

MAURITIUS TIMES

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



Interview: Kugan Parapen, Economist

"What matters ultimately to this government is its belief that it can get itself re-elected"

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A Pandora's Box on Paradise Island?

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Learning to live with Covid - the tough choices ahead

By Jonathan Pugh, Dominic Wilkinson & Julian Savulescu University of Oxford See Page 2

Recurrent Floods

It must have been an unpleasant experience for Minister Alan Ganoo to have been publicly taken to task by some local inhabitants of Chemin Grenier, last Monday, when he went down for a site visit following the downpour of April 24 which resulted in the flooding of major parts of the South of the island. Hon Ganoo was castigated for allegedly promises unkept in relation to infrastructure works to be undertaken in the locality and elsewhere to avert the kind of situation many thousands of Mauritians have had to live through during the recent torrential rains. Of course, all the blame for the recurrent distress that torrential rains bring in their wake around the island cannot be pinned down on Hon Ganoo given the multifactorial causes of such disasters, including institutional slack and/or overlapping, town and country planning deficiencies, budgetary constraints (?), etc. But he himself as well as his successors at the Ministry of Public Utilities cannot shirk responsibility for the mess many regions find themselves in after heavy downpours.

From 2000 to 2005 Alan Ganoo has held the office of Minister of Public Utilities - the principal ministry whose mandate is, amongst others, to work out and implement plans to prevent floods, or at least to minimise them to the point of eliminating their catastrophic effects - not just in Port Louis as it happened in 2013 at Caudan, but also everywhere else in the island. As Minister of Public Utilities in 2003, he was expected to take appropriate and effective action on the findings and recommendations of the Gibb report entitled "Study of Land Drainage System of Mauritius", and dated April 2003 - itself preceded by an advance report of the Consultant's findings on flood prone areas. It is not known what has been concretely done to fulfil that specific part of the Public Utilities' mandate by successive ministers, but billions have been poured in infrastructure works around the island - and we remain to date vulnerable to such disasters as happened even as recently as last Saturday.

The Gibb Report recommended the setting up of a 'permanent, overarching and pro-active Integrated Water Resources Management Authority that would oversee all rainfall water management practices over every square inch of the national territory inclusive of our coastal waters. Such an Authority would have had enforcement powers as regards rainfall effects over local administrations (city, town, district, and village councils), over the various authorities concerned with urban and rural land use including infrastructure projects, with all land under agriculture, with all forests and other state lands and natural watercourses, with aquifers, with irrigation systems, etc. The Authority would also have enforcement powers regarding the proper maintenance of and improvements to historical purpose-built drainage systems and the construction of any new drainage systems that might become necessary. It would also have to work in close liaison with other authorities such as the Central Water Authority, and with authorities responsible for the prevention of soil erosion.'

There has also been Justice Domah's Fact-Finding Committee, which was set up in March 2008 after floods in the north of the island, particularly at Mon Goût. The Domah report, released on March 23, 2009, highlighted the "systemic gaps" that led to such disasters and advocated an integrated strategy for the management of natural risks, to replace the approach adopted so far which remains only "defensive and reactive". Again, we unfortunately do not seem to have gone far in the implementation of much of Justice Domah's recommendations. For one, that the laying of proper drains combined with other ancillary associated works can be effective has been demonstrated in Fond du Sac and environs, where there has been no flooding this time, although it must be said that the area didn't receive as much torrential rain. But it does prove the point - that drains in flood prone areas, for example, already identified in the pre-cited reports must be one of the top priorities in the next budget.

With the onset of climate change, heavy downpours and droughts are likely to become more, not less frequent. This calls for urgent prioritising of all the issues related to infrastructure projects, including drainage systems, etc., that need to be revisited and implemented at the earliest rather spending billions of taxpayers' money in white elephants at Cote d'Or and elsewhere.

The Conversation

Learning to live with Covid - the tough choices ahead

As a society, we have to choose between liberty, equality and mortality. We can't have all three.



As mass vaccination continues to be rolled out, the UK is beginning to see encouraging signs that the number of COVID deaths is reducing, and that the vaccines may be reducing the transmission of coronavirus.

While this is very welcome news, a mass vaccination programme is unlikely to be enough to eliminate the virus, so we need to turn our thoughts towards the ethics of the long-term management of COVID-19.

One strategy would be to aim for the elimination of the virus within the UK. New Zealand successfully implemented an elimination strategy earlier in the pandemic and is now in a post-elimination stage.

An elimination strategy in the UK would require combining the mass vaccination programme with severe restrictions on international travel to stop new cases and variants of the virus being imported. However, the government has been reluctant to endorse an elimination strategy, given the importance of international trade to the UK economy.

One of the main alternatives to the elimination strategy is to treat coronavirus as endemic to the UK and to aim for long-term suppression of the virus to acceptable levels. But adopting a suppression strategy for the long term will require us to make a societal decision about the harms we are and are not willing to accept.

The liberty, equality and mortality trilemma

The first year of the pandemic has taught us that, without suppression measures, coronavirus will lead to significant death and harm, including long COVID. But evidence suggests that mitigation measures, such as lockdowns and effective test, trace and isolate systems, may be effective in reducing transmission of the virus.

These measures have their own costs. Lockdowns significantly restrict civil liberties and cause a wide range of other harms, including significant non-COVID mortality and morbidity. Recent models suggest that in the long term, the mitigation of the pandemic could lead to 100,000 non-COVID deaths. On the figures from this model, deaths from the virus itself may come to only account for about 54% of the overall death toll of the outbreak in the UK.

The extent of some of the costs of mitigation measures could be lessened by targeting these interventions at certain groups, such as those who have not been vaccinated, or those who have a particularly high risk of death from COVID, such as those over the age of 65.

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Mauritius Times

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

Editor-in-chief: M. Ramlallah / Senior Editor: Dr RN Gopee
This epaper has been produced with the assistance of

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Pandemic preparedness starts now

This is not the time to play blame games and to look for scapegoats, but it is about seriously identifying and analyzing the lacunae in our responses



Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

There's no country or government that hasn't been caught with its pants down when Covid-19 sprung upon the world at the beginning of last year. Except perhaps for New Zealand.

As suddenly, several countries including ours were flooded by a proliferation of lay experts in medicine and public health, whose non-expert opinions drowned the sober, evidence-based advice that the frontliner researchers and health professionals were tendering in the right places and in the established medical and health publications and forums. Given the rapidly changing manner in which the disease was manifesting across different geographies and demographics, these frontliners were also sharing more directly among themselves whatever new – and little but cumulative – experience they were gathering as they managed their patients. Nobody knew any better than the other, and every bit of new information in real time even if not yet peer reviewed as yet could help someone or the other to reduce severity of disease, or perhaps avert one more death.

Many of the complex technical discussions regarding Covid such as, among others, its pathophysiology in causing the phenomenon 'happy hypoxia' (low oxygen levels in patients with Covid who were going about with hardly any symptoms) went above the head of non-specialists in the field. Their attempts to get a grasp on it sent them back to look up their medical college notes and texts on lung physiology, and update that with the newer terminology so as to make better sense of what they were reading. Like I had to check up with physician friends to get a handle on the subtler aspects. This reminded me of the reply a very senior late orthopaedic colleague of mine many years ago, when asked whether he could lend me from time to time a copy of the *British Medical Journal* which I knew he had been receiving regularly since his return from the UK.

'Well, you know what. I have stopped subscribing to the BMJ because, apart from one or two of the leader articles in the editor's section and the obituary pages where I sometimes come across a write-up about one of my former teachers, I can hardly understand anything!'

The point is that advances are taking place so fast in



2006



2017

“The time to start preparing for the inevitable next pandemic is now. This is not the time to play blame games and to look for scapegoats, but it is about seriously identifying and analyzing the lacunae in our responses and the strategies to correct them pre-emptively and proactively, with the Fact Finding Committee being an important first step in this direction...”

medicine, with new vocabularies for newer conditions and concepts leading to hyperspecialisation, even keeping up in the subspecialties of one's own field can prove daunting – and time consuming. Not to speak of the challenges posed by greying cells even in, admittedly, a brain endowed with plasticity! In other words, the genuine experts in their respective domains, who tend to be humble as they gnaw at their problem (s) like the beaver, are those whose opinions should matter. Not those who belong to the Whatsapp university. Though, at times, there may be some reliable or valuable information present there, all of which must be used judiciously.

These reflections came to me on pondering about the current surge in India. In such times of acute crisis, it is natural for people to react with their guts, so that it is the country's leader who has to bear the brunt of criticisms to the extreme of shouting for his resignation, as if this will solve the immediate problem.

More objectively, the scientific approach is to analyse the different aspects and challenges of the situation, and then formulate new or modify existing responses. One paper that throws light on the new wave is **'Why variants are most likely to blame for India's Covid surge'** by Rajib Dasgupta Chairperson, Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health, Jawaharlal Nehru University, published in *The Conversation* of April 28, 2021.

It begins with 'India's government has blamed the people for not following Covid-safe public health directives, but recent data shows mask use has only fallen by 10 percentage points, from a high of 71% in August 2020 to a low of 61% by the end of February.

'And the mobility index increased by about 20 per-

centage points, although most sectors of the economy and activity had opened up. These are modest changes and do not adequately explain the huge increase in cases.'

The author then suggests that 'a more likely explanation is the impact of variants that are more transmissible than the original SARS-CoV-2 virus.'

He then goes on to discuss the variants in India, as viruses keep changing and adapting through mutations.

'The Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG), a group of ten national laboratories, was set up in December 2020 to monitor genetic variations in the coronavirus. The labs are required to sequence 5% of Covid-positive samples from states and 100% of positive samples from international travellers.

'The United Kingdom is currently testing about 8% of its positive samples and the United States about 4%. India has been testing about 1% altogether. INSACOG has so far tested 15,133 SARS-CoV-2 genomes. This means of every 1,000 cases, the UK has sequenced 79.5, the US 8.59, and India only 0.0552.

'...The current second wave started in the northwestern state of Punjab in the first half of February and has not yet plateaued. One of the advisers to the Punjab government confirmed that more than 80% of the cases were attributed to the UK variant.

'Significantly, the most affected districts are from Punjab's Doaba region, known as the NRI (non-resident Indian) belt. An estimated 60-70% of the families in these districts have relatives abroad, mostly in the UK or Canada, and a high volume of travel to and from these countries.'

It is established that variants are more highly transmissible and cause more severe disease, and epidemiologically this translates into a higher number of deaths the larger the population.

Responding to this article, Peter Cobbold, Professor Emeritus, University of Liverpool adds that 'The Indian crisis has a more convincing explanation than virus variants.' Citing a paper by Dr John Campbell, he advances the following: 'This is the low level of Vitamin D3 in the Indian population, despite the sunnier climate, and this has a negative impact upon disease transmission and severity.' He suggests that 'the answer for India is sunbathing, exposing the total area of skin can supply 10,000IU per day. Aerial pollution absorbs UVB so city dwellers will need supplements,' concluding that 'the science is sound, the implementation by medical and political authorities dire.'

Regarding the critical issue of oxygen shortage, another article in the same issue of *The Conversation*: **'What steps must be taken to secure oxygen – for COVID-19 patients and into the future'** opens by noting that 'new waves of the Covid-19 pandemic in countries, such as Kenya and India, have exposed the poor management of oxygen supplies' and gets the insights of Professor Trevor Duke, 'an expert on [oxygen provision] and editor of the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines on oxygen therapy for children, about ...what countries, with limited resources, can do to secure better supplies.'

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Mrinal Roy

No To Censorship

Why is the government rushing such a vital issue? Is it a deliberate ploy to control and censor social media?

writing or opinion provided they cause no evident and immediate harm to others.

Censorship enables those in power to have control over information, limit the people's freedom of opinion and clamp down on opinions critical of the government narrative and actions.

Social media has significantly enhanced the scope of freedom. It has provided a potent platform for people and a conduit for the voiceless to express their views. It has also empowered women who have found a new freedom. Social media movements such as #METoo has broken the taboo and culpable silence around sexual assault, provided support to women and emboldened them to share their experiences, trauma and views.

It has been a decade since #Hashtag was used on twitter. This small symbol has helped raise awareness and launch global citizen activism campaigns on a vast range of issues affecting people around the world such as #climate change, #BlackLivesMatter or #BringBackOurGirls following the abduction of 276 schoolgirls in Nigeria in 2014, etc.

Potent force

In 2020, over 3.6 billion people were using social media worldwide, a number projected to increase to almost 4.41 billion in 2025. These include prominent politicians such as former President Barack Obama, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the young and mainstream citizens. It provides a user friendly medium for the young and enables them to be more alive to political and social issues and be au fait with local and world news. It enables them to spot and share interesting articles and developments in the world and share their comments. At the click of a button, posts are liked and shared worldwide on an ever increasing scale. This certainly represents a potent platform for interaction and debate and a salubrious force to be reckoned with.

Some politicians and governments whose policies and standard of governance are decried by the multitude are obviously apprehensive of this powerful force that they have no control over.

