Editor's View

Your best investment

this year

IF YOU want to understand why the taps in Chatsworth ran dry and why your tap is next, you'd need to understand how

dy and why your mean the first, your freet or micesain role to the city spends its money.

eThekwini will spend well over R50 billion in the current financial year, money it raises from, you from various services and taxes. From this, the city allocates just under R10bn for

water.

Most of the money, just over R3bn, goes towards buying
water. The city then budgets to give away, for free, water worth
ust over R1bn. It spends a further R1bn paying staff. However,
t spends less than half a billion rand (R498 million) on repairs

ust over K10n. It spentos a numer action per second to the spends less than half a billion rand (R498 million) on repairs and maintenance. Put differently, for every R100 the city allocates for water, a nere R5 goes towards maintaining its ageing infrastructure. You don't have to be an expert of any kind to know it is not enough A5 a result, the pumps and pipes are breaking more often. Already, the time it takes to fix a problem has moved from the control of the cont

hours to days.

So, unless the politicians have a rethink on how the city spends its money, your best investment this year could be a storage tank or some buckets should the water tankers arrive.

Look who has become a

part of our lives

IF LOAD shedding was a person, it would turn 14 this year. We've had four different presidents since then, but none of them has been able to do much to change the situation of anything, the situation has become progressively worse. It was to be the properties of the situation of the situation. Most affectories and businesses are not running at full capacity due to the coronavirus pandemic. Most office workers are working from home and schools remain closed. As a result, we are using a lot less electricity than we normally would. Yet, we cannot produce enough to keep the lights on.

To solve the problem, we need to produce more electricity. The government has failed us in this regard. Those in power failed to build more power stations and, until recently, the government dia all it could to frustrate potential private producers. So, get your candles ready because, at this rate, it will be years before the situation is resolved. By then we would have marked 21 years of load shedding.

Who is more needy?

THESE days, there are a lot of people who need help. There are also a lot of people who are willing to help.

They have been handing out food parcels, distributing water, cutting overgrown verges and fixing roads. If their only intention was to better their communities, their actions would be noble. But, in an election year, we are sceptical about the intentions of some.

be noble. But, in an election year, we are sceptical about the intentions of some.

Too many political parties and wannabe politicians seem to believe that helping the less fortunate creates the impression that they are good people and this will result in them getting support during the elections.

But how much a person gives should not be an indication of how good or bad he or she is. After all, the person who shares half of the only apple he has is more generous than the person who shares one apple from the packet of apples he has. Furthermore, good leaders empower others. But these days we see more handouts rather than the type of empowerment that changes people's lives. The reason is simple: the needy serve a purpose.

rve a purpose.

It begs the question: Who is more needy? Those who need order to survive or those who need to show what good man beings they are?

COMMENT

WILL I USE IT AT THIS STAGE? NOT YET

Not enough data about Ivermectin's efficacy and dosing



THE Coyle-19 pandemic has put us under pressure, and the uncertainty is unnerving, and the uncertainty is unnerving, and the uncertainty is unnerving, and interval of the pressure and the uncertainty of the pressure is no south Africa, the continent and internationally, there is uncertainty even in the medical world.

All of us, patients and health-care professionals are looking for solutions fast. Some attribute the spread of infection to the mutations. Others attribute it to public health concerns like the festive periods and other social gatherings.

the mutations. Others attribute it to public health concerns like the festive periods and other social gatherings.

However, one thing is certain: people are getting sick and many are dying, and they're dying quickly. Solutions need to be found.

I'm not unaffected as a professional or personally by the pandemic. In the last six months, we have suffered significantly as a family and the distress has been unberable. We have lost four close family members, due to various health-care concerns during the pandemic. This included my father, his sister and my only sister-in-law.

Last week, we lost my game a simple medical condition with a fractured hone, but she eventually, and repertably, died from Covid-19 complications.

I am also looking for solutions to save my own and other patients across Africa, and that includes exploring the options of Ivermectin.

The use of Ivermectin among South

Ivermectin.

The use of Ivermectin among South Africans is topical, and there are many controversies regarding conflicting views on its potential use and benefits. There are also discussions in South Africa on whether there is a perception of purposeful denial of its use or the molecules, as some call it, for the treatment of Covid-19.

