

MAURITIUS TIMES

"Corruption is a cancer, a cancer that eats away at a citizen's faith in democracy, diminishes the instinct for innovation and creativity." - Joe Biden, former vice president of the United States



Interview: Rama Sithanen - Former Finance Minister

"Economic contraction will be over 13% in 2020

and we will not return to a pre Covid-19 situation before 2023 or 2024"

'ICAC has an opportunity to show that it can bark and bite, that it has the capability of unravelling the massive CEB-BWSC corruption case'

'Too many suspect cases revealed both locally and internationally have remained unresolved. This gives the impression that we are simply biding time'

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Keeping Mauritius Covid-19 free



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Le pays est prisonnier d'une structure fiscale désuète. Et sans revenu fiscal suffisant, l'Etat est obligé d'emprunter pour financer un train de vie artificiel

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Wake up calls from the FATF & EU



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Continuing Slide Downwards

The Audit Report that is released every year comes with a measure of predictability. This refers to the long list of irregularities that the Director of Audit signals in his examination of various expenses incurred by the Government for the proper running of its different services and infrastructural projects undertaken in different sectors. It has been the same story through successive governments down the years: delays in completion of projects to substantial project cost overruns, irregularities in procurement procedures and award of contracts; favouritism of various kinds in various sectors and at different levels to political protégés, etc.

The brief of the Director of Audit is to make observations and comments on the management of public funds in the country each year. The objective is clearly to give wake-up calls to the government of the day and induce it to take the remedial measures required so as to improve the efficient financial management in the public sector – hoping that the shortcomings pointed out and that result in waste and inefficiency at the level of certain concerned departments will be promptly addressed. It is not only the scale of financial adjustment that catches attention for the sloppiness with which different ministries have engaged with work allocations and questionable procurement exercises, which come at a high cost to the taxpayer. The aim is to minimize such occurrences which smack of inefficiency and are not in accord with good governance.

Judging from what the opposition parties and the press have been drawing attention to these last few weeks in relation to the procurement of pharmaceutical and related products prior to and during the confinement period, it looks like the next Audit Report for the current financial year will again make for depressing - and even shocking - reading. A document recently tabled by the Ministry of Health which gives a list of goods purchased under Budget 2019/2020 in connection with Covid-19 reveals the supply of these various goods to the health authorities, via the State Trading Corporation, which has cost the Exchequer some Rs 1.5 billion during a three-month period, beginning from March and up to June 2020. We thus learn of business houses unregistered with the Registrar of Companies, hardware stores, as well as some companies in this pharmaceutical sector having supplied goods amounting to hundreds of millions of rupees which, in some instances, would have been facilitated through the instrument of Emergency Procurement. What is striking are the names of protégés known for their closeness to the political heavyweights.

Given the scale of this rot in the system, the opposition has called for the institution for a commission of inquiry into these procurements, as it did in the case of St Louis Gate. And, once again, it is very unlikely that the Government will accede to that request, preferring to commit the inquiry, if any, to ICAC. Much has been aired about ICAC and we can only reiterate with other observers what has come to be seen as the obvious, namely ICAC's inability to unravel the big cases that have been confided to it. It has missed several opportunities to prove itself and turn around its poor image and regain some credibility. One more case to its charge will only burden it further and most likely spread thin its resources so that it may be a foregone conclusion what the outcome is going to be.

However, the larger issue here goes beyond ICAC. It is that the virus of favouritism and corruption that seems to have so infiltrated our polity that it appears as the new normal way of proceeding in running the affairs of the country. We are already on blacklists and our global business sector is labouring under the dark clouds of loss of investor confidence, and the country's loss of credibility globally.

Unless there is a demonstrable resolve to frontally confront the worms crawling in the woodwork of governance, the continuing slide downwards seems inevitable.

The Conversation

Coronavirus recovery – the new economic thinking we need

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is calling the coronavirus-induced economic crisis “the Great Lockdown”. The phrase mimics the Great Depression of the 1920s and the Great Recession that followed the 2007-08 global financial crisis. But, while it is tempting to maintain linguistic consistency in naming the present crisis the Great Lockdown, this term is misleading.

The Great Lockdown suggests that the root cause of the current economic depression lies in the negative impact of the pandemic. But the extent of the economic malaise cannot be attributed solely to the coronavirus.

The record rates of unemployment and the dramatic decline in economic growth are direct outcomes of policy choices promoted by the dominant economic paradigm the world has had since the 1980s – one that says free markets are the best way to organise our economic lives. It promoted interests of the financial sector, discouraged investment, and weakened the public sector's capacity to deal with the pandemic.

The coronavirus recovery ahead requires a new way of economic thinking – one that puts the wellbeing of society over individual success and fundamentally challenges what is valued and financially rewarded by the economy.

Today's economic policies have their roots in the thinking of the 1980s, which blossomed in the 1990s. It is based on the idea that, in the short run, the economy is characterised by market imperfections. These imperfections may lead to crises if external shocks – like a global pandemic – hit because income, spending, and production levels in the economy unexpectedly change and many workers become suddenly laid off.

But this paradigm believes that such imperfections are easily solved by temporary government interventions. It assumes that people make mostly “rational” decisions based on a mathematical model of the economy – so a limited amount of government spending and interest rate tinkering can bring the market back to normal. In the long term, this is meant to result in a healthy equilibrium where all people who want to work are once again able to find a job.

These ideas are the building blocks of mainstream economics and have had a decisive influence over economic policy in capitalist countries since the 1980s. Keeping inflation in check has become the top priority of economic policy in recent decades. It comes before other, arguably more important goals of policy, relating to social justice and sustainability.

Mainstream economics believes that in the long run excessive government spending, be it on healthcare, education, or on long-term projects like renewable energy, does more harm than good. This is because it has no influence over long-term levels of unemployment and GDP, but instead leads to inflation.

Crisis not averted

This dominant paradigm dictates that governments only intervene in “abnormal times” – such as following the global financial crisis and now, during the coronavirus pandemic. In response to the pandemic, policymakers have injected billions into the economy through higher government spending,

record-low interest rate levels, and large-scale asset purchases through quantitative easing programmes.

But based on the experience of the past decade, it's hard to say that economic crises are truly abnormal. Heterodox economics, an approach to economics that I belong to, says economic crises are an inherent feature of capitalism.

The dominant paradigm survived the Great Recession. Some government spending was allowed to stimulate the economy after the crisis. But then, in 2010, this was replaced by a decade of austerity, which had a devastating impact on society. In the UK, for example, years of underfunding have left the NHS barely able to cope with managing the pandemic.

Just like the Great Recession in 2007, the coronavirus pandemic has exposed the contradictions of our so-called advanced economies that lead to crises. Private sector indebtedness, persistent income and wealth inequalities, dependence of the labour market on insecure forms of employment, the prevalence of oligopolies where a limited few control markets – coronavirus is not the root cause of our economic problems, merely its catalyst.

But it's still unclear whether the pandemic will provoke a new way of economic thinking. Coronavirus seemingly fits the mainstream narrative of crises being caused by an “external shock”, which is unrelated to the structure and functioning of the economy itself.

But the underlying causes which make this crisis so severe – like inequality, insecure employment, market concentration – are direct outcomes of the mainstream approach to economic thinking and policy. The sluggish recovery after the Great Recession in 2007, evident in persistent productivity problems, low growth rates, unresolved racial inequalities and increasing wealth disparities in many high-income countries, is a testament to the ineffectiveness of the dominant economic paradigm.

Unique opportunity

We face a unique opportunity to fundamentally rethink the priorities of economic policy and the thinking that underpins them. Responses to the pandemic show that governments have the means to invest in healthcare, education, and research. And to support workers and small business. These policies help many people achieve financial security, which increases private spending levels and supports economic activity.

These points have long been emphasised by heterodox economists. More government spending on public investment projects and public services, as well as greater oversight of how market activity influences society, must be the focus going forward.

To build back better economies after the pandemic, we must put social and environmental wellbeing before private profit. It is therefore crucial that, as the economy recovers, the debates on how higher government spending should be financed go beyond the “there is no alternative” view of economic policy. They must seriously consider different approaches to public debt, taxation, green monetary policy, and managing inflation.

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Projet de loi des finances

Le conservatisme néolibéral l'emporte sur la justice fiscale

Aditya Narayan

Le ministre des Finances a présenté son projet de loi des finances [The Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. VII of 2020)] à l'Assemblée nationale pour l'année 2020-21, mardi dernier.

Sur le plan de la réforme fiscale, ce projet confirme la reculade du Gouvernement face aux pressions du secteur privé qui s'est opposé à un taux d'imposition marginal de 40% sur le revenu personnel des contribuables les plus aisés. Ce faisant, le Gouvernement a cédé aux sirènes du conservatisme néolibéral, ce qui a tué dans l'oeuf toute proposition d'introduire un véritable impôt progressif à Maurice.

Pour mieux comprendre les implications économiques et sociales du changement de position du Gouvernement, il convient de comparer la situation pré-budgétaire (Acte 1) à la situation budgétaire (Acte 2) et à la situation post-budgétaire (Acte 3).

Acte 1 – Pré-budget

Dans l'Acte 1 (avant le budget 2020-21), les particuliers étaient assujettis au taux de 10% sur le revenu annuel net jusqu'à Rs 700,000. Le revenu annuel net au-dessus de Rs 700,000 fut imposé au taux d'imposition marginal (*Marginal Tax Rate - MTR*) de 15%. En outre, il y avait une "charge de solidarité" (*Solidarity Levy*) de 5% sur le revenu annuel imposable (incluant les dividendes) dépassant Rs 3,5 millions, en vertu de l'article 16B de la Loi sur les Impôts (*Income Tax Act*). Les contribuables payaient l'impôt au MTR supérieur de 20% (15% + 5%) sur l'excédent de revenu sur le seuil de Rs 3,5 millions. Dans ce système, il y avait trois taux d'imposition selon les tranches de revenu (un taux de base de 10%, un premier taux marginal de 15% et un second taux marginal de 20%).

Acte 2 - Budget

Dans l'Acte 2, le budget 2020-21, au paragraphe 220, avait proposé d'augmenter la charge de solidarité de 5% à 25%, frappant le revenu annuel imposable (incluant les dividendes) d'un résident mauricien à compter de Rs 3 millions. Le MTR supérieur de 20% allait donc passer à 40% (15% + 25%) à partir du seuil de revenu de Rs 3 millions par an.

Acte 3 – Projet de loi

Dans l'Acte 3, le projet de loi des finances, sanctionnant les propositions fiscales, consacre et officialise le changement de position du Gouvernement. En effet, l'article 28 du projet de loi modifie l'article 16C de la Loi sur les Impôts pour proposer que la taxe de solidarité passe de 5% à 25% sur le revenu annuel imposable excédant Rs 3 millions (incluant les dividendes), ce qui introduit donc un MTR supérieur de 40%.

Toutefois, l'amendement de l'article 16C impose une **limitation** significative: la taxe de solidarité ne dépassera pas 10% de la somme totale du revenu net (revenu brut moins

“C'est dommage que le pays ne puisse envisager une véritable réforme fiscale pouvant réduire les inégalités de revenu entre les classes sociales, améliorer la capacité fiscale de l'Etat, et redistribuer les richesses sans pénaliser quiconque. Le pays est donc prisonnier d'une structure fiscale désuète. Et sans revenu fiscal suffisant, l'Etat est obligé d'emprunter pour financer un train de vie artificiel, sans commune mesure avec la productivité nationale...”



Photo: www.lombardiletter.com

déduction personnelle) et des dividendes. Cela signifie clairement que si le montant d'impôt calculé au taux de 40% sur la tranche de revenu excédant Rs 3 millions dépasse 10% de la somme totale concernée, c'est le montant de 10% de cette somme qui sera perçue comme impôt marginal.

MTR et ETR régressifs

Cette limitation a des aspects incongrus et singuliers tant du point de vue économique que technique, comme nous le voyons dans le tableau 1. Après calcul des impôts, le MTR supérieur évolue à géométrie variable selon les catégories de revenu. Le MTR a une tendance régressive car il diminue à mesure que le revenu imposable augmente.

Il descend de 40% pour un revenu annuel de Rs 3,4 millions à 11,3% pour un revenu annuel de Rs 26 millions. C'est une aberration causée par la limitation de 10%, qui impose une structure de taux d'imposition excentrique. Dans une structure rationnelle, le MTR devrait être constant à un taux fixe pour toutes les catégories de revenu.

Autre conséquence de la limitation de 10% : le taux d'imposition effectif (*Effective Tax Rate - ETR*) diminue de 15% pour le revenu annuel de Rs 3 millions à 11,6% pour le revenu annuel de Rs 26 millions. Dans une structure rationnelle, l'ETR (le montant total d'impôts en proportion du revenu brut) devrait augmenter à mesure que le revenu imposable augmente.

Sous le système d'imposition pré-budgétaire, le MTR supérieur était invariable à 20% pour toutes les catégories de revenu et l'ETR évoluait de 13,9% pour un revenu annuel de Rs 3,5 millions à 19,2% pour un revenu annuel de Rs 26 millions. C'était une structure relativement progressive bien que limitée avec seulement trois taux d'imposition (10%, 15% et 20%).

Compromis

Etant donné la levée des boucliers contre le MTR de 40%, le Gouvernement aurait pu faire un compromis plus acceptable au lieu de reculer sur toute la ligne. Ce compromis aurait été de majorer la taxe de solidarité de 5% à 10% et, partant, introduire un MTR supérieur de 25% (15% + 10%) sur le revenu annuel au-dessus du seuil de Rs 3 millions. Ce MTR invariable de 25% aurait produit un ETR progressif allant de 13,8% pour un revenu annuel de Rs 3,4 millions à 23,5% pour un revenu annuel de Rs 26 mil-

lions.

C'est regrettable que le Gouvernement n'ait pas eu le soutien des partis d'opposition pour envisager une alternative plus raisonnable à sa proposition initiale. Face à la révolte des contribuables les plus aisés, encouragée par les associations patronales, les partis d'opposition se sont laissés bernés par des économistes néolibéraux, qui se sont comportés comme les idéologues zélés du conservatisme.

Ces économistes ont propagé la fausse conception que le MTR de 40% allait s'appliquer à l'ensemble du revenu du contribuable. Or, le MTR s'applique toujours à la dernière tranche du revenu imposable (dans ce cas, à l'excédent de revenu sur le seuil de Rs 3 millions). Un MTR de 25% aurait été le juste milieu entre un MTR bas de 20% et un MTR élevé de 40%.

Manque à gagner

Le Gouvernement prévoyait récolter Rs 3,5 milliards avec un MTR initial de 40% en provenance de 3000 contribuables (0,2% de la population). Avec la proposition finale d'un MTR de 40% limité à 10% du revenu net, la récolte sera définitivement bien moindre bien qu'elle s'appliquera aux résidents mauriciens et aussi étrangers.

Le tableau 2 montre le manque à gagner fiscal avec l'application de la proposition finale pour trois catégories de revenu. Par exemple, un contribuable ayant un revenu annuel de Rs 6,5 millions paiera un montant d'impôt marginal de Rs 617,700 sur la tranche de revenu excédant Rs 3 millions (avec la limitation de 10%) au lieu d'un montant d'impôt marginal de Rs 1,2 millions au taux de 40%, ce qui fait perdre la somme de Rs 652,500 à l'Etat.

