

MAURITIUS TIMES

• "How many human beings have to die before some people understand the gravity of the situation?" -- Wayne Gerard Trotman

Interview: Eric Ng Ping Cheun,
économiste et directeur de
PluriConseil :

“ L'économie va mourir si les frontières ne s'ouvrent pas ”

☞ Voir Pages 8-9-10



Matters of The Moment

Still many miles to go



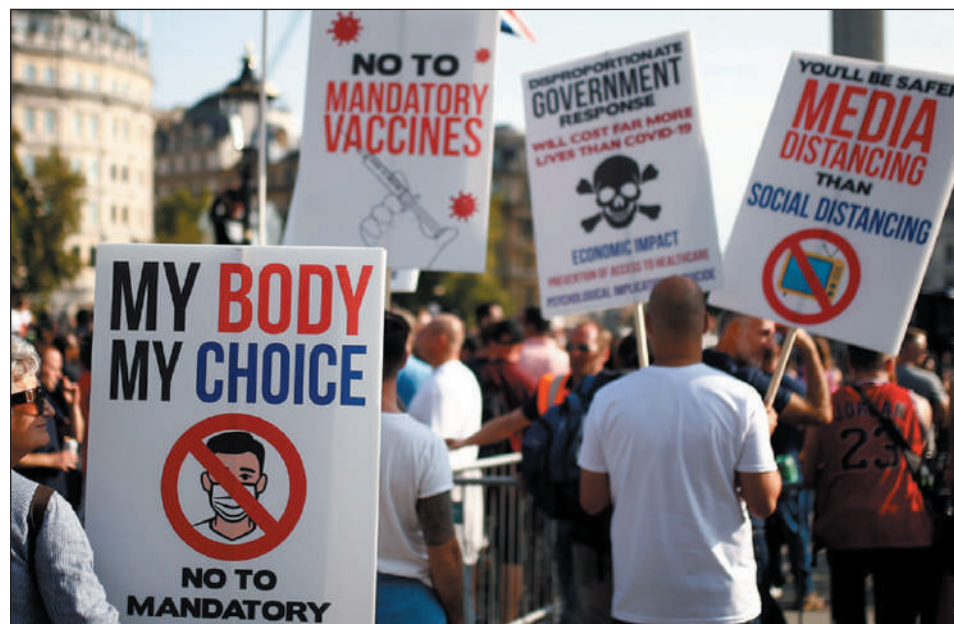
“On the local front, we urgently need to review and rev up our vaccination drive to attain the required herd immunity as quickly as possible. We have to proceed on the road towards normality step by step in the light of the state of vaccination, infection and economic recovery in each of our principal trading partners and sources of tourists. We therefore still have many miles to go and many hurdles to cross...”

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Time to Make a Choice

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Men may come and men may go...



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee ☞ See Page 3

Covid-19 - A Year Ago

By Nita Chicooree-Mercier ☞ See Page 18

Small planters: Rise in a single voice!

As happened during lockdown last year, an aspect of equally critical concern did not get the attention it deserved. This was that the provision of food, especially vegetables, which is also a matter of livelihood for thousands of small to medium scale vendors who meet the daily needs of those categories of people who do not have the means to do bulk buying at supermarkets. People are surprised why the associations of small planters, vegetable growers, and sellers have not come together to lobby their representatives in government to work out jointly how to make sure that our citizens have access to vegetables and fruits, as well as ensuring their own livelihoods. and of others engaged in this sector.

The reality is that the supermarkets buy from bulk suppliers, and they have their favourite ones: the small planters are excluded. And licences to the bulk suppliers is on the basis of personal and political contacts.

The pandemic had already forced us to realise that we will have no choice but to rely on our own local production, and increasingly this means vegetables and fruits.

Last year the police were seen to be chasing small planters who had gone to their fields, and that sent a very wrong signal: the police had clearly not been briefed, and that was not the only instance.

We must not complicate the crisis further. The people will need vegetables and fruits. Much if not most of it is grown by small planters and farmers. The fundamental issue is: how will people get access to vegetables and fruits while respecting the basic sanitary norm imposed, namely social distancing?

And here the principle is to limit physical contact between people, by not clustering, self-protecting, and keeping safe distance. Given that it is not known when *la foire* and *bazaar* will be allowed to operate, there is a need to reconcile the supply of vegetables and fruits to the people while abiding by sanitary rules about Covid-19.

Is there a solution? Yes, and it is not rocket science.

1. It must start with daily messaging about 'contact at a safe distance' for as long as is required, and use of masks and gloves.
2. The sellers (*marchands*) have their Business Registration Number (BRN) and a mode of transport.
3. The BRN should be allowed for use as an authorisation for them to source produce from their usual planters/growers, instead of them having to chase WAPs.
4. Similarly, with the BRN they then go about in their locality and sell to families, with only one member of the family coming out to collect and pay – and again, both parties keeping the same distance and wearing masks and gloves.
5. A combination of health inspectors and police can patrol localities to make sue norms are being respected.

In this manner: planters/growers will continue to **produce** vegetables and fruits, and **supply** sellers who will then **distribute** them to families who need them.

Through the production, supply and distribution of vegetables and fruits, an essential need of the people will be met and livelihoods will be preserved, at the same time maintaining a most important – because it is about survival – segment of economic activity.

Another advantage is that this method of sourcing and distribution will also meet another important sanitary requirement: avoiding crowds.

The implementation of such a plan has become a matter of national emergency.

We are already facing astronomical pricing for vegetables in supermarkets. It is high time for Government to step in and regulate the flow of the supply chain for the planters,

Better be safe than sorry – before there is a social calamity.

The Conversation

Vaccinated and ready to party? Not so fast

The Centers from Disease Control says it's OK to gather with other vaccinated people, but it's still best to avoid travel



Vaccinated and ready for party. Photo- img.texasmonthly.com

If you've been vaccinated for COVID-19, is it safe to gather with friends and loved ones in person? According to guidelines issued Monday by the Centers from Disease Control and Prevention, yes, fully vaccinated people can gather in small groups with other fully vaccinated people. And you can do that without the encumbrance of a mask or social distancing.

More than 30 million people in the US are now fully vaccinated against coronavirus, meaning that a fraction of the population is immune to COVID-19. This is because vaccination with the Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines offers very high levels of protection against the coronavirus. However, there is still a small risk that vaccinated people could transmit the disease to others.

As an infectious-disease doctor, I've been fielding a lot of questions from my patients as well as my friends and family about what someone is allowed to do once vaccinated. Do vaccinated people need to wear masks, socially distance and avoid travel?

If you are fully vaccinated – that is, if you are more than 10 days out from receiving both doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson – you can visit other fully vaccinated people without socially distancing or wearing masks, according to the new CDC guidelines. You can even visit indoors with unvaccinated people from a single household who are at low risk for severe COVID-19 disease without wearing masks or physical distancing.

The CDC does suggest you be tested if you develop symptoms that could be COVID-19. You should then stay isolated until you are shown to be uninfected. If you are fully vaccinated, you should still avoid social settings that include multiple unvaccinated households. And, you should avoid medium to large crowds because of the increased risk. You also should continue to wear a well-fitted mask, wash your hands frequently and maintain physical distance when outside the home. Worshipping indoors at a synagogue, mosque or church is still not advisable unless all attending are vaccinated.

Also unchanged are travel recommendations: The CDC recommends avoiding travel even if you are fully vaccinated. The aim of delaying travel is to protect yourself and others from the small risk of acquiring or transmitting COVID-19, since travel on public transportation exposes you to unvaccinated people from multiple households.

So in the face of continued pandemic transmission and new viral variants, we all need to remain vigilant and observe good health practices even after being vaccinated. However, it is very good news that we can prudently lift some of the restrictions that have so limited our ability to be with loved ones. This is especially good news for seniors who are particularly vulnerable to the downside of isolation.

William Petri,
 Professor of Medicine, University of Virginia

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Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

Some things we learn during our student days create a deep impression on us, and remain buried in our consciousness until some event brings them to the surface. The waves of the Covid pandemic that are surging in several countries that had seemingly brought it under control brought to my mind the last lines of Alfred Tennyson's poem 'The Brook' which we learnt at college:

*For men may come and men may go
But I go on for ever*

It is a story of a brook – a small stream - from its origin to its destination, the narrator being the brook itself, which is here a symbol of life and of nature in its totality. The brook's journey from its origin to its destination represents a man's journey of life from birth to death. Whatever happens to it on the way is similar to what man encounters through his life. The brook's noisy flow is similar to man's struggling and fretting and fuming against the odds of life. The brook slips, slides, glooms and glances. So does a man. It makes its way forcefully against odds, so does man as he struggles through many problems. The brook carries many things with it as it flows. So does a man: he meets people - builds relationships - carries memories, collects materialistic things as he goes through life.

The only difference is that the brook is ever flowing, eternal without ceasing whereas we, the men are ephemeral. We shall not live forever. We are subject to decay, decline and death.

Our current global situation prompts me to invent this paraphrase:

*For men may come and men may go
But Covid will go on for ever*

Covid is a virus, and viruses are a primordial form of life, poised between the inert and the living – they are neither completely dead nor completely alive. But they need to piggyback on a living unit to come alive and to hijack its innards to propagate themselves.

This is exactly what Covid is doing: entering the fundamental unit of life which is the cell. Here it is lung cells, in which it multiplies, killing a comparatively few so that most of the rest survive to keep spreading it around in keeping with the evolutionary principle of survival of the fittest. When scientists go about looking for life on other planets, they don't search for humans, though there is a project scouting for signs of human-like intelligence: SETI or the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence. Primarily what they look for is evidence of primordial life in the form of

Men may come and men may go...



"Belatedly, we have told ourselves to 'Stay Home Stay Safe' - and 'Stay Cool', added Sid, a seven-year old who submitted a painting he made in response to a call from the MBC-TV, and which was shown on TV, making him and his parents proud and happy..."

microbes such as viruses or bacteria.

Slowly, the view is gaining ground in the learned circles that Covid is on the way to becoming seasonal like the flu. It is, in other words, here to stay –whether we do or not, whether we like it or not.

It has already decided, in a manner of saying, that it is going to be around. It's up to us to see what we want to do. Adapt or perish.

After the initial bracing up and efforts at adapting that were reasonably successful till the beginning of this year, or nearly one year after we got smacked, we thought we'd look out of the window again and sneak out through the door.

The result? Smack again. Can't play games with Corona. It is a serious partner.

Belatedly, we have told ourselves to 'Stay Home Stay Safe' – and 'Stay Cool', added Sid, a seven-year old who submitted a painting he made in response to a call from the MBC-TV, and which was shown on TV, making him and his parents proud and happy. There is an artistic streak in the family, and who knows where this might lead Sid, as he has been guided to make fruitful use of his time during this second lockdown here, with schools closed. While Mum made *tartelettes-aux-goyave* from the produce in the yard, along with guava jam – Mauritian, after all!

* * *

To be or not to be vaccinated?

I have been receiving calls about whether to be or not to be vaccinated from family, friends, patients. A colleague sent me this excellent piece of advice nicely expressed without mincing words by a Dr D P Prakash FRCS:

'Suddenly we hear from almost every WhatsApp university certified specialist question about the speed with which some vaccine was approved.

I guess that's basic human nature where when we are starving we might eat anything but when the same hungry person is given a choice then he forgets the hunger and

starts analyzing which of the choices is better.

Suddenly everyone knows about phase 2 or phase 3 vaccine trials and starts comparing the efficacy rates, complications incidence and adverse drug events.

Such information is purely in research scientific domain but unfortunately today it has become WhatsApp 'time pass.'

Whether you **want** to be vaccinated or **not** is purely **your choice**. That's the only **fact** you need to know. Everything else is relative.

Your choice doesn't depend on the vaccine - its effectiveness or side effects but on your assessment of your **risk of dying from Covid**. If you feel fairly comfortable with the assessment that you will not die of Covid, then you don't need any vaccine.

Every medicine you and your family have taken so far including panadol has many side effects, such as kidney failure. Every antibiotic could have caused an allergic reaction that could have killed you. Every anaesthesia that someone in your family had before surgery could have caused complications like paralysis of the breathing leading to death. These are complications known to doctors and yet we have no choice but to use these treatments.

Wake up people - No medicine is 100% safe.

Every treatment offered by your doctor is done in **good faith** to make you better. Like in every field of life, we doctors also operate on the 'risk versus benefit' principle. If the potential benefit outweighs the risk considerably, then we give this in good faith.

Coming back to the safety of the Covid vaccines:

All the vaccines have been approved on an emergency use authorisation.

This means that the scientific community have not had adequate time to analyse the safety and effectiveness of all these currently available vaccines in spite of the best of their efforts, knowledge and resources.

So it's up to you to judge whether you are in an emergency or not.

All governments around the world know that you are in an emergency that's why you are offered the option for vaccine.

How did the government know that? It is by looking at the millions of deaths caused by Covid in just one year.

If you in your **WhatsApp University** educated mind feel that you are not in any emergency, then you can deny yourself that vaccine. But you take that extra risk which your neighbours haven't taken.

Is the vaccine the solution for this Covid pandemic? In my opinion any vaccine, including all the Covid vaccines are a **part of the solution**. No vaccine can protect against any disease 100% of the time.

This I state from our experience with viral infections like polio, measles, influenza.

A good N95 mask worn with 6 feet social distancing and hand hygiene can protect you 100% from Covid.

Unfortunately we are tired of following the above after one year of trial.

The most difficult thing to implement is the 6 feet social distancing because we are social animals. We like to meet with fellow humans all the time. We cannot live in isolation or lockdown for much longer - not because of the economic impact but more so due to the mental distress caused by staying away from each other.

☛ Cont. on page 11



Mrinal Roy

Still many miles to go

We have to proceed on the road towards normality step by step in the light of the state of vaccination, infection and economic recovery in each of our principal trading partners and sources of tourists

The new trail of Covid-19 infection detected locally as from 5 March has jolted the country out of the self congratulatory rhetoric and complacency of being Covid-safe. The local chain of infection mapped out through contact tracing from four identified clusters of infection is a potent reminder to all those infected and everyone in the country that we

need at all times to rigorously abide by sanitary rules of protection against the risk of coronavirus infection such as social distancing, the wearing of masks and strict compliance with hygiene norms.

