

MAURITIUS **TIMES**

• Leaders aren't born, they are made. And they are made just like anything else, through hard work. And that's the price we'll have to pay to achieve that goal, or any goal. -- Vince Lombardi

Interview: Dr Soomant Callikan

NHDC: 'On n'a peut-être pas tort de se demander si ce n'est pas une autre "Safe City" qui nous pend au nez'

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The Youthification and Feminization of Health Problems



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Democracy On Trial

This is certainly not the Mauritius we want as a nation

By Mrinal Roy 📖 See Page 4

'SMART' Social Housing?

The level of trust in politicians and political leaders across the board worldwide has come down so much and so rapidly during the year of the Covid pandemic that whatever they undertake is looked at with the same mistrust and suspicion. Many governments' record in the handling of the pandemic has indeed been abysmal, and everywhere the common man is reeling under the burden of unmet basic needs and rising debt, and a great fear about the future regarding their livelihoods. Because the next questions that crop up are: where has all the money disbursed over the pandemic period gone (i.e. into which big wig's pocket) and where will money that is needed come from?

In a globalised world, no country is an island, and we do not escape that logic either though geographically we are an island. And therefore, the same concerns arise, with the local context providing the material background to flag them. One of the latest projects of the government concerns social housing. *En passant*, it is relevant to point out that in 1987, when Minister Ramesh Jeewoolall was in charge of the Ministry of Housing, a debt to the tune of Rs 22 million was written off in favour of the housing units in the *cités*, which were each put on sale to their owners at a nominal price of Rs 1000.

Social housing is a major issue in all countries, from Australia to America. Each country is grappling with the problem by devising innovative schemes. The one that has come up in Mauritius for the construction of 12,000 units literally bypasses the two institutions that have been constructing such units as well as for the middle class over the years: the NHDC and the MHC respectively, which have the necessary human resources to carry out such projects. Nothing is perfect – even in the private gated colonies that have sprung up – in respect of both infrastructure both outside and inside the buildings, but at least there is some sort of a transparent process and institutional mechanisms to look at any matters arising by way of complaints from the residents or the public.

What is being proposed is the setting up of a private company, New Social Living Development Ltd (NSLD) to implement the project. With unanswered questions in the National Assembly about the lack of access to information about the Safe City project by the Director of Audit, there is justified apprehension that a similar scenario awaits this latest project which professionals in the matter estimate will cost nearly **Rs 30 billion**, on the basis that each unit will cost Rs 2.5 M. Setting aside the value of the land which will be Crown Land, this puts the construction cost at **Rs 12-15 Billion!**

There is speculation whether, as in the case of the Safe City project or emergency procurement of medical material during the pandemic, the provider or providers have already been identified and, further, whether they will have a contract that contains privacy clauses that will not allow information to be made available to the Director of Audit, to be made available in the public domain. After all, this will be public, taxpayer money isn't it?

Is the Safe City model going to become the prevailing one for future public projects, where tender exercises are absent, there is already pre-selection of contractor(s), and legal obstacles inserted into the contract (s) to prevent access to the details of the binding agreements? In other words, is a culture of state secrecy being installed in matters which have no direct connection with the security of the country? To say the least, if this is happening, it is a most condemnable and worrying trend.

The Conversation

Pandemic recovery will take more than soaring growth – to fuel a more equitable economy,

countries need to measure the well-being of people, too

GDP only measures economic growth – not inequality, poverty or unpaid work like elder care. So, researchers in the Netherlands developed a new way for governments to see how people are actually doing



Photo - uzalendone.com

Once a country's economy reaches a certain level of wealth, gross domestic product – which puts a single dollar value on a country's total economic output – is no longer a good measure of its overall success.

That's a main finding of our economic research, published in March with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. When we examined the development of nations worldwide since 1820, we found that among rich Western countries like the United States, the Netherlands and France, improvements in income, education, safety and health tracked or even outpaced rising gross domestic product for over a century.

But in the 1950s, even as economic growth accelerated after World War II, well-being in these countries lagged. From the 1970s onward, growth in median incomes slowed down, as did education. Crime rose. In recent years, health outcomes have even declined.

The gap between well-being and GDP became particularly evident after the 2008 global financial crisis. Even as rich countries' economies recovered, unemployment, poverty and housing insecurity stayed higher for years.

This pattern can also be observed in middle-income countries. In recent

decades, countries like Russia, Argentina, Turkey and China have begun to show slower increases in well-being, while growth in GDP per capita – total GDP divided by population – remains high.

These insights validate widespread feelings of people in many Western countries – and the US in particular – that the fruits of economic growth have passed them by. They also raise concerns about how, and indeed whether, policymakers will know when their country has actually recovered from the pandemic.

Rethinking GDP

GDP measures the total economic output of a country, from goods and services to trade, in monetary terms.

Since the inception of GDP in the 1930s, the growth of GDP per capita – that is, GDP divided by a country's population – was widely considered the best indicator of material progress, or progress in general. The OECD and World Bank have both advised countries to make boosting their GDP per capita a priority.

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Dr R Neerunjun Gopee

The Youthification and Feminization of Health Problems

When the Covid-19 pandemic broke out, caused by a coronavirus that was part of the family of coronaviruses that had caused earlier outbreaks of influenza-like illnesses, like SARS, it too affected predominantly those above sixty years of age. That is why restrictions on going out were targeted in particular at those in the senior citizen bracket so that they would not expose themselves to the risk of catching the infection. And in fact, the elderly were predominantly affected all over the world, and there were even allegations of neglecting them in the UK, for example, where many of that category are to be found in nursing or care homes.

However, after a few months, Covid-19 infection began to be diagnosed in children under twelve years of age, and I recall a study published in the US concerning about 200 children who had presented with what was diagnosed as multi-system inflammation, and we saw photographs of children who had patches of red or purplish inflamed skin in the lower limbs.

This is what an update dated February 24, 2021 from the Centers for Disease Control, USA has to say: 'Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) is a condition where different body parts can become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal organs. *We do not yet know what causes MIS-C.* However, we know that many children with MIS-C had the virus that causes Covid-19, or had been around someone with Covid-19. MIS-C can be serious, even deadly, but most children who were diagnosed with this condition have gotten better with medical care.' (italics added)

This 'youthification' of Covid-19 is of course a natural phenomenon, part of the Covid syndrome which is not fully explained as yet, that is, what makes the children vulnerable to the virus. However, as the year rolled out the statistics started showing that not only the elderly but also younger adults were being infected, though they were mainly in the fourth or fifth decades, Besides,



Photo - imagevars.gulfnews

“This ‘youthification’ of Covid-19 is of course a natural phenomenon, part of the Covid syndrome which is not fully explained as yet, that is, what makes the children vulnerable to the virus. However, as the year rolled out the statistics started showing that not only the elderly but also younger adults were being infected, though they were mainly in the fourth or fifth decades, Besides, unlike the influenza which is present during winter, Covid has continued to spread in all climes. This is another mystery which has led scientists and health professionals to question whether it is a natural virus or whether it could have escaped from a laboratory...”

unlike the influenza which is present during winter, Covid has continued to spread in all climes. This is another mystery which has led scientists and health professionals to question whether it is a natural virus or whether it could have escaped from a laboratory.

It will be recalled that a second WHO team was sent to Wuhan recently to try and get answers about the origin of Covid-19, but its report pointing to bats as the vectors has not been totally accepted. In fact a group of French scientists have written a letter to WHO raising many questions about the methodology and the findings of the WHO team, and pressing for a more thorough investigation along different lines. Be that as it may, the fact that Covid infection is presenting in such multifarious ways, affecting not only the lungs but all organs in all age groups, and causing immune-related phenomena such as the tendency to blood clotting, is posing a real challenge to the medical world as to what exactly we are dealing with. Definitely not a 'simple' influenza virus – but then what?

What has also characterized the pandemic is the revolt of younger people at serial lockdowns, especially in countries in Europe where outdoor activities as an escape from the claustrophobic environment of apartment living is a way of life. But it also happened in some

states in the US, such as Texas, where the claim to exercise one's freedoms overrode consideration for the common good. The protests which spilled into the streets and were at times violent, with burning of masks which they did not want to wear, meant that crowds were gathering.