In the larger world debate there is a running battle between spin doctored official narratives on key developments in the world blithely broadcast on mainstream news channels and incisive questioning by independent commentators. This is best epitomized in last week's BBC Newsnight edition. The American economist and academic Jeffrey Sachs took the BBC to task for pre-mising a question on collaboration between the US and China on climate change by comments on China's alleged human rights abuses and being totally silent 'on the US human rights abuses through the war in Iraq with the UK under false pretences, in Syria and Libya and the continued sanctions against civilian populations in Venezuela and Iraq as well as withdrawing from the

Censorship is basically a retrograde idea. In an age of freedom, it is regarded as a relic of an oppressive era. In a democracy, people enjoy freedom of speech,

2015 Paris Agreement on climate change and unilateral trade actions deemed illegal by the WTO. He admonished the BBC for 'framing the issue of climate change by saying that there is only one party that is terribly guilty and therefore how can we talk to them to address climate change'.

This begs the fundamental question of what is fake news and what is not and who decides what it should be.

Hasty proposal

In Mauritius, the Consultation Paper released by the authorities 'on proposed amendments to the Information and Communication Technologies Act for regulating the use and addressing the abuse and misuse of social media and provide a legal solution and sanctions to stamp out the problem of harmful and illegal online content provides no valid justification for hastily proposing such an arbitrary clamp down.

The paper avers that the possibilities offered by social networking services to people to express their views can 'lead to unacceptable abuse of these freedoms' without providing concrete evidence and examples of such misuse in the country. Instead, the paper lists out a hotchpotch of incidents reported on the Mauritian Cybercrime Online Reporting System during the January 2020 to January 2021 period relating to hacking, online harassing, offensive content, identity theft, online scams and frauds, cyber bullying, phishing, etc.

Contrived rationale

Instead of providing concrete examples of cases in Mauritius relating to hate speeches or content provoking terrorist acts or which put in peril social harmony and national security or relating to child pornography, etc., the ICTA paper disconcertingly catalogues a series of examples of incidents in Myanmar and various countries across the world to justify their decried and unacceptable restrictions on our fundamental freedoms.

In the absence of a material number of objectionable local cases, the uncalled for haste to propose such an unacceptable restriction of our fundamental freedoms when the country is grappling with the dire health and socio-economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic is highly questionable.

Why is there not instead a similar haste in passing a law to guarantee the independence of MBC-TV financed from public funds from abusive and abject government control? Why is there not an equal haste in enacting an



Pic - insidesources.com

“The uncalled for haste to propose such an unacceptable restriction of our fundamental freedoms when the country is grappling with the dire health and socio-economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic is highly questionable. Why is there not instead a similar haste in passing a law to guarantee the independence of MBC-TV financed from public funds from abusive and abject government control? Why is there not an equal haste in enacting an arsenal of harsher laws and more severe penal sanctions which, as in Singapore, can eradicate the evil of drug trafficking in the country?”

arsenal of harsher laws and more severe penal sanctions which, as in Singapore, can eradicate the evil of drug trafficking in the country?

We need to get our priorities right. Government should first and foremost urgently fix the burning issue of securing adequate vaccine supplies to accelerate the stalled programme of Covid-19 vaccination in the country towards swiftly achieving herd immunity and mobilize the best talents and expertise in the country to chart out an innovative economic recovery plan to put the country on a robust growth path. Time is of the essence.

The widespread flooding caused by the present torrential rains in the country brings into focus the tenor and adequacy of actions taken by the country to help reverse the dire fallouts of climate change and exposes the patent failure of the billions of Rupees sunk in improving drainage systems in the country every year.

Instances of misuse of social media abroad cannot therefore be a pretext to impose arbitrary rules and restrictions over the unalienable rights and fundamental freedoms of the multitude in the country. The rationale used by the authorities to justify their disputed proposals is therefore patently laboured and contrived.

Jumping the gun

This debate has to be also viewed in the larger context of related developments regarding social media in the world.

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Australia plans \$747 million budget to upgrade defence bases in Indo-Pacific

Australia will invest 747 million dollars in upgrading four key military training areas and ranges in the Northern Territory to defend the country's interests and support greater engagement with the Indo-Pacific neighbours and allies, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced on Wednesday. Morrison announced the multi-million dollar investment stating that the objective was to pursue peace rather than sending any message to China, reports PTI.

The multi-million investment would upgrade four key training areas and ranges in the Northern Territory to enable the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to conduct simulated training exercises and remain battle-ready. "We continue to invest more than 270 billion dollars in defence capability across Australia over the next decade, ensuring we have a capable defence force to meet a changing global environment while backing thousands of ADF men



Australian soldiers practice an amphibious assault landing during joint military exercises between Australia and the United States in 2017. Pic - Reuters

and women with the newest technology and training," Morrison said.

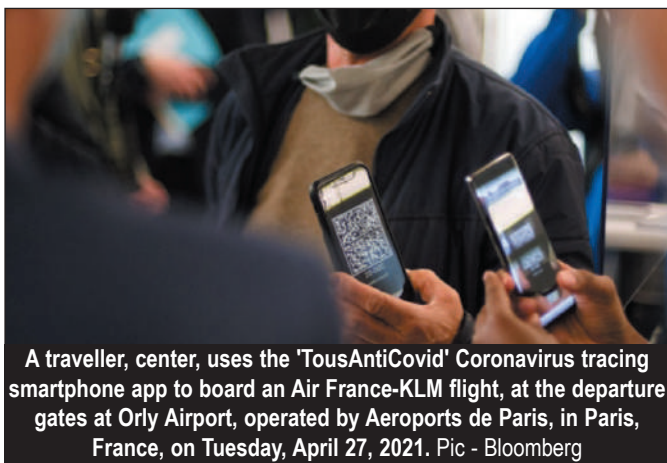
"Working with the United States and Indo-Pacific neighbours, we will continue to advance Australia's

interests by investing in the Australian Defence Force, particularly across Northern Australia. Our focus is on pursuing peace, stability and a free and open Indo-Pacific, with a world order that favours freedom," he said.

Australia along with India, Japan and the US, had in 2017 given shape to the long-pending proposal of setting up the "Quad" or the Quadrilateral coalition to counter China in the Indo-Pacific region.

China is engaged in contested territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas. Beijing has also made substantial progress in militarizing its man-made islands in the past few years. Beijing claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea. But Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei and Taiwan have counterclaims. In the East China Sea, China has territorial disputes with Japan.

The fraying of China-Australia ties that began with Canberra banning China's Huawei from its 5G networks in 2018, worsened after Australia called on China to allow international investigators into Wuhan to probe the origins of the novel coronavirus last year. Beijing placed crippling tariffs on Australia's barley exports and halted beef imports from four large meat plants. China also put embargoes on Australian cotton.



A traveller, center, uses the 'TousAntiCovid' Coronavirus tracing smartphone app to board an Air France-KLM flight, at the departure gates at Orly Airport, operated by Aeroports de Paris, in Paris, France, on Tuesday, April 27, 2021. Pic - Bloomberg

UK joins France with vaccine passport plan to lift travel

Britain is working on a digital Covid-19 vaccine passport as the move to restart travel in Europe gathers pace. The UK initiative, disclosed Wednesday by Transport Secretary Grant Shapps, is based on an existing National Health Service app, which will be adapted to help travellers prove they've had a jab or tested negative for the virus. The announcement comes a day after France started to trial short flights with a tracing app updated to host records of shots and tests, on short flights.

Vaccine passports are emerging as a key plank of efforts to jump-start European tourism in time for the summer peak. Britain had previously said that they were under consideration ahead of a planned reopening on May 17, while the European Union aims to introduce digital passes by June after governments reached a deal on technical standards earlier this month, reports Bloomberg.

In virtual talks Wednesday, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and her Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang discussed the use of vaccine certificates as a way to boost travel, as well as working together to ease the impact of the pan-

demic, according to a German government statement.

While Britain needs to remain cautious and protect the gains of its vaccine rollout, current data "does continue to look good" for reopening travel, Shapps said.

Within Europe, Greece has already started easing travel with some countries including its fellow EU members, with a full lifting of restrictions for international tourists set for May 15.

Britain, which along with Germany is the biggest source of visitors to Mediterranean sun spots, is set to announce a Green List of countries to which leisure travel will be permitted early next month.

Spanish tourism minister Fernando Valdes Verelst told The Sun newspaper on Wednesday that Britons will be allowed back in from June once an agreement on mutual recognition of vaccine passports is in place.

Didier Reynders, the EU's justice commissioner, said in a speech to the Parliament that lawmakers should move quickly to allow travel across the bloc to resume for summer, warning against rigid rules for vaccine passes or delays to gauge the impact of jabs on new Covid variants.

France's transport minister, Jean-Baptiste Djebbari, said Tuesday that the country's fledgling vaccine passport, which already has about 15 million users as a Covid-tracing app, is being deployed on services between Paris and the Mediterranean island of Corsica.

The trial will be extended to Air France-KLM flights to overseas territories next week and then to some neighboring countries. Talks have also been held with the UK on bilateral travel arrangements and discussions with the US will be next, he said.

Boris Johnson dodges questions in House of Commons over flat renovations

Boris Johnson has been accused of creating a "toothless" sleaze watchdog inside Downing Street after he rejected recommendations to give his new ethics adviser powers to launch inquiries into misbehaviour by ministers, reports The Independent.

Under new terms of reference, independent adviser on ministerial interests Lord Geidt will be allowed to approach Mr Johnson with concerns about misconduct, but must wait for the green light from the prime minister before opening an investigation. And the PM will retain his power to act as judge and jury over the finding of guilt and punishments handed out to ministers - even in Lord Geidt's first investigation, into the propriety of the funding of renovations to Mr Johnson's flat above 11 Downing Street.

The Electoral Commission sensationally announced that it was launching its own probe into the controversial £88,000 refit, declaring that there were "reasonable grounds to suspect that an offence or offences may have occurred". Mr Johnson dodged questions on the issue in the House of Commons, insisting that he had paid all bills over the £30,000 provided annually by the taxpayer but failing to deny that Tory donor Lord Brownlow had initially covered the massive bill.

Covid disease levels in the UK are "close to the bottom" with "very low" incidence, deputy chief medical officer Jonathan Van-Tam has suggested. His

remarks came as Matt Hancock, the health secretary, insisted that England was "on track" to further ease restrictions on 17 May - a major step in the government's roadmap.

Assessing the current situation, professor Van-Tam told a No 10 press conference: "We are really in very low levels that are comparable to where we were in September. We are running as a typical seven-day average at just over 2,000 people testing positive per day." He added: "My sense is that probably we are at or close to the bottom at the moment in terms of this level of disease in the UK."



Johnson under pressure over Downing Street flat refurbishment. Pic - Evening Standard

A 6.4-magnitude earthquake has struck the Indian state of Assam, causing significant damage to some buildings in a country currently hard-hit by the coronavirus. Tremors were reportedly felt across the entire northeast region, including the neighbouring state of Meghalaya. The aftershock was also felt in the state of West Bengal. Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal tweeted: "Big earthquake hits Assam. I pray for the wellbeing of all and urge everyone to stay alert." The epicentre of the earthquake was near Dhekiajuli town, 140km north of the city of Guwahati. While there are no reports of injuries so far, damage to buildings has been observed.

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Samsung heirs to pay over \$10 billion, donate Picasso in inheritance tax

The heirs to South Korea's Samsung group announced their plans to pay more than \$10 billion in death duties Wednesday -- one of the world's biggest ever inheritance tax settlements -- including donating Picasso and Monet artworks.

Lee Kun-hee, the late Samsung Electronics chairman was the country's richest man when he died last October at age 78 after being hospitalised for years, leaving an estimated \$19.6 billion in assets.

South Korea has stringent inheritance tax laws and high rates, resulting in a hefty bill for the family, including Samsung Electronics vice chairman Lee Jae-yong, who is currently in jail for bribery, embezzlement and other offences.

Lee's family "expects to pay more than 12 trillion won in taxes related to inheritance, which is more than half of the value of the late Chairman's total estate," Samsung said in a statement.

"The inheritance tax payment is one of the largest ever in Korea and globally," it

added, saying the Lee family will pay it off in six instalments starting this month.

The assets include shareholdings in Samsung Electronics, Samsung Life and Samsung C&T, as well as real estate, according to the statement.

The late chairman also left a trove of antiques and artworks reportedly worth 2 to 3 trillion won.

Around 23,000 pieces from Lee's collection will be donated, Samsung said, including 14 items classed as National Treasures that will be showcased at the National Museum of Korea.

Works by artists Marc Chagall, Pablo Picasso, Paul Gauguin as well as Claude Monet, Joan Miro and Salvador Dali will be donated to the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, it added.

Reports say the art donations will reduce the family's tax liability.

Another 1 trillion won will be donated to health causes, half of it to be spent on building the South's first specialist infectious diseases hospital.

Samsung -- whose flagship subsidiary is among the world's biggest smartphone and computer chip makers -- is by far the largest of the family-controlled empires known as chaebols that dominate business in South Korea, the world's 12th-largest economy. The conglomerate is crucial to the South's economic health -- its overall turnover is equivalent to a fifth of the national gross domestic product.

The late chairman's eldest son and the group's de facto leader, Lee Jae-yong was jailed in January over a sprawling corruption scandal that brought down former president Park Geun-hye. He is undergoing a separate trial over stock manipulation, which critics say was key to ensuring a smooth succession of power within the conglomerate.



