

# MAURITIUS TIMES

*The biggest source of getting the country to a balanced budget is not by raising taxes or by cutting spending. It's by encouraging the growth of the economy. -- Mitt Romney*

Interview : Eric Ng Ping Cheun, économiste et directeur de PluriConseil



**“Notre économie prendra deux ans et demi avant de revenir à son niveau de 2019”**

☞ Voir pages 7-8-9



**Covid-19 will continue to haunt us**

We have to continue with all the sanitary measures in place... How long will we go on like this is the query and worry on all lips. The only plausible answer is - when we discover a vaccine

By Dr R Neerunjun Gopee ☞ See Page 3

Budget 2020-21

## Réforme fiscale: mythes et réalités



Le Gouvernement aurait pu faire une réforme fiscale fondée sur une rationalité économique visant à accroître la capacité fiscale du pays tout en permettant une redistribution des richesses. Il ne l'a pas fait

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Tit-bits

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## Maintaining Law and Order

**T**he appointment of K. Servansingh in replacement of the outgoing Commissioner M. Nobin puts an end to speculations that had been doing the rounds about the successor to the former Commissioner, with the name of other Deputy Commissioners surfacing repeatedly. High responsibilities are not unfamiliar to the new Commissioner of Police, as he has been Commander of the Special Mobile Force prior to being assigned this present post. Both carry equally weighty responsibilities.

The Police Force forms part of the Civil Service, and it would be amiss on our part if we do not underline how the Civil Service in its entirety has risen to the challenge posed by the pandemic crisis. From the administrative cadres to those who perform all types of tasks, there was an efficient and coordinated mobilization of the staff of the essential services who did their duties with a sense of understanding of what was at stake, namely the health of the country which, by definition, meant it had to start with theirs. For, if the workforce of the essential services itself is disabled, then who is there to look after the rest of the population?

And so it is that all the so-called frontliners involved in first of all, saving lives – nurses, doctors, laboratory staff, ambulance drivers – and next, giving the vital support needed in ensuring the safe and clean environment to allow this to happen: the other hospital personnel, the cleaners and those responsible for waste collection and disposal, attendants at various service points are among those whose hard work and dedication helped to see the country through the confinement period. Helping and supplementing the guided efforts of the Civil Service were those who ensured food supplies and provisions, as well as the business sectors which repurposed to manufacture masks and sanitisers that conformed to the specified standards.

In parallel, a heavy onus was laid

upon the Police Force which was tasked to make sure that the sanitary measures recommended were followed to the letter by the population. This was a critical component of the control strategy, and required deployment of policemen to oversee social distancing at the supermarkets in particular, something that the population was unfamiliar with, and about which there was apprehension of a breakdown of law and order. But the Police Force met this challenge and there were no major untoward incidents of note.

As we go back towards how things were before the lockdown, the old problems and unresolved issues pertaining to policing will come to the fore again. Over the years, and unfortunately so, there have been too many allegations of police brutality, high-handedness in dealing with the public whether it is at the police stations or on the road, impolite behaviour and rough talking, sexual harassment of police-women by their peers or superiors, policemen being implicated in shady deals amongst other things.

The new Commissioner of Police therefore assumes responsibilities at a time when there is much expectation on the part of the public about 'sanitising' the process of maintaining law and order, and a restoration of the image of the Police. For this, he will need the support of the political establishment at the highest level, but crucially of course that of the Police Force itself, forging a relationship of trust and confidence, and pride in the profession as it fulfils its duties vis-à-vis the nation. Having been a soldier, he knows the meaning of discipline and honour, and will no doubt place a high premium on inculcating them and other values that are relevant to the maintenance of the safety and security of the country and will also be crucial to the success of his new mission. All this to be done while abiding by the principles of human rights and in the respect and dignity of the individual.

## The Conversation

## How pandemics past and present fuel the rise of mega-corporations

**T**he power of the state is something that we largely assume in the 21st century. Across the world, the idea of the sovereign nation has been central to the imperial politics and economy of the last few centuries.

But from the 1970s onwards, it became common among intellectuals to suggest that the state was less important, its monopoly of control within a given territory contested by multinational corporations. In 2016, of the largest 100 economic entities, 31 were countries and 69 were companies. Walmart was larger than the economy of Spain, Toyota larger than India. The capacity of these large companies to influence politicians and regulators has been clear enough: consider the effects of oil companies on climate change denial.

And since Margaret Thatcher, prime minister of the UK from 1979 to 1990, pronounced that she intended to "roll back the state", more and more parts of previously state-owned assets now operate as companies, or as players in state engineered quasi-markets. Roughly 25% of the UK's National Health Service, for example, is delivered through contracts with the private sector.

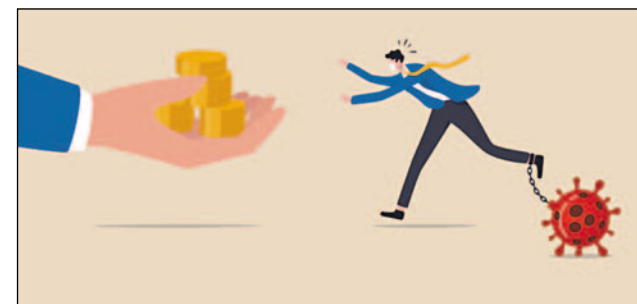
Across the globe, transport, utilities, telecommunications, dentists, opticians, the post office and many other services used to be state monopolies and are now run by profit-making companies. Nationalised, or state owned, industries are often described as slow, and in need of market discipline in order to become more modern and efficient.

But thanks to coronavirus, the state has come rolling back in again like a tsunami. Spending on a level which was mocked as "magic money tree" economics only a few months ago has been aimed at national health systems, addressed the problem of homelessness, provided universal basic income for millions of people, and offered loan guarantees or direct payments to a host of businesses.

This is Keynesian economics on a grand scale, in which national bonds are used to borrow money backed by future income from taxpayers. Ideas about balancing the budget appear to, for now, be history, with entire industries now being reliant on treasury bailouts. Politicians the world over have suddenly become interventionist, with wartime metaphors being used to justify gigantic spending.

Less often remarked is the astonishing restriction on personal freedoms. The autonomy of the individual is central to neoliberal ideas. "Freedom loving peoples" are contrasted with those who live their lives under the yoke of tyranny, of states that exercise Big Brother surveillance powers over their citizens behaviour.

Yet in the last few months, states around the world have effectively restricted movement for the vast majority of people and are using the police and armed forces to prevent assembly in public and private spaces. Theatres, pubs and



restaurants are closed by fiat, parks have been locked, and sitting on benches can get you a fine. Running too close to someone will get you shouted at by someone in a high vis vest. A medieval king would have been impressed with this level of authoritarianism.

The pandemic seems to have allowed the fiscal and administrative powers of big government to bulldozer arguments about prudence and liberty. The state's power is now being exercised in ways that haven't been seen since the Second World War, and there has been widespread public support.

### After coronavirus

The long-term result of the Black Death was the strengthening of the power of big business and the state. The same processes are happening much more rapidly during the coronavirus lockdown.

But we should be cautious of easy historical lessons. History never really repeats itself. The circumstances of each time are unique, and it simply isn't wise to treat the "lesson" of history as if it were a series of experiments that prove certain general laws. And Covid-19 will not kill a third of any population, so though its effects are profound, they will not result in the same shortage of working people. If anything, it has actually strengthened the power of employers.

The most profound difference is that the virus comes in the middle of another crisis, that of climate change. There is a real danger that the policy of bouncing back to a growth economy will simply overwhelm the necessity of reducing carbon emissions. This is the nightmare scenario, one in which Covid-19 is just a prequel to something much worse.

But the huge mobilisations of people and money which governments and corporations have deployed also shows that big organisations can reshape themselves and the world extraordinarily rapidly if they wish. This gives real grounds for optimism concerning our collective capacity to re-engineer energy production, transport, food systems and much else – the green new deal which many policy makers have been sponsoring.

The Black Death and Covid-19 seem to have both caused concentration and centralisation of business and state power. That is interesting to note. But the biggest question is whether these potent forces can be aimed at the crisis to come.

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Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

# Covid-19 will continue to haunt us

*We have to continue with all the sanitary measures in place... How long will we go on like this is the query and worry on all lips. The only plausible answer is – when we discover a vaccine*

Shortly after the onset of the COVID-19 emergency, the well-known British medical publication, *The Lancet*, started a new feature called 'The Lancet COVID-19 Resource Centre', which has been updated daily with articles reporting on the latest findings from the multitude of studies going on around the world. I think it would be correct to say that most doctors would be looking up this resource given the global nature in this pandemic, whatever be their field of specialization if they are specialists. This applies to me too, though I am a surgeon and do not deal with infectious disease as a matter of routine. Nevertheless, I have inevitably been drawn to take an interest in the developments taking place as I was directly involved in the response to the pandemic that preceded the present one, namely AH1N1, as I was serving at that time at the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life. In fact, I have had occasion to mention earlier that this is what led me to view the specialty of Public Health with even greater seriousness.

This was in line with an appreciation of its larger practical dimensions that began when, in 1999, I was interviewed in Harare for the post of WHO representative by the then Regional Director of WHO, Dr Ebrahim Samba who was from Gambia. Like me, he was Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh – and not unexpectedly, there was a *déclic*. The interview turned into his passionate account of how from surgeon he had become Public Health advocate when he had to handle an epidemic of yellow fever, shortly after he arrived back in Gambia in the mid-1960s as Director of the Medical Services there, along with performing his surgical duties.

And hence my curiosity about Covid-19, which is showing up several peculiarities about the various types of diseases that it is spawning, and that no medical



“In course of time, viruses circulate among the population as a normal phenomenon, and produce diseases when the conditions are conducive - like the influenza virus which attacks during the cold weather, and then we talk about the 'flu season'... This may happen with Covid-9 too, and by then a majority of people would have developed a degree of immunity to it. If a large enough segment of the population, about 75-80%, acquires such immunity, then the rest of the population is also protected...”

practitioner can fail to seek information about, and perhaps discuss one or more aspects which they find intriguing or appealing. And so have I been doing too, with specialist colleagues in internal medicine, public health, etc., and as well with a surgeon colleague who also happens to be specialised in public health. What has been troubling us is the reported non-response to oxygen therapy by several patients put on ventilator, and this is yet to be fully explained.

By now it is generally known by the public at large that there have been so many 'controversies' associated with this ongoing episode of Covid-19, ranging from the origin of the virus to the allegedly delayed declaration of the epidemic as a global public health emergency, to the issues about treatment with the anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) and the various types of tests that have been devised, to

the push for vaccine development besides how best to manage the social and economic impacts of the lockdown that has been advised and imposed as one of the most effective control measures.

As regards HCQ, the latest is the retraction of a paper published in *The Lancet* on May 22, 2020 by Mandeep Mehra et al: 'Hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine with or without a macrolide for treatment of Covid-19: a multinational registry analysis'. This came after an earlier 'Expression of concern' (EOC) by The *Lancet* Editors to the effect that 'important scientific questions have been raised about data reported in the paper by Mandeep Mehra et al'.

The reason for the retraction was that 'After publication of our *Lancet* article, several concerns were raised with respect to the veracity of the data and analyses conducted by Surgisphere Corporation and its founder and

our co-author, Sapan Desai, in our publication. We launched an independent third-party peer review of Surgisphere...' and '...our reviewers were not able to conduct an independent and private peer review and therefore notified us of their withdrawal from the peer-review process... Based on this development, we can no longer vouch for the veracity of the primary data sources. Due to this unfortunate development, the authors request that the paper be retracted.' And finally, 'We all entered this collaboration to contribute in good faith and at a time of great need during the Covid-19 pandemic. We deeply apologise to you, the editors, and the journal readership for any embarrassment or inconvenience that this may have caused'.

It may be of interest to readers that Prof Mehra, currently at Harvard, in 2009 (he was then at Maryland) came with a team to Mauritius at the invitation of then PM Hon Navin Ramgoolam to advise on medical education, and I led the local technical team at MOHQL.

The paper of Prof Mehra cautioned about the complication of cardiac failure in patients treated with HCQ, a finding reported in other studies after Prof Didier Raoult of Marseilles had strongly recommended the drug based on his own studies of about 1000 patients. This was not widely accepted. But it may be mentioned here that from the outset physicians in India have been using HCP as a *preventive drug* in personnel who are looking after COVID-19 patients, strictly

according to rigorous guidelines issued by the Indian Council of Medical Research. However, the last word has not yet been said about the use of HCQ in COVID-19.

Be that as it may, I had written at the beginning that 'In course of time, viruses circulate among the population as a normal phenomenon, and produce diseases when the conditions are conducive - like the influenza virus which attacks during the cold weather, and then we talk about the 'flu season'... This may happen with Covid-9 too, and by then a majority of people would have developed a degree of immunity to it. If a large enough segment of the population, about 75-80%, acquires such immunity, then the rest of the population is also protected, a phenomenon known as herd immunity'. However, in an article on this problem in *The Conversation* of June 5, 2020 Connor Bamford, Research Fellow, Virology, Queen's University Belfast writes: 'The antibody results coming in suggest that only a small proportion of people have been infected by SARS-CoV-2. In the UK, only an estimated 6.8% of people have had the virus; for France, the figure is just 4.4%. This means that we are far away from achieving herd immunity'.

The paper concludes that 'it's not clear that SARS-CoV-2 (the virus causing Covid-19) could ever burn itself out. Therefore, our only option remains to suppress Covid-19 as much as possible until we have a safe and effective vaccine available to the masses'.

