmann Khurrana,  
Kriti Sanon, Rajkummar Rao  
17.00 Live: Samacher  
18.30 Kumkum Bhagya  
18.52 Piya Albela  
19.14 Mere Angne Mein  
19.36 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai

Mercredi 24 juin - 15.10

## Half Girlfriend

Stars: Shraddha Kapoor,  
Greg Kriek, Arjun Kapoor

Jeudi 25 juin

- 15.10

Stars: Ayushmann Khurrana, Kriti  
Sanon, Rajkummar Rao





Nita Chicooree-Mercier

**P**hased lifting of lockdown in a pandemic period restricts mass celebration of International Yoga Day in India. It is likely to be celebrated in small numbers. The large-scale yoga sessions will take place in times of normalcy, hopefully. Elsewhere there is hardly any mention of the celebration. Media attention is rather focused on lamenting the financial losses caused by cancellations of concerts on Music Day, which is celebrated on the same day.

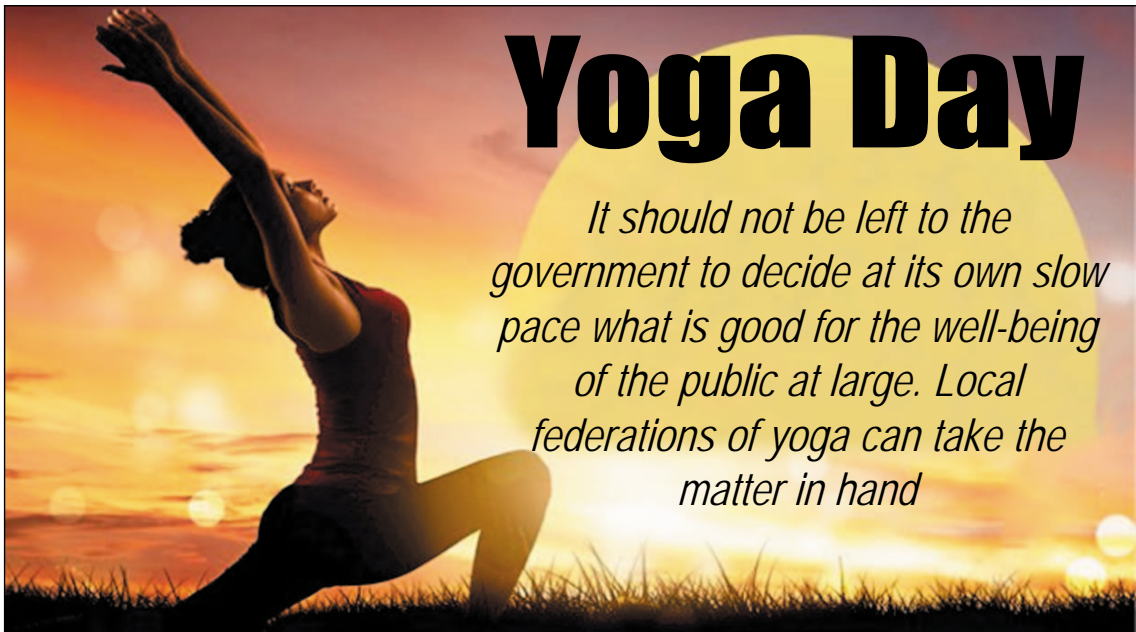
Indian diplomacy succeeded in garnering international support for the proposal of a yoga day during the early years of the NDA-led government. The next step would be to have a special day for yoga only, which will give it the attention it deserves.

Yoga spread from India to the rest of the world in the 20th century and is being adopted in more countries. Its benefits on health and well-being are widely acknowledged, and a plethora of books are published in several languages across the world. Yoga classes are held even in most improbable countries known for being closed to outside influences.

Observation of nature and animals inspired several physical positions in yoga, which knowledge of human anatomy shows they help blood circulation and the massaging of all the organs in the body. Yoga also inspires more motivated learners to be inquisitive and explore other disciplines of yoga apart from Hatha Yoga. It then opens windows on vast areas of knowledge and the philosophy underlying them.

Most of the early Western specialists spent years in India, learning yoga from experienced teachers. André Van Lysebeth is one such well-known yoga teacher in Belgium who wrote on the topic in the 1970s and greatly contributed to making it popular in France and French-speaking countries. Eva Ruchpaul, who is the wife of a Mauritian doctor in Paris, not only published books on yoga but also trained doctors in the techniques of breathing. She was a pioneer in a discipline which has been up to now of great use in medical treatment.

Today yoga has engendered different branches of physical exercises which are given European names. A few years back, there was an attempt to disown the Indian root of yoga by American families who were worried to see youngsters integrating yoga as part of their lifestyles and were uncomfortable to acknowledge the influence of a foreign culture. There was an awkward claim to present yoga as a Christian cultural phenomenon just as Ayurveda recipes were



unscrupulously copied in a typical American way and even exported back to India.