China to finance coal plants abroad despite carbon pledge at home

China will press ahead with its multi-billion-dollar financing of coal plants in developing countries, a top climate official said Tuesday, despite Beijing's stated aim of slashing carbon emissions.

In 2020, China opened three-quarters of the world's newly funded coal plants, according to the UK-based monitor CarbonBrief, and accounted for more than 80 percent of newly announced coal power projects, reports AFP.

At home, however, President Xi Jinping has pledged to wean China off coal with a peak carbon emissions target of 2030 - and achieve carbon neutrality thirty years later.

Those ambitious targets have been met with international praise. But China's overseas drive shows the complexity of untwining the economic drivers of coal power from environmental concerns.

"We cannot simply say that we'll stop supporting coal-fired electricity plants in developing countries," Li Gao, head of the climate change office at the Ministry of

Ecology and Environment, told reporters. "Combating climate change is also about letting people in developing countries live good lives."

Echoing Xi's comments at a recent climate summit hosted by US President Joe Biden, Li said poorer nations still need coal to power their economies.

"This is wholly in response to (foreign countries') actual needs, and we use very high standards (to build the plants)," he said.

Li also suggested that these countries were not sufficiently developed to be able to use renewable energy as their main sources of power.

China has continued to fund dozens of coal plants abroad, from Zimbabwe to Indonesia, and environmentalists say they are set to produce more emissions than major developed nations.

China is making the overseas coal play as part of its trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative, a plan to fund infrastructure projects and increase its influence overseas.

In contrast, officials have pledged to "strictly control" coal use domestically to reach ambitious climate goals.

Just under 60 percent of power in China still comes from coal, but a new five-year national development plan unveiled in March set a target of generating 20 percent of energy from renewable sources by 2025.

China will continue to build smaller-scale coal plants to ensure reliable power supply across the grid, but their "emissions will not be as large" as traditional coal plants, according to Li. "We will no longer continue large-scale development of coal-fired power plants, this is very clear."

BioNTech expects vaccine trial results for babies by September

"In July, the first results could be available for the five to 12 year olds, in September for the younger children," BioNTech Chief Executive Ugur Sahin told Spiegel. He added it takes about four to six weeks to evaluate the data, reports Reuters.

BioNTech expects results by September from trials testing the COVID-19 vaccine that it and Pfizer have developed in babies as young as six months old, German magazine Spiegel cited the company's CEO as saying.

"In July, the first results could be available for the five to 12 year olds, in September for the younger children," BioNTech Chief Executive Ugur Sahin told Spiegel. He added it takes about four to six weeks to evaluate the data.

"If all goes well, as soon as the data is evaluated, we will be able to submit the application for approval of the vaccine for all children in the respective age group in



BioNTech and Pfizer asked U.S. regulators this month to approve emergency use of their vaccine for adolescents aged 12 to 15. Pic - global.unitednations.entermediadb.net

different countries," he said.

BioNTech and Pfizer asked U.S. regulators this month to approve emergency use of their vaccine for adolescents aged 12 to 15.

more likely to have asymptomatic infection, allowing them to unwittingly transmit COVID-19 to others.

Sahin was quoted by Spiegel as saying the company was "in the final stages before submission" to European regulators for children aged 12 and older.

A trial published at the end of March found the companies' COVID-19 vaccine was safe, effective and produces robust antibody responses in adolescents.

The Pfizer/BioNTech two-shot vaccine is already authorized for use in those aged 16 and above.

Young people are less likely to suffer severe cases of COVID-19 and

Kugan Parapen, Economist

“What matters ultimately to this government is its belief that it can get itself re-elected”



Mauritius Times: Do you get the feeling that the Government is losing the information battle, and that social media may in a large measure be responsible for that?

Kugan Parapen: The liberalisation of the information landscape locally can be described as having been laborious at best. It is widely known that the control of information is key in a society. Numerous personalities including Noam Chomsky and Jim Morrison have made reference to the power of the media. “He who controls the media controls the mind.”

It is baffling that we had to wait until the very start of the 21st century to see the emergence of the first private radio channel in Mauritius. Nor can we forget the infamous Newspapers and

Periodicals Amendment Act from 1984 whereby private newspapers were required to post a 'caution' of Rs.500,000 to operate. Recently, we have heard of licence fees for private radios being increased exorbitantly.

Mind control has been a feature of most governments since independence. In today's world, we get the impression that controlling the national television channel and using it as an outright propaganda tool is not sufficient. The government has not yet lost the information battle, but it is certainly freaking out at the possibility of losing its power to shape perspectives in its favour and to hide unpleasant truths.

The internet has revolutionised the world in that it has made information

“The recent Supplementary Appropriation Bill officially marked the conversion of advances made by the Government to the National Property Fund and National Insurance Company in the wake of the BAI dismantling. Those loans, representing 11.9 billion rupees, are being converted into equity. In financial jargon, the debt conversion into equity is a significant credit event.

What it effectively means is that these two nationalised institutions would have gone bankrupt sooner or later. And guess who is bailing them out? We are!”

media content to check offensive and abusive online content which remain unattended or are not addressed in a timely manner by social media administrators?

There should of course be an appropriate regulatory framework surrounding the use of social media platforms such that the constitutional rights of every citizen is upheld. No one should be the victim of bullies, especially when these bullies hide behind fake profiles to do their dirty work.

But in its present form, the consultation paper put forward by ICTA is a potential attack on free speech in our democracy. In so many ways, ICTA is proposing to crack a nut with a sledge hammer. The ascertainment of a criminal offence should be left to the judiciary. Is ICTA trying to pre-empt a court of justice?

Economist and member of *Rezistans ek Alternativ* Kugan Parapen is no stranger to this paper as an interviewee who is as forthright and pointedly analytical in his views.

In today's paper he dissects some of the aspects of the amendments to the ICTA Act and concretely he finds that they tilt towards the tighter and unwarranted control of information of a personal nature, which is extremely dangerous. He also comments on the forthcoming budget, which he doubts will bring the relief needed by the masses if we are to go by the unfulfilled implementations of last year's budgetary provisions.

readily available to users and provided a direct linkage between the information source and the end user. The advent of social media has crystallized the worst fears of many governments worldwide – a circumvented unlimited access to reality. An end to the Truman Show.

The narrative is frightening for those who have controlled the levers of information for generations. The digital world is rapidly gaining ground and will shape future generations like no technology has done before. The outcome is uncertain, and this is exactly what bothers traditional power structures like the government. The threat of redundancy and obsolescence is all too real.

* Whatever the government's real, unstated, intentions and even if a majority of Mauricians want, according to Straconsult's latest AfroBarometer, “unrestricted access to the Internet and social media”, shouldn't there be some form of oversight over social

There are too many grey areas that need to be clarified by the regulatory body. In a nutshell, the ICTA proposes to treat everyone on social media as potential criminals so that when a crime is committed, the culprit can be identified and incriminated. It is a bit like the police keeping an inventory of the personal belongings of all citizens every day such that when a theft is committed, it can identify the robber.

Notwithstanding the gigantic cost factor of such an exercise, this is an outright attack on the right to privacy of citizens. Should such a frivolous project go ahead, we can already imagine the potential abuse of such a system by the authorities. It could very well lead to a censorship of those voicing out against the government, act as an intimidating agent for a majority of the population as well as deter whistleblowers.

☛ Cont. on page 8

'The BAI saga has cost taxpayers more than they will ever know. And what for? A political vendetta'

← Cont. from page 7

The Safe City project is a smoking gun which we cannot ignore – the disappearance of CCTV footage when it mattered the most in the Kistnen Case is irrefutable proof of tampering allegedly by the authorities. The lack of an official investigation in this particular matter suggests a degree of political interference at all levels of power.

Should we trust the authorities with our personal data? I would definitely not.

*** There is more however: besides the blacklisting of Mauritius by the European Commission, we are said to have joined the list of 10 autocracies, according to V-Dem (whatever the credentials of that research institute and the worth of its listing) and slipped five ranks down on 'Reporters Sans Frontières' World Press Freedom Index. Should these matter to the Government or not?**

What matters ultimately to this government is its belief that it can get itself re-elected. Re-election boils down to local politics and by extension to the local population. Of course, these international downgrades reflect poorly on the government, but it is a 'who cares' shrug as far as they are concerned.

It is worth digging into this paradigm as it does reveal the strategy and mindset of the government. I believe they do not think that such bad publicity will ultimately

“The irony of the pandemic is that it has paved the way for governments to indulge in the sort of fiscal extravaganza that Finance Ministers can only dream of. It is akin to a blank check. Under no other circumstances would governments have been allowed to spend so much money to bolster their respective economies had it not been for the scourge of a pandemic...”

“The cloak of secrecy surrounding the MIC makes for a difficult assessment of the fund. As far as we are aware, only a marginal proportion of the monies has been disbursed and that raises more questions than answers. Could it be that the political establishment has built itself an economic war chest that it intends to use when the political timing is right?”

“The intelligentsia of Mauritius was convinced that Pravind Jugnauth would not emerge victorious at the 2019 general elections. And they were proved wrong. They fell prey to what psychologists would call the 'false consensus bias'; that is thinking that the whole population think as they do because everyone in their social circle shared their opinion...”



damage their core vote bank. If we analyse the outcome of the last two elections, we know on which basis the winning formula was constructed.

The intelligentsia of Mauritius was convinced that Pravind Jugnauth would not emerge victorious at the 2019 general elections. And they were proved wrong. They fell prey to what psychologists would call the 'false consensus bias'; that is thinking that the whole population think as they do because everyone in their social circle shared their opinion. But electoral choice is rooted in a complex and diverse set of triggers. Most retired people chose to reconduct the MSM party to power on account of personal gains, even though they were aware, to varying degrees, of the adverse impact of the incumbent on society.

Former US President and founding father of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, famously said, “a

democracy is nothing more than mob rule where fifty-one percent of the people may take away the rights of the other forty-nine.” While mob-rule or ochlocracy may sometimes genuinely reflect the will of the majority in a manner approximating democracy, ochlocracy is characterized by the absence or impairment of a procedurally civil and democratic process.

In the Mauritian context, we are not even talking of 49%, but 37%. We seem to have succumbed to what political science would refer to as the tyranny of the majority which bases its claim to rule upon numbers, not upon rightness or excellence.

I believe we have sufficient ground to conclude that the fundamental democratic institutions have been and are being undermined in our Republic while I will leave it to the reader to make his/her opinion about the existence of a mob rule.

*** On the other hand, we are now saddled with a second lockdown, which will probably delay economic recovery. In the wake of the first lockdown, last year, the Government announced a series of measures to put the economy back on the rails. Do we know whether the MIC has delivered and if the beneficiaries of assistance have played the game?**

By and large, the government's economic response to the pandemic has been behind-the-curve. What we mean to say is that it should have been more ambitious in its bid to reinvigorate the economy.

Considering the significant pullback in the economy in 2020 (estimated to be at least 15% of GDP), the fiscal response should have at least matched the economic retreat. Based on available figures, this has not been the case.

The second lockdown will of course complicate the situation, but it needs to be pointed out that the latest lockdown will not be as bad as the initial one as the economy was not completely shut down and has adapted to the situation in a better way than last year.

As regards the MIC, the cloak of secrecy surrounding it makes for a difficult assessment of the fund. As far as we are aware, only a marginal proportion of the monies has been disbursed and that raises more questions than answers. Could it be that the political establishment has built itself an economic war chest that it intends to use when the political timing is right?

In other words, is the government refraining from throwing the kitchen sink at the economy for political reasons? Preferring instead to wait for the penultimate years of its current mandate to try swing the tide in its favour? The forthcoming budget will be a key bellwether.

*** It has been said the Covid pandemic provides us with a once in a 100-year chance to shake up the system, revisit the economic structures and policies whether as regards our flat rate tax system and distribution of wealth, the focus on real estate development to the detriment of food production, etc. But do you expect any change to happen?**

As much as I believe in the existence of unicorns! You are absolutely right in referring to the exceptional situation in which we find ourselves.

→ Cont. on page 9

ICTA Proposed Amendments

'Should we trust the authorities with our personal data? I would definitely not'



“The Safe City project is a smoking gun which we cannot ignore – the disappearance of CCTV footage when it mattered the most in the Kistnen Case is irrefutable proof of tampering allegedly by the authorities. The lack of an official investigation in this particular matter suggests a degree of political interference at all levels of power...”

➤ Cont. from page 8

This is by no means an idiosyncrasy unique to the Mauritian economy – the rest of the world also finds itself at crossroads. The irony of the pandemic is that it has paved the way for governments to indulge in the sort of fiscal extravaganza that Finance Ministers can only dream of. It is akin to a blank check. Under no other circumstances would governments have been allowed to spend so much money to bolster their respective economies had it not been for the scourge of a pandemic.

2020 is shaping up to be a major disruptive year in historical books and in so many aspects, we are likely to talk of a pre-2020 and post-2020 world down the line. As the saying goes, we are masters of our own destiny. The so-called developed world, led by the United States and Europe, have leveraged on the fiscal largesse to embrace the challenges of the twenty-first century. They are allocating significant resources to new industries including the digital sector and the green imperative. It remains to be seen whether their capitalistic structure can produce the adequate results but at least it represents a step in the right direction.