What this means is that we have to continue with all the sanitary measures in place, though quite naturally wearing masks is starting to tell on people... How long will we go on like this is the query and worry on all lips. The only plausible answer is - when we discover a vaccine. Till then, patience.

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## Budget 2020-21

# Réforme fiscale: mythes et réalités

*Le Gouvernement aurait pu faire une réforme fiscale visant à accroître la capacité fiscale du pays tout en permettant une redistribution des richesses. Il ne l'a pas fait*

Aditya Narayan

Certaines mesures fiscales annoncées dans le budget 2020-21 ont suscité des réactions diverses et opposées, allant d'une approbation tacite dans certains milieux à une désapprobation ouverte dans d'autres.

La fiscalité est toujours une question sensible dans la mesure où elle touche aux poches des contribuables : il est essentiel d'examiner ces mesures d'une façon désintéressée afin de séparer le bon grain de l'ivraie ; en d'autres mots, distinguer entre les mythes et les réalités.

Les principales mesures fiscales ont trait à l'impôt sur le revenu des particuliers (*personal income tax*) et l'impôt sur les bénéfices de la société (*corporate tax*).

## Impôt sur le revenu

D'abord, examinons l'impôt sur le revenu personnel. Avant le budget 2020-21, les particuliers étaient assujettis au taux de 10% sur le revenu annuel net jusqu'à Rs 700,000. Le revenu annuel net au-dessus de Rs 700 000 fut imposé au taux de 15%.

En outre, il y avait une "charge de solidarité" (*levy*) de 5% sur le revenu annuel taxable (incluant les dividendes) dépassant Rs 3,5 millions. Les contribuables payaient l'impôt au taux réel de 20% sur l'excédent de revenu sur le seuil de Rs 3,5 millions.

Le budget 2020-21 vient d'augmenter la charge de solidarité de 5% à 25%, frappant le revenu annuel imposable (incluant les dividendes) d'un résident mauricien à compter de Rs 3 millions. L'ancien taux d'imposition de 20% passe donc à 40% à partir du seuil de Rs 3 millions par an.

Il convient de distinguer entre le taux de base (10%), qui s'applique au revenu net après les déductions admises, et les taux d'imposition marginale qui s'appliquent aux tranches de revenu supérieures. Effectivement, les nouveaux taux d'imposition marginale seront de 15% et de 40%. Certains milieux confondent les deux types de taux d'imposition pour faire croire que la fiscalité est devenue excessive et confiscatoire pour les personnes à haut revenu. Or, tel pas le cas.

En moyenne, une personne à haut revenu ne paiera pas plus de 20% d'impôt en moyenne sur l'ensemble de son revenu. Par exemple, un contribuable ayant un revenu annuel de Rs 4 millions paiera une moyenne de 20% (sans tenir compte des déductions), comme le démontre le tableau schématique plus bas. Selon les calculs du ministre, le même contribuable paiera 17,4% après déductions contre 13,9% auparavant. On est donc très loin de la confiscation du revenu.

Income bracket (Rs)	Taxable income Rs	Tax rate	Tax Rs
Up to Rs 700,000	700,000	0.10	70,000
From Rs 700,000 to Rs 3 M.	2,300,000	0.15	345,000
From Rs 3 M to Rs 4 M.	1,000,000	0.40	400,000
Total taxes	4,000,000		815,000
Average tax rate			20%

## Problème structurel

Le ministre des Finances a justifié la nouvelle mesures en ces termes au paragraphe 220 de son discours du budget :

*"We need to bring more progressivity and fairness in our taxation system and we call upon the high income earners to further contribute to rebuild our economy while preserving our social fabric."*



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« Le gouvernement aurait pu faire une réforme fiscale fondée sur une rationalité économique visant à accroître la capacité fiscale du pays tout en permettant une redistribution des richesses qui puisse diminuer les inégalités de revenu et de richesse dans la société. Il ne l'a pas fait. Les nouvelles mesures, aussi positives soient-elles, constituent un simulacre de réforme fiscale parce qu'elles sont limitées. Elles touchent au revenu uniquement et non pas à la richesse... »

Le Gouvernement espère récolter Rs 3,5 milliards de revenu fiscal supplémentaire de l'augmentation de la charge de solidarité. En même temps, le budget a rehaussé les seuils de revenu imposable (le revenu moins le montant d'exemption personnelle) pour tous les contribuables avec pour résultat que les impôts seront réduits ou éliminés pour 55 000 contribuables.

Maurice a un problème fiscal structurel dans la mesure où la capacité fiscale du pays (18% du PIB contre 34% en moyenne dans les pays de l'OCDE) est insuffisante pour financer les dépenses de fonctionnement de l'Etat, ce qui donne lieu à un déficit annuel dans le budget devant être financé par l'endettement.

Le Gouvernement devait faire quelque chose pour renverser la vapeur. Il aurait pu faire une réforme fiscale fondée sur une rationalité économique visant à accroître la capacité fiscale du pays tout en permettant une redistribution des richesses qui puisse diminuer les inégalités de revenu et de richesse dans la société. Il ne l'a pas fait.

Les nouvelles mesures, aussi positives soient-elles, constituent un simulacre de réforme fiscale parce qu'elles sont limitées. Elles touchent au revenu uniquement et non pas à la richesse. Si le Gouvernement avait voulu taxer la richesse, il aurait réintroduit la taxe sur les plus-values sur les biens mobiliers (actions d'entreprise, bijoux, objets précieux, bateaux, etc.) et les biens immobiliers (terrains et bâtiments).

## Ecoles de pensée opposées

Le Gouvernement s'est placé dans ce qu'il estime être le juste milieu entre les deux principales écoles de pensée en matière de fiscalité. Ces deux écoles de pensée opposées sont :

(a) **l'école néolibérale** : elle prône l'impôt uniforme de 10% ou 15% pour tous les contribuables selon le raisonnement qu'un taux d'imposition proportionnel unique ne fait pas de discrimination. Très peu de pays ont l'impôt uniforme.

(b) **l'école progressiste** : elle préconise l'impôt progressif avec un taux de base (10%) et des taux d'imposition marginale (15%, 25%, 30% et 35%) applicables aux

tranches de revenu supérieures. La plupart des pays capitalistes de l'OCDE ont l'impôt progressif

Le Gouvernement justifie le nouveau taux d'imposition marginale de 40% au nom de la solidarité sociale en temps de crise. D'ailleurs, il parle de "prélèvement de solidarité" et non pas de taxe de solidarité. Il n'est pas certain qu'une fois la crise passée ce nouveau taux d'imposition marginale durera. Il est très probable qu'il disparaisse dans l'avenir lorsque les finances publiques auront été assainies. Les réactions aux nouvelles mesures appartiennent à l'une ou l'autre école de pensée.

Dans l'école néolibérale, l'ancien ministre des Finances Sithanen s'est prononcé contre le taux d'imposition marginale de 40% en déclarant qu'il pénalisera les Mauriciens qui engrangent de hauts revenus grâce à leurs études et compétences professionnelles. Un argument sans doute élitiste!

D'autres disent que la nouvelle mesure encouragera les cadres à émigrer ou à travailler moins afin de ne pas atteindre le seuil de revenu imposable de Rs 3 millions. Un dirigeant du secteur privé a même dit : «On verra le retour de l'évasion fiscale comme le sport préféré des hauts salariés.»

Ceux de l'école progressiste accueillent la nouvelle mesure au nom de la justice fiscale et ils auraient préféré que le Gouvernement aille plus loin en faisant une véritable réforme fiscale qui soit juste, permanente et capable de répondre aux besoins de financement de l'Etat-Providence. S'il y a une chose qui est controversée, c'est la décision du Gouvernement d'exempter les résidents étrangers, qui travaillent et obtiennent des revenus à Maurice, du nouveau taux d'imposition marginale de 40%. Le principe de l'équité fiscale veut que tous les contribuables qui tirent des revenus dans une juridiction donnée soient assujettis aux mêmes taux d'imposition selon le concept de résidence fiscale.

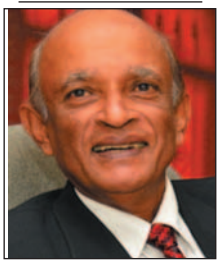
Maurice s'est mise en violation d'une autre règle de l'OCDE, qui a mis en œuvre tout un programme pour combattre l'érosion de la base fiscale et le transfert du profit (*Base Erosion and Profit Shifting*) dans ses pays membres. L'OCDE insiste pour que d'autres juridictions qui traitent avec elle suivent les mêmes règles fiscales dans l'effort global de contrôler l'optimisation fiscale et l'évasion fiscale. Maurice court déjà le risque d'être placée, à l'instigation de l'Union européenne, sur la liste noire des juridictions qui ont des carences dans leur dispositif contre le blanchiment de l'argent et le financement du terrorisme. Fallait-il une autre entorse aux règles de bonne gouvernance?

## Impôt sur la société

Le taux d'imposition sur les sociétés en général est resté à 15% avec le taux exceptionnel de 3% accordé aux sociétés d'exportation. Toutefois, le budget a introduit un prélèvement (*levy*) de 0,1% à 0,3 % sur les sociétés dont le revenu brut annuel dépasse Rs 500 millions. Les compagnies d'assurance, les institutions financières, les fournisseurs de services et les compagnies dans l'immobilier paieront le prélèvement de 0,3%. Cette nouvelle mesure est novatrice dans la mesure où la taxe s'applique au revenu brut et non pas aux bénéfices (profit), ce qui va à l'encontre du principe de l'imposition des sociétés.

Quel est le raisonnement du Gouvernement? Avec la taxe sur le profit, il y a toujours une tendance pour les sociétés de maximiser les dépenses déductibles pour minimiser le profit. Est-ce pour prévenir cette pratique qu'il veut imposer le prélèvement sur le revenu brut avant le calcul du profit? Le Gouvernement aurait pu peut-être faire un prélèvement de 5% sur le profit (ce qui aurait porté le taux d'imposition à 20%) au lieu de prélever 0,3% sur le revenu brut des compagnies rentables. Cela aurait accompli le même objectif.





S. Callikan

## Tit-bits

# When coyness is not a virtue!

**F**inance Minister Rengaden Padayachy and his team must have burnt the midnight oil as they juggled out the complexities and forecasts for Budget 2020-2021 and parsed them out in policies and priorities for our consumption in his Budget Speech and as appropriately detailed estimate supplements for MPs and knowledgeable analysts. Future exercises, which the PM himself remarked was 105 minutes long, we suggest could be easily curtailed to a compact one hour by cutting out the tedious listings of minor encumbrances which detract from impact.

This extract from a statement by Pope Francis during his January 2015 visit to cyclone-devastated Philippines comes to mind in these pandemic recovery times: *"It is now more than ever necessary that political leaders be outstanding for honesty, integrity and commitment to the common good."* And, in the current trauma of recovery and reconstruction requiring sacrifices from all quarters, we will not doubt that the budget team was fully ensconced in that spirit and those deep earthy values which, in today's management terms, embed precepts of transparency, good governance and accountability.

Yet we know that, while they delved into the new vision and priority measures for a difficult restart of the national economy, part of their craft would lie in highlighting the popular, skirting or shying from what is con-

sidered embarrassing and avoiding altogether those items not judged useful, particularly when there is necessity to shake off the chaff of more buoyant days as touted in last year's budget for instance.

Some of the shyness is unexplainable for the most major element (BOM financing) which has rendered this budget at all possible and which is in public domain anyway. Only careful perusal of the detailed Supplements will locate the "helicopter" Rs 60 billion of our national reserves from the Bank of Mauritius, injected as Rs 33 bn in current expenditures for the year and Rs27 bn in various capital projects over 2-3 years.

Nothing is indicated about the costs of Central Bank financing this "one-off" grant from excess liquidity on the market, neither is it easy to find the fate and usage of the additional Special Reserves of Rs 18 bn transferred from Central Bank earlier this year, nor, even more unfortunately, of the transparency and accountability concerns around the Rs 80 bn of our reserves which the Central Bank through the Mauritius Investment Company Ltd proposes to use to bail out the big majors.

Equally discretely camouflaged were the Rs 9 bn earmarked for future helping out of our national airline MK,



burdened it seems with a billion Euros of debt at end 2019 and which any gust would have brought tumbling out of the blue skies. Such coyness could be viewed as an accounting sleight of hand and it was rather unexpected in Hon Padayachy's first and probably most important budget exercise. When calls are made for the nation to unite in the difficult sacrifices ahead, we should expect greater transparency and accountability in usage of our own funds.

## Budget bits



“The Finance minister has chosen to retain certain major public infrastructure investments under way and understandably postpone others, for example, the airport runway at Plaine Corail in Rodrigues and the new Passenger Terminal at SSR International airport, near Rs 22 bn... Postponement, let alone scaling down or outright cancellation, has been disregarded for the Rs 19 bn Safe City CCTV project, although the budget fails to detail either the current stock and assets nor the number and locations of future street CCTV additions. We trust government will heed calls for appropriate legislation to ensure some degree of parliamentary or judicial oversight of those surveillance activities ...”

**T**he Finance minister has chosen to retain certain major public infrastructure investments under way and understandably postpone others, for example, the airport runway at Plaine Corail in Rodrigues and the new Passenger Terminal at SSR International airport, near Rs 22 bn jointly, on which works are only expected to start in 2021/22.

