

Listen to Kganyago and reform
by Mpumelelo Mkhabela

The past is certain, the future is opaque
by Leon Wessels

The education and arrival of Salim Abdool Karim

by Sarah Evans

The education and arrival of Salim Abdool Karim

South Africans were on Monday glued to their television screens as Professor Salim Abdool Karim, 59, an immunologist and infectious diseases specialist from KwaZulu-Natal gave a two-hour briefing to the media about the novel coronavirus. Abdool Karim provided clarity and honesty about the spread of Covid-19, explained whether we are "flattening the curve" and what needs to be done before South Africans can return to normality.

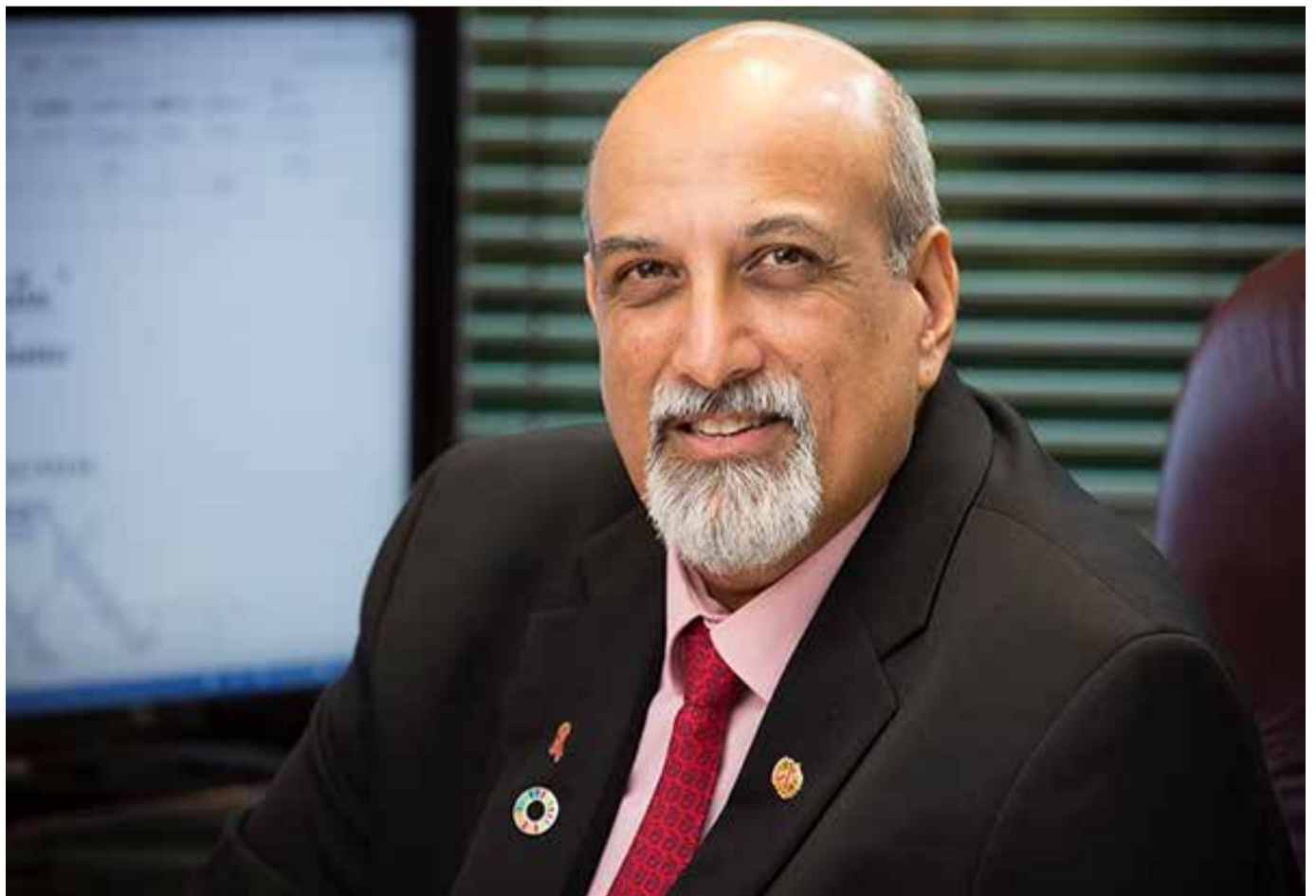
His appearance on an open platform was important. South Africans want to know that the decisions taken by their government are based on incontrovertible facts and proven science. Abdool Karim went into as much detail as the Zoom meeting allowed him to, and the knowledge that the country's most accomplished scientists are guiding government is reassuring.