This has happened in India too, where the surge of cases especially in the state of Maharashtra has affected the youth who went out to enjoy themselves often without taking the due precautions, and thus according to the medical experts there became superspreaders as in the US and Europe. This may also have led to extending vaccine coverage to younger age groups, above 45 being currently the cut-off in India until the vaccine supplies are scaled up, when consideration will probably be given to those below 45.

So whereas in the case of children, it has been a natural spread of Covid, in other youth it is their behaviour that has been the reason for them being affected.

That human behaviours, grouped under the umbrella term 'lifestyle', can be a driver of health problems and major diseases is now no longer a secret. Youthification has been seen in the so-called Non-Communicable Diseases or NCDs, where any number of studies and surveys have shown the lowering of the age of onset of conditions such as cancer, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes (different from Type 1 which affects the paediatric age-group) obesity and so on, all related to a number of risk factors that range from junk food to lack of exercise and substance abuse.

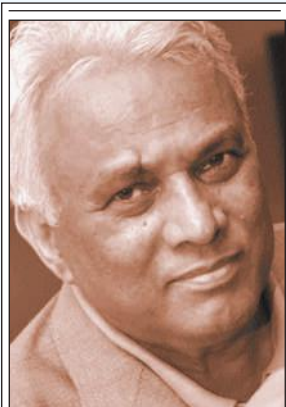
The term 'feminisation' of disease as far as I remember was first applied to HIV/AIDS, and is a complex issue that has been the subject of many, and ongoing studies and publications by the experts concerned.

However, both youthification and feminization of health or health-related issues have been noted in the regular Youth Global Surveys and Global School Health Surveys (GSBS) which are carried out at regular intervals based upon a WHO template, and also validated by WHO before it is submitted to the national authorities and then made public. Different countries, especially the developed ones, have their own methodologies, but basically the trends are similar practically all over the world, perhaps more pronounced in the industrialized world.

This is the case too in Mauritius, which has a focal point from the Public Health Division to carry out these surveys. The latest GSBS one of 2017 is in the public domain, and surveys the age range 13-17 years. The data cover sexual habits, substance abuse (tobacco and drugs), nutritional habits, physical exercise among other information sought.

Unfortunately, despite all the efforts put in by the concerned organisms to promote sound health, these trends do not seem to be dented if at all. The only thing that can be said is that it is up to the youth to become more aware of how their lifestyles are impacting them adversely, and to assume their responsibility accordingly and realise the dangers ahead for their health – why for their life itself.

You can take a horse to the water but...



Mrinal Roy

Democracy On Trial

This is certainly not the Mauritius we want as a nation

The new surge of Covid-19 in the country as from the 5 March has overshadowed and basically shifted public attention away from all the scandals which has bedeviled go-

This political ethos is applicable to all elected MPs who truly pledge to represent and uphold the interests of the people and the country irrespective of their party.

Politics is therefore certainly not about an endless game of one-upmanship, ploys and stratagems between government and the opposition to outsmart each other instead of unswervingly putting the interests of the people

mentary rules of transparency and accountability, how can the Director of Audit not have access to all the cost elements of the controversial Safe City project costing a whopping Rs19 billion (which has been incapable of providing key deliverables such as video footage to help elucidate criminal cases), in order to carry out his constitutional mandate of audit?

Decried gambits and ploys

The people are fed up with gambits such as special purpose vehicles, confidentiality agreements, Mutual Non-Disclosure Agreements, the setting of state private companies and similar stratagems to shroud billions of Rupees of public funds in opacity outside the scrutiny of Parliament or government audit.

The latest avatar of such decried ploys is the reported setting up of a private company, the New Social Living Development Ltd, to build 12,000 social housing units at a cost of Rs 12 billion financed from public funds announced in the 2020-21 budget proposals. A total blackout also surrounds spending details from the one-off Rs 60 billion lifeline received by government from the Bank of Mauritius to boost up strapped government revenue in order to grapple with the adverse fallouts of the Covid-19 crisis as well as the billions of Rupees advanced by the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd (MIC) out of public funds of Rs 80 billion to distressed private companies to bail them out.

Shameful high-handedness

A strong parliamentary opposition is an essential element of a vibrant democracy. It helps keep the government on its toes and bring its actions and policies under close scrutiny in the national interest. A constructive opposition can help build consensus on key policies for the common good and team up to expand the democratic space.

It is therefore a shame that three senior MPs of the opposition have been suspended from Parliament on 30 March for the rest of the session ending in August 2021 following motions tabled by the Prime Minister, 'unless unreserved apologies are tendered by them to the House'. This is patently punitive and disproportionate and certainly not in keeping with the best democratic principles prevailing in the world. They are seeking redress in court which could take long. The decried ruling therefore arbitrarily prevents them from carrying out their mandate as elected MPs. This is abjectly high-handed and is certainly not the brand of democracy Mauritians want. Their suspension must be promptly ended.

Blindly complicit

In a vibrant democracy, the onus is squarely on all elected MPs and the people at large to ensure the highest standards of governance in the country and that there is absolute transparency and accountability of the government decision making process and all public funds collected and spent. For too long in the chequered political history of Mauritius, MPs kowtowing to the interests of their political leaders rather than upholding those of the people and the country have been complicit in blindly endorsing widely decried government decisions in the teeth of public interest. Subservience to party leaders is now entrenched in the political culture of the political class in the country.

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vernment since last year. Despite conspiracy theories, the resumption of parliamentary sessions on 23 March 2021 and the live TV broadcast of the highhanded manner parliamentary democracy is being muzzled have once again reminded people of the long list of scandals plaguing the country and the appalling state of go-vernance with a vengeance.

The benchmarks of democracy must be absolute. They cannot be watered down. Parliamentary sessions and the tenor and standard of debate and parliamentary question time aptly conducted by a respected and impartial Speaker are yardsticks of democracy. In a vibrant democracy, parliamentary question time is therefore an opportunity for government to proudly showcase its good governance and the competence with which it is running the affairs of the country. This is certainly not the case in the country.

Lofty ideals

People who join politics must above all realize that it is a serious undertaking. It is about lofty ideals, a commitment of altruistic service to the people, a high code of ethics and propriety, exemplary good governance, promoting equal opportunities and meritocracy, ensuring transparency and accountability of government actions and public spending, relentless efforts to contribute constructively towards the establishment of a better socio-economic order for the benefit of one and all and much more.

and the country at the centre of their initiatives and actions. The role of the opposition is to question and scrutinize government policies and actions, be incisive and constructive.

Honest answers

For too long, the benchmarks of democracy in the country have been plummeting under successive governments. Why on earth should legitimate parliamentary questions on key matters of public interest by opposition MPs be systematically scuttled through shenanigans of every kind to muddle the issue or be the object of arbitrary expulsions of opposition MPs? People expect government to provide honest and straightforward answers to parliamentary questions germane to the interests of the country and in particular those related to the use of public funds and governance. Any subterfuge or patent stratagem to hide vital information regarding public interest and the management of the affairs of the country is unacceptable to the multitude. There is growing outrage in the country at such abject ploys to conceal the truth from public scrutiny.

The recent patently unsatisfactory answers given by government to a parliamentary question regarding the alleged difficulties of the Director of Audit to have access to important documents required to carry out its audit of the Safe City project is a case in point. In line with ele-

It's time to end America's longest war: Joe Biden



"I am now the fourth American president to preside over an American troop presence in Afghanistan. Two Republicans. Two Democrats. I will not pass this responsibility to a fifth," Joe Biden said. Photo - i.insider.com

"We cannot continue the cycle of extending or expanding our military presence in Afghanistan hoping to create the ideal conditions for our withdrawal, expecting a different result," the US president said.

US President Joe Biden announced Wednesday that the remaining US troops will leave Afghanistan by September 11, the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks that took them there in the hunt for Al Qaeda. He said American forces cannot stay on in the hope of creating the ideal withdrawal conditions and "it's time to end America's longest war".

The drawdown is not based on conditions and will start before May 1, the earlier deadline negotiated by the

Trump administration with the Taliban. After September 11, US military presence in Afghanistan will be confined to providing protections to diplomats, reports Yashwant Raj of Hindustan Times.

