

# MAURITIUS TIMES

*One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors. - Plato*

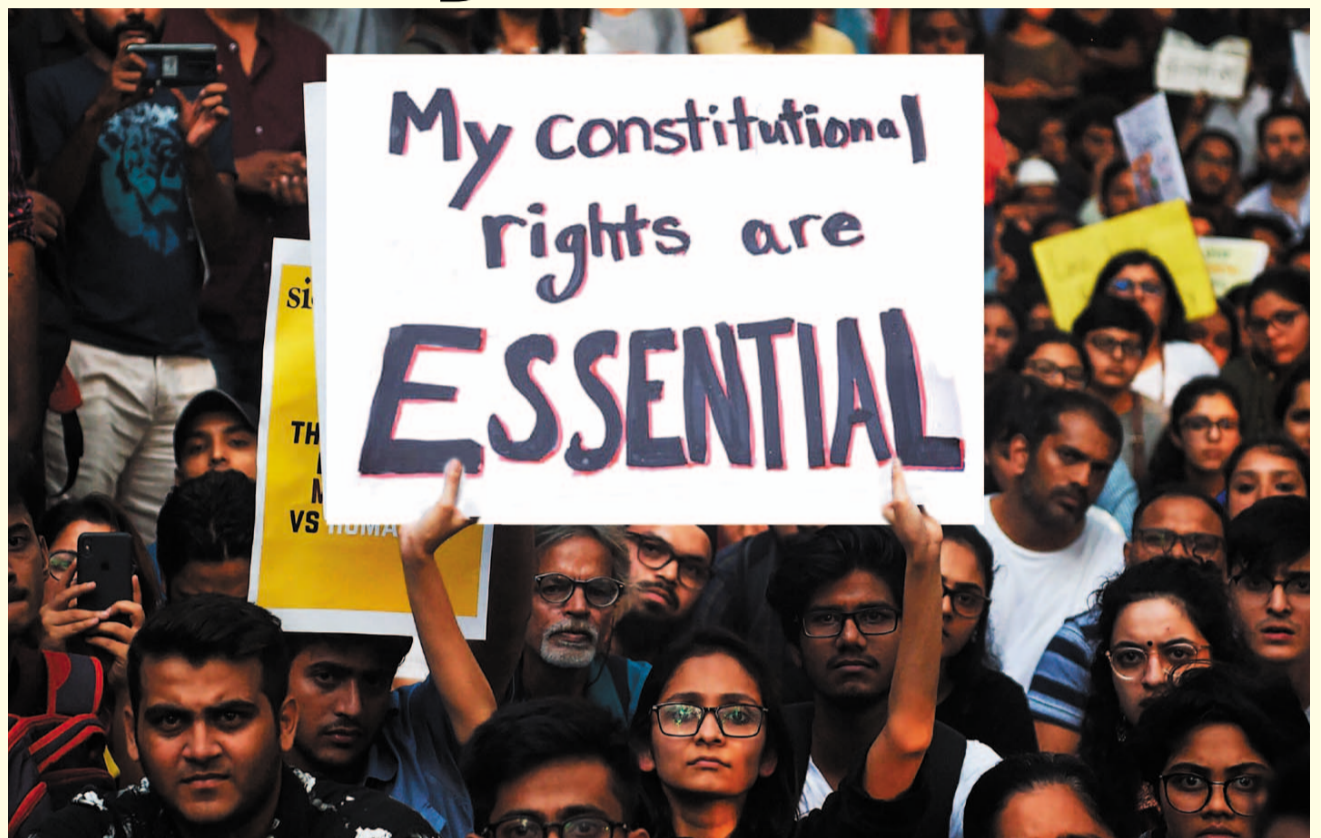
## Interview : Me Dev Ramano



**“L'ennemi commun, c'est ce trio que sont la 'pandémie, la crise économique et sociale’”**

☞ Voir Pages 8-9-10

## History Is On Our Side



“ Our history has its worth in the present crisis. It can inspire us to continue the struggle. Our ancestors have left us a rich tapestry of struggles and how to fight back whenever our rights are trampled upon. It is comforting to see the young generation taking over the struggle and creatively engaging the whole population to preserve our liberties”

By Sada Reddi ☞ See Page 3

### State-owned enterprises



**Where is director's liability for corporate misfeasance?**

By Aditya Narayan ☞ See Page 5

### Agora



**Cleaning up the Quarantine Bill**

By S. Callikan ☞ See Page 7

### Matters of the Moment



**Covid-19 & Quarantine Bills: Legal Overkill**

By Mrinal Roy ☞ See Page 4

## Ensuring health security AND Protecting human rights

Since Wednesday 13 May two important bills are being debated in the National Assembly. They are the Covid-19 (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill and the Quarantine Bill (No. II of 2020). Both these bills have proved to be necessary in the context of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic caused by a very highly infectious coronavirus, and which has swept the world with such rapidity that it has overwhelmed the health systems of even the most developed countries.

This is why countries have had to adopt the lockdown strategy which, combined with the sanitary measures recommended by WHO and other competent authorities, is meant to control the spread of the disease. Unfortunately, knowledge about it and its treatment and prevention is still evolving, which means that there is much that is unknown and this leads to uncertainties about overall management of the situation, including the serious social and economic impacts it is causing.

Hence the need for legislation to support more effectively the health containment measures that have been put in place, as well as to ensure the resumption of economic and other social activities that had come to a virtual standstill. That means that there will be more movement of people and goods using both public and private means of transport, and this calls for setting the legal parameters within which this opening up in stages will operate.

These bills bring fundamental amendments to a broad swathe of existing legislations. There doesn't seem to have been any prior consultations with the several stakeholders whose constituencies will be affected by the new provisions. Understandably, therefore, many apprehensions have been expressed across the board from members of the Opposition, civil society organizations, observers and analysts about various aspects of the bills.

Some of the main fears concern the provisions related to the Bank of Mauritius, Workers' Rights, and the Quarantine. Those about the BOM are so sweeping, coming as they do in the wake of the Air Mauritius and SBM debacles, that they raise genuine fears about the functioning and fate of this most important institution in the country, since it appears

that the State is appropriating to itself the right to extract from the BOM's reserves without any limit whatsoever.

A different order of concerns applies to Workers' Rights, which are being equally drastically curtailed, such that the workers are at great risk of losing their jobs through being made redundant, but also their other benefits and acquired rights which have been so arduously fought for. The irony is that at a time when even the Finance Minister has estimated that nearly 100,000 jobs are likely to be lost, instead of providing security to the workers, the bill is heavily skewed in favour of the employers, on top of the wage assistance support that they are already benefiting by.

Particularly worrying in the Quarantine Bill is Clause 11, Police Powers, wherein 'A police officer under (b) may (ii) enter premises *without a warrant* (iii) arrest, *without a warrant*, a person whom he has reasonable cause to believe has committed an offence... (highlights added). There have too many reported cases of the high-handed methods of the police that they raise a real cause for heightened alarm at this provision, justification for which is very hard to find in a sanitary context, however serious.

It is pertinent to note here that according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 'International human rights law lays down obligations of Governments to act in certain ways or to *refrain from certain acts*, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups' (italics added). In our view, entering or arresting *without a warrant* falls in the category of acts that must be refrained from in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The crucial issue is that the sanitary context must not be used as pretext or justification to bring about legislation that can appear coercive, repressive and in violation of the rights of individuals or groups. As it is, we have been placed on the black list of the European Union as regards the financial front. Do we want to compromise our international image further by perpetrating human rights abuses? It is something that must be seriously pondered as these bills are being debated.

### The Conversation

## Ending lockdown won't save the economy Here's how the government can aid recovery

Many opponents of the prolonged lockdown argue that as it is severely damaging the economy, ending it is the only way to bring the economy back to life. But the economy is already being damaged by this virulent, fast-spreading virus, to which there is no cure and currently no vaccine. Historical evidence from the 1918 flu shows that extending public health measures to prevent the spread of a virus does less economic damage in the long run than letting it ravage the entire population.

History also shows that pandemics have a long-lasting and severe effect on the economy. Looking at 15 major pandemics in Europe, from the Black Death in 1347 to the 1918 flu, researchers found that interest rates - and therefore investment - was depressed for between 30 and 50 years following an outbreak. This suggests that a "V-shaped" recovery - where economic growth returns to its previous level by the autumn - is highly unlikely.

Already the coronavirus has reduced economic activity by 30%, more than in the 1930s great depression, with unemployment rising to levels last seen in the 1980s during the Thatcher years. The cost to the government of preventing a deep depression will far exceed the already unprecedented sums it is currently spending on providing short-term relief.

### A decade of despair

The government has exceeded its expectations in changing our behaviour. It is the fear of the pandemic that has made the lockdown successful. Lifting it will not remove that fear, which will continue to have a profound effect on consumer and business confidence, and economic output across the whole economy.

People will be reluctant to return to work or go shopping while the virus is still around. They will also hesitate to take on major financial commitments, such as buying a house. And businesses will be reluctant to make major investments, or even re-employ all their furloughed workers while the economic outlook is so uncertain.

The pandemic has administered a severe supply-side shock to a major part of the economy, with thousands of firms in the retail, travel and hospitality sectors, including British Airways and Debenhams, either laying off thousands of staff or going bankrupt. The collapse of global supply chains has also hit manufacturing. And our exports will be damaged by the global recession.

The millions of workers who will be permanently laid off in these industries will reinforce the downward spiral, reducing demand for goods and services across the whole economy. It will also negatively affect people's health. And the lack of jobs will mean dire prospects for young people who are just starting out.

### Long-term measures

Only the government can prevent this spiral of despair, by restoring business and consumer confidence, providing income support to prevent mass poverty, and directly



intervening to revive industry.

The government will need to take centre stage in restructuring our crippled companies. It must take a strategic role, using its leverage to back those sectors that will improve productivity, if necessary by taking strategic stakes in vital industries like transport and utilities. We must not repeat the mistakes of the 2008 bailout, where banks prospered while real incomes for the majority stagnated.

To boost demand, the government will have to provide higher - and unconditional - benefits for the millions who will be unemployed, maybe moving towards a minimum income guarantee. It might also provide temporary government jobs to improve our social and physical infrastructure, such as happened in the New Deal in 1930s America, which improved schools and hospitals, built national parks and planted trees, and took plays around the country.

With industry on its knees, the government must play a bigger role in increasing investment to boost demand and ensure that our economy becomes more productive and more resilient in the long term. This must include major investments in our run-down public services, especially research and education, health, and the tottering under-funded social care system.

And the government will have to take a much more active role in the labour market, heavily subsidising jobs and training to encourage growth in the key sectors needed in the future.

It has already abandoned economic orthodoxy in the face of the crisis with its programme of temporary relief. But it must go much further, accepting a level of government debt that would be unimaginable before the crisis, and a level of intervention in the economy that is incompatible with its belief in untrammelled free enterprise.

It would be inconceivable if the UK government sought to manage that debt by a return to austerity. In the long term, the debt will be diminished by economic growth and modest inflation, while the recent drop in interest rates has reduced the cost of servicing it.

Over time, these measures could ensure not just an economic recovery, but also a society that is more resilient, fairer and more cohesive than what we have seen since the last financial crisis in 2008. Unless the government succeeds in reviving the economy as well as defeating the virus, it risks losing any newfound trust in its ability to govern.

Steve Schifferes  
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Sada Reddi

# History Is On Our Side

*Thousands of young people have made it their duty and responsibility to protect and defend our democracy and we must all join in*

Peace, Justice and liberty - the last three words of our National Anthem - are a pledge that, as a nation, we should endeavour to honour and implement. It is ironic that a majority of our re-presentatives in our National Assembly, after standing up as a gesture of respect to the National Anthem, should coldly proceed to support those pernicious sections of the Covid-19 Bill that undermine and abrogate our liberty.

Our liberty is the most precious gift that our ancestors have bequeathed to us, and they had shed their blood and their lives so that we could be free and live in dignity.

There are various rights that are both explicitly and implicitly undermined in the Bill, and legal experts will surely identify them and contest them in court. These rights are enshrined in our Constitution; they are our fundamental human rights which were inspired by the European Convention of Human Rights.

When the draft Constitution was being prepared, Sir Rampersad Neerunjun, the Chief Justice suggested that we should borrow and include in our Constitution an article from the Trinidad Constitution. This was done and the article was included at the beginning of Chapter II of our Constitution.

Referring to our fundamental rights and freedoms, the following words were taken on board: "It is hereby recognized and declared that in Mauritius **there have existed and shall continue to exist...** such human rights and freedoms", and the various rights are then listed. In other words, these rights are our **natural and inalienable rights, given by nature or God and cannot be restricted by any individual or government.** Our Constitution enshrines these rights but does not preclude the addition of other rights.

When we take a look at our history, we cannot but real-

ize how true it is that human beings have been endowed with the natural urge for liberty, freedom and justice. This explains the first reaction to the introduction of slavery in the island. In 1641 when Van der Stel landed 125 slaves from Madagascar, about 75 ran to the forest for their liberty. Slavery, which is the antithesis of a free society, is de-nounced not simply from a modern point of view but was castigated in the 18th century by enlightened writers and philosophers, and in Isle de France by Bernardin de St Pierre and others.

