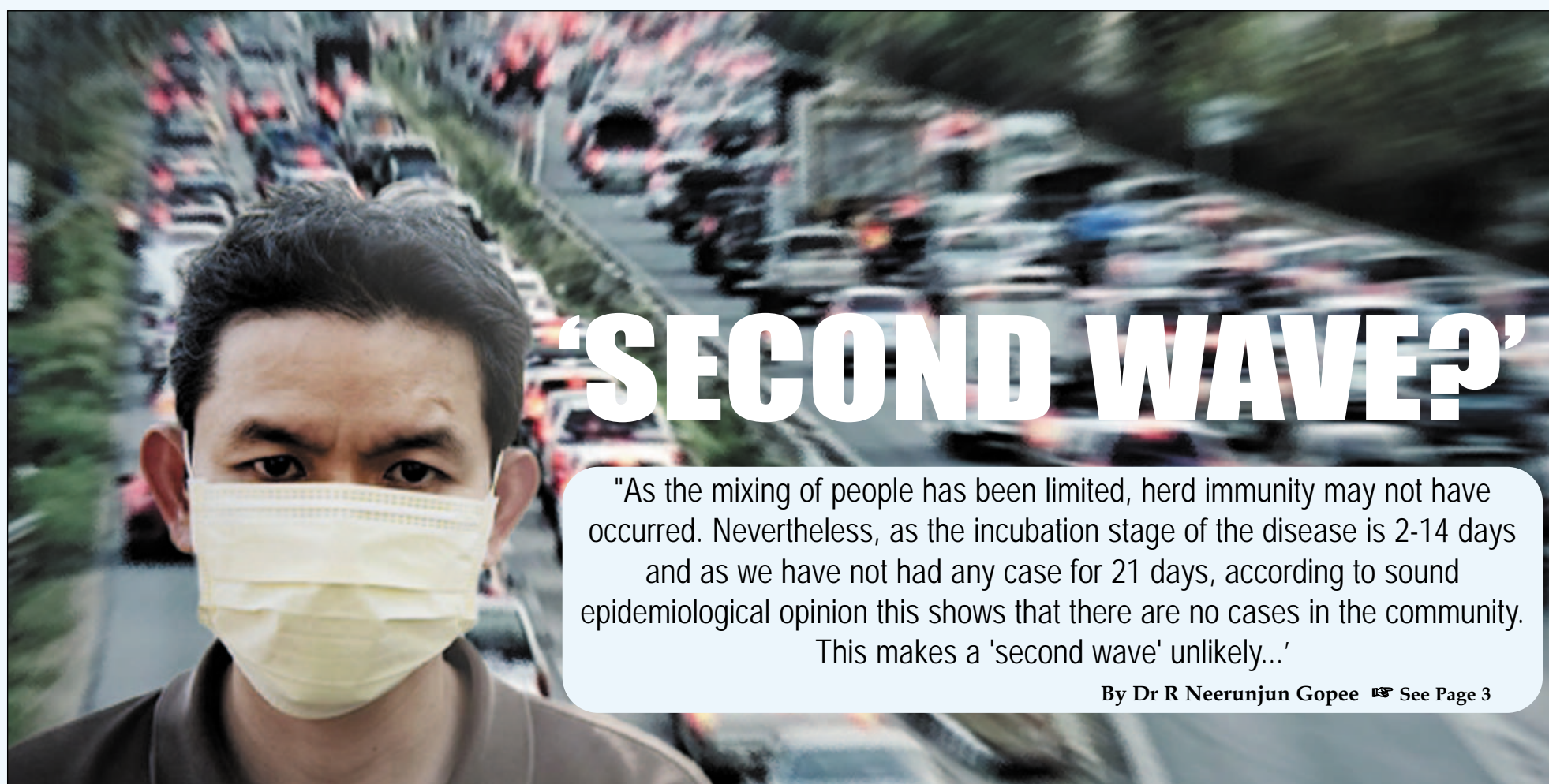


# MAURITIUS TIMES

*"We learn more in crisis than in comfort." -- Abhijit Naskar*



## 'SECOND WAVE?'

"As the mixing of people has been limited, herd immunity may not have occurred. Nevertheless, as the incubation stage of the disease is 2-14 days and as we have not had any case for 21 days, according to sound epidemiological opinion this shows that there are no cases in the community. This makes a 'second wave' unlikely..'

By Dr R Neerunjun Gopee 📞 See Page 3

## Africa in Serious Crisis



Covid-19 is the Chernobyl moment for bad regimes and badly managed aid programmes in Africa

By Aidan Hartley 📞 See Page 4

Interview : Dr Avinaash Munohur

## "Les cartes sont actuellement entre les mains du Premier ministre.

Les Mauriciens prendront bonne note de ce qu'il fera"

\* Voir page 8-9



Carnet Hebdo

## Keeping up hope post lockdown

By Nita Chicooree

📞 See Page 16



## Is the treatment worse than the disease?

**T**his is the question that so many people are asking themselves -- from workers, their unions, observers and analysts of the local scene, and other concerned stakeholders -- in the wake of the adoption of the Covid-19 and the Quarantine Bills, as well as the stringent provisions brought in the Public Health Act.

The irony is that the authorities themselves had pointed out the possibility of massive loss of jobs, and instead of enhancing job security, these laws may make the workers even more vulnerable by, among others, setting up a Redundancy Board, which will examine mostly downsizing applications from employers. And leave a person with nothing more than 30 days of pay, which is totally unfair.

Don't the deciders realise that they are likely to generate such severe hardship that it is going to lead to the poverty of thousands of families, over and above what already exists? After all, these workers have families to feed, expenses to meet for children's education and upbringing, bills to pay, loans to reimburse, and other incidental expenses that make for living in a decent and civilized manner. That is what people aspire to in a democratic society, especially the contemporary one where so many developments are taking place and aggressive marketing puts pressure on people to consume excessively.

As always, it is the people at the bottom rungs of the ladder that are going to be affected most, the low income groups, daily wage earners and the self-employed among others. In contrast, no corresponding sacrifice has been imposed on the governing elites and their corporate allies, who will continue to enjoy all the perks and benefits of their positions.

It will be hard for the Government to counter the criticism that Covid-19 has been used as a pretext to enact legislation that has nothing to do with the sanitary emergency. We are not aware of any other country that has passed such stringent laws in the context of the pandemic, or laws that allow them to freely

dig into the coffers of the State, when there may well be other alternative financial instruments that could have been used to cope with the situation.

On the other hand, according to the figures being released officially, we seem to be winning the battle over the spread of the epidemic, since there have not been any new cases registered over the past three weeks. The legislations enacted are in contradiction to this official success story, which gives rise to doubt about the real motives behind them. If those who have a job and a work access permit are allowed to shuttle between their homes and their places of work, what happens to people who have lost their jobs? How will they move about to seek a job or to respond to any call if perchance they receive an offer and need to attend for an informal interview to discuss terms and conditions? As it is, they will be short of money. If on top of that they have to face fines and the possible imprisonment if stopped by the police, and bureaucratic hassles to boot, who will step in to help them, since only those with access permits are allowed to move about?

These are some of the realities that have probably not been thought through and that are likely to generate a lot of physical, mental and psychological stress in the people concerned. Inevitably, this will impact their families who are already under pressure from the lockdown that has already been associated with a surge in domestic violence and other scourges.

There will have to be a reasonable period agreed after the lifting of lockdown, say 14 days, during which the evolution of the pandemic locally will be observed. If no further cases are detected during this period, surely these newly enacted provisions in the law will become superfluous, and they should be then seriously considered for rescinding. Let us hope that the unions and other stakeholders will also then take up the issue, with robust backing from lawyers who will be prepared to defend the cause of workers in a spirit of patriotism.

### The Conversation

## How to keep up social distancing after lockdown

**L**ockdowns are easing, if not ending. The hope now is that many countries are moving past the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

Easing the lockdown will mean people gradually getting more freedom to engage in social and economic activities, but also that they must take good care to keep a safe distance from others. And with the extra freedom comes risk as people suddenly get more opportunities to get close to others.

Effective mitigation relies on people's individual decisions to comply with social distancing measures. We have already seen images of packed trains and tubes as the easing of the lockdown started in England.

To deal with this risk, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's plan introduces higher fines for those caught violating social distancing measures. Fines will be £100 for each first offence and double to a maximum of £3,200 pounds for repeat offenders. This approach is rooted in the centuries-old idea of deterrence, under which people are less likely to break rules out of fear of punishment.

So will this work? Will people heed the government's call to stay alert, control the virus and save lives, by following social distancing rules?

### Why we comply with lockdown measures

To answer this question we must look at why people have been complying with the lockdown measures so far. We conducted a behavioural survey in a nationally representative sample in the UK in early April, which has been published as a preprint. With the survey, we assessed why people were or were not complying with lockdown measures.

The survey used a standard social science approach to study compliance and rule-violating behaviour. We first asked participants to report how often they kept a safe distance from people outside of their own household, whether they went outside for nonessential activities, and whether they met friends and family.

After that, we asked our participants to answer a range of questions about factors that we thought could influence their behaviour. For instance whether they were afraid of the disease, whether they supported the measures, whether they were able to follow the measures, and whether they were afraid to get caught and punished should they violate the rules.

We then used a statistical form of analysis -- an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression -- to find out whether these factors could explain variation in people's compliance. Such analysis allows us to understand which of the variables had a significant impact on whether people followed the rules.

The data show that in early April, most UK citizens we interviewed reported they were complying with the rules.



But our survey nonetheless shows the risk of the approach taken to ease the lockdown. We found that compliance was higher when people were practically able to follow the measures and could work from home and stay away from others. On the other hand, we found that there was a significant relationship between people's opportunity to meet people outside of their own household and their likelihood of violating the social distancing measures.

So the more freedom people have to socialise, the more likely they will do so. Before easing the lockdown, people had very limited freedom to meet friends and family and that kept them safely apart. Now they get that freedom, it is vital to ensure they socialise at a safe distance.

### Why fines won't work

Our survey also looked at whether the threat of higher sanctions might help to ensure compliance with the mitigation measures. Unfortunately, we did not find a significant association between people's fear of punishment and compliance.

Decades of social science research about the effect of punishment on criminal behaviour have not shown conclusive evidence that punishment works as an effective deterrent.

Such research shows that for deterrence to work, the severity of the punishment does not matter much. The most important aspect is whether people think they will get caught. And catching violators of social distancing rules will be extra hard in an opening society, as there are so many more people mingling. In light of all this, the higher fines are unlikely to have much effect in ensuring social distancing.

Our survey did show that people's intrinsic motivation played an important role in their compliance. If people felt a greater general duty to obey the law, they were more likely to comply. So it is crucial that authorities do all they can to maintain such sense of civic obedience.

There is a vital link with law enforcement here. Police must be very careful in enforcing the measures and applying the authority to issue fines. Decades of research has shown that when people see unfair law enforcement they develop a negative view of the legal system that undermines their sense of duty to obey its rules.

Benjamin van Rooij - Professor of Law and Society & Emmeke B. Kooistra - Researcher, University of Amsterdam

## Mauritius Times

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

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

*This paper has been produced with the assistance of Doojesh Ramlallah, Sultana Kurmally and Kersley Ramsamy*

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

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



mtimes@intnet.mu



www.mauritiustimes.com



facebook.com/mauritius.times





Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

# Do we have to fear a second wave?

*The local approach to containment has been able to keep the pandemic under control - though we still have to maintain vigilance*

As at Sunday May 17, according to Covid-19 statistics released by the Ministry of Health and Wellness, there have been no new cases detected since the last positive one of April 28. The total number of positive cases registered remains at 332, with 10 deaths, leaving 322 cases that have been successfully treated, and the total number of Covid-19 tests done was 87,177.

In an article on April 03, I had expressed my apprehension that the opening of supermarkets posed a risk of accelerating towards Phase 3 of pandemic (when the health system begins to be overwhelmed, as happened in e.g. Italy, Spain) from the Phase 2 that we were in, that is, the situation was still manageable: the health system was coping though under strain.

I had thought of two possible scenarios:

1. **Best case:** If we are lucky, and people behave themselves throughout these two weeks – a risky assumption since at some stage nerves may get frayed from prolonged waiting, etc – *herd immunity* may develop;
2. **Worst case:** infection spreads rapidly and we precipitate headlong into Phase 3.

I had also noted that 'the good thing is that people are wearing masks, and some wear gloves too. However, the recommended social distance of one metre may not be enough to prevent spread. Queues of up to a km have been seen, and clusters too with people chatting'.

It is a relief therefore that the worst case scenario has been averted, and that by and large people began to be more attentive to the advice given. Gradually the long lines at supermarkets have dwindled, as people must have realised that there was no need to panic-buy or stock up as they could shop more regularly.

There is no doubt that the local approach to containment has been able to keep the pandemic under control, though we still have to maintain vigilance. There is a caveat about *herd immunity* – usually it is related to a context where there is a vaccine available, and a significant proportion of the population has been vaccinated. In the present situation that developed very rapidly, there is only a hope that enough people would have caught the infection through the interactions that were allowed, and developed immunity, the sum total of which would add up to the *herd immunity* wished for.