We should remember that these basic preventive measures were put in place by health authorities across the world and the World Health Organization last year after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic to contain the spread of the virus, protect people against the risk of infection and break the person to person chain of transmission of coronavirus in the community. Surges of infection witnessed since last year in the US, the EU, Brazil, UK and countries across the world invariably show a causal correlation between the failure of people to strictly abide by these essential protective measures and spikes of infection.

The world must realize that people cannot afford to be complacent against an extremely resilient virus which constantly adapts to changing circumstances and mutates into extremely more contagious strains which are causing alarming surges of infection in the UK, South Africa, Brazil, Europe and other countries. Aware of the potent risks of such mutations, vaccine research scientists have already started work on tweaking coronavirus vaccines to beef up protection against variants. Covid-19 vaccines teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes the disease. The world therefore needs to monitor and be alert to the adaptations and mutations of the virus faced with the defense mechanism and antibodies built by anti-Covid-19 vaccines.

Vaccination drive

After a year of innovative and fast-tracked research, seven Covid-19 vaccines have been approved for emergency or full use by at least one WHO-recognized regulatory authority. We must certainly count our blessings as vaccines help robustly protect the world against a deadly virus. Israel is leading the vaccination roll out campaign as more than half of its population has already been administered at least one dose of vaccine and more than a third has received the required two doses.



Photo -thetimes.co.uk

Photo -thenationalnews.com

“In the UK which was the first country to kick start its Covid-19 vaccination programme as from 8 December 2020, more than 24 million people have received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine. In India which has launched the world's biggest inoculation drive as from 16 January 2021, more than 30 million people have already received at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine. Thus, more than 381 million doses of vaccines have to date been administered worldwide...”

Since the start of the vaccination programme on 14 December, more than 109 million doses have been administered in the US, representing some 21.4% of the total US population. In the UK which was the first country to kick start its Covid-19 vaccination programme as from 8 December 2020, more than 24 million people have received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine. In India which has launched the world's biggest inoculation drive as from 16 January 2021, more than 30 million people have already received at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine. Thus, more than 381 million doses of vaccines have to date been administered worldwide in some 132 countries and territories.

Significantly more people than the 121 million people infected by the virus since the outbreak of the pandemic have therefore already received the first dose of a Covid-19 vaccine. In Israel, there is also encouraging evidence that as more people above 60 years old are vaccinated, hospital admissions among this age group is falling significantly. There is also evidence that vaccines protect people against severe forms of coronavirus infection and death.

Unequal access to vaccines

We must however realize that the battle against Covid-19 still faces a series of daunting challenges and will necessarily be a long drawn affair.

The biggest challenge relates to the timely production and equitable distribution of enough doses of approved vaccines to protect the 7.8 billion people in the world. By December 2020 more than 10 billion vaccine doses had been preordered by countries. Half of this quantity is earmarked for high-income countries which represent only 14% of the world's population. Indications are that in 2021 Astra Zeneca-Oxford plans to produce 3 billion doses, Pfizer-BioNTech 1.3 billion doses and Sputnik V, Sinopharm, Sinovac, and Johnson & Johnson 1 billion doses each. Moderna aims at producing 600 million doses and Convidicea 500 million doses in 2021.

A new form of inequality is therefore dividing the world as there is already a stark gap between vaccination programmes in different countries, with many yet to

receive a single dose. There is therefore an urgent need to ensure that everyone in the world has access to Covid-19 vaccines. This is a key condition of success of the world's battle against the pandemic.

Still many hurdles to cross

According to UNICEF there are some 130 countries that 'are yet to administer a single dose' of a coronavirus vaccine. This represents 2.5 billion people who have so far been completely shut out of the global vaccine campaign.

The WHO COVAX initiative aims at ensuring that people in these countries and all corners of the world get access to Covid-19 vaccines regardless of their wealth, once these are available. How soon this happens is a determinant factor towards achieving a modicum of normality in respect of economic recovery, trade flows and the movement of people.

From the above it transpires that it is not until 2022 that the world will be able to ascertain if the whole world has access to approved vaccines.

It should also be flagged that vaccines are not administered to those below 18 years old as the trials to test the vaccines did not include the young. But these as evidenced in cases of infection detected in the country can still be carriers of the virus. In addition, swathes of people across the world still refuse to be vaccinated for diverse reasons. They could also be potential carriers of the virus.

However research on vaccines never stops. The drug company Moderna has already started testing its vaccines on babies as young as 6 months and young children. According to a study carried in February in Israel, pregnant women vaccinated against Covid-19 could pass along protection to their babies. The study showed that antibodies were detected in all 20 women administered both doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine during their third trimester of pregnancy and in their newborns, through placental transfer.



Anil Madan

In November 1977, former Vice President Hubert Humphrey said in the course of a speech: "The moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped." Over the course of time, the saying that the measure of a nation is how it treats its least fortunate or weakest, has been attributed to Gandhi although there is no evidence that he said it.

I offer the proposition that it is folly for the nations of the world to expect that a nation that abuses, tortures, and mistreats its own people, will treat them well if allowed to be in a position of dominion or power over them. One need only look to the well-documented abuses of the British Empire in Kenya and India that extended into the first half of the twentieth century to understand that dominion and power are precursors to abuse.

As the world views the simmering competition between China and the US, I suggest it is time for the world to choose sides.

On his last full day in office as US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo stated in a tweet: "I have determined that the People's Republic of China is committing genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, China, targeting Uyghur Muslims and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups." Whereas the Biden administration has sought to reverse many of the policies of the Trump administration, this determination has stuck. The Biden administration agrees with this assessment.

As might be expected, China went into full-fledged denial mode. China's foreign minister Wang Yi decried the assessment: "The so-called 'genocide' in Xinjiang is ridiculously absurd. It is a rumour with ulterior motives and a complete lie." Curiously, China does admit that it has placed Uighurs in what it calls "re-education camps" that are designed to provide vocational training and eradicate extremism. Meanwhile reports of forced labour and sterilization and systematic rape and torture at the facilities that are described as "concentration camps" abound. "Extremism" in the Chinese Communist Party's lexicon simply refers to anyone who disagrees with the party line. Nor did Wang explain why Chinese citizens should suddenly need to be re-educated.

On March 9, in the face of Chinese denials, a State Department spokesman said that the US has seen no developments to change its determination that China committed genocide in its treatment of Uighur Muslims in the western region of Xinjiang

Time to Make a Choice



US-China conflict echoes Europe's past. Photo - Financial Times

In the course of his denials, Wang doubled down and also reaffirmed the CCP's intention to "reform" Hong Kong's electoral system. China has made mass arrests of pro-democracy activists and essentially turned Hong Kong's government into a puppet of the CCP which gets to appoint more of Hong Kong's lawmakers and to decide who is eligible to run.

China's abuses of the Tibetan people and its ongoing effort to eradicate their religion, culture, and very identity have been well documented. Its threats to invade and annex Taiwan are oft repeated and recently have become more frequent.

A wary world might point to America's military interventions in many nations over the years. It is probably fair to view World War II and the Korean War as wars of necessity. The Vietnam War was clearly a mistake. The First Gulf War in which President George H.W. Bush undertook to liberate Kuwait from Saddam Hussein's invasion is generally viewed as a justifiable action.

The second war, the invasion of Iraq under the pretext of eliminating the phantom weapons of mass destruction, not so much. The war in Afghanistan, if initially justified when the Taliban gave refuge to Al Qaeda and Omar Mullah, is clearly an American folly. But it is worth mentioning these for two reasons: *first*, the US never engaged in these actions to annex lands; and *second* the US has expended trillions of dollars of national wealth in losing causes and thus rendered itself vulnerable to the current Chinese challenge.

We will defer to another day discussion of the compounding of that folly by allowing a massive transfer of technology and manufacturing from the US to China.

The nations of the world may not want to choose America, the nation whose leaders have made foolish and losing choices. But certainly, they cannot find even remotely acceptable

a world dominated by the Chinese Communist Party.

These matters are now coming to a head. On March 18, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan will meet in Anchorage, Alaska with their approximate counterparts in the Chinese government. Importantly, these meetings will be preceded by Blinken's meetings with allies in Tokyo and Seoul. Blinken will be joined by Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin at the US-Japan Security Consultative Committee meeting hosted by the Japanese Foreign Minister and Defense Minister. The two will then meet with South Korea's Foreign Minister and Defense Minister.

The meeting with the Chinese follows upon the maiden virtual Quad summit among Australia, India, Japan, and the US Defense Secretary is also scheduled to travel to India. The Quad members are said to be resolved to uphold a rules-based international order in the Indo-Pacific. Read that to mean that there is recognition that the time has come to check and hopefully end China's military muscle-flexing in the South China Sea and in the Pacific in general.

Just two weeks ago, the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence (NCSAI) released a report with a stunning warning that China likely will soon replace the US as the world's leader in artificial intelligence. Such a shift in power and control will have significant ramifications for the US military at home and around the world.

I leave readers with this sobering thought: On February 23, 2021 Eric Schmidt, former CEO of Google who is Chair of the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence testified before the Senate Committee on Armed Services. We will leave to another day an exploration of his detailed comments, but his conclusion is worth noting: "Right now, the United States is not playing to win. It is the Chinese who are competing to become the world's leading innovators. Never before in my lifetime have, I been more worried that we will soon be displaced by a rival or more aware of what second place means for our economy, our security, and the future of our nation."

Do the countries of the world want to choose a nation that will treat them as it has treated Tibetans, the Uighurs, the people of Hong Kong and as it threatens to treat Taiwan, or will they choose the US with all its faults and limitations?

Cheerz...
Bwana





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 1956-2020

Russia's Putin authorised pro-Trump 'influence' campaign, US intelligence says



US intelligence concluded in 2016 that Russia was behind an effort to undermine Hillary Clinton's presidential run against Mr Trump. Photo- reuters.com

Moscow spread "misleading or unsubstantiated allegations" about the eventual winner, Joe Biden, according to a US government report.

But it said no foreign government had compromised the final results.

Russia called the allegations of election interference "baseless".

"The conclusions of the report... are confirmed solely by the confidence of the intelligence services of their self-righteousness," the Russian embassy in Washington said in a statement. "No facts or

specific evidence of such claims were provided."

The US is expected to impose sanctions on Russia as soon as next week over the report's conclusions, reports BBC News.

Iran 'sought to weaken Trump support'

The 15-page report, released on Tuesday by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, outlined what it said were "influence operations" pushed by Russia as well as Iran.

It said Russian-linked indivi-

duals had spread unsubstantiated claims about President Biden ahead of the 3 November election. It also said a disinformation campaign sought to undermine confidence in the broader election process.

The report added that, while Russia had sought to boost Mr Trump's chances of victory, Iran had launched a "multi-pronged covert influence campaign" in an effort to weaken his support.

The former president pursued a policy of "maximum pressure" on Iran, imposing damaging sanctions and escalating a war of words between the two nations.

The report also concluded with "high confidence" that China, which has long been accused of cyber-espionage by Washington, chose not to "deploy interference efforts" ahead of the vote.

"China sought stability in its relationship with the United States and did not view either election outcome as being advantageous enough for China to risk blowback if caught," it said.

Italy and France admit AstraZeneca ban is political as EU 'sulks' over Brexit



Italy and France admit. Photo - cf-images.eu-west-1.prod.boltdns.net

Italian PM Mario Draghi spoke to French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday - and the two leaders agreed they were ready to begin vaccinating with the Oxford jab again.

They said they are waiting on the European Medicines Agency (EMA) to give the green light, reports The Sun.

France and Italy have also admitted their ban on the AstraZeneca vaccine is political - as the EU was accused of "sulking" over Brexit.

It comes amid growing anger across the Continent at the snail-pace vaccine rollout compared to the UK and US.

The EU Commission, which was blamed for bungling purchases, declared war on the Anglo-Swedish drug firm by accusing it of withholding doses.

Nicola Magrini, who runs Italian medicines regulator AIFA, said politicians in Italy were pressured to ban the Covid jabs after Germany and France did.

Mr Magrini told La Repubblica: "We got to the point of a suspension because several European countries, including Germany and France, preferred to interrupt vaccinations... to put them on hold in order to carry out checks.

'Brexit sulk'

"The choice is a political one."

French Europe Minister Clement Beaune admitted the suspension heaped "political pressure" on AstraZeneca amid the ongoing supply dispute.

He told Radio Classique: "There are concerns. And more than that, probably a number of breaches of contract.

"Europe is not going to be some sort of cuddly 'care bear' that hands over its money and expects nothing in return.

"We will defend our interests. There may be legal recourse. We are not ruling it out."

Mr Beaune also said the EU "must put pressure" on AstraZeneca to force it to deliver more doses to the bloc even as millions lie unused in fridges.

The vaccine ban coincided with the EU launching legal action against the UK yesterday over border controls in Northern Ireland.

France, Germany and Italy followed smaller EU nations such as Ireland and Estonia in banning the jab after around 40 patients had blood clots.

AstraZeneca said the rate was actually LOWER than would be expected in the general population.

The European Medicines Agency yesterday confirmed there is "no indication" the AstraZeneca jab causes blood clots.

Conservative MP Anthony Browne said European leaders had been driven by "politics not science",.

And he claimed the EU's "Brexit sulk" will cost lives.

Mars may be hiding most of its "missing" water underground: NASA-funded study



Nature Communication's handout picture released in Dec. 2017 shows Mars through time: Current Mars, red, dead and dry on the left, in contrast with the same landscape covered in water, early in the planet's history, over 3 billion years ago. Photo - AFP

Vast amounts of ancient water may have been trapped beneath the surface of Mars, according to a NASA-funded study which challenges the current theory that the Red Planet's water escaped into space.

Evidence found on the surface of Mars suggests that abundant water flowed across Mars billions of years ago, forming pools, lakes, and deep oceans, and where did all that water go has been a matter of

investigation.