There are an estimated 2,500-3,500 US troops in Afghanistan, in addition to 8,500 deployed by coalition allies.

"We went to Afghanistan because of a horrific attack that happened 20 years ago," Biden said referring to the terrorist attacks carried out by Al Qaeda on September 11, 2001. "It is time to end America's longest war. It is time for American troops to come home."

The US president also sought to

reassure Afghans and the world that the withdrawal of troops will not end US engagement in that country. The US will continue to support the Afghan government and the peace process and will also keep providing assistance to Afghan security forces.

The American president is facing criticism already for the drawdown. "After a brief and seemingly half-hearted effort at diplomacy, Mr. Biden has decided on unconditional withdrawal, step that may spare the United States further costs and lives but will almost certainly be a disaster for the country's 39 million people - and, in particular, its women," The Washington Post wrote in a scathing editorial. The president, it added, "has chosen the easy way out of Afghanistan, but the consequences are likely to be ugly."

The Biden administration official had said, perhaps anticipating the criticism, that it has

Hours after the announcement of the Biden timeline, the Taliban said they will not attend a 10-day UN-led and US-backed peace initiative in Istanbul, Turkey till all foreign troops had left Afghanistan.

"Until all foreign forces completely withdraw from our homeland, (we) will not participate in any conference that shall make decisions about Afghanistan," tweeted Mohammad Naeem, spokesman for the Taliban office in Qatar.



The USS John Paul Jones sailed past the Lakshadweep islands deep inside India's EEZ of 200 nautical miles without seeking New Delhi's prior permission. Photo - The Print

US strikes conciliatory tone on intrusion into India's EEZ, but unrepentant

The United States on Tuesday sought to allay outrage over the April 7 intrusion into India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) by invoking security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. Yet, it continued to defend the naval operation, saying it demonstrated American support for international law and freedom, reports Yashwant Raj of Hindustan Times.

The USS John Paul Jones, a warship of the 7th Fleet, the largest US naval formation, sailed past the Lakshadweep islands deep inside India's EEZ of 200 nautical miles without seeking New Delhi's prior permission.

The "operational assertion", as the US calls such naval manoeuvres, are conducted under a 1979 Freedom of Navigation Programme intended to challenge maritime protocols required by coastal nations that the US believes are "excessive maritime claims".

The American warship "conducted a routine Freedom of Navigation Operation in the Indian Ocean", a US defence department spokesperson said in a statement on Tuesday. "This operation demonstrates longstanding US support for international law and freedom of the seas worldwide."

The spokesperson added, "We value our partnership with India on a wide range of issues, including regional security across the Indo-Pacific."

By invoking Indo-Pacific security cooperation, the US appeared to be pushing back against criticism by directing attention towards the bigger picture - the threat from China - and recent strides made in this regard, the first-ever summit of the leaders of the Quad.

The US has been conducting these operational assertions in India's EEZ and territorial sea jurisdictions since 1985.

The one on April 7 triggered unprecedented outrage in India, possibly because the 7th Fleet announced it in a statement that some experts said had an "aggressive tone".

India's external affairs ministry responded with a statement saying, "The USS John Paul Jones was continuously monitored transiting from the Persian Gulf towards the Malacca Straits. We have conveyed our concerns regarding this passage through our EEZ to the government of USA through diplomatic channels."

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TikTok founder's \$60 billion fortune lands him among world's richest people

Just last year, the world's most valuable startup, ByteDance Ltd., was being squeezed from all sides. The Trump administration wanted the Chinese firm, which owns the ubiquitous TikTok video-sharing platform, to get rid of assets. Beijing was cracking down on tech businesses, and India blacklisted some of its social-media apps.

For all the obstacles, ByteDance kept growing. Now its founder, 38-year-old Zhang Yiming, is among the world's richest people -- a distinction that lately has carried increased risks in China, reports Bloomberg.

Shares of the company trade in the private market at a valuation of more than \$250 billion, people familiar with the dealings have said. At that level, Zhang, who owns about a quarter of ByteDance, could be worth more than \$60 billion, placing him alongside Tencent Holdings Ltd.'s Pony Ma, bottled-water king Zhong Shanshan and members of the Walton and Koch families in the US, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

ByteDance, famous for its short-video apps and news aggregator Toutiao, more than doubled revenue last year after expanding beyond its core advertising business into



38-year-old Zhang Yiming, is among the world's richest people. Photo - s.yimg.com

areas such as e-commerce and online gaming. It's now weighing options for the initial public offering of some businesses.

"Zhang is someone who's known for thinking long-term and not easily dissuaded by short-term setbacks," said Ma Rui, partner at venture-capital firm Synaptic Ventures. "He is set on building an enduring, global business."

Facebook, Starbucks, other US companies unite for voting rights

Hundreds of U.S. corporations and executives signed on to a new statement calling for a defense of Americans' voting rights, the latest united backlash against state initiatives that could restrict voters' access to the polls, reports Bloomberg.

In a full page advertisement that ran Wednesday in the New York Times, the signatories called for "all Americans to join us in taking a nonpartisan stand for this most basic and fundamental right."

"We all should feel a responsibility to defend the right to vote and to oppose any discriminatory legislation or measures that restrict or prevent any eligible voter from having an equal and fair opportunity to cast a ballot," the statement read.

The letter stopped short of specific actions, such as halting donations to candidates that support restrictions on voter access or pausing investments in states that act upon such proposals.

Signatories span big tech companies like Facebook Inc., consumer companies including Starbucks Corp. and Target Corp., and financial firms, among others. Michael Bloomberg, founder and majority



Critics of the new voting restrictions say the changes are aimed chiefly at limiting participation of Americans of color. Photo - Reuters

owner of Bloomberg News parent company Bloomberg LP, also signed as an individual.

The push by Corporate America comes as a number of state legislatures move to limit voting access, with some curbs already passed. A new law in Georgia last

month requires voters to provide a state-issued identification card when requesting an absentee ballot and limits drop boxes, among other restrictions, with Texas, Arizona and Florida discussing their own restrictions.

"The freedom to vote is a huge priority

for the public, consumers and employees," Mike Ward, co-founder of the Civic Alliance, which assisted in the initiative, said in an interview. "Businesses are leading because they have their fingers on pulse of their key stakeholders and they know that the freedom to vote and health of democracy is a top priority."

The statement shows the movement is gaining traction. It was Black CEOs who originally condemned restrictions and began to push for action, including Kenneth Chenault, the former chief at American Express Co., and Kenneth Frazier, the CEO of Merck & Co. Wednesday's statement also includes nonprofits, foundations, law firms and celebrities, from Leo DiCaprio to Larry David.

Critics of the new voting restrictions say the changes are aimed chiefly at limiting participation of Americans of colour. And while in the past, many companies tried to stay out of political disputes for fear of drawing a partisan backlash, customers are increasingly demanding their favorite brands take a stance on issues that matter to them, from sustainability to inclusion.

Kremlin says will 'study' US proposal for Putin-Biden summit



Putin and Biden discussed Ukraine as well as the Iranian nuclear programme, Afghanistan peace talks and climate change. Photo - Financial Times

In a phone call on Tuesday, Biden proposed that the two leaders hold a summit "in the near future" that would come at a time of heightened tensions between the former Cold War rivals, reports Harshit Sabarwal of Hindustan Times.

"It is early to talk about this meeting in terms of specifics. This is a new proposal and it will be studied," said Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

He added that there is still no set agenda for the summit, but said that "without a doubt bilateral ties are important" in areas of mutual interest.

Tensions between Moscow and Washington have escalated in recent weeks, with Russia building up its troops on the border with Ukraine, where government forces have been fighting pro-Russian separatists since the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

The United States and its allies have called on Moscow to withdraw its forces.

The Kremlin has repeatedly denied its involvement in the long-simmering conflict and rejected claims that it props up the separatist forces.

Ties were already strained after Washington demanded the release of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny and slapped sanctions on Moscow over his poisoning in August last year.

Peskov, however, said that Navalny was not discussed in the Putin-Biden call.