Are we going to follow suit, or will we be once more victims of the conservative narrow-mindedness of our political and economic lobbyists? There is a wide array of opportunities which we need to pursue to lay the foundation of a new Mauritius. Unfortunately, the political will simply does not seem to be there.

* Besides the effectiveness of the vaccination

rollout and the reopening of our borders to tourists (who would be willing to visit the island) to fast track economic recovery, what more can the Government do or should be doing in its next budget to get the economy back on its feet?

The recent nightmarish floods have reminded us all how badly we need an infrastructural revamp of our public infrastructure as the threat of devastating climatic change increases exponentially year after year. A massive infrastructure plan would be money well spent in current circumstances.

I fear that we will be served a re-heated budget where many of the supposedly ground-breaking projects which the government announced in the past years will be repackaged and presented as palatable under new circumstances. The real test will not be the measures announced but rather the means to achieve them. Public finances are as stretched as they have ever been in our short journey as an independent country. Given the challenges ahead, including a possible downgrade to junk status by rating agencies, the focus will be the journey on which the Minister of Finance proposes to embark our economy. Social measures will also be keenly watched as those at the bottom of the economic ladder are having to deal with a very delicate situation, while being heavily indebted.

It has been suggested in some quarters recently that Mauritius should seek the help of the IMF and accept the probable harsh reforms which would accompany such a move. The financing aspect of the budget will outline the government's stance on such a move. Overall, we

should expect an austere budget. However, will Renganaden Padayachy adopt the right tone, or will he try to sugarcoat the exercise as he did last year when he announced a balanced budget; it was anything but.

* The ghost of the BAI continues to haunt the Government; it has voted another Rs 11.9 billion which will be injected into the National Property Fund for the reimbursement of the victims of the BAI's policyholders and investors. More money will ultimately go to these latter BAI "victims" than it cost the Metro Express, it would seem. What's your take on that?

The unravelling of this whole saga was inevitable. The government has been calamitous in its handling of the BAI dismantling from day one. *Rezistans ek Alternativ* was one of the few political parties, if not the only one, to have denounced the modus operandi of the BAI. Some even accused us of being 'chatwas' at the time. But this whole BAI mega scandal is a play in two acts. And both should be condemned vehemently. That the fall guy turns out to be the population to the tune of billions of rupees is simply revolting.

The recent Supplementary Appropriation Bill officially marked the conversion of advances made by the Government to the two nationalised institutions in the wake of the BAI dismantling (National Property Fund and National Insurance Company). Those loans, representing 11.9 billion rupees, are being converted into equity – in other words, taxpayers' money which was initially lent out to these two companies is being converted into share capital. The public has gone from being a creditor to being a shareholder of these two companies. Given the track record of this government regarding the management of public companies, can we expect a profitable return on this investment?

“The narrative is frightening for those who have controlled the levers of information for generations. The digital world is rapidly gaining ground and will shape future generations like no technology has done before. The outcome is uncertain, and this is exactly what bothers traditional power structures...”

The worst part is the deceit involved though. Here we have elected representatives of the people, who on paper should be representing the people's interest, but who have conned the population into believing into a rescue mission which was doomed to fail from the onset?

In financial jargon, the debt conversion into equity is a significant credit event. What it effectively means is that these two nationalised institutions would have gone bankrupt sooner or later. And guess who is bailing them out? We are! The BAI saga has cost taxpayers more than they will ever know. And what for? A political vendetta.



Jack Bizlall

1921 – 2021, 100 ans de lutte syndicale

Une page d'histoire du syndicalisme mauricien

La Stèle du Plaza fut dévoilée par Merrill Anquetil, la petite fille d'Emmanuel Anquetil, le 1er mai 2019. Elle mentionne des noms d'individus qui ont contribué au syndicalisme mauricien, les noms d'organisations syndicales et les dates importantes de cette histoire qui a commencé en 1921.

De 1871 à 2018 : Les dates importantes

1871 : Sous le nom de 'Ramdin', Adolphe de Plevitz dénonce la situation des immigrés à Maurice. Il soutient son action par une pétition réunissant 19,000 signatures en 1871 et obtient une commission d'enquête en 1872 et ce fut une révélation cruelle de la situation des immigrés. Le rapport de 1875 'Report of the Royal Commission to inquire into the treatment of immigrants in Mauritius' ouvrit la voie à la loi de travail en 1878. Cette loi fut appliquée jusqu'en 1922.

1921: Tentative de Willie Moutou de créer la National Trade Union of Mauritius. La même année, il y eut un soulèvement des cheminots à Plaine Lauzun. Ce même Willie Moutou publie un journal en 1924 sous le nom de *Drapeau Ouvrier*. De notre point de vue, tout est dit dans ces trois actes éminemment politiques.

L'essence du syndicalisme mauricien se trouve dans la démarche volontariste de Willie Moutou. Nous lui devons aussi la République. Dès l'instant où la conscience des masses opprimées assume la liberté de l'individu de se soulever contre le silence et la soumission imposée par le pouvoir autocratique, les monarchies et les oligarchies chutent politiquement.

1936: Création du Parti Travailleuse au Champ de Mars par Maurice Curé. Le Travailisme va en effet booster la lutte syndicale contre l'oligarchie sucrière. Le pouvoir colonial, lui, va suivre le pas selon le rapport des forces, sur le plan des lois et des institutions. Le Travailisme est une idéologie socialiste émanant de la création du *Labour Party* en Angleterre en 1897-1900, mais plus particulièrement à partir de son affirmation comme organisation formellement socialiste, en 1918.

Deux noms vont marquer cette période : Emmanuel Anquetil et Guy Rozemont.

1937: Grand soulèvement des laboureurs et des laboureurs-petits cultivateurs. On compte des morts à Union Flacq. Siven Chinien a écrit une belle chanson intitulée «1937». Ce fut une référence pour les militants syndicaux et politiques de gauche pendant plusieurs années.

1938: La première Fête du Travail est organisée aux Champs de Mars par le Parti Travailleuse. Bien plus tard, sous l'insistance de Guy Rozemont, un congé public fut accordé le 1er mai. Lors de cette année, il y eut plusieurs grèves... Et des répressions contre les travailleurs et leurs dirigeants politiques. Emmanuel Anquetil fut envoyé en exil.

1943: Grèves dans le nord. Il y eut aussi et surtout les quatre martyres de la révolte de 1943 à Belle Vue Harel. Ils étaient Soondrum Pavatdan (plus connue comme Anjalay Coopen), Kistnasamy Mooneesamy, Moonsamy

Moonien, Marday Panapen.

1946: Mort d'Emmanuel Anquetil. Il n'était point en faveur de la collaboration de classe et, ainsi, il était contre une forme de parlementarisme bourgeois.

1954: Grand pas dans la lutte syndicale. La «*Trade Union Ordinance*» fut appliquée.

1922-1992: La République s'est construite aux États-Unis, par la guerre de l'indépendance (1775-1776) suivie par le démantèlement de l'esclavagisme à partir de la guerre civile (1861-1865).

A Maurice, ce fut d'abord l'abolition de l'esclavagisme (1835-1839), le démantèlement de l'engagisme (par des lois sur l'immigration: 1834-1911), un long combat syndical (1922-1965), et l'instauration de la puissance politique de l'industrialisation (1960 et 1971) qui effacèrent graduellement les rapports existant au sein de notre société, reposant sur l'économie de plantation.

Et, ce fut ensuite l'apothéose, avec l'indépendance (1965-1968) et l'avènement de la République en 1992. Il faut bien que l'on apprécie ce qui a été fait entre 1922 et 1968. Il faut absolument approprier ce pan de notre histoire pour bien faire comprendre ce basculement important vers une «civilisation» avancée.

1971: Quand la grande grève de 1971 eut lieu, beaucoup de choses changèrent. Rien ne fut plus comme avant.

On retiendra historiquement la puissance du militantisme. On assista à la relève du Parti Travailleuse par le MMM et la GWF (1969-1976) et le Travailisme par le Militantisme.

Le renvoi des élections de 1972, l'emprisonnement des travailleurs et leurs dirigeants et la répression qui suivit mirent un terme au Travailisme. De tous les militants de cette époque, on peut retenir deux noms: Rajen Pillay et Vella Vengaroo.

1979 -1982: La grève de 1979 ferma un deuxième chapitre de l'association syndicat-politique par la victoire dite des 60-0 de 1982. Il y eut l'éclatement du MMM. Eclata aussi la lutte syndicale.

Depuis ce moment-là, nous sommes dans l'expectative. Mais soyons objectifs pour affirmer que la période 1971-1982 fut une période de conscience révolutionnaire, républicaine et socialiste ; qui firent de nous ce que nous sommes aujourd'hui. Nous parlons aujourd'hui des libertés, des droits, de la démocratie et des lois non-liberti-



« **1936:** Création du Parti Travailleuse au Champ de Mars par Maurice Curé. Le Travailisme va en effet booster la lutte syndicale contre l'oligarchie sucrière. Le pouvoir colonial, lui, va suivre le pas selon le rapport des forces, sur le plan des lois et des institutions. Le Travailisme est une idéologie socialiste émanant de la création du *Labour Party* en Angleterre en 1897-1900, mais plus particulièrement à partir de son affirmation comme organisation formellement socialiste, en 1918... »

cides avec un savoir très avancé. Bref, cette période construisit notre culture et notre intégration au sein d'une civilisation qui fait honneur à l'humanité.

1982-1983: Une période de revirement politique à Maurice, 60-0. La classe des travailleurs exalta sa joie et tout laissa croire qu'un changement radical allait s'installer.

Retour du Fonds monétaire international (FMI) et de la Banque mondiale. Tournant budgétaire en faveur des capitalistes et éclatement du gouvernement MMM-PSM et retour à la case départ avec les partis politiques battus en 1982, partageant le pouvoir politique avec une aile dissidente du MMM qui se donna le nom de MSM. Ainsi fut créée aussi la dynastie Jugnauth.

1984: Alors qu'en 1983, le FSN (FSSC-FSCC-FSP-GSA) et le FSG se trouvèrent en conflit, un nouveau front syndical (FSU) -- le Front Syndical Uni avec la FTU, la GWF, le MLC, la FPU et le FSN -- fut créé.

1988: Il est indéniable que, depuis 1922 jusqu'à aujourd'hui, les grèves et les luttes syndicales associées à la lutte politique ont transformé notre pays. En 1988, quand on commémora le 50ème anniversaire du 1er Mai de 1938, un Front de gauche fut créé regroupant la GWF, la FPU, l'OMT-FNAS et le MMM. Il y eut une publication, intitulée *Linité Travayer*. Un bilan, fait en 1988, retraça toutes les dates et tous les événements et analysa la situation dans une perspective de recomposition du syndicalisme engagé politiquement.

☛ Suite en page 11

☛ Cont. from page 4

The last decade or so has seen a vigorous debate over the attitudes and responses of social media platforms to harmful speech. In the US, the overriding view is that in line with the First Amendment of the US Constitution guaranteeing free speech, no opinion should be banned except those that cause harm to others. Countries are still groping their way forward. This process is still very much a work in progress. The government therefore seems to be jumping the gun. Why is the government rushing such a vital issue? Is it a deliberate ploy to control and censor social media?

The overriding consideration which underpins social media freedom is that people should be free to express their views without constraint. This fundamental freedom is also defended by politicians across the political divide. The Florida Senate for example passed legislation this week requiring social media companies to publish standards for use and abide by them when it comes to de-platforming users. Big tech platforms would face fines up to \$100,000 a day if they de-platform state candidates.

Red line

Mauritius seems blatantly out of step with these game changing trends strongly protective of social

No To Censorship



Pic - bettnet.com

media freedom. No one is willing to penalize the majority who responsibly use social media platforms because of a few bad apples. The authorities seem to want to do the exact opposite, here.

A cohort of pliant MPs cannot decide on behalf of the people on such an important issue. It must necessarily first obtain the approval of the people. In any case this cannot be a priority for the country in the context of the

“We need to get our priorities right.

Government should first and foremost urgently fix the burning issue of securing adequate vaccine supplies to accelerate the stalled programme of Covid-19 vaccination in the country towards swiftly achieving herd immunity and mobilize the best talents and expertise in the country to chart out an innovative economic recovery plan to put the country on a robust growth path. Time is of the essence. The widespread flooding caused by the present torrential rains in the country brings into focus the tenor and adequacy of actions taken by the country to help reverse the dire fallouts of climate change...”

dire health and socio-economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The signs are not good. The mindset of control and censor smacks of George Orwell's 'Animal Farm'. This is a red line for the people which it would be foolhardy to cross.

Mrinal Roy

1921 – 2021, 100 ans de lutte syndicale

Une page d'histoire du syndicalisme mauricien

☛ Suite de la page 10

Ce fut l'avant-dernière tentative de rassembler tous les travailleurs. Ensuite, il a fallu attendre 2009 pour revoir presque toutes les centrales syndicales et deux partis politiques de gauche sur une seule plateforme à la Place des Taxis à Beau-Bassin.