However, as the mixing of people has been limited, such herd immunity may not have occurred. Nevertheless, as the incubation stage of the disease is 2-14 days and as we have not had any case for 21 days, according to sound epidemiological opinion this shows that there are no cases in the community. This makes a 'second wave' unlikely, and what we must do now is to beef up surveillance at the port and airport if we plan to allow entry of tourists. There are tools and mechanisms to do this.

Question is: are the harsh amendments brought to the Public Health Act really justifiable in our democratic country?

Especially if we commit to abide by all the measures that have been recommended and are meant primarily for our **self-protection – which is first and foremost our**



“As the mixing of people has been limited, herd immunity may not have occurred. Nevertheless, as the incubation stage of the disease is 2-14 days and as we have not had any case for 21 days, according to sound epidemiological opinion this shows that there are no cases in the community. This makes a 'second wave' unlikely, and what we must do now is to beef up surveillance at the port and airport if we plan to allow entry of tourists. There are tools and mechanisms to do this...”

## responsibility.

When we think of it, it boils down to just a few really simple steps: wear a mask when in public, keep a safe distance (at least one metre or more if possible), wash hands frequently with soap and water, stay at home in self-isolation if we have any symptoms. I know a senior Mauritian nurse who travelled back to London at the beginning of the epidemic who tested positive on reaching there, self-isolated at home, was served in his room which he did not step out of, sipped hot lemon water with honey several times a day – and was cured in 15 days, testing negative.

So the message is clear and one of hope: these small practical steps are easy to follow, and lead to cure – and prevent others from being infected.

Let's adopt President Barack Obama's catchphrase for his first election: Yes we can!

For ourselves, our family and the community at large. If we go about in this spirit from now onwards, we can look forward with confidence towards resuming activities when the lockdown is over. It will be accompanied by arrangements to maintain social distancing, both physically where needed, as well as through new frameworks for wider use of telecommuting, teleworking and tele-learning that are set to become mainstream in future.

In the meantime a global network of scientists and doctors are busy working on possible treatments and vaccines. As regards drugs, the antimalarial hydroxy-chloroquine that in earlier studies seemed promising has been discredited with reports of severe and in some cases lethal cardiac complications. The only drug that has been shown in a rigorous

trial to have benefit in the sense of reducing the duration of the disease by about four days is a medicine used to treat Ebola, Remdesivir, and it has been recommended for use.

But this will be done under strict conditions of clinical surveillance for any side effects or complications that will be promptly brought to the attention of the medical fraternity. Along similar lines, several other drugs used for other conditions are being studied for use against Covid-19, what is termed as 'repurposing' the drugs.

As regards a vaccine, all the experts are agreed that it is impossible to give any realistic timeline as yet. All told, therefore, we are not out of the danger zone yet.

So while from the drug treatment point of view there is a glimmer of hope, as regards vaccine prevention we may have a long wait. But the good thing that is worth repeating is that we have simple, powerful and proven tools at our disposal by way of the authoritative advice that is being repeated to us every

day since the pandemic struck. Perhaps there is a need to uptick the communication of this advice so that it really sinks into our psyche and becomes an effortless and integral part of our daily living.

We can help and protect ourselves further by keeping physically fit through daily exercise, as also enhance our lung function through yoga breathing techniques such as *pranayama*, *anulom vilom*, *kapalhati*, etc.

Let's show that we can take responsibility for our own health and safety – with help from the State where needed.



Photo: mikeylive.com

“While from the drug treatment point of view there is a glimmer of hope, as regards vaccine prevention we may have a long wait. But the good thing that is worth repeating is that we have simple, powerful and proven tools at our disposal by way of the authoritative advice that is being repeated to us every day since the pandemic struck. Perhaps there is a need to uptick the communication of this advice so that it really sinks into our psyche and becomes an effortless and integral part of our daily living...”



# Africa in Serious Crisis

*Covid-19 is the Chernobyl moment for bad regimes and badly managed aid programmes in Africa*

Aidan Hartley

Red roses are hardly a priority for people in a virus-wrecked global economy, and one day recently the world's flower market pretty much collapsed. At the vast Aalsmeer auction in Holland, there were scented mountains of unsold roses, gerberas and tulips. Some last stems still find their way into bouquets across a world that has cancelled all gatherings except funerals. But in the coming months, cut flowers might become a sight as rare as bananas were for children in the Blitz.

This story is a disaster for Kenya, my home country, which was until last month a top flower exporter. While western states repurpose their economies towards becoming vast hospitals, Africa is too poor to cope with the medical emergency, and virus deaths will probably not be the greatest challenge ahead. Even in a good year, multitudes go hungry, while respiratory diseases, diarrhoea, Aids, malaria, tuberculosis and measles scythe down 3.5 million people. In Kenya, some wags have pointed out that police enforcing a dusk-to-dawn curfew have already killed more people than the virus has locally - but later, accurately calculating total deaths from Covid-19 in Africa will involve greater guesswork even than elsewhere, since mathematical modelling tends to get lost in the Congo's rainforests or the shifting sands of Somalia.

If the virus spares the young, Africa is better off than Europe. Our median age is less than 20; three quarters are under 35. Most ordinary folk are fit, slim, non-smoking and healthy. Few live beyond 60, since misrule has so impoverished many hospitals that they lack even aspirins. The local joke in Kenya is that we have more parliamentarians (350) than ICU beds (130). 'Underlying health issues' affect mainly the tiny urban class of richer, often politically connected folk, who pick up westerners' bad habits. In other words, the pandemic's main victims might be ageing politicians and their hangers-on, who find themselves unable to fly their private jets to Europe for treatment - a cull of sugar-fed, obese oligarchs.

Starkest of all will be Africa's economic collapse, wiping out jobs for many of the continent's 1.2 billion people. Tourism, vital to the conservation of wildlife, forests and monuments, has fallen apart. Mining, oil and gas are close behind. Exports of tea, coffee and cocoa are also being hit hard. Until recently Africa served as a giant nursery, raising migrants to supply cheap labour for rich countries. Every month these workers send money home to their families, and remittances are now the largest source of foreign exchange in many countries.

As diaspora Africans fall out of work, these funds are evaporating. In the



Photo - ca-times.brightspolcdn.com

*"The local joke in Kenya is that we have more parliamentarians (350) than ICU beds (130). 'Underlying health issues' affect mainly the tiny urban class of richer, often politically connected folk, who pick up westerners' bad habits. In other words, the pandemic's main victims might be ageing politicians and their hangers-on, who find themselves unable to fly their private jets to Europe for treatment - a cull of sugar-fed, obese oligarchs..."*

high-density slums, each breadwinner might feed ten mouths. Nairobi city governor Mike Sonko promised mass distributions of Hennessy cognac because 'alcohol plays a major role in killing the coronavirus' - but such clowning aside, slum-dwellers have no cash reserves, nor a welfare state to rescue them. As global supply chains collapse, it becomes horribly clear that out of 54 African states, only Zambia is a net food exporter. Many Africans routinely rely on food aid. For oil-dependent Nigeria's nearly 200 million people, life is about to get tough.

Even before the pandemic, debt-laden Africa was gazing into an economic abyss deepened by spendthrift policies and crashing commodity prices. South Africa's junk status is now at the optimistic end of the spectrum. 'Sub-Saharan countries with no exception that I can think of have gorged on borrowing and balance sheets are maxed out,' according to Kenya's most prominent economic analyst, Aly-Khan Satchu. 'It's biblical.' Without restructuring, central banks will default, especially on their vast loans from China, which has built so much sub-standard, bribe-soaked belt and road infrastructure. The recent mistreatment of black people in Guangzhou has horrified Africans, who know where the virus came from.

Naturally, Africa's leaders have taken their begging bowls to the IMF and World Bank, asking for a mega-bailout. 'This time hopefully those institutions will be more intelligent about how the money is spent, rather than just shovelling it out to leaders who all round trip it offshore,' says Satchu.

Britain's approach to this is upsetting. Boris's government says 'all our resources' must focus on beating the virus. The FCO urges thousands of Brits to come home, fleeing the Commonwealth and foreign investments that until March were such a key part of post-Brexit policy. Masks and

ventilators are the language of diplomacy now. Until this month the British Army had its largest overseas training operation near my house in Kenya, but due to fears of civil unrest the mission has been mothballed. There are more jihadi terrorists in Africa than anywhere else these days, and al Qaeda and Isis affiliates have exploited recent disarray to escalate violence and seize territory. As the UK moves gazillions in private debt to the government's balance sheet and tax revenue disappears, one wonders how Department for International Development's aid budget of £14 billion can be justified. Since the same will go for other newly poor western donors, Africa will be left on its own.

Yet there is a silver lining. Some years ago, the Arab rulers of Sudan shut down the pipeline that traverses its territory towards the Red Sea, pumping crude oil production from its southern neighbour, South Sudan. When the embargo hit I predicted social collapse. Yet nothing changed, because South Sudan's rulers had always stolen all the oil money. The ministers' fat sons had to cut back on spare parts for their gold-plated Hummers, whereas most local people simply woke up in the morning to dig their fields and grow sorghum, manioc and vegetables.

In the same way now, people across Africa will struggle by on the land, relying on extended family relationships. Unless there is a dramatic reordering of the system, some states will fail, swept away in urban uprisings and fresh civil conflicts. Surely it's time to abolish or reform the edifice of international aid that has propped up this kleptocracy for decades - the racket run by UN agencies and leftist charities like Oxfam.

Covid-19 is the Chernobyl moment for bad regimes and badly managed aid programmes in Africa. Pestilence heralds a time of change more dramatic perhaps than any since the colonial scramble for Africa. It's the end of an epoch and an opportunity for ordinary Africans to build a better future for themselves.

Aidan Hartley is a writer, environmentalist and journalist born in Nairobi in 1965.



Photo - cdni0.trtworld.com



# Havoc on the global economy



**T**he coronavirus is wreaking havoc on the global economy with an estimated cost of up to \$8.8tn (£7.1tn).

Last week, Germany slipped into recession as more major economies face the impact of sustained lockdowns.

Japan didn't go into full national lockdown but issued a state of emergency in April severely affecting supply chains and businesses in the trade-reliant nation.

The 3.4% fall in growth domestic product (GDP) for the first three

months of 2020, follows a 6.4% decline during the last quarter of 2019, pushing Japan into a technical recession.

## Stimulus package announced

Consumers have been hit by the dual impact of the coronavirus and a sales tax hike to 10% from 8% in October.

While Japan has lifted the state of emergency in 39 out of its 47 prefectures, the economic outlook for this current quarter is equally gloomy.

Analysts polled by Reuters expect

the country's economy to shrink 22% during April to June, which would be its biggest decline on record.

The Japanese government has already announced a record \$1 trillion stimulus package, and the Bank of Japan expanded its stimulus measures for the second straight month in April.

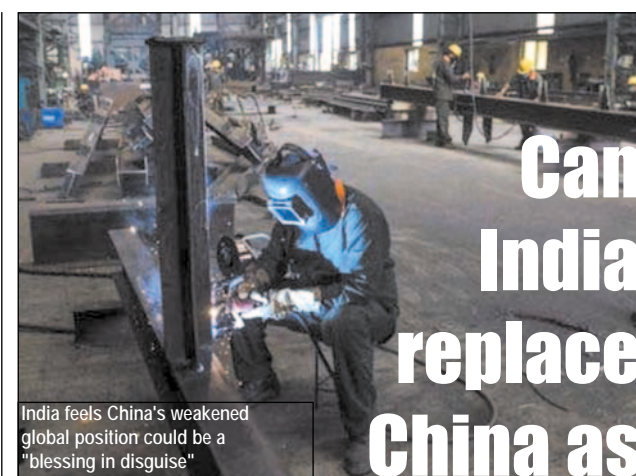
## Other economies see gloom

Last week, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) warned the global economy could face a hit of between \$5.8tn and \$8.8tn due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The US economy, the world's largest, suffered its sharpest decline in the first quarter of 2020 since the Great Depression, falling 4.8%.

China, the world's second largest economy, saw economic growth shrink 6.8% in the first three months of the year, its first quarterly contraction since records began.

Both of those economies haven't yet been confirmed as having fallen into a technical recession, which is defined as two consecutive quarters of negative growth, but most economists expect them to in the coming months.



## Can India replace China as world's factory?

India feels China's weakened global position could be a "blessing in disguise"

**W**ith Covid-19 infecting millions across the world, China is facing an unprecedented global backlash that could destabilise its reign as the world's factory of choice.

Its neighbour India has sensed an opportunity and is keen to make inroads to a space it hopes China will vacate sooner rather than later.

China's weakened global position is a "blessing in disguise" for India to attract more investment, transport minister Nitin Gadkari said in a recent interview. The northern state of Uttar Pradesh, which has a population the size of Brazil, is already forming an economic task force to attract firms keen to ditch China.

India is also readying a pool of land twice the size of Luxembourg to offer companies that want to move manufacturing out of China, and has reached out to 1000 American multinationals, Bloomberg reported.