A Kremlin statement on Tuesday said that the two leaders discussed Ukraine as well as the Iranian nuclear programme, Afghanistan peace talks and climate change.

Egypt seizes Suez ship 'Ever Given' pending \$900 million compensation



The Ever Given, a Panama-flagged cargo ship, is seen in Egypt's Great Bitter Lake. Photo - Hindu Businessline

Egypt seized a giant container vessel that blocked the Suez Canal last month as talks continued over the more than \$900 million in compensation sought by authorities.

A court in the city of Ismailia granted a seizure request regarding the Ever Given vessel at the behest of the Suez Canal Authority, state-run Ahram Gate reported Tuesday on its website.

Egypt's move underscores the legal complications following the container vessel's grounding on March 23, which closed the canal for almost a week and roiled shipping markets. Logjams are expected to continue in the coming weeks at major ports such as Singapore and

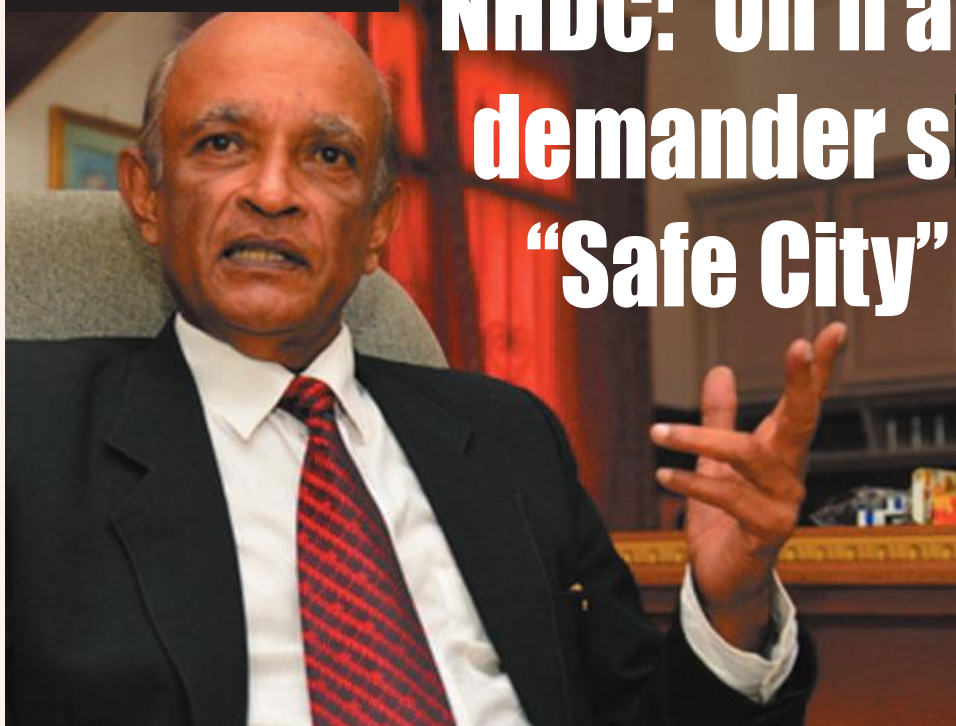
Rotterdam because of disruptions to schedules, according to supply-chain data provider project44, reports Bloomberg.

The Suez Canal Authority's chief executive officer, Osama Rabie, told an Egyptian TV channel late Tuesday that negotiations with the ship's owners and insurers were taking longer than anticipated, especially given the vessel and its containers were undamaged.

The ship's insurer for third-party losses, the U.K. P&I Club, said in a statement on Tuesday that the Ever Given's owner -- Japan-based Shoei Kisen Kaisha Ltd. -- received a claim for \$916 million.

"Despite the magnitude of the claim which was largely unsupported, the owners and their insurers have been negotiating in good faith with the SCA," the statement said. "On 12 April, a carefully considered and generous offer was made to the SCA to settle their claim. We are disappointed by the SCA's subsequent decision to arrest the vessel today."

Dr Soomant Callikan



NHDC: 'On n'a peut-être pas tort de se demander si ce n'est pas une autre "Safe City" qui nous pend au nez'

Dr S. Callikan peut se prévaloir d'une longue carrière tant à l'étranger qu'à Maurice où il a exercé, entre autres, à l'Université de Maurice et aussi dans un grand groupe privé de l'agro-alimentaire et l'hôtellerie. A son propre compte et sans affiliation politique, il n'en est que plus libre dans son regard et ses réflexions aujourd'hui. Dans le passé, il a soulevé des questions pertinentes sur notre système éducatif mais, aujourd'hui, nous l'avons invité à se pencher sur la gestion du pays en période de pandémie.

Mauritius Times: La population se pose beaucoup de questions sur la gestion de la deuxième vague de la pandémie tant sur le plan de l'économie que sanitaire. Quel regard jetez-vous sur cette double problématique ?

Dr Soomant Callikan : On comprend que la pandémie de Covid-19 à laquelle peu de pays occidentaux, même les plus riches et les plus puissants, s'étaient préparés, a eu un impact économique, sanitaire et psychologique considérable au niveau planétaire. Les finances publiques plombées, les déplacements et le tourisme en panne, l'agriculture et les planteurs malmenés, les industries et le commerce international affectés, les activités de loisirs, les spectacles ou les événements sportifs en arrière-plan, notre mode de vie et nos réflexes quotidiens en question, voilà où nous en étions, nous aussi, durant presque tout 2020.

Sur le plan socio-économique, mon regard de profane me fait penser que les dons généreux et l'assistance des pays amis, un endettement national assez massif ainsi que le recours aux réserves cumulées de la Banque centrale ont permis au Grand Argentier d'atténuer l'impact social de la crise et nous a préservés d'un taux de chômage qui aurait pu devenir alarmant. On peut toujours critiquer un certain manque de transparence ou les sources de cet argent injecté, mais nous pouvons rendre justice à cet effort considérable et indispensable pour maintenir la stabilité du tissu social du pays.

Mais les hauts cadres des Finances n'ignorent pas que certaines de nos entreprises - grosses, moins grosses ou des PME -

sont en mode survie, que le train de vie de l'État et les manquements constatés dans les dépenses publiques restent anormalement élevés alors que la situation financière du citoyen lambda s'est détériorée selon quelques sondages récents. La marge de manœuvre s'est rétrécie, la roupie s'est dépréciée significativement, alourdissant la note des ménages autant que celle des dettes à rembourser, et les voies traditionnelles d'accroître les revenus (hausse des tarifs publics, des impôts, de la TVA, des droits d'accise sur l'alcool et le tabac en particulier...), tout cela est porteur de risques sociaux et non des moindres.

*** Le budget 2021-2022 est à nos portes. Qu'est-ce que les Finances et le Gouvernement peuvent faire éventuellement pour tous ces opérateurs économiques qui n'ont bénéficié ni des largesses du Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd ni des contrats attribués durant la première vague, et les deux dans des conditions peu transparentes ?**

L'incertitude qui plane sur l'avenir est certes d'ordre mondial, mais il faudra redonner des raisons d'espérer à la population et à notre jeunesse autant qu'à tous nos entrepreneurs, incluant ceux qui sont à leur

compte, souvent les plus en détresse. Les autorités ne pourront continuer à soutenir longtemps les *Wage Assistance Scheme* et le *Self-employed Assistance Scheme* ; et elles se trouvent dans la position inconfortable de devoir gérer une réouverture progressive de l'économie alors même que la situation de sécurité sanitaire, devenue préoccupante, en a retardé l'échéance...

A l'heure du budget 2021, il faudra un véritable équilibriste aux Finances pour trouver les bonnes recettes qui relanceraient la machinerie de production et d'exportation, panser les plaies de pans entiers de l'économie, promouvoir une reprise lente mais planifiée du tourisme sans mettre à risque la sécurité sanitaire, bref redonner espoir à une population lassée, qui a souffert, qui est devenue dubitative, sinon un peu désabusée, de la parole publique et qui, dans sa grande majorité, est impatiente de retrouver les horizons d'une normalité post-pandémie.