La période 1982-2016 fut une période d'intégration dans la mondialisation et une transformation de notre économie et de notre société.

In fine, il n'existe pas un seul autre pays au monde qui nous ressemble. C'est un des aspects les plus importants de mon analyse politique pour l'avenir.

Chaque année, nous ajouterons d'autres noms, d'autres événements, jusqu'à 2019.

Le bilan

Le premier bilan: Tout adepte de l'action extraparlamentaire - dans les faits le pouvoir extra-parlementaire est plus puissant que le pouvoir parlementaire - doit objectivement admettre que tout ce qui a été gagné sur le plan syndical, fut le résultat de la lutte extra-parlementaire.

Il reste à faire comprendre que la société mauricienne s'est enrichie de plusieurs organisations syndicales et que ces organisations, consciemment ou inconsciemment, ont fait avancer considérablement les intérêts matériels et politiques des travailleurs.

Qui peut nier la contribution des centrales syndicales suivantes, dans la lutte autant politique que syndicale: La GWU (1949) - La FSSC (1957) - La PWU (1959)

“La grève de 1979 ferma un deuxième chapitre de l'association syndicat-politique par la victoire dite des 60-0 de 1982. Il y eut l'éclatement du MMM. Eclata aussi la lutte syndicale. Depuis ce moment-là, nous sommes dans l'expectative. Mais soyons objectifs pour affirmer que la période 1971-1982 fut une période de conscience révolutionnaire, républicaine et socialiste; qui firent de nous ce que nous sommes aujourd'hui...”

- Le MLC (1961 - d'obédience PTr et aujourd'hui apolitique) - La GWF (1970 - d'obédience MMM, aujourd'hui d'obédience R&A) - La FTU (1977 - d'obédience MMMSP, aujourd'hui engagée politiquement mais sans lien avec aucun parti politique) - La FPBU (1980 - Qui devint la FPU en 1984 ; centrale syndicale autogérée prônant l'unité syndicale et qui a créé le MPM) - La CTSP (2007 - prônant le syndicalisme apolitique) ; sans oublier les syndicats individuels comme l'UPSEE.

Les syndicats ont constitué non seulement une puissance politique agissante considérable, mais encore plus un des moteurs de notre Histoire. Ils ont produit un grand nombre de dirigeants politiques et de parlementaires, journalistes, techniciens du pouvoir...

Le second bilan : Il est important de relever des lois et des avancées des travailleurs depuis 1922. Souvent, on dit que les travailleurs ne sont plus comme avant, c'est-à-dire combatifs. Il est évident qu'il ne peut en être autrement avec le *Workers' Rights Act, l'Employment Relations Act,*

avec 30 *Remuneration Orders*, des institutions comme le NRB, le PRB, l'*Employment Re-lations Tribunal*, l'arbitrage sous le Code de Procédure Civile, la Cour Industrielle, la Commission de Conciliation et de Médiation...

Avons-nous pris conscience de l'impact de la semaine des 40 heures, des lois protégeant la sécurité d'emploi, plus des dizaines de salaires minimaux, le salaire minimum national, la pension universelle, les congés de plusieurs natures, le 13ème mois, la protection du pouvoir d'achat...? Avons-nous pris conscience de ce qui a été fait?

Beaucoup d'entre nous ont participé à plusieurs de ces combats et nous pouvons dire qu'ils étaient importants. Que reste-t-il à faire? Le plus grand d'entre tous les projets est la désaliénation du travail. Hélas, nous sommes bloqués par la Constitution actuelle et c'est la raison pour laquelle lors d'une conférence organisée par la Commission de Conciliation et de Médiation, j'ai déclaré qu'il faut

- 1) replacer l'économie au service du social;
 - 2) revoir notre système d'éducation;
 - 3) passer à la Deuxième République, et
- que ces trois réformes sont donc importantes et indispensables;
 - que rien ne peut être fait sans la Deuxième République;
 - que nous sommes dans la saturation des réformes possibles sous la présente Constitution : nous piétons et cela va détériorer les rapports sociaux.

Le troisième bilan: C'est sans



La Stèle du Plaza fut dévoilée par Merrill Anquetil, la petite fille d'Emmanuel Anquetil, le 1er mai 2019

aucune contestation l'amélioration du niveau de vie par l'augmentation des salaires dans plusieurs secteurs. Ceux qui ont suivi l'action politique extraparlamentaire doivent constater le rehaussement considérable du niveau de vie des travailleurs dans le port, l'aéroport, les corps paraétatiques, la fonction publique...

Dans les faits, la stratégie du «*salary gap*» – appliquée pour pousser les salaires du secteur privé vers le haut – eut des effets bénéfiques. Il suffit de voir aujourd'hui les villages et les quartiers des villes, pour prendre conscience de ce que notre société a accompli: une transformation spectaculaire. Seul l'endettement massif des ménages représente un danger.

Jack Bizlall

Cont. from page 3

The issues covered are: Why is oxygen so important for treating Covid-19? What are the challenges getting oxygen to patients? What can be done to improve the situation? Can any immediate steps be taken?

The recommendation is that 'the priority should be scaling up oxygen and quality of care and monitoring. There are ways and models to do this, in even the least resourced health care settings.' And the conclusion is that 'Covid-19 is a long-game; the best time to start implementing effective oxygen systems may have been several years ago, but the next best time is now.'

In the same vein is the recommendation in the article by Rajib Dasgupta, 'Setting up a genomic surveillance system and consistently testing 5% of the positive samples is an expensive but important tool in the journey ahead. This can help us identify emerging hotspots, track transmission and enable nimble-footed decision-making and tailored interventions.'

So too, for us: the time to start preparing for the inevitable next pandemic is now. This is not the time to play blame games and to look for scapegoats, but it is about seriously identifying and analyzing the lacunae in our responses and the strategies to correct them preemptively and proactively, with the Fact Finding Committee being an important first step in this direction.

RN Gopee

Pandemic preparedness starts now



Pic - news.un.org

“In such times of acute crisis, it is natural for people to react with their guts, so that it is the country's leader who has to bear the brunt of criticisms to the extreme of shouting for his resignation, as if this will solve the immediate problem. More objectively, the scientific approach is to analyse the different aspects and challenges of the situation, and then formulate new or modify existing responses...”

Learning to live with Covid – the tough choices ahead



Pic - SOPA Images Limited/Alamy Stock Photo

* Cont. from page 2

However, these targeted strategies involve forms of unequal treatment and possible discrimination.

This is the fundamental trilemma of the long-term suppression strategy. The societal decision we make about the acceptable level of viral suppression involves a choice about which of three competing values we should prioritise and which we must compromise. We can maximise one or two of these values, but we can't have all three.

We might be able to reduce COVID deaths while safeguarding equality, but only if we are willing to accept the poten-

tial need for future lockdowns, severe travel restrictions, and the costs to freedom and general health that entails. We might be able to reduce COVID deaths while protecting the freedom of those who do not pose a transmission risk by introducing COVID certificates or passports, but only if we are willing to accept the inequality that such schemes involve.

Finally, we can give everyone in society as much freedom as possible, but only if we are willing to accept the increased COVID deaths it will probably involve if the virus has not yet been sufficiently suppressed in other ways.

The moral question about the suppression strategy has been framed as one

concerning how many COVID deaths we should be willing to accept each year. This invites comparisons between COVID and annual deaths from other infectious diseases, such as influenza, which has caused fewer than two deaths per 100,000 people per year in European countries since 2000, and those that we have lived with in the past, such as tuberculosis, which caused around 100 deaths per 100,000 people per year in England and Wales at the beginning of the 20th century.

These comparisons are illuminating because they provide a baseline for the number of deaths from an infectious disease that we have historically found acceptable to live with. If we accept a bad flu year with over 22,000 deaths in

England without imposing significant societal restrictions, then perhaps we will come to accept the same number of deaths with COVID.

But these comparisons are relevant to only one of the key ethical values. In the context of COVID, we might have to risk a higher number of COVID deaths in the absence of significant societal restrictions or inequality.

To decide what is acceptable on the suppression strategy, we have to confront the fundamental conflict between values in the COVID trilemma.

**Jonathan Pugh, Dominic Wilkinson,
Julian Savulescu**
University of Oxford





Protecting lives, ensuring happiness

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1956-2020



Henry Kissinger & Chou En-Lai

Henry Kissinger once asked Chou En-Lai to say what might have happened if Nikita Khrushchev had been assassinated instead of John F. Kennedy.

After a moment's thought Chou En-Lai answered: "I don't think Mr Onassis would have married Mrs Khrushchev"

One day a farmer wakes up to go check on his cheese cow. He walks up and finds her dead in the grass. The man is so upset he kills himself. Then his wife wakes up. She finds her husband dead and goes to the lake and kills herself.

Next the first son wakes up and notices everybody is dead. He goes down to the river and sees a mermaid. She swims up to him and says, "Having a bad day, huh? I'll tell you what. If you make love to me ten times in a row without stopping, I'll bring everyone back to life. But if you don't, I will kill you."

He tries to do it, but doesn't make it. She kills him. Then the second son wakes up and after seeing his dead parents, also goes to the river where he sees his dead brother.

The same mermaid swims up and tells him what she told his brother. He asks, "If I make love to you 20 times, what will you do?" She tells him, "If you

are able to perform 20 times in a row, I will bring everyone back and make you the richest man alive."

He then asks, "Well if I do it 20 times in a row, what's stopping you from dying? That's what happened to the cow."

A little boy gets a toy plane. The boy loves his plane. He flies it all over the house. One day, the boy is in the living room with his plane while his mom is in the kitchen washing dishes. She listens to the boy playing and hears him say, "Vroom, vroom, vroom. All you mother f...ing people want to get on, get on. All you mother f...ing people want to get off, get off."

Angry, his mom rushes into the living room, takes the plane away, and sends him into his room. After 15 minutes, she starts to feel bad and tells the boy, "If you don't use that kind of language, you can play with your plane."

The boy returns to the living room, his mom to the kitchen. She listens again to the boy playing, she hears him say, "Vroom, vroom, vroom. All you very nice people want to get on, get on. All you very nice people want to get off, get off. If you have a problem with 15 minute delay, you can go talk to the bitch in the kitchen!"

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit; wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

How I learned to mind my own business: I was walking past the mental hospital the other day, and I could hear all the patients shouting, "13! 13! 13!"

The fence was too high to see over, but I saw a little gap in the planks, so I looked through to see what was going on. Someone poked me in the eye with a stick!

Then they all started shouting, "14! 14! 14!"



enough, and let them go.

The second boy arrived for the second daughter, and said, "Hi, my name is Joe. I'm here for Flo. We're going to a show. Is she good to go?"

Again, the farmer decided he was decent enough and let them go.

Finally, the last boy came, and he said, "Hi, my name is Chuck..." and the farmer shot him.

A completely inebriated man was stumbling down the street with one foot on the curb and one foot in the gutter.

A cop pulled up and said, "I've got to take you in pal. You're obviously drunk."

The wasted man asked, "Officer, are ya absolutely sure I'm drunk?"

"Yeah buddy, I'm sure," said the cop, "Let's go."

Breathing a sigh of relief, the wino said, "Thank goodness. I thought I was crippled."

Once there was a farmer that was very protective of his three daughters. When they told him they were going to go out on dates one night, the farmer decided to wait outside with a shotgun.

The first boy arrived for the first daughter, and he said, "Hi, my name is Freddy. I'm here for Betty. We're going for spaghetti. Is she ready?"

The farmer decided he was decent

Life's Talk

What does love mean?



A group of professionals posed this question to a group of 4 to 8 year-olds, 'What does love mean?' The answers they got were broader, deeper, and more profound than anyone could have ever imagined!

When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore... So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love.'

-- Rebecca - age 8

When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth.'

-- Billy - age 4

Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other.'

-- Karl - age 5

Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French fries without making them give you any of theirs.'

-- Chrissy - age 6

Love is what makes you smile when you're tired.'

-- Terri - age 4

Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK.'

-- Danny - age 8

Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and just listen.' -- Bobby - age 7 (Wow!)

'If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate.'

-- Nikka - age 6

'Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it every day.'

-- Noelle - age 7

'Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well.'

-- Tommy - age 6

'During my piano recital, I was on a stage and I was scared. I looked at all the people watching me and saw my daddy waving and smiling. He was the only one doing that. I wasn't scared anymore.'

-- Cindy - age 8

'My mommy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night.'

-- Clare - age 6

'Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken.'

-- Elaine - age 5

'Love is when Mommy sees Daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Robert Redford.'

-- Chris - age 7

'Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day.'

-- Mary Ann - age 4

'I know my older sister loves me because she gives me all her old clothes and has to go out and buy new ones.'

-- Lauren - age 4

'When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you.' (what an image!)

-- Karen - age 7

'Love is when Mommy sees Daddy on the toilet and she doesn't think it's gross...'

-- Mark - age 6

'You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget.'

-- Jessica - age 8

And the final one: The winner was a four year old child whose next-door neighbour was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there. When his mother asked what he had said to the neighbour, the little boy said, 'Nothing, I just helped him cry.'