"This outreach has been an ongoing process," Deepak Bagla, chief executive of Invest India, the government's national investment promotion agency told the BBC. "Covid will only accelerate the process of de-risking from China for many of these companies."

The US-India Business Council (USIBC), a powerful lobby group that works to enhance investment flows between India and the US, also said that India has significantly stepped up its pitch.

"We are seeing India prioritise efforts to attract supply chains, both at central and state government level," Nisha Biswal, President of USIBC and the former assistant secretary of state for south and central Asian affairs in the US Department of State, told the BBC.

"Companies that already have some manufacturing in India may be earlier movers in reducing output in plants in China and scaling up in production in India."

But things are still at an evaluation stage and decisions are

unlikely to be made in a hurry, she added.

In an environment where global balance sheets are fractured, relocating entire supply chains is easier said than done.

"Many of these companies are facing severe cash and capital constraints because of the pandemic, and will therefore be very cautious before making quick moves," independent economist Rupa Subramanya said.

According to Rahul Jacob, a long-time China watcher and former *Financial Times* bureau chief in Hong Kong, the Indian government putting together land banks is a step in the right direction, but large companies are unlikely to move their operations just because land is made available.

"Production lines and supply chains are far more sticky than most people seem to understand. It is very difficult to pull them apart overnight," he said.

"China offers integrated infrastructure like large ports and highways, top quality labour and sophisticated logistics, all of which are critical factors to meet strict deadlines that international companies operate on."

But with the US weighing punitive action against China, Japan paying its corporations to move out of the country and UK lawmakers coming under pressure to reconsider their decision to allow Chinese telecoms giant Huawei a role in building the country's new 5G data network, global anti-China sentiment is increasing.

The time is ripe, say experts, for India to undertake broad-based structural reforms and use these sweeping geopolitical shifts to modify its trading relationship with the world.

Compiled by  
Doojesh Ramlallah

## Why Africans should take part in vaccine trials

**T**here have been numerous scare stories about trials for a coronavirus vaccine being carried out on people in Africa.

However, scientists say that it is vital that Africans take part in these trials, arguing it could jeopardise efforts to find a vaccine that works worldwide - and not just for richer nations, reports Anne Mawathe of BBC.

In March, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, head of the World Health Organization (WHO), announced a global "solidarity trial" looking at finding promising treatments for Covid-19, the respiratory illness caused by coronavirus.

As there are no known cures yet, an effective vaccine would play a critical role in preventing and controlling the pandemic, the WHO says.

It would train people's immune systems to fight the virus stopping them becoming sick.

### How vaccines work:

- They help develop immunity by imitating infections
- This helps the body's defences to recognise them and learn how to



fight them

- If the body is then ever exposed for real, it already knows what to do
- A vaccine would normally take years, if not decades, to develop
- A Covid-19 vaccine would allow lockdowns to be lifted more safely and for social distancing to be relaxed

So far one vaccine trial has begun in South Africa - and one is one waiting approval in Kenya. Yet the issue has been plagued by controversy. And while vocal opposition to vaccinations of any kind is not new, the

current debate in Africa centres on a race row.

### 'Colonial mentality'

It was sparked by two French doctors discussing a trial in Europe and Australia looking into whether a tuberculosis vaccine would prove effective against coronavirus.

During the TV debate, they both agreed it should be tested in Africa too, one saying: "If I can be provocative, shouldn't we be doing this study in Africa, where there are no masks, no treatments, no resuscitation?"

The tone of the comments caused a backlash.

"It was a disgrace, appalling, to hear during the 21st Century, to hear from scientists that kind of remark," said Dr Tedros, who is Ethiopian.

Unsurprisingly prominent African personalities added their voice to the outrage, including former footballers Didier Drogba and Samuel Eto'o - both of whom have been victims of racial abuse on and off the pitch during their careers in Europe.

Such anger is well founded as it has been documented that racism and economic discrimination exist in healthcare. There is evidence that pharmaceutical companies have carried out trials in parts of Africa, with little regard to ethics or even simple respect for human life.



From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

4th Year - No 141

## MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 19th April, 1957

● *Dedicated to socialists: "Sleepest thou, Brutus, and Rome in bonds!" - Voltaire*

# Our Constitutional Prospects



Jay Narain Roy

**A**s there is an impression abroad that the acceptance of what is offered by way of Constitution will be the sowing of the dragon's teeth in Mauritius, I wish to discuss objectively some of the salient features largely for the sake of the young. I feel that it will be more lucid if I present it all in the Socratic form of catechism.

**Does the new Constitution foreshadow any advance?**

There are some progressive features. The most important is the immediate adult suffrage. In the normal course under our present Constitution, universal franchise would have come after fifteen years or so when the school-agers were to reach maturity. There are other features which to my mind seem to be of a hypothetical nature. Here are three of such: (a) the nominations will not be used to frustrate the results of the polls, (b) the Commission will primarily enquire into the system of single-member constituencies, and (c) the Ministry will be able to be responsible and will have collective responsibility. I call them hypothetical because I am not sure how much of it will be put down in black and white and how much will be left in the hands of the Governor to establish a precedent.

## What about the Nominees?

In a homogeneous society, nominations are resorted to in order to establish the balance of any election freak tending to whittle down certain important interests. But in a multi-racial and heterogeneous society, eliminated racial groups expect to be represented during the period of transition when the edges of racialism remains fairly whetted. But this rider is gradually relaxed when racial consciousness comes to harmonise into a national concept of life. At any rate this is the normal line of colonial evolution in the modern world. But Proportional Representation (P.R.) itself is said to be substituted for nomination and it is a viciously reactionary system if both are wedded and thrust down our throat as an over-dose.

P.R. and nomination cannot pair together. Between them nomination is any day preferable as it offers better guarantee of the representation of minorities or interests. As a result of the London discussions two points appear to have been made. It was said that in rare cases will the 12 nominated seats be filled. It was also said that it will not foil the people's election mandate and some special interests will be nominated. Cooperation is one of them. Are Trade Unions and Planters Associations also included? Or Township and District Boards?

## Compare the two systems the Commission will enquire into?

I have already expressed my preference of the single-member constituencies and it appears that the

British Labour Party considers it to be the best and the most democratic system. It is the only system that can build up the proper representation fully responsive to his rights and obligations. Those who believe in fooling and horse-play will surely oppose it. Here you cannot eternally go on blaming your pal and dastardly shirking your responsibilities or of only talking through your hat. Mr Ramsay Macdonald speaking in the House of Commons in 1917 said: "The three-member constituency for proportional representation crushes out minorities rather than secures them representation." In fact it will shift minority representation to those financially strong.

If we take the population of Mauritius to be 550,000, each of the 11 three-member constituencies will have a population of 55,000, or an adult suffrage voting strength of about 25,000. One-man quota will be 8333. While if we make 33 single-member constituencies, each will have a population of about 17,000 or an adult suffrage voting strength of over 8,000. In both cases the chances of minorities are just the same. But while the single-member system will foster national unity and party government, the list system will wreck them both and perpetuate communalism of the most rabid type. It must be fought tooth and nail and I am sure the country will reject it if it is sought to be foisted on us.

## What if we throw it out and boycott elections under it?

That's the only thing consistent with our national prestige. The alternative will be total suicide. The list system does not bind our delegates either. They said that they would prefer the single-member constituencies but should it be proved to the satisfaction of the country that it is totally unworkable, then they might recommend it to the country for its verdict but that neither the country nor the Labour Party is bound to accept it. It means that in the final analysis the decision will rest on the electorate. I consider the rider on the single-member constituency system to be rather unfortunate as I fear that they will become its self-strangulation. The feeling in Labour England is that sooner or later the single-member system will be established in Mauritius. It is quite likely that before the mounting public opinion in Mauritius will assert to scrap the List system, the Labour Party will have come to power in England and it may be before the Commission has completed its report. So that the worst cannot be so bad after all.

We should also from now agitate hotly against the List system to see that it is finally torpedoed. That system definitely would be the sowing of the dragon's teeth and we should give it no breathing space. I know that Mr Gaitskill's colonial advisers will not touch it. We must have a committee of competent people to study and put up the case for single-member constituencies before the Commission. The Ministers must show outstanding competence and courage to shape policies and to keep the people duly posted with things. We must also keep our friends in the House of Commons informed about our day-to-day difficulties and consult them on all our vital problems putting our unflinching faith in the fact that they will soon come to power and readjust things to the satisfaction of the people of this colony.

## Food for Thought

## When you are bored just think about a few things that don't make sense like

1. If poison expires, is it more poisonous or is it no longer poisonous?
2. Which letter is silent in the word "Scent," the S or the C?
3. Do twins ever realize that one of them is unplanned?
4. Why is the letter W, in English, called double U? Shouldn't it be called double V?
5. Maybe oxygen is slowly killing you and it just takes 75-100 years to fully work.
6. Every time you clean something, you just make something else dirty.
7. The word "swims" upside-down is still "swims"
8. 100 years ago everyone owned a horse and only the rich had cars. Today everyone has cars and only the rich own horses.
9. If you replace "W" with "T" in "What, Where and When", you get the answer to each of them.

## Some great confusions still unresolved...

1. At a movie theatre, which arm rest is yours?
2. If people evolve from monkeys, why are monkeys still around?
3. Why is there a 'D' in fridge, but not in refrigerator?
4. Who knew what time it was when the first clock was made?

## Vagaries in the English language

- Wonder why the word funeral starts with FUN?
- Why isn't a Fireman called a Water-man?
- How come Lipstick doesn't do what it says?
- If money doesn't grow on trees, how come Banks have Branches?
- If a Vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a Humanitarian eat?
- How do you get off a non-stop flight?
- Why are goods sent by ship called cargo and those sent by truck shipment?
- Why do we put cups in the dishwasher and the dishes in the cupboard?
- Why do doctors 'practise' medicine? Are they having practice at the cost of the patients?
- Why is it called 'Rush Hour' when traffic moves at its slowest then?
- How come Noses run and Feet smell?
- Why do they call it a TV 'set' when there is only one?
- What are you vacating when you go on a vacation?

## SOCIETE R. CHUNDUNSING & FILS RADHAYSING LTD



**Accredited Agent of:**  
**Swan Life:** Life, Pension and Loan  
**Swan General:** Motor, Fire, Household, Liability

**Office:** 24 Bourbon St, Fook House, Port Louis  
**Tel:** 212 3265 / 213 1049  
**Fax:** 213 1048  
**Mobile:** 525 83661, 525 61866, 57561388



societe.rchundunsing@intnet.mu



# MRA Works from Home

A promising experiment in change management



(FID) and the Research, Policy and Planning Department (RPP), under the guidance of their respective Directors, provided the necessary support to deal with the heavy workload.

They all teamed up with the Information System Department (ISD) to provide the logistics for the staff to work from home. ISD officers developed online systems, purchased software licenses and distributed approximately 100 laptops. The bandwidth of MRA servers was increased by 4 times and security features were enhanced to support the WfH initiative.

The Taxpayer Education and Communication Department (TECD) marked a regular presence in the media to inform the public about the process and the status of their online applications. The FAD provided helpdesk officers with softphone facilities at home which were primordial to attend to manifold queries. Some helpdesk officers shouldered the responsibility to credit bank accounts of beneficiaries of SEAS and GWAS promptly. Others have been keeping pace with salary processing, and revenue and expenditure monitoring.

The Human Resource and Training Department (HRTD) kept the whole organization apprised of all sanitary and relevant measures. They also used mail-to-everyone to coordinate the collection of the MRA's contribution to the COVID-19 Solidarity Fund which, as at date, amounts to Rs 850,000.

Moreover, the HRTD, along with the FAD, ensured that Customs Officers working on site were provided with the safety components.

They also designed a plan to guarantee that all necessary and reasonable measures and precautions be in place for resumption. Overall, all the other departments

at the MRA - namely the Internal Audit Division (IAuD), the Internal Affairs Division (IAfD) and the Legal Services Department (LSD) - engaged themselves in their diverse capacities to live the unprecedented WfH experience.

An unprecedented achievement concerned the Assessment Review Committee (ARC). For the first time in Mauritius, the stakeholders used video conferencing to hear appeal cases lodged by taxpayers. This venture was successfully launched on 13 May 2020.

To ensure that the MRA was responding effectively to all the challenges posed by the lockdown, Board Meetings and Management Meetings were held regularly from home through Skype and Zoom under the chairmanship of Mr Nayan Koomar Ballah and Mr Sudhamo Lal respectively. By now, MRA departments have held some 120 virtual meetings to thwart any interruption of business activity. Some online sessions even involved international stakeholders such as the African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF), the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Customs Organisation (WCO) and the European Union (EU). Besides, to better its services, inhouse training for 51 Trainee Audit Officers are still occurring daily on Zoom.

The holistic approach to the management of business at MRA heralded a wonderful experience lived from home. Referring to SEAS, Mr Sudhamo Lal labels its implementation as the biggest case study in change management at the MRA. He asserts that it took the organisation several years to reach universal e-filing of some 175,000 income tax returns submitted mainly by the upper middle and the high-income earners.