Le manque de transparence dans la distribution de la manne financière provenant des réserves accumulées par le travail de toute la population laisse beaucoup à désirer. Souhaitons que l'écoute entamée ces jours-ci des attentes et des propositions budgétaires de toutes les parties concernées, soit productive et permette de dégager dans le cabinet de réflexion du ministre, des pistes nouvelles pour le pays...

On pourrait espérer deux choses : qu'on redresse la barre pour une meilleure transparence et, par ailleurs, qu'on mette tout le paquet, comme on dit, pour une sortie en 2021 des listes déshonorantes de la FATF, de l'UE ou de la Grande Bretagne.

*** On parle ces jours-ci de relance et de réformes post-pandémie. Auriez-vous souhaité que le Gouvernement entreprenne une réforme en priorité ?**

Parmi les pistes nouvelles, une réforme devrait s'imposer en ces temps de crise car les gâchis et les dessous de l'État dépensier sont devenus encore plus insupportables.

En effet, la saga des rapports annuels du Directeur de l'Audit sans véritable suivi, sans effet, et sans sanction, rapidement

enterrés, dure depuis des années. Aucun régime ne s'y est attaqué. Mais «aux temps exceptionnels, des mesures exceptionnelles», comme disait un *Senior Minister*. Alors pourquoi ne pas envisager de transformer le Bureau de l'Audit, peut-être un vestige colonial, en une véritable **Cour des Comptes permanente** avec les moyens, l'indépendance et l'autorité indiscutée pour accomplir de façon autonome sa tâche d'importance nationale ?

D'une part, cela permettrait d'obtenir plus d'«*accountability*» et, d'autre part, rendrait caduc le bouledogue sans dents qu'est le *Public Accounts Committee*, selon tous les Présidents de cette institution.

La Cour des Comptes en France a «pour mission principale de s'assurer du bon emploi de l'argent public et d'en informer les citoyens» comme «une Juridiction indépendante» qui «se situe à équidistance du Parlement et du Gouvernement, qu'elle assiste l'un et l'autre».

Elle a quatre missions principales: le volet d'audit, le volet de veille de l'utilisation de l'argent public, la certification de certains comptes publics et, tout aussi important, l'assistance au Parlement et au gouvernement dans l'évaluation des politiques publiques. Pas la peine donc de réinventer la roue puisque la législation existe déjà en France et dans de nombreux pays francophones.

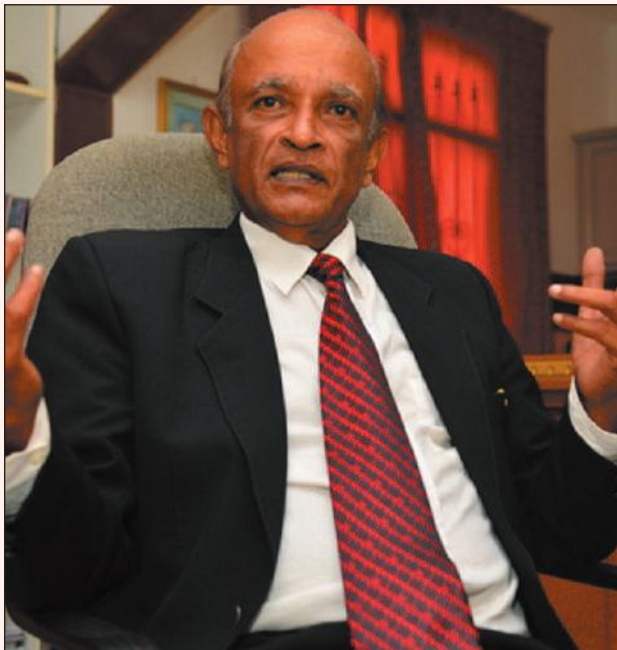
Dans une approche constructive sans arrière-pensée partisane, une table ronde réunissant d'anciens ministres des Finances, des légistes indépendants et ceux du *State Law Office* pourrait déboucher rapidement sur un projet de loi adapté à notre Constitution. Pour le féru d'écoles françaises qu'est notre Grand Argentier et pour tous ceux qui souhaitent une gestion plus saine des finances publiques, ce nouveau pilier pourrait être un grand pas en avant. Si les propres hauts cadres aux Finances et ailleurs ne déconseillent pas ce qui pourrait être une réforme historique...

*** Et ne pensez-vous pas que la population, bien plus éclairée que jadis, et le pays, dans ses modes de fonctionnement, méritent au minimum une plus grande transparence dans la gestion publique? Les conditions entourant le projet de 12,000 logements sociaux, en particulier, vous interpellent-elles ?**

L'Opposition : c'est son rôle de chien de garde de veiller aux abus, malgré tous les obstacles.

“Deux jours après la réception du don chinois, est-il normal qu'on ne puisse toujours pas dire clairement à qui ces 50,000 doses seront réservées en priorité ? Tout cela contribue à une atmosphère d'agacement général qui s'ajoute aux frustrations liées à ce *Consent Form* controversé, aux risques imposés pour des examens locaux trop retardés, au confinement prolongé ainsi qu'aux nouveaux «clusters» et zones rouges...”

* Suite en page 8



“Si on fait le décompte des contrats-pandémie, le peu d'informations sur les fonds de la Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd (filiale de la Banque de Maurice) ou sur les dons et les financements reçus dans les fonds de soutien pandémie, la population reste sur sa faim. Si on ajoute les dossiers épineux des contrats publics controversés que le Bureau de l'Audit, malgré ses attributions constitutionnelles, n'a pu contre-vérifier à cause de prétextes divers, il y a de quoi se poser des questions...”

* Suite de la page 7

Mais une presse vigilante, des observateurs indépendants, des internautes et de larges pans de la population s'interrogent aussi sur la volonté réelle pour une plus grande transparence des affaires de l'État.

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Si on ajoute les dossiers épineux des contrats publics controversés que le Bureau de l'Audit, malgré ses attributions constitutionnelles, n'a pu contre-vérifier à cause de prétextes divers, il y a de quoi se poser des questions. Suffira-t-il demain que toute entreprise publique, dépensant des milliards de nos deniers, insère une clause de confidentialité dans un contrat juteux avec une autre entité privée ou publique, pour qu'elle passe sous le radar de l'Audit ? C'est une pensée dérangeante.

Espérons que ce n'est pas dans ces eaux-là qu'on trouve la justification de la création de filiales privées de compagnies publiques, hier à la CEB et, demain, dans le cadre de ce mégaprojet de maisons de la NHDC. Alors qu'on évince son Directeur pour recruter avec des conditions affriolantes un nouveau maître des lieux dans cette filiale, on n'a peut-être pas tort de se demander si ce n'est pas une autre « Safe City » qui nous pend au nez...

* Revenons à cette gestion de la seconde vague de la pandémie. Les épisodes tragiques de décès en dialyse, l'éclosion de nouveaux clusters, les zones rouges, le manque de vaccins font la une de l'actualité. Quel est votre regard sur cet état de choses ?

En ce qu'il s'agit de la gestion de ce qu'on appelle « la seconde vague » de la pandémie, il faut d'abord saluer l'ensemble du personnel hospitalier et médical pour leur vraie abnégation dans cette situation nouvelle de risques

'Le risque zéro n'existe pas et tout le monde peut faire des erreurs. Mais, dans cette crise, on s'attend à obtenir des réponses claires'

personnels, où la peur de contaminer ses proches, le stress, la fatigue et la surcharge de travail ont été sans aucun doute omniprésents.

Et si nos services publics comptent de nombreux services de pointe performants, il faut néanmoins reconnaître que l'état sanitaire et la propreté dans nos hôpitaux est en-deçà de ce qu'on pourrait et devrait attendre, un problème auquel l'ex-ministre Anwar Husnoo avait promis de s'y atteler depuis 2018 au moins.

Beaucoup de choses laissent encore à désirer. Certaines prestations offertes en temps normal, comme la dialyse, sont porteuses de vie mais lourdes et pénibles, réclamant le déplacement d'un patient par un proche pour trois sessions de quatre heures par semaine, souvent de 17h à 21h le soir. Alors, en pleine pandémie, on comprend l'angoisse des parents, des proches et d'un patient, obligé de se rendre, pour sa survie, dans un centre de traitement devenu, sans véritables explications plausibles, un lieu de risque d'infection du virus.