C'est dommage que le pays ne puisse envisager une véritable réforme fiscale pouvant réduire les inégalités de revenu entre les classes sociales, améliorer la capacité fiscale de l'Etat, et redistribuer les richesses sans pénaliser quiconque. Le pays est donc prisonnier d'une structure fiscale désuète. Et sans revenu fiscal suffisant, l'Etat est obligé d'emprunter pour financer un train de vie artificiel, sans commune mesure avec la productivité nationale.

Tableau 1: Calculation of Marginal Tax Rate (MTR) and Effective Tax Rates

	Rs	Rs	Rs	Rs	Rs
Monthly income	230,769	261,538	500,000	1,000,000	2,000,000
Annual income (13 months)	3,000,000	3,400,000	6,500,000	13,000,000	26,000,000
Deduction	-325,000	-325,000	-325,000	-325,000	-325,000
Net income – N.I.	2,675,000	3,075,000	6,175,000	12,675,000	25,675,000
Threshold for 40% MTR	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
15% tax up to Rs 3 M.	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000
Chargeable income > Rs 3 M.	0	75,000	3,175,000	9,675,000	22,675,000
40% tax capped at 10% of N.I.	0	30,000	617,500	1,267,500	2,567,500
Total tax	450,000	480,000	1,067,500	1,717,500	3,017,500
Effective tax rate	15.0%	14.1%	16.4%	13.2%	11.6%
MTR over Rs 3 M.	0.0%	40.0%	19.4%	13.1%	11.3%
Note:					
MTR of 40% applies only in 2nd column					
In subsequent columns, MTR of 40% is capped at 10% of annual net income					
10% of annual net income			617,500	1,267,500	2,567,500

Tableau 2: Revenue foregone with 10% CAP

	Rs	Rs	Rs	Rs
Chargeable income > Rs 3 M.	75,000	3,175,000	9,675,000	22,675,000
40% tax on income > Rs 3 M	30,000	1,270,000	3,870,000	9,070,000
Tax capped at 10% of net income	0	617,500	1,267,500	2,567,500
Tax revenue foregone	0	652,500	2,602,500	6,502,500



Mrinal Roy

Keeping Mauritius Covid-19 free

The country cannot afford to risk a resurgence of the virus and the dire throes and enormous costs of a new lockdown

The statistics are forbidding. The recent spike in the cases of Covid-19 in countries across the world in the wake of the lifting of lockdown restrictions has raised the alarm bells of a resurgence of the pandemic.

From the United States, Brazil and Chile to the UK, Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia, India, South Africa and Australia, the Covid-19 statistics show a marked rise in new cases of infection. New spikes of Covid-19 infection have put the capacity of health services to cope under severe stress.

There seems to be a direct correlation between the lifting of the lockdown restrictions and the sudden rise in new cases of Covid-19 in the world owing to more person-to-person contact and the non respect of social distancing and hygiene norms or the wearing of masks. It is also evident that the premature lifting of the lockdown restrictions in some countries has fuelled the rise in coronavirus cases.

On the 4th of July, the world registered a record 212,326 rise in coronavirus cases over a 24-hour period according to the World Health Organization. This total included 53,213 new cases in the US, 48,105 in Brazil and 19,694 new cases across Europe. This is a marked rise from the previous record of 189,077 of new cases of Covid-19 posted on 28 June.

Dr Anthony Fauci, the renowned American physician and immunologist warned during a hearing in the US Senate on the Covid-19 pandemic last week that the current level of daily increase of new cases in the US could rise under present circumstances to 100,000. Covid-19 cases have risen in 39 of the 50 US states. 15 of these states have reported record number of new cases in July. These include Texas, California, Florida and Arizona where a quarter of all coronavirus detection tests done are positive. Florida, Texas and Arizona are emerging as the country's latest epicentres of Covid-19 after reporting record numbers of new infections for weeks in a row.

Even the wearing of masks has become a divisive bone of contention in the US between those who want to make a political statement by not wearing masks and those who advocate wearing masks to prevent the spread of the virus. Good sense seems to have prevailed in a context of rising Covid-19 cases as both US Vice-President Mike Pence and President Donald Trump have recently publicly supported the wearing of masks by people to protect themselves.

Re-imposition of lockdowns

The resurgence of Covid-19 cases has therefore forced a number of countries to re-impose lockdowns and restrictions. Thus, China has imposed a strict lockdown on an area near Beijing and its 400,000 inhabitants following a surge of Covid-19 cases in the locality. In the UK, a lockdown has been re-imposed in the city of Leicester under a new law carrying severe penalties for those who flout the lockdown rules.

In Australia, a new outbreak of hundreds of new cases of Covid-19 in the past two weeks in Melbourne has led the state of Victoria to re-impose strict lockdown measures for six weeks on Melbourne, in order to stem the risk of a second wave of infections spreading across the country. The border between Australia's two most populous states, Victoria and New South Wales (NSW), has also been closed

in an effort to contain the spread of the virus.

Greece has banned all but essential travel from Serbia as infection numbers continue to rise there. In Israel, the government imposed a partial lockdown following a rise in new cases, two months after it thought it had contained the virus.



South Korea worries as virus resurgence spreads.
Photo - storage.googleapis.com

“In the war against Covid-19 all countries face two major challenges. They must first and foremost contain and ideally stem the virus within the country. Secondly, they must ensure that the opening of their borders to tourists and foreign travellers is safe and does not become a conduit of new Covid-19 infections in the country. In the present state of infection in the world, it is evident that the opening of borders to foreign travel and tourists is fraught with high risks...”

In our own region, Madagascar has imposed a total 15-day lockdown as from this week following a rise in cases in Analamanga, a region which includes the capital Antananarivo and its surrounding metropolitan area.

We are in this together

Knee-jerk reactions to contain spikes of infection cannot win the battle against Covid-19. The re-imposition of lockdowns means a step backwards in the fight against coronavirus. Every country seems to be adopting their own strategies to combat the virus using similar ingredients but diverse plans of action. It all seems in disarray. More than ever the world needs to share their experience and unite to quash this common enemy. Without active cooperation and coordination among nations and a common resolve we will not be able to overcome this pandemic. We are in this together.

Flattening the curve of infection does not mean that the battle against Covid-19 is won. Covid-19 is an extremely contagious and insidious virus which is very much present in the world in our midst. Any complacency and lack of vigilance or discipline in strictly abiding by social distancing and hygienic norms or in wearing protective masks can cause and is causing spikes of coronavirus infection.

The world cannot bear the heavy human toll of another wave of the virus and the whopping costs and hardships of new lockdowns. Every action necessary must therefore be taken to prevent such a grim scenario.

In the war against Covid-19 all countries face two major challenges. They must first and foremost contain and ideally stem the virus within the country. Secondly, they must ensure that the opening of their borders to tourists and foreign travellers is safe and does not become a conduit of new Covid-19 infections in the country. In the present state of infection in the world, it is evident that the opening of borders to foreign travel and tourists is fraught with high risks.

Foolhardy

In Mauritius, it would be reckless to open our borders when the countries which are our main sources of tourists are still seriously affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and are still battling against the virus. There are strong lobbies at work and the government is also reported to be working on a *modus operandi* to open up the tourism sector despite the obvious risks and pitfalls of such a foolhardy decision when they and the country are fully aware that Covid-19 was imported in Mauritius through carriers of the virus who were either foreign visitors from infected countries or Mauritians working on cruise vessels.

Being an island, Mauritius is fairly well protected provided the border controls, testing protocol and quarantine measures are rigorously implemented. These strict measures of border control have enabled us to detect, isolate and treat those infected by Covid-19 to prevent the spread of the virus in the country. However, dealing with a few thousand travellers and those they were in contact with is not the same exercise as screening and managing the health risks posed by tens of thousands of tourists every month. The country cannot afford to risk a resurgence of the virus and the dire throes and enormous costs of a new lockdown.

It is a very difficult decision bearing in mind the prime importance of the tourism sector in the country. Good sense must however prevail. The tourism industry in the country and all its economic actors must reconcile themselves with the crying reality that the country cannot take the risk of opening its borders to tourists in the present state of the Covid-19 pandemic in the world and in countries which are our main sources of tourists.

Key questions

As a nation, are we prepared to expose the hotel staff and those working in the travel industry and the hospitality business to the risk of being infected by Covid-19 by undetected carriers of the virus? Can we put their lives at risk? Is the nation prepared to deliberately overwhelm the health services of the country through a resurgence of Covid-19 in the country?

The tourism industry must therefore adopt mitigating strategies and they must receive the required support to do that. Renovation and attractive packages to encourage more Mauritians to holiday in our hotels or the organization of diverse activities such as seminars or weddings could be some of the actions to help the industry tide over the current crisis.

The pursuit of profit cannot be an end in itself in the context of the daunting Covid-19 crisis faced by the world and the heavy toll of casualties caused by the pandemic. The wise counsel of Charles Ng, the Director of Atom Travel who is one of the key players of the travel industry in Mauritius to government says it all: 'Je suis dans le tourisme depuis longtemps. C'est mon gagne-pain. En dépit du soutien de l'Etat, mon entreprise souffre énormément. Cependant, pour ouvrir l'accès, il y a trop de risques. Le gouvernement doit y réfléchir à quatre fois.'

This is the Mauritius we salute. This laudable stance must be echoed by the whole sector if we want to keep Mauritius Covid-19 free.



S. Callikan

Wake up calls from the FATF & EU

Corruption on major contracts are crimes that are inevitably and intimately linked with money-laundering as the FATF and G20 have expressed: 'Money laundering is the process of concealing illicit gains that were generated from criminal activity'

The Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG)/Financial Action Task Force (FATF) assessment conducted in 2017 was a wake-up call for our Mauritian administration, including the Bank of Mauritius, the Financial Services Commission, the Financial Intelligence Unit, the Ministry of Financial Services, the Ministry of Finance and the Attorney General's office. They surely worked overtime and amendments to some 19 pieces of legislation were put forward in the Anti-Money Laundering and Combatting the Financing of Terrorism and Proliferation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill tabled in 2019 by then PM and Minister of Finance Hon Pravind Kumar Jugnauth. They were unfortunately not sufficient to prevent Mauritius being placed in the list of countries with "strategic deficiencies" and under "increased monitoring" at the FATF plenary of February 2020.

“Corruption on major contracts are crimes that are inevitably and intimately linked with money-laundering as the FATF and G20 have expressed: 'The FATF attaches a great importance to the fight against corruption: corruption has the potential to bring catastrophic harm to economic development, the fight against organized crime, and respect for the law and effective governance. Corruption offenses, such as bribery or theft of public funds, are generally committed for the purpose of obtaining private gain. Money laundering is the process of concealing illicit gains that were generated from criminal activity...'”

That grey-listing has had costly repercussions as government found out with dismay at the subsequent European Union blacklisting in May-June this year. The EU, OECD and most international institutions and lending banks have observer status at the FATF. The EU not surprisingly bases itself largely but not solely on the FATF yardstick; whether it accepts government's plea to conduct its "own assessment" and whether such assessment will pull us out of the blacklist remains more of a forlorn hope.

The incoming Minister of Finance may be entirely right that the international financial community to which we have aspired and struggled to belong, is continuously evolving its mandatory and desirable requirements, passing from 40 at one stage to 58 nowadays. He added that we are progressing since we met 35 then and 53 of these requirements now; unfortunately it seems that the same five strategic deficiencies are dogging us, sticking out like a sore set of fingers for all international observers to watch under their scanners.

At its third and final plenary held virtually on 30 June 2020, FATF reassessed the progress of Iceland and Mongolia and delisted both countries from the grey list. Sadly, it is understood that Mauritius was either not ready or chose not to present its case for review of our inglorious greylisting at that assessment window. A new set of amendments to another 19 pieces of legislation is being brought in by government this week in Parliament. This renewed but late effort may go some way to ease interna-



tional financial community concerns with our jurisdiction. Some recent Central Bank agitation about its regulatory oversight of private banks may go in that direction. But whether these will be enough to satisfy that we pass muster on all five strategic deficiencies highlighted since 2017 remains uncertain. We may have the best panoply of laws and regulations, but if applied sparingly, sporadically or with high-level political discretion, they may not earn us the waiver we seek.

The next plenary rounds are expected in early September at ESAMLG level with the critical FATF meeting scheduled for October this year. Failure at those junctures and staying on the FATF grey list with some notorious comrades (like Myanmar, Syria, Yemen, Pakistan, Cambodia...) would be most awkward for us with respect to our competitors and international community watchers. It would certainly make exit from the EU blacklist extremely dicey, but what should be equally worrying for our administration is that we may have to face at the next assessment rounds the continuous upward drive in mandatory requirements which have been already announced under the new German chair over the next two years.

From the FATF website, these will most notably include a stiffening of measures on bitcoins and cryptocurrencies, but the following advance notice should be digested: "These (reviews) will ensure that evaluations will remain comprehensive... but will be more timely, **have greater emphasis on effectiveness and will strengthen the risk-based elements of the assessment process.** The FATF expects to complete this strategic review, including the revisions to the Methodology for assessments, in 2021." In other words more stringent demands where we have been found most lacking is not good news. It should certainly be another wake up call to be treated more seriously through collective, concerted and planned action rather than playing catch-up and spin-politics.

In this very limited sense therefore, the recent high-profile financial scandals which have splashed headlines, including the most important corruption scandal known as the St Louis-CEB affair, are an opportunity to restore some badly needed credibility of our enforcement and investigation agencies. It is after all a case where the corrupter (Danish firm Burmeister & Wain Scandinavian Contractor), the mechanisms, the agents, the intermediaries and the purpose of the bribery to make a tailor-fit submission by the company at Rs 700 m more than its previous failed bid for the same project, have all been acknowledged by the latter's own commissioned investigation, the results of which

have been submitted to the African Development Bank. Much depends therefore on the expeditiousness and effectiveness of our investigation authorities to book the corrupt on our side of the shady deal and enforce appropriate legal sanction.

The EU and the FATF will have noted that this high-profile affair closely involving the two political partners in government has been disclosed fortuitously by an anonymous whistleblower rather than by our intrinsic vigilance capabilities. The EU will also be aware that a Danish company has cleaned up its act, accepting a serious 21-month ban from all international tenders.

It will also be aware of the unprecedented anti-fraud and corruption charges that have led French former PM Francois Fillon condemned to jail and financial sanction, pending his judicial appeal. Not to mention financial misdemeanor charges expected to be heard against former French President Nicolas Sarkozy as from October. These are not times when the collective European psyche may feel kindly towards corruption and financial scam tolerance in an island-state so dependent on Western controlled financial instruments.

Corruption on major contracts are crimes that are inevitably and intimately linked with money-laundering as the FATF and G20 have expressed: "The FATF attaches a great importance to the fight against corruption: corruption has the potential to bring catastrophic harm to economic development, the fight against organized crime, and respect for the law and effective governance. Corruption offenses, such as bribery or theft of public funds, are generally committed for the purpose of obtaining private gain. Money laundering is the process of concealing illicit gains that were generated from criminal activity."

We have every reason therefore to expect that the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) can break the mold and demonstrate some effectiveness at such a difficult juncture for the reputation of our jurisdiction, our banks, our financial operators and the thousands of skilled employees who work in the sector. Anything else would be too abysmal to even contemplate.

NOTICE FOR PERMISSION FOR LAND USE

Take notice that BREEZE DU NORD LTD will apply to the District Council of Riviere Du Rempart for a Building & Land Use Permit for a proposed Tourist Residences at Indenarain Road, Saint Francois. Any person feeling aggrieved by the proposal may lodge an objection in writing to the above-named council within 15 days as from the date of this publication.