In fact, 10 days following the announcement of the scheme, the MRA received around 176,000 SEAS applications online mainly from low income earners, including many informal sector operators. Mr Lal believes that the success of the SEAS can be attributed to providing the right facilities at the right time.

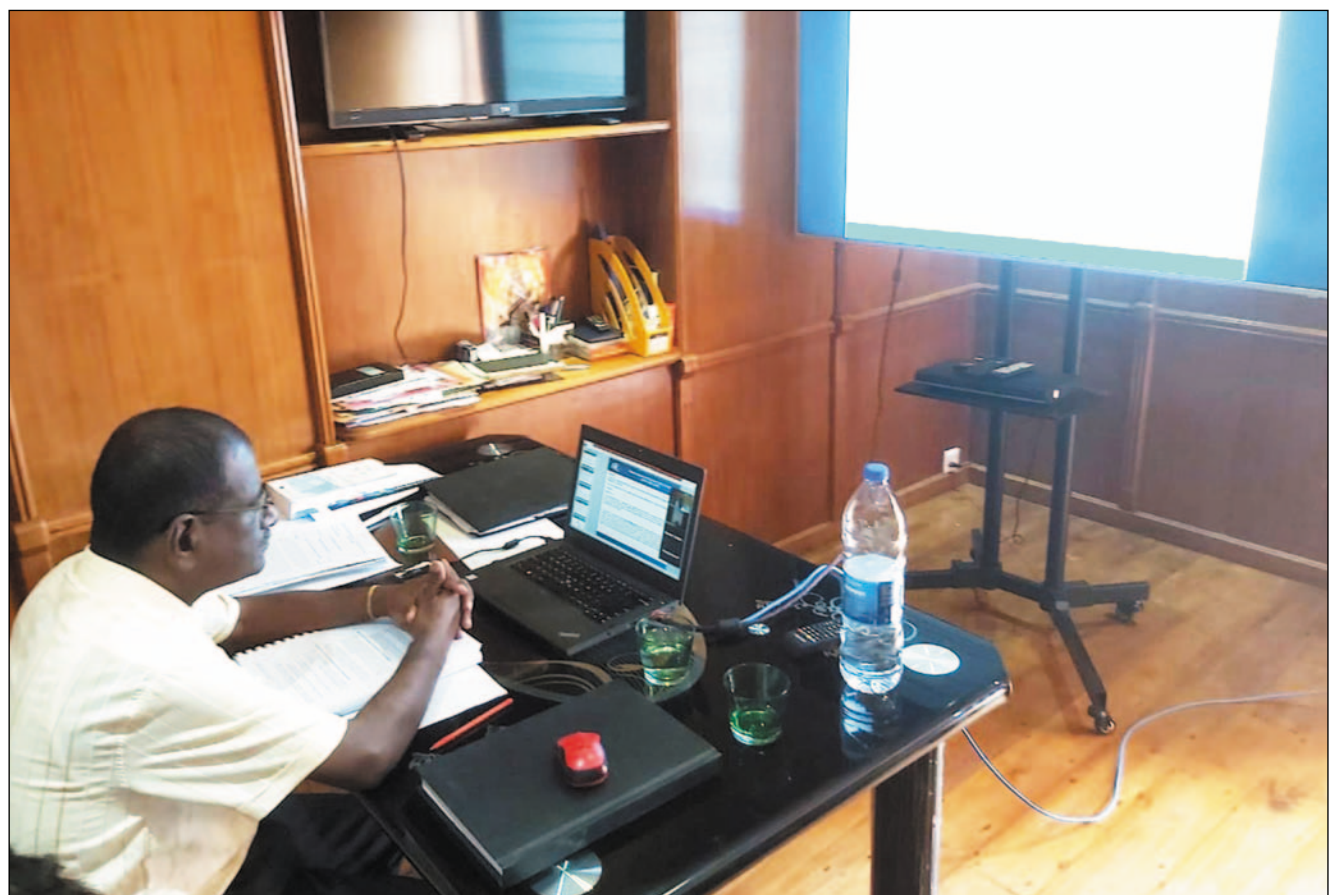
The impressive fact is that the MRA attained this success merely from home.

**W**ho could have imagined that the Work from Home (WfH) project, which was under experimentation at the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) six months preceding the advent of the lockdown, would become a reality?

Some 150 officers from various tax departments at the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) have worked from home during the lockdown period to ensure an effective implementation of the Government Wage Assistance Scheme (GWAS) and the Self-Employed Assistance Scheme (SEAS) put in place by the Government. At the level of MRA Customs, 150 Customs Officers were physically deployed daily in essential services at the seaport, the SSR International Airport, the Plaisance Air Transport Services (PATs) and the Surveillance & Enforcement Division. A further 180 others were accessing the Customs Management System (CMS) from home to clear consignments.

By the 13th of May, 2020, around Rs 4.5 Billion was transferred to the account of employers under GWAS to ensure timely payment of salaries to employees. By the same date, approximately Rs 1.3 Billion were credited to the account of 186,000 self-employed workers, eligible for SEAS, in the informal sector, with all arrangements being processed from home.

The Operational Services Department (OSD) spearheaded the implementation of SEAS and GWAS and interfaced directly with all businesses and self-employed workers having various issues with their applications. In this respect, the officers attended to around 43,700 phone calls received at the Helpdesk 207-6000 and responded to some 113,000 emails. Officers from the Medium and Small Taxpayers Department (MSTD), the Large Taxpayers Department (LTD), the Objection, Appeal and Dispute Resolution (OADR), the Finance and Administration Department (FAD), the Fiscal Investigation Department





Interview : Dr Avinaash Munohur

# «Les cartes sont actuellement entre les mains du Premier ministre.

## Les Mauriciens prendront bonne note de ce qu'il fera »



**Quels sont les enjeux actuels pour la démocratie à Maurice, et les défis qui nous attendent à la sortie de la crise sanitaire du Covid-19 ? Nous abordons aujourd'hui avec Dr Avinaash Munohur les questions liées à l'état d'exception, les conséquences de la crise sur la mondialisation, l'avenir du travail et la possibilité d'un New Deal économique, social et écologique pour Maurice.**

**Mauritius Times:** Lorsque l'on écoute le Gouvernement, il semble que nous sommes entrés dans la phase de reprise et que l'urgence sanitaire a clairement laissé la place à l'urgence économique. Quelle est votre lecture, dans les grandes lignes, des enjeux actuels ?

**Avinaash Munohur:** Oui, ce passage entre urgence sanitaire et urgence économique semble être acté. La vitesse avec laquelle le Gouvernement a poussé le 'Covid-19 Bill' et le 'Quarantine Bill' est en une preuve. Nous savons également que le Gouvernement présentera le budget le 4 juin prochain. Ils veulent donc aller vite.

La première chose qui peut être dite est que la gestion de la crise sanitaire, qui a été approximative au début, s'est renforcée au bout de quelques jours pour devenir efficace. Les autorités ont su s'adapter rapidement, quitte à procéder par du «trial and error» comme on dit, dans une situation qui était inédite. Les 'frontliners' ont également été remarquables dans leur engagement et leur dévotion.

Il était extrêmement important de mobiliser toute la population, ainsi que les institutions publiques et sécuritaires, dans un effort collectif, ce qui a permis de maîtriser la propagation du virus. Et cette mobilisation a porté ses fruits, ce qui est une excellente chose. Nous constatons que l'image de Maurice au niveau international s'est renforcée, ce qui est une chose essen-

tielle pour notre avenir socio-économique. Il faut maintenant tout faire pour préserver cet acquis et stopper une seconde vague si elle surgit.

La deuxième chose c'est que maintenant que l'urgence sanitaire est officiellement maîtrisée, il faut que nous nous tournions vers l'urgence socio-économique. Nous avons tous pris connaissance des prévisions du FMI pour l'économie mauricienne, et nous savons déjà que nos secteurs clés sont dans une situation extrêmement difficile.

La mise sous administration volontaire d'Air Mauritius, l'affaire des prêts impliquant plusieurs banques mauriciennes à un investisseur indien basé dans les Émirats arabes unis et le communiqué de la Commission européenne nous menaçant d'une inscription sur leur liste noire des centres financiers sont

les signes que nous sommes dans une situation très volatile et qu'un nombre important de nos acquis économiques et sociaux pourraient bien être liquidés dans la tsunami économique qui s'annonce.

**\* L'urgence de la situation justifie-t-elle, selon vous, les amendements controversés des deux textes de loi passés la semaine dernière ?**

Absolument pas ! Il était impératif pour le Gouvernement de présenter un texte de loi qui pose le cadre dans lequel les politiques publiques et les réformes pourront opérer afin que nous puissions naviguer dans les eaux troubles du monde de l'après-Covid.

Mais l'opacité et les implications de certaines mesures – notamment pour les libertés, pour nos réserves en devises et pour l'avenir du travail – ont de quoi inquiéter.

Le Premier ministre a tenté de rassurer certaines inquiétudes pendant les débats parlementaires, mais je dois vous avouer ne pas être satisfait de ses explications. Il n'a eu de cesse de faire appel au fait qu'il fallait lui faire confiance. Or, le manque de confiance dans le Gouvernement semblerait

prédominer...

**\* Voyez-vous dans ces amendements une tendance vers l'autoritarisme, comme le soutiennent certains observateurs, ou est-ce exagéré ?**

Il serait innocent de penser que non. Par exemple, il était tout à fait normal de moderniser la 'Quarantine Act', qui datait de 1954, mais rien n'empêchait le Gouvernement d'y introduire des 'safeguards' afin de rassurer la population. Ce sont des choses comme cet oubli qui font que la défiance augmente envers nos gouvernants.

En fait, ces textes de lois actent, selon moi, le fait que nous soyons dans ce que les

« Notre pays est l'un des plus ouverts sur les phénomènes de la mondialisation: c'est aujourd'hui un fait économique, culturel et social. Il suffit de voir à quel point les piliers de notre économie dépendent des flux de la mondialisation – flux en marchandises, en personnes et en capitaux – pour savoir que nous serons touchés de plein fouet par la crise mondiale... »

juristes nomment un état d'exception.

Un état d'exception signifie, en droit, une situation où le droit commun est suspendu. Il s'agit d'un outil législatif qui permet à des gouvernements d'agir dans des situations d'urgence comme des guerres, un état d'urgence sécuritaire ou, comme ce que nous vivons, un état d'urgence sanitaire. Elle implique une suspension temporaire de certains droits et de certaines libertés afin de permettre à l'appareil d'État de mobiliser toute son énergie vers l'objectif d'un retour à la normale.

Mais l'état d'exception est justement cela : une exception, c'est-à-dire qu'il relève de situations exceptionnelles, et qu'il ne peut pas devenir la règle en temps normal. L'état d'exception ne peut pas devenir permanent. Il y a là un immense danger.

Plusieurs études très sérieuses en sciences politiques ont démontré comment certains régimes démocratiques basculaient peu à peu vers des régimes autoritaires, et parfois même vers des régimes totalitaires de par l'utilisation d'instruments de l'état d'exception. Cette possibilité est inscrite dans la nature même de l'état d'exception, et c'est là qu'il y a une certaine ambiguïté dans certains des amendements proposés et dans la communication du Gouvernement.

Ce dernier aurait tout intérêt à dissiper le doute le plus rapidement possible sur ces

« Ce dernier aurait tout intérêt à dissiper le doute le plus rapidement possible sur ces inquiétudes, surtout que le recul socio-économique qui s'annonce nous fera entrer dans une phase d'instabilité sociale. Si nous rajoutons à cela une crise de confiance et une perception d'un abus gratuit de l'autorité, les choses pourraient rapidement devenir extrêmement volatiles... »

inquiétudes, surtout que le recul socio-économique qui s'annonce nous fera entrer dans une phase d'instabilité sociale. Si nous rajoutons à cela une crise de confiance et une perception d'un abus gratuit de l'autorité, les choses pourraient rapidement devenir extrêmement volatiles.

**\* Nous le savons depuis le début que nous ferons face à une situation exceptionnelle. «A situation exceptionnelle, solutions exceptionnelles», donc ?**

Absolument ! Mais il ne faut pas comprendre cette notion de la solution ou de la réponse exceptionnelle comme se limitant à l'application de l'état d'exception. Il y a là aussi un immense danger. La réponse à la

conjoncture présente doit relever des propositions à formuler en matière de politiques publiques, de sécurité civile, de protection sociale et de vision économique.

Je m'explique... Notre pays est l'un des plus ouverts sur les phénomènes de la mondialisation: c'est aujourd'hui un fait économique, culturel et social. Il suffit de voir à quel point les piliers de notre économie dépendent des flux de la mondialisation – flux en marchandises, en personnes et en capitaux – pour savoir que nous serons touchés de plein fouet par la crise mondiale.

D'ailleurs, qu'est-ce qui caractérise le Covid-19 par rapport aux autres pandémies ? C'est justement la vitesse avec laquelle cette dernière s'est propagée et a causé un arrêt de l'économie mondiale, ce qui témoigne du fait que nous sommes dans la première pandémie mondiale qui est directement liée à la vitesse de la circulation et des échanges de l'économie mondialisée.