Postponement, let alone scaling down or outright cancellation, has been disregarded for the Rs 19 bn Safe City CCTV project, although the budget fails to detail either the current stock and assets nor the number and locations of future street CCTV additions for an annual fork-out of some Rs 600 m. We trust government will heed calls for appropriate legislation to ensure some degree of parliamentary or judicial oversight of those surveillance activities to ensure citizen rights are not encroached beyond what is necessary for public safety.

On the other hand, we do learn that the Core d'Or Sports Complex, nominally valued at Rs 4.7 bn, has outstanding payments of Rs 2.4 bn due to 30th June 2020. But the baffling element is the commercial association with Liverpool Football Club (bless the 'You'll Never Walk Alone' crowd!) to the tune of near Rs 400 m over 3 years, on terms which are kept away from public domain, other than the contract would promote inbound tourism. Together with a planned Rs 50 m Branding exercise, both carefully forked out to the National Resilience Fund (the same that earmarks support for the national carrier MK), they are side-dish oddities in the tourism promotion budget, at a time when a more structured emergency action plan might have been expected for

what has been and will remain for long months the most embattled sector of the economy.

In laymen terms, it stands to reason to minimize risks associated with our currency depreciation, through a lesser reliance on foreign debt sources. The debt to GDP ratio of 75% forecast for June 2020 has been criticized for convenient under-estimation and figures of 83% or more have been aired publicly. Specialists and economists will weigh in on the macro-economic public sector debt management strategy adopted by Government in today's difficult circumstances. Despite those circumstances, the Minister had the exceptional leeway with the massive grants from the Central Bank and the significant freefall of international oil prices. The latter, we may add, have not been passed on to the consumer or to the fuel-hungry economic activities.

The Rs 30 gas cylinder rebate, some low-interest loan facilities and the well-deserved cash grant to some frontliners, were the relatively sparse moments of Government MPs noisy appreciation, for a Budget Speech that was curiously received with caution and even some baffled silence when the demise of the 40-year old National Pension Scheme was announced as a bolt from the blue. Even the clarifications since by the Minister have not entirely cleared matters. Obviously Government will have to justify such a mighty pen-swipe and better explain pension workings when proper consultations or a White Paper was deserved on all aspects of the question, including electoral promises made and the sustainability of the replacement scheme.

S. Callikan



# Coronavirus: US-China virus row flares with senator's comments

The row between the US and China over the coronavirus outbreak has flared again with a US senator accusing Beijing of trying to block the development of a vaccine in the West. Rick Scott said evidence had come via "our intelligence community" but provided no details to back it up.

China meanwhile issued a document defending its virus actions, saying it briefed the US as early as 4 January, reports BBC.

Deaths caused by the virus passed 400,000 worldwide on Sunday.

The figure is provided in a count by Johns Hopkins University, which also shows confirmed global infections close to the 7 million mark.

The Republican senator for Florida, who serves on the armed services and homeland security committees among others, was speaking on the BBC's Andrew Marr Show.

He said: "We have got to get this vaccine done. Unfortunately we have evidence that communist China is trying to sabotage us or slow it down."

Mr Scott was pressed on the issue twice. He said: "China does not want us, and England and Europe to do it first. They've decided to be an adversary to America and democracies around the world."

Mr Scott, who has been a staunch supporter of President Donald Trump,



Rick Scott said China had "decided it wanted to dominate the rest of the world". Photo - bbc.com

was questioned again, saying the "evidence" had come through the intelligence community and armed services, adding: "There are things I can't discuss... I get provided information."

The Trump administration has consistently attacked China over its handling of the coronavirus outbreak. Mr Trump has referred to coronavirus regularly as the "China virus". He also said he has proof Covid-19 originated in a Chinese laboratory in Wuhan. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said there was "enormous evidence" to back the theory, which Beijing has dismissed.

The Five Eyes intelligence alliance, which includes the UK and the US, said there was no such evidence, as did the World Health Organization (WHO).

But the WHO is another point of contention for Mr Trump's administration. It has pulled out of the body, accusing it of being China's puppet. Mr Trump accused Chinese officials of

covering up the virus early on and saying they could have stopped the disease from spreading.

This week he threatened to bar passenger flights from China from 16 June, after which Beijing said it would loosen restrictions on international air travel.

Then there is the back-drop of the US-China trade dispute, which saw the imposition of hundreds of billions of dollars worth of tariffs on each another's good

China has not yet responded specifically to Mr Scott's accusations but in a new document it has published on its response to the virus, Beijing says it briefed the United States as early as 4 January, when the disease was still largely unknown.

It lists a telephone briefing given by the head of the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention to his US counterpart. China says in the document it has acted in an open, transparent and responsible manner. The WHO has praised China's actions, saying they helped slow the spread of the virus, particularly with the quick and voluntary sharing of the virus's genetic code.

China's foreign ministry has repeatedly accused the Trump administration of trying to distract from its own problems tackling the crisis. The US has more infections and deaths than any other nation.



Passengers arriving at Heathrow. British Airways says the government's quarantine regulations are more severe than those placed on people with Covid-19. Photograph - Neil Hall - EPA

## BA launches legal battle over Covid-19 quarantine ruling

Britain's three biggest airlines have started legal proceedings against the government in a bid to overturn quarantine rules due to take effect in the UK from Monday.

BA's owner, IAG, along with Ryanair and EasyJet, have sent a pre-action protocol letter setting out why they believe the moves, which will force air passengers arriving from abroad to self-isolate for 14 days, are illogical and unfair, reports The Guardian.

Airlines and travel firms have protested in vain against the new Home Office-led regulations, which they have said come months late to stop the transmission of coronavirus and will kill off any nascent recovery in their industries.

The airlines' letter argues that the quarantine measures are more severe than those applied where the risks are greater, and impose greater restrictions on arrivals than on people infected with Covid-19. The airlines also object that enforcement of the regulations as published appears to apply only to England, and people arriving in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland would not face the same penalties. The devolved administrations have yet to set out how they will police the rules.

The government has argued that the quarantine rules are science-based and would help limit the risk of a second wave as restrictions on movement are eased.

The quarantine row comes amid further uproar over BA's plans to sack about 12,000 staff and lower the terms and conditions of remaining employees.

## India and China generals hold meeting to defuse border standoff

Top Chinese and Indian generals have held high-level talks in a Himalayan outpost in a bid to end the latest border standoff between the world's two most populous nations that has seen thousands of troops sent to both sides of the disputed border.

According to India's foreign ministry, the meeting took place in a "cordial and positive atmosphere".

"Both sides agreed to peacefully resolve the situation in the border areas in accordance with various bilateral agreements and keeping in view the agreement between the leaders that peace and tranquility in the India-China border regions is essential for the overall development of bilateral relations," the statement from the external affairs ministry on Sunday said. There was no immediate reaction from

Beijing.

The talks were held in the border outpost of Maldo on the Chinese side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) - the de facto border between the two countries, India-based NDTV channel reported.

They took place after multiple local military level meetings failed to defuse the tension, which arose

after troops from both sides were involved in scuffles in early May followed by Chinese intrusion in several border areas that New Delhi claims as its own. Most of 3,488km-long (2,167 miles) border between the two countries is disputed and non-demarcated.

Retired Northern Army Commander Lt Gen DS Hooda

described the high-level talks as "unprecedented".

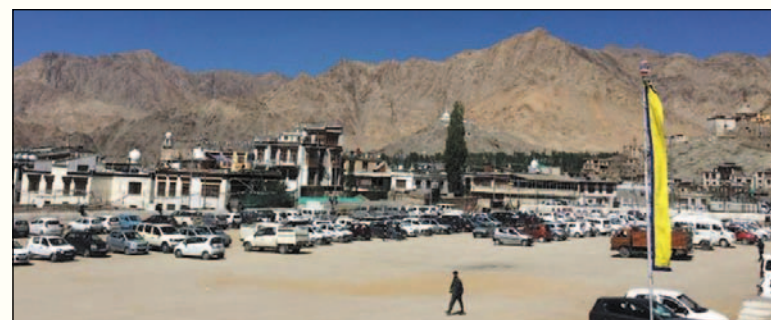
The face-off in eastern Ladakh region, which was carved out of Indian-administered Kashmir last August, started on May 5 and May 6 when soldiers of both sides were involved in a skirmish.

On May 9, several Indian and Chinese troops were injured in fights with fists, stones and wooden batons in Sikkim state - about 1,200km east the Ladakh region.

Indian officials say that within days, Chinese troops had encroached on the Indian side of their demarcation line in the Ladakh region further to the west.

India has moved extra troops to positions opposite.

The dividing line between India and China is more like a scar - that includes a ceasefire LAC - than a border.



Most of 3,488km-long (2,167 miles) border between the two countries is disputed and non-demarcated. Photo. Aljazz Hussain - AP

The countries cannot even agree on how long it is. India gives a figure of 3,488 kilometres (2,167 miles). China does not give a number, but state media says the border should be just 2,000km (1,250 miles) when China's claims in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh and other regions are taken into account. Each side uses different frontier proposals made by Britain to China in the 19th century to back their claims.

Increasingly tense border talks and a series of skirmishes led to the 1962 war, mainly fought above 4,000 metres (14,000 feet), in which China took territory from India in Arunachal Pradesh.

Regular clashes have followed and the rival sides staged a 73-day showdown in the Doklam plateau in 2017.

Compiled by  
Doojesh Ramlallah



Interview : Eric Ng Ping Cheun, économiste et directeur de PluriConseil

# 'Si les frontières du pays sont fermées, l'économie mauricienne restera en panne.'

Sans les arrivées de touristes et d'investisseurs étrangers, elle ne retournera pas à la normale'

**E**tant donné la Covid-19, nombreux sont ceux qui pensent à un Discours du Budget éloigné du changement minimal proposé annuellement par chaque ministre des Finances. Nous l'avons entendu dans plusieurs pays du monde: la pandémie est une occasion pour effectuer des choix fondamentaux. Il s'agit de prendre une nouvelle direction dans le respect des valeurs fondamentales et une plus grande considération pour l'écologie. Les Mauriciens ont attendu le Discours du budget 2020-2021 avec beaucoup d'espérance et l'attente d'un renouveau. Mais que nous propose ce budget? Eric Ng Ping Cheun, auteur de plusieurs ouvrages sur l'économie mauricienne, nous en parle.

**Mauritius Times: Au-delà des discours et des déclarations d'intention énoncées dans le "Discours du Budget de 2020-2021", quel constat faites-vous de la stratégie économique mais aussi politique de l'actuel Gouvernement lorsque vous allez au fond des choses ?**

**Eric Ng:** Le discours budgétaire est devenu maintenant un exercice de communication, truffé de déclarations d'intention et d'effets d'annonce. Les sucreries et les douceurs sont dans le discours alors que la note est salée dans les annexes. Par exemple, le discours souligne l'exemption des frais portuaires à l'exportation, mais passe sous silence la hausse des frais à l'importation de la Cargo Handling Corporation et de la Mauritius Ports Authority. Voilà de quoi alimenter l'inflation importée, qui est déjà renforcée par la très forte dépréciation de la roupie. Le portefeuille des Mauriciens va souffrir.

La stratégie économique du Gouvernement reste la même que celle qu'il a suivie en temps normal, alors qu'il parle de "New Normal!", à savoir que "the construction industry will be the engine of our recovery". Déjà, avant Covid-19, cette stratégie fondée sur la construction et l'immobilier n'a pas pu stimuler la croissance économique au-delà de 4,0%. Celle-ci est même tombée à 3,0% l'année dernière.

Persister dans cette voie ne relancera pas l'économie sur une base solide et saine. Les fuites d'importation dans la construction et l'immobilier sont très élevées : pratiquement tout est importé - les équipements, les matériaux, la main-d'œuvre et les mobiliers. Or, les prix d'importation sont en hausse, sans compter que la pandémie, qui est toujours là, affecte le transport international et les chaînes d'approvisionnement. Par conséquent, les projets de ces deux secteurs subiront des retards dans leur exécution.

Cette stratégie n'accélérera pas la reprise économique. Les prévisions du ministère des Finances le démontrent : le produit intérieur brut (PIB), qui était de Rs 498 milliards l'année dernière, sera en baisse en 2020 et en 2021, et il n'atteindra la barre des Rs 500 milliards qu'en 2022. Donc, malgré une injection de Rs 150 milliards prises de la Banque de Maurice (BoM), notre économie prendra deux ans et demi avant de revenir à

son niveau de 2019.

Il est bon de faire ressortir que l'économie mauricienne aura non pas une, mais deux années de contraction : une croissance négative de 5,8% en 2019-2020 et de 7,0% en 2020-2021. Ces deux années fiscales bénéficient pourtant d'énormes dépenses publiques, qui constituent 35,3% et 36,0% du PIB respectivement, contre 25,5% en 2018-2019, c'est dire que la politique keynésienne ne marche pas.

Au fond, le Gouvernement fait du keynésianisme social : les bénéfices sociaux ont connu un bond de 33%, de Rs 32 milliards en 2018-2019 à Rs 43 milliards en 2019-2020, et ils continueront de progresser les trois années suivantes. Le ministre des Finances a pris la peine de préciser dans son discours budgétaire que "we are reducing our recurrent expenditure, excluding social benefits, by some 10 percent on average for the coming financial year".

De plus, le régime de *Basic Retirement Pension* demeure intact, alors que les grosses sociétés et les particuliers à hauts revenus sont taxés plus lourdement. Voilà autant de signaux de la stratégie politique du Gouvernement. Reste à savoir si les coûts économiques ne vont pas nuire aux dividendes politiques.