Date: 10 July 2020

NOTICE FOR PERMISSION FOR LAND USE

Take notice that PREETYBEELA LUKHOO will apply to the District Council of Riviere Du Rempart for a Building & Land Use Permit for Tourist Residences at Surya Mukti Road, Grand Bay. Any person feeling aggrieved by the proposal may lodge an objection in writing to the above-named council within 15 days as from the date of this publication.

Date: 10 July 2020

Top US doctor Fauci cautiously optimistic on having Covid vaccine by early 2021



Fauci, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director, said that the coronavirus will likely to continue to emerge. Photo - AP

America's top infectious disease expert Dr Anthony Fauci has said that he is cautiously optimistic over the results from the current clinical trials and the possibility of developing a vaccine for Covid-19 by the end of this year or early next year.

Fauci, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director, said that the coronavirus will likely to continue to emerge, and global collaboration and transparency are critical to deal with the future pandemics, reports Press Trust of India.

"The lessons we've learned from the coronavirus is they have pandemic potential, they're likely to continue to emerge. Good public health measures are critical to controlling them.

"Global collaboration and transparency are critical if we are to get a containment of this extraordinary assault

on the human population, a viral disease that spreads rapidly and as a high degree of morbidity and mortality," he said in his recorded remarks during an online session on 'Confronting COVID-19 Through Innovation and Research: Lessons Learned from the Pandemic'.

There are a number of vaccine candidates already in clinical trial and a few out of those candidates have completed phase 1/2 status, he said, adding that there are trials that will be going into phase three sometime at the end of July and then others will follow in the months of August, September and October.

There are 5-7 candidates that are going into clinical trials at different stages, he said.

The Moderna coronavirus vaccine is showing promising results, "which makes me cautiously optimistic. Although you can never, ever predict with any certainty, whether a vaccine is going to be safe and effective.

Moderna said that it has completed enrollment of Phase 2 Study of its mRNA vaccine against COVID-19, adding that it has finalised the Phase 3 study protocol based on the feedback from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Moderna has completed the manufacture of vaccine required to start the Phase 3 study and the company remains on track to be able to deliver approximately 500 million doses per year, and possibly up to 1 billion doses per year beginning in 2021 from the company's internal US manufacturing site and strategic collaborations, the biotechnology company added.

Coronavirus: Harvard and MIT sue over US visa ruling



Students walk near the Widener Library in Harvard Yard at Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass. in August 2019. Photo - AP/Charles Krupa

Two elite US universities are suing immigration services over a decision to withdraw visas from foreign students whose courses move fully online.

Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology filed the lawsuit against Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Harvard President Lawrence Bacow said the visa move's "cruelty [is] surpassed only by its recklessness".

Many colleges are moving courses online amid the coronavirus outbreak.

Harvard had on Monday announced it would hold all classes online for the autumn term, with only 40% of undergraduates housed on campus, reports BBC News.

The decision from ICE, the federal law enforcement agency within Homeland Security, came shortly after that, saying students could face deportation unless they changed to an institution with in-person tuition.

President Donald Trump on Tuesday lashed out at Harvard, calling its move online "ridiculous". He has been adamant that US schooling should return to normal in the autumn term.

On Twitter on Wednesday, he issued a threat to funding if schools did not reopen.

What does the visa move mean?

The Student and Exchange Visitor Programme, which is operated by ICE, had introduced a temporary exemption to allow students whose courses had moved online for the spring and summer semesters to remain in the US.

However, the exemption will not be extended into the new academic year.

The decision affects students who are in the US on F-1 and M-1 visas, according to the ICE statement.

According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, 9% of US universities are planning to teach all their classes online in the autumn, although this could change in the coming months.

UK - Meal deals and VAT cuts, Sunak reveals rescue plan



UK chancellor Rishi Sunak announced his emergency mini-budget on Wednesday to get Britain spending again as the country emerges from its coronavirus lockdown, handing out a VAT break for hotels and tourist attractions, a £10-a-head meal discount for diners and a stamp duty cut for home-buyers. But the chancellor was warned that his £30bn package may only be postponing the grim prospect of unemployment on a scale not seen since the 1930s, as experts questioned whether a £1,000 bonus for keeping employees on will be enough to stop businesses shedding staff when his furlough scheme ends in November, reports The Independent.

His announcement also raised questions over whether taxes will have to rise to pay for the rescue package, with the Institute for Fiscal Studies warning that measures announced since the outbreak began are likely to drive the state deficit above £300bn, "easily the highest as a share of public income since the Second World War".

Fix NHS staff shortage now, health leaders warn

The NHS will be unable to meet the needs of patients unless significant action is taken to tackle staff shortages, an unprecedented coalition of health leaders has warned. Medical royal colleges, NHS trade unions and bodies representing senior hospital managers and other health organisations have joined together to warn bosses at NHS England and the government that they must act to ensure the workforce is supported in the wake of coronavirus.

The organisations said they were united in the belief that meaningful action on long-standing issues would be the best way to repay staff for their efforts during the virus outbreak – calling for a public commitment to boost numbers, increase flexible working practices and improve leadership and support.

☞ Cont. on page 7

Coronavirus: Is India the next global hotspot?

The coronavirus took hold slowly in India, but six months after its first confirmed infection it has overtaken Russia to record the world's third largest caseload.

With the world's second-largest population, much of which lives packed into cities, the country was perhaps always destined to become a global hotspot.

India has seen a series of record spikes recently, adding tens of thousands of cases daily. It recorded most of its confirmed cases in June, within weeks of reopening after a rigid lockdown, reports BBC.

As of 8 July, India had 742,417 confirmed cases.

But the true scale of infection rates in the population is unclear, according to virologist Shahid Jameel.

The government conducted a random sample of 26,000 Indians in May, which showed that 0.73% had the virus. Some experts have reservations about the sample size, but others, such as Dr Jameel, say it's the only country-wide indicator they have to work with.

"If we extrapolate that to the whole population, we would have had 10 million infections in mid-May," Dr Jameel said.

Given that confirmed cases in India have been doubling every 20 days, that would put the current total between 30 and 40 million.



India the next global hotspot. Photo - www.bloomberg.com

The gap between confirmed cases and actual infections exists in every country, but to different degrees. Testing is the only way to bridge it. "If you test more, you will find more," Dr Jameel said.

That's what has happened in India in recent weeks - as the government ramped up testing, case numbers suddenly increased.

India has done more than 10 million tests since 13 March, but more than half of those happened after 1 June.

India's recovery numbers are promising

The data suggests that those in India who have been diagnosed with the virus

are recovering from it faster than they are dying from it.

This is crucial, Dr Jameel said, because it determines the strain on the health system. Currently, deaths are rising more slowly than confirmed cases or recoveries - but if that rate quickens, it would increase the pressure on hospitals, possibly driving up deaths.

Globally, India's recovery curve appears steeper than other badly hit countries - in this instance, a steeper curve is a good thing. It means Covid-19 patients in India are recovering faster than those in the US or Brazil.

India's share of recoveries - that is, the % of total confirmed cases in a given coun-

try that have made a full recovery - is also higher. At nearly 60%, it's far ahead of the US, where it is 27%.

India defines as recovered anyone who tests positive for the virus and then, weeks later, tests negative. Some countries only count hospitalised cases that make a full recovery.

What's important is that, irrespective of how many people are recovering within each of these countries, India's share of recoveries is higher.

And that's because India's reported deaths are lower.

India's death rate is very low

India has so far recorded about 20,160 deaths from Covid-19. In absolute numbers, that is the eighth highest tally in the world. But per million of the population, it is low.

"It's a fraction of what you are seeing in Western Europe," said Shamika Ravi, an economist and senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

Theories range from a higher prevalence of infections in the region to a less virulent strain of the virus circulating in these countries to younger populations on average than badly hit Western nations, given that Covid-19 predominantly kills the elderly.

National security law: Australia suspends Hong Kong extradition treaty

Australia has suspended its extradition treaty with Hong Kong in response to fears over a new national security law imposed by China.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the new law undermined "Hong Kong's own basic law" and the territory's current level of autonomy from Beijing.

Australia planned to extend visas for Hong Kong residents and encourage businesses there to relocate, he said.

China has criticised the move as "gross interference" in its domestic affairs, reports BBC.

"We urge the Australian side to immediately stop meddling... otherwise it will lead to nothing but lifting a rock only to hit its own feet," said a statement by its embassy in Australia.

Since the law was enacted last week, Canada has also suspended its extradition treaty, while the UK has offered citizenship options to Hong Kong residents, reports BBC News.

Critics say the law makes it easier to punish protesters and critics of the Chinese government.

Hong Kong's government says the law is required to bring order to a city that saw mass pro-democracy protests last year that often turned violent.

As the extent of the law's reach is still uncertain, critics have said it could also lead to foreign nationals being arbitrarily detained in Hong Kong.

That has led Australia and other nations to issue new warnings to their citizens in Hong Kong. More than 100,000 Australians are in the city.

"You may be at increased risk of detention on vaguely



Australia suspends Hong Kong extradition treaty. Photo - www.pulselive.co.ke

defined national security grounds. You could break the law without intending to. If you're concerned about the new law, reconsider your need to remain in Hong Kong," said Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

New Zealand's government also said on Thursday it would review the country's relationship with Hong Kong. Foreign Minister Winston Peters said New Zealand was "deeply concerned" about the national security law.

Australia has also offered to extend visas to Hong Kong residents by five years - providing a pathway to permanent residency for up to 10,000 people.

Mr Morrison said the visa offer was also aimed at enticing Hong Kong businesses to relocate to Australia if they "become footloose as a result of the changes".

Hong Kong is a former British colony and was handed back to China in 1997.

Under the arrangement, Hong Kong was allowed to have certain freedoms for 50 years, setting it apart from the Chinese mainland.

However the UK, and other Western nations say China's new law directly threatens those freedoms and rights.

Last week, the UK offered resettlement to up three million Hong Kong residents - an action criticised by China.

Australia's announcement could again aggravate tensions with China, its biggest trading partner.

Bilateral relations have soured further this year after Australia called for a global investigation into the origins of Covid-19. This has been viewed as the catalyst for China levelling sanctions on Australian exports.

Compiled by Doojesh Ramlallah

Interview: Rama Sithanen - Former Finance Minister

“Economic contraction will be over 13% in 2020**and we will not return to a pre Covid-19 situation before 2023 or 2024”**

Former Minister of Finance Rama Sithanen in today's interview foresees much trouble ahead for the country on the economic, financial and social fronts, a consequence amongst others of the weak-kneed approach to resolve the many corruption cases that the country is facing, with the latest additions such as the St Louis Gate testing the (in)capacity of ICAC.

That is the reason why our jurisdiction is being watched closely by international bodies and the country is losing face. This impacts investor confidence, which has already received a big blow in the wake of the budget presented by the Finance Minister, who has decided to shift gear from a model that has served the country only too well for the past nearly 25 years. All the wrong signals have been sent, says Rama Sithanen, and this does not bode well for the future of the country in terms of employment, investment, etc.

Mauritius Times: After the earlier grey list of financial havens, the European Union has included Mauritius on its revised list of high-risk countries with strategic deficiencies in anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing frameworks. There have also been the corruption charges levelled against the Mauritius "administration and others" in the matter of the CEB's St Louis redevelopment project... All of these happening in the early days in power do not bode well for the present government. How do you see it trying to extricate itself from these embarrassments?

Rama Sithanen: These unfortunate events could not have come at a worse time for our country while the piling up is awful for our reputation.

We are in the middle of an unprecedented public health emergency with devastating economic, financial and social consequences, and now we have to deal with being on the grey list of the FATF and the black one of the EU with calamitous ramifications not only for our financial services sector but for the entire economy.

To add to the rot, there is the serious corruption charge from a very credible international institution as the African Development Bank about the St Louis Gate that will tarnish our image. And to add insult to injury, within one week the country is mired in two new scandals with the Wiracard /EMIF fraud and round tripping in Germany, and the Milo Investment Limited affair in the UK. This is too much for us! And Government must act fast and diligently.

On the EU and FATF, the Government has no choice than to address the five identified strategic deficiencies that have been flagged way back in 2018 by the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG). They are all about deficiencies in implementation

effectiveness. We will have to follow the due process which will take time.

For the St Louis Gate, Government must ensure that no stone is left unturned to get to the bottom of the corrupt practices and to take appropriate actions to salvage our reputation. Certainly not to play politics as our integrity and reputation as a state are at stake.

On the two scandals related to Wirecard and Milo Investment Funds, the legal enforcement agencies have a unique opportunity to demonstrate that they have the willingness and capacity to conduct complex investigations to curb the abuse and misuse of our jurisdiction by unscrupulous persons and companies. The ultimate tests must be outcome driven and not intention based.

*** As regards the the CEB-BWSC affair, a commission of inquiry might have allowed the Government to extricate itself from its present embarrassment, but it instead chose to suspend the CEB's acting GM, revoke its Board and the Public Utilities minister and refer the matter to ICAC. Do you see the Government acceding to the Opposition's request for a commission of inquiry in these circumstances?**

I believe the PM has made it abundantly clear that his Government will not set up a Commission of Inquiry on the St Louis Gate. Both the PM and the Attorney General have given the reasons why they prefer the investigation to be carried out by ICAC. As a matter of fact, the PM has already sent a copy of the ADB report to ICAC.

Many would prefer a Commission of Inquiry chaired by an independent Judge or former Chief Justice as they believe that ICAC is neither independent nor credible based on all the inquiries that are still unresolved or lie in a desk somewhere. And it may not have the institutional capacity to



“I honestly believe the Mauritius Investment Company will lose lots of money if it invests in equity in these two sectors. Equally it will not be fully repaid of its loans for a long time as they are already overleveraged and do not have repayment capacity. Otherwise commercial banks would lend to them. Even if the redeemable loans are provided at below Prime Lending Rate, say 2 % interest per annum...”

conduct complex investigations which is one of the strategic deficiencies identified by FATF in its evaluation of AML/CFT of Mauritius.

ICAC has an opportunity to show that it can bark and bite, that it is fully independent and has the capability of unravelling this massive corruption that has tarnished our reputation. Our country will gain by embracing good governance, transparency and accountability in dealing with this high-profile corrupt case.

Let us see whether ICAC will miss the boat and give another reason to its detractors to question its independence and its investigative capacity. Especially as there are strong evidence on corrupt practices as revealed by the ADB while BWSC has accepted that its employees engaged in

such financial misdemeanours with Mauritius administrators and others and has taken actions against them.

*** There is also the EU blacklist and there is some rehabilitation work to be done as regards the country's status as a respected and serious jurisdiction. Amendments have been proposed to our anti-money laundering and prevention of terrorism law. Do you think the ticking of the right FATF boxes will be sufficient to reassure the European Union about the Mauritius jurisdiction?**

Let us be frank about the chain of events.

While we have made some progress since the ESAAMLG report of 2018 on technical compliance, there is still considerable work to be accomplished at the level of implementation effectiveness. Essentially between ticking the appropriate boxes in terms of the legislative and regulatory framework and the actual implementation, efficacy and effectiveness in regulation, supervision and enforcement.

It is not clear whether the new legislation on its own will cure the weaknesses identified by ESAAMLG, FATF and the EU. On paper, there is progress on three of the five strategic deficiencies. However there remain challenges at the level of non-profit organisations, DNFBPs (Designated Non-Financial Business or Professions) and the institutional capacity of law enforcement agencies (LEAs) to conduct money laundering and financial investigations.