Pour faire simple, le virus peut voyager de la Chine aux États-Unis en quelques heures, ce qui était impensable il y a encore quelques décennies. D'ailleurs, nous savons bien que nous sommes dans une ère de la mondialisation où la circulation des individus, des marchandises et des capitaux est devenue prioritaire sur la production elle-même.

Pour dire les choses autrement, un grand nombre de marchandises sont produites en Chine, en Inde et dans des pays qui ont assis leur économie sur la capacité de mettre leur vaste population au service de la production mondiale.

☞ Suite en page 9



# 'Toute crise met en place des processus de destruction créatrice.

Beaucoup de drames vont être vécus, et il faudra tenir bon'

• Suite de la page 8

Ces marchandises sont ensuite acheminées dans toutes les régions du monde où elles ne sont plus produites.

Il y a vraiment une division mondiale entre les pays qui produisent des marchandises, des objets de consommation, et des pays dont l'économie repose plus sur les services, le développement technologique et les savoirs. D'ailleurs, ces derniers caractérisent plus les pays post-industriels.

C'est en quelque sorte la situation de Maurice. Notre économie a depuis longtemps basculé de l'industrie sucrière vers les services. Le secteur financier, le secteur du tourisme ou encore celui de l'immobilier de luxe relève beaucoup plus d'une logique de services que de celle de l'industrialisation massive afin de produire des objets pour les exporter.

Nous sommes dans la catégorie des pays qui importent plus qu'ils n'exportent pour cette même raison. Nous avons fait des choix stratégiques qui nous ont positionnés comme un pays dispensateur de services haut de gamme, ce qui a permis l'essor du tourisme et des services financiers.

Mais ceci signifie également que nous serons directement touchés par le recul de la circulation. Ne nous faisons aucune illusion sur ce point : le Covid-19 va produire un immense recul de la circulation dans le monde puisque c'est exactement la circulation qui a été impliquée dans la propagation du virus.

D'ailleurs, il suffit de voir la manière dont l'industrie de l'aviation civile prévoit déjà un changement de modèle économique pour se rendre compte que ce sont les outils de la circulation qui seront les plus touchés. Par conséquent, notre dépendance à ces outils nous met dans une position de faiblesse inquiétante.

**\* Le Gouvernement fera-t-il le choix de l'ultralibéralisme au détriment du travail, ou bien allons-nous vers quelque chose d'autre, selon vous ?**

Oui, je crois que c'est l'avenir même de l'État social mauricien qui se joue ici. Est-ce que nous allons prendre la direction d'une liquidation des acquis sociaux au nom d'outils relevant de la logique de l'ultralibéralisme ?

Cette solution semble se dessiner dans les amendements aux lois du travail, par exemple. Même si le Premier ministre a annoncé qu'il s'agissait de mesures temporaires, nous voyons bien son raisonnement : il veut donner tous les outils possibles et imaginables aux entreprises afin qu'elles puissent se maintenir dans la crise.

D'ailleurs, il a affirmé aux représentants syndicaux que la relance de l'économie était sa grande priorité quand ces derniers l'ont rencontré. Nous ne savons pas encore



« Je ne veux absolument pas minimiser l'impact de l'explosion du chômage sur des dizaines de milliers de familles à Maurice. Beaucoup de drames vont être vécus, et il faudra tenir bon, il faudra faire preuve de solidarité et de patriotisme. Mais cette situation est aussi porteuse de potentiels. Si le Gouvernement sait saisir les opportunités qui se présentent à lui... »

si cela relève d'une stratégie plus large de réinvention, de réorientation et de modernisation de certains secteurs de l'activité. Il faudra attendre le budget pour en savoir plus.

Ou bien est-ce que les formes, les institutions et la nature même de l'État social mauricien peuvent évoluer vers un progrès socio-économique mieux partagé et plus égalitaire ? Je crois que nous sommes précisément dans cette question lorsque l'on parle du 'Covid-19 Bill'.

Et je répète ce que je vous ai dit : les signes ne sont pas bons pour des acquis qui ont été conquis au fur et à mesure de luttes coloniales et postcoloniales.

L'avenir du travail à Maurice me semble sombre à l'heure où nous parlons, alors qu'il pourrait être très optimiste.

**\* Mais il me semble qu'il y a comme une contradiction dans ce que vous dites. D'un côté, vous dites que les conséquences socio-économiques du Covid-19 sur notre pays seront désastreuses et, de l'autre, que l'avenir du travail pourrait être radieux...**

Toute crise met en place des processus de destruction créatrice. Ce terme, inventé par le grand économiste Joseph Schumpeter renvoie à une certaine logique de la construction économique où, d'un côté, il y a destruction – destruction du travail, du ca-

pital, des entreprises, etc., mais de l'autre côté, il y a possibilité de mobiliser ce qui a été détruit afin de les déployer vers d'autres objectifs socio-économiques.

Ce processus est d'une violence extrême, et je ne veux absolument pas minimiser l'impact de l'explosion du chômage sur des dizaines de milliers de familles à Maurice. Beaucoup de drames vont être vécus, et il faudra tenir bon, il faudra faire preuve de solidarité et de patriotisme.

Mais cette situation est aussi porteuse de potentiels. Si le Gouvernement sait saisir les opportunités qui se présentent à lui, et s'il prend les décisions qui s'imposent, alors je suis convaincu que nous pourrions émerger de cette crise avec une force retrouvée.

Mais il faudra que nous soyons solides, que nous sachions mobiliser nos savoirs et notre inventivité vers des objectifs précisément définis.

**\* Quels pourraient être ces objectifs ?**

L'avenir du travail est une question essentielle aujourd'hui. Le ministre des Finances a déjà annoncé que le chômage

grimperait rapidement pour atteindre le seuil des 100,000 personnes, ce qui est énorme. J'ai également vu que le groupe Swan était très inquiet du fait que ces chômeurs pourraient s'inscrire dans la durée, ce qui témoigne du fait que la Swan n'est pas très optimiste quant à la reprise de l'activité économique.

« Le développement d'un label « Safe Tourism », qui prend appui sur les résultats positifs obtenus dans le fait d'avoir rapidement pu contrôler la propagation du virus. Ils veulent maintenant jouer sur le fait que Maurice pourrait être une destination refuge, ou du moins sur le fait que nous ayons acquis des capacités de contrôle sanitaire qui nous permettent de renforcer la sécurité des touristes... »

Une telle explosion du chômage force le Gouvernement à une action pour amortir la casse en quelque sorte. Cette action se doit, selon moi, d'être double ; il faut mettre en place des mesures d'amortissement de la précarité et de la pauvreté, et des politiques qui permettront rapidement un redéploiement de cette force de travail vers de l'activité.

La première action implique une intervention efficace de l'État social. La deuxième action implique, elle, de repenser les secteurs de l'activité et de proposer un 'New Deal' économique, social et

écologique pour Maurice.

Je vous donne un exemple très simple. Il me semble que les hôteliers mauriciens ont vite compris que nous pouvions retourner la situation actuelle en notre faveur. Le développement d'un label « Safe Tourism », qui prend appui sur les résultats positifs obtenus dans le fait d'avoir rapidement pu contrôler la propagation du virus.

Ils veulent maintenant jouer sur le fait que Maurice pourrait être une destination refuge, ou du moins sur le fait que nous ayons acquis des capacités de contrôle sanitaire qui nous permettent de renforcer la sécurité des touristes qui viennent à Maurice – tout en renforçant la sécurité des Mauriciens, bien entendu.

Il faudrait maintenant que le Gouvernement puisse améliorer ses stratégies et ses protocoles de sécurité civile. L'investissement dans la formation de services urgentistes modernes, dans des dispositifs permettant aux ambulances, aux pompiers, à la police et aux 'frontliners' d'avoir une meilleure assise territoriale sont des choses essentielles. Il y a là tout un domaine de formation à des métiers qui n'existent pas encore tout à fait à Maurice qui peut s'ouvrir.

Mais il faut aller plus loin... Le secteur touristique doit également, selon moi, développer un label écologique. Les technologies dans le domaine des énergies renouvelables ont fait un bond énorme en avant ces dernières années, et nous avons deux ressources naturelles majeures qui vont dans ce sens : le soleil et l'océan.

La conversion énergétique des hôtels, l'application de principes liés à l'économie durable et circulaire – notamment à travers la valorisation des produits locaux, de la pêche artisanale éco-responsable, la conservation des côtes et des littoraux, la valorisation des métiers de bouche et de l'artisanat – sont des arguments extrêmement importants pour l'avenir du tourisme mauricien.

L'agriculture vivrière bio - avec le développement de l'aquaponie ou encore des fermes high-tech verticales -, le développement océanique durable, celui

des bioproduits pharmaceutiques et biochimiques, ou encore celui des minéraux marins sont des axes porteurs de nombreux emplois et ceux-ci pourraient devenir des secteurs majeurs de l'activité.

Bien, sûr, pour revenir à la question du travail, cette transformation économique requiert une réserve de travailleurs qui puissent être formés à ces nouveaux métiers. Hors, cette réserve de travailleurs, le Gouvernement a déjà annoncé qu'il allait l'avoir en affirmant que nous aurons bientôt 100,000 chômeurs à Maurice.

☞ Suite en page 16





# COMMUNIQUE

## COVID-19

### CUSTOMER SERVICE AT MRA HEAD OFFICE

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) informs the public that, in line with the Government's strategy for resumption of economic activities, some 30% of its officers have resumed duty at office on 15<sup>th</sup> of May, 2020, and the rest are working from home.

In order to minimise the risk of infection by the Corona Virus, visitors to the MRA Head Office, Eham Court, Port Louis, will be allowed access **ONLY** on appointment. However, to ensure that operations are running smoothly, the MRA requests taxpayers to abide by the following:

1. All tax returns should be submitted electronically, as provided in the Revenue Laws,
2. All payment of taxes to be effected electronically, preferably through the **Direct Debit** option. In order to benefit from the Direct Debit facility, taxpayers are requested to fill-in and forward to MRA a '**PLACH Direct Debit Mandate**' form which may be downloaded from **MRA's website**, and
3. Applicants having queries regarding the Self-Employed Assistance Scheme or the Government Wage Assistance Scheme, or any issue relating to tax obligations, may phone the MRA Helpdesk on **207 6000** or address a mail to **headoffice@mra.mu**

Arrangements have also been made for the hearing of appeal cases lodged at the Assessment Review Committee (ARC), through tele-conferencing.

**MRA relies on the usual cooperation and understanding of one and all to reduce physical contact with a view to combat the Covid-19 disease.**

MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY

16 May 2020

Eham Court, Cnr Mgr. Gonin & Sir Virgil Naz Streets, Port Louis, Mauritius

T: +230 207 6000 | F: +230 211 8099 | E: headoffice@mra.mu | W: www.mra.mu





# How do Buddhists handle coronavirus?

## The answer is not just meditation

Millions of Buddhists seeking protection and healing from the novel coronavirus are turning to traditional religious rituals.

Since the emergence of COVID-19, the Dalai Lama, other senior monks and Buddhist organizations in Asia and worldwide have emphasized that this pandemic calls for meditation, compassion, generosity and gratitude. Such messages reinforce a common view in the West of Buddhism as more philosophy than religion - a spiritual, perhaps, but secular practice associated with mindfulness, happiness and stress reduction.

But for many people around the world Buddhism is a religion - a belief system that includes strong faith in supernatural powers. As such, Buddhism has a large repertoire of healing rituals that go well beyond meditation.

Having studied the interplay between Buddhism and medicine as a historian and ethnographer for the past 25 years, I have been documenting the role these ritual practices play in the coronavirus pandemic.

### Talismans, prayer and ritual

Buddhism originated in India about two and a half millennia ago. Today, with well over a half-billion adherents across the world, it is a highly diverse tradition that has adapted to many cultural and social contexts.

There are three main schools of traditional Buddhism: Theravada, practiced in most of Southeast Asia; Mahayana, the form most prevalent in East Asia; and Vajrayana, commonly associated with Tibet and the Himalayan region.

In Buddhist-majority places, the official Covid-19 pandemic response includes conventional emergency health and sanitation measures like recommending face masks, hand-washing and stay-at-home orders. But within religious communities, Buddhist leaders also are using a range of ritual apotropaics - magical protection rites - to protect against disease.

In Thailand, for example, Theravada temples are handing out "yant," talismans bearing images of spirits, sacred syllables and Buddhist symbols. These blessed orange papers are a common ritual object among Buddhists in Southeast Asia who see crises such as epidemic illnesses as a sign that demonic forces are on the rise.

Theravada amulets and charms trace their magical powers to repel evil spirits not only to the Buddha but also to beneficial nature spirits, demigods, charismatic monks and wizards.

Now, these blessed objects are being specifically formulated with the intention of protecting people from contracting the coronavirus.