**\* "Un budget qui sort de l'ordinaire mais qui garde les mêmes valeurs de solidarité et de partage", a déclaré le Premier ministre dans ses premiers commentaires sur le budget. Ce qui se traduit par, entre autres, l'allocation de Rs 15 milliards pour une aide mensuelle de Rs 5 100 pendant 6 mois pour ceux qui sont en chômage technique, une fiscalité réduite pour la classe moyenne, tout une panoplie de prêts bancaires à un faible taux d'intérêt aux petites et moyennes entreprises (PME), et aussi la décision de ne pas taxer les intérêts et d'augmenter le taux de la TVA. Comment réagissez-vous à cela ?**

Ce sont encore des signaux politiques. Mais c'est là jeter de la poudre aux yeux, car la réalité économique prendra le dessus des expédients politiques. Les valeurs de solidarité et de partage seront de vains mots si l'économie ne redémarre pas.

Tout procède de la production, mais ce budget fait accroître les coûts de production.



**“Le budget de 2020-2021 contient quelques bonnes mesures économiques, notamment celles en faveur de la production locale, de la sécurité alimentaire et énergétique, et de l'économie circulaire.**

**Fondamentalement, le pays ne sort pas du modèle de développement qui a fait son succès économique, et c'est tant mieux, sauf que Maurice risque d'être vue comme une juridiction à fiscalité élevée...”**

**"Une taxe de solidarité sur les grosses sociétés n'est pas une mauvaise idée en soi, sauf qu'elle aurait dû s'appliquer sur les bénéficiaires, et non sur le chiffre d'affaires. Or elle sera applicable même si un groupe -- ayant un chiffre d'affaires de plus de Rs 500 millions -- encourt des pertes ! C'est une taxe punitive, donc injuste...”**

Lorsque les entreprises produisent moins, elles ne procéderont pas au chômage technique (l'employé garde son emploi mais ne travaille pas), mais aux licenciements purs et simples. Les Rs 5 100 ne sont pas une allocation-chômage, mais une indemnisation salariale. Je ne vois pas beaucoup d'entreprises prendre le risque de recourir au chômage technique pendant six mois, sachant que la crise durera bien plus longtemps.

Le problème actuel des entreprises, c'est de savoir comment réduire les coûts pour

survivre. Je crois que le grand argentier s'est fourvoyé en s'appuyant sur des hypothèses qui auraient été valables en temps normal. Or la situation économique est tout, sauf normale.

Au niveau de la fiscalité, la classe moyenne bénéficie certes d'un relèvement des seuils d'imposition. Mais si les gens perdent leur emploi, cette mesure n'aura pas de sens pour eux. N'importe qui préfère payer des impôts que de se retrouver chômeur. Le budget parle plus du chômage que de l'emploi ! C'est la production, et non la consommation, qui est à la base de l'emploi.

Quant aux prêts à faible taux d'intérêt aux PME, ils concernent la Banque de développement (DBM). Je suis sceptique sur l'octroi de tels crédits. D'abord, la DBM est connue pour sa lenteur bureaucratique, pour sa piètre gestion des dossiers et pour ses mauvais payeurs. Ses employés sont formés pour traiter des demandes de petits prêts de Rs 10 000 à Rs 50 000, et encore qu'ils s'y montrent très pointilleux. J'imagine mal qu'ils puissent évaluer rapidement et correctement des demandes qui vont jusqu'à un million de roupies. Et puis, le crédit facile aux PME, ou plus précisément à des entreprises zombies (qui vivent des aides gouvernementales sans être rentables), est la cause de nombreuses créances irrécouvrables.

Quoi qu'il en soit, les annonces faites aux PME restent toujours à l'état de promesse. Souvenez-vous, en 2015, le ministre Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo avait promis un plan de Rs 10 milliards pour les PME, mais elles n'ont jamais vu la couleur de cet argent. Aujourd'hui, le ministre Renganaden Padayachy leur fait miroiter un montant similaire.

☞ Suite en page 8



# 'Les valeurs de solidarité et de partage seront de vains mots si l'économie ne redémarre pas'



\* Suite de la Page 8

Pour ce qui est de la TVA, il aurait été inconcevable d'augmenter son taux dans le contexte actuel, car cela aurait tué la consommation. Avec un taux inchangé, les recettes de la TVA accuseront tout de même une baisse de Rs 3 milliards en 2020-2021, malgré un taux d'inflation qui grimpera à 4,0%.

**\* La préparation du budget s'est faite dans des circonstances exceptionnelles liées à la pandémie de la Covid-19 dont les conséquences sur l'emploi, les entreprises et d'autres secteurs d'activité vont être dévastatrices. La question qui se pose en fin de compte, c'est de savoir si ce budget sera en mesure, avec les milliards de la Banque de Maurice, de limiter la casse et relancer l'économie. Qu'en pensez-vous ?**

Une relance immédiate de l'économie est peu probable, car ce budget ne règle pas les problèmes urgents dus à la pandémie. Ils sont de deux ordres. Premièrement, en dépit de la loi Covid-19, des rigidités structurelles empêchent les entreprises à se restructurer convenablement. Dans une situation de crise aiguë, qui est mondiale, nos entreprises doivent être agiles et réactives aux changements. Mais si le Gouvernement leur impose des conditions draconiennes contre une aide financière, elles seront incapables de revoir de fond en comble leur structure de production pour s'adapter à la crise. Tout n'est pas qu'une question de liquidités, car il faut aussi gérer les coûts, les risques et la volatilité de la demande.

Deuxièmement, la connectivité aérienne est la condition sine qua non de la reprise économique. Le grand argentier semble avoir oublié que nous vivons sur une île, géographiquement isolée et loin de ses marchés d'exportation. Son discours budgétaire ne contient pas un seul mot sur Air Mauritius et, accessoirement, sur notre politique d'accès aérien face à un secteur d'aviation qui est en plein bouleversement dans le monde.

Le Gouvernement peut venir avec autant de mesures qu'il veut pour le textile, le tourisme et l'immobilier, mais si les frontières du pays sont fermées, l'économie mauricienne restera en panne. Sans les arrivées de touristes et d'investisseurs étrangers, elle ne retournera pas à la normale. Dans toute son Histoire, l'île Maurice a été dépendante de son ouverture aux flux de biens et de personnes pour se développer.

Dans l'économie globalisée d'aujourd'hui, un développement autocentré n'est même pas pensable. La mobilité internationale est l'horizon indépassable de toute stratégie économique. A ce titre, il est réconfortant d'entendre le ministre Padayachy exprimer sa foi dans "Opening to the World". Le plus tôt Maurice rouvre ses frontières avec toutes les précautions sanitaires requises, le mieux ce sera pour son économie.

**\* Des questions subsistent sur le recours du Gouvernement aux réserves de la Banque de Maurice pour le financement de la relance, et le mécanisme opératoire et d'aide de la Mauritius Investment Corporation, cela loin du regard du Parlement. Vos commentaires ?**

“ Tout professionnel ayant un Occupation Permit doit obligatoirement s'associer avec un Mauricien pour investir, en lui cédant au moins 30% des actions. Au cas contraire, il n'y aura pas de transfert de connaissances aux locaux. Rappelons que les Mauriciens ont acquis une grande expertise dans le textile grâce à une participation égale avec des industriels étrangers au début des années 80...”

Il y a deux types d'aide de la BoM au Gouvernement, et il faut bien faire la distinction entre les Rs 60 milliards accordées sous la section 6(1)(oa) de la *Bank of Mauritius Act*, et les deux milliards de dollars (l'équivalent de Rs 80 milliards) provenant des réserves officielles en devises.

C'est une semaine après avoir annoncé cela que le gouverneur de la Banque de Maurice a précisé que les Rs 60 milliards seront levées sur le marché monétaire local. C'est une bonne chose d'absorber les Rs 30 milliards d'excès de liquidités qui sont dans le système bancaire, et je pense qu'il ne sera pas difficile de trouver une souscription additionnelle de Rs 30 milliards. Le problème, c'est que tout cet argent constitue un don, et non un prêt, au Gouvernement, et donc la BoM devra bien créer de la monnaie lorsqu'elle aura à rembourser les détenteurs de ses titres de dette. C'est une opération hautement inflationniste, qui ne se fait pas ailleurs dans le monde.

Maintenant, ces Rs 60 milliards sont classées comme "other revenue" du budget. Je me demande si le Fonds monétaire international acceptera cette classification au regard de son *Government Finance Statistics Manual 2001*. Au cas où les Rs 60 milliards seraient considérées comme un élément de financement, et non comme un revenu, l'exercice 2020-2021 enregistrera alors un déficit budgétaire de Rs 60 milliards, soit 13,2% du PIB !

Concernant le financement de la Mauritius Investment Corporation (MIC), qui sera une filiale de la BoM, il se fera aussi par création monétaire, ce qui aura un grand effet inflationniste. De plus, la contrepartie en roupies des deux milliards de dollars ne sera pas absorbée par la Banque centrale. Lorsque celle-ci vend des dollars aux banques locales, la masse monétaire diminue. Ce ne sera pas le cas avec la MIC qui aura Rs 80 milliards en main.

“ Lorsque l'Etat sauve une entreprise de la faillite en y injectant du capital, comme il compte le faire à travers la MIC, il doit établir des conditions précises telles que la sécurité des employés et un droit de regard sur la gestion de l'entreprise. Cependant, si les conditions imposées sont trop strictes, si la sauvegarde de l'emploi est absolue, l'entreprise risque de ne pas se relever, et c'est l'Etat lui-même qui perdra son argent...”

Bref, avec les Rs 10 milliards restantes qui viennent du *Special Reserve Fund* de la BoM, on aura une injection de Rs 150 milliards dans le circuit économique. Cela représente un tiers du PIB. C'est de la pure folie pour une petite économie !

Un autre acte de "démence" consiste à faire de notre Banque centrale une sorte de "venture capitalist", ce qui est unique au monde. Il y a contradiction entre le communiqué de la BoM et le discours budgétaire.

Le premier dit que *"the objective of the MIC is to mitigate contagion of the ongoing economic downturn to the banking sector"*, avec les *"major economic and systemic operators in the tourism and manufacturing sectors"*.

Le second nous dévoile que la MIC investira dans des projets africains, dans les activités de la pêche, dans les productions alimentaire et pharmaceutique, et dans les entreprises orientées vers un futur innovant. C'est seulement à Maurice que le régulateur du secteur bancaire est entraîné dans autant d'activités commerciales avec tous les risques de conflits d'intérêt que cela implique.

Et puis, le Board de la MIC n'est même pas encore totalement constitué que ses priorités d'investissement sont déjà établies par le ministre des Finances. Est-ce que cela répond au critère : *"operating independently within the parameters of a strict governance structure"* ? C'est à un comité parlementaire que la MIC aurait dû répondre, précisément au nom de la bonne gouvernance.

**\* Les entreprises rentables qui déclaraient des dividendes ont aussi bénéficié de l'aide gouvernementale avec le Wage Assistance Scheme. Maintenant, l'Etat vient au secours des entreprises sans rien demander en contrepartie (une sécurité d'emploi garantie, une prise de participation au capital d'entreprise ou le remboursement à terme de l'aide consentie). Est-ce acceptable ?**

Il n'est évidemment pas acceptable que l'Etat apporte une aide financière aux entreprises privées sans contrepartie. Il ne faut toutefois pas confondre indemnisation salariale et sauvetage d'entreprise (bail-out). Le Gouvernement avait un devoir de venir avec un Wage Assistance Scheme parce qu'il a sciemment pénalisé les entreprises en imposant un confinement à la population et la fermeture des frontières. Les firmes ne peuvent pas être blâmées pour cela.

En revanche, lorsque l'Etat sauve une entreprise de la faillite en y injectant du capital, comme il compte le faire à travers la MIC, il doit établir des conditions précises telles que la sécurité des employés et un droit de regard sur la gestion de l'entreprise. Cependant, si les conditions imposées sont trop strictes, si la sauvegarde de l'emploi est absolue, l'entreprise risque de ne pas se relever, et c'est l'Etat lui-même qui perdra son argent. Il convient d'accorder une certaine flexibilité à la direction de l'entreprise pour redresser la barre.



# "Notre économie prendra deux ans et demi avant de revenir à son niveau de 2019"

☞ Suite de la page 8

\* Quelques mesures suscitent des interrogations, comme la répartition des 12 000 logements sociaux qui seront construits. Seulement 1 800 maisons seront pour ceux ayant des salaires de moins de Rs 10 000, 5 200 pour les salariés touchant entre Rs 10 000 et Rs 30 000, et 5 000 pour ceux gagnant plus de Rs 30 000. Est-ce juste et équitable, selon vous ?

Je ne sais pas si ceci fait partie de la "nouvelle normalité" du Gouvernement actuel, mais il n'est pas normal que la classe moyenne supérieure (plus de Rs 30 000) ait aussi accès aux logements sociaux de l'Etat. Qui plus est, elle a un quota presque trois fois plus élevé que les gens au bas de l'échelle (moins de Rs 10 000). C'est une régression sociale.

En piochant dans le bassin des acheteurs plus aisés, l'Etat devient un concurrent du secteur privé et va ainsi déstabiliser un segment important du marché immobilier. Cet interventionnisme ne fera pas l'affaire des entrepreneurs honnêtes. Il étendra plutôt le domaine d'influence de ceux qui sont proches du pouvoir politique et à l'affût de contrats de construction.