*** Contd on page 9**

'ICAC has an opportunity to show that it can bark and bite, that it has the capability of unravelling the massive CEB-BWSC corruption case'



* Contd from page 8

There are 11 effectiveness ratings and we are low in 7 and moderate in 4. I think more will be required and additional measures should be taken to cure the five strategic deficiencies so as to convince the FATF and the EU that we meet the effectiveness and enforcement tests to be removed first from the grey list and then from the black list.

*** Government believes that it can accomplish these before 1st October 2020 to avoid being effectively black-listed by the EU? Is that possible?**

Absolutely not, based on evidence and practice. We are not the only country in that predicament and there is a due process that must be followed by all states that are on that list. We should not be naïve to believe we can do this before October 2020 when the sanction of the EU kicks in.

First, we have to submit our roadmap and remedies to the FATF, then it has to assess it and carry out an on-site inspection before making its recommendations to the plenary session, probably in Feb 2021. Then we have to meet the additional criteria/methodology of the EU to be removed from the black list.

I do not know any country that has been delisted before two years. Even Tunisia which has the full support of France and the EU has taken almost two years to be delisted and it does not have a sophisticated global business sector as us. Bahamas is ahead of us in the queue while Ethiopia waited for a long time.

In the meantime, it will be difficult to attract new businesses while existing ones may relocate to competing jurisdictions because of the enhanced diligence and the reputational risks associated with the

black list. It will also affect the banking sector through its correspondent facilities.

*** We have an arsenal of laws to combat different offences in different sectors, including the Global Business sector, but 'là où le bât blesse', it's at the level of the regulators and political interference in these institutions. What's your take on that?**

Undoubtedly, the many sleazy cases that have been unearthed either by the various leaks or by investigative journalists on alleged frauds, money laundering and abuse and misuse of our global business sector have certainly not helped our case vis-a-vis the international community. We all know the long list.

Our law enforcement agencies have also not shown enough diligence to back up our declared policy not to tolerate fraudulent and shady businesses. Too many suspect cases revealed both locally and internationally have remained unresolved. This gives the impression that we are simply biding time to ensure that these cases are no more hitting the headlines and we forget about them. Until the chickens come home to roost and another one emerges that reminds us of all the previous misdemeanours.

It is clear today that we need not only robust legislations and regulations but, above all, strong, independent, competent, transparent and accountable institutions to implement and enforce these rules, regulations, norms and standards. A Professor of Taxation that I meet at conferences always reminds me that Mauritius is best in class at enacting legislations and regulations but then we are not effective at implementing and enforcing them.

Worse, because of the ferocious competition among international financial centres, many companies often do not do

“With such a massive gift of Rs 150 bn from the Bank of Mauritius, I have considerable difficulties to comprehend why the Minister has cut his nose to spite his face. We are already in a deep hole with the devastating impact of the Covid-19. Why make life much more difficult by drastically changing the economic model at the same time when the focus should have been on reviving the moribund economy...”

what it takes to avoid our system being abused and misused. We need to plug in these loopholes to repair the damage done. Even if it means refusing some very low value-added entities that are harming our brand and reputation as a credible and reputable International Financial Centre (IFC).

*** For having been Finance minister in previous governments and having interacted with the multilateral agencies, do you consider that the various instances of misgovernance in the functioning of different bodies and regulators in relation to sectors other than Global Business have also a bearing on the decision of the European Union to blacklist the Mauritius jurisdiction?**

We have always had to defend the integrity and reputation of our financial services. We are under close watch. Whether in the context of the double taxation treaty with India, the OECD, the EU, the FATF and other standard setting institutions. I had to personally attend an OECD meeting in 2007 to defend our country and, thankfully, we were placed on the white list as a result.

The environment has considerably changed with significant emphasis on effectiveness of implementation as opposed to simple technical compliance. Government should have comprehensively and effectively sorted out these issues as they were amply raised by ESAAMLG in 2018. We must also strengthen the effectiveness of regulation and supervision in many areas such as Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) and DNFBP's and enhance the capacity of law enforcement agencies by appointing competent and knowledgeable people.

I am privileged to have been involved in various aspects of global business. As Minister of Finance, I started it in the early 90s. I have also worked in that sector for a long time and know its opportunities and challenges. And I have advised countries in Africa on offshore business and taxation.

Honestly our current model based on tax arbitrage through treaties, almost zero to low effective tax on GBC, inadequate substance except for funds, the challenges in the effective implementation of rules and

regulations to combat money laundering and terrorist financing and a heavy reliance on simple holding structures for cross border investments, is clearly not sustainable.

Of course, it has delivered meaningful economic and employment outcomes over 25 years. But it has reached its limits, especially with greater emphasis on curbing simple treaty shopping through the principal purpose test, the renegotiation of many treaties to better balance the allocation of taxing rights and the aggressive behaviour of many NGOs against our jurisdiction.

We need to reinvent the global business model in the light of the significant changes in the tax, regulatory and substance environment. We need a more focused approach based on more substance, higher value added, a more diversified sector in terms of geographical footprint, range of products and suite of services. This could imply letting go of low value products that expose us disproportionately to the prying eyes of many and concentrate on building a modern, efficient, compliant, competitive and robust IFC.

Of course, the transition will be tough and there will be some collateral damages. But so is our economic history. It has happened in sugar, textiles, manufacturing and tourism. We need to adapt, adjust and to continually reinvent to survive. The alternative is what we see today. A constant challenge to our International Financial Centre in one way or another. There is no stability, no certainty and no predictability as our centre is stirred and shaken too frequently. It is not good for investment and businesses.

*** How about the Finance Bill which provides for the implementation of measures announced in the Budget Speech 2020-2021? Do you think the proposed measures sit well with the Mauritian context in the present circumstances and will facilitate a speedier economic recovery?**

I hope that everybody is wrong and the Minister of Finance is the only person in town who is right and knows what he is doing. I have my serious doubts.

* Contd on page 10

'Too many suspect cases revealed both locally and internationally have remained unresolved.

This gives the impression that we are simply biding time'

* Contd from page 9

I am very surprised that the PM who has been Minister of Finance three times and is politically astute is allowing an economic disaster to unfold. Everybody I meet who is an investor, an entrepreneur, a business person, a risk taker, large, medium and small, local and foreign and shrewd independent political and economic observers tell me exactly the same thing. That it is an awful budget, the worst one they have seen for decades. That it has destroyed trust, demolished confidence, shattered investor feeling and wrecked business sentiment.

It sends the wrong signal to the very people who have to work hard and innovatively to get the country out of the economic mess and the severe recession. I can only hope that my random sample is not a good reflection of reality and the Minister knows much better where he is taking our country. In uncharted territory with reckless fiscal and economic experimentation.

He has abruptly and drastically changed an economic model that has paid dividends over the years starting in the early 80s until today with Ministers of Finance of all stripes including the current PM who was Minister of Finance three times. The budget in its current shape and form is unlikely to boost investment, rekindle growth and save jobs.

Exports are already underperforming since 5 years and with falling demand globally it will be very difficult to kick start that sector. Sugar is sour and there is no structural reform to turn the tide. Tourism, travel and aviation are the worst affected and their direct, indirect, induced and catalytic effects are already being felt throughout the economy.

The financial services will be impacted by the grey and black lists. There is absolutely nothing to support the BPO sector that has been affected by declining demand. Then there is a significant wealth effect combined with a sizeable loss of income that will drive down consumption.

I do not see a rush for private investment and FDI with the introduction of punitive taxation. This is what a foreigner told me. Why should he pay 15% corporate tax as a base to which we have to add 2% CSR, 6% Contribution Sociale Généralisée (CSG), 4.5% PRGF and 25% dividend tax (or a cap of 10% on large amount). A cumulative tax of 52.5%! And employees have to pay 40% after a prescribed threshold compared to 20% now. Who would want to come to Mauritius when the likes of Singapore, Hong Kong and Dubai have much lower rates?

I really do not know how EDB will



“Many people are withdrawing money from the country and are focused on how to avoid the punitive and discriminatory taxes through tax planning and avoidance rather than concentrate their time, energy and effort to revive the economy. Many companies including Small and Medium-sized Enterprises will go under as they simply cannot bear the rising costs of doing business. This will lead to much higher unemployment...”

market our country in its overseas roadshows.

The Minister needs to be reminded that we are still a small island and emerging economy that cannot compare with an OECD country. Taxes at over 52% is simply going to drive investment away to competing destinations. With such a massive gift of Rs 150 bn from the Bank of Mauritius, I have considerable difficulties to comprehend why the Minister has cut his nose to spite his face. We are already in a deep hole with the devastating impact of the Covid-19. Why make life much more difficult by drastically changing the economic model at the same time when the focus should have been on reviving the moribund economy to save jobs, rescue

firms and safeguard livelihoods?

* **What are really the main weaknesses of the 2020-21 budget?**

The Minister should have used the substantial gift of Rs 150 bn from the Bank of Mauritius to boost productive investment, support exports, rekindle economic growth and avoid massive unemployment. By protecting people, rescuing companies and saving jobs. That should have been his priorities under the circumstances. Instead he proceeded to jettison the economic model that has been the success of our country for a long time.

Mauritius has thrived on a competitive, attractive, simple, non-discriminatory and coherent taxation system. He has raised taxation significantly across the board and introduced discriminatory taxation that will negatively affect business sentiment and investor confidence in our economic paradigm. It places taxation at the centre of everybody's attention and it sends the wrong signal to employees and investors alike.

Many people are withdrawing money from the country and are focused on how to avoid the punitive and discriminatory taxes through tax planning and avoidance rather than concentrate their time, energy and effort to revive the economy. Many companies including Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) will go under as they simply cannot bear the rising costs of doing business. This will lead to much higher unemployment.

The economic contraction will be over 13% in 2020 and we will not return to a pre Covid-19 situation before 2023 or 2024. The Minister of Finance is relying too much on the construction sector to rekindle the economy. There is not enough support for the export-led and traditional sectors of the country. And hardly any new sector will emerge to diversify our economic base.

* **Could the Mauritius Investment Company which has come into the picture with the billions of the Bank of Mauritius save the Government by rescuing firms?**

The MIC is playing its cards too close to its chest as there is hardly any information on how Rs 80 bn of public funds will be used. There is a contradiction between the initial communique of the BOM and the announcements in the budget.

The BOM stated clearly that the MIC would invest in two key strategic sectors of our economy which are tourism and manufacturing while the Minister has considerably broadened its scope of intervention to other sectors such as aquaculture, pharma and Africa. We do not know what are the criteria used by the MIC to assess

the requests made by various firms before deciding on whether to support them, in what amount, with which instruments between equity, quasi equity and loans and with what conditions. Nothing at all up to now.

For instance, will capacity to repay and economic viability be key conditions to determine access to MIC funds? Will shareholders be required to inject some new funds to share burden? Will they be told not to distribute dividends and not to do share buy back as long as they have not repaid the debt? Will there be restrictions on executive pay and fringe benefits to contain costs? Will these loans or redeemable debt have priority over existing commercial bank loans? Will there be conditions on keeping employees? Will assets be given as guarantees to the MIC commensurate with the quantum of the financing facility? How does the MIC handle blatant conflict of interest between some of its members and companies seeking its support?

The Government faces a policy dilemma. If it does not support the deeply affected sectors, there will be bankruptcies with knock-on effects on unemployment. However, based on strict financial viability and economic returns, especially the provisions of clause 46 on the use of reserves, it is almost impossible to justify investment in the hotel industry and export manufacturing in the current context. These two sectors were already in trouble before Covid-19 and their challenges have amplified after the pandemic.

I honestly believe MIC will lose lots of money if it invests in equity in these two sectors. Equally it will not be fully repaid of its loans for a long time as they are already overleveraged and do not have repayment capacity. Otherwise commercial banks would lend to them. Even if the redeemable loans are provided at below Prime Lending Rate, say 2 % interest per annum.

I can't speak for the other members of the MIC as they are either ex officio or are conflicted. However, I am sure Professor Desai who taught me economics 45 years ago at the LSE knows very well that the risks of MIC's exposure to two very fragile sectors are extremely high. These investments or loans do not provide 'liquidity, security and return' as clearly stated by clause 46. The MIC should be frank and transparent about it. Hence the need for burden sharing with shareholders and commercial banks to mitigate the risks of losing significant amount of public funds.

Otherwise it would be an utterly disproportionate socialisation of corporate losses.



Samad Ramoly

Our mindset, the trigger to our paradox

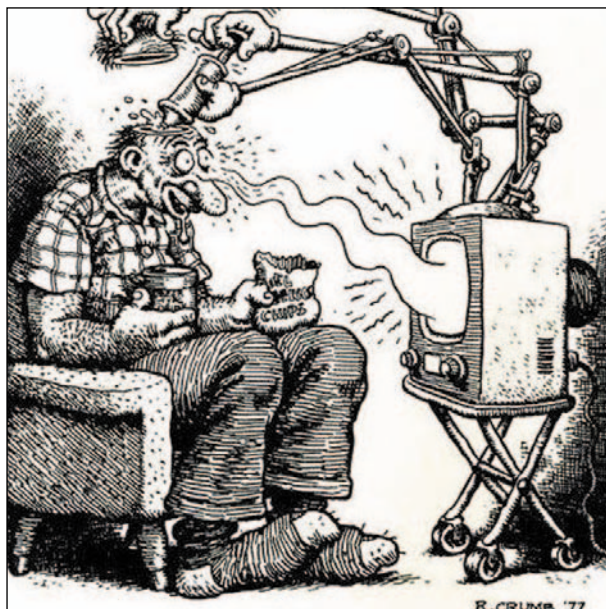
We should better ponder how to, at least, minimise the impact of the Dumbing Down Syndrome and hero (charlatan in most cases) worship on our existence. As, akin to the frog in the pertinent fable, we may be adapting to the rising temperature of the water

Some twenty years ago, inspired by former diplomat Kishore Mahbubani's provocative "Can Asians think?", I ventured into "Can Mauritians think?". As expected, it ruffled feathers in conservative circles. Still, "Has the world been dumbed down?" would convey a fairer observation. Although we are far from being equally infected worldwide.

The extent of lazy thinking, tunnel vision and silo mentality (let us dub the phenomenon Dumbing Down Syndrome - DDS) is tributary to the environment shaping our thinking. Most of us have been influenced by an educational system disproportionately rewarding rote learning and by the political, business, intellectual and family ethos at the top in addition to a culture of subservience, probably a legacy of colonisation.

It would be misguided to pin DDS to the 1980s. But, in all likelihood, it has been catapulted in this era, as much as the rat race and the dissemination of the *pena letan* (busyness) affliction. Jointly with the media's sudden bent on immediacy, the era has contributed to the assault on hindsight, nuances and variables while instilling common non-sense and acute gullibility.

Under these circumstances, no exceptional talent is required to control and abuse the masses. Twisted data, buzzwords and spin, no matter how shoddy and despicable, are enough. Why then bother to implement more experiential learning to



Dumbing Down Syndrome. Cartoon adapted from i.pinimg.com

upskill the human capital and groom more discerning citizens?

In our daily routine, DDS translates into a severe disconnect from the real world. In the short run it may create an illusion of progression and even success. Ultimately frustration and potentially failure emerge for outsiders and a sense of entitlement grips insiders (while cynical outsiders get busy plotting how to join them).

In that context, researcher Daniel Kahneman's "Thinking, fast and slow" should be made compulsory reading for everyone in a leadership position, and ideally for everybody. Anyway, this message needs to get through: DDS is wired in cognitive biases that thrive on simple-minded binaries that turn us more into intuitive, rather than rational, creatures. Only an optimal and perpetual interlink between the intuitive and the rational can lead to a smart decision. Our competence to collect

and filter information within and without, adapt them to the context and apply them is critical. We ignore this wisdom at our own risk and peril.