The new study, published in the journal 'Science', shows that a significant portion of Mars's water - between 30 and 99 percent - is trapped within minerals in the planet's crust, reports Press Trust of India.

The researchers from California Institute of Technology and NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) found that around four billion years ago, Mars was home to enough water to have covered the whole planet in an ocean about 100 to 1,500 metres deep.

However, a billion years later the planet was as dry as it is today.

Previously, scientists seeking to explain what happened to the flowing water on Mars had suggested that it escaped into space due to Mars's low gravity.

Though some water did indeed leave Mars this way, it now appears that such an escape cannot account for most of the water loss, the researchers said.

North Korea possibly testing improved intercontinental nuclear missiles in 'near future'

As President Joe Biden's secretaries of state and defense head to South Korea for the first time, a U.S. Air Force general issued a warning to the Senate that North Korea could resume testing of its inter-continental ballistic missile.

General Glen VanHerck, the head of the Northern Command, told the Senate Armed Services Committee on Tuesday that testing may be conducted "in the near future."

He didn't mention any specific intelligence on the issue, but a resumption of the testing could increase tensions on an already strained relationship between North Korea and the United States, reports Newsweek.

"The Kim Jong Un regime has achieved alarming success in its quest to demonstrate the capability to threaten the U.S. homeland with nuclear-armed [inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBMs)], believing such weapons are necessary to deter U.S. military action and ensure his regime's survival," VanHerck told the



A man watches a television screen showing news footage of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attending the 8th congress of the ruling Workers' Party held in Pyongyang, at a railway station in Seoul on January 6. Photo - AFP

Senate committee.

VanHerck's assessment appeared to be based on North Korea's own actions. In October, North Korea unveiled a new ICBM that was "considerably larger and

more capable" than that which was tested in 2017, an "increased threat" to the United States. The regime also indicated that it was no longer bound by the nuclear and ICBM testing moratorium announced in

2018, indicating to VanHerck that Kim may begin testing the improved design "in the near future."

Former President Donald Trump attempted to find common ground with Kim on the issue of ICBMs, but no such agreement was made. Since North Korea continued to develop ICBMs that are capable of striking targets in the United States, VanHerck said the U.S. Northern Command is focused on developing advanced sensors that are capable of tracking potential threats.

The White House has reached out to North Korea since the Biden administration assumed office, but have yet to receive a response.

On Monday, Kim's sister, Kim Yo Jong, criticized the United States for its continued military drills in South Korea.

If the U.S. wants to "sleep in peace" for the next four years, state media reported she said, "it had better refrain from causing a stink at its first step."

New bookings for Covid-19 vaccinations closed in UK

New bookings for Covid-19 vaccinations have been closed for the month of April after health bosses revealed a "significant" reduction in supply from the week beginning 29 March. Regional NHS leaders received a letter ordering them to concentrate on completing vaccination of over-50s and other priority groups, as well as administering second doses to those who have already had a jab, while people aged under 49 must wait for their turn, reports The Independent.

The development came against the backdrop of a furious row with Brussels, after European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen warned the EU was ready to block exports of vaccine to the UK in an effort to safeguard jabs for its own citizens, as parts of the continent face a third wave of the pandemic. Foreign secretary Dominic Raab accused Brussels of acting like a dictatorship, while Downing Street made clear that it expected contracts for Pfizer vaccines from Belgium to be honoured.

More than 700 of the UK's leading legal academics have signed a stinging open letter urging Boris Johnson to ditch "draconian" restrictions on the freedom to demonstrate, in one of the largest protests of its kind in decades.

The signatories, who represent a significant proportion of the UK's legal scholars and include more than 120 professors of law from universities including Oxford, Cambridge, Durham and York, warned of "an alarming extension of state control over legal assembly" from measures in the prime minister's controversial Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill.

Scenes of women being forced to the ground and handcuffed while attending a vigil to murder victim Sarah Everard in south London on Saturday vividly highlighted the dangers of extending powers to control protests and public gatherings, they said.

Boris Johnson's plan to increase the size of the UK's nuclear weapons stockpile amounts to a violation of inter-

national law, campaigners and experts have warned. The UK government's integrated defence review said it would be lifting the cap on its nuclear arsenal by 40 per cent to 260 warheads. The UK had previously been committed to cutting its stockpile to 180 warheads by the mid-2020s but the review said this policy would be changed "in recognition of the evolving security environment, including the developing range of technological and doctrinal threats".

greatest threat since the Cold War.

But his claim that the UK will be guided by its "moral compass" was undermined by a leaked recording of him telling Foreign Office staff that Britain risks missing out on "growth markets" if it refuses to trade with states breaching human rights standards.

Demand for the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine in the UK remains "incredibly strong" despite a string of EU countries pausing use of the jab in their inoculation programmes, Matt Hancock has said. The health secretary said British regulators were keeping vaccine side effects "under review" but, at present, there is no evidence to link the AstraZeneca shot to blood clots.

Mr Hancock's comments came after Latvia and Sweden joined a growing list of nations to slam the brakes on their jab campaigns after blot clots were reported in a small number of patients who had received it on the continent. Poland and Belgium are among the EU countries continuing to use it.

Priti Patel has been accused of launching an assault on Britain's democratic traditions with a crackdown on protests that would make it a crime to cause "serious annoyance or inconvenience" by taking part in a demonstration.

Amid an atmosphere charged by the police use of force at a vigil for murder victim Sarah Everard on Saturday, the home secretary came under fire in the House of Commons over proposed legislation that Labour say would allow someone convicted of vandalising a statue to be sentenced to a longer jail term than a rapist.

Among MPs raising concerns was ex-prime minister and former home secretary Theresa May, who said that freedom of speech was "an important right in our democracy" and warned of "potential unintended consequences" from provisions in Ms Patel's Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill.

Compiled by Doojesh Ramlallah



Six pharmacies will be vaccinating people invited by letter to make an appointment online. Photo - ichef.bbci.co.uk

The announcement comes despite the UK being a signatory of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Labour supports the renewal of Trident but Sir Keir Starmer said: "This review breaks the goal of successive prime ministers and cross-party efforts to reduce our nuclear stockpile." Hans Kristensen, from the Nuclear Information Project, said the move was disappointing: "This will put Britain in violation of its non-proliferation treaty Article 6 obligations."

Britain is heading into a decade in which "democracy is in retreat", with autocratic regimes claiming a greater slice of global wealth and military might, foreign secretary Dominic Raab is to warn in a chilling vision of the 2020s.

Speaking in the wake of Mr Johnson's controversial announcement, Mr Raab will say that the UK needs to project military power in order to act as a "force for good" as the institutions underpinning democracy face their

Eric Ng Ping Cheun, économiste et directeur de PluriConseil

“L'économie va mourir si les frontières ne s'ouvrent pas”

Mauritius Times : Dans son message adressé à la nation à l'occasion de la fête nationale le 12 mars dernier, le Premier ministre a déclaré qu'il sera «très difficile de remonter la pente économique avec ce deuxième confinement». Le ministre Padayachy a abondé dans le même sens en disant que «nous nous trouvons dans une période difficile». Selon vous, quelles seront les répercussions sur la croissance économique?

Eric Ng : Avant le second confinement, l'économie mauricienne ne s'était pas encore relevée du premier. Elle remontait déjà difficilement la pente, preuve que les politiques du ministère des Finances et de la Banque centrale tardent à donner les résultats escomptés. Maintenant, il sera encore plus difficile pour le pays de remonter la pente économique.

Je trouve éloquent que des économistes auto-proclamés ont relativisé l'impact économique de ce second confinement en disant que Maurice a «l'expérience» d'une telle situation et que des plans d'aide gouvernementale sont déjà en place. C'est ignorer que les effets du premier confinement sont toujours là, et que donc ceux du second viennent s'y ajouter. En somme, on fait face à un effet multiplicateur négatif sur l'économie.

« Tout semble indiquer, avec le second confinement national, que l'année 2021 ne sera pas si meilleure que 2020. Sans des réformes structurelles de l'économie, les choses prendront plus de temps pour s'améliorer. Et un gouvernement condamné à être populiste appliquera des politiques de la terre brûlée... »

Du reste, il est certain que les prévisions de la croissance économique pour 2021 seront nettement révisées à la baisse. Les 7,9% prévus par la Banque de Maurice seront loin d'être réalisés.

L'année dernière, le produit intérieur brut (PIB) aux prix de base était de Rs 42 milliards moindre qu'en 2019. Mais il faut considérer aussi le fait que, dans une année normale (sans Covid), le PIB augmente généralement d'environ Rs 18 milliards. Donc les 10 semaines de confinement en 2020 ont coûté Rs 60 milliards, soit Rs 12 milliards pour deux semaines. Mais les coûts ne sont pas étalés de manière uniforme sur la période de confinement: les coûts fixes sont très élevés durant les premières semaines, et après les coûts deviennent variables et décroissants.

Aujourd'hui, le télétravail est déjà en place, mais sa contribution à l'économie est encore très minime et, d'ailleurs, c'est la vente qui fait progresser le chiffre d'affaires. Certes, il n'y a pas de changement dans le tourisme. Mais tout compte fait, si l'on considère que MCB Focus prévoit un PIB de Rs 415 milliards en 2021, les deux semaines de confinement (10 jours ouvrables sur un total annuel de 260) feraient perdre à l'économie quelque Rs 16 milliards.

La crise sanitaire et le deuxième confinement provoquent beaucoup d'angoisse, surtout au sein de la population active. Les citoyens craignent les répercussions à différents niveaux : la fermeture d'entreprises, l'épuisement de l'épargne et la réduction de la capacité de consommation, entre autres. Les jeunes diplômés, eux, sont sceptiques par rapport à l'accès à l'emploi. Pour nous éclairer sur la situation économique, nous avons invité l'économiste Eric Ng Ping Cheun.

Bref, le PIB aux prix de base risque de ne pas franchir la barre de Rs 400 milliards cette année, dans lequel cas la croissance tournerait, au mieux, autour de 2%. Mais si le confinement national est étendu de plusieurs semaines, l'économie se dirigera vers une nouvelle contraction.

*** Plus précisément, quelles sont les implications pour les consommateurs, les travailleurs et les entrepreneurs?**

Il est évident que les consommateurs, les travailleurs et les entrepreneurs sont tous affectés par la baisse du rythme d'activité. Les consommateurs sont pénalisés par les hausses des prix, qui les obligent soit à diminuer leur volume de dépenses soit à puiser dans leur épargne pour maintenir celui-ci.

Sans anticiper le second confinement, la Banque de Maurice avait prévu une inflation de 3% pour l'année 2021, un taux qui est déjà élevé dans un contexte où la demande est relativement faible (si elle était forte, ce taux serait justifié). Maintenant, avec la déstabilisation de l'offre due au confinement, l'inflation est susceptible de grimper encore plus.

Pour leur part, les travailleurs continueront à vivre dans la crainte de perdre leur emploi. Avec ce sentiment, ils seront très prudents dans leurs dépenses, même après le confinement, ce qui affaiblira la demande globale et, par conséquent, le chiffre d'affaires des entreprises locales. Par ailleurs, les travailleurs qui ont vu leur salaire réduit à la suite du premier confinement resteront dans ce nouveau régime salarial, et donc, ils continueront à se serrer la ceinture. Enfin, des travailleurs seront mis à la porte à la suite du second confinement parce que les affaires vont de mal en pis pour les petites et moyennes entreprises.

Justement, les entrepreneurs ne s'attendaient pas à un deuxième confinement. Ils étaient convaincus que l'économie mauricienne connaîtrait une reprise certaine en 2021. Désormais, ils tiendront compte dans leur calcul

économique de l'excès de précaution du Gouvernement qui tient à confiner toute la nation au moindre nouveau cas local de contamination. Ils n'écarteront pas un troisième confinement plus tard, ce qui fait qu'ils hésiteront à investir et à embaucher de sitôt.

Comme vous le voyez, la décision de confiner le pays une deuxième fois a accru l'incertitude à laquelle font face les opérateurs économiques. L'impact économique du second confinement n'est pas que mathématique, mais il est aussi et surtout psychologique. Un changement de psychologie de l'investisseur et du consommateur en l'espace de deux semaines a des répercussions sur l'économie à l'échelle de plusieurs mois, voire de quelques années.

« La Mauritius Investment Corporation, comme son nom l'indique, est une entité qui fait des investissements, et tout investissement est censé avoir un rendement. C'est ce que laissent entendre le ministre des Finances et le gouverneur de la Banque de Maurice lors de la création de la MIC. Les contribuables ont été pris pour les dindons de la farce... »

*** Le ministre des Finances soutient que des provisions ont été faites lors du dernier exercice budgétaire «pour les temps durs», en particulier pour les besoins du 'Wage Assistance Scheme' et d'une certaine forme d'assistance financière aux entrepreneurs. Toutes ces mesures se révéleront utiles et nous aideront à tenir le coup jusqu'à ce que cette crise se résorbe, mais jusqu'où peut-on aller?**

Toutes les aides gouvernementales dues au Covid se montent déjà à plusieurs milliards de roupies.

☛ Suite en page 9



'Nous devons apprendre à vivre avec le coronavirus, sachant que le risque zéro n'existe pas...'

les chômeurs. Ce serait irresponsable de sa part de recruter. Il est déjà asphyxié par les dépenses dues à la pandémie. Il ne peut même pas accorder de compensation aux retraités cette année ni aller de l'avant avec les recommandations salariales du Pay Research Bureau.

Quant à l'inflation, le taux officiel est actuellement cinq fois plus élevé qu'il y a un an. Mais le problème n'est pas tant le taux d'inflation actuel, qui reflète les hausses de prix passées, que l'inflation future attendue par les agents économiques. Il est important pour une Banque centrale d'ancrer fermement les anticipations inflationnistes qui sont en hausse avec la dépréciation continue de la roupie.