Our historical experience shows us that a repressive government based on fear and exploitation can go to extremes in its legislations to deprive people of their liberties. The Code Noir punished marooning by inflicting such harsh and brutal punishments like cutting the ears, putting maroons in irons and even to death. On the 16th July 1778, an Indian slave was ordered to be chained and burnt alive at the stake at the Place du Bazard for machinations against his master. Another one was put in irons for the rest of his life and made to work near the harbour until his death.

While there may be so many clauses in the Covid-19 Bill that are detrimental to the liberties of people, we may focus on one aspect of the law such as the compulsory use of a pass and its monitoring by the police. What looks like an innocent piece of legislation passed for sanitary reasons may serve other purposes as well and may result in abuse by the police for an indefinite period if we go by the list of complaints from the public and sometimes within the police force itself.

Indian immigrants too went through a similar ordeal and had to bear the brunt of repressive legislations that limited their physical mobility. The Pass System was borrowed from Reunion Island, and the deteriorating sanitary conditions provided an excuse for repressive legislations and control. The 'Old Immigrant' was compelled by law to carry a ticket; in case he lost his ticket or failed to produce one, he was arrested and imprisoned at the Vagrant Depot near Grande Riviere. Thousands of Old Immigrants were compelled to pay for a pass; that and fines for breach of the law and fees for duplicate copies helped to fill the coffers of the colonial state. Vagrant hunts were organized to arrest Indians who were then considered as vagrants and those who breached the law on several occasions were deemed to be incorrigible vagrants; they were either imprisoned or deported to India.

On one occasion, the police arrested Indians in the precincts of the Sinantambou Kovil in Terre Rouge, and among whom there was the richest Indian merchant at that time, Teerommoody Chetty, who was officiating as priest. His arrest led to a protest by Rajarethnum Moodeliar that resulted in a Police Commission Inquiry. Later Moodeliar, Yates Steven, an ex-British soldier, and Adolphe de Plevitz, mobilized 9000 Old Immigrants to sign a petition addressed to the authorities. This led to the Royal Commission of



Photo: indiatoday.in

“The struggle of our ancestors, slaves and indentured labourers to recover their human rights was a long and arduous one. That struggle did not take place only in our island but in many other countries as well. In 1904, Gandhi started the first Satyagraha against the pass which Indians were compelled to carry at the beginning of the 20th century. In 1960, the Sharpeville massacre occurred when the South African police fired on South Africans protesting against the pass laws and killed 69 people...”

Inquiry of 1872.

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In the 1930s and 1940s, labourers and workers kept the struggle going, and at L'Union in Flacq and Belle Vue Harel, they fell to the bullets of the employers and police. Women, men and children shed their blood and lives for our future. In the 1970s, the MMM took over the struggle to fight a repressive state. Since 1980s, to safeguard many of our rights, cases were taken to court and to the Privy Council whenever our rights were infringed by the State, whether it was for the freedom of the press, raising electoral deposits for candidates participating in elections and other workers' issues which violated the freedom of the individual.

In a recent interview to the BBC, Lord Sumption reminds us that in times of crisis governments do exaggerate problems and threats to the public; they usually come up with repressive legislations, and the police is made to execute the command of the Executive. In England, for instance, even if the police has generally acted sensibly and reasonably, in some places they have behaved shamefully and disgracefully. However, he also concluded that the public should not surrender their liberties to the Executive and the police. This piece of advice is valid for our country too.

Our history has its worth in the present crisis. It can inspire us to continue the struggle. Our ancestors have left us a rich tapestry of struggles and how to fight back whenever our rights are trampled upon. It is comforting to see the young generation taking over the struggle and creatively engaging the whole population to preserve our liberties. Thousands of young people have made it their duty and responsibility to protect and defend our democracy and we must all join in. History is on our side and we shall overcome.



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# Covid-19 & Quarantine Bills: Legal Overkill



Mrinal Roy

*Harsher benchmarks of punishment seem to be a driving mantra and an all-encompassing panacea. There is patently a Père Fouettard mindset and approach*

**A**fter some eight weeks of lockdown in the country, no new cases of Covid-19 infection have been detected during more than a fortnight. The last two remaining active cases of Covid-19 have now recovered. It is however imperative that we continue as a nation to remain vigilant, wear masks and

strictly abide by social distancing and hygiene rules in force during the lockdown so as to stem the risk of any undetected carriers of the virus in our midst from triggering a new surge of infection, as has been the case in other countries. It is only through strict discipline in abiding by these cardinal rules in force to prevent person to person contact that we can sever and break the chain of infection of the virus in order to stamp out and eliminate Covid-19 from the island. This will open the way towards carefully starting the process of gradually and judiciously rebooting the economy.

Against such a backdrop, some of the provisions of the Covid-19 (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill tabled by government this week seem patently out of step with the status of Covid-19 in the country and smacks of overkill. While some of the amendments proposed formalise many of the stopgap measures and waivers adopted to adapt to the lockdown enforced in the country, some of the heavy-handed penalties proposed in the Bill conjure the image of a sledgehammer being used to swat a fly. This is neither efficient nor meets the objective test of reasonableness.

Harsher benchmarks of punishment seem to be a driving mantra and an all-encompassing panacea. For example, under the proposed amendments to the Public Health Act, any person who contravenes sanitary mea-



sures 'for the prevention or mitigation of any epidemic shall be liable to a fine not exceeding 200,000 rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years'. Similarly, although the definitions of the array of offences in the new Quarantine Bill are too broad-brush and open-ended, they are all liable to a standard heavy-handed and clobbering fine not exceeding 500,000 rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years! There is

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In contrast, the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has this week proposed to hike fines for breaching coronavirus regulations from £60 to £100 for first offenders under the lockdown easing plans announced by him. Payment of the fixed penalty notice within 14 days will reduce the sum to £50 whereas the maximum for repeat offenders will more than triple from £960 to £3,200 (about Rs 156,000). Penalties imposed on people who do not strictly abide by sanitary measures enforced during the Covid-19 pandemic or quarantine rules should act as a deterrent. They cannot be based on extreme cases. They should certainly not mete out excessive and disproportionate punishment.

## Burning questions

The tough line taken by government in drafting the Covid-19 and Quarantine Bills begs so many burning questions. Shouldn't such fundamental bills which relate to the exceptional situation of a world pandemic and encompass such a broad spectrum of laws be discussed and agreed through bipartisan support by consensus not only by all MPs but also by the civil society at large? Shouldn't the Bills also include beefed up health and safety benchmarks and the provision for protective gear as required at the place of work and while commuting to work to ensure that the health and safety of all employees during the Covid-19 pandemic is fully safeguarded at all times?

Rebooting the economy also means robustly protecting and continuously assuring the health and safety of all employees. The trade unions, which are normally quite vocal, seem to be disconcertingly silent on such a crucial issue. In contrast, why has government not demonstrated the same toughness, determination and alacrity to propose the significantly harsher laws required to quash the evil of drug trafficking in the country in the wake of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking submitted since October 2018?

## Mixed bag

**A**s an export-oriented country, Mauritius is highly dependent on the state of the Covid-19 pandemic and the economy in countries which are our principal trading partners and markets. The Covid-19 and economic situation in the EU, UK, the US, India, China and the regional markets is a mixed bag. Every country seems to be adopting its own strategy to fight and contain the virus using its own mix of the same ingredients such as a total lockdown, confinement of people in their homes, social distancing and hygiene norms, used by countries across the world. Demand to sustain our export sector will therefore depend on the state of revival of these economies. This will only happen when the spread of Covid-19 in these countries is strictly contained. The domestic market cannot sustain the economy.

Countries that had already opened up are closing down again after renewed

spikes in infections. South Korea which is regarded as one of the world's success stories in its battle against Covid-19 has had to reverse its decision to open bars and clubs after a spike in new cases. In Wuhan, in China, considered as the epicentre of the pandemic, the detection of new cases of infection, five weeks after the city had claimed to be Covid-19 free, has caused the authorities to order the testing of all 11 million residents of Wuhan.

The timing of when to ease restrictions and start a step by step opening of the economy is therefore crucial. It must be determined by an honest and comprehensive appraisal of the robust state of containment of the virus in the country and the safety of the people.

### No to adventurism

There is however impatience by some leaders bent on opening the economy in the teeth of the ground reality of Covid-19 infection in their countries. In a context where President Donald Trump is impa-

tient to get the economy going again, Dr Anthony Fauci, a key member of the White House's coronavirus task force and top infectious disease expert warned a Republican-led US Senate hearing this week that Americans would experience "suffering and death that could be avoided," in addition to further economic damage, if US states ease restrictions and reopen the economy too soon.

Despite a rising Covid-19 death toll which has exceeded that of China and a large number of undetected cases which could be 12 to 15 times higher, owing to the lack of testing availability in a country of 210 million people, Brazilian President Bolsonaro is pushing for economic activity to restart. He is at loggerheads with the state governors who have imposed restrictions to slow the spread of the virus.

Not all countries are therefore judiciously arbitrating the fundamental question of choosing to save lives as opposed to the economy. In this moment of world crisis, it is important that the world reaf-

firms with one voice that people are not expendable and cannot serve as cannon fodder.

The mixed signals and messages coming from countries across the world depict an appalling state of affairs. More than ever before, the world needs to set up an international forum to share information, findings and experience of epidemiologists and health professionals treating infected patients and battling against Covid-19 in hospitals across the world. We are still learning about the virus. This platform should also facilitate the supply of protective gear and medicine for treatment of infected patients as well as muster with the help of international financial institutions the resources required to help rehabilitate the world economy post Covid-19. More than ever in the chequered history of the world, we need to unite and stand together to defeat this deadly virus and manage our common future.

Mrinal Roy

## State-owned enterprises

# Where is director's liability for corporate misfeasance?

Aditya Narayan

**T**he financial crash of Air Mauritius (due to a shortfall of revenue over costs over two years) and the extremely low profitability of State Bank of Mauritius (net profit after tax of Rs 15 million in 2009 due to a credit loss of Rs 3 billion) are undoubtedly the results of bad business decisions. They have nothing to do with Covid-19. There is no denying that past and present enablers of bad governance bear responsibility for the predicament of both entities. Where is director's liability for misfeasance in theory and practice?



“It might be argued that the directors of the Air Mauritius and SBM did not breach their duty and acted in good faith. That's something for a court of law to determine upon application from aggrieved shareholders. Since the majority shareholder is the State, and in the absence of any action on her part, it was up to minority shareholders to be proactive before they were pre-empted by voluntary administration or otherwise. How to enforce director's liability is an issue that needs careful thinking from shareholders and employee unions...”

In principle, directors have a fiduciary duty to the corporation and its shareholders to manage the affairs of the corporation in a manner consistent with their interests. In the typical business model, shareholders are concerned about profit maximization as measured by profitability ratios (Profit Margin, Return on Investment and Return on Equity) and shareholder value. Beyond these narrow indicators, corporate citizens are expected to be fair to other stakeholders, namely employees, creditors and customers.

## Corporate misfeasance

While Covid-19 is an exogenous factor that has grounded all airline companies, in general the performance of a company is usually determined by endogenous factors, assuming there is no disruption in markets. One factor that accounts for poor financial results is corporate misfeasance, which is legally defined as the improper performance of a lawful act. Misfeasance implies that directors use their lawful authority to make business decisions in a “wrongful or injurious manner”. That is true for both Air Mauritius and SBM, where directors have the general authority to contract, except in exceptional cases where they need board approval.

In the case of Air Mauritius, no amount of rationalization could warrant the ill-advised hedging contracts (hedging fuel supply at a higher price than subsequent market prices), the overstaffing at all levels, the humongous compensation for a few and the leasing contracts for expensive aircraft. It is

obvious that for both an operating lease (a straight rental of aircraft that is expensed yearly) and a capital lease (acquisition of a depreciable asset with a long-term lease obligation), the company failed to do a sound cost-benefit analysis to predict cash inflows and outflows over a time period. Or if the analysis was done, it relied on faulty assumptions of cost and revenue.

It is mind-boggling that some genius would have signed off on the financial analysis relating to leasing contracts signed by the company. Anyone in business would not acquire expensive capital equipment for use if the net cash inflows over time are not positive.

Similarly, in the case of SBM, no reasonable person would have approved large loans to foreigners without securing adequate collateral. It is a fact that the bank took excessive risks in lending over three years that accumulated credit losses of Rs 7 billion. It's unconscionable that senior management would write off bad debts as an accounting exercise without questioning the credit risk management procedures and the approval process.

## Director's liability

So who is responsible and accountable for bad business decisions? It is not enough to get rid of people who made the wrong decisions and let them go scot-free with golden handshakes. There is a principle of corporate governance that is called director's liability. It is fairly simple but never applied in public companies controlled by the State. Corporate law in most countries provides for director's liability to hold directors to account for decisions that they made without due diligence. Before going into voluntary administration or filing for bankruptcy, a company should be able to go to the bottom of things to understand who is responsible for what and when.

Over the years, in developed countries, there has been a general trend towards holding directors liable for the consequences of their actions that bring hardship to employees, shareholders and third parties. Penalty or liability provisions in statutes are directed not only at the corporation but at the directors as well. For example, where insolvency occurs, governments hold directors personally liable for taxes collected (e.g. VAT) but not remitted on time or for corporate taxes payable but not paid.

In the USA, directors of ex-Enron, who created Special Purpose Vehicles to hide significant transactions off-balance sheet, were prosecuted and fined. In some jurisdictions, a special liability is imposed on directors with respect to employee wages in the event of the bankruptcy of the corporation.