It is hardly surprising that philosopher Edgar Morin's theory of complex thinking should hail from a country that draws so much popular devotion from the pontification by "an elite so willing to let fine phrases overrule hard thinking", as economic thinker Paul Krugman puts it. As English language, the language that connects cultures and sciences worldwide, continues to fade (a very Mauritian exception) and French brand of satellite idiot box

“Our perspective on the real world has been further dented by specialisation and indeed over-specialisation, with it our judgment for sound decision-making. Systemic approach is today a privilege. No "expert" has earned a bad name as much as the psychologist (of whom some have turned into trendier "coach"), the academic (not to confuse with the scholar) and the economist. In truth, nobody is spared by the Dumbing Down Syndrome, not even the engineer and entrepreneur, although realism is their key driver...”

continues to conquer screens and minds, parochialism slowly but surely pollutes our once cosmopolitan spirit and mind. From there, it does not take much to lapse into irrelevance.

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The following will be news for most. The Nobel family has never been keen on attributing a Nobel Prize for economics.

From 1968, Sweden's central bank Sveriges Riksbank started sponsoring a prize in economics. That's why it is called The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel. There is no such thing as a Nobel Prize in economics even if it is awarded along genuine Nobel Prizes.

What's more, in 1974 after receiving the prize and in a seminal speech aptly named "The Pretence of Knowledge", Friedrich von Hayek, arguably one of the finest thinkers ever even if many who claim his influence bears the hallmark of DDS victims, warned us: "...[economists] have made a mess of things... and that almost exclusive concentration on quantitatively measurable surface phenomena has produced a policy which has made matters worse..."

He further added: "If I had been consulted whether to establish a Nobel Prize in economics, I should have decidedly

advised against it. There is no reason why a man who has made a distinctive contribution to economic science should be omniscient on all problems of society – as the press tends to treat him till in the end he may himself be persuaded to believe." Any further comment becomes redundant.

Our toxic idea of development has obviously led us to the present stalemate. Policymaking founded on infantilisation in lieu of empowerment with a vision serves best plutocratic ambitions. We should better ponder how to, at least, minimise the impact of the DDS and hero (charlatan in most cases) worship on our existence. As, akin to the frog in the pertinent fable, we may be adapting to the rising temperature of the water without even noticing our tragic fate.

NOTICE FOR PERMISSION FOR LAND USE

Take notice that Mr BALAKRISHNA Moidin will apply to the District Council of Riviere Du Rempart for a Building & Land Use Permit for a proposed Mechanical Garage and an authorization to install/use the following electric motors / engines: (1) one Welding Machine of 2500W (2) One Grinder Machine of 1400 W & One drilling Machine of 800 W at Beau Plateau Road, Goodlands.

Any person feeling aggrieved by the proposal may lodge an objection in writing to the above-named council within 15 days as from the date of this publication.

Date: 10th July 2020



THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS Regn 6915 :Compliant members are kindly invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of the association on Saturday 25th July 2020 at 10.00 hrs. at the Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Social Security House, Rose Hill.

AGENDA: (1) Welcome (2) Reading and approval of last AGM Minutes (3) President's Report (4) Treasurer's Report (5) Approval of Budget Estimates for the year 2020 (6) A.O.B. The Secretary



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Sarita Boodhoo

Surya Prasad Mungur Bhagat, known more commonly as Soorooj Parsad, belongs to the Mungur Bhagat family of Long Mountain whose name is intertwined with the institution of Hindi Pracharini Sabha and the promotion of Hindi in Mauritius.

One of the pillars of Hindi and Hindi Pracharini Sabha, Sooraj Parsad was the third son of immigrant Mungur, who came to Mauritius, aged five, along with his father Narain, aged thirty-five, on 8 January 1862 by the ship Iskandar Shah from Calcutta. They hailed from the village of Dhawoye in the District of Gaya in the Presidency of Bihar, Bengal, Oudh and Orissa during the British Raj. They were engaged as *girmitiyas* on the Estate belonging to Desvaux and Company. Father and son were hard workers and soon they climbed up the ladder and became *sirdars*. After their period of engagement, they became free workers. They benefited from the 1880s 'Grand Morcellement', became small planters and bought small plots of land around Les Mariannes, Robinson, Congomah and Crève-

Surya Prasad Mungur Bhagat: A Strong Pillar of Hindi in Mauritius

Cœur.

They bought a colonial residence in Valton in 1921. Immigrant Mungur got married and had three sons - Lekhman, Ramlall and Surya Parsad. By dint of hard work they became big and influential planters and commanded great respect in the Indian community. They were pioneers of the Hindi movement. Their residence at Valton was the hub of intellectuals coming from India. Soorooj Parsad learnt Hindi and Sanskrit from the acharyas, scholars and swamis visiting them. Lekhman and Ramlall Mungur Bhagat founded the *Tilak Vidyalye* along with others on 12 June 1926. At the time Soorooj was only eighteen years old. From an ordinary *baithka* in a thatched hut, it was registered on 26 December 1935 as Hindi Pracharini Sabha. There were generous donors.

Bolaram Mooktaram Chatterjee, an influential Bengali Pandit from Calcutta became the first President. Ramlall Mungur Bhagat was appointed the First Secretary and Mohabeer Foogoa, who became a prominent politician later, was appointed Treasurer.



Surya Prasad Mungur Bhagat

Young Soorooj Parsad was appointed Assistant Secretary and he thus early on had the apprenticeship in the administration of the Hindi Pracharini Sabha. Ramlall Mungur occupied the post of Secretary till 1940. Thereafter Surya Prasad Mungur became the Secretary which post he occupied till his demise in 1976.

He set up the hand-written magazine 'Doorga' along with friends and edited it under the pen-name of 'Jwalamookhee'. It was one of the best Hindi publications

outside India in style, content and language. In the late 40s, he co-edited, along with Jay Narain Roy, the 'Janata' Hindi newspaper founded by Seewoosagar Ramgoolam.

As a close friend of Beekrumsingh Ramlallah, he helped him to raise Rs 800 to set up along with other collaborators the Nalanda Bookshop and Nalanda Press Service in 1946. In 1960, Beekrumsingh Ramlallah and Soorooj co-founded the weekly Hindi newspaper 'Navjeevan' printed by the Nalanda Press Service. He introduced and encouraged a number of budding young Hindi writers to sharpen their pens.

Soorooj Parsad Mungur Bhagat was a disciplined administrator and steered the Hindi Pracharini Sabha with a firm hand. In 1941, he organised the first Literary Hindi Conference in Port-Louis with the support of Pandit Basdeo Bissoondoyal. 300 Hindi schools were operative and the 'Varshik Utsav' - annual school anniversaries were a galvanizing force for the encouragement of Hindi prose and lyrics.

Oomashanker Geerjanan, Jay Narain Roy and Srinivas Jugdutt, young graduates back from studies in India, joined forces along with the selfless dedicated Soorooj Parsad and left no stone unturned for the promotion and propagation of Hindi. Every weekend they toured the island addressing the masses, encouraging them to send their children to the Hindi schools. From time to time they were joined by Aneerood Dwarka. They affiliated the Hindi Pracharini Sabha with the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan in Allahabad for the conduct of Higher Hindi Studies.

The Hindi Pracharini Sabha set as its motto: 'Bhasha Gayi to Sanskriti Gayi' which in Gustave Flaubert's words mean "Qui perd sa langue perd son âme."

Soorooj Parsad Mungur Bhagat passed away on the 8th September 1976 shortly after the historic 2nd World Hindi Conference held in Mauritius in which he had participated actively.

* * *

Indradhanush's Special Issue 2019 dedicated to Surya Parsad Mungur Bhagat under the initiative of Pahlad Ramsurrun will be launched on Saturday 11th July 2020 at the Hindi Pracharini Sabha, Long Mountain

Programme des Courses

4e Journée - Samedi 11 juillet 2020

1 THE PRODIGAL - CANCER SUPPORT CUP

Distance: 1600 m Valeur [0-25] Time -- 12h15

1 DEER PARK	G	0-0-0-4	60	J.Bardottier	4	220
2 FAIRBANKS	VA	0-5-7-5/6	57	A.Roy	9	850
3 KINGS EMPIRE	SH	7-3-2-2/9	61	J.Allyhosain	7	900
4 MIDNIGHT ORACLE	CD	5-R-3-8/2	60.5	B.Sooful	6	350
5 STAR OF ZEUS	PM	R-6-3-5/R	60	C.Segeon	1	820
6 LADY'S KNIGHT	RM	7-5-7-4-6/	59.5	S.Rama	3	1200
7 MIDDLE PATH	RG	2-7-4-3/3	59.5	D.David	2	500
8 SLIGHTLY SCOTTISH	AS	10-10-7-10/6	59.5	R.K.Chumun	8	2500
9 THE BARRISTER	SN	10-6-9-6-5/	59.5	G.D.Aucharuz	5	2500
10 BYPASS	SPN	10-8-5-8/9	57	R.Hoolash	10	2500

2 CHATTURGOON HURCHUND MEMORIAL TROPHY

Distance: 1450 m Valeur Benchmark 31 Time -- 12h50

1 INERTIA	AS	0-6-9-8-9/	60	R.K.Chumun	6	2500
2 TANJIRO	CD	8-5-6-10-8/	60	B.Sooful	4	2500
3 CASH CALL	SH	1-2-3-R/3	59.5	J.Allyhosain	11	700
4 LAGACIO	G	0-0-1-R/2	59.5	J.Bardottier	1	200
5 NEWSMAN	RG	8-5-8-6/3	59.5	D.David	7	500
6 COPENHAGEN	VA	nouveau	59	R.Boutanive	10	1000
7 HIGH KEY	SN	0-0-0-0-R	59	G.D.Aucharuz	3	750
8 TEMP THE TIGER	SPN	0-0-0-0-8	59	R.Hoolash	8	1400
9 KING'S STORY	JMH	0-0-0-6-10/	58.5	K.Kalychurun	2	2500
10 AFTER THE ORDER	CR	2-4-3-4/1	58	S.Bussunt	9	1400
11 RIVER THAMES [EA]	SJ	0-0-0-8/7	58.5	-----	5	---

3 PRIX DU CENTENAIRE DE LTM ALLIANCE FRANCAISE

Distance: 1600 m Valeur Benchmark 36 Time - 13h25

1 CYBER SPECIAL	GR	2-3-4-6/7	60.5	N.Juglall	8	450
2 OVERDOSE	AS	4-2-1-1/10	60.5	J.Allyhosain	9	1400
3 BURG	SN	5-4-5-3/7	60	G.D.Aucharuz	6	1200
4 SIBERIAN HUSKY	CR	7-8-8-2/7	60	S.Bussunt	1	670
5 CONFSSIONAL	G	nouveau	59	J.Bardottier	2	800
6 POWER TOWER	RG	2-2-4-2-4/	59	D.David	4	500
7 SAND PATH	CD	9-3-2-1/7	58.5	B.Sooful	10	600
8 EIGHT CITIES	VA	1-7-5-8/5	54	A.Roy	3	800
9 PRIDE ROCK	CD	6-8-3-7/7	57	V.A.Bundhoo	7	2000
10 WHY WOULDN'T YEW	RM	7-6-4-6/1	57	S.Rama	5	330

4 THE SERGE HENRY CUP

Distance: 1600 m Valeur Benchmark 41 Time -- 14h00

1 CHARLESTON HERO	AS	4-4-2-2/4	61	R.Boutanive	5	1000
2 POTAWATOMI	AS	6-9-5-7-6/	61	R.K.Chumun	6	1200
3 TEXAS SKY	SN	9-1-6-7/6	61	G.D.Aucharuz	11	1200
4 DRIVEN FORCE	GR	0-0-0-0-6	60.5	N.Juglall	7	700
5 NORTHERN SPY	SJ	1-2-1-2/1	60.5	J.Allyhosain	9	280
6 SUBTROPICAL	CD	10-7-8-9/5	60.5	S.Rama	2	1400
7 THE GREY CRUSADER	RG	2-1-4-3/3	60.5	D.David	3	260
8 WEST COAST WARRIOR	RG	3-2-9-4/10	59.5	V.A.Bundhoo	1	1600
9 SUPREME ORATOR	CR	5-8-8-7/2	59	S.Bussunt	8	1200
10 KEMAL KAVUR	G	11-1-10-9-9/	56.5	B.Sooful	4	2000
11 BARAK LAVAN [EA]	SN	7-4-7-4/4	59	-----	10	---

5 THE SIR BEDE CLIFFORD CUP

Distance: 1500 m Valeur Benchmark 51 Time -- 14h35

1 MOONRISE SENSATION	SH	7-4-3-1-6/	61	K.Kalychurun	2	1600
2 SIR BERNADINI	PM	6-3-6-6-6/	61	C.Segeon	5	1000
3 OVATION AWARD	GR	5-4-5-4-1/	60.5	N.Juglall	3	270
4 SPRING MAN	RM	9-1-7-1/5	60.5	S.Rama	10	800
5 THE BYZANTINE	JMH	1-5-8-5-1/	60	R.Hoolash	6	900
6 RED MARS	SJ	6-3-6-2/2	59.5	J.Allyhosain	9	370
7 YANKEEDOODLEDANDY	G	3-3-5-4-5/	59.5	J.Bardottier	1	550
8 SACRED FLAME	RG	4-6-3-1-1/	59	D.David	11	1000
9 PROMISSORY	VA	6-1-6-5/4	57	R.Boutanive	8	1200
10 CONSUL OF WAR	CD	4-4-5-8-3/	54	B.Sooful	7	1200
11 RED LINE CAPTAIN [EA]	GR	4-2-4-4-8/	59	-----	4	---

6 THE BOTANIQUE CUP

Distance: 990 m Valeur Benchmark 56 Time -- 15h10

1 HENRY TUDOR	CD	1-2-1-4-4/	61	B.Sooful	3	300
2 PERA PALACE	RM	8-10-9-7-6/	61	S.Rama	7	1600
3 LICKERIO	AS	5-3-5-1/9	60.5	J.Bardottier	9	1200
4 PALACE CHAPEL	SJ	0-0-0-0-3	60.5	J.Allyhosain	8	380
5 WAVEBREAKER	SN	5-6-1-10/10	58.5	G.D.Aucharuz	1	1400
6 GUNSTON	SH	2-2-1-1/10	57.5	K.Kalychurun	2	1400
7 MAXAMORE	GR	2-4-1-3-8/	56.5	N.Juglall	4	650
8 TRIPOD	PM	0-0-0-0-3	56.5	C.Segeon	5	500
9 ROB ROY	VA	8-8-3-1-R/	54	R.Boutanive	6	1400

7 THE MAURITIUS JOCKEY CLUB GOLDEN JUBILEE CUP

Distance: 1400 m Valeur [50+] Time -- 15h50

1 RULE THE NIGHT	GR	1-2-1-4/3	61	N.Juglall	6	250
2 WALL TAG	VA	1-6-2-1/2	60	J.Bardottier	1	210
3 AL MARIACHI	SJ	8/2-2-10/1	59	J.Allyhosain	4	1000
4 PEROVSKIA	RM	6-7-5-10/7	58	S.Rama	5	2500
5 HAYLOR	SJ	3-2-1-1/5	55.5	B.Sooful	3	550
6 SILKEN PRINCE	SH	1-2-3-1/8	52	K.Kalychurun	2	3000