Mais ce n'est pas l'impression qui se dégage du procès-verbal de la dernière réunion du comité de politique monétaire, avec des déclarations très optimistes sur les prix. Or, partout dans le monde, les marchés font état d'une résurgence inflationniste avec la montée brutale des prix du brut et des commodités. Je ne vois pas comment Maurice pourrait en être à l'abri. Une hausse des prix des carburants à la pompe est inévitable.

*** Un rebond de la machinerie économique, cela assez rapidement, nous dit-on dans les milieux des affaires et des économistes, devra passer par l'ouverture de nos frontières, et tout retard ne fera que repousser la sortie de la crise. Or, ce deuxième confinement complique les choses. On n'y peut rien, n'est-ce pas, car la santé de la population doit primer sur les autres considérations?**

Évidemment, une économie doit avoir une population en bonne santé pour prospérer. Mais une économie en mauvaise santé met une population à mal. Vous me direz que le risque de mourir de la Covid-19 est plus grand que le risque de mourir de faim. Mais ce n'est pas le cas pour les milliers de familles frappées par la paupérisation. Sinon, on a plus de chance de mourir de maladies chroniques que de la Covid, faute de soins.

Depuis mai dernier, Maurice n'a pas eu de décès de la Covid, mais elle a enregistré une centaine de morts sur ses routes. Tous les jours, des gens meurent pour diverses raisons. Je ne suis pas en train de banaliser la mort, mais comme le déplore le philosophe André Comte-Sponville, nous avons oublié que l'homme est un être mortel.

« Dans son message de quelques lignes postées sur le site web de la MIC le 22 février, Lord Desai écrit que *« we shall measure our success by the number of livelihoods protected and the number of businesses saved rather than profit or loss »*. Donc le conseil d'administration de la MIC ne se soucie guère que l'Etat mauricien perde deux milliards de dollars... »

« Suite de la page 8

Elles étaient supposées exceptionnelles, mais voilà que leur montant va continuer d'augmenter en raison du second confinement. Cela n'est pas sans conséquence sur les finances publiques, car il faut bien les financer.

Il existe trois sources de financement.

1. La première est le recours à la planche à billets. Mais le Fonds monétaire international nous a mis en garde contre le financement des dépenses publiques par la Banque centrale. De même, Moody's vient d'abaisser la note de Maurice à Baa2 avec une perspective négative, faisant ressortir l'expansion excessive de la base monétaire qui est susceptible d'entraîner le pays dans une spirale inflationniste. Si le ministre des Finances prend encore gratuitement de l'argent de la Banque de Maurice, il devra s'attendre à une dégradation subséquente de Maurice par Moody's, ce qui se traduira par une perte de crédibilité internationale.
2. La deuxième source de financement, ce sont les emprunts étrangers. Maurice vient d'emprunter 300 millions d'euros de l'Agence française de développement (AFD), 100 millions de dollars de l'Inde, 30 milliards de yens du Japon et 40 millions de yuans de la Chine. Certes, les taux d'intérêt sont très faibles, mais il faut bien rembourser le capital. Et si la roupie continue de se déprécier, le service de la dette s'alourdira pour les contribuables mauriciens. Mais plus grave est le fait qu'un accroissement rapide de la dette extérieure du

Gouvernement envoie un mauvais signal aux investisseurs, locaux et étrangers, qui vont craindre un alourdissement fiscal.

3. Justement, la troisième source de financement, c'est la taxation. Or si l'on augmente les taxes sur la production, les entreprises n'investiront pas et ne recruteront pas. Si c'est sur la consommation, par exemple, la taxe sur la valeur ajoutée, les hausses de prix qui en résulteront, réduiront le pouvoir d'achat des Mauriciens, avec le risque d'une explosion sociale. Je ne vois pas le Gouvernement augmenter les droits de douane, étant donné le nombre d'accords de libre-échange qu'il a signés.

C'est dire que la capacité du Gouvernement de soutenir les entreprises est limitée. Et puis, les subventions publiques ne remplacent pas la production, qui demeure la seule source de création de richesses. En fait, elles laissent accumuler les inefficiences dans l'économie en maintenant en vie les entreprises zombies qui vivent de l'argent public sans être rentables.

*** Dans l'immédiat, il semble que le chômage s'accroît – il n'y a que le Gouvernement qui procède à des recrutements –, et que le coût de la vie augmente avec la hausse des prix à la consommation en raison de la dépréciation de la roupie et du coût plus élevé du fret. Un cocktail dangereux, diriez-vous?**

C'est en effet un cocktail explosif. Si Maurice a subi une contraction économique l'année dernière, elle connaîtra cette année une stagflation, c'est-à-dire une combinaison de chômage et d'inflation élevés, tombant ainsi de Charybde en Scylla. Et encore que la croissance risque d'être ténue à la suite du second confinement.

Selon Statistics Mauritius, il y avait 62,200 chômeurs, soit un taux de chômage de 10,9%, à septembre dernier. C'est là une situation de chômage de masse. Nul doute que le nombre de sans-emplois passera à 75,000 après le second confinement, ce qui est désastreux pour les PME. Sans compter qu'il existe des milliers de travailleurs à temps partiel et de sous-emplois (ceux dont le travail ne correspond pas à leurs qualifications).

Le Gouvernement ne peut pas, à lui seul, absorber

« Maurice ne pourra pas se passer du tourisme. Ce serait d'ailleurs un beau gâchis si nous n'exploitons pas nos atouts naturels (la mer, le soleil, les plages) pour créer de la richesse pour nous. De plus, beaucoup de petites gens vivent du tourisme et des secteurs para-touristiques. Aussi, les touristes constituent un important marché complémentaire à notre minuscule marché domestique... »

Celui qui ne prend pas de risque ne vit pas. C'est le cas d'une personne qui est confinée entre quatre murs comme dans une prison. C'est aussi le cas d'une économie qui est confinée à l'intérieur de frontières fermées: elle va mourir si elles ne s'ouvrent pas. De toute façon, même en autarcie, le pays n'est plus «Covid-safe»!

Gérer un pays, c'est savoir gérer les risques, en l'occurrence les risques sanitaires et économiques, en même temps. Tout l'art de gouverner, c'est de savoir créer les conditions d'une bonne santé économique tout en faisant respecter en public, dans la discipline, les signes sanitaires (port du masque, distanciation sociale).

« Suite en page 10

'Si le confinement national est étendu de plusieurs semaines, l'économie se dirigera vers une nouvelle contraction'

➔ Suite de la page 9

Nous devons apprendre à vivre avec le coronavirus, sachant que le risque zéro n'existe pas. Faute de quoi, l'économie mauricienne, qui n'est déjà plus résiliente, avancera à reculons.

*** Mais vu notre dépendance sur le tourisme et la vulnérabilité de cette industrie aux chocs externes, il faudra bien repenser notre modèle et l'infrastructure économique, diversifier notre économie et créer d'autres piliers de développement. Est-ce la masse critique qui fait défaut, ou le savoir-faire ?**

Ne nous faisons pas d'illusion : Maurice ne pourra pas se passer du tourisme. Ce serait d'ailleurs un beau gâchis si nous n'exploitons pas nos atouts naturels (la mer, le soleil, les plages) pour créer de la richesse pour nous. De plus, beaucoup de petites gens vivent du tourisme et des secteurs para-touristiques. Aussi, les touristes constituent un important marché complémentaire à notre minuscule marché domestique. Enfin, en côtoyant des touristes, nous sommes amenés à sortir de notre insularité, à ouvrir notre esprit aux autres cultures.

Évidemment, le pays ne peut pas se rendre dépendant du tourisme, comme de n'importe quel autre secteur économique. La diversification économique est très importante pour une île qui n'a pas de ressources naturelles. S'il n'est pas possible de créer un nouveau grand pilier économique, on peut toujours viser de petits piliers tels que l'agriculture biologique ou à haute technologie, l'économie océanique, l'industrie pharmaceutique, les équipements médicaux, les technologies financières.

Pour certaines activités, on n'a pas de masse critique, faute d'espace, mais la technologie peut combler cette déficience. Ce qui fait défaut, en fait, ce sont des compétences pointues et des travailleurs hautement qualifiés, en somme le savoir-faire. Mais ce n'est pas difficile d'attirer des expertises étrangères moyennant que des incitations leur soient accordées et que la bureaucratie publique fasse diligence.

*** Moody's, qui a abaissé la note du pays de Baa1 à Baa2, soutient que cet abaissement reflète une baisse de la solidité budgétaire et économique du Gouvernement en raison du choc provoqué par la pandémie de la Covid-19. Le ministre des Finances a, lui, fait une lecture différente en soutenant que «Moody's nous a classifiés comme un investissement de qualité», et il a aussi fait référence aux réserves de la Banque de Maurice, représentant 13,4 mois d'importations, pour dire que la situation économique, même difficile, n'est pas si mal que ça. Qu'en pensez-vous ?**

Soit le ministre des Finances est dans le déni, soit il feint de ne pas comprendre le message de Moody's. Si le pays jouit toujours du statut d'investissement de qualité, il souffre aussi d'une dégradation de ce statut. Avec une note de Baa2, il est seulement à deux crans de perdre ce statut. Et c'est ce qui arrivera si le Gouvernement ne change pas de politique : tel est l'avertissement de Moody's.

L'agence de notation veut faire comprendre au Gouvernement qu'il doit stopper l'accroissement de ses dépenses et de son endettement. Il ne peut pas conti-



« Évidemment, une économie doit avoir une population en bonne santé pour prospérer. Mais une économie en mauvaise santé met une population à mal. Vous me direz que le risque de mourir de la Covid-19 est plus grand que le risque de mourir de faim. Mais ce n'est pas le cas pour les milliers de familles frappées par la paupérisation. Sinon, on a plus de chance de mourir de maladies chroniques que de la Covid... »

nuer à emprunter, mais doit au contraire venir avec un plan de consolidation fiscale. Après l'abolition du plafond légal de la dette du secteur public, il doit fixer un objectif du ratio dette-PIB.

Il ne doit pas non plus continuer à imprimer de la monnaie, comme alternative à l'endettement, car la hausse de la base monétaire (de 58% en 2020) est déjà trop importante pour pouvoir contenir les pressions inflationnistes. Or, en déclarant qu'il compte avoir recours aux réserves en devises pour financer les plans d'aide du Gouvernement dans le contexte de la Covid-19, le grand argentier va à l'encontre de la recommandation de Moody's de ne plus créer de la monnaie. La conversion de dollars en roupies, sans retirer ces roupies du système bancaire, c'est de la création monétaire.

Ces réserves sont là pour défendre la roupie. Si elles s'élèvent aujourd'hui à 13,4 mois d'importations, c'est en partie grâce aux emprunts contractés auprès de l'AFD et de gouvernements étrangers. Mais lorsque le pays commencera à les rembourser, les réserves diminueront. Entre-temps, il ne reçoit pas de revenus touristiques et, étant sur la liste noire de l'Union européenne jusqu'à 2022 au moins, il attire de moins en moins de nouveaux capitaux via le secteur offshore.

Nos réserves internationales n'augmentent pas grâce aux exportations, celles-ci étant en réelle baisse. La

« Le Gouvernement ne peut pas, à lui seul, absorber les chômeurs. Ce serait irresponsable de sa part de recruter. Il est déjà asphyxié par les dépenses dues à la pandémie. Il ne peut même pas accorder de compensation aux retraités cette année ni aller de l'avant avec les recommandations salariales du Pay Research Bureau... »

Banque de Maurice doit vendre continuellement des dollars aux banques pour faire payer des importations de plus en plus croissantes. C'est ainsi que les réserves sont utilisées à bon escient.

*** Mais deux milliards de dollars seront puisés des réserves officielles pour le compte de la Mauritius Investment Corporation, autour de laquelle il existe toujours une certaine opacité. Il y a une crainte qu'en fin de compte, la MIC va encourir des pertes considérables pour plusieurs raisons... Est-ce aussi votre sentiment ?**

La réponse est oui, et elle est soutenue par nul autre que le président de la MIC, Lord Meghnad Desai. Dans son message de quelques lignes postées sur le site web de la MIC le 22 février, il écrit que « *we shall measure our success by the number of livelihoods protected and the number of businesses saved rather than profit or loss* ».

Donc le conseil d'administration de la MIC ne se soucie guère que l'Etat mauricien perde deux milliards de dollars, soit l'équivalent de 80 milliards de roupies, au profit du secteur privé! Voilà comment on traite l'argent public, et c'est effarant!

Or, si cela devait arriver, ce serait la catastrophe pour la Banque de Maurice dont la MIC est une filiale. L'actif et le passif de la MIC sont reportés au bilan de la Banque centrale. Celle-ci a des engagements (*liabilities*) contre ses avoirs de réserve internationaux. Si elle perd sur ses avoirs, elle aura un problème avec ses engagements, et ses fonds propres diminueront. C'est de la folie!

D'ailleurs, les autorités nagent en pleine contradiction. La Mauritius Investment Corporation, comme son nom l'indique, est une entité qui fait des investissements, et tout investissement est censé avoir un rendement. C'est ce que laissaient entendre le ministre des Finances et le gouverneur de la Banque de Maurice lors de la création de la MIC. Les contribuables ont été pris pour les dinons de la farce.

*** « Things will get worse before they get better », affirment certains économistes. En combien de temps serait-il raisonnable de parvenir à l'apaisement ?**

Pas avant 2023. Tout semble indiquer, avec le second confinement national, que l'année 2021 ne sera pas si meilleure que 2020. Sans des réformes structurelles de l'économie, les choses prendront plus de temps pour s'améliorer. Et un gouvernement condamné à être populiste appliquera des politiques de la terre brûlée.

C'est pourquoi je crains fort que le prochain budget national soit un *bis repetita* du premier avec de nouvelles hausses d'impôts pour financer des dépenses supplémentaires, en dépit de l'avis exprimé par Moody's. Il faudra alors attendre 2022 pour que le Gouvernement, confronté à la réalité comme en 1982-1983, soit contraint d'accepter que le bon sens l'emporte.