## Companies Act

Section 160 of the Companies Act, 2001 (Standard of care and civil liability of officers) provides that:

- (1) Every officer of a company shall exercise -
  - (a) the powers and discharge the duties of his office honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of the company; and
  - (b) the degree of care, diligence and skill that a reasonably prudent person would exercise in comparable circumstances.
- (2) Where a director of a public company also holds office as an executive, the director shall exercise that degree of care, diligence and skill which a reasonably prudent and



Enron's disaster - Photo - ft.com

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competent executive in that position would exercise.

- (3) Subject to section 149 and without limiting any liability of a director under section 143, where an officer commits a breach of any duty under this Part -
  - (a) the officer and every person who knowingly participated in the breach shall be liable to compensate the company for any loss it suffers as a result of the breach;
  - (b) the officer shall be liable to account to the company for any profit made by the officer as a result of such breach; and
  - (c) any contract or other transaction entered into between the officer and the company in breach of those duties may be rescinded by the company.

The provisions above are clear: where a director has breached the duty stated in subsection 160(1) of the Act, the director is liable for the loss resulting from the breach. It might be argued that the directors of the Air Mauritius and SBM did not breach their duty and acted in good faith. That's something for a court of law to determine upon application from aggrieved shareholders. Since the majority shareholder is the State, and in the absence of any action on her part, it was up to minority shareholders to be proactive before they were pre-empted by voluntary administration or otherwise. How to enforce director's liability is an issue that needs careful thinking from shareholders and employee unions.

## Enforcement

With regard to Air Mauritius, we understand that the trade unions have staked a claim for past wages or benefits not paid with the insolvency administrators. However, we know from previous cases that employees have always got the short end of the stick when proceeds from a liquidation of assets are distributed as secured creditors always come ahead. While creditors might take a haircut this time, it is likely that employees would be the losers. Moreover, as the company's pension fund had a deficit of Rs 2,4 billion for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019, it is clear that the pension plan was underfunded, due either to insufficient contributions from the employer or to the employer's default on payment of contributions. Who is responsible for the unfunded liabilities?

The potential or actual collapse of a national airline is a tragedy in the life of any nation that depends on its carrier to connect to the world and carry passengers. Also, the write-off of large loans with a negative impact on the bank's bottom line is an irrecoverable loss. Those two events are harmful to employees (now on the brink of unemployment) and to shareholders (losing income on investment). While there is no *deus ex machina* to save badly managed companies from insolvency or bankruptcy, it's time for employees and shareholders to act in order to get director's liability enforced where it is warranted.

Aditya Narayan

# Coronavirus may never go away, WHO warns

Speaking at a briefing on Wednesday, WHO emergencies director Dr Mike Ryan warned against trying to predict when the virus would disappear. He added that even if a vaccine is found, controlling the virus will require a "massive effort".

Almost 300,000 people worldwide are reported to have died with coronavirus, and more than 4.3m cases recorded, reports BBC News.

The UN meanwhile warned the pandemic was causing widespread distress and mental ill health - particularly in countries where there's a lack of investment in mental healthcare. The UN urged governments to make mental health considerations part of their overall response.

## What did WHO say?

"It is important to put this on the table: this virus may become just another endemic virus in our communities, and this virus may never go



There are more than 100 potential vaccines currently in development

away," Dr Ryan told the virtual press conference from Geneva.

"HIV has not gone away - but we have come to terms with the virus." Dr Ryan then said he doesn't believe "anyone can predict when this disease will disappear".

There are currently more than 100 potential vaccines in development - but Dr Ryan noted there are other illnesses, such as measles, that still haven't been eliminated despite there being vaccines for them.

WHO epidemiologist Maria van

Kerkhove also told the briefing: "We need to get into the mindset that it is going to take some time to come out of this pandemic."

Their stark remarks come as several countries began to gradually ease lockdown measures, and leaders consider the issue of how and when to reopen their economies.

WHO's director general Dr Tedros warned that there was no guaranteed way of easing restrictions without triggering a second wave of infections.

"Many countries would like to get out of the different measures. But our recommendation is still the alert at any country should be at the highest level possible," he said.

Dr Ryan added: "There is some magical thinking going on that lockdowns work perfectly and that unlocking lockdowns will go great. Both are fraught with dangers."

# US accuses China of hacking coronavirus research

The FBI said it had seen hacking attempts on US groups researching vaccines, treatments and testing.

The US has long accused the Chinese government of cyber-espionage, something Beijing denies.

The pandemic has worsened tensions between the two countries, which have both accused each other of failing to contain the outbreak, reports BBC News.

In what was billed as a public service announcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Cyber-security and Infrastructure Security

Agency (Cisa), a division of the homeland security department, said "health-care, pharmaceutical and research sectors working on Covid-19 response should all be aware they are prime targets" of hackers.

The cyber-thieves had "been observed attempting to identify and illicitly obtain valuable intellectual property and public health data" on treating the coronavirus, the statement added.

China has repeatedly denied US accusations of cyber-espionage.

Earlier this week, foreign affairs ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said:

"We are leading the world in Covid-19 treatment and vaccine research. It is immoral to target China with rumours and slanders in the absence of any evidence."

US officials have long accused China of hacking and intellectual property theft.

In 2009, the US alleged that China-linked hackers managed to infiltrate the sensitive data from the Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter jet. Shortly afterwards, China announced it was developing a similar jet, the Shenyang J-31.

# India targets small businesses in economic bailout

India has announced plans to spur small and medium businesses as part of a \$266bn economic package.

These include an emergency credit line of collateral-free loans worth \$40bn to "resume business activity and safeguard jobs" in the wake of India's lockdown to curb coronavirus.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said more measures will be announced in the coming days.

The economic package is equivalent to 10% of India's gross domestic product, reports BBC News.

Ms Sitharaman outlined a series of measures to infuse much-needed liquidity into India's small and medium businesses, power distribution companies, non-banking financial institutions and micro-finance firms, among other things.

Other key announcements included a move to bail out more than 200,000 ailing small and medium businesses and prohibiting global tenders for government procurements worth up to \$26.5m to help local businesses sell to government.

"The measures will spur growth and build a self-reliant India," Ms Sitharaman said.

"The intention is to build local brands and make them world class. It's not (about) looking inwards or (being) iso-



India's economic package is equivalent to 10% of India's gross domestic product. Photo - www.znbc.co.zm

lationalist. It's (about a) confident India that contributes to the globe," she added.

The country's very strict lockdown, which started on 25 March, has had a huge economic impact, with tens of millions of poorer Indians and migrant workers hit hardest.

Mr Modi said on Tuesday said that stay-at-home orders would be extended beyond 17 May with a new set of rules.

In March, India said it would provide around 1.7 trillion rupees in direct cash transfers and food security measures, mainly for the poor.

# Where are countries finding the money to mitigate economic catastrophe?

The management of the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in tough public policy measures around the globe, including lockdowns aimed at reducing human interaction to a minimum. These measures, which have put a stop to big chunks of economic activity, have come with devastating consequences, forcing business to lay off tens of millions of workers globally.

To mitigate the social and economic impacts, governments have had to dig deep into their finances that in some instances were already under strain. These are over and above the resources that governments need to pump into their health systems as they battle the pandemic, writes reports Jabulani Sikhakhane of The Conversation.



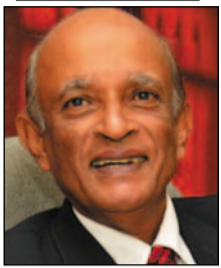
Photo - Vincent Yu/AP

## What various countries are doing

Governments have two options to finance additional expenditures: higher taxes and raising more debt.

- ❑ **Indonesia** has decided to issue government bonds to finance a stimulus package to counter the impacts of Covid-19. The long-term nature of the bond and its denomination in US dollars will most likely be a burden on future generations.
- ❑ **Argentina** is seeking ways to tax its way out of the current economic crisis induced by Covid-19. This is risky for a country that already has very high tax rates.
- ❑ **New Zealand** should unleash aggressive but well-targeted spending. Without it, the burden of an L-shaped economic trajectory will be far greater on future generations than any debt governments might take on now to develop a vaccine or keep businesses afloat and people on payrolls.
- ❑ **A number of African countries** face strained public finances, some already struggling to repay their debt. In response, there have been growing calls for debt relief.
- ❑ **Canada** is forecasting a twelve-fold increase in its budget deficit this financial year, driven by the sharp drop in forecasted tax collections and the government's extraordinary spending measures to support the economy and manage the pandemic. However, this may not result in higher taxes.
- ❑ **US** unemployment shot up from 4.4% in March to 14.7% in April, but unemployment is not likely to reach 25%, the highest level reached during the 1933 depression.
- ❑ **Australia's** Reserve Bank has forecast overly optimistic economic growth and employment (one in 13 people in Australia will lose their jobs) for the next two years, according to Peter Martin. Drawing on what happened after the global financial crisis in 2008, he sees a recovery that looks more like a flat-bottomed boat.

Compiled by  
Doojesh Ramlallah



S. Callikan

# Cleaning up the Quarantine Bill

A pandemic is an exceptional situation and the Covid-19 one has had unparalleled effects both on populations and economies. Whereas an updating of the provisions of our old Quarantine Act is entirely justified, one should resist temptations to go overboard in a legislation that would be on our statute books for a while and apply to all types of epidemic outbreaks. Concerns have indeed been raised about the proposed Quarantine Bill 2020.

Are there merits to those concerns? Does the Bill (or Act if it has been pushed through) stand up to tests of reasonableness? Are the measures intended and sufficient for ordinary Quarantine purposes which, for instance, might be justified for controlling dengue proliferation? Are extraordinary powers being granted to enforcement authorities under any future (or current) sanitary conditions requiring country lockdown? In that case, are there sufficient controls, checks and balances that would prevent abuse by authorities or by zealous officers going beyond their purview, particularly when

zens have held strongly worded opinions on the provisions of the Bill. The text confers to the Minister of Health the power to issue a Quarantine Order without mention of any WHO advisory or other specialist advice in his sole judgment that an “epidemic” condition is taking place or is “likely” without specifying the time-frame, the severity or the communicability of such a dramatic event occurring. Curiously, while the Bill adequately and fully defines most terms and functions, the single most important definition that is missing is precisely what constitutes an “epidemic” or, worse, a “likely epidemic” of a communicable disease.

Epidemiologists, medical specialists or even the WHO may hold different views on what precisely constitutes an epidemic. For instance, to epidemiologists an “epidemic refers to an increase, often sudden, in the number of cases of a disease above what is normally expected in that population in that area”. Although they do distinguish an epidemic from allied terms as endemic, clusters, sporadic, outbreaks or pandemics, such a broad definition is extremely vague: even a school compound or a specific zone or district could be concerned.

need not be subject to any National Assembly vetting nor based on any scientific or medical report, nor substantiated by any WHO-advisory notice, sounds like a lot of leeway. The Quarantine Order entails such immense consequential effects on civil society and natural freedoms that it should not be absolute and discretionary.

to inform QOs “forthwith” when he “suspects” that he “may” have been in contact with a person who “may” have a communicable disease, failure to doing so being again an offence.

Section 11 will require more intense scrutiny for although para (a) says that the Police Officer “shall provide such

“Whereas an updating of the provisions of our old Quarantine Act is entirely justified, one should resist temptations to go overboard in a legislation that would be on our statute books for a while and apply to all types of epidemic outbreaks. Concerns have indeed been raised about the proposed Quarantine Bill 2020. Are there merits to those concerns? Does the Bill (or Act if it has been pushed through) stand up to tests of reasonableness?”

Assuming that there are substantiated reasons for a Quarantine Order and that it has been subject to prior scrutiny by our legislators, such an exceptional measure should be clearly time-barred for, say three months, with the proviso that a renewal can be applied for under the same solid vetting mechanisms and variations that legislators are apt to decide upon.

Sections 5 treats the designation of quarantine facilities, but Section 6.1 seems rather ambiguously worded: “The Quarantine Authority may designate a medical practitioner to be a Quarantine Officer”, not making certain that only Medical Practitioners are so designated. Sections 7 and 8 then go in some detail about the operation of quarantine facilities (QFs) and the confinement and exit of infected persons to such premises or, on request, to private health institutions or self-isolation.

Confinement to a quarantine facility is and has been demonstrably an extremely stressful period for any citizen and the extent of leeway granted to a Quarantine Officer (QO) seems odd to us laymen: “a person [...] who may have been in contact with a person who [...] may have a communicable disease”. No reference is made to any scientific or medical tests required to substantiate those presumptions.

Section 9 deals with the duty for inmates to provide the QO with relevant information, failure to do so being an offence. This leaves out the duties of the QO to provide inmates with any assistance or relevant timely medical information about his/her condition, about his daily necessities including food, specialized health supplies, adequate fresh air or exercises, his protection from infected inmates or even about his/her rights as a citizen under curfew locked inside a government administered QF.

Section 10 attempts to deal with duties of any member of the population at large

assistance as may be reasonably required by a Quarantine Officer under this Act”, as laymen we are not confident that para (b, i, ii & iii) offer any checks and balances to their authority, in particular, the power to “enter premises without a warrant” or worse, “arrest, without a warrant, a person whom he has reasonable cause to believe” has committed an offence under this Act.