Your Health

4 Signs You Might Have a Blood Clot

An unexpected clot can lead to serious problems and even death. See what can raise your odds of getting one, and watch out for these four warning signs

What's a clot? It's a clump of cells and protein in your blood. A clot helps slow bleeding when you're injured. It usually dissolves as you heal. But if it doesn't, or if it forms when it's not needed, it can clog up or completely block a blood vessel.

What problems can it cause? An unexpected clot can lead to serious problems and even death. In an artery, it can give you a heart attack or a stroke. If it happens in a vein, you can feel pain and swelling. A clot deep inside your body is called a deep vein thrombosis (DVT). One in your lungs is a pulmonary embolism (PE). They're both medical emergencies.

Know your chances

You can get a blood clot if you break a bone or pull a muscle badly. But sometimes you may not know why it happened or even realize you have one. There are clues though. Your odds of a clot are higher if you:

- are recovering from surgery or had to sit for many hours on a flight or in a wheelchair
- are overweight or obese
- have diabetes or high cholesterol, and
- are over 60.

Clue: Swelling

When a clot slows or stops the flow of blood, it can build up in the vessel and make it swell. If it happens in your lower leg or calf, it's often a sign of DVT. But you also can have a clot in your arms or belly. Even after it goes away, one in three people still have swelling and sometimes pain and sores from damage to the blood vessel.

Clue: Skin colour

If a clot plugs up veins in your arms or legs, they may look bluish or reddish. Your skin also might stay dis-



coloured from the damage to blood vessels afterward. A PE in your lung could make your skin pale, bluish, and clammy.

Clue: Pain

Sudden, intense chest pain could mean the clot has broken off and caused a PE. Or it could be a sign that a clot in your artery gave you a heart attack. If so, you also might feel pain in your arm, especially on the left. A clot often hurts where it's located, like in your lower leg, stomach, or under your throat.

Clue: Trouble breathing

This is a serious symptom. It could be a sign that you have a clot in your lung or your heart. Your heart might also race, or you may feel sweaty or faint.

Location: Lung

A clot can give you different symptoms based on where it is. A PE can give you a fast pulse, chest pain, bloody cough, and shortness of breath. Get to the hospital right away. You also might have no signs.

Location: Heart

This can feel similar to a clot in the lung. But if it's a heart attack, you also might feel nausea and light-headedness along with the chest pain. Either way, get to a hospital right away.

Location: Brain

Pressure builds when blood can't flow normally. A severe blockage sometimes can lead to a stroke. Without oxygen from the blood, your brain cells start to die in minutes. A clot in your brain can cause headaches, confusion, seizures, speech problems, and weakness, sometimes on just one side of the body.

Location: Belly

Often, you have no symptoms at all. Blocked veins in the stomach or esophagus, a tube that connects it to your throat, can rip and leak blood. That can hurt a lot. You may poop or vomit blood, and your stool might look black and smell unusually bad.

Location: Kidneys

Also called renal vein thrombosis, these clots usually grow slowly and mostly in adults. You

probably won't have symptoms unless a piece breaks off and lodges in your lung. Rarely, especially in children, it can happen fast and cause nausea, fever, and vomiting. You also might have blood in your pee and go less often.

If you suspect a blood clot

See your doctor or go to the hospital right away. A clot can be deadly, and you won't know for sure you have it until you get checked. Your doctor may give you a clot-busting drug or surgically thread a thin tube to the site of the clot to dissolve it.

Prevention tips

You can act to lower your odds of a clot.

First, keep a healthy weight, eat right, and exercise.

Don't sit or stay still for long, especially after a long trip or surgery.

If you're a desk jockey, get up and move at least every couple of hours. Flex your legs, feet, and toes in your chair.

Check if tight-fitting compression socks or garments can help your blood flow.

Ask your doctor if you might need to take clot-fighting drugs called anticoagulants.

Reviewed by James Beckerman, MD - WebMD

11 Reasons to Add More Ginger to Your Diet

Certain chemical compounds in fresh ginger help your body ward off germs. They're especially good at halting growth of bacteria like E.coli and shigella, and they may also keep viruses like RSV at bay.

Keeps your mouth healthy

Ginger's antibacterial power may also brighten your smile. Active compounds in ginger called gingerols keep oral bacteria from growing. These bacteria are the same ones that can cause periodontal disease, a serious gum infection.

Calms nausea

The old wives' tale may be true: Ginger helps if you're trying to ease a queasy stomach, especially during pregnancy. It may work by breaking up and getting rid of built-up gas in your intestines. It might also

help settle seasickness or nausea caused by chemotherapy.

Soothes sore muscles

Ginger won't whisk away muscle pain on the spot, but it may tame soreness over time. In some studies, people with muscle aches from exercise who took ginger had less pain the next day than those who didn't.

Eases arthritis symptoms

Ginger is an anti-inflammatory, which means it reduces swelling. That may be especially helpful for treating symptoms of both rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis. You might get relief from pain and swelling either by taking ginger by mouth or by using a ginger compress or patch on your skin.

Curbs cancer growth

Some studies show that bioactive molecules in ginger may slow down the growth of some cancers like colorectal, gastric, ovarian, liver, skin, breast, and prostate cancer. But much more research is needed to see if this is true.

Lowers blood sugar

One recent small study suggested that ginger may help your body use insulin better. Larger studies are needed to see if ginger could help improve blood sugar levels.

Eases period pains

Got menstrual cramps? Ginger powder may help. In studies, women who took 1,500 milligrams of ginger powder once a day for 3 days during their cycle felt less pain than women who didn't.

Lowers cholesterol

A daily dose of ginger may help you battle your "bad" or LDL cholesterol levels. In a recent study, taking 5 grams of ginger a day for 3 months lowered people's LDL cholesterol an average of 30 points.

Protects against disease

Ginger is loaded with antioxidants, compounds that prevent stress and damage to your body's DNA. They may help your body fight off chronic diseases like high blood pressure, heart disease, and diseases of the lungs, plus promote healthy aging.

Relieves indigestion

If you live with chronic indigestion, also called dyspepsia, ginger could bring some relief. Ginger before meals may make your system empty faster, leaving less time for food to sit and cause problems.

Melinda Ratini, DO, MS - WebMD



Helping fans beat the blues

Shilpa Shetty shares tips, Bhumi Pednekar, Parineeti Chopra become Covid-19 warriors

With the second wave of COVID-19 cases sweeping across India and lockdowns in place in Maharashtra, Delhi and Kerala, Bollywood stars are stepping in to keep up the spirits during this crisis. Here's a look, as reported by Bindu Rai of Gulf News:

Bhumi Pednekar: After recently recovering from the coronavirus, the Bollywood star took up the mantle of a "COVID warrior" and extended support to her fans and followers on social media. Sharing a statement Pednekar wrote on Instagram: "#COVIDWARRIOR Dear All, I have created a highlight where I will be identifying resources to enable facilitation & access to medical supplies, plasma request and donors as the case may be." She asked fans to support her. Instilling the people with hope, she added: "This initiative is my small contribution to the huge battle that lies ahead to us. Please be patient & don't lose hope! We're in this together. Love, Bhumi."

Alia Bhatt: The actress, who is currently in the Maldives with Ranbir Kapoor, has been posting about the Covid-19 vaccination and safety measures on her Instagram Story. The actress and her beau both battled

the virus during the second wave and have taken time off right now to recover during the Maharashtra lockdown.

Parineeti Chopra: The actress, who has been the busiest perhaps during Covid-19 with two films releasing while a third is in the pipeline, also posted a picture on Instagram with the message: "Match it with your outfit if you want, but WEAR THAT MASK!" Her films '*The Girl on the Train*' and '*Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar*' are already out, while '*Saina*' was set to release on Amazon Prime on April 23.

Rahul Bose: The '*Bombay Begums*' actor shared words of encouragement with his followers on social media at a time when India is battling the second wave of Covid-19.

"Anger, exhaustion, confusion, despair, feed off each other. Infighting inevitably follows. How many times have we seen this in sport. A team that was winning in the first half, suddenly staring at a massive defeat in the second," he

wrote on Instagram. "The only way to break this is to gather again, take a deep breath, believe in each other, list where things are going wrong, go back to what worked for the team, and then push harder than ever before to implement those solutions. #winthis."

Bipasha Basu: The actress, who has been away from Bollywood for a while now, uploaded an image of her meditating on Instagram. In the caption, she wrote: "Prayers for all. Humanity is the need of the hour." On the work front, Basu was last seen in Vikram Bhatt's 2020 web series '*Dangerous*' opposite husband Karan Singh Grover.

Shilpa Shetty Kundra: The Bollywood actress gave her Instagram followers tips to de-stress during the pandemic. "The lockdown and other restrictions due to the rising cases can lead to a lot of stress. But, we have to stand united and do what we need to do. Foremost, we need to ensure our own bodies don't fall prey to the effects of restricted movements. It's important to keep the muscles and joints flexible & agile, while tending to our immunity. So, this morning, I decided to make the routine a little tougher for myself. I chose to do the Gatyatmak Utthita Padahasthasana, leading to Naukasana [yoga poses]. This flow helps build core strength, stretches the hamstring, tones the abs muscles, and strengthens the muscles of the arms, shoulders & thighs. Do try this flow, but remember to only stretch as much as your body permits. Don't force anything. Stay safe, maintain social distance, and please mask up when you step out (if you have to)."

Elnaaz Norouzi: In Bollywood every actress has to look pretty for every role

Elnaaz Norouzi, who was recently seen in the film "*Hello Charlie*" feels while Bollywood is undergoing many changes, the industry has to stop looking at actresses as just glamour quotients in the films.

Asked if Bollywood needs to change the mentality of looking at actresses as just pretty faces, Elnaaz says: "It does need to change in our industry. The same notion is not followed in many other film industries but in Bollywood every actress needs to look pretty and for every role, they have to wear a lot of makeup. It is

changing for the better now and I really glad about it."

"I don't just want to be part of films where my only job is to look pretty and dance. I also want to take up parts where I can show my acting calibre, just how I did with '*Sacred Games*,'" the Iranian-German actress told IANS.

Elnaaz's role in "*Hello Charlie*" was that of Mona, a traditional 'vamp' prototype of Hindi films who is trying help her lover and the film's villain (played by Jackie Shroff) pull off his vile plan. She triggers off an impor-

tant plot point.

"The primary reason for doing the film was the fact that my character was the catalyst to the entire story being in motion. I remember when my team and I were discussing, whether or not, I should do '*Hello Charlie*', the most important point that came up was I would be doing something in the film. In a film where there are so many actors, it is easy to forget a character in the whole narrative. It happens a lot, especially to a woman's character," says the actress.



From Deepika Padukone to Priyanka Chopra, here are social media sensations

The famed and fabulous are realizing the power of social media now more than ever. Here's a look at some, from Priyanka Chopra Jonas to Deepika Padukone who are reaching out to fans through their Insta, YouTube and Twitter pages - and having some fun while doing it. A report by Nilanjana G. Javed of Gulf News:

Madhuri Dixit: Madhuri may have taken a long hiatus from starhood, but when she came back she did so with purpose. And then didn't just stop at TV or the big screen. She's a bona fide YouTuber with more than 800,000 subscribers. On this channel she offers up recipes and other tit-bits.

Alia Bhatt: Alia has got a YouTube channel with 1.5 million subscribers, and she uses it to promote a healthy lifestyle; there are food and fitness videos alike.

Deepika Padukone: When Deepika deleted all her old posts in the New Year fans were stumped. And upset. Fortunately, that conspicuous absence didn't last long, the actor was back with a vengeance. Happy, empowering messages, memes and other fun stuff is filling up the reel.

Kartik Aaryan: Kartik has not only played the role of interviewee many times but also interviewer - his YouTube channel's series '*Koki poochega*' sees him asking questions of A-listers including Anupama Chopra and Farah Khan.

Priyanka Chopra: Beauty queen-turned-actor Priyanka Chopra is no novice at reinvention, and her social media profile proves it. Just over the past year she's written a book ('*Unfinished*'), opened a restaurant (Sona) all the while sharing glimpses of her fabulous life. No wonder she's accumulated 61.7 million followers.

Shah Rukh Khan: The actor likes to stay in touch with his fan base and if you keep an eye on his Twitter feed quite often you'll find a healthy back and forth between fan and star. It keeps the well-wishers checking on his channels often and with enthusiasm.

Malaika Arora: Malaika has slogged her way to fame - as a fitness buff with oodles of knowledge. That dedication to staying healthy has gotten her 12.6 million Instagram followers, who love her food and exercise tips.

Jacqueline Fernandez: A star through and through, her insta fans are proof of that. She has over 10.7 million followers who watch with rapt attention as the actor posts fun -and sometimes funny - selfies.



Divyanka Tripathi to Rubina Dilaik - TV celebs spread a message of positivity and hope

As India fights the second wave of Covid-19, TV celebs are sending out a message of hope, positivity, staying fit and more. Recently, a few of them took to their social media handles to spread the word and urge people to not let the situation take a toll on their physical and mental health, reports Times of India. Take a look:

Divyanka Tripathi urges everyone to contribute in spreading positivity

Yeh Hai Mohabbatein actress Divyanka Tripathi recently shared her pretty pictures with a message to not let oneself succumb to the distressing situation. She wrote, "If we are seeing are stories of distress and dismay on daily basis. But should we succumb to it and stay depressed,

or should we lift up our spirits and keep moving on our paths? Slight enthusiasm & tiny smiles...every-one's little contribution in keeping it positive will create a world of a difference."