Katie Young

Post Doctoral Researcher,
Mary Immaculate College,
University of Limerick

Why Indian films are popular in Ghana – and have been for decades

The cultures of two different countries have found a melting pot via media



Children watching an old Hindi film at a video centre in Tamale in Ghana in 2016. Katie Young

Over the past ten years, Indian television series have become a feature in many households across Ghana as they've become available on cable and satellite channels.

Indian television series, including romantic dramas (such as *Till the End of Time*) and historical dramas (such as *Razia Sultan*), have gained popularity. One show loosely based on Jane Austen's classic novel *Sense and Sensibility* called *Kumkum Bhagya* has even been dubbed in Twi, an Akan language spoken in southern and central Ghana. Based on the success of the show, the stars of *Kumkum Bhagya* travelled to Ghana for a tour in 2017.

The history of Indian media in Ghana – the subject of my PhD thesis as well as a recent academic paper – extends back to the mid-1950s. At that time, Sindhi and Lebanese film distributors and cinema owners circulated Hindi films throughout the country, screened in cinema halls in most major urban centres.

The films were popular among all Ghanaians during the postcolonial period. In the intervening decades they have remained popular within Ghana's majority Muslim communities. These include majority Muslim cities in the north, such as Tamale. It also includes zongos, neighbourhoods that tend to be majority Muslim communities found in nearly every urban setting. Zongos developed as settlements of foreign traders. Each has its own complex history of colonial segregation, with many zongos dating back to the late 1800s and early 1900s.

The popularity of Hindi films in zongo communities came through vividly in an interview I conducted with one of Ghana's former cinema owners. They recalled that at one point during the 1960s, Kumasi's Rex Cinema, located near a zongo neighbourhood, played the Hindi film *Albela* (1951) every Friday night for a year, selling out its 2,000-seat capacity each week.

The postcolonial circulation of Hindi films in Ghana reveals the early cosmopolitan engagement that Ghanaian viewers had with South Asian popular media during the time of independence in both countries. In cities like Tamale, the popularity of Hindi films has conti-

nued to grow over time.

The case of Tamale

In Tamale – where I conducted two years of ethnographic research – I found that older Hindi films spanning the postcolonial period are still viewed by residents in their homes and in neighbourhood video centres. Popular films include *Albela* (1951), *Love in Tokyo* (1966), *Noorie* (1979) and *Andha Kanoon* (1983).

Hundreds of Hindi films from the postcolonial period are still available for sale in Tamale's central market at speciality DVD shops. Sellers receive new shipments of older Hindi films each week.

But my research showed that the circulation of Indian films in Tamale was not indiscriminate. India's most well-known film export – Bollywood – has had little success in the city. Older Dagbamba viewers were unimpressed by the Bollywood films that entered Tamale's market in the mid-1990s. Many expressed concern about the cultural and moral shifts. Of particular concern was the perceived Americanisation of the films.

As a result, distributors, shop owners and cultural authorities in Tamale intervened in the circulation of Bollywood in the city. For example, many DVD shop owners do not sell newer Bollywood films, while owners of neighbourhood video centres make an active decision not to screen newer Bollywood films.

The older films have remained popular in Tamale for several reasons.

One is their melodramatic form. This includes a clear moral universe that reaffirms the importance of community and extended intergenerational families over individuality and consumption.

There's also a clear delineation between 'evil' and 'good', 'individuality' and 'community', and 'moral' and 'immoral' practices. This might explain why Tamale's older generations encourage young people to watch the films in their homes today.

The 'Alarikhah family' – a community that developed out of an Indian film song radio show at Justice FM in Tamale – has gone as far as to screen Hindi films at Chief palaces in the city, as a way to "save youth from immoral behaviour".

Tamale's Muslim viewers also note depictions of Muslim life in certain Hindi films. This is because many Hindi films circulating in Tamale feature modest costumes, as well as recognisable architecture including mosques.

Many older Hindi films include Arabic loan words such as *ishq* (passion) or *duniya* (world). In West Africa, many Muslim viewers recognise Arabic loan words heard in Hindi films, as the same loan words are found in their own languages such as Wolof, Fulani, Serer, Hausa and Dagbani.

Synergies between films and series

In Tamale, recent Indian television series are a welcome addition to the continued circulation of older Hindi films in the city. My research showed that Dagbamba viewers accustomed to older Hindi films found similarities between new Indian television series and older films. These included the use of certain modest Indian fashions (including sarees and kameez) in series that parallel costumery in postcolonial Hindi films.

Tamale viewers also found parallels between religious aspects of certain Indian television series and elements of their Muslim faith, akin to earlier patterns of Hindi film viewership in the city.

Recent Indian television series also parallel the melodramatic moral universe of earlier Hindi films. For example, plot lines focus on multigenerational Indian families that live together and collectively negotiate issues of love, class and marriage.

For over 70 years, Hindi films and film songs, and more recently Indian television series, have circulated in Ghana. With this in mind, seemingly "new" trends – such as the arrival of *Kumkum Bhagya*'s cast in Ghana in 2017 – are part of a much broader, extended history of Indian media circulation in the country.

Men may come and men may go...

Cont. from page 3

Any Covid vaccine is safer than getting infected with the virus and fighting for survival in an ICU with a ventilator in your throat.

A vaccine is an additional safety - like a crash helmet for a bike rider, but it has to be used with safe driving practice. The best helmet cannot save you if you are a rash driver but can protect your head in case of an accidental fall.

Therefore: Look at the Covid vaccine as an additional safety measure along with masks, social distancing and hand hygiene – not as a replacement.

If you feel you are a safe driver who does not need a helmet and can strictly follow the three important steps – mask, distancing, hand hygiene - that will 100% protect you, then you probably can stay away from the vaccine until you are convinced.

But that's a decision **only you have to take**, not look for advice from WhatsApp University.

Either get Infected or get Vaccinated - or stay forever in a bubble distanced from other people.

The choice is yours.

Don't forget that we have already lost one full year in this epidemic! Isn't that enough?

If that is not clear enough, nothing will be.

RN Gopee

Still many miles to go

Cont. from page 4

There is also no indication regarding the timeline of protection of the Covid-19 vaccines. Scientists and medical experts are still learning on how long the vaccines protect people. Will it for example be necessary to administer a booster dose of the vaccine in future in the light of the findings of scientific research and advice?

Covid-19 vaccines are also profitable ventures subject to fierce commercial competition. Is there more to it than meets the eye?

The AstraZeneca vaccine, produced by the UK-based pharmaceutical company and Oxford University, is currently the leading candidate to vaccinate people in low-resource countries. It is relatively cheap, does not need to be kept at



Photo - leicestershospitals.nhs.uk

“There is also no indication regarding the timeline of protection of the Covid-19 vaccines. Scientists and medical experts are still learning on how long the vaccines protect people. Will it for example be necessary to administer a booster dose of the vaccine in future in the light of the findings of scientific research and advice? The upshot of this situation is that Covid-19 will remain an endemic disease...”

The upshot of this situation is that Covid-19 will remain an endemic disease. In the light of the above it is therefore imperative that despite being vaccinated against Covid-19, people should continue taking precautions in public places and strictly abide by prescribed sanitary measures to protect themselves. The wearing of masks, social distancing and strict compliance with hygiene norms will remain part of our lives for the foreseeable future. We need to reconcile ourselves with this new reality.

More than meets the eye?

A controversy is now threatening to rock the boat of affordable vaccine supplies. Despite firm assurances given by the head of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) which is the EU Regulator approving the use of vaccines in the continent, the WTO as well as other experts, that Astra Zeneca-Oxford the most utilized Covid-19 vaccine in the world is safe to use, several countries in Europe and South Africa have suspended its use because of a few instances of blood clotting. The EMA and the UK

Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) stated that evidence "does not suggest" the jab causes clots.

Affordable, safe, easily available and stored

very low temperatures and assures swift logistics as it is currently being manufactured in production units around the globe. Countries have signed delivery contracts for more than 2 billion doses which is nearly twice the volume being promised this year by the next leading manufacturer, Pfizer BioNtech. Some countries, including Bangladesh and El Salvador, have only been able to secure contracts with AstraZeneca to supplement doses they hope to get from the COVAX programme to carry out their Covid-19 vaccination programme.

Vasudhaiva kutumbakam

The world is one family. The world's priority should therefore be to unite our efforts to ensure that the whole world has access to affordable vaccines and is vaccinated as quickly as possible. This is the most important step towards achieving a modicum of normality.

On the local front, we urgently need to review and rev up our vaccination drive to attain the required herd immunity as quickly as possible. We have to proceed on the road towards normality step by step in the light of the state of vaccination, infection and economic recovery in each of our principal trading partners and sources of tourists. We therefore still have many miles to go and many hurdles to cross.

Mrinal Roy

Forum

Traditional Cure for Covid-19

There is so much contradictory literature in circulation on the Covid-19 virus and its cure that the reader is left utterly confused.

I learnt one piece of wisdom from an Indian Imam officiating in my village mosque. He remarked that Mauritians go to see the doctor for any minor ailment which Indians cure at home. I immediately thought of my childhood days when traditional cure was used successfully to relieve headache, fever, diarrhea, cough, etc.

The messages flooding the social media mention, among other things, getting rid of Covid-19 by drinking a hot liquid, or inhaling steam from a mixture of water and eucalyptus, ginger and/or cloves, or consuming ginger and curcumin. Furthermore a room can be made Covid-free if sliced onions are randomly scattered around.

What if these are tried and tested methods? What if a controlled group from those in quarantine is given those remedies? There are two possible outcomes: either the person giving them will be made a laughing stock of in case of failure, or in case of success, he will be a hero.

The "white coat" syndrome is so deeply ingrained that the vast majority of readers will call me mad. Those who are desperate will try the cures. I can remember having been made a laughing stock of even when, with the help of an alternative medicine practitioner, some patients suffering from an ailment considered "incurable" by the MAYO Institute were miraculously cured.

Dawood Auleear

* * *

Mise au point de l'évêché de Port-Louis

Dans le numéro de ce mardi 9 mars du *Mauritius Times*, l'article publié en page 13 intitulé «Laughter is the best medicine» choque le chrétien que je suis. Je vous demande de publier ma lettre en forme et place correspondant à l'éthique journalistique du droit de réponse.

Les chrétiens à l'image de leur maître et Seigneur sont tolérants et ne manquent pas d'humour sur eux-mêmes. Oui, le rire est une bonne thérapie en particulier quand il s'applique à la religion, et ceci pour les fondamentalistes de tout acabit.

Cependant, je trouve intolérant, maladroit et provoquant qu'un titre respecté comme le *Mauritius Times* propose à ses lecteurs de rire d'un prêtre alcoolique qui pendant la messe utilise un langage vulgaire sur les fondamentaux de la foi chrétienne en les ridiculisant, ce alors que les chrétiens sont en plein carême. Je le dis d'autant plus que je ne suis pas sûr que des lecteurs non avertis de la religion chrétienne soient en mesure de rire un bon coup sans ridiculiser la foi chrétienne.

En tant que chrétien et prêtre, je ne sens blessé par cet article et je demande à la rédaction de *Mauritius Times*, de présenter ses excuses à la communauté chrétienne. Une maladresse peut-être mais qui, si elle visait une religion moins tolérante que la nôtre pourrait provoquer des violences incontrôlables.

Père Jean Maurice Labour
Vicaire Général

P.S. *Mauritius Times* compte parmi les titres que je lis régulièrement.

La rédaction : *Le Mauritius Times s'est efforcé de tout temps de ne pas offusquer qui que ce soit ou quelque section de la population quant à ses croyances et pratiques religieuses et culturelles. Toutefois, il pourrait arriver que certains détails échappent à notre attention, comme il arrive parfois dans la presse, dans lequel cas tout journal qui se respecte se fait un devoir de faire les réparations nécessaires. C'est dans cette optique que nous exprimons nos regrets si l'article en question ait pu causer offense, ce qui n'a jamais été notre intention.*

Le seul but était de faire un p'tit brin d'humour, qui ne peut que faire du bien par les temps qui courent.



Marriage (Part I)

Macho man married good-looking lady, and after the wedding, he laid down the following rules:

'I'll be home when I want, if I want and at what time I want -- and I don't expect any hassle from you.

I expect a great dinner to be on the table unless I tell you that I won't be home for dinner.

I'll go hunting, fishing, boozing, and card-playing when I want with my old buddies, and don't you give me a hard time about it.

Those are my rules. Any comments?'

His new bride said: 'No, that's fine with me. Just understand that there will be sex here at seven o'clock every night... whether you're here or not.'

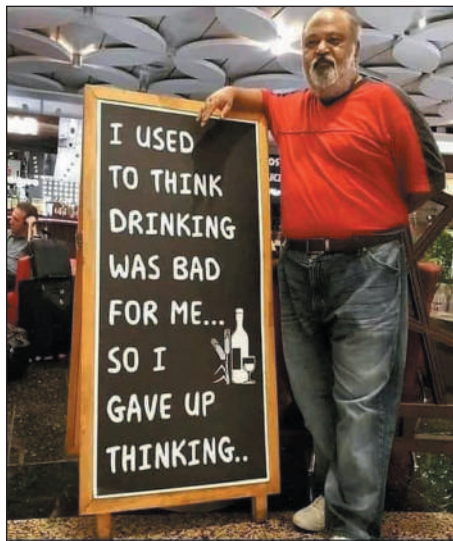
Marriage (Part II)

Husband and wife had a bitter quarrel on the day of their 40th wedding anniversary!

The husband yells, 'When you die, I'm getting you a headstone that reads, 'Here Lies My Wife -- Cold As Ever!'

'Yeah?' she replies. 'When you die, I'm getting you a headstone that reads, 'Here Lies My Husband -- Stiff At Last!'

_(HE ASKED FOR IT!)



Marriage (Part III)

Husband (a doctor) and his wife are having a fight at the breakfast table.

Husband gets up in a rage and says, 'And you are no good in bed either,' and storms out of the house.

After some time he realizes he was nasty and decides to make amends and rings her up.

She comes to the phone after many rings, and the irritated husband says, 'What took you so long to answer the phone?'

She says, 'I was in bed.'

'In bed this early, doing what?'

'Getting a second opinion!'