Investigative reporter Sarah Evans delved into Abdool Karim's background and found that he was known as an activist as much as a physician, and that he has professional ties to Dr Anthony Fauci, dubbed "America's doctor", who is leading the United States' response to the coronavirus. Also, analyst Mpumelelo Mkhabela says there are very good reasons to heed SA Reserve Bank Governor Lesetja Kganyago's exhortations, and former human rights commissioner Leon Wessels says Covid-19 has again exposed old apartheid divides.

There's some smart writing in this edition, and a lot to think about.

Stay inside, only two weeks of lockdown left!

Pieter du Toit
Assistant Editor



THE LEAD

Slim: The life, times and education of Salim Abdool Karim

Professor Salim Abdool Karim, the government's chief advisor on Covid-19, has achieved worldwide acclaim in a career spanning more than thirty years. He has straddled science and activism his whole professional life, and helped stare down Thabo Mbeki on HIV. But this, the battle against the coronavirus, is his moment.

By Sarah Evans



THE BROAD VIEW

Covid-19 exposes old apartheid divides and draws new boundaries

We're now much more certain of the past than we are of the future. The new coronavirus has emphasised old apartheid divides, like spatial planning, and have put up new boundaries between people. The virus "has forcefully reminded us that we have not overcome the vestiges of our past".

By Leon Wessels



OPINION

There are very good reasons to listen to Lesetja Kganyago

The governor of the SA Reserve Bank might sound like a stuck record, but he's playing a consistent tune: reform, reform, reform.

By Mounellelo Mkhabela

OPINION

Covid-19 is giving African governments cover to crack down on media

Many African governments are stifling freedom of expression under the guise of tackling Covid-19, restricting access to information and undermining the basic human rights of ordinary citizens. They must be kept in check.

By William Gumede

OPINION

Why concerns about transparency, quality of data in the fight against Covid-19 are valid

South Africans are making great sacrifices during the national lockdown and we need to understand exactly why we're doing it, and maximum transparency is critical.

By Nicole Fritz

OPINION

Why lockdown extension is tougher for President Ramaphosa

Notwithstanding the acceptance (and necessity) of the almost inevitable exertion of the lockdown, the prolonged Groundhog Day sensation of the routine of a total disruption to the rituals of normal life are likely to take their toll as we move towards the end of April.

By Daniel Silke

Photo of the week



A man prays on the roof of a bus stop in Mitchells Plain while residents protest over food parcels on Day 19 of the national lockdown on 14 April 2020 in Cape Town. Residents are furious with the social development department for not fulfilling its promise of delivering food parcels to them. (Photo: Gallo Images/Die Burger/Jaco Marais)

Editor's pick

- **Anatomy of a lobby: How, and why, coal and nuclear interests are converging:** The coal industry remains at the centre of the South African energy mix, with a strong push still being made to add nuclear energy into the equation. Who are the groups and individuals behind these lobby groups, and what do they want? Sarah Evans reports.
- **SA's world-class scientists, doctors are set to expose our weak political class:** Government and the health department have been given time to prepare for the "wildfire" of Covid-19, but it is going to have to do so with a notoriously underperforming public health system, creaking under the demand for services and battling with a lack of resources, writes Pieter du Toit.
- **Cabinet salary cuts a poor PR stunt by Ramaphosa:** The cuts to ministers' salaries is a PR move by President Ramaphosa and in poor taste. Our country is facing a financial crisis which threatens the future of our economy. Anyone who believes these problems arose only in the past few months is fooling themselves, says Herman Mashaba.