Section 12 details and expands the variety of offences mentioned previously at Sections 9-11, and adds “otherwise contravenes this Act or any regulations, Order or Notice under this Act” to make good measure. Lawyers will recognize whether the severity of the penalties (up to Rs 500,000 and 5 years imprisonment) means harassing retention in police custody and stressful or delayed application for what could be a hefty bail. Recent allegations of ordinary people being reportedly abused under police or prison vigilance, and the absence of any reference to Court, legal assistance and judiciary oversight of confinement orders and conditions, have intensified controversies.

The special circumstances surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic and the constraining measures that have been required in most countries to tackle its spread are ample reasons to review our existing Quarantine legislation and confer greater effectiveness to authorities. However the right balance must be struck between the exigencies of temporary emergencies in the face of international sanitary onslaughts and the severe curtailment of civil society's rights and freedoms through discretionary and arbitrary powers granted to Authorities to handle any epidemic or likely future epidemic.

We trust our legislators and legal or constitutional minds will bring their collective wisdom to bear on such critical issues embodied in the proposed Quarantine Bill.



“The special circumstances surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic and the constraining measures that have been required in most countries to tackle its spread are ample reasons to review our existing Quarantine legislation and confer greater effectiveness to authorities. However the right balance must be struck between the exigencies of temporary emergencies in the face of international sanitary onslaughts and the severe curtailment of civil society's rights and freedoms...”

courts may not be functioning normally and normal legal protections may take long weeks after an arrest?

These are indeed some of the many questions our MPs have to decide upon.

Independently of the debates in the National Assembly, many concerned citi-

The WHO has its own classification levels which have been the subject of some controversies due to alleged political bias. We consider that legal specialists, our MPs and the population at large need somewhat firm descriptors of what constitutes an “epidemic”.

That the proposed Quarantine Order

## Interview : Me Dev Ramano

# «L'ennemi commun, c'est ce trio que sont la 'pandémie, la crise économique et sociale'»



**Mauritius Times : Circonstances exceptionnelles, mesures exceptionnelles, mais à condition que ce soit pour un temps défini et limité dans la durée. Or, l'application des amendements proposés dans le 'Covid-19 (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill', ce serait pour la durée, cela avec des conséquences inestimables à long terme. Pouvez-vous comprendre la démarche du Gouvernement?**

**Dev Ramano :** Une parenthèse ! Les malédictions économiques et sociales dans lesquelles on va être empêtré de plus en plus sont les conséquences d'un système néolibéral coupable qui a failli et qui démontre sa fragilité et son caractère inapproprié pour le bien-être de l'humain. De par le monde, dans le cadre de ce système, on court derrière l'épidémie au lieu de la prévenir et, à l'horizon, il n'y a aucun vaccin ni traitement antiviral éprouvé et sûr pour la faire reculer.

« Il faut faire attention à ne pas se laisser manipuler par le dogme officiel. La crise économique ou la crise boursière ou financière ont leurs racines dans les contradictions du modèle systémique lui-même en place. Le Covid-19 n'est pas la cause mais simplement le détonateur et l'étincelle de cette crise. Les éléments de celle-là existaient bien en amont de cette pandémie. Le Covid-19 accélère et amplifie cette crise... »

Il faut faire attention à ne pas se laisser manipuler par le dogme officiel. La crise économique ou la crise boursière ou financière ont leurs racines dans les contradictions du modèle systémique lui-même en place. Le Covid-19 n'est pas la cause mais simplement le détonateur et l'étincelle de cette crise. Les éléments de celle-là existaient bien en amont de cette pandémie. Le Covid-19 accélère et amplifie cette crise mais cette dernière de caractère endogène émane des contradictions internes du système lui-même.

Donc, les présentes circonstances sont là pour durer. La démarche du Gouvernement dans ce cadre du 'Covid-19 (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill' est excessive et inhumaine. Ce Gouvernement a choisi son camp, celui des

**L**es retombées de la pandémie se font sentir graduellement. Le déconfinement commence à peine. Beaucoup de citoyens sont encore nostalgiques de leur liberté perdue dans les méandres tissés par le coronavirus. Et voilà que le Covid-19 Bill apporte un réveil en sursaut! Plusieurs personnes engagées se mobilisent pour maintenir l'esprit de la Constitution. Dev Ramano, homme de loi et militant politique engagé, nous en parle.

nantis et a aussi fait le choix de continuer avec le même paradigme néolibéral. Ce dernier est compatible avec des mesures excessives et répressives.

Profitant de l'ère du Covid-19, de la peur, de la panique, de la stupeur, de la démoralisation et de la naïveté de la population, pour asseoir son contrôle, il démontre un goût exagéré pour un Etat fort avec des visées totalitaires et autoritaires. Il s'arroge déjà des hyper-pouvoirs avec les amendements à la Bank of Mauritius Act, entre autres, et met le grappin sur les différentes réserves de la Banque centrale et l'argent des contribuables. L'allure répressive qu'il prend avec les abrogations au Code pénal et la 'Quarantine Act' dessine effectivement une atmosphère hautement inquiétante.

**\* Voyez-vous dans ce projet de loi certaines provisions qui dépassent largement le cadre défini dans son 'Explanatory Memorandum' qui précise que 'the object of this Bill is to amend a number of enactments to cater for the impact of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), the infectious disease commonly known as COVID-19, and for matters connected, consequential or related thereto' ?**

Ce projet a deux faces. La première qui consiste en des mesures à administrer la situation sanitaire pendant et après la période du Covid-19. On peut souligner les règlements qui permettent de différer le paiement des loyers, des factures d'eau et d'électricité, et la suspension de possibles déconnexions de ces deux services. Entre autres, les mesures sanitaires de distanciation physique, le port des équipements de protection qui seront codifiés restent louables.

Mais on ne doit pas se laisser berner par ce côté doux du 'Covid-19 (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2020' car le revers de la médaille décèle l'autre face dure, rigide et infernale de celui-ci qui consiste à éroder les droits acquis et à rétrécir le tissu démocratique.

**\* Le champ d'application du 'Covid-19 (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill' est vaste, et plusieurs volets soulèvent déjà des critiques à l'instar des lois du travail ou encore un durcissement des peines pour plusieurs délits. 'Ces amendements, une fois votés, vont détruire tout ce que nous avons gagné suite à des combats historiques engageant le Travailisme et le Militantisme depuis 1936 en passant par 1971', soutient l'Observatoire de la démocratie. Etes-vous du même avis ?**

Certes, si on décortique les sections 15 et 57 qui concernent les abrogations à l'Employment Relations Act' (ERA) de 2008 et à la 'Workers Rights Act' (WRA) de 2019, on comprendrait l'intensité du tsunami économico-social qui s'abattra sur les salariés et les masses populaires. Malgré les déclarations des autorités selon lesquelles les mesures prises seraient pour préserver l'emploi, la politique appliquée ouvrirait les vannes pour une vague mas-

sive de licenciements. Et le Gouvernement a choisi de camper dans la cour des patrons multi-riches.

Les activités économiques seront largement affectées certes. Des entreprises réduiront leur personnel. D'autres probablement mettront la clé sous le paillason. Mais, à chaque crise, le même scénario se dessine. Les protagonistes de ce cercle vicieux ne connaîtront pas les mêmes dénouements. Les nantis au sommet connaissent rarement des défaites. Après l'accumulation des profits et des dividendes pendant les années collées à l'entreprise, ils ressortiront en aval du Covid-19 au moins avec leur investissement initial. D'autres reprendront le relais avec le jackpot dans les bagages.

« Quelques décennies de cela, ceux qui sont fervents pour un autre paradigme social avançaient le mot d'ordre « *Changer le monde est possible* ». Mais aujourd'hui on doit arborer le projet : « *Changer le monde est nécessaire. C'est une urgence* ». Le présent système est coupable de la pandémie. Il a failli... »

Et cela ne va que perdurer avec le 'Covid-19 Bill' d'une façon plus incisive. Une section 72A est insérée dans la 'Workers Rights Act' qui serait un 'fast-track' pour faciliter les licenciements. Le 'Redundancy Board' qui constitue une avancée en termes de barrage aux licenciements économiques, serait réduit à un 'rubber stamp' et l'instrument de ce 'fast-track' pour jeter des milliers de salariés sur le pavé.

De plus, le cynisme est à son comble avec la démarche insolente proposée qui consiste à pousser le salarié à un congé forcé sans solde pour une période indéfinie et, en cas de reprise, l'employé serait soumis à de nouveaux termes d'emploi et de pensions – soyons sans illusion -- plus défavorables. Quelle insulte à la dignité des travailleurs!

- Le droit de grève et les négociations collectives seront anéantis pour au moins trois secteurs de service (Aviation Control, Health et Hospital). Quelle compassion, quelle empathie pour les 'frontliners' qui ont combattu le virus invisible!
- Les 'local leaves' seraient retenus par l'employeur à la hauteur de 15 jours pour ceux qui n'ont pas travaillé pendant la période de confinement et de 7 jours pour ceux qui n'étaient pas appelés à être présents au travail.
- Le 'night allowance' de 15% pour les salariés travaillant en mode « shift » est simplement gommé.

# 'Le Covid-19 n'est pas la cause de la crise économique mais simplement le détonateur et l'étincelle de cette crise...'

● Suite de la page 8

- En cas de changement de propriétaire d'entreprise ('change of undertaking'), le nouvel employeur pourrait exiger de nouveaux termes et conditions d'emploi avec l'appui des règlements prescrits par le ministre du Travail. C'est le monde à l'envers!

Les cadeaux à gogo pour les nantis puisés des poches des salariés, d'un côté et, de l'autre côté de la barricade, c'est la peur, la dépression des lendemains noirs. Les notes sont extrêmement salées dans ce système dont le fonctionnement broie et jette violemment sur le pavé de centaines de femmes et d'hommes. Ce système ne veut pas connaître le principe de transition intelligente d'un emploi à un autre.

**\* S'il est évident qu'il faut protéger l'ensemble de la population, cela ne peut pas se faire par la coercition étatique..., ajoute l'Observatoire, qui souligne aussi que plus les sanctions sont dures, plus certains dans la pratique du népotisme, de toutes sortes de corruption, deviennent des intouchables. Ce sont des commentaires pertinents dans les circonstances actuelles, selon vous ?**

Je trouve cette observation fort pertinente. Rappelons un peu les séquences pratiques constituant le prélude au discours du ministre de la Justice et à la proposition du 'Covid 19 Bill'. On a eu droit à l'arrestation arbitraire de Rachnah Seenauth pour un post sur Facebook à caractère satirique.

L'exigence de «memo» de permis d'accès par la police pour les avocats sollicités pour représenter un suspect était foncièrement illégale et anticonstitutionnelle. Nous avons été témoins de l'arrogance outrancière que s'est permis un membre de l'ICTA et selon les dires, d'un cuisiner chevronné à la cuisine du pouvoir, dans ce cas, et aussi en relation avec l'affaire Jamil Peerally.

En amont de ce 'Covid-19 Bill', on a connu aussi l'action de l'ICTA contre TopFM et la déconfiture de cette autorité en Cour suprême. Tout cela constitue une attaque arbitraire aux droits constitutionnels fondamentaux, notamment la liberté d'expression.

Avec le 'Covid Bill' et le 'Quarantine Bill', on est en droit de se poser des questions!

“Rien ne se gagne sans combat. L'unité au niveau syndical, et sur le front social et politique est de mise. Le rapport de forces, le rassemblement et la contre-offensive sont autant d'impératifs pour que les masses populaires tournent le dos à la léthargie et réagissent contre les coups et les contre-coups. Une stratégie de lutte appropriée s'impose pour endiguer l'arbitraire des propositions du 'Covid Bill'...”

**\* Patronat et salariés devront consentir à des «sacrifices» pour accélérer la reprise économique, a affirmé l'Attorney General Maneesh Gobin lors du point de presse du Gouvernement dimanche dernier. Outre des lois du travail qui seront également « sacrifiées », il devait souligner que des entreprises « profitables » se verront imposées une taxe Covid-19. « Bizin marye pike pou tir pei dan sitiasion ekonomik ki li ete. Si pa fer sa, nou pou tom dan presipis », a-t-il fait ressortir. Il faudra bien passer par des sacrifices, non?**

Au préalable, soulignons deux éléments. Pendant le confinement du 23 mars au 1er avril partiellement et pour

la période au-delà jusqu'au 15 mai, la totalité du salaire de base à un certain montant, le Gouvernement a octroyé - au fait - des cadeaux indistinctement aux magnats hautement riches et moins riches.

On est dans une exigence de la crise sanitaire. Nous nous trouvons, là, devant une problématique qualifiée dans le jargon légal de « force majeure ». Ce serait illégal pour l'employeur de ne pas payer les salariés à rémunération normale dans ce cas de figure.

Donc, on ne doit pas nager dans la naïveté. Les 2.6 milliards de roupies octroyées aux employeurs (50% sur la moitié des salaires de base allant jusqu'à Rs 25,000 et Rs 12,500 sur les salaires entre Rs 25,000 et Rs 50,000) et des sommes encore plus faramineuses pour les mois d'avril et de mai ne restent foncièrement qu'une manne financière coulée subrepticement dans la poche des gros patrons.

L'article 32 de la 'Workers' Rights Act 2019' « Payment of remuneration in other specific circumstances », la sous-section 4 fait ainsi provision, « Where a cyclone warning class III or IV is in force, a worker may absent himself from work and the employer shall pay remuneration to the worker at the normal rate in respect of the period of absence ». Faisant le parallèle de la «force majeure» déclinée dans l'article à celui de la période de confinement Covid-19, ce dernier s'adapte pertinemment à l'esprit de l'article cité.