8 THE WINKING CUP

Distance: 990 m Valeur [0-26] Time -- 16h25

1 AMANDLA	JMH	nouveau	60	R.Hoolash	7	2000
2 BIRTHDAY BOY	VA	nouveau	60	R.Boutanive	9	300
3 DOUBLE WINNER	CR	nouveau	60	V.A.Bundhoo	4	1000
4 GREY AGAIN	RG	nouveau	60	D.David	3	550
5 MR MOGAMBO	AS	0-0-0-0-5	60	J.Allyhosain	2	470
6 SECRET IDEA	CD	3-7-7-7/6	60	B.Sooful	6	1200
7 THE RIDDLER	SH	nouveau	60	K.Kalychurun	8	1200
8 CHAP TRAP	G	9-1-2-6-9/	59	J.Bardottier	10	1000
9 GREENFLASHSUNSET	RM	9-10-6-8-7/	58.5	S.Rama	1	1000
10 THE FORERUNNER [EA]	VA	nouveau	57.5	-----	5	---

9 THE CHICKADEE PLATE

Distance: 1400 m Valeur [0-25] Time -- 17h00

1 KING OF TARA	VA	nouveau	60	R.Boutanive	1	1200
2 YANKEE FORCE	RG	0-0-0-0-7	60	D.David	4	300
3 ZIGI ZAGI ZUGI	SN	0-3-10-1/3	60	G.D.Aucharuz	7	400
4 CAPTAIN MOSS	P	1-4-5-7/7	59.5	S.Bussunt	6	1200
5 ARTAX	AS	2-4-10-6/5	59	R.Hoolash	10	1600
6 GREATFIVEEIGHT	CD	10-10-5-1/9	59	B.Sooful	3	1000
7 SILVER SONG	CD	9-5-2-6-1/	59	V.A.Bundhoo	8	1000
8 MR BOMBASTIC	RM	0-0-0-7-R/	58.5	S.Rama	9	1000
9 SEVENTH EXPRESS	G	nouveau	58	J.Bardottier	5	600
10 FREDDIE FLINT	SJ	8-8-4-9/7	57	R.K.Chumun	2	1600

Health Watch

7 things you can do to prevent a stroke

Stroke prevention can start today. Protect yourself and avoid stroke, regardless of your age or family history

What can you do to prevent stroke? Age makes us more susceptible to having a stroke, as does having a mother, father, or other close relative who has had a stroke.

You can't reverse the years or change your family history, but there are many other stroke risk factors that you can control—provided that you're aware of them. Knowledge is power. If you know that a particular risk factor is sabotaging your health and predisposing you to a higher risk of stroke, you can take steps to alleviate the effects of that risk.

Here are seven ways to start reining in your risks today to avoid stroke, before a stroke has the chance to strike.

1. Lower blood pressure

High blood pressure is the biggest contributor to the risk of stroke in both men and women. Monitoring blood pressure and, if it is elevated, treating it, is probably the biggest difference people can make to their vascular health.

Your ideal goal: Maintain a blood pressure of less than 120/80 if possible. For some older people, this might not be possible because of medication side effects or dizziness with standing.

How to achieve it:

- Reduce the salt in your diet, ideally to no more than 1,500 milligrams a day (about a half teaspoon).
- Increase polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats in your diet, while avoiding foods high in saturated fats.
- Eat 4 to 5 cups of fruits and vegetables every day, one serving of fish two to three times a week, and several daily servings of whole grains and low-fat dairy.
- Get more exercise - at least 30 minutes of activity a day, and more, if possible.
- Quit smoking, if you smoke.

If needed, take blood pressure medicines.

2. Lose weight

Obesity, as well as the complications linked to it (including high blood pressure and diabetes), raises your odds of having a stroke. If you're overweight, losing as little as 10 pounds can have a real impact on your stroke risk.

Your goal: While an ideal body mass index (BMI) is 25 or less, that may not be realistic for you. Work with your doctor to create a personal weight loss strategy.

How to achieve it:

- Try to eat no more than 1,500 to 2,000 calories a day (depending on your activity level and your current BMI).
- Increase the amount of exercise you do with activities like walking, golfing, or playing tennis, and by making activity part of every single day.

3. Exercise more

Exercise contributes to losing weight and lowering blood pressure, but it also stands on its own as an independent stroke reducer.

Your goal: Exercise at a moderate intensity at least five days a week.

How to achieve it:

- Take a walk around your neighborhood every morning after breakfast.
- Start a fitness club with friends.
- When you exercise, reach the level at which you're breathing hard, but you can still talk.
- Take the stairs instead of an elevator when you can.
- If you don't have 30 consecutive minutes to exercise, break it up into 10- to 15-minute sessions a few times each day.

4. If you drink - do it in moderation

Drinking a little alcohol is okay, and it may decrease your risk of stroke. Studies show that if you have about one drink per day, your risk may be lower. Once you start drinking more than two drinks per day, your risk goes up very sharply.

Your goal: Don't drink alcohol or do it in moderation.

How to achieve it:

- Have no more than one glass of alcohol a day.
- Make red wine your first choice, because it contains resveratrol, which is thought to protect the heart and brain.
- Watch your portion sizes. A standard-sized drink is a 5-ounce glass of wine, 12-ounce beer, or 1.5-ounce glass of hard liquor.

5. Treat atrial fibrillation

Atrial fibrillation is a form of irregular heartbeat that causes clots to form in the heart. Those clots can then travel to the brain, producing a stroke. Atrial fibrillation carries almost a fivefold risk of stroke.

Your goal: If you have atrial fibrillation, get it treated.

How to achieve it:

- If you have symptoms such as heart palpitations or shortness of breath, see your doctor for an exam.
- You may need to take an anticoagulant drug (blood thinner) such as warfarin (Coumadin) or one of the newer direct-acting anticoagulant drugs to reduce your stroke risk from atrial fibrillation. Your doctors can guide you through this treatment.

6. Treat diabetes

Having high blood sugar damages blood vessels over time, making clots more likely to form inside them.

Your goal: Keep your blood sugar under control.

How to achieve it:

- Monitor your blood sugar as directed by your doctor.
- Use diet, exercise, and medicines to keep your blood sugar within the recommended range.

7. Quit smoking

Smoking accelerates clot formation in a couple of different ways. It thickens your blood, and it increases the amount of plaque buildup in the arteries. Along with a healthy diet and regular exercise, smoking cessation is one of the most powerful lifestyle changes that will help you reduce your stroke risk significantly.

Your goal: Quit smoking.

How to achieve it:

- Ask your doctor for advice on the most appropriate way

for you to quit.

- Use quit-smoking aids, such as nicotine pills or patches, counselling, or medicine.
- Don't give up. Most smokers need several tries to quit. See each attempt as bringing you one step closer to successfully beating the habit.

Identify a stroke F-A-S-T

Too many people ignore the signs of stroke because they question whether their symptoms are real. The National Stroke Association has created an easy acronym to help you remember, and act on, the signs of a stroke.

Signs of a stroke include:

- Weakness on one side of the body
- Numbness of the face
- Unusual and severe headache
- Vision loss
- Numbness and tingling
- Unsteady walk.

NOTICE FOR PERMISSION FOR LAND USE

Take notice that R.C Transport Services Ltd will apply to the District Council of Riviere Du Rempart for a Building & Land Use Permit for Automotive Workshop with installation of the following electrical motors: (1) One Welding machine of 2500W (2) One Grinder Machine of 1400 W and (3) One Drilling machine of 800W at Accacia Street, L'esperance Trebuchet.

Any person feeling aggrieved by the proposal may lodge an objection in writing to the above-named council within 15 days as from the date of this publication.

Date: 10th July 2020

NOTICE FOR PERMISSION FOR LAND USE

Take notice that Mr JAGANANDAR KANIAH will apply to the District Council of Moka for a Building & Land Use Permit for Maintenance and repair of Motor Vehicles n.e.c Automotive Workshop (employing less than 10 persons) with permission to use the following electrical motors (1) One Angle Grinder of 2200 W and (2) One Welding Machine of 8000 W at Royal Road, Montagne Blanche.

Any person feeling aggrieved by the proposal may lodge an objection in writing to the above-named council within 15 days as from the date of this publication.

Date: 10th July 2020

NOTICE FOR PERMISSION FOR LAND USE

Take notice that Mrs LUCCHESI Marie Joane Priscilla will apply to the Municipal Council of Port Louis for a Building & Land Use Permit for Child Day Care Activities/Kindergarten at 105, Morcellement Verger Les Bains, Pointe Aux Sables, Port Louis.

Any person feeling aggrieved by the proposal may lodge an objection in writing to the above-named council within 15 days as from the date of this publication.

Date: 10th July 2020

NOTICE FOR PERMISSION FOR LAND USE

Take notice that Mrs MARIE JOYCE LOUISE will apply to the Municipal Council of Port Louis for a Building & Land Use Permit for General retailer-Foodstuff (excluding liquor) and Non Foodstuff (foodstuff predominant) & Victualler, selling cooked food on & Off premises at 24, Orchidee Terrason, Pointe Aux Sables, Port Louis.

Any person feeling aggrieved by the proposal may lodge an objection in writing to the above-named council within 15 days as from the date of this publication.

Date: 10th July 2020

In a light vein

Ready for Marriage

Son: Dad, I want to get married.
Father: First, tell me you're sorry.
Son: For what?
Father: Say sorry...
Son: But for what? What did I do?
Father: Just say sorry...
Son: But...what have I done wrong?
Father: Say sorry!
Son: WHY?
Father: Say sorry!!
Son: Please, just tell me why?
Father: Say sorry!
Son: OK, Dad... I'm sorry!
Father: There you are! Now you are ready... your training is complete. When you learn to say sorry for no reason at all, then you're ready to get married!

The accountant's wife

Wife: "Why in marriages bride is always on the left?"
Husband: "According to profit and loss account, all income is on the right side and expenses is on the left side."
* * *
Wife: "Where are you?"
Husband: "I'm at the bank."
Wife: "Wow that's good, I need Rs 200,000 for buying a new cellphone, dresses, shoes, a new purse and cosmetics."
Husband: "Sorry, I mean I'm at the blood bank."
* * *
At a dinner party, the speaker who was the guest of



honour, was about to deliver his speech when his wife sitting at the other end of the table, sent him a piece of paper with the word "Kiss" scribbled on it.
A guest seated next to him said, "Your wife has sent you a kiss before you begin your speech, she must love you very much."
The speaker replied: "You don't know my wife, the letters stand for - 'Keep it short, stupid'. "
* * *
Running from a cop, a man in his mid-forties bought a new BMW and was out on the interstate for a nice evening drive. He decided to see what the engine had.
As the needle jumped to 80 m.p.h, he suddenly saw flashing red and blue lights behind him.
There's no way the cop can catch a BMW, he thought to himself, and pressed on the accelerator. The needle hit 90, then 100, and reality hit him and he knew he

shouldn't run from the police, so he slowed down and pulled over.
The cop came to him, took his license without a word and examined the car.
"It's been a long drive; this is the end of my shift and today is Friday 13th, I don't feel I like more paper work, so if you can give me an excuse for your speeding, you can go."
The guy thought for a second and said: "Last weekend my wife ran off with a cop, I was afraid you were trying to return her back."
"Have a nice weekend," said the officer and walked away.
* * *
Reporter: So, why you guys don't do any funny things, like playing games together?
The married man: Yes, we do. Me and my wife, we are playing a game called "You to be blamed". Very close game, right now, she is leading by 1876-1.
Reporter: Ok, tell us, what kind of conversations you guys make when you're free?
The married man: She asks a lot of questions - every wife does -, and as you start answering their questions, they start questioning the answers.
Reporter: So, any tips you wanna share.
The married man: Yep, quite a few:
(a) Don't waste your energy trying to make her laugh, she'll treat you like a clown anyway.
(b) Never reply to your wife's 'Ilove you' text with 'okay'.
(c) Remember, a perfect husband is one who apologizes every time his wife makes a mistake.
(d) And, yes, take your wife on holidays to different places of the world; that will increase chances of her being lost.

Life's Lessons

Professionalism

Shiv Khera, a renowned author and our management guru writes about his experience in Singapore:
Six years ago in Singapore I gave a taxi driver a business card to take me to a particular address.
At the last point he circled round the building. His meter read 11\$, but he took only 10.
I said Henry, "Your meter reads 11\$ how come you are taking only 10?"
He said, "Sir, I am a taxi driver, I am supposed to be bringing you straight to the destination. Since I did not know the last spot, I had to circle around the building. Had I brought you straight here, the meter would have read 10\$. Why should you be paying for my ignorance?"
He said, "Sir, legally, I can claim 11\$ but honestly and ethically I am entitled to only 10."
He further added that Singapore is a tourist destination and many people come here for three or four days. After clearing the immigrations and customs, the first experience is always with the taxi driver and if that is not good, the remaining three to four days are not pleasant either.
He said, "Sir, though I am a taxi driver, I am the Ambassador of Singapore without a diplomatic passport."
In my opinion he probably did not go to school beyond the 8th grade, but to me he was a professional. To me his behaviour reflected pride in performance and character.
That day I learnt that one needs more than professional qualification to be a professional.
In one line, be a "Professional with a Human Touch and Values" - that makes all the more difference. Knowledge, skill, money, education, all comes later. First comes Human Values, Honesty and Integrity.
Professionalism: It's NOT the job you DO, It's HOW you DO the job.

Relationships Tips

7 relationship 'rules' you can throw out the window

Turns out, some of the tried-and-true marriage advice given to newlyweds -- like "never go to bed angry" -- isn't so true after all.
Here are seven relationship "no-nos" that really aren't that bad, according to experts:
1. Sleeping in separate beds.
2. Saying "I don't want to talk about it right now."
3. Commenting on your spouse's weight gain.
4. Going to bed angry.
5. Asking for some individual attention from your spouse.
6. Fantasizing about your ex.
7. Fighting.
HuffPost
* * *
If you want a great sex life, don't be scared to work at it
"It's kind of ironic that our modern willpower society, which encourages us to manifest our careers and health through deliberate and relentless work ethic, tells us that we shouldn't have to try hard at all when it comes to sex. That our sex lives must only rise in the spontaneity of the moment. Spontaneity is a wonderful fantasy. But in an ongoing and busy relationship, whatever is going to 'just happen' has already happened...
Realistically, sex is more like going to the gym. Fit people intentionally make the gym a priority in their lives. As a result, their deliberateness causes them to have very fit bodies.
If you want your sex life to leave you with your heart pounding, and if you want to be left sprawled out breathless on the bed, then you need to commit to giving sex the attention it deserves."
HuffPost

From 'Ek Thi Daayan' to '1920: Evil Returns': Bollywood horror films that left us asking for more

Stree

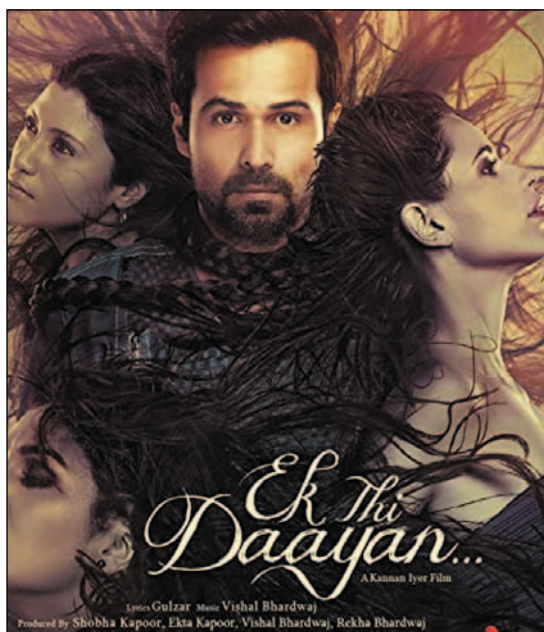
Although 'Stree' is listed under the category of horror-comedy, trust us, this movie is so well scripted that along with its funny elements, it can make you scream at the top of your voices. The 2018 film's plot was based on the Bangalore urban legend known as Nale Ba (English: "Come Tomorrow"), that revolves around a spirit who knocks on people's doors at night, and this makes the movie even spookier. 'Stree' stars Rajkummar Rao and Shraddha Kapoor, along with various brilliant side characters who have made this movie a social satire, with its own frightening edges, that will keep you glued to the screen at all times.