It is a totally different picture in France. The French openly admit the influence of yoga in all sorts of new disciplines with French names to enhance physical well-being. The new disciplines are flourishing into successful businesses, ranging from more dynamic physical exercises for men, advanced courses on the flow of energy along *chakras* to mass sessions of meditation and healing by a new brand of French specialists. Associations of the Indian diaspora in France object to what they call 'appropriation' of Indian culture. Their stance is aired in French media. It is randomly lumped up with the series of claims hailing from other minorities who have a propensity to complain about something every two days in France.

**“There is nothing new in Western countries borrowing treasures from other civilizations to enrich their own culture. The other point is to what extent people of Indian origin abroad value their own culture, if ever they are aware of its worth. And if there is an awareness that they pick up today the clothes that Westerners threw away yesterday, in terms of ideas, interaction in society and cultural habits. If you run after trash, you can't blame others for picking up your cherished treasures...”**

Some members of the Pondicherrian community, natives of Sri Lankan origin and of overseas French islands are likely to be in the forefront of this kind of reaction. They already have past records of harbouring age-old resentment against their culture being 'appropriated' by other segments of the population in India itself. Something which gives them a revolutionary edge in a few noisy claims made in heated debates. Such observations are made in the amphitheatres of universities and occasionally in private assemblies. All the nuances in the flow of cross-cultural legacies in India over millennia are not taken into account; namely, the widely claimed 'older culture' was also imbibed with external features inherited from other sections of Hindu culture. Anyway, on one occasion in the 1990s a professor of

Pondicherrian origin reassured worried students during a course on Indian civilization in Reunion, telling them: 'Don't worry, Westerners will not 'appropriate' our culture any time soon. It will take centuries before they come to anything close to acquiring the Indian mental landscape.'

Deep within, people of Indian origin cherish the treasures of their culture. It is matter of elegance and decency to keep one's culture as a private garden to oneself. They are not keen on convincing or winning other hearts and minds. Proselytism and the 'assimilationist' style of other cultures splashing their goods around are viewed as inelegant and vulgar. The belief is: let everyone find their own way.

This being said, yoga has a universal appeal which transcends cultures. Considering the Western quest for other branches of knowledge in India in the 1950s, and the invitation made to swamis and gurus to come over to the US, UK and other Western countries to lecture and teach, yoga was bound to become increasingly popular. And the Indian PM's proposal in 2015 paved the way to more overtures.

There is nothing new in Western countries borrowing treasures from other civilizations to enrich their own culture. The other point is to what extent people of Indian origin abroad value their own culture, if ever they are aware of its worth. And if there is an awareness that they pick up today the clothes that Westerners threw away yesterday, in terms of ideas, interaction in society and cultural habits. If you run after trash, you can't blame others for picking up your cherished treasures.

As regards yoga, we do have a feeling that not much is being done to promote it so that it benefits a greater number of people, starting with the young in schools and the rest of society. It should not be left to the government to decide at its own slow pace what is good for the well-being of the public at large. Local federations of yoga can take the matter in hand and see whether there is a sufficient number of yoga teachers locally to press for scaling up of teaching the discipline in the country. If our citizens simply acquire breathing techniques not only for physical health but to gain self-control in a society prone to fly into a temper over any trifle, it will be a tremendous benefit to themselves and to society as a whole.



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor

## Learning to Trust Divine Guidance



**K**eeping an open mind is the most important step when learning to listen to divine guidance.

Anyone who has asked for divine guidance knows that it can be challenging to trust it when it comes. This is because divine guidance comes in many forms and it is sometimes hard to locate it. We aren't sure if we are meant to trust our thoughts, our feelings, our dreams, or our intuitions to be the carriers of divine wisdom. We are not sure if advice from a friend is the form in which the guidance has come into the world, or if our own opinion is the source of wisdom we need to take seriously. The ability to sort all this out comes with trial and error, and the best way to learn to recognize divine guidance is to engage in the process of asking and receiving.

Sometimes when we ask for guidance, we already have a sense of what we want to hear. At such times, receiving guidance can be difficult, because we don't want to hear anything that appears to be in opposition to our desire. Therefore, one of the most important qualities we need to cultivate if we are to receive guidance is an open mind. It helps to acknowledge what we want, and then to symbolically set it aside, making room for whatever wisdom comes through to us.

Cultivating an active relationship with the divine is the essential ingredient to being able to receive and trust guidance when it comes our way. We can use our journals, developing a relationship with the divine through the written word. As we request and receive guidance, we might take notes on our experiences. Over time we will begin to recognize when we were able to hear correctly and when we were not. In this way, we will gradually attune ourselves to our particular relationship with the divine. Begin to trust the guidance you are receiving and soon you will find it flowing with ease.