* On s'attendrait à ce que les autorités prennent le taureau par les cornes pour tenter de comprendre ce qui explique ces dysfonctionnements, non ?

Certains acceptent les statistiques froides des mortalités et des comorbidités accrues. Mais si on balaie d'un revers de main cette demande légitime des parents, et même du personnel hospitalier, de comprendre où ont fait irruption les brèches qu'il faut colmater, quelles sont les causes de cette surmortalité, de ces tristes décès dans l'isolement, c'est se mettre à dos la population et desservir la crédibilité de ceux qui se dévouent au service de santé publique.

Le manque de tact, les déclarations mal comprises, les ratés et les prises de position contradictoires se greffent sur des cas récents de décès tragiques et une gestion de la seconde vague qui avaient déjà laissé de nombreux Mauriciens désorientés.

Le risque zéro n'existe pas et tout le monde peut faire des erreurs. Mais, dans cette crise, on s'attend à obtenir des réponses claires. On passe sur le mystère du patient zéro ou sur les variants ou sur l'impression qu'on n'a pas vraiment tiré les leçons de la première vague. Une enquête en milieu hospitalier est toujours difficile, plus encore durant la pandémie, mais elle pourrait aussi aider les autorités à cerner et à corriger des failles ou des lacunes dans le système. Nous parlons de tragédies humaines, ne l'oublions pas.

* Que pensez-vous des difficultés à nous approvisionner en vaccins et de l'état de nos réserves, alors qu'on a brandi ce fameux slogan et peut-être réducteur « Sel solution, vaccination! » ?

L'exemple le plus symptomatique des dérèglements à la Santé est sans aucun doute celui de la politique nationale de vaccination, sujette à de tels couacs et de retournements depuis décembre 2020, qu'on se retrouve aujourd'hui, selon les responsables, avec seulement 16% de la population vaccinée d'une première dose dans un programme initié depuis fin janvier 2021, et ce, grâce en partie à la généreuse donation de l'Inde, elle-même à court de vaccins. Pour les observateurs externes et profanes, c'est quand même difficile à comprendre.

Nous aurions pu agir avec diligence, avec des précommandes et un minimum de planification, plutôt que d'être affligés par cet attristant spectacle qui n'honore en

rien ceux qui se sont chargés du dossier : attente de dons de pays amis et achats au triple ou quadruple du prix du marché auprès de Bharat Biotech Ltd, de Spoutnik ou d'autres...

Ayant fait la cigale en été, voilà les autorités bien démunies à courir aux urgences dans une période de compétition internationale pour des vaccins!

A quoi tient le fait que nous n'avons presque rien de la «Covax Facility»? Deux jours après la réception du don chinois, est-il normal qu'on ne puisse toujours pas dire clairement à qui ces 50,000 doses seront réservées en priorité? Tout cela contribue à une atmosphère d'agacement général qui s'ajoute aux frustrations liées à ce *Consent Form* controversé, aux risques imposés pour des examens locaux trop retardés, au confinement prolongé ainsi qu'aux nouveaux «clusters» et zones rouges...

* En fin de compte, avons-nous des raisons d'espérer un retour à des valeurs plus traditionnelles dans nos mœurs - ce qui semble avoir pris un grand coup depuis un bon bout de temps ?

Ce qui est véritablement dommage pour le pays serait ce raisonnement que l'état de confrontation permanente profiterait au parti dominant du gouvernement. Y verrait-on une stratégie de ceux que Nando Bodha dénommait des "tours de contrôle" occultes? Ou de leurs bailleurs de fonds?

“Espérons que ce n'est pas dans ces eaux-là qu'on trouve la justification de la création de filiales privées de compagnies publiques, hier à la CEB et, demain, dans le cadre de ce mégaprojet de maisons de la NHDC. Alors qu'on évince son Directeur pour recruter avec des conditions affriolantes un nouveau maître des lieux dans cette filiale, on n'a peut-être pas tort de se demander si ce n'est pas une autre «Safe City» qui nous pend au nez...”

L'état du Parlement avec les excès du Speaker, ses exclusions et les atteintes générales à l'Opposition dans ses attributions, soutenus par un *shouting brigade* des bancs du Gouvernement, est la plus lamentable expression de notre démocratie.

Les circonstances difficiles que traversent le pays et des milliers de concitoyens réclament plus de hauteur et plus d'écoute des voix de l'Opposition, accordant ainsi une plus grande primauté à l'intérêt national. Le PM, en élevant les débats, en rappelant ses troupes à plus de retenue, en favorisant une certaine sobriété dans ses réponses, en évitant les motions d'exclusion punitive ou humiliante, pourrait renouveler sa garde-robe pour laisser une empreinte respectée comme un *Leader of the House* plutôt qu'un leader de parti.

Rien ne dit que cette dimension d'homme d'État est hors de sa portée. J'ai du mal à croire qu'une telle démarche lui ferait perdre de son capital politique. Mais nous serions bien impudents de songer offrir des conseils à un chef de parti aguerri, sorti victorieux des urnes et qui domine son monde.



Deborah Gleeson
Associate Professor in
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La Trobe University

COVAX, the global initiative to coordinate the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines in an equitable way, is crucial for bringing the pandemic under control.

But COVAX's aim of delivering 2 billion doses to participating countries by the end of 2021 — including 92 low-income countries that can't afford to buy vaccines directly from manufacturers — is threatened by chronic under-investment, vaccine nationalism and export restrictions.

COVAX is not intended only for low-income countries: Canada has so far received 316,800 doses through the scheme. As such, it represents an important "insurance policy" for Australia, potentially enabling access to a wider portfolio of vaccines than we could secure through negotiations with suppliers.

The vulnerability of our vaccine procurement strategy has become clearer over the last few weeks, with supply blockages limiting vaccine imports from Europe and now the government's warning about the AstraZeneca vaccine and its links to a rare blood-clotting disorder.

Saving COVAX will require more than donations (of both funds and vaccines), as well as the removal of export bans. Countries must collaborate to urgently remove the legal and technical barriers preventing more widespread vaccine manufacturing in order to increase the global supply of vaccines for COVAX to distribute.

How does COVAX work?

COVAX is led by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI); Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (a public-private partnership that aims to increase vaccination in low-income countries); and the World Health Organization.

It aims to deliver doses to all of the participating countries that have requested them in the first half of 2021, and 2 billion vaccines in total by the end of 2021.

COVAX is complex, but essentially it works by investing in a portfolio of promising vaccines and then distributing them according to a formula to both "self-financing countries" and "funded countries".

Self-financing countries are those which have contributed funds to COVAX, such as Australia. They are able to buy the vaccines at cheaper prices negotiated by COVAX and will initially receive enough to vaccinate 20%

The best hope for fairly distributing Covid-19 vaccines globally is at risk of failing...

COVAX, the global vaccine distribution initiative, is well behind its goal of delivering 2 billion doses this year due to under-investment, vaccine nationalism and export restrictions



The first shipment of COVID-19 vaccines distributed by COVAX arriving in Ghana.
Francis Kokoroko/UNICEF/AP - Photo - theconversation.com

of their populations. In the longer term, these countries may receive enough doses to vaccinate up to half of their populations, depending on how much they contribute.

Funded countries include 92 low-income countries that can't afford to buy their own vaccines. They will also receive enough to vaccinate 20% of their populations, provided COVAX is able to meet its goals. This is nowhere near enough to achieve herd immunity, but will at least allow health workers and the most vulnerable groups to be vaccinated.

Australia has committed A\$123.2 million to enable it to purchase 25 million vaccines for domestic use.

It has also committed A\$80 million specifically earmarked for providing vaccines for low-income countries. This money will be drawn from existing aid funding, however, and won't go very far in terms of assistance.

How is the program going so far?

COVAX made its first delivery of vaccines to Ghana on February 24. By April 11, it had shipped approximately 38.5 million doses to 106 countries and territories.

While these figures might look promising at first glance, this is a long way behind COVAX's aim to deliver 100 million doses by the end of March.