Buddhist monks in Thailand pray at Phleng temple amid the COVID-19 crisis, May 11, 2020.  
Chaiwat Subprasom/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images

Mahayana Buddhists use similar sacred objects, but they also pray to a whole pantheon of buddhas and bodhisattvas - another class of enlightened beings - for protection. In Japan, for example, Buddhist organizations have been conducting expulsion rites that call on Buddhist deities to help rid the land of the coronavirus.

Mahayana practitioners have faith that the blessings bestowed by these deities can be transmitted through statues or images. In a modern twist on this ancient belief, a priest affiliated with the Todaiji temple in Nara, Japan, in April tweeted a photo of the great Vairocana Buddha. He said the image would protect all who lay eyes upon it.

The third major form of Buddhism, Vajrayana, which developed in the medieval period and is widely influential in Tibet, incorporates many rituals of earlier traditions. For example, the Dalai Lama has urged practitioners in Tibet and China to chant mantras to the bodhisattva Tara, a female goddess associated with compassion and well-being, to gain her protection.

Vajrayana practitioners also advocate a unique form of visualization where the practitioner generates a vivid mental image of a deity and then interacts with them on the level of subtle energy. Responses to COVID-19 suggested by leading figures in traditional Tibetan medicine frequently involve this kind of visualization practice.

### Buddhist modernism

Since the height of the colonial period in the 19th century, "Buddhist modernists" have carefully constructed an international image of Buddhism as a philosophy or a psychology. In emphasizing its compatibility with empiricism and scientific objectivity they have ensured Buddhism's

place in the modern world and paved the way for its popularity outside of Asia.

Many of these secular-minded Buddhists have dismissed rituals and other aspects of traditional Buddhism as "hocus pocus" lurking on the fringes of the tradition.

Having documented the richness of the history and contemporary practice of Buddhist healing and protective rituals, however, I argue that these practices cannot be written off quite so easily.

In most living traditions of Buddhism, protective and healing rituals are taken seriously. They have sophisticated doctrinal justifications that often focus on the healing power of belief.

Increasingly, researchers are agreeing that faith in itself plays a role in promoting health. The anthropologist Daniel Moerman, for example, has identified what he calls the "meaning response." This model accounts for how cultural and social beliefs and practices lead to "real improvements in human well-being." Likewise, Harvard Medical School researcher Ted Kaptchuk has studied the neurobiological mechanisms for how rituals work to alleviate illnesses.

To date, there is no known way to prevent Covid-19 other than staying home to avoid contagion, and no miracle cure. But for millions worldwide, Buddhist talismans, prayers and protective rituals offer a meaningful way to confront the anxieties of the global coronavirus pandemic, providing comfort and relief.

And in a difficult time when both are in short supply, that's nothing to discredit.

Pierce Salguero

Associate Professor of Asian History & Religious Studies,  
Pennsylvania State University

### Inspiration

## How to Live & Die

By Late Khushwant Singh

*I've often thought about what it is that makes people happy -- what one has to do in order to achieve happiness.*

**F**irst and foremost is good health. If you do not enjoy good health, you can never be happy. Any ailment, however trivial, will deduct something from your happiness.

**Second**, a healthy bank balance. It need not run into millions, but it should be enough to provide for comforts, and there should be something to spare for recreation -- eating out, going to the movies, travel and holidays in the hills or by the sea. Shortage of money can be demoralising. Living on credit or borrowing is demeaning and lowers one in one's own eyes.

**Third**, your own home. Rented places can never give you the comfort or security of a home that is yours for keeps. If it has garden space, all the better. Plant your own trees and flowers, see them grow and blossom, and cultivate a sense of kinship with them.

**Fourth**, an understanding companion, be it your spouse or a girlfriend or a best friend. If you have too many misunderstandings, it robs you of your peace of mind. It is better to accept the differences than to be quarrelling all the time.

**Fifth**, stop envying those who have done better than you in life -- risen higher, made more money, or earned more fame. Envy can be corroding; avoid comparing yourself with others.

**Sixth**, do not allow people to descend on you for gossip. By the time you get rid of them, you will feel exhausted and poisoned by their gossip-mongering.

**Seventh**, cultivate a hobby or two that will fulfil you -- gardening, reading, writing, painting, playing or listening to music. Going to clubs or parties to get free drinks, or to meet celebrities, is a criminal waste of time. It's important to concentrate on something that keeps you occupied meaningfully.

**Eighth**, every morning and evening devote 20 minutes to meditation or introspection. In the mornings, 10 minutes should be spent in keeping the mind absolutely still, and five minutes listing the things you have to do that day. In the evenings, five minutes should be set aside to keep the mind still and 10 to go over the tasks you had intended to do.

**Ninth**, don't lose your temper. Try not to be short-tempered, or vengeful. Even when a friend has been rude, just move on.

Above all, when the time comes to go, one should go like a person without any regret or grievance against anyone.



In A Light Vein

# Lockdown - Some sage advice

This lockdown is getting old and frankly I've had enough.

I've discussed the matter over a cup of coffee with the kitchen sink , and we both agree that the experience is draining.

I didn't mention anything to the washing machine as she puts wrong spin on everything .

Same with the fridge. He only gives cold comfort.

I asked the lamp but she couldn't shed any light on the new situation.

The vacuum cleaner was rather rude and told me to suck it up.

The threshold was no better, it suggested I get over it.

The carpet advised me to sweep my feelings under the rug.

But the fan was more upbeat and thought that the crisis would soon blow over.

The toilet looked a bit flushed and didn't offer an opinion.

The wall didn't say a word either, just gave me a blank stare.

The door knob was more forthcoming - told me to get a firm grip on the situation and move on.

The front door declared I was unhinged and so the curtains told me to... you guessed it right - pull myself together.

Then the chair told me to table it, and the table remarked, I didn't have a leg to stand on.

When I told the table to break a leg, the mirror said that my comments reflected poorly on my thinking .

However, in the end, the iron straightened things out.

She said everything will be fine. No situation is too pressing for long anyways!!!

Facebook Post by Shivani Raval

# Women never listen properly

A man was driving a car...

A fat lady on a scooty overtook him.

Man shouted: "Hey Buffalo!"

Lady turned back and shouted: "You donkey, idiot, stupid monkey!"

Suddenly she had an accident; she was hit by a buffalo crossing the road.

**Moral:** Ladies never understand what a man wants to say.

\*\*\*

Wife: I lost my keys again!

Husband: It's in your jeans.

Wife: Don't drag my family into this...

\*\*\*

Husband's message (by cellphone): 'Honey, I got hit by a car outside office. Teena brought me to the hospital. They have been making tests and taking X-rays. The blow to my head, though very strong, will not have any serious or lasting injury. Bu I have three broken ribs, a broken arm, a compound fracture in the left leg, and they may have to amputate the right foot.

Wife's response: 'Who is Teena?'

\*\*\*

**Psychiatrist:** "Well, what's your problem?"

**Patient:** "I prefer brown shoes to black shoes."

**Psychiatrist:** "There's nothing wrong with that; many people prefer brown to black shoes. I do myself."

**Patient:** "Really! And how do you like yours - fried or boiled?"

\*\*\*

Prem went to Shanghai. He fell ill so he contacted the hotel manager and asked him if he could recommend the best doctor in the city. The manager said that according to him Dr Wing was the best.

When Prem wanted more information, the manager explained: "You see once I got wet in the rain, I started sneezing so I went to see Dr Su. After his treatment I got a cough, then I was rushed to Dr Cu whose tablets did not help either and the cough turned into severe fever. Then I

was sent to Dr Fok and it became acute hyperthermia. After that I was sent to Dr How, his syrup led me to pneumonia.

At last my family took me to Dr Wing. We were told that he was out of town so my life was saved."

\*\*\*

Patient: "Doctor, I keep thinking I'm a bell."

Doctor: "Well, go home and if the feeling persists, give me a ring."

\*\*\*

Wife sent a message to her husband: "Don't forget to buy the night dress I liked, and Savita says hi to you."

Husband: "Who is Savita?"

Wife: "Nobody... I was just making sure that you read my message."

\*\*\*

# The Concept of Politics!

A little boy goes to his Dad and asks, "What is politics?"

Dad says, "Well son, let me try to explain it this way: I am the head of the family, so call me The President. Your mother is the administrator of the money, so we call her The Government. We are here to take care of your needs, so we will call you The People. The Nanny, we will consider her The Working Class. And your Baby Brother, we will call him The Future.

"Now think about that and see if it makes sense."

So the little boy goes off to bed thinking about what Dad had said. Later that night, he hears his baby brother crying, so he gets up to check on him. He finds that the baby has severely soiled his diaper; so the little boy goes to his parent's room and finds his mother sound asleep.

Not wanting to wake her, he goes to the nanny's room. Finding the door locked, he peeps in the keyhole and sees his father in bed with the nanny. He gives up and goes back to bed.

The next morning, the little boy says to his father, "Dad, I think I understand the concept of politics now."

The father says, "Great son! Tell me in your own words what you think politics is all about."

The little boy replies, "**The President** is screwing **The Working Class** while **The Government** is sound asleep. **The People** are being ignored and **The Future** is in deep shit.





# Mimi director Laxman Utekar says film yet to be completed, makers planning to push the release

*Mimi marks the second collaboration of the trio of Kriti Sanon, actor Pankaj Tripathi and the director Laxman Utekar, after last year's Luka Chuppi*



Cinematographer-turned-director Laxman Utekar says while his upcoming film *Mimi* is almost complete, the team is yet to shoot one song and finish the post-production work, which may result in some delay in release of the movie.

The film, featuring Kriti Sanon, is inspired by Samruddhi Porey-directed movie *Mala Aai Vhaaychya*, which won the National Award for best feature film in Marathi in 2011.

"We have one introductory song left to be shot with Kriti. We have actors from the UK as part of the song and we won't be able to shoot the song till the time the international flights are inactive," Utekar told

PTI.

The director said considering the scale of the song, it is not possible to film an at-home version.

"We have shot almost the entire film with the actors from the UK, only a song is left. They are there in the whole film. We haven't thought of any alternative. We will wait and see what happens. We can't do it at home. It is a big song with several dancers. Once the lockdown is lifted we will follow preventive measures. We will do whatever is necessary for everyone's safety. But we won't compromise on the quality of our remaining work," he said.

Utekar added that no work is happening on the film currently as all the studios are shut.

Produced by Dinesh Vijan, *Mimi* was scheduled to hit the theatres in July, but the director said they will now have to postpone the release.

We don't have a clear picture about when we will be able to shoot the song, when the post-production will begin. The release date will be pushed for sure.

When asked if the team is thinking of a digital release, Utekar said, No, not yet because the film is not ready.

*Mimi* marks the second collaboration of the trio of Kriti, actor Pankaj Tripathi and the director, after last year's *Luka Chuppi*.

The upcoming film also features actors Manoj Pahwa, Supriya Pathak, and Sai Tamhankar.

## Charlize Theron and Tom Hardy finally spill the beans about their infamous fight on 'Mad Max: Fury Road' sets

Charlize Theron and Tom Hardy have opened up about their fight while shooting action classic *'Mad Max: Fury Road'*, which they say was partly fuelled by the challenging production in Namibian desert and their inability to understand director George Miller's vision. The cast and crew revealed details about what went on behind-the-scenes of the movie and spilled the beans about their time on the set and why they felt that they were functioning like their characters in the post-apocalyptic thriller where everything was about "survival."

In a recent interview with the New York Times, Charlize said, "In retrospect, I didn't have enough empathy to really, truly understand what he must have felt like to step into Mel Gibson's shoes. That is frightening! And I think because of my own fear, we were putting up walls to protect ourselves instead of saying to each other, 'This is scary for you, and it's scary for me, too. Let's be nice to each other.' In a weird way, we were functioning like our characters: Everything was about survival."

The actor said the entire production was driven by fear.

"I was incredibly scared, because I'd never done anything like it. I think the hardest thing between me and George is that he had the movie in his head and I was so desperate to understand it," she added.

Hardy told The Times that he agreed with Theron and the pressure on both of them was "overwhelming at times."

"I think in hindsight, I was in over my head in many ways. The pressure on both of us was overwhelming at times. What she needed was a better, perhaps more experienced, partner in me. That's something that can't be faked. I'd like to think that now that I'm older and uglier, I could rise to that occasion," he said.

Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, who starred in *'Fury Road'* as one of Immortan Joe's wives, said Theron and Hardy's

personalities clashed on set because they have "completely different approaches to their craft."

Zoe Kravitz, however, said seeing Hardy clash with the director was a "bummer".

She said she observed both actors having moments of anger, but that it was Hardy who "really took it out on George the most, and that was a bummer to see."

"In some ways, you also can't blame him, because a lot was being asked of these actors and there were a lot of unanswered questions," she added.

Like actors, the production and the tension on the set took a toll on Miller.

*'Fury Road'* editor Margaret Sixel, who is also Miller's wife, said, "I was worried about George. You wouldn't



even know the half of it, let me tell you. You should have seen him by the end of the shoot, he was so thin."

Miller, who pulled the movie out from a development hell of over a decade while dealing with the challenges of shooting the film in a rough terrain without the help of a green screen while also dealing with the studio politics, admitted that he should have probably given more attention to the process of the actors.