Toujours est-il qu'il sera impossible de construire 12 000 maisons d'ici à la fin du mandat de ce Gouvernement. Ces cinq dernières années, seulement environ 2 000 nouvelles unités furent concrétisées. Avec les gros travaux de construction qui sont annoncés, et ceux qui doivent être complétés, les ressources manqueront à l'appel.

\* Une autre interrogation, c'est l'ouverture des portes aux étrangers avec l'élimination des obstacles pour l'obtention d'un *Occupation & Permanent Residence Permit* fusionné, et l'investissement dans une entreprise sans aucune restriction d'actionariat. On connaît l'impact d'une telle mesure sur le prix de l'immobilier. Qu'est-ce que cela rapportera au pays en termes de transfert de connaissances et de technologies ?

Je suis en faveur de l'ouverture aux expertises étrangères à condition que cela entraîne un transfert réel de connaissances et de technologies. C'est le seul moyen de favoriser la diversification de notre économie. Singapour l'a fait avec beaucoup de réussite.

Je comprends les craintes qu'une telle approche suscite à Maurice. Pour les dissiper, il faut des mesures complémentaires qui rassurent les Mauriciens. D'abord, tout professionnel ayant un *Occupation Permit* doit obligatoirement s'associer avec un Mauricien pour investir, en lui cédant au moins 30% des actions. Au cas contraire, il n'y aura pas de transfert de connaissances aux locaux. Rappelons que les Mauriciens ont acquis une grande expertise dans le textile grâce à une participation égale avec des industriels étrangers au début des années 80.

Puis, on peut réserver le droit de vote à ceux qui sont nés à Maurice. Ensuite, on peut avoir un régime fiscal différent pour les acheteurs étrangers des propriétés immobilières. Aussi, il convient d'éviter des zones



“Le Board de la Mauritius Investment Company Ltd n'est même pas encore totalement constitué que ses priorités d'investissement sont déjà établies par le ministre des Finances. Est-ce que cela répond au critère : "operating independently within the parameters of a strict governance structure"? C'est à un comité parlementaire que la MIC aurait dû répondre, précisément au nom de la bonne gouvernance...”

de ségrégation qui concentrent des expatriés dans certaines régions, ce qui ressemble à de l'apartheid.

D'autre part, je ne suis pas d'accord que le/la conjoint(e) de l'expatrié(e) peut travailler ici sans un permis de travail en bonne et due forme. On ne saurait avoir deux catégories d'employés étrangers, une pour la main-d'œuvre et une autre pour les conjoints des expatriés. C'est discriminatoire en termes de droits humains.

\* Par ailleurs, Business Mauritius a fait part de l'inquiétude du monde des affaires concernant la taxe sur le Revenu Brut qui, selon elle, est "une taxe sur la réussite et un net obstacle à la croissance", l'augmentation du *Solidarity Levy*, qui fait passer le taux d'imposition marginal à 40% pour les Mauriciens à revenus élevés, et aussi l'introduction de la Contribution Sociale Généralisée, "une charge supplémentaire conséquente aux entreprises". Ses inquiétudes sont-elles justifiées, selon vous ?

Les inquiétudes du secteur privé sont justifiées parce que la forte progressivité fiscale va à l'encontre de la relance de l'économie. Cette mesure aurait été acceptable si la situation économique était bonne. Comme je vous l'ai dit, le ministre des Finances s'est trompé dans ses hypothèses pour concevoir son budget. Ce n'est pas le moment de se servir de la fiscalité pour envoyer des signaux politiques à la population. On se serait cru à la veille d'élections générales !

Alors que le pays a besoin de hautes compétences professionnelles pour diversifier et faire repartir l'économie, le Gouvernement les démotive et les effarouche. De plus, il décourage les Mauriciens talentueux à rentrer

au pays pour mettre leur expérience et leur capital au service de leur patrie. Il n'encourage pas non plus les sociétés et les particuliers, qui ont un total de mille milliards de roupies en devises sur des comptes étrangers, à rapatrier leur argent à Maurice.

Une taxe de solidarité sur les grosses sociétés n'est pas une mauvaise idée en soi, sauf qu'elle aurait dû s'appliquer sur les bénéfices, et non sur le chiffre d'affaires. Or elle sera applicable même si un groupe -- ayant un chiffre d'affaires de plus de Rs 500 millions -- encourt des pertes ! C'est une taxe punitive, donc injuste.

Le Gouvernement a raté une occasion en or d'apporter une véritable refonte de notre système d'imposition. Il aurait dû transférer la charge fiscale de la valeur travail aux valeurs foncières et immobilières. Les terrains et les bâtiments sont des actifs immobiliers. Ils rapportent une plus-value ou une rente sans qu'il y ait un effort de production.

Le Gouvernement utilise l'argent des contribuables pour construire des routes et des rails qui valorisent les terres, et les espaces immobiliers et commerciaux. Il est vrai que les Mauriciens sont trop émotifs par rapport à leurs propriétés. Mais la présente crise exceptionnelle exige d'injecter une bonne dose de rationalité dans notre politique fiscale.

Quant à la Contribution Sociale Généralisée, c'est une appellation impropre, puisqu'elle est en vérité une taxe additionnelle pour financer la pension de vieillesse. Ce qu'on présente comme une réforme du système public de retraite est une cote mal taillée, car on s'éloigne d'un régime par répartition sans aller vers un véritable régime par capitalisation. En même temps, les coûts des entreprises augmentent, ce qui détruira des emplois.

\* La pandémie de Covid-19 a créé de nouvelles opportunités de changement, unimaginables auparavant. Le Budget a-t-il saisi ces opportunités de rupture, ou bien se rabattra-t-on en fin de compte sur un modèle de développement dépassé et des méthodes inefficaces une fois la sortie de crise assurée ?

Le Gouvernement s'est servi de cette pandémie comme prétexte pour ponctionner Rs 140 milliards de la Banque de Maurice sans vraiment réformer ni le système fiscal ni l'Etat-providence ni les canards boiteux du secteur public. C'est du gaspillage à grande échelle. La crise actuelle n'est pas transformée en opportunité de changement ou de rupture : le conservatisme social a encore de beaux jours devant lui.

Néanmoins, le budget de 2020-2021 contient quelques bonnes mesures économiques, notamment celles en faveur de la production locale, de la sécurité alimentaire et énergétique, et de l'économie circulaire. Fondamentalement, le pays ne sort pas du modèle de développement qui a fait son succès économique, et c'est tant mieux, sauf que Maurice risque d'être vue comme une juridiction à fiscalité élevée. C'est là que se jouera son avenir économique.

## Food for Thought

# Be thankful, be patient

A movie theatre announced that an eight-minute movie won the title of Best Short Film in the World. So, it was decided to display this movie in the cinema for free, so that the largest crowd could gather to watch it.

The movie began with a snapshot of a room ceiling that is devoid of any decoration and of any details; just a white ceiling.

Three minutes passed without the camera moving and it did not move to any other scene, or any other part of the ceiling in the same room.

Another three minutes passed without the camera moving and without changing the scene.

After six boring minutes, the viewers started grumbling. Some of them were about to leave the theatre hall. And some of them objected to the officials of the house because they wasted their time watching a ceiling.

Suddenly, before the majority became concerned and starting to leave, the camera lens slowly moved on a wall without any details as well until it reached down towards the floor. There a child, who seems to be totally handicapped due to the spinal cord tear in his little body, appeared on a bed.

The camera slowly moved to the side of the handicap bed, showing a wheelchair without a back. It then moved to the boredom location of the ceiling again - to show a sentence: "We showed you only 8 minutes of this child's daily activity; only 8 minutes from the scene that this handicapped child watches at all hours of his life, and you complained and weren't patient for only six minutes, you couldn't bear to watch it!"

So know the value of every second of your life that you spend in wellness, and thank your Lord for every blessing bestowed on you, and you will not feel its existence unless you lose it.

We suffered during quarantine and the curfew, which God willing is for a limited time, and we do not know that there are millions who live their entire lives in quarantine.

Covid-19 has forced us to have the time to think about many privileges, and we thank God for the blessing of the freedom of movement and out of the house to see life, breathe the air, and practise activities in its various colours.





Kishore Teelanah

**T**here are many nationalities who left their homelands in search of a better life in foreign lands around the world. Britain is one of those countries that allowed in many such immigrants since the 1960s and even earlier in some cases. One of those groups was the Mauritians who came to Britain *en masse* in the 1970s to pursue nursing and other studies. Much has already been written about the lives of the first generation Mauritians in the UK. The present article is about the second generation Mauritians born in the UK, especially about their children; what makes them different from their proud parents is that, under their positive influence, their offspring have become highly educated individuals.

Pritee Almeida, nee Hurnam, was born in Britain of Mauritian parents in the 1980s and has a very interesting profile. She is a larger than life young lady who has already made her mark as a singer, performer, actor as well as a presenter. She is also well educated with a clutch of 10 GCSEs and good A-Levels that opened the



Pritee with her husband Tino and children. Picture credit - Peekaboo Studios

door for further studies, like for instance an undergraduate BA (Hons) degree in Public Relations with French. She is proud to be of Indo-Mauritian heritage; she speaks fluent Kreol, and is also conversant with Hindu Sanskrit prayers and culture. She was brought up by Hindu parents who were very happy with their beliefs and also of being liberal.

Pritee was drawn to singing since her primary school age. She started to sing mostly English songs of the famous Western singers.

She went to the Miss Saigon Training School which was established by the renowned West End producer Cameron Mackintosh at a time when talented professionals from ethnic minorities were very few. That was when Pritee stepped into that world with courage and sharpened the talent that would allow her to make it to where she is now. She has a deep, powerful and soulful voice and is a true performer in front of crowds, be it weddings, music festivals or large celebrations. She also took part in 'Britain's Got Talents' in 2011 singing the James Brown classic song 'I Feel Good' and was well received by the judges and audience. She created

the name 'Big Mama Funk' as she is most popularly known amongst the Mauritian community in the UK and elsewhere.

Pritee is a Front Woman and Lead Vocalist for her own band, 'The Big Mama Funk and The Funkstars' and has already achieved success in local and international functions. She has appeared in many live performances in countries like Bahrain, Italy, Portugal, Spain, France, Mauritius as well as in the UK.

Pritee's talent has also led her to treading the boards in the West End as well as doing voiceovers and various radio broadcasts – all of which have drawn appreciation from different audiences. As the new coronavirus pandemic sweeps the globe, Pritee has taken to online video messaging.

For more on Pritee, please check her website: [www.bigmamafunk.co.uk](http://www.bigmamafunk.co.uk).



Pritee Almeida in one of her many live performances



Dylan Savomy – Part of an extraordinary generation who have grown up as pioneers of the digital world

## Dylan Savomy

**A**nother young and talented British-Mauritian, just 21, is an undergraduate in Civil Engineering at City University, London. He is very Mauritian in many ways, be it with his culture, demeanour, cool attitude and love of his pet dog Misty.

Dylan is born of proud Mauritian parents who came to England in the 1980s. His ambition was to become a footballer, but after much opposition from his mother he chose to do engineering instead. He remains a proud supporter of Liverpool FC, regularly plays football with many Mauritian friends; he is a talented goal keeper. He also has been participating in various sports since an early age: he started with swimming lessons when he was only 3 and went on to win a swimming award at the age of 13. He also took karate lessons since he was 5.

Dylan's parents have introduced him to the key Hindu religious practices and traditional rituals. Like his mother, he also became actively involved with the Mauritian Telegu Association's religious and fund-raising activities.

Besides fluency in spoken Kreol and English, Dylan can read French and studied the language to GCSE with a grade A, thanks to his mother. Despite being born and bred in England, Dylan makes it a point to keep contact with his Mauritian relatives and friends.

Overall, the second generation of Britishers of Mauritian origin are an extraordinary generation who have grown up as pioneers in the digital world. They grew up in an unfamiliar British culture that their parents knew little about. This new generation had to adapt their parents' Indo-Mauritian culture with a British one to create a blend. Very often they had to please their parents. However, in some cases it caused con-

flicts about dress codes, food, music and even languages. This often led to conflict with parents and other relatives but also created more resilient individuals who value both cultures.

This is not unique to the second generation of Mauritian parents but of other diasporas too. In some cases, other parents are far too strict due to religious obligation and beliefs as well as influence from their communities. They do not want their children to follow much of the British culture. This has resulted in a lot of strife and conflicts in their lives until they have left home to have their own families. On the whole, most of them lead quite a harmonious British way of life and they feel proud of being British too.

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## Relationships

# Are you sabotaging your happiness?

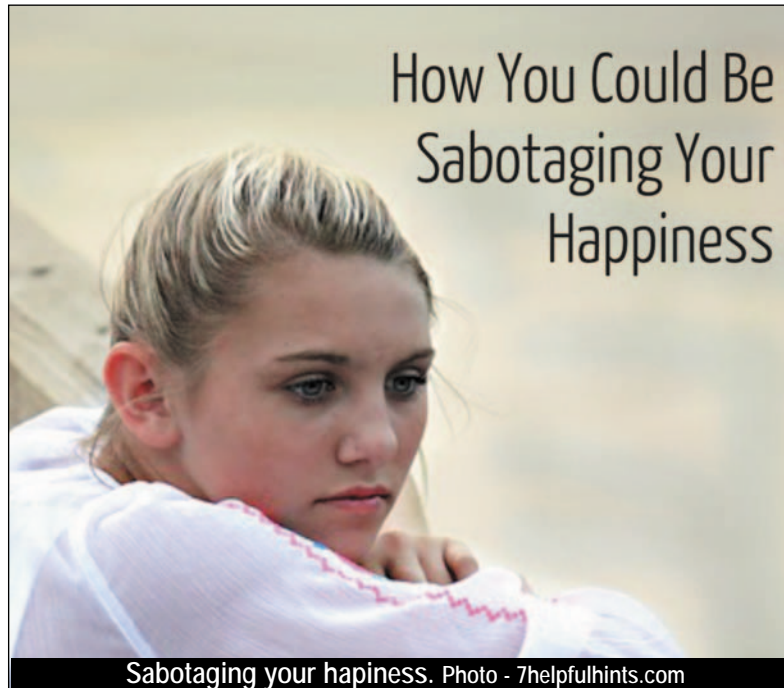
*To feel inner peace and happiness, you must make peace with your personal experiences*

**P**eople enter therapy because they are, in some way, suffering. Whatever the specifics of their situation, most patients are struggling with at least one significant problem: avoidance. When people try to avoid their struggles and pain, they are also avoiding their own experience - and this leads to more problems and unhappiness.