And they don't stand up well in the context of global vaccine roll-outs. So far, only 0.2% of the 700 million vaccine doses administered globally have been given in low-income countries, whereas 87% have been received by people in high-income and upper middle-income countries.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general of the WHO, pointed out last week that only one in 500 people in low-income countries have so far received a vaccine — a situation he described as a "shocking imbalance".

Why is COVAX struggling to deliver?

COVAX needs more funding, to the tune of US\$3.2 billion even to meet its modest goals for 2021. But the supply of vaccines is an even bigger problem.

Rich countries like Australia have undermined COVAX by negotiating deals for vaccines directly with pharmaceutical companies, rather than waiting for COVAX to allocate them fairly. By last November, high-income countries making up just 14% of the world's population had negotiated pre-market agreements covering 51% of the global supply.

Adding to COVAX's problems, the flow of vaccine deliveries has mostly dried up in the last week.

Some 90 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine manufactured in India that were to be delivered to 64 countries in March and April have been delayed as a surge in COVID-19 cases prompted the Indian government to restrict exports.

What needs to happen?

WHO has called on rich countries to immediately share 10 million doses to prop up COVAX in the first half of 2021?

But so far, no country has committed to do this. Donations that come after countries have fully vaccinated their own populations will be too late. And where bilateral donations have been made outside of the COVAX program (mainly by China and Russia), they have largely been driven by security, strategic or political considerations, rather than donated to the countries where they are most needed.

Removing export restrictions would help. But as long as demand exceeds supply and the countries where vaccines are manufactured face large outbreaks, we are likely to continue to see these types of barriers.

What is needed most are more sustainable approaches to dramatically boost the global supply of vaccines and ensure there's enough to go around.

This first requires removing the intellectual property protections that allow vaccine developers to hold exclusive rights to control who can make and sell them.

India and South Africa have put forth a proposal at the World Trade Organization to waive intellectual property rights for COVID-19 medical products during the pandemic, which has been supported by more than 100 low- and middle-income countries. However, several high-income countries, including Australia, have blocked it.

Secondly, governments need to support mechanisms for sharing intellectual property, such as the WHO's COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP).

This was set up nearly a year ago, but no vaccine developer has contributed to it yet. Governments need to make sharing intellectual property and contributing to the pool a condition of public funding for the development of COVID-19 products.

Finally, governments need to help low- and middle-income countries to produce their own vaccines. This means investing money to build up manufacturing capacities in these countries and facilitating technology transfers from companies based in high-income countries.

For COVAX to supply enough vaccines for even 20% of the world's population, rich countries will need to step up. And fast.

“ Je suis désolée ” : à l'exemple d'Angela Merkel, les dirigeants devraient plus souvent présenter leurs excuses

La majorité des leaders ne s'excusent pas pour leurs erreurs, même flagrantes. Pourtant, des excuses sincères et spontanées sont bénéfiques

Rares sont les dirigeants en fonction qui reconnaissent une erreur, présentent leurs excuses et demandent pardon.

C'est pour cela que ces mots d'Angela Merkel, à la fin mars, à propos de sa gestion de la crise sanitaire et le durcissement des règles sanitaires à Pâques ont surpris et marqué les esprits: "Cette erreur est mon erreur et mon erreur seule. Car à la fin, c'est moi qui porte la responsabilité de tout, de par mon mandat. Je regrette profondément cette erreur et je demande pardon aux concitoyennes et concitoyens pour la confusion qu'elle a pu causer."

Angela Merkel s'est ainsi démarquée de l'écrasante majorité des autres dirigeants qui refusent de reconnaître leurs erreurs ou bien le font tardivement, sous la pression et du bout des lèvres. On se souvient par exemple de Richard Nixon qui a utilisé à plusieurs reprises l'expression "des erreurs ont été faites" au moment du Watergate pour tenter d'atténuer sa responsabilité. Ou bien encore d'Henry Kissinger répondant de manière fuyante à des accusations à son égard: "Des erreurs ont probablement été commises par l'administration dans laquelle j'ai servi".

Dans sa gestion de la pandémie de la Covid-19 au Québec, qui a provoqué la mort de plus de 10 000 citoyens, le premier ministre François Legault s'est blanchi de toute erreur. Il s'est ainsi attribué une note parfaite. Quant au président français, Emmanuel Macron, il a souligné que "celui qui ne fait pas d'erreur, c'est celui qui ne cherche pas, qui ne fait rien ou qui mécaniquement fait la même chose que la veille". Et il a regretté que la France devienne "une nation de 66 millions de procureurs".

Depuis six ans, je m'intéresse aux erreurs de management et de leadership. J'ai recueilli plus de 200 erreurs commises par des gestionnaires et des dirigeants. La plupart de ces erreurs sont de fausses bonnes idées: ce qui semble une bonne pratique aux yeux des gestionnaires est en réalité une mauvaise pratique d'après la recherche scientifique en gestion. Ne pas présenter ses excuses en cas d'erreur semble précisément une fausse bonne idée.

Vraies et fausses excuses

Les excuses d'Angela Merkel sont de vraies excuses, semblent sincères et spontanées, ce qui tranche avec les fausses excuses :

* *L'excuse vide* qui consiste à se contenter d'un simple : "Je suis désolé". Cela donne l'impression d'excuses obligées, que la personne qui prononce ces mots ne les pense pas véritablement. C'est le cas de Kissinger qui a attendu d'être à la



La chancelière allemande Angela Merkel lors d'une conférence de presse, le 30 mars 2021, à Berlin. Elle est l'une des rares leaders à avoir présenter ses excuses dans la gestion de la pandémie de Covid-19. AP Photo/Markus Schreiber, pool)

retraite et pressé par un journaliste pour évoquer des erreurs éventuellement commises.

* *L'excuse excessive* consiste en des excuses surjouées, trop nombreuses et trop longues ou bien à se confondre en excuse en se mettant en avant: "Je suis désolé, je me sens si mal, je n'en dors plus de la nuit...". Il y a un renversement des rôles : celle qui présente ses excuses tente de faire pleurer l'autre, se fait passer pour la victime. Un message de contrition préparé avec une firme de communication est souvent trop travaillé pour sembler sincère. Voici par exemple celui de Tiger Woods accusé d'adultère: "J'ai laissé tomber ma famille, et je regrette ces transgressions de tout mon cœur. Je n'ai pas été fidèle à mes valeurs et au comportement que ma famille mérite. Je ne suis pas sans fautes et je suis loin d'être parfait." Ses excuses manquent de simplicité et d'authenticité; ce n'est pas sa façon de parler habituelle.

* *L'excuse incomplète* qui consiste en une excuse partielle de type: "Je suis désolé pour ce qui s'est passé", "Je suis désolé que tu te sois senti mal". La personne ne reconnaît pas directement sa responsabilité, ne demande pas pardon. Richard Nixon entre typiquement dans cette catégorie en reconnaissant l'existence d'erreurs sans reconnaître en être l'auteur.

Des excuses pour poursuivre la relation

À quoi servent les excuses? À exprimer son émotion intérieure afin de réparer et poursuivre la relation avec les personnes lésées, explique le professeur Nicolas Tavuchis dans son livre *Mea culpa*

(Stanford University Press).

Les excuses répondent à une attente des personnes lésées, désamorcent leur colère et leur font sentir que les deux parties appartiennent à la même communauté: elles partagent une certaine humanité.

Des études montrent d'ailleurs que les excuses font du bien aux offensés, mais aussi à l'offenseur: l'estime de soi et la fierté augmentent.

Un aveu de faiblesse ou de force?

Alors pourquoi les dirigeants rechignent-ils à présenter leurs excuses? Parce qu'ils en sous-estiment les bénéfices et en surestiment le coût. Ils craignent qu'un tel acte passe pour un aveu de faiblesse.

Or, les dirigeants qui reconnaissent leurs erreurs et présentent de vraies et sincères excuses voient leur image s'améliorer. C'est une marque d'humilité, ce qui donne plus envie aux autres de les suivre. C'est aussi un gage de confiance.