Autre chose encore : Auparavant - une trentaine d'années de cela - les taxes sur les compagnies étaient de l'ordre de 65%. Celles-là ont connu une pente descendante pour atteindre le 'flat rate' de 15% dans le cadre de la politique néolibérale à caractère tricéphale de la 'flexibilité-dérégulation-privatisation'.

Dans cet enfer néolibéral, les salariés vivent un destin d'éternel perdants. Dans ce cas de figure, face - ils perdent, et pile - ils perdent davantage. Ils n'ont pas de mirador ou de retraite en hauteur pour garder la tête hors de l'eau. On a brossé plus haut un tableau des drames qui se trament pour les masses populaires avec le 'Covid-19 Bill'.

Cet appel timide du ministre de la Justice, «bizin marye pike pou tir pei dan situation ekonomik ki liete. Si pas fer sa sacrifices nou pou tom dan precipice», n'est nullement transcrit dans ces mêmes ébauches des lois. Ce sont seulement les salariés qui sont conduits au précipice du ministre!

Les deux items qu'on peut noter qui pincement les patrons, c'est la provision d'un 'Covid-19 Levy' pour que les patrons ayant bénéficié des subsides pour les salaires lors de la période de confinement aient à rembourser et cela sujet à une possible exemption ultérieurement prescrite par le ministre du Travail et les pénalisations pour ceux qui ont frauduleusement tiré avantage de cette manne. Eh bien, faisons les comptes!

**\* Quant à l'augmentation des amendes et une peine de prison pour un certain nombre de délits, l'Attorney General a aussi déploré certaines «amalgames» quant aux nouveaux pouvoirs conférés à la police en cette période de confinement sanitaire. Comment réagissez-vous à cela ?**

Le 'Covid-19 Bill' et ses abrogations au Code pénal vont doubler et tripler les peines et sentences. Il est indiqué que la police a déjà enregistré 17,699 cas de contraventions pendant la période de confinement, et il paraît que les peines seraient rétroactives. Si c'était le cas, ce serait une attaque incisive inédite aux droits constitutionnels.

Pendant le confinement, si on a vu la force policière se déployer dans des actes de contrôle légitimes et dans des



“Le 'Quarantine Bill' inaugure un penchant pour l'arbitraire. Le pouvoir de la police serait accru. La police serait dispensé de la nécessité d'un mandat de perquisition. Il lui suffirait d'avoir des 'motifs raisonnables de soupçonner'... Et là, c'est très vague et cela ouvre la porte à l'arbitraire, vu la réalité de pseudo indépendance des institutions vis-à-vis du pouvoir...”

œuvres charitables de partage de vivres, n'empêche qu'il y a eu des abus outranciers à l'instar des brutalités exagérées.

Le 'Quarantine Bill' inaugure un penchant pour l'arbitraire. Le pouvoir de la police serait accru. La police serait dispensé de la nécessité d'un mandat de perquisition. Il lui suffirait d'avoir des 'motifs raisonnables de soupçonner'... Et là, c'est très vague et cela ouvre la porte à l'arbitraire, vu la réalité de pseudo indépendance des institutions vis-à-vis du pouvoir. Les cas flagrants fleuvent.

D'ailleurs, je le dis de nouveau : le pouvoir donné à la police pour l'octroi des 'Work Access Permit' est illégal et frôle l'anti-constitutionnalité. Les règlements émanant du 'Public Health Act' ne peuvent conférer des telles responsabilités au Commissaire de Police.

Mais l'aspect social le plus criant dans ce cadre demeure le fait que la crise sanitaire ne frappe pas tous les gens et toutes les classes de la même façon. Elle cogne immensément plus sur les pauvres et les plus faibles économiquement et socialement.

**\* Il ne suffit d'une simple majorité pour l'amendement de pas moins de 58 provisions de différentes lois telles que prévues dans le 'Covid-19 Bill'. Comment contrer cela ? Une action concertée de l'opposition parlementaire et extraparlamentaire ? Un recours à la justice ?**

Je dirai que rien ne se gagne sans combat. L'unité au niveau syndical, et sur le front social et politique est de mise. Le rapport de forces, le rassemblement et la contre-offensive sont autant d'impératifs pour que les masses populaires tournent le dos à la léthargie et réagissent contre les coups et les contre-coups.

☞ Suite en page 10

## 'Rien ne se gagne sans combat. L'unité au niveau syndical, et sur le front social et politique est de mise'



● Suite de la page 9

Une stratégie de lutte appropriée s'impose pour endiguer l'arbitraire des propositions du 'Covid Bill'.

L'ennemi commun pour les masses populaires et les forces progressistes, c'est ce trio que sont la

«pandémie, la crise économique et sociale». La lutte à mener embrasse trois champs : celui de la politique, du combat syndical et de la société civile. Ceux qui sont prêts pour lutter contre les tares de cette société dans le cadre de la période pandémique et post pandémique, doivent se doter d'un nouveau «mindset».

Il faut sortir des sentiers battus. Il faut laisser les egos de côté. Il faut délaisser la mentalité de chefs de tribus ou de chasse gardée. Il faut savoir parler d'une même voix. Il faut avoir l'audace pour repenser, réinventer et innover. Il faut œuvrer pour une plateforme unitaire syndicale, sociale, politique et écologique vraie. Il faut savoir organiser avec tact, avec de nouvelles méthodes et moyens, rassembler qualitativement et quantitativement. Je salue l'initiative du front unitaire qui

*nécessaire. C'est une urgence ».*

Le présent système est coupable de la pandémie. Il a failli. Le chômage et/ou les licenciements en masse : c'est le symbole de la faillite du présent ordre social. Les gourous, idéologues et adeptes de l'ère néolibérale, sortis des moules de l'école de Milton Friedman et d'Arnold Harberger, aujourd'hui bégaiant, sont en panne d'idées et de solutions pour sortir leur système social de l'impasse.

Avec la pandémie et la crise climatique, toutes deux émanant d'une source commune, la logique d'accumulation pour le profit, sans un changement de paradigme, le monde est foutu. Eh oui, si on est acculé par tous ces fléaux que vous énoncez, il y a aussi une prémisse de nouvelles opportunités de changement et de rupture avec les pratiques de gouvernance et de modèle économique.

Puisque vous avez cité L'Observatoire de la démocratie, je vous renvoie aux propositions alternatives et percutantes de ce dernier et qui se résument à mettre l'économie au service du social, à une nouvelle politique de terre et de logement, à une vraie réforme agraire qui pousse à l'auto-suffisance et à la sécurité alimentaire.

Je vous renvoie aux propositions de Resistans ek Alternativ et des écologistes pour une transition sociale vers un idéal écosocialiste. Je vous renvoie aux propositions pertinentes de Lalit qui, entre autres, focalisent sur la réforme agraire. Je vous réfère au texte de Dany Montille et de Stefan Gua : «*Pas si folle certaines idées de gauche*».

Ecoutez la voix de la jeune Sonakshi Deeerpalsing, celle de l'écologiste Manjusha

“Le 'Covid-19 Bill' et ses abrogations au Code pénal vont doubler et tripler les peines et sentences. Il est indiqué que la police a déjà enregistré 17,699 cas de contraventions pendant la période de confinement, et il paraît que les peines seraient rétroactives. Si c'était le cas, ce serait une attaque incisive inédite aux droits constitutionnels...”

se dessine contre le 'Covid-19 Bill'.

**\* En sus des dégâts importants tant sur le plan humain que matériel et ses conséquences très graves pour la croissance, l'emploi et la dette publique, la pandémie du coronavirus a aussi créé de nouvelles opportunités de changement et de rupture avec les pratiques de gouvernance et de modèle économique. Voyez-vous cette rupture se réaliser ou finira-t-on par se rabattre sur les mêmes pratiques et modèle du passé une fois la sortie de crise assurée ?**

Quelques décennies de cela, ceux qui sont fervents pour un autre paradigme social avançaient le mot d'ordre « *Changer le monde est possible* ». Mais aujourd'hui on doit arborer le projet : « *Changer le monde est*

Coonjan et celle d'Ashvin Gouday. Portez votre attention à ce qu'avancent Ashok Subron, Jack Bizlall, Linzy et Ram Seegobin entre autres.

Il nous faut une rupture avec les politiques d'austérité, une redistribution des richesses, un refinancement et une de-libéralisation du secteur de la santé, une priorité aux besoins sociaux. Et ça et là, il ne peut y avoir de droit à l'emploi sans suppression de licenciement. Alors il faut oser exiger carrément une loi anti-licenciement.

Il faut implémenter le concept de la continuité du contrat de travail. L'employé conserve son contrat de travail avec salaire comme protection sociale jusqu'à ce qu'il soit reclassé dans un emploi équivalent. C'est tout un programme, n'est-ce pas ?

## Love - Healing during Covid-19



Armoogum Parsuramen

Love, endorsed by sages and religion, is the foundational explanation for our existence. Science has acknowledged the universality of love. Mahatma Gandhi and Einstein's daughter, Lieserl had been great influencers in the physicist's life. Einstein acknowledged their valuable contribution in his grasping of the essence of the universality of love, beyond the materialistic human sentiment.

Gandhi's choice to walk through the path of resistance and liberation in *ahimsa* - non-violence had not only baffled but touched Einstein. Opposed to hostility and WWII, the physicist overtly termed the Gandhian pacifism as an "instinctive feeling" grounded within "deepest antipathy to every kind of cruelty and hatred," rather than any "intellectual theory." Einstein stood in respect and gratitude towards Gandhi's approach to exercise the politics of non-violence in India. Einstein's esteem for India's Bapu is aptly expressed when he admiringly notes:

You have shown through your works that it is possible to succeed without violence even with those who have not discarded the method of violence.

Einstein was deeply touched by the profound belief that everything is possible with love; it acts as an invisible hammer breaking the walls of hate and racism, and all the destructive forces. Einstein was undeniably in praise of the power of love to achieve freedom, unlike the ravaging might of wars and violence. He added that he believes that -

Gandhi's views were the most enlightened of all the political men of our time. We should strive to do things in his spirit: not to use violence in fighting for our cause, but by non-participation in anything you believe is evil.

Satyagraha and Einstein's loathing for sadism levelled them up to the same pedestal of universalizing love as a daily way of life. Gandhi's conciliatory approach hails from the ability to win over with love. It is a reconciliatory mission; it enlightens the world and hearts. It leaves

no one indifferent to its soothing touch. Einstein appropriates and lives Gandhi's philosophy of love, "where there is love, there is life" which uplifts the human soul towards enhancing the value of life and the Universe.

Einstein letter's to his dear daughter Lieserl is a proof of the scientific and humane belief in "this universal force" about which he brilliantly shared his profound reflection. He demonstrated a higher level of understanding of Love, "an extremely powerful force" that had captivated his scientific interest given that "it is a force that includes and governs all others", despite the fact that "science has not found a formal explanation". Einstein's gratitude letter to his daughter endorses the inclusive power of LOVE.

In the current Covid-19 condition and the tedious days of confinement, our lives have literally turned topsy-turvy. We are bound to witness and face radical mutations in all realms. Einstein's reflection enligh-tens us on love as the unifying force which is the purest form of panacea and solace in this difficult moment. It is the universal operating wheel which pulls



PC: Pinterest

*"Whatever the crisis, the fire of love will overcome it."*  
-- Mahatma Gandhi

us to converge into Oneness during this Covid-19 strained test which has gripped the world.

When relationships drift apart, chaos rules and things simply are falling apart, Love rings its clarion call. The Universe opens its arms to call us back to its lap through the "most powerful unseen force". It is this fiery continuous spark of love which ensures that "humanity not to be extinguished in their blind selfishness". Einstein reminds us that now is the time to overcome our phobia as "it is the only energy in the universe that man has not learned to drive at will". It teaches us to slow down and review our own lives, relationships and surroundings.

Anarchy reigns the world; we need to allow love to bloom. Set the soothing fire of Love free to freewheel unity, oneness and the "energy to heal the world" in multiples. Now is the time to consolidate our bonding and to unleash the better version of ourselves and the world.

Armoogum Parsuramen is the  
Founder-President of Global Rainbow  
Foundation.

# WHO and Covid-19: Some pertinent issues of global interest



Dharam Gokhool

On 18-19 May 2020, a very important international meeting will be held in Geneva Switzerland - the 73rd World Health Assembly (#WHA73), in virtual mode with an adjusted agenda because of the Covid-19 pandemic. WHA brings together 194 member states and their role is to review the work undertaken by WHO, set new goals and tasks.

## #WHA73 - A historic moment

#WHA73 comes at a time when the world is engaged in a relentless struggle to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic. There is no doubt that this year's assembly will be of historic importance not only because of its timing but also in view of the dramatic, unprecedented global public health challenge posed by Covid-19 - a pandemic which, as at 14 May 2020, had claimed 297,000 victims, with some 4,350,000 confirmed cases.

With a second wave, and with the improbability of an effective vaccine being developed in the near future, the statistics are likely to indicate a heavier burden - economic, social, psychological and emotional -- on the global community.