When my grandmother was critically ill, the options were limited. Everyone was desperately trying to save her. Did her immediate family use Ivermectin? Yes, they did. Ultimately, it made no difference to her outcome.



THE writer says he is optimistic that clinical data will be provided soon to advise on the potential use of Ivermectin. | IOL

Let us look at some of the facts when it comes to Ivermectin. We know that Ivermectin internationally has been used for various conditions relating to parasitic infections. We also have information that it has been used for various conditions, even in South Africa with special permission for various parasitic infections. This includes scables and others, in which a Section 21 authorisation was provided.

There are discussions taking place on social media between health-care and experimental test of the provided of the pr Let us look at some of the facts when

its use.
To date, there has also been no specific consensus on the potential dosage for the treatment of Covid-19, and the risk of overdose is high, with its related complications.

What is optimistic from these trials is a positive impetus and move to find the potential use of Ivermectin for potential patients and, in some cases, prophylac-tic and or preventative use, to reduce the potential transmissibility of the virus. What has contributed to a lot of the positive utgency in the community is a singular trial in-vitro, or simply put in a test tube, which found that bremectin had reduced the replication of the virus outside of the human body by a factor of more than 5 000. However, that is not enough to find that it is clinically safe in South Africa. We don't have enough dedicated data to say Ivermectin will work 100% or at least enough positive data yet that is scientifically acceptable. Do I want it to be positive data? Yes, 100%. Will I use it at this stage? Not yet. There is not enough safe data about its efficacy, its dosing and potential value for treatments right now. What has contributed to a lot of the

its efficacy, its dosing and potential value for treatments right now.

Many have opined that there are other factors that may be influencing the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) outside of science.

The current lack of conclusive scientific data to recommend Veremectiris use in South Africa, as well as the lack of proven efficacy from the more than 51 trials internationally, has led to SAHPRA's reluctance to authorise its use.

There is a movement on the continent for the drug. But as of Sunday, and based on the international databases of clinical trials, there appears to be no current registered

there appears to be no current registered clinical trial in South Africa to explore the potential use and/or to document the outcomes of Ivermectin to treat Covid-19

patients.
However, there are also serious dangers

in buying the illegal ivermectin on the black market. In any environment in which there is significant demand, there is the risk of illegal products being packaged as ivermectin.

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death.

So until and unless valid products are brought into South Africa, through reputable sources that are verifiable and confirmed safe, there are risks. There is the risk of poisoning our loved ones and allowing then to be harmed by conscious decisions

poisoning our loved ones and allowing them to be harmed by conscious decisions using illegal products.

According to the UN, at least 30% of the health-care products, including medicines, in Africa are fake. Can we afford to take the chance to use such products?

Do we have conclusive scientific evidence yet, except small pockets of limited studies that prove that I vermectin alone is useful and proven against Covid-19? At this stage, I don't believe we have. Do we have positive indicators moving in that direction? Yes, we do.

But many of the 51 trials are not final-sed and patients are still being recruited to participate or the results are being studied or are still being peet-reviewed. Therefore, I'm optimistic that the scientific community and my peers will soon provide clinical data to act the potential use of the emercial to act the potential to the control of the potential of the control of the potential to the potential of the potential of the potential risks when using illegal products.

illegal products.

Kommal is a medical doctor and former member of the South African Presidential Medical Team. He is chairperson of the Medical Expert Consulting Group and FDA Medical, a SAHPRA-licensed medical devices Medical, a SAHPRA-licensed medical aerices company. Kommal is the first Professor of Practice at North West University. He has completed specialist training in pandemic influenzas, biological weapons and other infectious national security threats by the US Defence Institute of Military Operations.

A VOID IS LEFT WHEN THE GIFTED ONES ARE NO MORE

How do we fill the talent vacuum?



MORE than two million precious lives have been lost worldwide to Covid-19. Each one beloved by kith and kin.

been ost wontowise to Covici-19. Each one belowed by kith and kin.

The precious, treasured lives of more The precious, treasured lives of more than the precious of the first. Daily, our burnanty is being decimated before our eyes. Every life is precious and cherished. We, therefore, mourn the loss of so many fellow beings to the dreaded pandemic. We believe life is priceless because it is our one chance to blossom and to express ourselves. Hence, we make every effort, at great personal and national sacrifice, to minimise the harm we could inflict on others.