Hardy had famously apologised to the director during a press conference at Cannes where the film premiered to glowing reviews in 2015.



## New TV Serial

**'Kahan Hum Kahan Tum': Based on Madhuri Dixit-Sriram Nene's love story?**

If you're a Madhuri Dixit fan, then it's time you get hooked to Dipika Kakar-Karan V Grover's upcoming show, *Kahan Hum Kahan Tum*. Reports suggest that the show is inspired by Mr and Mrs Nene's love story, reports Neeki Singh of spotboye.com.

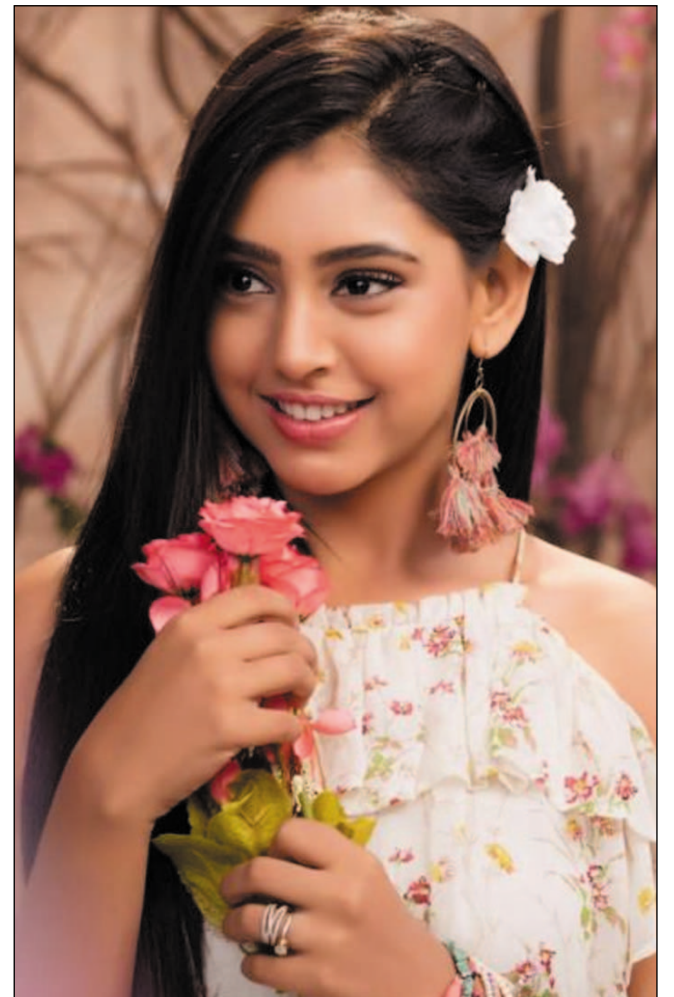
*Kahan Hum Kahan Tum* is a story of two characters from different worlds, who have two different professions with extremely busy schedules. While one is an actress, the other is a surgeon. Does this ring a bell? Well, a source close to the production revealed that this on-screen love story is based on the popular couple Madhuri Dixit and her husband, Sriram Nene's courtship period where the actress would be busy with her acting schedule and Nene would be away as he is a surgeon along with the struggles it took to keep the romance going.

With two high profile respective careers, Madhuri Dixit

had to earlier give up her successful career and settle in USA for her husband after a long period of courtship. Now, with the actresses' second innings in the industry, Sriram has put his surgeon career in the States to rest and settled in India for his wife. The show will underline how they dealt with the busy lifestyles yet made time for courtship which will be essayed by Dipika and Karan onscreen.

The first trailer of the show featured Saif Ali Khan who introduced the onscreen pair leaving the audience with a question - while their hearts are one, will they manage to find themselves, hinting at the two demanding careers and the compromise it entails?

With a fresh and contemporary love saga inspired from Madhuri's story, the never-seen-before love story is set to air on Star Plus.

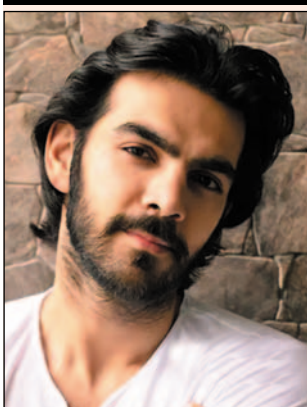
**Exclusive: Niti Taylor reveals she was intimidated by Nakuul Mehta on the sets of *Ishqbaaz*, says 'I would forget my lines'**

Television actress Niti Taylor (25) is one of the youngest actresses who has immense fan following on social media. She is described as a happy-go-lucky girl, who always carries her million-dollar smile along. During this lockdown too, Niti is keeping the positivity alive and spreading it amongst her fans and around. Niti Taylor did a live interaction with ETimes TV exclusively and spoke about her many experiences in professional life. The actress spoke about her 'special' show *Ishqbaaz* where she was paired opposite Nakuul Mehta as Mannat. Speaking about her experience on working on this show, Niti affirmed, "*Ishqbaaz* just came and things just went on happening. It was magical and the biggest sets I ever worked with. Everything was so professional and I have never been treated so well to be honest. Everyone was treated with so much respect, I just loved it."

The actress said that everyone on the set was so good with their craft be it Nakuul Mehta or anybody that she would feel very conscious. Speaking about it, she said, "It took me two months to realise that I am a part of the show because I used to forget lines and be like 'Oh My God'. *'Main toh nervous ho jaati thi set par jaakar.'* (I would feel very nervous seeing everyone). I used to rehearse the lines and then look at them and forget everything. And, I would be like *'Humse Na Ho Payega'*."

"I felt very scared and I didn't want to be bad because everyone was so good. I used to feel so new in the field of acting. It was a very special show for me," concluded the Kaisi Yeh Yaariaan actress.

Gayatri Nirmal

**Karan V Grover talks about '*Kahaan Hum Kahaan Tum*' and with Dipika Kakar & more****"I will go with anything that comes my way and excites me"**

Dipika Kakar and Karan V Grover starrer *Kahaan Hum Kahaan Tum* was launched amidst fanfare and ever since the show seems to have struck a chord with the audience. Karan aka Rohit Sippy spoke about all things

KHKT in an exclusive chat with Sanchita Jhunjhunwala of Pinkvilla.

Ask him if the show was always going to be a finite series, he says, "No, it was never going to be a finite series, it ended rather abruptly. Personally, I feel it needed to go on for longer." Sharing his vision for the show, he adds, "Of course, Ronakshi would get back and plan a family. In fact, we decided we will speak about an actress' life after she has a family and also how having a doctor around is both a boon and a bane. We had thought a lot about it."

The leading duo of Dipika and Karan aka Ronakshi has received a lot of love and, talking about it, he says, "Luckily, we clicked with the viewers right from episode 1

and we have got love and encouragement throughout. We never had an acceptance problem and even now, everyone talks about the pair, something that happens when there is equal involvement." About working with Dipika, he says, "She is very considerate and involved, something I've always said. She has been great to work with."

On things he will miss about the show, he says, "(laughs) I will miss shooting in Film City Goregaon, the regular meetings with Sandeep Sikand. He is one of the finest content creators in India and I have sat with him for hours on the sets and is one of the most involved makers. Over time, we have developed a friendship as well and I am thankful to him for giving me Rohit Sippy. I will obviously miss the entire team, they are a mad bunch and there is not a single day on the sets where I was bored. The producers of the show are a gem, words fall short to appreciate them."

When quizzed about his plans ahead, he says, "I have no plan because I love to go with what comes and I like being surprised. I will go with anything that comes my way and excites me. I will peacefully go with the flow because as an actor, I never believe in planning ahead."



## CINE 12

Mardi 19 mai - 21.15

## About Last Night

Avec: Kevin Hart, Michael Ealy, Regina Hall



Mardi 19 mai - 14.50

Stars: Shahid Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor, Fardeen Khan, Kim Sharma



## CINE 12

Mercredi 20 mai - 21.15

## Hannah's Law

Avec: Sara Canning, John Pyper-Ferguson, Greyston Holt



mardi 19 mai

## MBC 1

06.30 Local: Encounter  
07.00 Dessin Anime  
10.26 Mag: Origami  
10.27 Mag: Origami  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.25 Local: Autour Des Valeurs  
12.35 Doc: Comme Un Poisson...  
13.30 Local: Palette  
14.00 Local: Le Chef  
14.30 D. Anime: Raju The Rickshaw  
14.44 D. Anime: Astrology  
15.04 D. Anime: Kuu Kuu Harajuku  
16.28 D. Anime: Polly Pocket  
17.00 Live: Live Press Conference  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Jamai Raja  
18.55 Local: Yaadein  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.00 Local: Press Conference  
21.03 Local: Les Petits Curieux  
22.27 Serial: Chicago Police...

## MBC 2

04.30 Aastha TV  
07.00 DDI Live  
10.00 Serial: Tumhaari Natasha  
11.19 Serial: MOL  
12.04 Film:  
15.00 Live: Samachar  
15.20 Honaar Soon Mee Hya...  
15.43 Mooga Manasulu  
16.03 Apoorva Raagangal  
16.30 Serial: Ki Jaana Mein Kaun  
16.53 Serial: Gangaa  
18.00 Serial: Dr. Quin  
18.30 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett  
19.00 Zournal Kreol  
19.30 DDI Magazine  
19.50 Local: Yaadein  
20.20 Serial: Mah-E-Tamaam  
21.25 Local: Anjuman  
21.26 Local: Urdu Programme  
22.37 DDI Live

## MBC 3

06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa  
06.58 Mag: World Stories  
07.14 Mag: Voa Connect  
07.42 Doc: A Question Of Science  
07.32 Mag: In Good Shape  
08.41 World Stamps  
09.00 Live Educational Program...  
17.25 Mag: Global 3000  
17.54 Doc: Japon 2019  
18.00 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto  
18.30 Mag: Urban Gardens  
18.35 Talk On Ramadan 2020  
19.00 Mag: Check In  
19.26 Doc: A Question Of Science  
19.32 Mag: Made In Germany  
20.00 Local: Tamil Programme  
20.32 Film: Un Samayal Arayil  
22.32 Mag: Close Up  
23.00 Doc: Battle Of Social Net...  
23.43 Doc: Displaced: Tomatoes  
00.25 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto...

## Cine 12

01.33 Tele: Esmeraldas  
02.57 Serial: 12 Monkeys  
03.43 Serial: Sherlock  
05.09 Tele: Amanda  
06.47 Film: Sept Ans Au Tibet  
09.00 Serial: The Good Fight  
09.51 Tele: Au Nom De L'Amour  
10.11 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett  
10.35 Serial: 12 Monkeys  
11.25 Tele: Dulce Amor  
12.00 Serial: Sherlock  
13.30 Tele: Amanda  
14.45 Film: Sept Ans Au Tibet  
16.40 Serial: Scorpion  
17.20 Serial: Dynasty  
18.07 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour  
18.31 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett  
19.10 Tele: Dulce Amor  
20.05 Tele: Totalment Diva  
20.30 Serial: Dynasty  
21.15 Film: About Last Night

## Bollywood TV

09.16 Film: Aarabhna  
11.55 / 19.54 - Ek Deewana Tha  
12.24 / 20.11 -  
Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala  
12.40 / 20.32 Radha Krishna  
13.03 / 21.04 Bin Kuch Kahe  
13.25 / 21.09 - Zindagi Ki Mehek  
13.47 / 21.46 -  
Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
14.09 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan  
14.30 / 22.25 - Ishqbaaz  
14.50 Film: Fida  
Stars: Shahid Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor, Fardeen Khan, Kim Sharma  
17.36 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Kumkum Bhagya  
18.51 Piya Albela  
19.13 Mere Angne Mein  
19.36 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai

mercredi 20 mai

07.00 Dessin Anime  
10.24 Mag: Origami  
10.45 Mag: Zoboomafoo  
11.15 Local: Rodrigues  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.25 Local: Autour Des Valeurs  
13.35 Local: Les Petits Curieux  
14.30 D. Anime: Raju The Rickshaw  
14.44 D. Anime: Astrology  
14.55 D. Anime: Zou  
15.31 D. Anime: Astrology  
15.55 D. Anime: Little People  
17.00 Live Press Conference  
17.35 Local: Kahani Patharon Ki  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.00 Local: Press Conference  
20.35 Doc: Big Story  
21.30 Serial: The Enemy Within  
22.20 Serial: Chicago Police Department

04.30 Aastha TV  
07.00 Film:  
11.40 Good Morning Shanghai  
12.00 Nanda Saukhyia Bhare  
12.30 Serial: Mooga Manasulu  
12.48 Serial: Brundavanam  
13.10 Serial: Annakodiyum Ainthu  
13.35 Serial: Anu Pallavi  
14.05 Entertainment: Dil Hai Hindu  
15.00 Live: Samachar  
15.20 Film: Imtihaan  
18.00 Mag: Check In  
18.30 Mag: Eco@Africa  
19.00 Zournal Kreol  
19.30 DDI Magazine  
20.05 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha  
20.21 Serial: Bitti Business Wali  
21.00 Film:  
23.15 DDI Live