Pari

This exceptional desert-dwelling supernatural horror film, is complicated but has definitely raised the bar for horror films in Bollywood. As the tagline says, "not a fairytale", the 2018 film lives up to what it says. 'Pari' brings out a different essence of the horror genre in Bollywood with Anushka Sharma's mindblowing performance. Her brilliant acting, coupled with the atmosphere, the makeup and the sound effects, everything added up to it becoming one of the best horrors in the past decade. Rajat Kapoor and Dibyendu Bhattacharya (the morgue worker) were very convincing too. The music and background score need special mention as they reflected the mood of the movie throughout. 'Pari' was an outstanding example as it showed that Bollywood is slowly traversing towards using the techniques that are used in World Cinema.

1920: Evil Returns

The 2012 release, '1920: Evil Returns' still stands as one of the best horror films made in Bollywood in recent times. The movie explored the genre of possession and love triangles and made for a gripping tale. Tia Bajpai and Sharad Kelkar's acting chops spoke volumes and hence made this movie amongst the finest to have been created in the past decade. Dialogues were well written and the music was in sync with the plot to create the right effects for a horror film. Brought to life by Bhushan Patel, the movie was well directed and is a highly recommended one by many.



Bollywood has had a stereotypical way of portraying horror or thriller plots in films. The creaking doors, fallen antiques, big old chandeliers, brutally murdered cats and dogs and eerie characters with loads of cakey make up were considered to be symbolic of a horror film. And for a long time, that did the job alright. However, even then, Hollywood movies were considered to be the ultimate horror flicks; what with 'The Omen', 'Child's Play' and 'Possession'. But with the exposure of Hindi film fraternity to World Cinema, little did we know that this decade would have so much more in store for us besides the regular spooky costumed men and witches dressed in white sarees. So, we take you on a tour of those new-age Bollywood horror films from the past decade from 'Ek Thi Daayan' to '1920 Evil Returns' that are enough to get you goose bumps.

Ek Thi Daayan

This 2013 movie threaded beautifully between the world of suspense, occult and drama, with an intensively gripping plot, making for a hair-raising experience. Directed by Kannan Iyer, this movie was carefully created around dark interiors with darker settings. Iyer merged romance with horror and what would be a better way to see who wins. Love or the Witch?

Lupt

Directed by Prabhu Raj, this 2018 movie revolved around a family going on a vacation, where their car breaks down in the middle of a dark road in a jungle. A suspicious man offers to help, and that's where all the trouble begins. This completely out-of-the-box plot was gripping. The movie was based on an eerie vision that Javed Jaffri gets, after which, everything goes horribly wrong. Lupt was well directed and edited and had a great effect on its viewers.

Phobia

Based on the concept of Fear of the Unknown, 'Phobia', released in 2016, was a great psychological thriller, bordering on horror. It was an eerie movie with loads of suspense and a strong plot. Radhika Apte was accurately cast for the lead character of Mehak. Pawan Kripalani outdid himself, directing this unconventional film and the film surely qualifies as a must-watch for all horror-thriller lovers out there.

YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

Pecuniary difficulties are to be foreseen; it would be better to postpone certain purchases that are not urgent. You'll have great chances to make a very significant sentimental encounter. If your present union proves impossible to live, don't hesitate to provoke a break-up.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 11, 15, 19, 22, 30

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

Your failures and sufferings will be transformed into joys and peace. A favourable climate for amorous unions and a determining encounter. You'll by no means be willing to tighten your belt; fortunately, you'll have a completely unexpected money entry.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 9, 17, 18, 30, 36

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

You'll have a very good chance to satisfy your heart's deepest aspirations. You'll skilfully carry out a financial transaction. Put your business in order; wouldn't this be the moment to sort out your projects and plans, and to launch immediately what can be achieved in a short term?

Lucky Numbers: 1, 8, 11, 15, 19, 35

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

Concerning love, try to know exactly what you want, don't play with other people's feelings. Your friends will give you very useful advice concerning your work. Considerable professional progress within your reach if you don't slacken your efforts.

Lucky Numbers: 25, 26, 31, 34, 38, 40

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

You'll live your love affairs as on a roller coaster, but this won't be without charm. Be careful of certain friends. During this week nothing is more prejudicial to you than pessimism; but if you're definitely optimistic and realistic, you can gain some nice successes on all fronts.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 19, 21, 33, 36, 37

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

Avoid taking important steps, or starting a big project. Give your heart a new chance, don't let yourself be discouraged by your recent disappointments. If you don't have time or the desire to practise a sport, you'll imperatively have to do some exercise every day.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 9, 14, 16, 33, 36

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

A favourable week for young and less young lovers; quite happy sentimental climate, full of gaiety and liveliness. On the contrary, tensions and disputes will be current in family. At work, it would be useless to try to force destiny too much; let the situation mature.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 20, 23, 26, 29, 34

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

You'll be able to find the right balance between work and leisure. You'll benefit from dazzling health. At work, don't try to get ahead of schedule, for you're likely to spoil your chances of success.

Lucky Numbers: 11, 12, 14, 17, 26, 33

Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

A gust of jealousy will agitate your love relationships; try to control the situation. At work, nothing serious should come to impede your efforts. Luck will be on your side in a joint venture or a financial deal; this time, you can take risks.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 11, 17, 20, 36, 39

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

You'll overflow with drive, energy, and enthusiasm, which will enable you to achieve repeated feats. You'll like to charm and flit about; but if you trespass certain limits, you'll have to experience a very bad surprise.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 12, 16, 17, 22, 28

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

Your love life will suddenly bloom. For once, you can manage to conciliate work and family life. Avoid dealing with any kind of litigious matter; play for time. Events will be favourable to you on the professional plane; nevertheless, intensify your efforts.

Lucky Numbers: 17, 20, 29, 30, 35, 37

Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

Positive changes will take place in your life: you'll make new encounters or will start more enriching activities. Financial situation in expansion: you can count on a helping hand from luck. Increased inflammatory tendency.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 11, 14, 20, 25, 27

Sumeet Sachdev: Life is like a game of Scrabble

There's a lot more to Sumeet Sachdev as Roshni Olivera of Times of India discovered in a recent chat with the actor-turned-singer, who has already recorded a few songs in the last couple of months. Interestingly, he's also a Scrabble player and regularly participates in tournaments. Excerpts from a chat with Sumeet...

You've recorded a few songs during the lockdown. Tell us about your passion for singing...

Singing and I go back a long way. I've always had a deep passion for singing, and I do it quite seriously; if someone is talking too loudly while I'm singing at a casual karaoke evening, she or he may get an annoyed glare from me (laughs). I remember I was spotted in school by my music teacher. I still remember we were around 15-20 boys singing in a group and he was walking around us. He stopped next to me, asked everyone to stop singing, bent down and asked me to sing from the beginning. I vividly recollect his expression - it was like he was awestruck. Well, courtesy that experience, I was made aware that I am probably a decent singer.

You play Scrabble at a tournament level. How did it all begin?

Yes, I am very active on the world tournament scene. My mother is the one who got me all hooked on to Scrabble. However, playing the game casually at home is very different than how the game is actually played. One thing is common - be it playing at home or at a tournament - it is super fun. I started playing in tournaments three years ago and have done very well. I am ranked 33 in India. It's a game that involves a study of words in a logical fashion.

Other than the knowledge of words, there are aspects like strategy, vision (understanding the board and all possibilities), time management, and tile and score tracking - all this is happening parallelly, so you need to be alert. Chess is another board game that has a wide following and draws a major audience. I don't know much about chess, but from what I know about Scrabble, I feel it is probably more complicated than chess. The fact that your strategy has to change with every game as every game is different - the tiles you get, the words you spot, etc. - decide on what shape the game takes. This uncertainty makes this game more complex and fun.

You chose to give up your job as an architect years ago and become an actor. Are you happy with your decision?

Absolutely! I'm very happy and satisfied and have no reason to complain. I really appreciate all the love I have received from my audience over the years. I anyway don't believe in ifs and buts. One cannot look into the past and say, 'If I had done this or that, things may have been better'. You need to stand by every decision you take at every stage in your life.

In that context, life is like a game of Scrabble. In the middle of a game, one may have two or even three moves to choose from. After a lot of thought and calculation, the move that seems the best is made. In due course, it is known if it actually was - depending on what tiles come, what the opponent plays, and what shape the game takes.

Once the game is over and



analysed, one may realise that the move made didn't turn out to be the best. It would be futile to mull over it, feel sad or complain. At the time, you made a decision that you felt was the best, and you should stick with it and just smile.

What's the road ahead for the entertainment industry, given the current Covid-19 crisis?

It's going to take time to get used to the 'new normal'. Not sure how things are going to be controlled henceforth. There will be more rules and guidelines, but everybody will have to individually make an effort to adhere to them. All one can hope and pray for is that this is just a phase and everything will hopefully come-back to normal soon. My heart goes out to all those who have suffered so much during this pandemic. It is essential that we be careful and safe. My best wishes are with everyone.

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societe.rchundunsing@intnet.mu

TV SERIAL

Kulfi Kumar Bajewala

Friday 10 July: Sikander, Kulfi and Amyra struggle to escape from the burning building. Later, Loveleen is arrested after Amyra learns a shocking truth about her.

Monday 13 July: Sikander and his family try to move on without Lovleen while Jimmy plays his trump card. Later, a terrified Loveleen crosses paths with someone from her past.

Tuesday 14 July: Amyra breaks down when she is invited to live with Kulfi while Sikander gets a strange phone call. Later, he recalls some fond memories as he prepares to move out.

Wednesday 15 July: Sikander breaks down after he decides to stay away from Kulfi and Amyra. Later, they confront him before they run into an unruly crowd.

Thursday 16 July: Sikander and his daughters move into their new house. Later, some neighbourhood kids trouble Kulfi and Amyra by throwing eggs at them.

Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai

Friday 10 July: Rakesh is trying his level best to convince Mr. Gadkari to accept Aditya and his acting, but whatever they are trying doesn't seem to work. Rakesh finally chooses a move to share a story with Mr. Gadkari.

Monday 13 July: After Gadkari and Aditya have solved their differences, Naina as she tries to enter her boss' cabin, she overhears him narrating the story she suggested and feels cheated.

Tuesday 14 July: Bakshi makes fun of Sameer's audition and tells Naina not to ever double-cross him. Naina gets a surprise when Sameer and her father throw a party for her. When Sameer asks her about his audition she hesitates to tell him what happened in the office.

Wednesday 15 July: Naina's father is upset because Naina left her job without thinking anything. Sameer tries to defend Naina. Naina tells her father that Bakshi wouldn't have let her succeed in anything so she wanted to try doing something on her own.

Thursday 16 July: Naina and Sameer decide that they will comply with the marriage of Pandit as he had helped him during his marriage. Later along with Pandit, they go to see the would-be bride and see what happens next.

Kahan Hum Kahan Tum

Friday 10 July: During a severe storm, Rohit takes shelter at Sonakshi's house. Later, they recollect their past when they spend some time together on the terrace.

Monday 13 July: While Suman is irked by Rohit's behaviour, Pari provokes her against Sonakshi. Later, Sonakshi reminisces about the times spent with him.

Tuesday 14 July: The Sippys arrive at Sonakshi's shooting set to confront Sumit. They assault him after he makes an arrogant confession regarding his misdeeds.

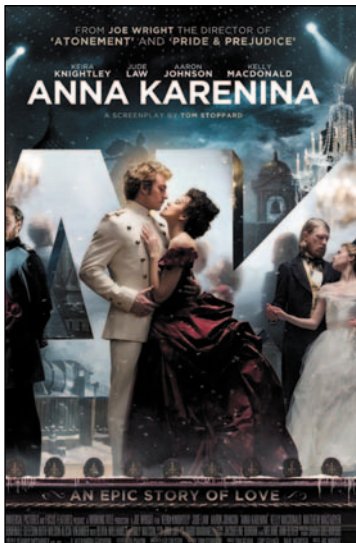
Wednesday 15 July: Sonakshi expresses her gratitude to Rohit while Pari secretly stalks Rohan. Later, Rohit organises a dinner with Sonakshi while she plans a surprise for him.

Thursday 16 July: Rohit and Sonakshi go out for dinner while Akash learns a startling truth about Pooja. Later, while trying to save a woman, Rohit is reminded of a horrible memory.

CINE 12

Vendredi 10 juillet - 21.15

Anna Karenina

Avec: Keira Knightley, Jude Law,
Aaron Taylor-Johnson

CINE 12

Samedi 11 juillet - 21.15

Passengers

Avec: Jennifer Lawrence, Chris
Pratt, Michael Sheen

CINE 12

Dimanche 12 juillet - 21.15



vendredi 10 juillet

MBC 1

07.00 Local: Passerelles
09.35 Local: Rodrig Prog
10.17 Local: Portrait D'artiste
10.30 Local: Saver KilTirel
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Doc: Autour Des Valeurs
12.30 Mag: Eye On SADC
14.00 Local: Rodrig Prog
14.30 D.Anime: Le Quiz De Zack
14.45 D.Anime: Astrology
14.47 D.Anime: Hogie The Globe...
15.10 D.Anime: Dinoforz
16.07 D.Anime: Chicken Town
17.05 D.Aimes: Mega Man
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.00 Prod: Goute A Tout
20.35 Prod: Komiko
22.15 Serial: Chicago Police...
23.00 Le Journal

MBC 2

10.00 Serial: Tumhaari Natsaha
11.21 Serial: Mol
12.04 Film: Ashley
Starring: Rishi Bhutani,
Gurleen Chopra
13.48 DDI Magazine
15.00 Mag: Strictly Street
15.25 Serial: Honaar Soon Mee
15.50 Serial: Mooga Manasulu
16.20 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal
17.11 Mehendi Tohra Naam Ke
17.03 Serial: Gangaa
17.30 Serial: Ki Jaana Mein Kaun
18.00 Serial: Dr. Quin
18.30 Local: Yaadein
19.00 DDI Magazine
20.15 Serial: Tawaan
21.00 Local: Anjuman
21.26 Local: Urdu Programme
22.26 DDI Live

MBC 3

06.00 Mag: Eco India
06.44 Mag: Shift
07.00 Mag: Border Crossing
07.29 Mag: Tomorrow Today
07.55 Doc: Comme Un Poissn...
09.00 Doc: 360 GEO
10.12 Doc: Africa Rising
11.33 Mag: Sur Mesure
11.44 Mag: Shift
12.02 Mag: Border Crossing
12.27 Doc: A Question Of Science
12.56 Doc: Comme Un Poisson...
14.49 Mag: Stricl Street
15.12 Doc: Africa Rising
16.25 Mag: Urban Gardens
17.07 Mag: Border Crossing
17.54 Doc: Empty Nets
18.23 Mag: Urban Gardens
18.30 Live: News
18.40 Mag: Arts And Culture
19.00 Student Support Prog...