The situation will become more complex and complicated with:

- (i) any mutation of Covid-19 i.e. genetic changes in the make-up of the virus, making it easier to infect more people and more difficult to develop effective vaccines and treatments;
- (ii) the appearance other diseases linked to Covid-19 like the Kawasaki syndrome, affecting children;
- (iii) the devastating social, human and psychological impact of fear, anxiety, stress, loneliness and depression and the effects of lockdown, quarantine and curfew measures on the people's liberty, social routines and livelihoods.

#WHA73 will have to address a number of issues of global public health interest, namely:

### • The Chinese enigma

The origin of the virus remains shrouded in a thick veil of opacity. Since it is deemed to have spread from China, thereafter engulfing the whole planet, the Chinese authorities are duty-bound not only to enlighten the global community about the genesis of this virus but also to assume its share of responsibility in tackling this unprecedented human tragedy. Was it from a human source or the result of a lab accident? How will WHO ensure greater transparency and accountability in the reporting of global health hazards in future?

### • Re-emergence, Surveillance and Preparedness

In the aftermath of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) which became a global health threat in mid-March 2003, both possibilities - human source and lab accident origin - of a post SARS virus were examined by the scientific community under the aegis of WHO.

"The future is likely to bring far greater challenges. Will SARS re-emerge, and with greater virulence? Can we contain a more widely disseminated epidemic? Will we have preventive or therapeutic countermeasures? Can the necessary global cooperation and resources for containment be sustained? If not SARS, are we prepared for the next emerging infection? Are our public health and research investments (human, technical, and financial) flexible enough to respond to the ever-changing profile of



Taiwan saw the pandemic coming. Soldiers take part in a drill organized by the New Taipei City government to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus in Xindian district on March 14. Photo - foreignpolicy.com

*"In view of the exceptional circumstances and Taiwan's exceptionally successful response to Covid-19, if anything, the global community would stand to benefit from its experience and the strategy it deployed in containing the pandemic. The Taiwan response to Covid-19 is an interesting, informative and eye-opening case study..."*

microbial threats?"

Furthermore, it was recognised that:

"The experience of the SARS outbreak and the history of its control hold clues to the origin and spread of the disease - knowledge that will help to prevent or curtail its resurgence. In assessing the public health response to SARS at both the global and local levels, workshop participants focused on the roles of surveillance and containment in limiting the spread of SARS and anticipated the use of these tools against future microbial threats." (1)

The outbreak of Covid-19 and its rapid spread and the unprecedented casualties and its short- and long-term consequences for humanity beg the question as to the role and responsibilities of the authorities concerned - international, regional and local - in putting in place effective measures of surveillance and preparedness.

In the case of Covid-19, since advance warning and knowledge were available, what were the weaknesses in the system of surveillance and preparedness and why?

### • Leadership and Management

How the Covid-19 pandemic is being managed in different parts of the world provides clear indications of why some countries' response is more effective than that of others. Asian countries like Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan, learning from their experience in tackling SARS (2003) and H1N1(2009), were able to put in place outbreak management plans. They were better prepared so they are managing better.

In Nordic countries like Finland and Iceland, as well as

in Germany, New Zealand, and a few others in the Pacific, women leaders have focused on the public health priority, and through their clear and credible messages combined with decisive and timely actions have earned public trust and have stood out in sharp contrast to "many countries led by incompetent, science-denialist men" like US President Donald Trump, who "accused the Democratic party of politicizing the virus as a "hoax" and of ignoring multiple warnings from top scientists for months".

In most of the cases where management and leadership have failed or are failing, narrow political considerations are driving public health priorities. Obviously, this is a politically sensitive issue but can #WHA73 push it under the carpet when the lives and livelihoods as well as the future of our planet are concerned?

### • The Case of Taiwan

Taiwan, a democracy of almost 24 million people (and a territory claimed by China) and led by a woman President, Tsai Ing-wen, is among the few countries which have provided an effective response to the Covid-19 pandemic. It has also been very active in extending its help to a number of countries battling with Covid-19. In view of its political differences with China, since 2009, it was granted an "Observer" status only at the WHO Annual Assembly and was invited as such until #WHA73. This is certainly a highly politically sensitive issue and whether Taiwan will be present, and in what status, is still undecided.

However, in view of the exceptional circumstances and Taiwan's exceptionally successful response to Covid-19, if anything, the global community would stand to benefit from its experience and the strategy it deployed in containing the pandemic. The Taiwan response to Covid-19 is an interesting, informative and eye-opening case study. Will WHO be able to untangle this Gordian knot and let the whole world take cognisance of the experience and strategy deployed by Taiwan to tackle Covid-19?

These are but a few issues of global public health interest that #WHA73 could address and chart a more coherent, comprehensive and cohesive strategy for post Covid-19 challenges. And help avoid another human tragedy like the one the world is going through presently.

(1) Institute of Medicine. 2004. Learning from SARS: Preparing for the Next Disease Outbreak: Workshop Summary. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/10915>

## In A Light Vein

# Le Petit Robert est paru !

## Voici quelques extraits:

**Facebook:** Le seul endroit où tu parles à un mur sans être ridicule.

**GPS:** Seule femme que les hommes écoutent pour trouver leur chemin.

**Autobus:** Véhicule qui roule deux fois plus vite quand on court après que quand on est assis dedans.

**Taser:** Instrument utilisé afin de mieux faire passer le courant entre la police et la jeunesse.

**Mozart:** Célèbre compositeur que l'on écoute le plus souvent dans les pizzerias car on sent bien que mozzarella.

**Sudoku:** Qui a le nord en face.

**Porte-clefs:** Invention très pratique qui permet de perdre toutes ses clefs d'un coup au lieu de les perdre une par une.

**Etat:** Système mafieux le mieux organisé de tous les temps.

**Cravate:** Accessoire servant à indiquer la direction du cerveau de l'homme.

**Voiture:** Invention ingénieuse, permettant de contenir 110 chevaux dans le moteur et un âne au volant.

**Orteil:** Appendice servant à détecter les coins de portes.

**Egalité des sexes:** Nouveau concept créé par les hommes pour ne plus payer le restaurant.

**Monter un meuble Ikea:** Expression moderne signifiant "passer un week-end de merde".

**Suppositoire:** Invention qui restera dans les annales.

**Soutien-gorge:** Synonyme de flamby. Tu tires la languette et tout tombe.

**Les ex:** C'est comme la prison, si tu y retournes c'est que tu n'as pas compris la leçon.

**La beauté intérieure:** Concept inventé par les moches pour pouvoir se reproduire.

**Pruneau:** Synonyme de personne âgée. Qui est ridé et qui fait chier.

**Aides internationales:** Aides payées par les pauvres des pays riches pour aider les riches des pays pauvres.

**68km/h:** Limite de vitesse pour faire l'amour. Et oui à 69 on part en tête à queue.

**Pharmacie:** Confiserie pour vieux.

**Blonde:** Concept pour faire croire que les autres femmes sont intelligentes.

**Un meurtre de sang froid:** Un ice crime.

**Sentiments partagés:** Quand votre belle-mère est en train de reculer dans le ravin avec votre voiture toute neuve.

**Archipel:** Outil pour creuser des archi trous.

**Cellulite:** Couche graisseuse qui enveloppe souvent les femmes mais emballe rarement les hommes.

**Les ciseaux à bois:** Les chiens aussi.

**Femme:** C'est comme le café, au début ça excite mais rapidement ça énerve.

**Carte bleue:** Viagra féminin.

**Masochisme:** Concept proche de la politesse: frapper avant d'entrer.

**L'amour:** C'est comme un jeu de cartes, si tu n'as pas un bon partenaire, il vaut mieux avoir une bonne main.

**Femme facile:** Femme ayant les mêmes besoins sexuels qu'un homme.

**Homme riche:** Celui qui gagne plus d'argent que ce que sa femme n'en dépense.

**Grand amour:** Expression datant du 15ème siècle, lorsque l'espérance de vie était de 35 ans.

## Food for Thought

# When all this is over...

**S**uddenly nobody is thinking about business. Nobody is planning when to travel. Nobody is busy reading for an examination. Nobody is saving for vacation. Clubbing is not even coming to mind. Some people have even ignored their boyfriends/girlfriends. Our communities that were overpopulated have suddenly been rid of hold-ups and congestion. No more rushing to work and catching the early bus.

Earning a degree is no longer the priority. Spending lavishly on parties is no longer a trend. Hotels and brothels are shut down. Gluttony is now frowned at. People now have a sense of management.

We now understand that going to church/temple is not the same as going to God.

Money has become useless to the rich! Wealth has failed the wealthy. Corruption is exposed. The powerful is rendered powerless. Fathers now understand what it means to have a family. Some mothers have understood how risky it is to place their children above their husbands.

People now realise that above the hustle and bustle, it is life that matters. That is the most important thing. That, and how we care for and look after those around us. This is the time when many will learn to love unconditionally. Some politicians will turn a new leaf when all this is over. Don't get me wrong: I said some!

Cleanliness will be studied in schools, and mothers will teach their children to be neat.

Some gurus will learn that it is better to build men that to build blocks: of what use are those beautiful edifices now when your members don't even feel like today is Sunday? Education will no longer be a do-or-die affair: professors are in their rooms now, their certificates and degrees totally useless. We will now learn to depend and check on each other: do you see how many stay safe messages you have received?

I'm not sure if Covid-19 is the handiwork of men or a divine arrangement. But one thing I know: when all this is over, a little sanity will be restored to the world and the world will move back a few centuries, when men hadn't lost their sense of being human.

# Moms will be Moms...

... no matter who you are. Here's some Mom Talk:

**Issac Newton's** mother: "But did you wash the apple before eating it?"

**Archimedes's** mother: "Didn't you have any shame running naked in the street from? And, WHO is this girl Eureka?"

**Thomas Edison's** mother: "Of course I am proud that you invented the electric bulb. Now turn it off and get to bed!"

**Abraham Lincoln's** mother: "Now that you have become President, for heaven's sake get rid of that shabby tailcoat and stovepipe hat, and buy yourself a decent outfit."

**James Watt's** mother: "If you just keep watching that damn lid lifting and dropping, rice will be burnt. Turn off the stove now."

**Alexander Graham Bell's** mother: "You have installed this new silly thing in the house alright, but I do not want girls calling you at odd hours."

**Galileo Galilei's** mother: "What use is seeing that goddamn moon with your telescope if it does not help me to see my mother in Milano?"

**Samuel Morse's** mother: "Make sure your school report card doesn't have only dashes and dots!"

**Mona Lisa's** mother: "After all that money your father and I spent on your braces, is that the best smile you can give us?"

**Michelangelo's** mother: "Can't you paint on walls like other children? Do you have any idea how hard it is to get that stuff off the ceiling?"

**Albert Einstein's** mother: "Can't you do something about your hair? Use styling gel or something?"

**Bill Gates' mother:** "You keep browsing all day long; watch out if I ever catch you on any adult website."

**Daniel Fahrenheit's** mother: "Stop playing with boiling water and let me make tea."

**Georg Ohm's** mother: "I don't like

you resisting everything I say."

**Robert Boyle's** mother: "If your volume is really inversely proportional to pressure, you must be having a constipation. Take a laxative."

**Alessandro Volta's** mother: "It is shocking to see you all the while dipping those copper and zinc rods in that beaker."

**Andre Ampere's** mother: "Apart from fooling around all the time shall you ever find time to glance through your current books!"

**Socrates' mother:** "If you keep drinking from any cup, it is not necessary that you will also survive like Meera Bai."

**Christopher Columbus' mother:** "I don't care what you were busy discovering and where, you could still have dropped a two-line letter!"

*Dedicated to all mothers, but for without whom human civilisation wouldn't have progressed.*



## Parineeti Chopra wants to 'find someone and fall in love' with him!



with her amazing performances in all her movies. She was last seen in Jabriya Jodi and was loved for her performance. The actress has been preparing for Saina Nehwal's biopic and was going through training. The actress earlier had been on Look Who's Talking with Niranjana and *Starry Nights 2*.

The episodes of the show have been rerun now and we would get to see Parineeti in one of those.

The actress opened up about a lot of things in the show. She spoke about the criticism she faced. She said, "I am not an insecure person at

weight issue but rather my personality and my body language which I am putting an effort to be better at."

She also expressed her love for food. She said, "The one thing I absolutely love and cannot do without is food. Anytime of my life and moment, I could have a pizza and there was a time I used to have 3 pizzas a day." She also spoke about being in a relationship. She shared, "I'm a very shy person with physicality and relationships. I don't indulge in them too often. I am slightly unorthodox when it comes to all this. I don't date people or have one-night stands, it's just how I am." She also shared that she feels that she needs someone who she can fall in love with. Parineeti Chopra said, "I am a little impatient now. I want to find someone and fall in love with."

**J**abriya Jodi actress Parineeti Chopra has been one of the most talented actresses. She has impressed us all heart but I know that I am not as good looking as an actress should be. Specifically, I am not talking about my

## Robert Downey Jr producing 'Sweet Tooth' series at Netflix

*Robert Downey Jr, along with his wife will be producing a new show for Netflix titled Sweet Tooth. It is a fantasy tale about a half man and half deer*

**H**ollywood superstar Robert Downey Jr and his wife Susan are set to produce "Sweet Tooth" series for Netflix. The streamer has given an eight-episode series order for the live-action drama series based on DC characters created by Jeff Lemire. Jim Mickle and Beth Schwartz will pen the script, executive produce and serve as co-showrunners. Mickle will helm the series. Described as a "broad appeal, family-friendly, storybook adventure", the story is about Gus, a part deer, part boy, who leaves his home in the forest to find the outside world ravaged by a cataclysmic event. "He joins a ragtag family of humans and animal-children hybrids like himself in search of answers about this new world and the mystery behind his hybrid origins," said the official plotline of the series. The show will feature Christian Convery, Nonso Anozie, Adeel Akhtar and Will Forte, with veteran actor James Brolin serving as the narrator. The project will be produced by Team Downey in association with Warner Bros. Television. Evan Moore will produce for Team Downey.