Gurmeet Choudhary asks all to stay strong

Gurmeet, who has been helping many during these tough times, asked everyone to stay strong and help each other. He tweeted, "Sleepless night, tension, stress v all r going through this seeing the things happening around us but I want you all to remember don't let it

affect you be strong and help each other not physically but virtually, mentally everything is possible and I'm here for you.#COVID19India"

Rubina Dilaik urges everyone to keep a check on their health

BB14 winner Rubina Dilaik recently shared a workout video and created awareness about how it is important for all to stay healthy. Sending a message about how staying healthy is most important, she wrote, "Nothing is more important than our health! And today's harsh reality is teaching us the lesson... The best contribution towards the nation right now is staying healthy ourselves... do your bit."

Shaheer Sheikh says 'Stay positive'

Yeh Rishtey Hain Pyaar Ke actor Shaheer Sheikh talked about how each person can do their bit. He wrote, "In these dark testing times for humanity it's important to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Maybe a smile can't cure a disease but it can give courage and hope to people to fight back. Do ur bit, stay positive and work for a better tomorrow #Hope"

'Kumkum Bhagya' completes seven years, Sriti Jha thanks Ekta Kapoor for 'making this magic happen'

Ekta Kapoor also posted a video where the cast of Kumkum Bhagya thanked fans and congratulated each other on completing seven years. The Sriti Jha-Shabir Ahluwalia starrer airs on Zee TV.

On Thursday, Zee TV's popular daily *Kumkum Bhagya* completed seven years of being on air. Starring Shabir Ahluwalia and Sriti Jha in the lead role as Abhi and Pragma, the show has been a favourite among masses from the time of its launch. On that special day, Sriti and producer Ekta Kapoor took to Instagram to thank the team and fans for being such a strong support.

Calling the last seven years the best time in her life, Sriti wrote, 'my heart is a puddle of joy today', adding that she has met little pieces of her heart on *Kumkum Bhagya*. "It has taught me the

true meaning of serendipity... there can't be a happier coincidence than bringing together of some of the most amazing people. Most of all thank you @ektarkapoor for making this magic happen... every single person who has been on the show has a special place in my life...", she wrote.

She further thanked her co-star Shabir and her fans, as she posted, "I can go on and on and on but my vocabulary fails me. *Har khushi shabdo me bayaan nahi hoti...* (Everything cannot be put into words). @shabirahluwalia what a pleasure it is to have front row seats to the magic you create between action and cut and beyond. And the fans... *tum logo ne to din bana diya itni yaadein taza karke... sabko dher dher saara pyaar* (You guys made our day by sharing all beautiful memories)."

Ekta Kapoor, on her part, shared a video with the entire cast congratulating each other, and thanking fans for their love. Shabir Ahluwalia mentioned how the show became what it is only because of its loyal audience, while the newer generation Mugdha Chapekar and Krishna Kaul hoped that *Kumkum Bhagya* would go on to become the longest running television serial.

"Celebrating 7 years of Love, togetherness and compassion! Celebrating 7 years of *Kumkum Bhagya*. A big thank you to all our fans for showering the show and the actors with love and affection," Ekta captioned the post.



YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

Your business affairs will thrive, but always remain on your guards for your competitors are tough. Don't indulge in self-pity; rather, think of the problems from which you're free and appreciate all that life offers you.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 11, 19, 20, 27, 30

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

Some luck on the financial plane, but avoid overrating your undertakings. An ideal week to declare one's burning love. It will be necessary to watch over your children more closely, don't let them go out in the evening during the week.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 12, 17, 20, 21, 33

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

If you live as a couple, it'll be necessary to water down your wine in order to avoid tensions with your partner. You'll win if you learn to take life as it comes; stop asking yourself too many questions. Your children will give you many satisfactions.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 9, 11, 16, 17, 20

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

Long-term unemployed people will have a chance to find a job. If you work, opportunities of promotion or expansion will present themselves to you. Beware of aggressiveness: try to remain cool in all your relationships.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 9, 10, 11, 16, 30

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

In your work, trust your own intuition and not the advice of your entourage. A very good week to carry out daring financial transactions; if you play your cards well, by taking calculated risks, you'll be able to develop your material situation.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 8, 12, 15, 20, 21

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

If you manage your budget with rigour, you'll get the satisfaction of improving your resources. Single people, you could discover love at first sight! Don't meddle with the private lives of other people, you'll be better off that way.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 8, 19, 20, 23, 25

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

Be on your guard against certain of your friends. Luck will be on your side in a joint venture or in financial transactions. If you wish to continue your life journey with your present partner, you'll have to modify the nature of your relations.

Lucky Numbers: 14, 15, 19, 23, 24, 25

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

It will be quite difficult for you to communicate with your family entourage; you'll make great efforts, but your close ones will hardly be expansive; don't become discouraged: dialogue can finally be established.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 9, 15, 16, 20, 21

Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

Try to adapt yourself gracefully to certain changes imposed by the events. In your love life, you'll be enterprising, and this unusual tactic will bear its fruits. Unexpected and indispensable expenses will oblige you to make severe cuts in your budget.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 5, 9, 12, 15, 32

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

You'll be able to improve your social condition and to enjoy appreciable material comfort. Moreover, you'll enjoy unforgettable hours with your love. The stars will support your professional efforts, and you'll obtain very satisfactory results.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 17, 20, 30, 34, 35

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

You'll be inclined to be morose; it will be necessary to react, by forcing yourself only to see the positive side of things. A sentimental disappointment won't be impossible; but this event won't take on exaggerated proportions: you'll quickly recover your balance.

Lucky Numbers: 10, 16, 20, 34, 36, 38

Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

Luck in business should be present. Your love affairs will be favoured by fortune. By showing yourself understanding and tolerant, you'll not leave anybody indifferent in your entourage; you'll instantaneously attract sympathy.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 7, 9, 30, 34, 40