Cine 12

01.21 Film: Chappie
03.16 Serial: Chicago Med
06.00 Tele: Amanda
06.42 Serial: When Calls The Heart
07.24 Film: Jesse Stone
09.45 Tele: Au Nom De L'Amour
10.10 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett
10.35 Serial: Chicago Med
11.16 Tele: Dulce Amor
11.41 Film: All The King's Men
13.44 Tele: Totalement Diva
14.45 Film: Jesse Stone
16.40 Serial: NCIS
17.24 Serial: When Calls The Heart
18.07 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour
18.31 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett
19.10 Tele: Dulce Amor
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Serial: The Magicians
21.15 Film: Anna Karenina
23.24 Tele: Totalement Diva

Bollywood TV

08.00 Film: Barsaat
12.16 / 19.54 -
Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam
12.16 / 20.11 -
Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
12.37 / 20.32 Radha Krishna
13.09 / 21.09 - Bin Kuch Kahe
13.20 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek
13.41 / 21.46 -
Bade Acche Lagte Hai
14.03 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan
14.25 / 22.25 - Bitti Business...
15.09 Film: Gharana
Starring: Rishi Kapoor,
Govinda, Jaya Prada
17.39 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
18.00 Live: Samacher
18.30 Kumkum Bhagya
18.51 Piya Albela
19.13 Mere Angne Mein
19.33 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai

samedi 11 juillet

06.30 D.Anime: Trolls
07.32 D.Anime: Kid-E-Cats
08.50 D.Anime: The Garfield Show
12.00 Le Journal
12.25 Local: People
12.35 Mag: Strictly Street
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: MIA
16.03 D.Anime: Chicken Town
16.41 D.Anime: Delilah Et Julius
17.30 Serial: You And Me
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja
19.30 Journal & La Meteo
20.00 Prod: Lottotech
21.05 Film: Anddroid Apocalypse
22.35 Mag: Hollywood On Set
23.06 Local: Le Journal

10.00 Bade Acchelagte Hai
12.00 Serial: Mooga Manasulu
12.30 Serial: Brundavanam
13.00 Annakodiyum Ainthus
Pengalum
13.30 Serial: Anu Pallavi
14.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhya
Bhare
15.00 Mag: Strictly Street
15.30 Film: Jaan-E-Mann
Starring: Salman Khan,
Akshay Kumar, Preity Zinta
18.15 Mag: DDI Magazine
20.05 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki
Rahasya Gatha
20.28 Serial: Bitti Business Wali
21.00 Film: Lateef - An Unfold Fact
Starring Nawazuddin
Siddiqui, Murli Sharma,
Mukesh Tiwari, Kader Khan
23.00 DDI Live

06.00 Doc: The Miracle Of Love
06.42 Mag: Urban Gardens
06.47 Mag: Arts And Culture
07.27 Doc: A Question Of Science
08.43 Doc: World Stamps
08.57 Doc: 80's Blockbusters
10.31 The Great Lead Forward
11.59 Mag: Urban Gardens
12.50 Mag: Euromaxx
15.03 Doc: Breaking The Cycle
15.46 Mag: Arts And Culture
15.59 Open Univ: Student Support
18.30 Live: News (English)
18.45 Mag: Carnet De Sante
19.30 Mag: Mixeur, Les Goûts...
19.56 Mag: Japan Video Topics
20.02 Doc: Fresh Fruit Frakers
20.57 Doc: World Stamps
20.58 Doc: 360 GEO
21.50 Doc: Programmed To Kill
22.42 Doc: Pioneers Of The Skies
23.25 Doc: Horizon

01.12 Film: Anna Karenina
03.21 Serial: Chicago Fire
04.00 Film: Crystal Skulls
05.24 Tele: Destiny
06.06 Serial: The Magicians
06.52 Film: Runaway
08.30 Serial: Mike Hammer
09.00 Serial: NCIS
09.18 Film: Kung Fu Hustle
10.54 Film: The 5th Wave
12.41 Serial: Chicago Fire
13.22 Tele: L'esclave Blanche
14.03 Tele: Premiere Dame
15.05 Serial: Chicago Med
16.33 Mag: Hollywood News Feed
16.48 Serial: Mission: Impossible
17.00 Serial: The Magicians
17.45 Film: Sos Fantômes
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Series: The Magicians
21.15 Film: Passengers
23.06 Tele: Eva Luna

04.05 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum
04.26 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
04.43 Radha Krishna
05.05 Zindagi Ki Mehek
05.27 Bade Acche Lagte Hai
05.47 Chhanchhan
06.14 Bitti Business
06.29 Kumkum Bhagya
06.50 Piya Albela
07.12 Mere Angne Mein
08.00 Zindagi Ki Mehek
09.56 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai
14.02 Bin Kuch Kahe
16.00 Pavitra Rishta
18.30 Film: Diljale
Starring Ajay Devgn,
Sonali Bendre, Madhoo,
Amrsh Puri
21.08 Serial: Siya Ke Ram
21.51 Serial: Naagin Season 2
22.36 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek

dimanche 12 juillet

06.00 D.Anime: Robot Trains
08.47 D.Anime: The Garfield Show
09.18 D.Anime: Astrology
09.20 Mag: Origami
12.00 Le Journal
12.30 Local: Elle - No 104
15.00 D.Anime: Bob Le Bricoleur
15.11 D.Anime: Le Quiz De Zack
15.29 D.Anime: MIA
15.40 D.Anime: Dinofroz
16.06 D.Anime: Astrology
16.15 D.Anime: Caillou
16.37 D.Anime: Chicken Town
16.45 D.Anime: The Young Empress
17.33 D.Anime: Mega Man
18.00 Live: Samachar
18.30 Jamai Raja
19.30 Le Journal
20.00 Local: Mett Sa Ladan
20.10 Local: Faya Vibes
21.10 Film: Talhotlond

07.00 Film: Phul Wari
Starring: Debashree Roy,
Shashi Puri, Ashok Saraf
09.38 DDI Magazine
11.00 Serial: Santoshi Maa
12.00 Film: Jamai Raja
14.26 DDI Magazine
15.00 Mag: Strictly Street
15.30 Serial: Mooga Manasulu
16.00 Eka Lagnachi Teesri Gosht
16.30 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal
17.00 Serial: Gangaa
17.40 Serial: Mahakali
19.00 DDI Magazine
20.00 Serial: Maharakshak
21.00 Serial: Naagin
21.48 Serial: CID
22.31 Serial: Piya Rangrez
23.15 DDI Live

06.00 Doc: Horizon
06.49 Doc: Olivia's Garden
07.39 Doc: Fresh Fruit Frakers
08.33 Doc: World Stamps
10.19 Doc: Pioneers Of The Skies
11.05 Doc: Horizons
11.45 Doc: Olivia's Garden
13.37 Doc: World Stamps
16.10 Doc: Horizon
17.26 Mag: Mixeur, Les Goût Et...
18.00 Doc: Diving At The Limit
18.30 Live: News
19.05 Doc: Builders Of The Future
19.36 Mag: Mixeur, Les Goût Et...
20.05 Doc: To The Moon
20.49 Doc: World Stamps
20.52 Doc: 360 Geo
21.44 Doc: Can The Citarum Still...
22.27 Doc: Displaced: Drought...
23.05 Doc: Garden Party
00.01 Doc: Builders Of The Future

00.24 Serial: The Magicians
01.28 Film: Passengers
03.18 Serial: Hawaii 5-0
03.59 Film: A Gift Horse
05.23 Tele: Destiny
06.10 Serial: The Magicians
06.52 Film: Witchslayer Gretl
08.30 Serial: Mike Hammer
09.18 Film: World Invasion
11.31 Tele: Dulce Amor
12.34 Serial: Hawaii 5-0
13.16 Tele: L'esclave Blanche
13.58 Tele: Premiere Dame
15.05 Serial: Chicago Med
17.08 Serial: The Magicians
17.50 Serial: Hawaii 5-0
18.31 Serial: Mission: Impossible
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir
20.30 Serial: Incorporated
21.15 Film: Grizzly Park
22.46 Film: World Invasion

00.45 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein
02.12 Bin Kuch Kahe
04.01 Pavitra Rishta
05.25 Film: Diljale
08.06 Motu Patlu
08.16 Chhanchhan
10.05 Itna Karo Na Mujhe Pyaar
12.01 Piya Albela
14.00 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum
15.48 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala
17.00 Punar Vivaah
18.00 Samachar
18.30 Film: Har Dil Jo Pyar
Karega
Starring: Salman Khan,
Preity Zinta, Rani Mukerji
20.30 Entertainment: Nach Baliye
21.47 Bade Acche Lagte Hai
23.37 Piya Albela

Samedi 11 juillet -
18.30Stars: Ajay Devgn, Sonali Bendre,
Madhoo, Amrsh Puri

Dimanche 12 juillet - 18.30

Stars: Salman Khan, Preity
Zinta, Rani Mukerji

A 'Manifest Destiny' of the Oldest Democracy



Nita Chicooree-Mercier

The US celebrated the 244th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence last week amid warnings of coronavirus contamination in mass gatherings. Discarding alarms raised on health hazards, a huge assembly of loyal supporters stuck to their guns and cheerfully lauded the presidential discourse. Presumably, in the wake of mass protests against racial discrimination triggered by police violence, which somewhat showcased the US in a negative spotlight, the public wanted to hear something different. So, the President briefly recalled the foundation of the huge country and its positive contribution to the world with emphasis on its generosity.

In the oldest democracy of the world where free speech ranks high in the long list of freedoms granted to citizens, apparently no academic or media spokesperson deemed it necessary to observe that among one thousand deaths a year by police action, only 26 to 31% of the victims are African-Americans according to figures published in the media. What about the 70% or so? Among American whites and Hispanics, probably. Are they perceived as racially-motivated? As things stand these days, with both academics and media portraying every confrontation and clash as minority woes, promoting a skewed vision of victim/oppressor relation based on ethnicity, religion or colour, it comes as no surprise. Such partial reporting on sensitive issues hides the complexity of factors underlying economic and cultural aspects of society, and how the mainstream majoritarian section of society see themselves as a nation in its historical development and the values they cherish.

In an era of non-stop news, events, well-grounded or impulsive ill-informed opinions, and above all, quick emotional reactions splashed on 'social' media by all and sundry, historical reality and a multi-faceted portrait of a country are often ignored. As regards its history and rise as a superpower, a deeper insight into what the US has been and still represents is of prime relevance notwithstanding the beheading of Columbus and other key figures. On Independence Day, presidential discourses encapsulate the state and mood of the country and give an overview of its trajectory and present significance on



Declaration of Independence celebrations in Washington. Photo - static.independent.co.uk

the world stage. Quite an impressive country from all angles whatever be the yardsticks used to evaluate its importance and worth on the one hand, and without underestimating its flaws in diplomacy and far-reaching consequences in international conflicts on the other hand.

'Birth of a Nation' is the first American film in the early beginning of cinema production, a patriotic view of its foundations and guiding ethics. A date which might perhaps offend Native Americans. Indeed, the Founding Fathers namely, John Adams, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and others laid down the principles and lofty ideals of the Constitution right after declaring independence from England on July 4th 1776. An experimentation with democracy elaborated by an authoritarian and conservative set of Puritan representatives, but which nevertheless foreshadowed an unwavering belief in freedom and individual human rights irrespective of race, birth, gender and religion embodied in the Constitution. The oldest democracy is imbued with a profound religious spirit of its 'manifest destiny' in making the new country a model for the world.

Like a City upon a Hill

Musical Comedy and film 'The Mayflower' depicts the tempestuous journey of the second batch of settlers who set sail from the shores of Holland after departing from England. The quest for freedom encompasses religion (Puritanism rejected in England), agricultural economy and political distancing from king rule. A string of biblical connotations runs through all the discourses of the first **Pilgrim Fathers**. It was a voyage to the **Promised Land**, full of milk and honey, a liberation from persecution, and a freedom of enterprise and hope of self-rule. A dream of prosperity and success which one of the most prominent **Pilgrim Fathers**, John Winthrop described in prophetic terms: We shall be like a city upon a hill. One day all the world will look

“Whatever be the flaws, lack of adequate national healthcare and equal education system, lack of wisdom in the conduct of a few cases in international affairs, the US remains a key world power to reckon with. Whether it is labelled as Satan by anti-Western rhetoric, big bully by all and sundry, it is a country which still lives up to its principles; it has a system of checks and balances to address wrongdoings and ensure fairness in its internal affairs...”

at us.

A city upon a hill is reminiscent of the sermon on the hill in the Old Testament and the foundation of Jerusalem.

If anything, a 1620 prophecy that came to full realization in the course of the 20th century. President Trump's mention of US generosity is reminiscent of the sense of duty of its leaders as they opened its gate to other migrants fleeing poverty in England and Ireland in the 17th and 18th centuries in the first stages of nation-building, and to Germans, Greeks, Italians and other Eastern Europeans who consolidated its economic pillars in the 19th century. Then came Asians, mainly Chinese, to build its railway infrastructure, and in times of prosperity Egyptians, Iranians, Middle-Easterners, Africans and other Asians were accepted as immigrants for several reasons, as they were fleeing tyranny, wars, dictatorship, bleak economic conditions in native lands. America was the promised land of opportunities, land of plenty where anyone could make it to the top, from rags to riches, whatever be

the circumstances they were born with. It was indeed the shining city, a beacon of hope other citizens of the world looked up to.

End of 20th century and exploding world demography made it difficult for the US to keep its gates wide open to all indiscriminately. Its model as a free society, a strong democracy coupled with dynamic economic growth kept drawing thousands of people to its shores. This is the basic relation of foreigners with the US. In recent decades, inadequate investment in education in the US has led the administration to welcome high-tech specialists in key sectors from other countries where they are educated at the expense of local public funds. Scholarships, grants of all sorts to foreign students in American universities, huge sums to the budget of world organizations and NATO to ensure Europe's security have remained on the agenda for years despite a review of US funding lately.

Whatever be the flaws, lack of adequate national healthcare and equal education system, lack of wisdom in the conduct of a few cases in international affairs, the US remains a key world power to reckon with. With a high-profile businessman as President, it inevitably reviews the sacred policy of non-intervention of federal government in economic affairs dating back to Jefferson because the President seriously means business. Whether it is labelled as Satan by anti-Western rhetoric, big bully by all and sundry, it is a country which still lives up to its principles; it has a system of checks and balances to address wrongdoings and ensure fairness in its internal affairs. It has the power and backbone to address unfair international trade practices and take on rogue countries while spineless EU leaders complain and whine about without taking action.

The point is there are several narratives in what makes up the distinctive features of a country and of all countries for that matter. Multiple narratives matter because of the complexity of everything, and the yardsticks used to measure this and that randomly. It is worth taking into consideration in an era of widespread ignorance, sheep mindset, grotesque mimicry, media predators and Inquisition style mob violence.

The onus is also on prosperous countries and rising big nations to head towards a multi-polar balance of power and include other stakeholders to operate a change in the equation that has prevailed up to now. The predominant male characteristic of the jungle law and vision of a single power, be it a new one, crushing others under its paws is no longer sustainable for world peace. The US 'manifest destiny' can unfold in a myriad of ways in upholding key values and lofty principles with right partners in the turbulent phase of warring Dataism in the course of this century.