People often don't even realize when they are actively avoiding certain feelings or experiences. Some signs that you might be engaging in avoidance are:

**You say, "I don't know" a lot.** If you are frequently unable to say what you feel, then you may be chronically avoiding your emotions. This may keep you "safe" from painful emotions, but you may also frequently feel emotionally cut off, numb, or confused. (You may also get feedback from others that you seem hostile or angry even though you don't think of yourself as angry.)

**Your conversations frequently meander between topics,** especially when those topics involve personal problems or dilemmas. People close to you might express frustration with not being able to talk about particular (or any) difficult issues. You might experience a sense of feeling lost in conversations, or unable to even think much about certain situations.



Sabotaging your happiness. Photo - 7helpfulhints.com

**You have a limited range of emotions.** You may notice that while you do not feel many negative emotions, you also don't feel positive ones. You may (or may not) be conscious of limiting your happiness to protect yourself from the pain you expect when that happiness ends.

**You are chronically bored.** Many people try to avoid potential pain by limiting their interests and activities. This extinguishes their life energy. As a result, they are not engaged in, or interested by, anything.

If your efforts to avoid pain are unintentionally causing you more suffering, it may be time to start accepting your distress. You may find help in a kind of therapy called "acceptance and commitment therapy" (ACT), which focuses on helping people to accept their experiences. "Acceptance" means acknowledging that an experience exists and not fighting against it, even if you are not happy about it. For instance, you might accept that your partner has ended your relationship even though it makes you desperately upset. "Commitment" refers to committing to taking actions that lead you toward living your values. So, rather than continuing to stalk your ex, you allow yourself to grieve the relationship and set about finding a new partner.

To feel inner peace and happiness, you must make peace with your personal experiences. While we all, on occasion, feel the need to temporarily distract ourselves from a distressing topic or suppress a particularly painful emotion, if you continually use avoidance as a basic way of coping with life's difficulties, you will inevitably experience other problems.

Leslie Becker-Phelps, PhD - Psychologist - WebMD

## Health &amp; balance

## How to feel better in less than 15 minutes

**T**o clear your mind, you may take a brief meditation break. It's simple: Sit quietly, close your eyes, and focus on your breathing. When you get distracted, just bring your attention back to your breath.

When you're done, you could feel more positive and patient. That's just what you need to shift the energy of your day and help you bounce back from stress. More tips: from WebMD

**Get outside:** Step outdoors for a few minutes to pull some weeds, sit in the sunshine, or just get some fresh air. Research shows that time outside can give you more energy, a better memory, and less anxiety. Even if you're in a city, notice trees, flowers, and parks. Soak up nature to give yourself a boost.

**Have a laugh:** Read a few pages of a funny book, watch a clip of your favorite comedian, or call a friend who always cracks you up. Laughter obviously lightens your mood, plus it stimulates your heart, lungs, and muscles. It makes your brain release more feel-good endorphins. And it can relax your muscles and help your circulation.

**Count what's good:** Pick up a pen and list at least a few things you're grateful for today. Think about your relationships, things that went well, and any positive parts of your life -- big or small. People who do this feel better and are less bothered by stress. And it can take very little time to do.

**Wish someone well:** Practising compassion for others tends to make you feel better, too. Choose someone: a friend, family member, co-worker, or even a stranger. In your mind, send them wishes to be happy and healthy and live with ease. This quick exercise can make you more satisfied with your own life.

**Take a walk:** Lace up your shoes. A stroll around the neighborhood can lift your mood and bust stress. Stuck in

a rut? Research shows your next big idea could be just a walk away. It can boost creative thinking.

**Turn on some tunes:** Play a few of your favorite songs to relax and lighten your mood. Research shows music has all kinds of benefits -- it can reduce anxiety and pain. If you feel moved to get up and dance, even better.

**Check a chore off your list:** What small task has been lurking in the back of your mind for too long? Change that burned-out light bulb, return that email, make that appointment. The satisfaction of getting something small done could stop stress and give you the momentum to tackle more.

**Connect:** Call a friend to catch up, email a family member to check in, or text a colleague to meet you for coffee. Making contact with other people builds social connections and gives you more support. Studies support this: Better relationships are one of the best ways to become happier.

**Eat a smart snack: Fuel up, but keep it healthy and simple.**

**Some ideas:** Oranges. Citrus fruits are high in vitamin C, which is good for your immune system.

**Nuts:** Enjoy a small handful of walnuts, almonds, or pistachios for some omega-3 fatty acids that even out your stress hormones.

**Whole grains.** A bowl of oatmeal or a piece of whole wheat toast could help your brain make more serotonin, which can improve your mood.



Feel better. Photo - content.thriveglobal.com

**Do a good deed:** Open a door for someone. Donate to a cause you believe in. Sign up for a volunteer project. Help a family member with a small task. Studies prove that when you show kindness to other people, it makes you feel good. And it can be quick to do, any day of the week.

**Stretch yourself:** Reach for your toes! Take a short break to gently stretch your neck, shoulders, lower back, thighs, and hips. Try yoga moves, like downward dog, mountain pose, or cat-cow. When you stretch, it lowers stress and sends extra blood to your muscles.

**Hug it out:** Find a friend or family member and ask for a hug. That warm squeeze will give you a lift -- and could even make conflict less upsetting, according to one study. Hugging could also help your immune system, another study says.

**Practise positive self-talk:** Try to reverse any negative thoughts you have. If you're worried about a mistake you made, tell yourself, "Everyone messes up. I can fix it."



## In A Light Vein

# A Conversation between two Mauritian youngsters - Picpac & Ticolo

*Warning - Not to be read if you do not understand Kreol*

Picpac: Allo qui maniere, Ticolo? Tou correk?

Ticolo: My English professor has asked me to speak English only. Let us speak English. This will improve my English knowledge.

Picpac: OK, what are you called?

Ticolo: Ticolo. And you?

Picpac: Picpac.

Ticolo: Where do you rest?

Picpac: At Four Coconuts. And you?

Ticolo: At Red Earth near a half-big shop.

Picpac: It is husband hot in this stadium.

Ticolo: You have reason. I am transpiring! How are you doing at school? Are you breaking the packet?

Picpac: Yes, my father told me if I fail, my saucepan will be hot.

Ticolo: I gain thirsty. Have you something to drink?

Picpac: Yes, I have some dead water. Do you want some?

Ticolo: Yes. Thank you. If you gain hungry, I have got fried apple of the earth.

Picpac: No. Thank you. I have bought some dholl rotten with curry big weight.

Ticolo: Are you taking part in the sports?

Picpac: No. I am blessed in the foot.

Ticolo: What have you got?

Picpac: The baby of curry rock fell on it.

Ticolo: Do you hurt much?

Picpac: Of course! I saw lightnings.

*(Suddenly there was a commotion in the centre of the field and many pupils had assembled.)*

Ticolo: Stay here. I am going to see what arrived

*A few minutes later, he returns and announces:*

A boy fell down without knowledge. The professor says it is because of the sun. He is called Zoreille. Do you know him?

Picpac: Yes, but he is not my army. He is a coconut eater. It is not easy with him.

Ticolo: Look at the small boy. He wants to run with a big. He will not be capable.

Picpac: I know him. He runs quickly. Small knife cut big pumpkin. His sister is a beautiful thirty-five. I am trying to put her in a circle, but I have no money. I am waiting for my condemned box to fill. Now my hand is under rock.

Ticolo: We must marry picker. I give you money.

Picpac: Don't tell her brother. If he knows, he will untie our race. He is a small chilli.

Ticolo: Are you to rest here a long time?

Picpac: No. If I felt an occasion, I am going to break the pause at Rose-Hill.

*(He stood up and inadvertently crushed his friend's foot)*

Ticolo: Eh, you monkey, you are blessing me again. You can not make attention.

Picpac: Sorry, my black.

\*\*\*

Man was asked: If you win a Rs 80 million lottery, what will you do in your community?

Him: Will practise social distancing!

## Life's Stories



## Stories of Innocence

Author and lecturer, Leo Buscaglia, once talked about a contest he was asked to judge. The purpose of the contest was to find the most caring child.

The winner was: A four-year-old child, whose next-door neighbour was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife.

Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old man's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there.

When his mother asked him what he had said to the neighbour, the little boy just said: 'Nothing, I just helped him cry.'

\*\*\*

Students of Class One in a school were discussing a student's family picture. One little boy in the picture had a hair colour different from the other family members. One of the other students suggested that he was adopted.

A little girl said: 'I know all about adoption, because I was adopted.'

'What does it mean to be adopted?' asked another child.

'It means,' said the girl, 'that you grew in your mommy's heart, instead of her tummy!'

\*\*\*

Whenever I'm disappointed with my life, I stop and think about little Jamie Scott.

Jamie was trying out for a part in the school play.

His mother told me that he'd set his heart on being in it, though she feared he would not be chosen.

On the day the parts were awarded, I went with her

to collect him after school.

Jamie rushed up to her, eyes shining with pride and excitement.

'Guess what, Mom,' he shouted, and then said those words that will remain a lesson to me: 'I've been chosen to clap and cheer.'

\*\*\*

An eye witness account from New York City, on a cold day in ecember.

A little boy, about 10 years old, was standing before a shoe store on the road, barefooted, peering through the window, and shivering with cold.

A lady approached the young boy and said: 'My boy, but you're in such deep thought staring in that window!'

The boy replied: 'I was asking God to give me a pair of shoes.'

The lady took him by the hand, went into the store, and asked the clerk to get half a dozen pairs of socks for the boy. She then asked if he could give her a basin of water and a towel. He quickly brought them to her.

She took the little fellow to the back part of the store and, removing her gloves, knelt down, washed his little feet, and dried them with the towel.

By this time, the clerk had returned with the socks.

Placing a pair upon the boy's feet, she purchased him a pair of shoes.

She tied up the remaining pairs of socks and gave them to him. She patted him on the head and said, 'No doubt, you will be more comfortable now.'

As she turned to go, the astonished kid caught her by the hand, and looking up into her face, with tears in his eyes, asked her: 'Are you God's wife?'

## This Crazy World

# Racism will never end as long as...

“Racism will never end as long as white cars are still using black tyres. Racism will never end if people still use black to symbolise bad luck and white for peace. Racism will never end if people still wear white clothes to weddings and black clothes to funerals. Racism will never end as long as those who don't pay their bills are

blacklisted not whitelisted. Even when playing snooker, you haven't won until you've sunk the black ball, and the white ball must remain on the table! But I don't care, as long as I'm still using white toilet paper to wipe my black ass, I'm happy.”

**Former Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe**



## Not Vin Diesel but this actor was the first choice for the Fast And Furious franchise

*Interestingly, Denzel Washington was approached to play a key role in the seventh installment of the Fast and Furious franchise, which was directed by James Wan*



**H**ollywood action-entertainer, *Fast and Furious* is one of the biggest franchises across the globe. In fact, this

franchise also enjoys a huge fanbase in India. And the face of this Hollywood's money-spinner is actor, Vin Diesel, who plays the lead protagonist, Dominic "Dom" Toretto. While the actor garnered worldwide fame due to the Fast And Furious franchise, he was not the first choice for the franchise. Actor Tim Olyphant was offered this film but he rejected the offer. Producer Neil H Moritz revealed this news to CinemaBlend and said, "We had to look for Dom Toretto. The studio said, 'If you can get Timothy Olyphant to play that role, we will greenlight the movie... The luckiest thing that ever happened to us is Tim Olyphant turned us down. He's a great actor. In fact, I'm curious to see what that movie would have been.'"

Interestingly, Denzel Washington was approached to play a key role in the seventh installment, which was directed by James Wan. The Deadline reported, "The studio is now looking for another big star to join the next film in a small role and then be a big part of the film that follows. Denzel Washington just turned down that opportunity, but they'll undoubtedly get somebody important by the time The Conjuring helmer James Wan starts shooting the seventh film."

Talking about *Fast and Furious 9*, the film will hit the screens on April 2, 2021. The film also features Michelle Rodriguez, Tyrese Gibson, and Jordana Brewster in pivotal roles. Charlize Theron reprises her Cipher role. It will also star Helen Mirren, who starred in *Hobbs And Shaw*. John Cena and Michael Rooker will be the new joiners in the cast. WWE star John Cena earlier expressed his happiness of joining the cast and tweeted, "For nearly 20 years, the Fast Franchise has entertained fans and created some of the biggest cinematic moments in history. It's an incredible honor to join this franchise and this family."