Marriage (Part IV)

A man has six children and is very proud of his achievement.

He is so proud of himself, that he starts calling his wife, 'Mother of Six' in spite of her objections.

One night, they go to a party. The man decides that it IS time to go home and wants to find out if his wife is ready to leave as well. He shouts at the top of his voice, 'Shall we go home, Mother of Six?'

His wife, irritated by her husband's lack of discretion, shouts right back, 'Any time you're ready, Father of Four.'

Mercedes for Sale @ \$1

Someone put up this advertisement.

No one believed it, but one old man responded and went to see the car.

The lady actually sold him a Mercedes, which had done just 12,000 kms, for \$1.

She handed him the papers and the car keys. Deal done.

As the old man was leaving, he said: 'I would die of suspense if you don't tell me why this car was sold so cheap?'

The Lady replied: 'I am just fulfilling the will of my deceased husband, where all money received from sale of his Mercedes would go to his Secretary...'

Wives are wives !!!

A man buys a lie detector robot that slaps people who lie. He decides to test it at dinner.

He asks his son, "Son, where were you today during school hours?"

"At school."

The robot slaps the son.

"Okay, I went to the movies!"

The father asks, "Which one?"

"Harry Potter." ~

The robot slaps the son again.

"Okay, I was watching porn!"

The father replies, "What? When I was your age, I didn't even know what porn was!"

The robot slaps the father.

The mom chimes in, "Haha! After all, he is your son!"

The robot slaps the mother.

Student obtained 0% in an exam!

Iwould have given him 100%! Each answer is absolutely grammatically correct and funny too. The teacher has no sense of humour.

Q 1: In which battle did Napoleon die?

-- His last battle.

Q 2: Where was the Declaration of Independence signed?

-- At the bottom of the page.

Q 3: River Ravi flows in which state?

-- Liquid.

Q 4: What is the main reason for divorce?

-- Marriage.

Q 5: What is the main reason for failure?

-- Exams.

Q 6: What can you never eat for breakfast?

-- Lunch & dinner.

Q 7: What looks like half an apple?

-- The other half.

Q 8: If you throw a red stone into the blue sea what will it become?

-- Wet.

Q 9: How can a man go eight days with out sleeping?

-- No problem, he sleeps at night.

Q 10: How can you lift an elephant with one hand?

-- You will never find an elephant that has one hand.

Q 11: If you had three apples and four oranges in one hand and four apples and three oranges in other hand,



what would you have?

-- Very large hands.

Q 12: If it took eight men ten hours to build a wall, how long would it take four men to build it?

-- No time at all, the wall is already built.

Q 13: How can you drop a raw egg onto a concrete floor without cracking it?

-- Anyway you want, concrete floors are very hard to crack.

Wonders before and after marriage. When you are in love, wonders happen. But once you get married, you wonder, what happened.

Philosophy of marriage:

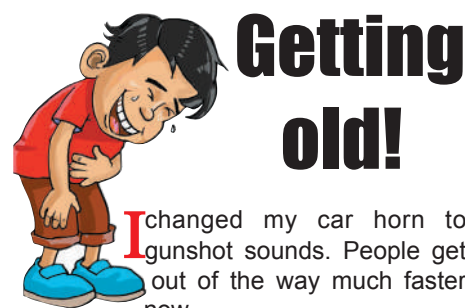
At the beginning, every wife treats her husband as GOD.

Later, somehow don't know why alphabets get reversed.

Secret formula for married couples...

"Love one another"

And if it doesn't work, bring the last word in the middle!



Ichanged my car horn to gunshot sounds. People get out of the way much faster now.

Gone are the days when girls used to cook like their mothers. Now they drink like their fathers.

I didn't make it to the gym today. That makes five years in a row.

I decided to stop calling the bathroom the "John" and renamed it the "Jim". I feel so much better saying I went to the Jim this morning.

Old age is coming at a really bad time. When I was a child I thought "Nap Time" was a punishment. Now, as a grownup, it feels like a small vacation.

The biggest lie I tell myself is "I don't need to write that down, I'll remember it."

I don't have grey hair; I have "wisdom highlights"! I'm just very wise.

If God wanted me to touch my toes, He would've put them on my knees.

Last year I joined a support group for procrastinators. We haven't met yet.

Why do I have to press 1 for English when you're just going to transfer me to someone I can't understand anyway?

Of course I talk to myself. Sometimes I need expert advice.

At my age "Getting lucky" means walking into a room and remembering what I came in there for.

Actually I'm not complaining because I am a Senager (senior teenager). I have everything that I wanted as a teenager, only 60 years later. I don't have to go to school or work. I get an allowance every month. I don't have a curfew. I have a driver's license and my own car. The people I hang around with are not scared of getting pregnant. And I don't have acne.

Life is great.

Relationship mistakes young couples make

Young love is spontaneous, dreamy and giddy. There is a string of emotions in your youthful years that culminate into love and excitement. But, sometimes, young couples unintentionally sabotage their relationships. Hence, we bring to you some common relationship mistakes you can avoid.

The need to listen

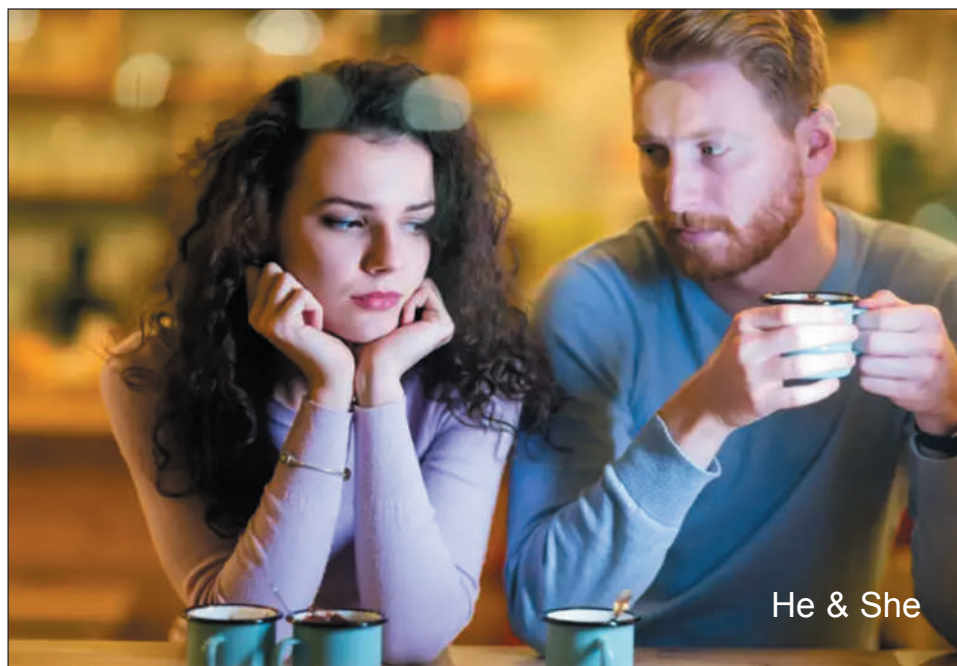
Couples should know when they need to listen. Instead of speaking up all the time, be calm and listen to the other person. If two people end up arguing and expressing their opinions at the same time, there will be no proper conclusion to the argument.

Competing against each other

Even in love, young people have a constant urge to compete for success against each other. But this will bear no fruit in the relationship. As long as you both respect and support each other's goals rather than being jealous of the achievements, you both can proceed into a healthy relationship.

Not speaking up

You shouldn't have to wait for the right time to speak up to your partner about something that has bothered you. If you continue to suppress your feelings, fearing that the other person won't take it seriously, then it will result in a big blow-out later on.



Don't lie

You may think that it isn't a very big deal if you happen to indulge in little, harmless lies. But that's a huge mistake. Trust is built in a relationship from day 1, no matter how young the love is. Lies, once uttered cannot be taken back.

Rebound relationships

These may be one of the most popular kinds of relationships but it definitely isn't constructive for the human heart. You can't enter into a relationship being unhappy,

hoping that it'll distract you from your past heartbreak. Your partner shouldn't suffer from all your insecurities that are the ashes remaining from your burnt past.

Ignoring red flags

Don't ignore glaring signs of your relationship turning toxic and unhealthy. It will only hurt you more, down the road. Identifying red flags is important to realise why your partner may not be the best fit for you. You wouldn't want to threaten your own sanity over an undeserving partner.

Your only source of happiness

Young couples shouldn't label each other as their only source of happiness. Love shouldn't be the only thing that keeps them going, but ambition, success, hard work, dedication, individualistic values and more are aspects you should hang onto.

Take time to dissolve fights

It's not necessary to make up just after you and your partner have had a fight. Take some time to gather your thoughts, cool off or even sleep over it. The next day, when you both wake up fresh, be ready to discuss the problem in a clearer state of mind. Don't follow the 'we won't sleep angry' rule.

Don't fight over unnecessary things

Even if you're young and in love, you both need to act mature in order to continue retaining a healthy relationship. Fighting over stupid, and redundant things will only escalate the matter, causing hard feelings to grow. Now, we wouldn't want that right?

Do things separately

Gone are the days when you and your partner shared the same notebooks, took the same co-curricular classes and even went to the same study tuition classes. Invest in your own hobbies and interests rather than depending on your partner for opting for the same interests. Remember, you both are an individual of your own.

What happens when you stop eating meat

It may be hard, but ditching those crispy pieces of bacon is better for you in the long run. Research shows both processed and red meats are high in saturated fat and can lead to ongoing inflammation. This could raise your chances of getting cancer and other diseases. Processed meat includes bacon, deli meat, and hot dogs. Red meat includes beef, pork, and lamb.

Better gut health

Research shows eating lots of processed food and refined grains can negatively affect your gut health. But a plant-based diet helps boost healthy gut bacteria. Fibre-rich foods especially trigger growth of good bacteria, which lower inflammation and your risk of inflammatory diseases.

Energy loss

You may feel tired and weak if you cut meat out of your diet. That's because you're missing an important source of protein and iron, both of which give you energy. The body absorbs more iron from meat than other foods, but it's not your only choice. You can also find it in green, leafy veggies like spinach, as well as iron-rich cereal, bread, and pasta. Look for protein in eggs, beans, peas, lentils, nuts, seeds, and soy products.

More trips to the bathroom

Less meat and more fibre from whole grains, raw fruit, and veggies may mean extra time on the toilet. Fibre makes it easier to poop by pulling water into your colon. This makes your stools softer.

Lower risk of diabetes

Researchers have linked red and processed meat with

a higher chance of type 2 diabetes. One study found that eating a half serving of red meat (one serving is the size of a deck of cards) a day boosts your odds of getting the disease by 48%.

Lower cholesterol

Limiting foods with saturated fat, including meat, can lower "bad" or LDL cholesterol in your blood. Experts say saturated fats should make up less than 10% of your calories every day. If you still crave meat, try leaner, skinless cuts.

You save money

High-protein foods like beans, peas, lentils, and eggs are a cheaper alternative to meat. And buying in-season fruits and veggies can save you even more money. Data shows one person on a 2,000-calorie diet can eat enough fruit and veggies for less than \$3 a day.

You help the environment

Replacing meat with plant-based foods lowers carbon and other greenhouse emissions. It takes more land to raise livestock than it does to grow food. Growing food also uses less water.

You may need supplements

When you follow a meatless or limited plant-based diet, you might miss out on important vitamins and



minerals. Supplements can boost your levels of vitamin B12 (only found in animal-based foods), iron, calcium, and vitamins A, B, and D. Talk to your doctor about which supplements are best for you.

You may lose weight

Researchers reviewed 15 studies on how a vegetarian diet affects your weight. People who switched to a plant-based diet lost about 10 pounds, and those who were heavier lost more weight.

Hansa D. Bhargava, MD

Bollywood celebrities who went from rags to riches



It is a famous saying that success comes to those who try. And when it comes to establishing a footing in Bollywood, it takes much more than just 'trying'. The fame, money, and major fan following require honest determination, consistency, and trust in the process.

While the insider-outsider debate remains, Bollywood has seen various actors who made it big without a godfather, proving that talent and hard work can take you a long way.

Here are a few Bollywood actors who started their journey with nothing, but made a mark in the film industry, as reported by Hindustan Times.

Shah Rukh Khan

Shah Rukh had one of the humblest backgrounds and grew up in a middle-class family who lived in rented apartments but quit his Masters in Mass Communication to follow his passion for acting. From landing in a serial in a supporting role, SRK traced his path to success

and made his dream come true.

Kangana Ranaut

Often making headlines for her tweets, Kangana Ranaut is one of the most sought-after actresses in Bollywood. However, she too did have a rough journey to fame and stardom.

Born in a small town in Himachal Pradesh, Kangana had intended to pursue medical studies on the persistence of her parents until she tried her hand in modelling. While her journey has been quite a rough one, the actress is known for her acting prowess and has made a mark for herself in the industry.

Nawazuddin Siddiqui

From working as a chemist and watchman to being a critically-acclaimed actor, Nawaz's story is highly inspiring. The actor struggled with small roles, despite being a National School of Drama graduate.

While his Bollywood debut came with a small role in the Amir Khan

starrer *Sarfarosh* in 1990, it was much later in the 2010 film *Peepli Live* which got him noticed. The struggle continued still, and recognition started pouring only after he gave strong performances in movies like *Gangs of Wasseypur* (2012) and *The Lunchbox* (2013). Today, the actor is widely known for his strong screen presence of flair at helming the toughest roles.

Arshad Warsi

Did you know our very circuit worked as a door-to-door salesman before he made people crack up with his funny antics? Orphaned at the age of 14, the financial crunch forced him to drop out of school and work as a salesman for a cosmetic company at the age of 17.

Following this, he also worked in a photo lab. Slowly he developed an interest in dancing and choreography, and landed Bollywood projects for the same, and was later offered a role by Jaya Bachchan for *Tere Mere Sapne*. The rest, as they say, is history.