### YOUR STARS

#### Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

Spare your heart; don't run to catch a bus; go up or downstairs slowly. The comportment of the person who loves you will appear to you very disconcerting, capricious, and incoherent; you'll sometimes ask yourself if you're actually loved by the other one.

#### Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

The romantic side to your character will prevent you from tackling sexual questions in a realistic manner. You'll need romantic outbursts so as to feel satisfied. Be particularly cautious in all that concerns the financial domain, where your judgment won't always be excellent.

#### Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

You'll put your optimism and enthusiasm at the service of your family entourage; you'll respect the freedom of everyone. If you must make an important purchase, from an apartment to a car or a freezer, this will be the moment or never to do it.

#### Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

You may make a dangerous encounter. A person of your near entourage will try to abuse your confidence and your credulity. Try to clarify your objectives before making decisions concerning your professional future; otherwise you may commit grave errors.

#### Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

Try to present a joint front with your spouse concerning your children. A fascinating person may appear suddenly in your life; but nothing gratifying would result from this. You'll enjoy good health if you refrain from excesses in all fields.

#### Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

The astral influxes will be so that they'll allow you to achieve some beautiful professional feats. The pettiness and hurtful words of your neighbours won't succeed in troubling your equanimity; however, some family concerns will perturb you.

#### Gemini: May 21 - June 20

Contacts with strangers will prove very beneficial, particularly as concerns intellectual exchanges. Be more sure of yourself and be confident in your possibilities. Don't let yourself be influenced by certain persons of your entourage who aren't always very objective.

#### Cancer: June 21 - July 22

Heart wise, this will be a good week for you; the climate will be for a very clear improvement of your relations; you'll feel the need to share complicity and tenderness with your mate. Profit well by the support of the stars so as to conduct your business successfully.

#### Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

You'll very probably suffer from frustrations and conflicts. Anger may cause you many difficulties this week, in your private life as well as in your work; self-control will prove more necessary to you than ever.

#### Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

You'll make new encounters which will shaken many of your certitudes and question some of your most profound convictions. All this will provoke within you certain malaise, certain anxiety. You'll need to see new faces and to widen your horizons.

#### Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

Try to avoid stress, especially if you lead a very active life or assume important professional or family responsibilities. Relaxation will provide you with the greatest well-being. You'll probably be interested by a small flirt; it would be wise not to take it seriously.

#### Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

Old dissensions will make a comeback, the fires of passion will weaken, and the hearts will no longer beat at the same pace; fortunately, these are only transitory and rather discreet disagreements; don't dramatize anything.

## Avatar 2 release date to be unaffected by the coronavirus pandemic; James Cameron confident of meeting deadline

*It is being believed that Avatar 2 takes place 12 years after the events of the first movie. It follows Jake Sully (Sam Worthington) as he roams the planet of Pandora with the new family he has with Neytiri (Zoe Saldana)*



The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a massive reshuffle in Hollywood release dates but filmmaker James Cameron is still confident that his much-awaited "Avatar 2" will release as planned. "Avatar 2" is currently slated for a release on December 17, 2021. "I want to get back to work on 'Avatar', which right now we're not allowed to do under state emergency laws or rules. So it's all on hold right now," Cameron said, speaking to Empire for the new Celebration Of Cinema issue. The filmmaker shared that he was scheduled to take the filming to New Zealand before the lockdown.

"We were about to shoot down in New Zealand, so that got pushed. We're trying to get back to it as quick as we can," he said. However, the James Cameron to keep up with the pace of shooting and finish the movie as planned. "On the bright side, New Zealand seems to have been very effective in controlling the virus and their goal is not mitigation, but eradication, which they believe that they can do with aggressive contact tracing and

testing," he said, adding: "So there's a very good chance that our shoot might be delayed a couple of months, but we can still do it. So that's good news."

During the lockdown as well, the work on the film is on -- thanks to advanced technology. "We've got everybody -- everybody at Weta Digital and Lightstorm -- working from home to the extent that is possible. But my work is on the stage doing the virtual cameras and so on, so I can do a bit of editing, but it's not great for me," he said.

It is being believed that Avatar 2 takes place 12 years after the events of the first movie. It follows Jake Sully (Sam Worthington) as he roams the planet of Pandora with the new family he has with Neytiri (Zoe Saldana). The first part was a huge success, becoming the highest-grossing movie of all time when it released in 2009. Its worldwide record was broken last year by Avengers: Endgame.

## Vivek Dahiya would love to work with wife Divyanka again

Vivek Dahiya, who met his wife Divyanka Tripathi for the first time on the sets of the TV show *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein*, says he would love to work with her again, reports IANS.

"I know our fans are waiting for long to see Divyanka and I together on screen.... I also want to work with her again... It's just that I am waiting for some right project to come our way. If the project is right and script looks interesting, we would definitely give a heads-up," Vivek told the source. After dating each other for several months, the two got married in 2016.

Speaking of Vivek's acting projects, he recently wowed the audience with his role in a web series based on the 2008 Mumbai terror attack. Prior to this he was seen in *Qayamat Ki Raat*. Meanwhile, Divyanka's long running show *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein* wrapped up recently and she is on a sabbatical currently.



### TV SERIAL

## Kulfi Kumar Bajewala

**Friday 15 May:** Chandan traps Kulfi in the house while Loveleen learns about his existence. Later, an overjoyed Bhola is unaware of the danger that lurked ahead of him.

**Monday 18 May:** Chandan scares Loveleen with a knife while Kulfi gives Rocket a hint to save Bhola from his men. Later, a worried Kulfi reveals a shocking truth to Loveleen.

**Tuesday 19 May:** Loveleen hatches a clever trick to gain Chandan's trust. Elsewhere, Kulfi and Bhola engage in a heated argument.

**Wednesday 20 May:** Bhola faints after he recalls a past memory. Meanwhile, Kulfi is delighted to learn about the same.

**Thursday 21 May:** Vikram insults Bhola while a helpless Kulfi looks on. Later, she sings a song and Bhola gets flashbacks, will he remember his past?

## Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai

**Friday 15 May:** After reaching Bombay, Naina and Sameer get a taxi to reach their rented house but forget the key to their house. Becoming out of options, they wait for Naina's friend to arrive so that they can enter into their new house through a master key.

**Monday 18 May:** After reaching Preeti's house, Naina and Sameer request her mother-in-law to not to reveal that they are married. Though Preeti's mother-in-law kept on blabbering facts still gets convinced at last.

**Tuesday 19 May:** Naina and Sameer finally shifted to their own house but her father tries disturbing them. And later Sameer goes to an office for his acting career as a hero.

**Wednesday 20 May:** Naina and Sameer on the first day in the colony and Sameer go in search of his work as he wanted to work in films. On the way, he hears many appreciations upon the film industry and feels happy.

**Thursday 21 May:** Preeti's Mother-in-law creates troubles for Sameer and Naina and gives unnecessary advice to get them settled with less money. And later Sameer and Naina go out to meet a producer for him.

## Ek Deewana Tha

**Friday 15 May:** Radhika gets a recollection of her past life, who she was and who she loved. She reconnects with Akash. Back at home, Krish is going crazy to admit that fact that Shivani has moved on.

**Monday 18 May:** Vyom has somehow convinced Radhika that they are meant to be together, but what she doesn't know that Vyom is actually a 52 year old man. Radhika finds Mr. and Mrs. Bedi locked inside the house.

**Tuesday 19 May:** Vyom aka Akash targets Krish and stabs him. Radhika is shocked and scared. Mr. and Mrs. Bedi reveals the truth to Radhika. Vyom stoops a new low.

**Wednesday 20 May:** Radhika aka Sharanya is forced to choose between Mr. & Mrs. Bedi or Krish aka Shiv. Krish and Radhika swiftly turn the tables and put Vyom to his knees.

## LOCKDOWN LAUGHS

by Varsha Sheth

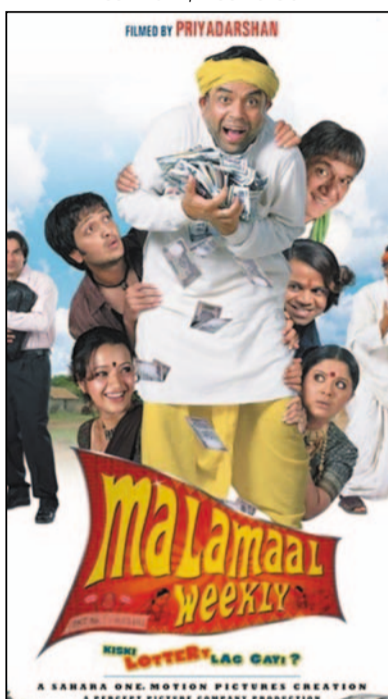




Vendredi 15 mai  
- 15.00

## Malamaal Weekly

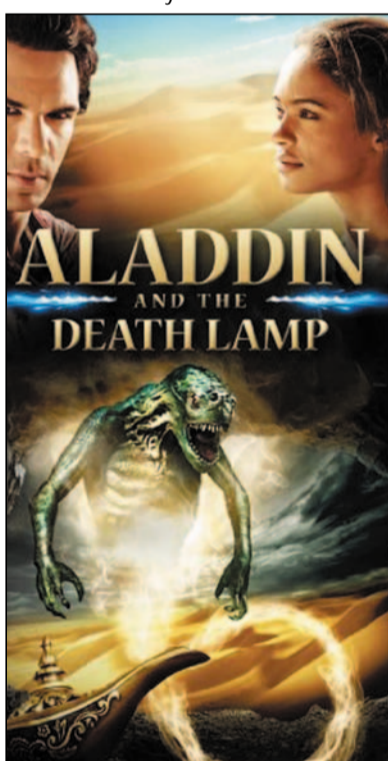
Stars: Paresh Rawal, Om Puri, Ritesh Deshmukh, Reema Sen



Samedi 16 mai - 21.15

## Aladdin And The Death Lamp

Stars: Darren Shahlavi, Noam Jenkins, Kandyse McClure



Dimanche 17  
mai - 21.30



vendredi 15 mai

### MBC 1

06.40 Local: Avant Scene  
07.13 Dessin Anime  
10.24 Mag: Origami  
10.45 Mag: Zoboomafoo  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.25 Local: Autour Des Valeurs  
12.35 Doc: Wildlife Heroes  
13.30 Local: Saver Kiltirel  
14.00 Local: Pause Cuisine  
14.30 D.Anime: Raju The Rickshaw  
14.44 D.Anime: Astrology  
15.07 D.Anime: Kuu Kuu Harajuku  
16.28 D.Anime: Polly Pocket  
17.00 Live Press Conference  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.00 Local: Press Conference  
22.15 Serial: Chicago Police...  
23.00 Le Journal  
23.35 Local: Hit Parade Kreol

### MBC 2

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

### MBC 3

06.00 Mag: Eco India  
06.44 Mag: Shift  
07.00 Mag: Border Crossing  
07.29 Doc: A Question Of Science  
07.36 Mag: Tomorrow Today  
08.57 World Stamps  
09.00 Live Educational Program...  
16.33 Doc: 360 Geo  
17.25 Mag: Strictly Street  
17.49 Doc: World Stamps  
18.04 Doc: The Bitter Price Of...  
18.35 Local: Talk On Ramadan  
19.00 Mag: Global 3000  
19.26 Doc: A Question Of Science  
19.33 Mag: Euromaxx  
20.01 Serial: Mah-E-Tamaam  
20.39 Serial: Karb  
21.03 Local: Ramadhan 2020  
22.03 Local: Photo Number 6  
22.42 Doc: Never Enough  
23.25 The Sound Of Freedom

### Cine 12

01.41 Film: About Alex  
03.10 Serial: 12 Monkeys  
03.51 Film: The Gabby Douglas...  
05.13 Tele: Amanda  
06.37 Film: A Bunch Of Amateurs  
09.00 Serial: The Good Fight  
09.52 Tele: Au Nom De L'Amour  
10.16 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett  
10.35 Serial: 12 Monkeys  
11.25 Tele: Dulce Amor  
12.00 Film: The Gabby Douglas...  
13.30 Tele: Amanda  
14.45 Film: A Bunch Of Amateurs  
16.40 Serial: Scorpion  
17.21 Serial: When Calls The Heart  
18.07 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour  
18.31 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett  
19.10 Tele: Dulce Amor  
20.05 Tele: Totalment Diva  
20.30 Serial: Midnight, Texas  
21.15 The Memory Keeper's Daughter