## Celina Jaitley opens up on her battle with depression

*Celina Jaitley said, 'I was rendered completely helpless. Getting better from depression is a lifelong commitment. The frequent attempt to conceal mental pain increases the burden.'*

**D**epression has always been a concern for mental health regardless the strata of society you come work of line of work you're in. However, only of late are people willing to abolish the stigma and dismissive attitude, and facing its harsh realities and possible repercussions if left unchecked. Of course, the sight of noted celebrities and influenced coming forth and opening up about their struggles with it has led to this change. And the latest celeb to open up about it in Bollywood news circles is Celina Jaitley.

Intrepidly disclosing her battle with depression in an exclusive interview to Pinkvilla, Celina Jaitley said, "The true test of all romances and candlelights and valentine hearts boils down to times like this when one is down and out. My husband was the Chief Commercial Officer of one of the leading organisations in the world when the depression hit me. I was rendered completely helpless. On the advice of doctors, he decided to resign, and for me to have a complete change in the fresh mountain air, he moved us back to our Alpine estate in Austria."

Lamenting how she didn't understand the untold sacrifices her husband made back then, Celina added, "I honestly did not realise the sacrifice he was making for me because I was very low at that time. To be taken care of and be loved anyhow is something that I experienced during this entire phase."

Elaborating on the importance of seeking help for mental-health concerns and the huge commitment it takes to reco-ver from depression, the actress explained, "Getting



better from depression is a lifelong commitment. Depression mostly doesn't show. It lives within, and people don't recognise it, worrying that it will shatter their very being. The frequent attempt to conceal mental pain increases the burden. Therefore, get help, eliminate from your life all those who bring you down or add to the negativity, exercise, don't be shy to ask for help. The broken will always be able to love harder than most because once you've been in the dark, you learn to appreciate everything that shines."

## Did you know Sai Pallavi featured in this Kangana Ranaut starrer before Nivin Pauly's Premam?

*Sai Pallavi will be next seen in Naga Chaitanya Akkineni starrer Love Story. The film is expected to release after the lockdown.*



**P**opular south actress, Sai Pallavi garnered to fame with her sensational debut in Malayalam blockbuster Premam, went on feature in hits like *Maari 2* and *Fidaa*. While most of us think, Premam was her first acting stint, the actress had an uncredited role in Kangana Ranaut starrer 2006 Tamil film, *Dhaam Dhoom*. She was in 6th grade while doing this film. Though Sai doesn't consider *Dhaam Dhoom* as her debut film.

In an interview with News Minute, the NGK actress said, "Yes, but I wouldn't call that my debut. I didn't know what I was doing! I was only in sixth grade and I went along with my friends because I wanted to cut class. I did that for two days (shooting)...it was quite an experience. I felt really uncomfortable wondering how do people do this in the heat, repeat the same thing over and over again. I saw what they were going through...the costumes, the make-up, the hair. And I thought it must be very tough to be a heroine."

On the work front, Sai Pallavi has two projects under her belt, which are *Love Story* and *Virata Parvam*. Apart from Rana Daggubati, *Virata Parvam* also stars Priyamani, Nanditha Das, Naveen Chandra, Zareena Ee Wahab, Eeswari Rao and Sai Chand in key roles. The film has the backdrop of the Naxalite theme in Andhra Pradesh during 1990s. While Rana plays the character of Naxalite, Sai Pallavi's the singer, who get attracted towards Rana. Produced by Sudhakar Cherukuri, the cinematography is done by Dani Sanchez Lopez and Divakar Mani.



# I don't want to be known only as a good looking actor: Donal Bisht

*Donal Bisht who was last seen in Dil Toh Happy Hai Ji is looking at the web platform for her next big break, reports Tellychakkar...*



**S**ays Donal, "After having made a niche for me with shows *Ek Deewana Tha* and *Roop - Mard Ka Naya Swaroop*, it is essential to try out other mediums as well. Let me be clear; I will always hold TV very high in my heart and will never close doors on it."

"One of the reasons for the break was that I too need time for myself. I am now travelling, giving me a chance to recharge my batteries."

"Being a pragmatist, I know I will not land a film role opposite A-listers. But yes, I want something along the lines of Ayushmann Khurrana type content-driven films, eg. female-driven scripts like *Chhapaak* and *Raazi*). I don't want to make the mistake of doing small films which end up going nowhere, as it besmirches my name. I rather wait, having age on my

side," says this journo turned actor whose last show was *Dill Toh Happy Hai Ji*."

"As for the web, I have been offered a couple of projects which might merit my interest. My biggest grouse with stand-alone digital is that you need to kiss and do lovemaking scenes in most cases. I am sorry I can't drop my clothes either. I can wear a bikini on the beach, though."

"I will not do things only for money. Had that been the case I would not have left TV which was paying me a bomb."

"Being of a creative bent of mind, I don't want to be remembered only as an actor who looks good. Rather, I want to be known as an actor who impresses the audiences with her skillsets."

Here Donal adds that "social media has given me non-bahu image which afflicts other TV biggies like Hina Khan and Jennifer Winget, thereby restricting their options. I still have the romantic girl avatar, giving me a better window in both the web and TV."

In closing, Donal says, "Today the chasm between TV and cinema is narrowing, gone are the days when TV actors were not considered. Now we are welcome for our ability to deliver a one-take shot."

## Rapid-fire

*IWMBuzz caught up with Donal for a fun rapid-fire section. Read on:*

**Describe yourself as a teenager in 3 words?**

I was simple, obedient and sincere as a teenager.

**If you could be from any other era, what would it be?**

Ramayan or Mahabharat, as it would let me meet the Gods upfront, and personal. I also want to find out if their tales are history or mythos.

**If your house was on fire, what two things would you run back in to get?**

I would leap in a burning inferno only to save someone's life. But if the fire is less raging, I would go back in to retrieve my debit card. I would need *moolah* to live right with my pad gutted.

**Any tattoos?**

I don't dig body markings, either permanent or temporary.

**The best gift you have ever received...**

When I was working, in a Delhi corporate firm, I always desired a shift to our Mumbai branch. My boss very graciously gave me the transfer order on my birthday with a cake. I was so happy that tears started rolling out.

**If you had one superpower, what would it be?**

I hate travelling from point A to point B. So please give me a teleporter.

**Texting or talking?**

I prefer calling as longish texting becomes a drag. Even more in lockdown, when we have oodles of time to kill.



## Drashti Dhami, Hina Khan, Tamannaah Bhatia and Pooja Gor: No-makeup look is the latest trend of 2020

**O**ur television actresses are pretty ladies who give us major style goals with their fashionable avatars.

With the right makeup and stylish outfits, they rock their looks with panache. However, some actresses also look beautiful without make-up. There are many actresses who make sure to flaunt their natural skin on social media. The actresses are also often praised by their fans for their natural skin.

While our television industry is all about glitz and glamour, we have some actresses who give time to their skin to breathe and when they put on that no makeup look, they prove to us that a good skin care regime, good exercise and right diet can make you look radiant and bring that natural glow.

In fact, there are a lot of celebrities opting for a no makeup look this year and somewhere down the line, they are setting a trend of the same!

Hina Khan shows us that what you eat you are. Pooja Gor makes sure that her skin is hydrated and moist for that natural glow...

Drashti Dhami reminds that someone with a girl-next-door personality can also transform into a diva and can carry both the looks with elegance!

Get good sleep and be stress free to get that look, says Tamannaah Bhatia.

## Aakriti Sharma: Have started to reduce, reuse and recycle things

**C**hild actor Aakriti Sharma says the lockdown has made her realise "how much destruction humans have caused", adding that she has introduced a few eco-friendly changes in her life, reports IANS.

"We have been staying at home for so many days so that the virus does not spread more. With everybody sitting at home, everything around me is changing, even the environment. The sky is clearer and there are lesser cars on roads, thus reducing pollution," Aakriti said.

"This has helped me in understanding how much destruction humans have caused. I have even started to reduce, reuse and recycle things kept at home and ask my friends to do so. I am glad that we are looking at the positives of this lockdown," added the actress, who was seen in musical drama *Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala*.

Child actress Myra Singh Gill, who has a starring role in the show, says "as a part of the young generation, I feel it is everyone's responsibility to take care of nature".

"At present, the world is fighting a big crisis but it has also helped in healing the environment. From cleaner beaches and fresh air, I also hope that the world is able to come out soon without masks and protections and I can go to school soon and meet my friends. My mother and I have decided to plant more saplings this Environment Day," Myra added.

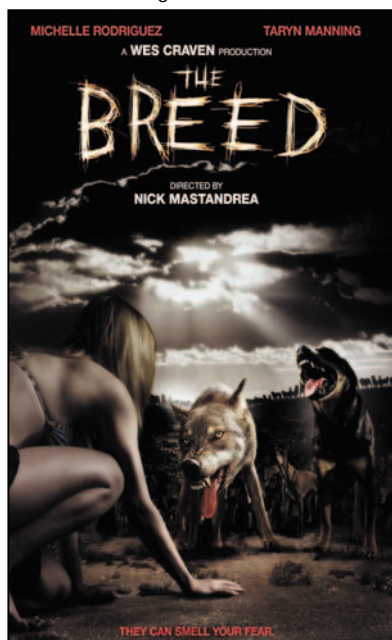


## CINE 12

Mardi 2 juin - 21.15

**The Breed**

Star: Michelle Rodriguez, Taryn Manning, Oliver Hudson



## CINE 12

Mercredi 10 juin - 21.15

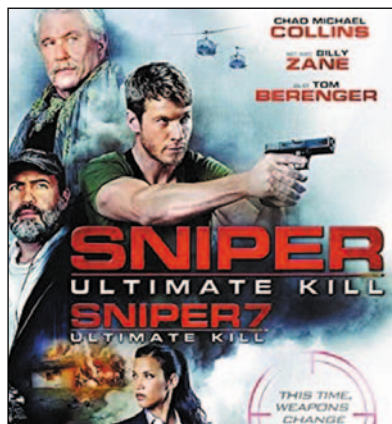
**Mort Ou Vif**

Avec: Sharon Stone, Gene Hackman, Russell Crowe



## CINE 12

Jeudi 11 juin - 21.15

**Sniper 7: Ultimate Kill**

mardi 9 juin

**MBC 1**

06.00 Local: Rodrig Prog  
07.00 Dessin Anime  
10.30 Mag: Origami  
10.45 Mag: Zoboomafoo  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.25 Doc: Autour Des Valeurs  
12.35 Doc: Comme Un Poisson...  
13.30 Local: Mouvence  
14.30 D.Anime: Bob Le Bricoleur  
14.41 D.Anime: Le Quiz De Zack  
14.44 D.Anime: Astrology  
15.07 D.Anime: Kuu Kuu Harajuku  
16.32 D.Anime: Johnny Test  
17.00 Live Press Conference  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.00 Local: Press Conference  
20.35 Local Production  
21.30 Serial: Unforgotten  
22.15 Serial: Chicago Police...

**MBC 2**

04.30 Aastha TV  
07.00 DDI Live  
10.00 Serial: Tumhaari Natasha  
11.19 Serial: MOL  
12.04 Film:  
15.00 Live: Samachar  
15.20 Honaar Soon Mee Hya...  
15.43 Mooga Manasulu  
16.03 Apoorva Raagangal  
16.30 Serial: Ki Jaana Mein Kaun  
16.53 Serial: Gangaa  
18.00 Serial: Dr. Quin  
18.30 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett  
19.00 Journal 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  
06.56 Mag: World Stories  
07.11 Mag: Voa Connect  
07.37 Doc: A Question Of Science  
07.42 Mag: In Good Shape  
08.54 Doc: World Stamps  
09.00 Live Educational Program...  
16.56 Mag: Global 3000  
17.19 Mag: Made In Germany  
18.00 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto...  
18.24 Mag: Urban Gardens  
19.00 Journal Kreol  
19.29 Doc: A Question Of Science  
19.58 Local: Tamil Programme  
20.32 Film: Sketch  
22.40 Mag: Close Up  
23.09 Doc: Hoping For A Better...  
23.51 Mag: Rev: Global Auto...  
00.17 Mag: Urban Gardens  
00.47 Mag: Check In  
01.13 Doc: A Question Of Science

**Cine 12**

01.34 Tele: Esmeraldas  
02.22 Serial: The L.A. Complex  
03.40 Film: La Double Vie De...  
05.22 Tele: Amanda  
07.08 Film: K2 - The Ultimate High  
09.00 Serial: Line Of Duty  
09.59 Tele: Au Nom De L'Amour  
10.23 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett  
10.48 Serial: S.W.A.T  
11.29 Tele: Dulce Amor  
11.58 Film: La Double Vie De...  
13.40 Tele: Amanda  
14.45 Film: K2 - The Ultimate High  
16.27 Serial: Line Of Duty  
17.25 Serial: Dynasty  
18.21 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour  
18.45 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett  
19.10 Tele: Dulce Amor  
20.05 Tele: Totalment Diva  
20.30 Serial: Dynasty  
21.15 Film: The Breed