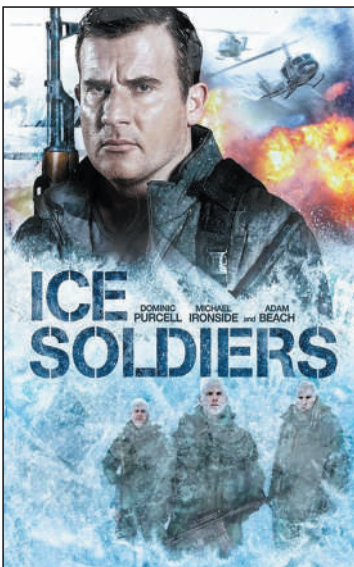
Vendredi 30 Avril - 21.15
Darkest Hour



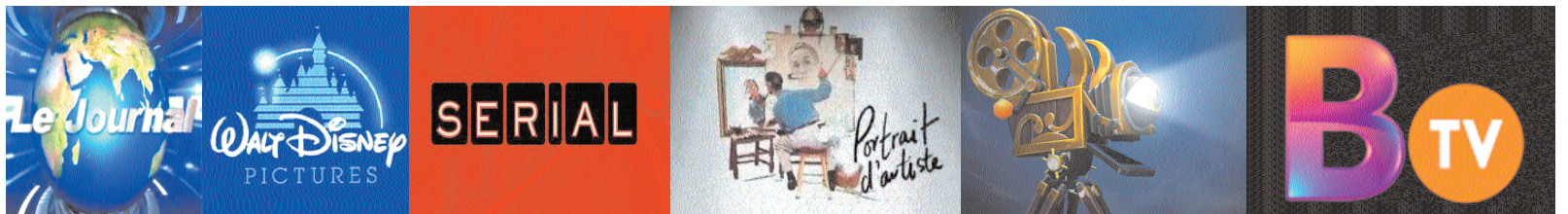
Samedi 1 Mai - 21.20

Ice Soldiers

Starring: Dominic Purcell, Adam Beach, Gabriel Hogan



Dimanche 2 Mai - 21.15

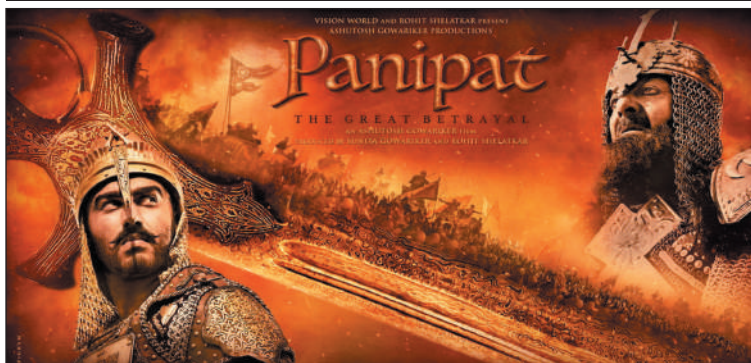


	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV		
vendredi 30 avril	07.00 Dessin Anime 10.35 Serial: Radio Free Roscoe 11.10 Tele: Soleil Levant 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.50 MBC Talent Show 14.20 D.Anime: The Hive 14.27 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà... 14.48 D.Anime: Robot Trains 15.09 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 15.25 D.Anime: Kung Fu Panda 15.55 Film: 00K9 - Double O.K Nine 17.00 Serial: Mustangs FC 17.30 Live - Covid-19 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.20 Prod: Lottery Vert Draw 20.30 Local: Fashion Festival Mau... 21.25 Serial: Seal Team 23.35 Mag: Eye On SADC	10.00 Serial: Ki Jaana Mein Kaun 11.05 Serial: Zun Mureed 12.04 Film: Tu Mari Ass Pas Che Starring : Jayesh More, Chirag Trivedi, Hardika Joshi 13.57 DDI Magazine 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.34 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.34 Serial: Bava Maradallu 16.19 Serial: Suno Chanda 16.07 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 16.40 Serial: Achra Ke Moti 17.01 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.35 Serial: Chhanchhan 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 DDI Magazine 19.05 Journal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Serial: Band Khirkiyan 20.43 Local: Anjuman 21.18 Local: Urdu Programe	06.00 Mag: Eco India 06.26 Mag: Shift 06.38 Mag: Sur Mesure 07.46 Mag: Science Ou Fiction 08.12 Doc: 360 GEO 09.46 Doc: Solar Storms 10.29 Doc: Too Good For The... 11.49 Mag: Border Crossing 12.20 Mag: Tomorrow Today 12.44 Mag: Science Ou Fiction 13.10 Doc: 360 GEO 15.30 Doc: Too Good For The... 15.56 Mag: Eco India 16.22 Mag: Shift 16.34 Mag: Border Crossing 17.01 Mag: Tomorrow Today 17.27 Mag: Science Ou Fiction 17.53 Doc: Screen Generation 20.05 Mag: Euromaxx 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.40 Doc: Wildlife Heroes	01.27 Film: Dominion 03.16 Serial: Hawaii 5-0 03.58 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive... 05.23 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.01 Serial: 19-2 07.09 Film: Gun Fury 09.00 Serial: Chicago Fire 09.45 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.00 Serial: Chicago Med 12.00 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive... 13.34 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: Gun Fury 16.40 Serial: Chicago Fire 17.20 Serial: 19-2 18.05 Tele: Daneilla 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: Reckoning 21.15 Film: Darkest Hour 22.45 Tele: Muneca Brava	08.00 Film: Angaaray 12.05 / 19.54 - Sanjivani 12.30 / 20.11 - Radha Krishna 12.44 / 20.32 - Agniphera 13.07 / 21.09 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.29 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.49 / 21.46 - Naagin S3 14.35 / 21.59 - Ikyawann 14.51 / 22.25 - Mere Sai - Shradha Aur Saburi 15.21 Film: 102 Not Out Starring: Amitabh Bachchan, Rishi Kapoor 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.52 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka 19.11 Serial: Bhakharwadi 19.38 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak		
	samedi 1 mai	06.00 D.Anime: Mega Man 06.35 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis... 06.46 D.Anime: Dinofroz 07.13 D.Anime: Dee Dee The Little... 07.35 D.Anime: Wishfart 07.57 D.Anime: Oum Le Dauphin... 08.22 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies 08.24 D.Anime: Martin Morning 12.00 Le Journal 12.35 Tele: Daniella 14.50 D.Anime: The Hive 15.09 D.Anime: The Twisted Whisk 15.20 Film: Moi, Moche Et Méch... 16.46 Serial: Nowhere Boys 17.15 Local: Info En Langue 17.30 Live - Covid-19 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Entertainment: Dance 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.25 Local: Le Rendez Vous 21.20 Film: Ice Soldiers 23.00 Le Journal	07.00 Film: Nanha Farishta 09.13 Serial: Vir: The Robot Boy 10.00 Bade Acchelagte Hai 12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhya Bhare 12.26 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 12.49 Serial: High School 13.11 Annakodiyum Ainthus Pengalum 13.37 Serial: Anu Pallavi 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.21 Film: Khajoor Pe Atke Starring: Vinay Pathak, Suneeta Sengupta, Alka Amin 17.20 Mag: DDI Magazine 19.00 Live: Journal Kreol 20.06 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha 20.29 Serial: Bitti Business 21.00 Film: Panipat Starring: Arjun Kapoor, Sanjay Dutt, Kriti Sanon 23.41 DDI Live	06.00 Doc: Screen Generation 06.47 Mag: Global 3000 07.13 Mag: Euromaxx 07.42 Doc: Wildlife Heroes 08.34 Le Monde Des Couleurs 09.30 Local: Messe Du 1er Mai 10.48 Doc: Screen Generation 11.30 Mag: Arts And Culture 11.43 Mag: Global 3000 12.09 Mag: Euromaxx 12.38 Doc: Wildlife Heroes 13.30 Mag: Japan Video Topics... 13.34 Doc: An Adventure In Trans... 16.03 Doc: Screen Generation 20.05 Mag: Check In 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.40 Doc: 360 GEO 21.32 Doc: Destinations 21.45 Doc: SOS Animaux En... 22.37 Doc: The Forest Rescuers 23.19 Doc: The Warsaw Ghetto 00.01 Doc: Amazing Gardens	01.26 Film: Darkest Hour 02.56 Serial: Dynasty 2 03.37 Film: Death Fighter 05.05 Tele: Esmeraldas 05.47 Serial: Reckoning 06.55 Film: Avenging The Throne 08.30 Serial: Mike Hammer 09.20 Serial: The Enemy Within 10.02 Serial: 12 Monkeys 10.40 Film: Cop Dog 12.15 Serial: Dynasty 2 13.00 Serial: Chicago Med 15.05 Tele: Amanda 15.48 Tele: Muneca Brava 16.30 Mag: Hollywood On Set 17.00 Serial: Reckoning 17.45 Film: Monstre Sur Command 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Series: Reckoning 21.15 Film: Flawless 22.45 Tele: Dulce Amor	04.05 Sanjivani 04.26 Radha Krishna 04.48 Agniphera 05.09 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 05.31 Zindagi Ki Mehek 05.55 Ikyawann 06.13 Mere Sai - Shradha Aur... 06.36 Bin Kuch Kahe 07.23 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka 07.18 Serial: Bhakharwadi 08.00 Zindagi Ki Mehek 09.47 Motu Patlu 10.12 Siddhi Vinayak 11.38 Serial: Bhakharwadi 14.00 Sanjivani 16.00 Pavitra Rishta 18.30 Film: Manikarnika Star: Kangana Ranaut, Jishu Sengupta, Danny Denzongpa 20.51 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 21.37 Serial: Naagin	
		dimanche 2 mai	06.00 D.Anime: Mega Man: Fully... 06.24 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis A... 07.56 D.Anime: Oum Le Dauphin... 09.30 Mag: Future Mag 10.00 Local: Zafan Nou Zil 10.30 Serial: Backstage 12.00 Le Journal 12.40 Tele: Daniella 15.05 D.Anime: The Hive 15.35 D.Anime: Robot Trains 15.47 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 16.00 Film: Alpha And Omega 6 17.00 Serial: Project MC 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Local: Yeh Shaam Mastani 19.30 Le Journal 20.10 Local: Groove'In - Kafé Kiltir 21.15 Film: Gabriel Stars: Andy Whitfield, Dwaine Stevenson, Samantha Noble 23.05 Le Journal	07.00 Film: Bombay Ka Babu Starring: Dev Anand, Suchitra Sen, Jeevan, Nasir Hussain 09.17 Mag: DDI Magazine 10.00 Excerpts Of Shrimad Bhagwat Maha Puran Ki Katha 11.09 Serial: Oru Kai Osai 11.31 Serial: Santoshi Maa 12.00 Film: Housefull 4 Starring - Akshay Kumar, Sam Nagar, Riteish Deshmukh 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.20 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 15.45 Eka Lagnachi Teesri Gosht 16.06 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 17.00 Serial: Mahakali 17.42 Serial: Kisna 18.30 Local: Tipa Tipa Nu Avance 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Serial: Mann Mein Vishwas..	06.00 Mag: Amazing Gardens 06.26 Doc: Look And Act 06.50 Doc: The World From Above 07.44 Doc: 360 GEO 08.42 Doc: Destination 10.29 Doc: The Warsaw Ghetto 11.18 Doc: Amazing Gardens 11.44 Doc: Look And Act 12.06 Mag: Check In 14.31 Doc: Destinations 17.28 Doc: The World From Above 18.00 Mag: Tendance XXI 18.35 Local: Talk On Ramadan 20.05 Mag: Happiness Is On The... 20.30 Local Prod: News (English) 20.40 Doc: Comme Une Envie... 21.32 Doc: Destination 22.38 Doc: Treasures In The Sand 23.20 Doc: The Memory Illusion 00.02 Mag: Tendance XXI 00.52 Doc: Garden Party	00.20 Serial: The Good Doctor 02.57 Serial: Hawaai Five-0 03.38 Film: Ice Soldiers 05.09 Tele: Esmeraldas 05.50 Serial: Reckoning 06.32 Film: Cassidy Red 08.00 Serial: Mike Hammer 09.19 Film: Flawless 10.44 Film: Monstre Sur Command 12.20 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 13.03 Serial: Chicago Med 15.05 Telenovela: Amanda 15.45 Tele: Muneca Brava 16.29 Mag: Close Up 17.00 Serial: Reckoning 17.45 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 18.30 Serial: Supercopter 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: The Good Doctor 21.15 Film: Trash 23.13 Tele: Dulce Amor	00.40 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 02.04 Sanjivani 04.06 Pavitra Rishta 05.33 Film: Manikarnika Starring: Kangana Ranaut, Jishu Sengupta, Danny Denzongpa 08.01 Motu Patlu 08.11 Karn Sangini 09.58 Jaana Na Dil Se Door 11.42 Piya Albela 13.31 Agniphera 15.20 Bin Kuch Kahe 17.27 Punar Vivaah 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Film: Hindustani Film 20.55 Entertainment: Dance 21.17 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 23.08 Piya Albela

MBC 2 Samedi 1 Mai - 21.00 Stars: Arjun Kapoor, Sanjay Dutt, Kriti Sanon



Samedi 1 Mai - 18.30 Stars: Kangana Ranaut, Jishu Sengupta, Danny Denzongpa



A Pandora's Box on Paradise Island?

The risks and costs of ICTA's Proposed Amendments appear to far outweigh their likely benefits



Thiruthiraj A. Pather

In any democratic country, citizens should commend and encourage initiatives such as the ongoing public consultation of the ICTA with regard to its 'Proposed Amendments to the ICT Act for Regulating the Use and Addressing the Abuse and Misuse of Social Media in Mauritius'.

The ICTA's Proposed Amendments may seem technically sound at first glance. Yet, these amendments should not be analysed through a biased and/or incomplete approach. Their societal, economic, business, financial, political and legal consequences should be thoroughly and objectively scrutinised through a holistic lens. In this respect, nine key points, *inter alia*, may be considered.

1. Freedom of Expression and Test of Constitutionality

The Proposed Amendments advocate for a "technical toolset" which would interfere with the social media traffic of each Internet user in Mauritius via a filtering system. The social media traffic will be segregated, decrypted, archived, inspected (as and when required) and re-encrypted. All local users would therefore be forced to accept the interference of the ICTA, through the automatic installation of a self-signed certificate, if they wish to access their social media accounts.

Consequently, the Proposed Amendments do not allow for the consent of users and would not pass the test of constitutionality pursuant to Article 12(1) of the Constitution of Mauritius.

In the face of anti-freedom-of-expression measures, Mauritians must reflect on the kind of country and society they want to live in and bequeath to their children.

2. Definitions of Social Media and Technological Convergence

The Proposed Amendments apply solely to social media traffic. In this respect, the ICTA's technical toolset would segregate social media traffic from all incoming and outgoing Internet traffic in Mauritius. Yet, today, there is no universally-accepted definition of Social Media and the Consultation Paper does not shed any light on the definition chosen by the ICTA.

As the technological convergence phenomenon broadens, the boundaries

between social media and non-social media traffic will increasingly blur. The implications of such a phenomenon must be understood as they will determine the scope of the Proposed Amendments in terms of Internet traffic which may be intercepted.

3. The Independence of the NDEC Members

The competencies, independence and ethical conduct of each and every member of the National Digital Ethics Committee (NDEC) are fundamental to the effectiveness of the Proposed Amendments. Yet, the Consultation Paper does not define the criteria which will be used to objectively and openly assess independence, calibre and repute of these members.

4. A Treasure Trove for Hackers

The Governments of the US and other advanced economies, and even giant tech companies like Facebook and Google, are not immune from the risk of cyberattacks and the dire consequences of data breaches, as demonstrated by last year's cyberattacks whereby thousands of organisations across the globe, including several departments/agencies of the US Federal Government, the NATO, the UK Government, the European Parliament, Microsoft were targeted.

In the face of such events, we can, rightly so, question the ability of Mauritius to set up and maintain a technical system which would be immune from cyberattacks. Will the Proposed Amendments not create a treasure trove for hackers and facilitate their tasks?

Most importantly, will the Proposed Amendments not put the State of Mauritius in a situation where it will put at risk the privacy and safety of the citizens it is bound to protect and defend?

5. The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The European Union (EU) is a critical export market and economic partner for our country. In this connection, companies dealing with data subjects in the EU must comply with the GDPR. The Data Protection Act 2017 was purposely introduced in response to the requirements of the GDPR, given the importance of the EU market for Mauritius. Yet, the Proposed Amendments are awkwardly in contradiction with the EU-GDPR.

With the Proposed Amendments, there is no doubt that companies based in Mauritius will have to inform their EU data subjects that their personal data are being intercepted, decrypted, archived and inspected by the ICTA/State of Mauritius. The following what-if scenarios must, con-



sequently, be considered:

- What if the EU data subjects do not give their consent to such an interception? Should the concerned Mauritian-based companies stop their businesses with their European counterparts? Should these companies relocate to other jurisdictions? If so, what would be the likely business, economic and social effects for Mauritius?
- What if Mauritian companies are found to be in violation of the GDPR due to the technical toolset and legal provisions forced on them by the ICTA? Will the ICTA/State of Mauritius pay for the applicable fines of up to EUR 20 million per company?
- What if the personal data of EU data subjects intercepted and archived by the ICTA are hacked and freely disseminated worldwide through online platforms? What would be the impact of such an incident on the international reputation of Mauritius?

6. The International Reputation of Mauritius

The Mauritian jurisdiction is currently blacklisted by the EU and the UK. We can no more count on the DTAA with India to bolster the Global Business sector. The competitiveness of the country's tax regime is eroding due to external pressures (OECD & EU) and the fragile position of public finances. What about democracy?

In its 'Democracy Report 2021', the V-Dem Institute classified Mauritius among the top-10 autocratising countries in the world, highlighting that "Mauritius is only an electoral democracy."

Given the current context, bearing in mind the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our economy, can we afford to further jeopardise the democratic image of Mauritius and further erode its global competitiveness?

7. Tourists and Foreign Investors, High-Calibre Professionals and HNWI

As Mauritius gradually moves out of the Covid-19 sanitary crisis, the borders will be re-opened. Potential tourists will be aggressively enticed to visit our "pristine beaches". Foreign investors, high-calibre

professionals and High-Net-Worth Individuals (HNWI) will be proactively and strongly convinced to invest in or relocate to Mauritius.

Will potential tourists, foreign investors, high-calibre professionals and high-net-worth individuals be eager to visit, do business with or relocate to a country where their personal data will be legally intercepted, decrypted, archived and inspected? If not, what are the likely effects on the Mauritian economy?

8. A Treasure Trove for Politically-Motivated Individuals (PMIs)

The reservoir of personal data, which will be created and maintained by the ICTA, will not only be a treasure trove for hackers, it will also be one for PMIs. It is therefore judicious to ask ourselves the following questions:

- Will the NDEC be capable of formulating effective safeguards whilst tech-pioneering countries are yet to formulate any fail-proof safeguards in relation to such matters and are facing much difficulty in fighting the dark web?
- What if the political neutrality of the ICTA officers, entrusted with the responsibility to use the proposed "data analysis software with an advanced reporting feature" to analyse intercepted traffic, is compromised?
- What if the ICTA's reservoir of personal data falls under the control of a group of politically-motivated individuals powered by artificial-intelligence technologies? What would be the impact on the functioning of the country's democratic system?
- What if the personal data of high-ranking Mauritian politicians are leaked to foreign agencies? What would be the impact on our country's sovereignty and geopolitical strategy?

Overall, the risks and costs of the Proposed Amendments appear to far outweigh their likely benefits.

Whilst the ICTA rightly strives to effectively address the pressing issue of social media misuse, it must make sure that its proposed actions do not lead to the creation of a Pandora's Box which can wreak havoc on our Paradise Island.

Former French government scholarship holder, Thiruthiraj Pather is the founder of the consulting firm Lapidus Azuri Consulting. He has over 14 years of professional experience in the areas of corporate strategy, investment and business intelligence, having worked with large foreign and Mauritian companies. In 2016-17, he played a major role, as consultant, in the development of the 2017-2026 national master plan for SMEs in Mauritius.