Bollywood Roundup:

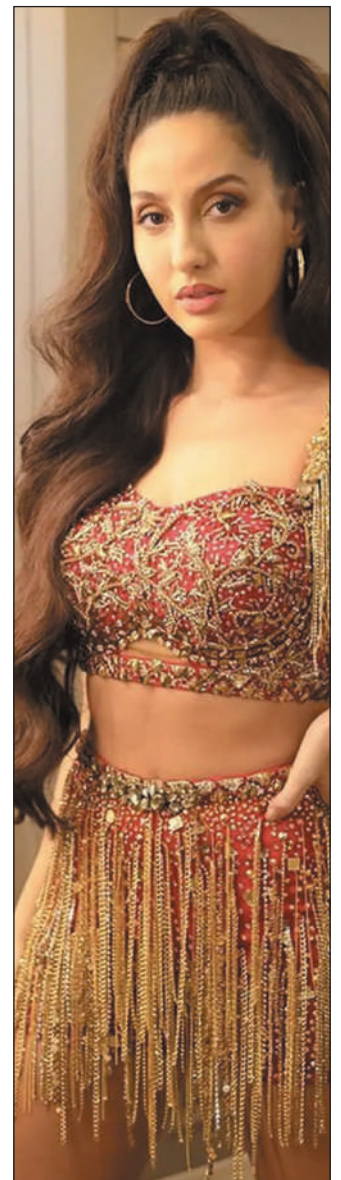
Nora Fatehi can do anything as performer: 'Chhod denge' choreographer

Choreographer Rajit Dev recently directed Nora Fatehi's moves in the music video of Sachet-Parampara's new non-film song, *Chhod denge*.

While it required strenuous practice of 40 days, Rajit says Nora finally delivered what was expected of her.

"This was a challenge for both of us because there are people who say that she is good at item numbers, but I know that as a performer she could do anything. Although it was a challenge, she proved herself in this one," Rajit tells IANS.

He adds: "This song is very different from what Nora has been doing in the past in Bollywood. She has performed mostly western dances, and even if it was a Bollywood song her dance was not typical Bollywood. This is the first time that we got an opportunity to portray Nora in a completely different style. She has performed the way you would see a certain Bollywood dance choreographed by Saroj Khan or Vaibhavi Merchant."



Sunny Leone feels 'beyond blessed' to have Nisha, Noah, Asher



Sunny Leone has shared an emotional note on social media as her twins Noah and Asher turn three. The actress says she feels "beyond blessed" to have her children Nisha and her boys, whom she lovingly calls her nuggets, in her life.

Sunny posted a string of pictures from the birthday celebration of Noah and Asher, who were born through surrogacy.

Alongside the image, Sunny wrote: "My little nuggets are 3! Asher Singh and Noah Singh Weber you both are so so different but are the sweetest, nicest, caring, intelligent little men. I can't believe 3 years have passed and you both amaze me every day with what you have learned and all the things you say."

Sunny and her husband Daniel Weber also adopted a 21-months girl child, Nisha, in 2017 from Latur and announced the birth of their sons via surrogacy in 2018.

Sunny is currently shooting for the youth-based reality show in *Splitsvilla* in Kerala along with Rannvijay Singha. The actress was recently in news in a fraud case but a bench of the Kerala High Court on Wednesday gave relief to her and her two close aides from being arrested.

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Ram Kapoor-Gautami to Kishwer-Suyyash

Rock-solid love stories of some lesser talked couples

Love is in the air and here are some love stories of TV couples, who have known and been with each other for decades now. They have stood the test of time and their bond and love have just grown. A look at some fairy-tale love stories of the lesser talked about couples that will make you want to believe in love.

Hiten Tejwani and Gauri Pradhan

Hiten and Gauri have been married for 16 long years and are parents to beautiful twins - Nevaan and Katya.

When asked what's the secret to their successful and rock-solid relationship, Hiten answered, "The idea is, if you have a family you have to give them time and respect. Touch wood, we are in the same field and Gauri knows my work. She knows what goes into our job. You respect each other and give them space and these are the basic necessities. The rest falls in place."



Ram and Gautami Kapoor

Ram Kapoor and Gautami Kapoor are social media favourites as they keep sharing fun and hilarious videos. Ram fell head-over-heels in love with his *Ghar Ek Mandir* co-star, Gautami and since then there has been no looking back.

Staying with each other through thick and thin, Gautami also inspired Ram during his weightless journey. They are parents to two kids and a pup.

Yash and Gouri Tonk

This celeb couple will complete 19 years of togetherness and are parents to two adorable daughters - Pari and Myrah. About their happy married life, Gouri once shared, "Nobody has a perfect marriage, but the best thing about our marriage is that we resolve issues and get back to happiness again."

They met on the sets of *Kaahin Kissii Roz*. After a month of knowing each other, they realised their love for each other.

Apurva Agnihotri and Shilpa

Apurva and Shilpa fell in love over a period of time after their first meeting at a coffee shop. Their common BFF Rakshanda Khan played cupid for the two. Apparently, Shilpa had a major crush on Apurva the moment she saw him at a coffee shop. They tied the knot in 2013.

Ashlesha Savant and Sandeep Baswana

Ashlesha and Sandeep have broken all societal norms and have been living together for 18 years now. They met on the sets of *'Kyunki Saas Bhi...'* in 2002 and their love for each other has just grown

stronger than ever.

Not going the traditional route, they decided to make each other happy, stay together and grow as individuals.

Arjun Punj and Gurdeep Kohli

They met on the sets of *Sanjivani* in 2002 and the first meeting was quite an awkward one. But for Arjun, it was love at first sight. While Arjun wanted to confess his love for her, Gurdeep was however, hesitant.

But as they say, love finds its way, Gurdeep finally realised her feelings and they tied the knot in 2006. They are parents to two cute little munchkins Meher and Mahir.

Iqbal Khan and Sneha

Iqbal was a TV heartthrob, who got a lot of female adulation. But his heart was taken by Sneha. They did a music video of Falguni Pathak and Sneha was just 16. But they were destined to be together and suddenly bumped into each other years later at a restaurant. Their eyes met and couldn't do without each other. Iqbal and Sneha took the wedding vows on January 15, 2007.

Ronit Roy and Neelam

For TV's one of the highest rated actors, Ronit Roy, it was love at first sight. And for Neelam too, it was love at first sight. After dating for three and half years, the couple tied the knot in December 2003. The wedding was a lavish affair. With Neelam he has two kids Ador and Agastya.

Rohit Roy and Manasi Joshi

Rohit and Mansi are also one of the most loved couples. It all happened when Rohit was an AD and stumbled upon a few pics of Manasi. He called her for an ad but Manasi couldn't attend. Later, Mansi ended up going to his office for an ad film and sparks flew. Post that meeting, love happened over a cup of coffee and Rohit had marriage on his mind when he fell in love. They tied the knot in 1999 and have been together for over two decades. They are parents to Kiara Bose Roy.



Suyyash Rai and Kishwer Merchant

Kishwer and Suyyash met for the first time in 2011 on the set of the serial *Pyaar Kii Ye Ek Kahaani*. She was impressed with Suyyash - the singer. The couple went through testing times, when they participated in Bigg Boss 9 and came out stronger.

There was a time when they received a lot of flak because Suyyash is seven years younger to Kishwer. However, as they say 'Love wins', the couple tied the knot in 2016 for their happy beginning.

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

Your new fighting attitude will enable you to surpass yourself and to succeed. You should give up your too rich diet, which is a sure cause of cardiovascular diseases. Small annoyances in your family life; try to be a little less commanding.

Lucky Numbers: 16, 20, 23, 26, 29, 30

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

You'll be tempted to take risks, but success will remain dubious. On the financial front, you could have difficult moments; but you'll manage to get out of this situation anyway. The freedom that you value above all will force you to make not very easy choices.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 11, 15, 19, 20, 36

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

The circumstances will compel you to take a position, and to make clear-cut choices. In your family, you won't have to look a long time for a solution: it'll present itself to you. You'll have a chance to meet great love, the one written with a capital L; live it intensely.

Lucky Numbers: 19, 20, 23, 26, 30, 35

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

With your close ones, you'll also use your increased magnetism, and things will run like clockwork. You'll be able to profit by kindness and useful supports coming from people of the other sex. No big health problems to be feared.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 20, 29, 32, 33, 37

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

You'll be capable of precisely evaluating the financial risks to take so as to enable your resources to bear their fruits. Your sentimental relationships are likely to turn sour; control your utterings.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 11, 12, 15, 23, 26

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

Rather animated love life which, however, will not be devoid of conflicts because of your current tendency to flit about. You'll be the object of some indelicate intrigues from one of your friends. Get rid of friends who don't deserve this name.

Lucky Numbers: 20, 21, 23, 26, 30, 40

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

You're very likely to have arguments with your beloved one if you continue to place him/her after your professional concerns. Be very careful not to endanger the balance of your budget; this rather unhealthy lunar climate may cause you to take some bad decisions in this field.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 15, 19, 20, 23, 27

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

You'll have very precise objectives in mind and you'll do everything possible to carry them out. On the career front, your efficiency and your sense of reality will help you to find concrete solutions to most problems; success will be guaranteed.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 19, 20, 24, 25, 28

Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

If you're not afraid of failure, dare to launch original initiatives and take calculated risks. Your professional ambitions will be rewarded. Luck will smile to you in your practice of new leisure activities.

Lucky Numbers: 14, 18, 20, 26, 33, 36

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

Your relations with the man/woman of your life will be chaotic because of your fluctuating mood. To recover a good physical and emotional balance, you'll have to lead a calm and regular life. You'll also need security and stability in your family life. Beware of stress.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 11, 12, 17, 20, 30

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

You should benefit from exceptional intuition that will put you on the road to success in many different areas. You'll feel galvanized by a recovered affection; take advantage of it to do whatever you've never dared to do before, and you'll be extremely happy about it.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 10, 14, 17, 20, 23

Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

Nice financial break: money will keep trying to get into your purse. Also, it's a nice time for the heart; perfect harmony with the beloved one. Singles, you're going to make an encounter which you won't stop congratulating yourselves for.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 7, 9, 15, 20, 23