**Bollywood TV**

09.14 Film: Dhoop Chhaon  
12.04 / 19.54 -  
Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam  
12.26 / 20.11 -  
Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala  
12.46 / 20.32 Radha Krishna  
13.08 / 21.09 - Bin Kuch Kahe  
13.30 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek  
13.52 / 21.46 -  
Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
14.14 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan  
14.35 / 22.25 - Ishqbaaz  
15.10 Film: Kachche Dhaage  
Stars: Ajay Devgn, Saif Ali Khan, Manisha Koirala, Namrata Shirodkar  
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

mercredi 10 juin

07.00 Dessin Anime  
10.28 Mag: Origami  
10.45 Mag: Zoboomafoo  
11.15 Local: Itinerer Moris  
11.30 Local: Rodrigues  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.25 Local: Autour Des Valeurs  
13.30 Local: Africa Leaders...  
14.00 Local: Smart Culture  
14.30 D.Anime: Bob Le Bricoleur  
14.41 D.Anime: Le Quiz De Zack  
16.03 D.Anime: Mademoiselle Zazie  
16.10 D.Anime: The Deep  
16.30 D.Anime: Johnny Test  
17.00 Live Press Conference  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
18.30 Serial: Jamai Raja  
19.30 Journal & La Meteo  
20.00 Local: Press Conference  
21.30 Serial: The Enemy Within  
22.15 Serial: Chicago Police Depart  
23.00 Local: Le Journal

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 Journal Kreol  
19.30 DDI Magazine  
20.05 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha  
20.21 Serial: Bitti Business Wali  
21.00 Film:  
23.15 DDI Live

06.00 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto  
06.26 Mag: Urban Gardens  
07.21 Doc: A Question Of Science  
08.03 Doc: Horizons S  
08.46 Doc: World Stamps  
08.49 Mag: Set One  
09.00 Live Educational Prog...  
16.03 Doc: The Dresden Legend  
16.45 Mag: Close Up  
17.14 Doc: Farming Policies For...  
18.04 Mag: Motorweek  
18.24 Mag: Urban Gardens  
18.30 Live: News  
18.40 Mag: Set One  
19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol  
19.30 Doc: Garden Party  
20.02 Programme In Marathi  
22.27 Film: Aamhi Doghi  
22.49 Mag: Motorweek  
23.15 Mag: Urban Gardens  
23.19 Doc: Olivia's Garden  
23.46 Mag: Arts.21

01.37 Film: The Breed  
03.00 Serial: S.W.A.T  
03.41 Film: Murder, She Baked...  
05.17 Tele: Amanda  
05.51 Serial: Dynasty  
06.40 Film: Surprise Me!  
08.30 Mag: Hollywood No Set  
09.00 Serial: Line Of Duty  
09.59 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour  
10.46 Serial: S.W.A.T  
11.26 Tele: Dulce Amor  
12.00 Film: Murder, She Baked...  
13.30 Tele: Amanda  
14.16 Mag: Hollywood New Feed  
14.45 Film: Surprise Me!  
16.40 Serial: Mission Impossible  
17.22 Serial: Dynasty  
19.00 Tele: Dulce Amor  
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir  
20.30 Series: When Calls The Heart  
21.15 Film: Mort Ou Vif  
22.59 Tele: Amanda

09.11 Film: Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai  
12.04 / 19.54 -  
Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam  
12.26 / 20.11 -  
Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala  
12.46 / 20.32 Radha Krishna  
13.08 / 21.09 - Bin Kuch Kahe  
13.30 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek  
13.52 / 21.46 -  
Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
14.14 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan  
14.35 / 22.25 - Ishqbaaz  
15.10 Film: Soldier  
Stars: Raakhee, Bobby Deol, Preity Zinta  
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 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum

jeudi 11 juin

07.00 Dessin Anime  
10.25 Mag: Origami  
10.45 Mag: Zoboomafoo  
11.00 Local: Itinerer Rodrig  
12.00 Le Journal  
12.25 Local: Autour Des Valeurs  
13.30 Local: Metissages  
14.25 D.Anime: Bob Le Bricoleur  
14.36 D.Anime: Le Quiz De Zack  
15.07 D.Anime: Kuu Kuu Harajuku  
15.30 D.Anime: Astrology  
15.39 D.Anime: Chicken Town  
16.32 D.Anime: Johnny Test  
17.00 Live Press Conference  
17.30 Local: Kal Aaj Aur Kal  
18.00 Live: Samachar  
20.00 Le Journal Televisé  
20.35 Film: October  
Star: Varun Dhawan, Banita Sandhu, Gitanjali Rao  
23.30 Le Journal

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

06.00 Mag: Motorweek  
06.26 Mag: Urban Gardens  
07.24 Doc: A Question Of Science  
07.30 Doc: Garden Party  
08.43 Doc: World Stamps  
09.00 Live Educational Prog...  
16.03 Doc: Visite Guidee  
16.45 Mag: Business Africa  
17.24 Mag: Focus On Europe  
17.58 Mag: Eco India  
18.24 Mag: Urban Gardens  
18.30 Live: News  
18.40 Mag: Shift  
19.00 Live: Zournal Kreol  
19.24 Doc: A Question Of Science  
20.02 Film: Hu Tara Ishq Ma  
22.08 Mag: Strictly Street  
22.31 Doc: Sustainable Labelled...  
23.56 Mag: Eco India  
00.22 Mag: Urban Gardens  
00.26 Mag: Sur Mesure

01.12 Film: Mort Ou Vif  
02.55 Serial: S.W.A.T  
03.34 Film: Love Blossoms  
05.03 Telenovela: Amanda  
05.45 Serial: When Calls The Heart  
06.27 Film: Stever Jobs  
09.00 Serial: Line Of Duty  
09.59 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour  
10.49 Serial: S.W.A.T  
11.29 Tele: Dulce Amor  
12.00 Film: Love Blossoms  
13.28 Tele: Amanda  
14.45 Film: Stever Jobs  
16.26 Serial: Line Of Duty  
17.25 Serial: When Calls The Heart  
18.08 Tele: Au Nom De L'amour  
18.30 Tele: Mariana Et Scarlett  
19.00 Tele: Dulce Amor  
20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir  
20.30 Serial: When Calls The Heart  
21.15 Film: Sniper 7: Ultimate Kill

09.31 Film: Ganga Ki Saugandh  
12.04 / 19.54 -  
Kahan Hum Kahan Tuam  
12.26 / 20.11 -  
Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala  
12.37 / 20.32 Radha Krishna  
12.59 / 21.09 - Bin Kuch Kahe  
13.21 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek  
13.43 / 21.46 -  
Bade Acche Lagte Hai  
14.03 / 21.59 - Chhanchhan  
14.25 / 22.25 - Ishqbaaz  
14.50 Film: Tezaab  
Stars: Anil Kapoor, Madhuri Dixit, Anupam Kher  
18.00 Live: Samacher  
18.30 Kumkum Bhagya  
18.51 Piya Albela  
19.13 Mere Angne Mein  
19.33 Yeh Un Dinon Ki Baat Hai  
20.03 Kahan Hum Kahan Tum

Jeudi 11 juin  
- 20.35Stars: Varun Dhawan, Banita Sandhu,  
Gitanjali RaoJeudi 11 juin  
- 14.50Stars: Anil Kapoor, Madhuri Dixit,  
Anupam Kher



# Going Green

*The trend now is to produce, consume and buy locally as much as possible. In no way does it mean the revival of past utopia*



Nita Chicooree-Mercier

**I**t is common knowledge that imported goods drain huge sums out of the country and the taxes levied on them fill government coffers. It is also widely acknowledged that preserving world environment should top the list of priorities.

Right now decision makers, economists, scientists and citizens know that their business is to keep the right balance between innovation, job creation and securing health. The Netherlands, France and Hungary are gearing up for the promotion of clean energy by the use of electric bicycles. Holland is years ahead in implementing green transportation and providing cycle lanes for bike users. France considers expanding the use of bicycles to the suburbs so that suburbanians can commute to city centres by their own means. Cycles enable seven times more people to travel to their workplaces than individual cars and require less space for parking. It is facilitating transport for city dwellers in Paris itself. Dutch citizens living in France are pushing for the use of clean energy. Hungary is seriously considering to adopt such measures.

Obviously, the first advantage is to reduce the oil import bill and dependence on foreign raw energy, keep money in the country and cut down air and noise pollution.

Currently, there is a significant hike in the sales of bikes, and bike sellers are looking forward to manufacturing bikes in Europe, and set up a Made in France label in the near future. The basic materials such as aluminium have to be imported from Asia. The goal is to become more independent and cut down imports from China for items which they can manufacture locally. Besides, Hungary has a leadership which has a pronounced leaning to nationalist sentiment, and its president shows much interest in reducing oil import and adopting greener means of transport.

What about Mauritius? Can it do without the incentive to buy cars and collect taxes from high interests? The road network in villages and towns has little space for providing cycle lanes. For years, there have been no efforts to give due attention to the issue of alternative mode of transport. Year in year out the annual budget looks like the choices are limited and the country is stuck in living above its means and overspending on imports

**“Currently, there is a significant hike in the sales of bikes, and bike sellers are looking forward to manufacturing bikes in Europe, and set up a Made in France label in the near future. The basic materials such as aluminium have to be imported from Asia. The goal is to become more independent and cut down imports from China for items which they can manufacture locally...”**

despite the more or less 'social' leaning of different Ministers of Finance. Most of the roads are narrow and congested with cars, buses, lorries and vans at peak hours. A chaotic situation in the surroundings of the two bus stations in the capital is viewed as part of the local folklore.

Introducing bicycles implies some modification in the itinerary of other vehicles in the four towns. A different option can be studied in the villages. Progress does not mean more expensive and modern stuff which other countries manufacture and sell to us. Port-Louis and its streets were built at a time when horse carriages were a common means of transport for a small minority of well-off citizens. Not much has changed in its road infrastructure ever since though the population has gone up significantly. Any suggestion for motor rickshaws is likely to be frowned upon or derided. Yet it looks like a practical means of transport in cities, thus sparing pedestrians long walks from one place to another end of the towns. Indians travel by rickshaws and invest in space programs.

Are we too advanced compared to Indians to introduce motor rickshaws over here? We find it very handy when visiting around in Indian cities. So why not here? Already in Triolet someone moves around with a rickshaw of his own making. It is such a headache for some elderly sick people to go to hospitals or mediclinics, taxis are far too expensive. The manufacture of electric bikes and electric motor rickshaws does not require skyrocketing technology. They could also be exported to other countries. Traffic congestion in big African capitals like Lagos in Nigeria is chaotic and messy. Either we manufacture or we import from India, South Korea or China, but we cannot go on increasing the fleet of cars and the fuel bill, and let money pour out of the island.

In India there has been an exponential use of solar energy. For instance, the Sai Baba Ashrams have several solar panels installed



Green transportation in Vancouver. Photo - vancouver.ca

on rooftops and use solar energy instead of electricity and gas to cook and serve thousands of free meals on a daily basis. Women in remote villages make a living by selling small solar panels. Can't we envisage the use of solar energy for cooking in individual households and hospitals? Hospitals in quite a number of Asian countries optimise solar energy to meet their needs.

Besides, in India, China, Singapore and other countries, vegetables are grown on rooftops of hospitals for consumption. Other natural methods are experimented - to cool down the temperature during summer season, and reduce the use of air-conditioners.

It seems that this country is stuck in old habits and is unable to innovate. It must be depressing for the younger generation to put up with the narrow vision of decision makers. Modern technology, robotics, clean energy are clearly not on the agenda. Not even a life-threatening pandemic can prompt the leadership to get off beaten tracks. The focus is only on more lands for agriculture, which should not lead to too much competition among planters. New sectors in modern technology, etc., were already mentioned in previous budgets and have remained quite vague in their development. Without a political culture of transparency, investments of a few millions here and there does not mean much to the public.

What we all agree upon is that we have to import less, consume moderately, save more energy and money, innovate and manufacture new items. Over here successive governments opted for easy money generated by policies dictated by big business. Locals hardly have any know-how to manufacture anything. We are now feeling the pinch. Covid-19 should jolt one and all into a new awareness.

Many advanced countries which have been competing for a few more dollars or euros by locating key industries in lower income countries in Eastern Europe, Asia and North Africa are pushing for 'localism' even before the pandemic outbreak. The trend now is to produce, consume and buy locally as much as possible. In no way does it mean the revival of past utopia either, something which is being rekindled by far-left wing die-hard supporters.



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor

## A Good Turn Daily

**E**ach of us is more than capable of helping the world, despite our fears and limitations and the uncertainty that holds us back. It is commonly accepted that it is impossible to make a difference without unlimited funding or free time, yet most healing, cleansing, and spreading of joy is accomplished in a matter of minutes. If we vow to make the world a better place one day at a time, the true significance of small good deeds reveals itself to us. We come to see that we can be of service without dedicating our lives to recognized charities or giving up the pleasures we enjoy. The warmth we feel when we help the world is only a tiny part of the affirmative transformations that take place when we make altruism a part of everyday existence.

We make our homes, workplaces, communities, and countries better and brighter when we think positive thoughts that echo outward, give donations of time or money, smile at everyone we meet, and lend those in need of aid our assistance. As we learn, we inadvertently improve the universe because we can only be truly involved when we are informed. Even enthusiastically sharing ideas with others generates positive energy that then serves as the motivation for more tangible change. Selfless and helpful deeds remind us that we exercise some degree of control over a world that can seem chaotic at times. Even the smallest of such deeds is a demonstration of the fact that we are capable of changing the world in a positive way. So much negative energy is generated by the suffering, pain, and close-mindedness we are regularly exposed to, but we can counteract it in a constructive way by thinking and acting altruistically when opportunities to do so arise.

Helping the world often takes no more than a moment, just a wish for the world is a beautiful gesture and can be done by even the busiest of people effortlessly. The gift you give each day need not be grand or attention-worthy because the broader benefits are the same no matter the literal repercussions. Once a day, you can affect reality, and you can reap the rewards of knowing that you are making the world a better place, day by day.