For almost a year, we have reduced our contact with others. We have closed busicontact with others, we have closed businesses, schools, sports and entertainment venues, and even houses of worship. We have created distance between ourselves because we do not want to be agents of suffering and death. After all, each life is

suffering and death. After all, each life is precious.

While no one life is more precious than another, some lives are embellished with qualities that stand out. Some people perform more good actions than others.
These are humble giants who have realised that life is o precious that, rather than allowing the sands of time to slip through their hands, they need to seize the moment.
If you ask, leaders about their organisation's greatest assets, most will unhesitatingly respond, "Our people." However, even within organisations, some people are more valued than others because they make a difference in all they do.
They are the ones who possess stellar talent—the kind that can deliver ootimally



KWAZULU-Natal has lost more than 100 nurses, who form the backbone of health-care workers, and the national figure is not far from 1 000, says the writer. | PHANDO JIKELO African News Agency (ANA)

low in proportion to the ordinary masses, a void is left when the gifted ones are no more. Their expertise and experience are not easy to replace. Hence, I have been silently lamenting the major brain drain caused by the minuscule coronavirus. Such

caused by the minuscule coronavirus. Such squander of rare aptitude. Society has been robbed of some great scientists, innovators, experts in their fields, creative thinkers and problem solvers. As the country battles a second wave, fuelled by a more ruthless variant of the virus that is making people even more infectious, we are confronted daily with news of the

neers, business leaders, sports personalities and entertainers of all races.

Despite their best efforts to take the nessaary presentions, man doctors have considered to the control of t

A great number of academics, among them professors of repute, also count among the death toll from Covid-19. It's tragic when a professor dies unexpectedly. It can mean the loss of a valued faculty member, a respected colleague, a favourite instructor or a beloved mentor. Some of the top university academics who have passed on were recognised worldwide for scholarship and expertise in their disciplines of research.

Those who hold the control of the professor of the control of the

Those who hold the moral compass to Those who hold the moral compass to direct society on the right path have also not been spared by the pandemic. Many of religious leaders of all faiths have fallen victim to the virus. While places of worship remain closed under the lockdown, the loss of Christian pastors, Muslim moulanas and Hindu priests will be sorely felt when churches, mosques and temples again allow worshippers when the Covid-19 storm is over.

A challenge for commerce and industry A challenge for commerce and mutuany is how to steer businesses to profitability with so many company chief executives having died suddenly, and with no succession plan in place. I am hopeful chambers of commerce, banks and other financial institutions will provide the necessary guid-ance to help leaderless businesses remain afloat.

afloat.

One more life lost to Covid-19 is one too many. One more leader who gives up the fight to breathe creates a vacuum that is going to be hard to fill.

the fight to breathe creates a vacuum that is going to be hard to fill.

There is no certainty how long this scourge will be around. There could be waves of infection lasting throughout the year, keeping us in crisis mode for months to come. How are we going to fill the empliness caused by the loss of meritorious men and women?

I do not follow astrology or cosmic gurus. I regard their predictions as poppy-cock. The stars, for me, are giant flaming balls of gas. Nothing more, nothing less. They cannot determine you life. They have no control over you, your griffiend, your job, your wallet, your health or what colour clothing you should wear.



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with minimum supervision; the kind that meets and exceeds all performance targets; the kind that moves the dial on profits, brings an innovative mindset and influences others to drive the vision forward. Talented individuals have self-discipline – they are able to manage time and meet deadlines. They produce prime results because they are committed to making sure that every task makes it to the finish line.

Since the number of people who excel is

deaths of people who stood head and shoulders above the rest. These were people who made a significant contribution to improve the lives of others selfless). It would not be fair to mame some of these leaders as this could be misread, as if they shone brighter than those who are not identified. Also, space would not allow for even a fraction of the trailblazers to be acknowledged. We have lost a large rumber of doctors, nurses, teachers, scientists, engl-

putting their own lives at risk because of inadequate personal protective equipment. The pandemic has torn the fabric of the school experience. Hundreds of teachers have died because of Covid-19. In the first week of January this year, at least 32 teachers were reported to have died. The national loss of educators will leave a major gap in the education system as experience and expertise cannot be replaced overnight.

On a dark, cloudless night, admire stars for what they are. Twinkling lights, far, far away, that couldn't care less that we exist. What matters – and what is true – is that while we await a vaccine, only a mask, physical distancing and hand washing can keep you safe.

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