CINE 12

Vendredi 19 Mars - 21.15

Les Guerriers De L'empire Céleste

Avec Kiichi Nakai, Jiang Wen, Xueqi Wang

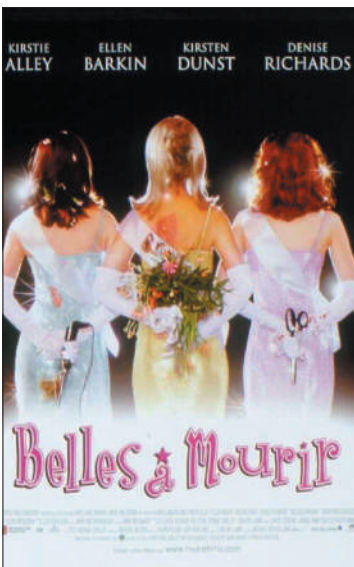


MBC 1

Samedi 20 Mars - 21.15

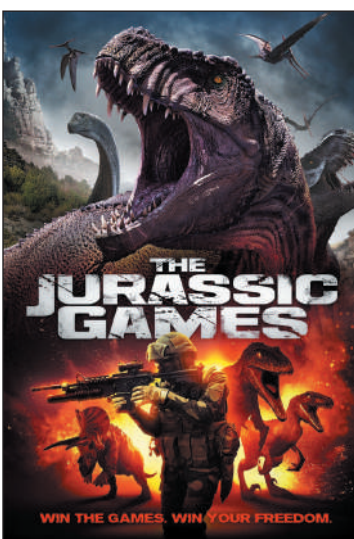
Belles A Mourir

Avec: Kirsten Dunst, Ellen Barkin, Allison Janney Mount Rose, Minnesota



MBC 1

Dimanche 21 Mars - 21.15



	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
vendredi 19 mars	08.15 Local: Lir - Ekrir Kreol... 09.45 Local: Arsiv MBC No 251 10.15 Local: Rodrig Prog 11.00 Mag: Garden Makeover 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.50 Mag: Urban Gardens 13.55 Local: Generations J 14.30 D.Anime: Sissi 15.07 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 15.23 D.Anime: Kulipari An Army... 15.47 D.Anime: HTDT - Humpty... 16.02 D.Anime: Robot Trains 17.20 Serial: Heidi, Bienvenida 17.45 Mag: Origami 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.20 Prod: Lottery Vert Draw 21.25 Serial: When Calls The Heart 23.00 Le Journal	10.00 Serial: Ki Jaana Mein Kaun 11.05 Serial: Zun Mureed 12.04 Film: Aamhi Doghi 14.12 DDI Magazine 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.21 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.42 Serial: Pooga Manasulu 16.07 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 16.30 Serial: Suno Chanda 16.56 Serial: Achra Ke Moti 17.09 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.30 Serial: Chhanchhan 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 DDI Magazine 19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Serial: Band Khirkiyan 20.42 Local: Anjuman 21.09 Local: Urdu Programme - Noor-E-Iman	06.00 Mag: Eco India 06.26 Mag: Shift 06.38 Mag: Carnet De Sante 07.53 The Real Sherlock Holmes 08.49 Doc: 360 GEO 09.39 Have Fun In Pyongyang 10.22 Doc: 100 Million Views 12.06 Mag: Border Crossing 12.32 Mag: Le Saviez vous? 12.34 Mag: Tomorrow Today 14.01 Doc: 360 GEO 14.47 Have Fun In Pyongyang 15.29 Doc: 100 Million Views 16.15 Mag: Eco India 16.39 Mag: Shift 17.00 Mag: Border Crossing 17.35 Mag: Tomorrow Today 18.00 Doc: Solar Storms 20.05 Doc: Wildlife Heroes 21.00 Local: News (English) 21.10 Doc: Bernard Buffet...	01.30 Film: Death Fighter 02.58 Serial: S.W.A.T 03.40 Film: Runaway 04.56 Tele: Muneca Brava 05.38 Serial: 19-2 06.20 Film: Crooked Arrows 09.00 Serial: The Magicians 09.45 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.00 Serial: The Good Doctor 12.00 Film: Runaway 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: Crooked Arrows 16.44 Serial: The Magicians 17.26 Serial: 19-2 18.05 Tele: Daneilla 19.10 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: Powers 21.15 Film: Les Guerriers De L'empire Céleste	08.00 Film: Izzatdaar 12.05 / 19.54 - Sanjivani 12.30 / 20.11 - Radha Krishna 12.48 / 20.32 - Agniphera 13.07 / 21.09 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.29 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.49 / 21.46 - Naagin S3 14.35 / 21.59 - Ikyawann 14.51 / 22.25 - Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 15.14 Film: Tu Chor Mein Sipahi Starring: Akshay Kumar, Saif Ali Khan and Tabu 18.00 Live: Samacher 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.52 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka 19.11 Mere Angne Mein 19.30 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak
samedi 20 mars	06.00 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà 07.12 D.Anime: Trollhunters 08.23 D.Anime: The Minimighty... 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Tele: Daniella 14.40 D.Anime: Sur Mesure 15.00 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 15.21 D.Anime: Kulipari An Army... 15.57 D.Anime: Robot Trains 16.11 D.Anime: Trolls 16.33 D.Anime: Baby Boss 16.32 D.Anime: Robot Trains 17.00 Mag: Mimetismes 17.15 Serial: Nowhere Boys 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Entertainment: Dance 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.20 Prod: Lottotech 20.25 Local: RDV Muzikal 21.20 Film: Belles A Mourir 23.00 Le Journal	07.00 Film: Bandini Starring Nutan, Ashok Kumar, Dharmendra 09.13 Mag: DDI Magazine 10.00 Bade Acchelagte Hai 12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhya Bhare 12.31 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 12.50 Serial: High School 13.17 Annakodiyum Ainthus Pengalum 13.35 Serial: Anu Pallavi 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.20 Film: Jajantaram Starring: Jaaved Jaffrey, Gulshan Grover 17.18 Mag: DDI Magazine 19.00 Zournal Kreol 20.05 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha 20.31 Serial: Bitti Business 21.00 Film: Paltan	06.00 Doc: Solar Storms 06.42 Mag: Arts And Culture 06.55 Mag: Global 3000 07.21 Mag: Euromaxx 07.50 Doc: Wildlife Heroes 08.42 Doc: Bernard Buffet 09.34 Doc: The Shah And The... 10.17 Doc: The Digital Age 11.02 Doc: Solar Storms 11.45 Mag: Global 3000 12.10 Mag: Euromaxx 12.39 Doc: Wildlife Heroes 13.31 Doc: Bernard Buffet 14.24 Doc: The Shah And The... 20.05 Doc: La Ville Passe Au Vert 21.00 Local: News (English) 21.10 Doc: Destination 21.23 Doc: Mr. Brown 22.19 Doc: Healthy Eyes 22.57 Doc: Blowguns Vs Bulldozer 23.40 Doc: Amazing Gardens 00.05 Doc: An Adventure In...	01.41 Film: Les Guerriers De... 03.35 Serial: Dynasty 2 04.13 Film: The Quiet Hour 05.39 Tele: Esmeraldas 06.20 Serial: Powers 07.02 Film: For The Love Of George 08.35 Serial: Midnight, Texas 09.16 Serial: Shades Of Blue 09.57 Serial: Unforgotten 10.46 Film: Les Guerriers De... 12.40 Serial: Dynasty 2 13.19 Serial: S.W.A.T 13.31 Doc: Bernard Buffet 16.05 Tele: Muneca Brava 17.00 Serial: Powers 17.45 Film: A Cowgirl??s Story 19.18 Mag: Ultimate Countdown 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Series: Powers 21.15 Film: House Of Cards 23.04 Tele: Dulce Amor	04.05 Sanjivani 04.26 Radha Krishna 04.48 Agniphera 05.09 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 05.31 Zindagi Ki Mehek 05.51 Ikyawann 06.13 Bin Kuch Kahe 06.41 Kundali Bhagya 06.58 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka 07.18 Mere Angne Mein 08.00 Zindagi Ki Mehek 09.47 Motu Patlu 10.20 Siddhi Vinayak 12.00 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 14.00 Sanjivani 16.00 Pavitra Rishta 18.30 Film: Nawabzaade Star: Dharmesh Yelande, Punit Pathak, Raghav Juyal 20.16 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 20.58 Serial: Naagin
dimanche 21 mars	06.00 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà... 06.25 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis A... 08.09 D.Anime: Oum Le Dauphin... 09.30 Mag: Future Mag 10.00 Local: Zanfan Nou Zil 12.00 Le Journal 12.40 Tele: Daniella 15.25 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 15.36 D.Anime: Kulipari An Army... 15.53 D.Anime: La Ligue Des Super 15.58 D.Anime: HTDT 16.10 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies 16.27 D.Anime: Trolls 17.15 Mag: Mimetismes 17.30 Serial: Nowhere Boys 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Local: Yeh Shaam Mastani 19.30 Le Journal 20.00 Prod: La Meteo 21.15 Film: The Jurassic Games	07.00 Film: Bazaar Starring: Farooq Shaikh, Smita Patil, Naseeruddin Shah 09.00 DDI Magazine 10.00 Local Production 11.00 Serial: Oru Kai Osai 11.22 Serial: Santoshi Maa 12.00 Film: Tutak Tutak Tutiya Starring - RJ Balaji, Tamannaah Bhatia, Prabhu Deva 14.23 Mag: DDI Magazine 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.20 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 15.43 Eka Lagnachi Teesri Gosht 16.06 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 17.00 Serial: Mahakali 18.30 Local: Tipa Tipa Nu Avance 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Serial: Mann Mein Vishwas.. 20.50 Serial: CID	06.00 Doc: Amazing Gardens 06.26 Doc: An Adventure In Trans.. 06.52 Mag: Vue D'en Haut 07.45 Doc: La Ville Passe Au Vert 08.37 Doc: Destination 09.47 Doc: Healthy Eyes 11.10 Doc: Amazing Gardens 12.07 Mag: Vue D'en Haut 13.00 Doc: La Ville Passe Au Vert 14.05 Doc: Mr. Brown 17.38 Mag: Sur Mesure 18.00 Mag: Tendance XXI 18.30 Doc: Ville En Fête 20.05 Doc: Comme Une Envie De... 21.00 Doc: News (English) 21.10 Doc: Destination 21.23 Doc: Hugo Pratt, Trait Pour... 22.19 Doc: Can Green Investment.. 22.44 Doc: Neuschwanstein 23.27 Mag: Tendance XXI 23.53 Doc: Ville En Fête	03.16 Serial: Hawaai Five-0 03.57 Film: The Head Hunter 05.04 Tele: Esmeraldas 05.46 Serial: Powers 06.28 Film: Dominion 08.30 Serial: Midnight, Texas 09.11 Film: A Doggone Adventure 10.41 Film: A Cowgirl??s Story 12.16 Serial: Hawaii Five 5-0 13.03 Serial: S.W.A.T 14.22 Telenovela: Amanda 15.05 Tele: Muneca Brava 15.44 Mag: Ultimate Countdown 17.00 Serial: Power 17.45 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 18.30 Serial: Macgyver 19.17 Mag: Ultimate Countdown 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: Falling Water 21.15 Serial: Island Doctor 22.45 Tele: Dulce Amor	00.40 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 02.19 Sanjivani 04.06 Pavitra Rishta 05.33 Film: Nawabzaade Dharmesh Yelande, Punit Pathak, Raghav Juyal 08.01 Motu Patlu 08.11 Karn Sangini 10.04 Jaana Na Dil Se Door 11.44 Piya Albela 13.27 Agniphera 15.20 Bin Kuch Kahe 17.10 Punar Vivaah 18.30 Film: Shaadi Ke Side Effects 18.00 Samachar 20.45 Entertainment: Dance 21.26 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 23.16 Piya Albela

MBC 2

Samedi 20 Mars - 21.00

Stars: Jackie Shroff, Arjun Rampal, Sonu Sood



B TV

Dimanche 21 Mars - 18.30

Stars: Farhan Akhtar, Vidya Balan, Vir Das



Covid-19 - A Year Ago



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor



Nita Chicooree-Mercier

A threatening epidemic originating in China in 2019 spread to the rest of the world into a full-fledged pandemic. Initially, many in Europe saw it as an Asian calamity which would be confined to that distant part of the world. Asians are used to this, anyway, they thought. Wrong. In no time the pandemic gave a Third World vision of Europe.

Breaking news in Mauritius by midday on March 19th 2020 revealed that the virus had finally sneaked into the island. End of business as usual. In Port-Louis employees poured out of offices, hurriedly bought some stuff before heading towards bus stations. Shopkeepers cashed in payment for last customers. Metallic shutters began to be pulled down in Royal Street; the clanking noise of shutters resonated all along Farquhar Street as the other shops closed down one after another. Street vendors began packing up their stuff; called out loudly to fellow vendors. Folks commented the news and grinned nervously in the streets. By one p.m. the sun was high in the blue sky, and with the unpleasant summer heat hovering above, there was a feeling of something ominous in the atmosphere. A few days later Port-Louis joined the rank of Asian sprawling cities as a miniature ghost town.

No one had any idea of what was in store in the coming weeks. There was a tacit understanding that we would have to brace up for longer than the two weeks' confinement period announced officially. The Spanish flu, which started in Texas and was propagated by American soldiers at the end of World War I in 1918, devastated an unprepared, impoverished world causing millions of deaths in a short span of time. A century later, by and large, people enjoy more comfortable living conditions across the world, medicine has made unbelievable gigantic progress, and precautionary measures to avoid contamination are still the rule of the day.

The government worked hand in hand with the medical advisory committee, hospital staff, police forces and other partners to ensure an efficient surveillance system, and make sure that basic necessities be made available to the public. Old-age pensioners received their allowances at their doorsteps. Well-



“The Spanish flu, which started in Texas and was propagated by American soldiers at the end of World War I in 1918, devastated an unprepared, impoverished world causing millions of deaths in a short span of time. A century later, by and large, people enjoy more comfortable living conditions across the world, medicine has made unbelievable gigantic progress, and precautionary measures to avoid contamination are still the rule of the day...”

Photo - s.marketwatch.com

enforced lockdown restrictions paid off after three months, allowing people to move around freely in the country. If the government had followed the example of Western countries, it would have created an uncontrollable mess with a heavy toll on the lives of citizens. Authorization to go out for essential purposes in alphabetical order of names to control the flow of customers was an exceptional measure; and though one might argue that a small population in a small island territory facilitated enforcement of rules, it nevertheless stands out as a remarkable feat in pandemic crisis management.

The newly-elected government in December 2019 had hardly time to breathe, with the knees of a powerful invisible nuisance pinning it to the ground and bringing all projects to a standstill. By a twist of fate, all governments around the world had their hands tied and their coffers drained by the pandemic. Hasty, and in some cases questionable, deals were made in the procurement of masks and medical equipment here as elsewhere, the latest one being revealed is the charge of corruption being made against Angela Merkel's government in Germany.

Memories of hard times in the first two decades of Independence are still in the back of people's minds. So, adaptation to a new situation that urged the public to make do with restricted levels of spending was not perceived as too demanding. Indeed, the old habit of saving for hard times resurfaced. Superfluous items were put on standby, and even after the end of lockdown, busy streets in the capital in times of normalcy have remained deserted. Loss of jobs and limited income make people think twice before opening their purse.

A network of solidarity ensured a smooth organization of social aid granted to the most needy by benevolent citizens. The hardest hit were the low-income earners, and mostly those in the manufacturing and tourism sectors. It is common knowledge that hotels continued to mushroom on the coast despite warnings that they could not run fully all year round. It is a Herculean task to embark on an aggressive campaign at international level to lure tourists to the island at the first sign of safe travelling with vaccine passport and such like. Employees in the export sector and the tourism industry are painstakingly making ends meet by taking up whatever odd jobs available. Students who have enrolled in foreign universities look forward to travel and experience studying abroad safely.

Free university courses generously extended to all higher tertiary institutions in 2019 came as a relief to many families. It added to the list of free services granted to the public. For the 'nanny' state to keep afloat, tax policy on big private companies will have to be reviewed above the 15% limit when the economy starts picking up, and hopefully, if the country manages to draw significant FDI.

It took advanced medical organizations 44 years to overcome tuberculosis. A crisis, financial or sanitary, is defined by its short duration. As things stand, it hardly fits the definition of the present harsh times facing countries across the world. But by now it is widely believed that coronavirus is not going away any time soon and, vaccine or not, we will have to put up with it for years and take risks until a definite vaccine comes up.



We need to encourage ourselves to look deeply into all things in our lives to see the inherent goodness of everything.

Sometimes we find it difficult to see the good in people, places, or situations that aren't to our liking. We focus on the things we don't like in our lives as a way of fueling our efforts to create change. There is nothing inherently wrong with this, and it is one way we make progress. However, if we get too caught up in this way of looking at the world, we lose touch with our ability to sit back and simply say yes to everything on our plates, which is the true starting point for all successful activity. Sometimes what we really need is to encourage ourselves to look deeply into all things in our lives to see the inherent goodness at the heart of everything.

At the core of this inquiry is the practice of unconditional acceptance, which can be scary because we feel as if we are being asked not to change the things we don't like. But when we think this way, we are still operating on the surface of our lives. In order to feel the beauty and warmth of full acceptance, we have to be willing to sink deeper into the stratum underlying the external manifestation of our lives. This deeper place of being is the origin of all lasting change, yet its paradox is that when we are in it, we often don't feel the need to change anything. From this place, we experience the pure beauty of the process of being alive, and we see that all things change in their own time. We don't need to force anything. If there are things that we do need to change, from this place of serenity we create the shift easily, our hands guided by an energy that resides at the very center of our hearts.

In our active, goal-oriented culture, we learn to distrust stillness and to engage in busywork on the surface of life. This tendency can blind us to the good that lies at the heart of all things. But all we have to do to see again is stop for a moment, let go of our preconceptions and our agendas, and settle into the very center of our hearts, remembering that it is only from here that we can truly see.