### Bollywood TV

09.30 Film: Duniya  
11.55 / 19.54 - Ek Deewana Tha  
12.11 / 20.11 -  
Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala  
12.42 / 20.32 Radha Krishna  
13.04 / 21.09 - Bin Kuch Kahe  
13.26 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek  
13.48 / 21.46 -  
Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
14.07 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan  
14.27 / 22.25 - Ishqbaaz  
15.03 Film: Malamaal Weekly  
Stars: Paresh Rawal, Om Puri, Ritesh Deshmukh, Reema Sen  
18.00 Live: Samacher  
18.30 Kumkum Bhagya  
18.51 Piya Albela  
19.13 Mere Angne Mein  
19.24 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai  
20.05 Ek Deewana Tha  
20.22 Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala

samedi 16 mai

06.00 Dessin Anime  
09.31 Mag: Origami  
09.45 Serial: Grandpa In My Pocket  
10.15 Serial: Heidi, Bienvenida...  
11.10 Local: Itinerer Moris  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.25 Local: People - No 18  
13.10 Local: Fanfan  
14.00 Local: Pause Cuisine  
14.10 Local: Fee Main  
14.30 D.Anime: Raju The Rickshaw  
14.44 D.Anime: Astrology  
17.00 Live Press Conference  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Entertainment: Dance  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.00 Local: Press Conference  
20.30 Local Prod: In Concert  
21.35 Serial: Chicago Med  
23.00 Local: Le Journal  
23.35 Local: Rodrigues

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

06.00 The Sound Of Freedom  
07.00 Mag: Arts And Culture  
07.29 Doc: A Question Of Science  
08.03 Doc: Le Roi De La Foret  
08.54 Doc: World Stamps  
08.53 Doc: Sur La Route Des Vins  
09.52 Doc: Photo Number 6  
10.34 Doc: Never Enough  
11.20 The Sound Of Freedom  
12.03 Entertainment: Madonna  
13.10 Doc: Arts And Culture  
14.15 Doc: World Stamps  
15.12 Doc: Photo Number 6  
15.55 Doc: Never Enough  
16.37 The Sound Of Freedom  
17.24 Mag: Arts And Culture  
17.37 Mag: Global 3000  
18.04 Doc: Italy??S Little Criminal  
19.00 Doc: Olivia's Garden  
19.30 Mag: Mixeur, Les Gouts et...  
20.02 Doc: Wildlife Heroes  
20.59 Doc: World Stamps

00.20 Tele: Peau Sauvage  
01.06 The Memory Keeper's Daughter  
03.18 Film: Ricki And The Flash  
04.55 Tele: Destiny  
05.48 Serial: Midnight, Texas  
06.35 Film: The Man Without A Face  
08.30 Serial: Mike Hammer  
09.19 Serial: Sherlock  
10.47 Film: La Chance D'une Vie  
12.16 Serial: The Bletchley Circle  
13.08 Tele: L'esclave Blanche  
13.46 Tele: La Premiere Dame  
15.05 Film: Ricki And The Flash  
17.00 Serial: Midnight, Texas  
17.52 Film: Sos Chasseurs De Monstres  
20.05 Tele: Totalment Diva  
20.30 Series: Midnight, Texas  
21.15 Film: Aladdin And The Death Lamp  
22.45 Tele: Eva Luna

04.05 Ek Deewana Tha  
04.26 Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala  
04.43 Radha Krishna  
05.05 Zindagi Ki Mehek  
05.27 Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
05.47 Chhanchhan  
06.07 Ishqbazz  
06.29 Kumkum Bhagya  
06.50 Piya Albela  
07.12 Mere Angne Mein  
08.00 Zindagi Ki Mehek  
10.11 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai  
12.30 Film: God Tussi Great Ho  
Starring: Salman Khan, Priyanka Chopra, Amitabh Bachchan  
14.54 Bin Kuch Kahe  
16.00 Pavitra Rishta  
18.30 Film: Tanu Webs Manu  
20.53 Serial: Siya Ke Ram  
21.15 Serial: Naagin Season 2  
21.59 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek

dimanche 17 mai

06.00 Dessin Anime  
09.33 Mag: Origami  
09.45 Serial: Grandpa In My Pocket  
10.40 Local: Un Rasinn  
11.30 Local: Saveurs Plus  
12.00 Le Journal  
14.30 D.Anime: Raju The Rickshaw  
14.46 D. Anime: Croque Nuage  
14.55 D.Anime: Zou  
15.30 D.Anime: Astrology  
15.32 D.Anime: La Famille Passiflore  
16.30 D.Anime: Polly Pocket  
17.00 Live Press Conference  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Local: Safar  
19.00 Local: Anjoria  
19.30 Le Journal  
20.05 Local: Press Conference  
21.30 Film: Dominion: The Last Star Warriro  
23.00 Le Journal

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

06.00 Doc: Horizon  
06.51 Doc: Olivia's Garden  
07.44 Doc: Wildlife Heroes  
08.38 Doc: World Stamps  
10.28 Doc: The Father Of Modern...  
11.10 Doc: Horizon S  
12.00 Entertainment: Michael Jackson  
13.18 Mag: Mixeur, Les Gouts Et...  
13.46 Doc: World Stamps  
14.40 Chine, Un Million D'artistes  
16.18 Doc: Horizon S  
17.10 Doc: Olivia's Garden  
18.00 Doc: Anna's Wildlife  
18.26 Doc: Set One: Quality...  
18.34 Local: Talk On Ramadan  
19.05 Doc: Builders Of The Future  
19.29 Mag: Mixeur, Les Gouts Et...  
20.06 Doc: Charles Pathé...  
20.58 Doc: World Stamps  
21.01 Doc: Raymond Loewy, Le...  
21.48 Doc: Futuropolis

00.20 Tele: Peau Sauvage  
01.36 Aladdin And The Death Lamp  
02.56 Serial: Hawaii 5-0  
03.40 Film: Sos Chasseurs De Monstres  
05.11 Tele: Destiny  
06.46 Film: Pixels  
08.30 Serial: Mike Hammer  
09.18 Film: The Gabby Douglas Story  
10.44 Sos Chasseurs De Monstres  
12.15 Serial: Hawaii 5-0  
13.10 Tele: L'esclave Blanche  
13.40 Tele: Premiere Dame  
15.06 Film: La Momie  
17.31 Serial: Midnight, Texas  
18.30 Series: Mission: Impossible  
19.15 Mag: Hollywood On Set  
20.05 Tele: Totalment Diva  
20.30 Serial: Counterpart  
21.15 Film: Memoires D'une Geisha

02.19 Bin Kuch Kahe  
04.11 Pavitra Rishta  
05.57 Film: Tanu Webs Manu  
08.00 Motu Patlu  
08.11 Chhanchhan  
10.02 Itna Karo Na Mujhe Pyaar  
12.30 Film: Golmaal Again  
Starring: Ajay Devgn, Parineeti Chopra, Tabu, Arshad Warsi  
15.01 Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala  
17.00 Punar Vivaah  
18.00 Samachar  
18.30 Film: Dil Maange More  
Starring: Shahid Kapoor, Soha Ali Khan, Ayesha Takia, Tulip Joshi  
21.16 Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
22.54 Ishqbazz

Samedi 16 mai -  
18.30

Stars: Kangana Ranaut,  
Madhavan, Swara Bhaskar



Dimanche 17 mai  
- 18.30

Stars: Shahid Kapoor, Soha Ali Khan, Ayesha Takia, Tulip Joshi





Nita Chicooree-Mercier

The polemic raised over controversial authorization given to the police force to monitor public movement and call at citizens' homes for investigation and arrest without any warrant leaves room for several interpretations. There is the fear that the authorities would misuse the law to send the police to deliberately harass political opponents or anyone who criticizes the government. It may translate into policemen barging into houses at any time of the day and in the middle of the night under false pretences, and target those who are chafing the nerves of the rulers. Or policemen might just misuse the law to settle scores with anyone they have in their sights and flex muscles unnecessarily to impress and frighten.

The official standpoint is to have the law applied during the time of pandemic for a more effective control of public movement and propagation of the disease in case of a second surge so as to alleviate the tasks of the medical staff and all frontliners. The ultimate goal is to instill more discipline to combat the virus. Fines are already raised to a disproportionate level to deter potential offenders, especially those who take the wheel for no reason, and another category who is impatient to congregate in total disrespect for confinement which most law-abiding citizens are putting up with.

The aim is to avoid a situation akin to the nightmare authorities in India had to cope with because thousands of people assembled for religious purposes in fearless disregard of confinement rules and contaminated loads of other citizens. It is a matter of applying the same law to all citizens, and not allowing sections of society to have their own law. In such cases tough measures are expected to act as deterrent, and may imply that police forces have to call at houses without any prior notice.

Public health and safety is important to people themselves, and is an essential service to the economy. So police action is understandable on this ground. It should certainly not open the way to abuse of opponents and random arrests of citizens on flimsy suspicions. Nobody wishes that a sense of discipline is transformed into authoritarian nonsense.

### Abuse of power

Reservations on the use of police authority over the public on suspicious grounds are not unfounded if we go by previous reports. Resentment and animosity ill-inspire politicians to order arbitrary arrests and retaliatory investigations with a view to harass and pester opponents. A few unruly elements among policemen resort to brutal force to crack down on erring citizens. A few days ago, a young policewoman patrolling with her male colleagues in a coastal village indulged in gratuitous verbal abuse of an elderly person, hurling swear words ending with 'mama'. Women like her stupidly mimic the vulgarity that characterizes some policemen. The man was just standing in front of his gate. His relatives came out of their house and gave a piece of their mind to the bunch of policemen and the young woman. Cases of routine patrols degenerating into unnecessary blows were reported in the early days of confinement. Lately, cases of muscled handling of prisoners ending in death are totally unacceptable.

What training do policemen get before being enrolled to act as representatives of law and order is worth reviewing. Whether they are inculcated with a full understanding of their duty, a set of

# A Sense of Discipline



*//Coastal beaches also require due attention. There are fewer policemen on duty on Sundays. So there are scarce patrols to make picnickers respectful of regulations. Cars are parked anywhere, bottles, cans and plastic and paper wraps are simply thrown away on the beaches..."*

principles to guide them and a sense of discipline is an open question. The typical question a venal officer asks if you don't have all the documents available during a random check is: What do you want to do now? You expect him to simply give you the damned paper to go and pay a fine. It is only later that you are told, in case you tend not to be aware of local practices, what the fellow really meant in repeating the same question Ki pou fer aster?

The criteria for recruitment in the police force follow the same pattern in many countries with more or less the same IQ level for the average policeman. Generally, most of them take their job seriously and fulfil them appropriately. Law and order are an essential service in society, and police forces are expected to carry out their duties in accordance with well-defined guidelines, principles and right ethics.

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### Channeling priorities

What about imposing a fine to promote cleanliness in public places? Indeed, while the public is largely sensitized on sanitary measures it is the right time to launch a campaign in favour of environment-friendly behaviours. Use MBC television to raise awareness on keeping streets clean, avoid littering roadsides with plastic bottles, beer cans, cigarette packs and such likes.

In post-lockdown period, municipalities should send their teams to town centres, markets and crowded spots to enforce regulations on cleanliness. The mess around the market in Port-Louis at 5 p.m. is nothing flattering for a capital city. It is left by vendors and hawkers of all kinds. The time has come to move to another location, and shift Parliament and the ministries there as well. In the meantime, there is a lot to be done to instill discipline for a pleasant and clean environment in the towns and villages.

Coastal beaches also require due attention. There are fewer policemen on duty on Sundays. So there are scarce patrols to make picnickers respectful of regulations. Cars are parked anywhere, bottles, cans and plastic and paper wraps are simply thrown away on the beaches.

What can be done to avoid accidents and deaths in times of normalcy? Motorcycles overtake buses right and left these days, with policemen watching the scene and doing nothing about it. It is happening when there is not much traffic now. On normal days, you see it on the highway leading to the capital and in the villages on a daily basis. It takes years to develop a new mindset geared towards discipline in individual choices and behaviour in the public sphere for the common welfare. General awareness that a back-to-usual way of doing things is increasing.

Moreover, in managing public funds, government must strike the right balance between business growth, devise a new fiscal policy to reduce glaring inequalities, and promote welfare of workers. A lot of boldness, goodwill and energy will be needed to bring about real change.



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor

# Silence of The Heart

It takes a sensitive ear to tune in to the silence of the heart, but it is there in each one of us.

We spend a lot of time attempting to put the feelings in our hearts into words, to communicate to others our passions, our emotions, and our love. Often we are so busy trying to translate our heart's roar into language that we miss the most profound experience the heart has to offer, which is silence.

Every poem arises from this silence and returns to it. When all the songs have been sung, the soliloquies delivered, the emotions expressed, silence is what remains. As each wave of feeling rises and falls back into the silence, we have an opportunity to connect with the vast, open, powerfully healing wisdom at the soundless centre of our hearts.

Our hearts may seem noisy and tumultuous so much of the time that we do not even associate them with silence. It takes a sensitive ear to tune in to the silence of the heart, but it is there in each one of us, so close and so large that we do not even notice it. We can begin to become aware of it in the same way we become aware of the negative space in a still life, the background of a photograph, or the open sky that contains the sun, clouds, moon, and stars.

We are accustomed to tuning in to objects and sounds that are one-pointed, solid, and three-dimensional. Seeing and hearing the apparently empty space that contains these sounds and objects takes a little practice.

We can bring our awareness into our hearts by simply breathing into the general area of our heart. The first thing we may notice is feelings like joy or sadness and physical sensations like tightness or tenderness. We acknowledge these as we continue to breathe and focus, listening attentively. We surround these feelings and sensations with breath and recognize that they are contained and held in an immeasurable substance like water or air, intangible, ineffable, but utterly real.

This is the silence of the heart, and the more we listen for it, return to it, and accept it, the more we bathe and purify ourselves in the soundless center of our being.