06.00 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto  
07.00 Mag: Check In  
07.29 Mag: Made In Germany  
07.57 Doc: Horizon S  
08.45 Doc: World Stamps  
09.01 Live Educational Program...  
17.25 Mag: Close Up  
17.54 Mag: Set One  
18.04 Mag: Motorweek  
18.35 Local: Talk On Ramadan  
19.00 Doc: Arts.21  
19.26 Doc: A Question Of Science  
19.30 Doc: Garden Party  
20.25 Film: Lagna Mubarak  
22.24 The Volcano That Changed  
23.07 Mag: Motorweek  
23.33 Mag: Urban Gardens  
23.37 Doc: Olivia's Garden  
00.03 Mag: Arts.21  
00.29 Doc: A Question Of Science  
00.36 Doc: Garden Party  
01.04 Doc: Blood Trade

01.06 Tele: Peau Sauvage  
01.36 Film: About Last Night  
03.12 Serial: 12 Monkeys  
03.53 Film: Hailey Dean Mysteries  
05.56 Serial: Dynasty  
09.00 Serial: The Good Fight  
09.48 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour  
10.12 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett  
10.40 Serial: 12 Monkeys  
12.05 Film: Hailey Dean Mysteries  
13.30 Tele: Amanda  
14.45 Film: Away From Her  
16.40 Serial: Scorpion  
17.23 Serial: Dynasty  
18.07 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour  
18.31 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett  
20.05 Tele: Totalment Diva  
20.30 When Calls The Heart  
21.15 Film: Hannah's Law  
Acteurs: Sara Canning, John Pyper-Ferguson, Greyston Holt  
22.45 Tele: Amanda

09.20 Film: Masoom  
12.05 / 19.54 - Ek Deewana Tha  
12.22 / 20.11 -  
Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala  
12.43 / 20.32 Radha Krishna  
13.05 / 21.04 Bin Kuch Kahe  
13.27 / 21.09 - Zindagi Ki Mehek  
13.39 / 21.46 -  
Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
14.09 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan  
14.29 / 22.25 - Ishqbaaz  
15.16 Film: Simran  
Stars: Kargana Ranaut, Sohumi Shah, Hiten Kumar  
17.30 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Kumkum Bhagya  
18.51 Piya Albela  
19.13 Mere Angne Mein  
19.36 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai

jeudi 21 mai

07.00 Dessin Anime  
10.24 Mag: Origami  
10.45 Mag: Zoboomafoo  
11.30 Local: Mangeons Veg  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.25 Local: Autour Des Valeurs  
13.30 Doc: Big Story  
14.30 D. Anime: Raju The Rickshaw  
14.43 D. Anime: Astrology  
14.55 D. Anime: Zou  
15.32 D. Anime: La Famille Passiflore  
16.30 D. Anime: Johnny Test  
17.30 Local: Prakriti Ki God Mein  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja  
19.30 Le Journal  
20.05 Local: Press Conference  
20.35 Film: Happy Phir Bhag...  
22.45 Serial: Chicago Police Depar  
23.30 Le Journal

04.30 Aastha TV  
07.00 Film: Paapi  
10.00 Local: Shree Durga...  
11.00 Serial: Oru Kai Osai  
12.00 Film:  
15.00 Samachar  
15.20 Serial: Mooga Manasulu  
15.40 Serial: Eka Lagnachi Teesri  
16.06 Apoorva Raagangal  
16.28 Local: Yaadein  
16.54 Serial: Mahakali  
18.00 Lettre Pastorale Careme  
18.30 Local: Tipa Tipa Nu Avance  
19.00 Zournal Kreol  
19.30 DDI Magazine  
20.00 Serial: Maharakshak  
20.42 Serial: Naagin  
21.28 Serial: CID  
22.15 Serial: Piya Rangrezz

06.00 Mag: Motorweek  
06.30 Doc: Olivia's Garden  
07.25 Doc: A Question Of Science  
07.29 Doc: Garden Party  
07.57 Doc: Blood Trade  
08.39 Doc: World Stamps  
08.45 Mag: Shift  
09.00 Live Educational Program...  
16.35 Doc: Visite Guidee  
17.14 Mag: Focus On Europe  
17.36 Mag: Shift  
18.00 Mag: Eco India  
18.27 Mag: Urban Gardens  
18.35 Talk On Ramadan 2020  
19.00 Mag: Border Crossing  
19.30 Doc: A Question Of Science  
19.37 Mag: Tomorrow Today  
20.00 Film: Dragoner 3  
21.24 Mag: Strictly Street  
21.48 Doc: Marvel  
22.30 Mag: Eco India

03.37 Film: Boone  
05.03 Tele: Amanda  
06.00 Serial: When Calls The Heart  
06.45 Film: The Villain  
09.00 Serial: The Good Fight  
09.48 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour  
10.12 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett  
10.37 Serial: 12 Monkeys  
11.25 Tele: Dulce Amor  
12.04 Film: Boone  
13.30 Tele: Amanda  
14.45 Film: The Villain  
16.40 Serial: Scorpion  
17.21 Serial: When Calls The Heart  
18.12 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour  
18.31 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett  
19.00 Tele: Dulce Amor  
20.06 Tele: Totalment Diva  
20.31 Serial: When Calls The Heart  
21.15 Film: Tower Block  
22.45 Tele: Amanda

09.20 Film: Chirag  
12.05 / 19.54 - Ek Deewana Tha  
12.24 / 20.11 -  
Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala  
12.44 / 20.32 Radha Krishna  
13.06 / 21.04 Bin Kuch Kahe  
13.28 / 21.09 -  
Zindagi Ki Mehek  
13.50 / 21.46 -  
Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
14.12 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan  
14.33 / 22.25 - Ishqbaaz  
14.50 Film: Dhadak  
Stars: Ishaan Khattar, Janhvi Kapoor, Ashutosh Rana  
18.30 Kumkum Bhagya  
18.51 Piya Albela  
19.13 Mere Angne Mein  
19.36 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai  
20.04 Serial: Kahan Hum Kahan Tum



Mercredi 20 mai - 15.16

Stars: Kangana Ranaut, Sohumi Shah, Hiten Kumar



Jeudi 21 mai - 20.35

Stars: Sonakshi Sinha, Diana Penty, Jimmy Sheirgill





# Keeping up hope post lockdown



Nita Chicooree-Mercier

**E**pidemiologists and researchers have been saying that the coronavirus is here to stay until a proper vaccine is developed to neutralize it. In the meantime, the world will have to learn to live with it – the more so since it may be carried by people travelling from one country to another, and there is not to this day any certainty about the reliability of tests even if they are made compulsory for all citizens of a country. As if that were not enough, there is also the Kawasaki-like inflammatory syndrome linked to coronavirus, which almost exclusively affects children, leaving epidemiologists baffled about how to handle children who do not show any symptoms. However, there is no ground to create a psychosis among parents for the moment.

It is also not clear why the authorities have taken to postpone the reopening of schools to August, when their parents will have to resume work at the beginning of June. Why August, not mid-June or July if the quarantine period for returning Mauritians is going to be over in three weeks' time? What is the rationale to delay classes is not explained, nor why SC and HSC classes cannot re-start earlier. More importantly, in whose care will parents leave their children in June and July?

What is certain is that we will have to navigate uncertain waters for probably more than a year. By now, the habit of wearing masks, using sanitizers and maintaining social distancing has settled in and should not be an issue in case of a second wave of the disease. Currently, there is more safety in small countries than bigger ones for there is lesser risk of transmission. Accordingly, the easing of restrictions can be adjusted to local realities, rather than necessarily follow what is being adopted elsewhere. Judging from information given by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare there has been a surge in domestic violence, protection orders and children put in shelters. This collateral social damage reflects the stress caused by dwindling incomes, uncertainty and worry over the future, pushing a number of male citizens on edge. Lack of professional and physical activity is experienced differently for several reasons. Idleness and inactivity may engender violence when men lack other resources which can help them keep some degree of sanity. It unfolds a partial view of the extent of disruption a sanitary crisis can cause in society.

This is not the time for discussing the causes of male violence, but there is an increasing awareness of the havoc caused by the imbalance engendered by patriarchal societies across the world over centuries. And certainly things have to change in coming years to set a right balance of power. It all boils down to a power play, to who displays more power than the other. As to physical power, women



have to learn basic techniques of self-defense to overpower their male partners or other males who seek to mess with them. Climate change, damages done to Planet Earth, economic growth policies, wars and the status of women, etc., are more interconnected than is generally believed.

Pandemics and wars in the past proved to have a high nuisance value of widespread disruption which could topple governments, devastate economies and break up societies, but they could also open new ways of reconsidering the idea of social classes, job categories, and the status of men and women. They shake up societies and create new awareness of pressing issues.

Paradoxically islands are geographically confined in the middle of vast oceans but heavily depend on tourism, trade and exchanges of all kinds with other countries to keep their economies afloat. No island is an island in itself. It has to open up for free movement of people, services and goods. All countries have shrunk into small islands with closed frontiers around them. Right now, the world is in the same boat, and it is not going to be a smooth sailing for some time on.

The airport is bracing for reopening. Good news if sanitary precautions are maintained. And so much the better if passengers have to go through a test two weeks before embarking, which sounds a gigantic task to put into practice but it can be helpful to everyone of us who are bound to encounter others in our social interactions.

Hotels cannot afford to go empty for months on end; neither can taxi drivers, food and beverage companies, and a myriad of sectors remain idle for long. Even if it is going to be a slow pick-up, a demand for selective countries under certain conditions can be envisaged.

Are there too many hotels in the island? For the past twenty years successive governments pledged to stop delivering permission for further construction. But they went on giving the green light to diverse business companies eager to take their share in the hotel industry.

Is the sky clearing up for Air Mauritius and all-weather friend Air France? It may take time for the Chinese to straighten things up before boarding Air Mauritius; Asian countries do not go crazy over the charm of small islands. Indians are scanning the horizon for new opportunities that are seen coming in to boost the economy and may be willing to take advantage thereof. Fairly well-off Westerners always have a soft heart for the exotic charm of tropical islands – Covid-19 or not. Without harbouring puerile hopes, there may be reasons to expect things to pick up.

Interview : Dr Avinaash Munohur

## 'L'état d'exception ne peut pas devenir permanent. Il y a là un immense danger'

• Suite de la page 9

Il faut absolument régler le problème identifié par l'audit indépendant du TEC sur l'Université de Maurice de 2018 et qui avait diagnostiqué une disjonction entre les offres de formation et le marché de l'emploi à Maurice.

Il est ainsi impératif de mettre en place une concertation nationale entre le Gouvernement, les acteurs du secteur privé et les syndicats afin de développer un 'masterplan' pour le pays, ce que j'ose appeler un 'New Deal' économique, social et écologique.

La réorientation des industries doit se faire parallèlement au développement des offres de formation qui serviront les besoins de ces industries en nouveaux métiers, ainsi que l'approfondissement et la modernisation de l'État social.

« Il faut le dire haut et fort, les cartes sont actuellement entre les mains du Premier ministre, ses prochaines décisions décideront de l'avenir de notre pays. Et j'ai bien l'impression que les Mauriciens prendront bonne note de ce qu'il fera... »



Il y aura de la destruction socio-économique, c'est un fait, mais nous devons mettre en place les politiques facilitant la création socio-économique parallèlement à ces destructions.

**\* Ce qui sous-entend des investissements et des endettements massifs... Est-ce que ce serait sage dans le contexte actuel d'envisager cela?**

L'endettement n'est pas forcément quelque chose de négatif. Il faut bien évidemment le maîtriser et le contrôler, cela va de soit. Ce qui est négatif dans l'endettement, c'est le fait de s'endetter pour investir et acheter des choses qui n'ont aucune utilité socio-économique. Par exemple, une question doit être posée au Gouvernement : est-ce que l'endettement produit par le Metro Express a aidé à résoudre le problème de congestion et a fait baisser le coût total du transport à Maurice. Est-ce que la phase deux est justifiée au vu de la redéfinition de nos priorités nationales ?

Nous savons déjà que le prochain budget fera la part belle à des plans de soutien, donc au moyen de l'endettement public. Encore une fois, nous devons attendre pour voir si le Gouvernement y déploiera une proposition orientée vers l'avenir ou s'il restera cantonné à des solutions simples et sans ambition pour boucher les trous.

En tout cas, l'endettement peut être positif s'il va dans le sens d'investissements en technologies, en techniques et dans des dispositifs qui permettent la transformation de notre pays, et aussi le renforcement de notre modèle de développement qui s'est historiquement appuyé sur le développement de l'entreprise, d'un côté, et sur un État social fort, de l'autre.

Ce modèle doit être conservé, mais il doit être modernisé afin que notre pays puisse saisir les opportunités actuelles pour entrer pleinement dans le 21<sup>e</sup> siècle.

Et, il faut le dire haut et fort, les cartes sont actuellement entre les mains du Premier ministre, ses prochaines décisions décideront de l'avenir de notre pays. Et j'ai bien l'impression que les Mauriciens prendront bonne note de ce qu'il fera.