Un bon exemple est le cas de Michael McCain, PDG de Maple Leaf Foods, qui a dû présenter des excuses après la mort de vingt personnes de listeria à la suite de la consommation de viande avariée. McCain a admis qu'en tant que dirigeant il en était responsable. Il n'a pas cherché à minimiser les faits ou à désigner d'autres responsables. Sa priorité était de restaurer la confiance des consommateurs et de prendre des mesures pour faire en sorte qu'un tel drame ne se reproduise pas. Son discours semble avoir été juste, car les médias ont loué la gestion de crise mise en place par l'entreprise. Et la confiance des consommateurs est remontée en flèche peu après.

Reconnaître sa responsabilité, c'est aussi mettre en lumière son pouvoir. Lorsqu'un dirigeant attribue des événements négatifs à des causes externes, il renvoie une image d'incertitude et d'impuissance. Par exemple, lorsque les dirigeants d'entreprise laissent entendre que les mauvais résultats sont liés à des causes externes, le cours de la Bourse diminue. En revanche, une étude menée aux États-Unis sur une période de dix-huit ans par les chercheurs Gerald Salancik et James Meindl montre que quand les dirigeants mettent en avant des causes internes et proposent des solutions, la valeur des actions de leur entreprise augmente. Pourquoi ? Car les dirigeants montrent qu'ils contrôlent la situation.

Nier toute responsabilité, c'est également laisser penser qu'on n'apprend pas de ses erreurs. Or, comme l'indique le philosophe et écrivain George Santayana dans son livre *The Life of Reason*: "lorsque l'expérience n'est pas retenue [...] l'enfance est perpétuelle. Ceux qui ne se souviennent pas du passé sont condamnés à le répéter".

Les dirigeants auraient donc intérêt à s'inspirer d'Angela Merkel, reconnaître leurs erreurs et présenter de vraies excuses. À condition que celles-ci semblent sincères. Sinon, le remède serait pire que le mal !

Il y a erreur et erreur

Il existe toutefois une exception. Les erreurs de comportement (être maladroit, impulsif, malhonnête...) sont jugées moins pardonnables que les erreurs de jugement (prendre une mauvaise décision). Elles s'apparentent parfois plus à des fautes qu'à des erreurs et paraissent directement liées à la personnalité de son auteur. Or la personnalité d'un individu est stable. Donc d'autres "gaffes" risquent de survenir, à l'image du personnage de bande dessinée Gaston Lagaffe qui les multiplie.

Justin Trudeau est sans doute le leader occidental qui s'est le plus excusé dans sa carrière. Mais ses excuses portent avant tout sur ses erreurs de comportements (bousculade d'une députée, visage grimé en noir, contrat douteux avec l'UNIS). Ou encore, ses excuses concernent des événements survenus dans le passé (du Canada) dont il n'est pas directement responsable. C'est pourquoi il n'en tire pas un grand bénéfice.

Par Denis Monneuse
Chercheur à l'Université du Québec à Montréal,
Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)

Democracy On Trial

* Cont. from page 4

Like Covid-19, we above all need as a nation to break loose from this crippling political straightjacket so detrimental to the prospects of the country. The young are imbued with a certain idealism and refreshing values. They are driven by lofty hopes and ambitions.

How can the young elected MPs therefore reconcile their ideals and values with the country's plummeting state of governance, nepotism, cronyism and the government decision to appoint the coterie at the head of key state institutions, state companies or as ambassadors which are so disastrous to the interests of the country? How can they turn a blind eye on the lack of transparency and accountability of government spending, government procurement tenders and costly projects such as Safe City?

Can't they measure the distress of consumers in a context of escalating prices of consumer goods fuelled by the unchecked depreciation of the Rupee despite supermarkets having the cost leeway to offer heavy price discounts of 23% to 48% during their monthly sales promo-



“The people are fed up with gambits such as special purpose vehicles, confidentiality agreements, Mutual Non-Disclosure Agreements, the setting of state private companies and similar stratagems to shroud billions of Rupees of public funds in opacity outside the scrutiny of Parliament or government audit. The latest avatar of such decried ploys is the reported setting up of a private company, the New Social Living Development Ltd, to build 12,000 social housing units at a cost of Rs 12 billion financed from public funds...”

tion campaigns? Are they tacitly content to bring the weight of their numbers to indiscriminately vote in favour of policies and actions which are patently against the public interest? More importantly do they discuss these key issues of governance, accountability, judicious public spending and national policies with the electorate which elected them to office or do they just sycophantically abide by the directives of their leader?

The Mauritius we want

Without the support of young MPs, no contested policy or action can be approved. Against such a deplorable backdrop, they can surely opt to leverage their numbers to bring about a paradigm shift in governance, democratic standards and policy framework. This will certainly take the wind off the sails of the arrogance and smugness of power.

This is certainly not the Mauritius we want as a nation. The hope of a significantly better Mauritius can only be realized by the bright and talented young of the country driven by lofty ideals, a high standard of ethics, a commitment of service to the people and country and the intellect to chart an innovative pathway towards a more prosperous future for the benefit of one and all.

Mrinal Roy

Pandemic recovery will take more than soaring growth – to fuel a more equitable economy, countries need to measure the well-being of people, too

* Cont. from page 2

Starting about a decade ago, however, scholars started to question this assumption, noting that GDP does not include the value of unpaid work, often performed by women, such as household work or child and elder care.

Economic growth often has negative consequences, too, that can offset its positive effects. Intensive use of natural resources, for example, harms the environment and the living conditions of people in those areas. Longer working hours reduce quality of life.

Moreover, economic inequality – which is growing in many Western countries – cannot be seen in an average like GDP per capita, but it does affect average well-being.

In 2011 the OECD introduced the “Better Life Initiative.” It ranks all 37 OECD member states based on 11 dimensions that contribute to citizens’ well-being: job security, education, health, civic engagement, purchasing power, housing, safety, work-life balance, social connections, environmental quality and subjective well-being.

The Better Life Initiative is important in broadening our view of success. But it lacks GDP-per-capita’s appealing simplicity of being a single, comprehensive number.

A new single-number index

In 2016, the interdisciplinary team of researchers I lead at Utrecht University created the Better Well-Being Index. This integrated measure of well-being enables researchers and policymakers to critically assess whether economic growth translates into well-being – and rate well-being with a single, easy-to-understand number.

Our index uses the same 11 dimensions as the OECD’s Better Life Initiative, and it rates each country’s score on



Homelessness and lack of affordable housing are the main problems dragging down well-being in the Netherlands today. Pierre Crom/Getty Images

these dimensions on a scale of 0 to 1, using international benchmarks. Next, the figures are weighted to reflect how important each country’s population has reported each dimension to be.

All these inputs are then combined to result in a single measure of well-being.

When we tested our new system on the Netherlands, comparing its well-being rating with GDP per capita, we found that they diverged markedly in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis.

Per capita GDP recovered within a few years, and in 2016 surpassed its pre-crisis peak. However, well-being as measured by our Better Well-being Index remained depressed for much longer, largely due to high unemployment.

Many everyday Dutch people knew this all too well. What our data showed, empirically, is that the Dutch had just reached their pre-2008 level of well-being when the COVID-19 crisis hit.

Measuring the pandemic recovery

Our results are already stimulating societal and political debates in the Netherlands. Dutch policymakers, including regional governments, are starting to use well-being indexes to measure the effects of their policies and investment programs.

The Better Well-Being Index has not yet been applied to the United States – though it could easily be adapted to the American context – so we can’t yet measure empirically how well-being compares with economic growth in the US.

But studies suggest the divergence may be even larger than in the Netherlands. In recent decades, the US has increased its lead over European countries in GDP terms but lags behind them in life expectancy, safety and income distribution.

We believe well-being is especially important for countries to monitor in the COVID-19 recovery period, whether using our index, the OECD’s or another comprehensive tool. As our historical analysis shows, people may still be suffering in many ways well after a country’s economic growth returns – and crises typically exacerbate inequalities.

Countries seeking to explicitly counteract the negative effects of the pandemic need a good compass to guide their recovery plan. And that won’t be GDP.

Bas van Bavel & Auke Rijpma
Utrecht University



Exercise your way to a better relationship

In addition to its health and fitness benefits, exercise can also give your relationship a boost - especially if you exercise together.

Want to spice up your relationship? Or maybe even start a new one off on the right foot? Go on an exercise date.

Exercise has a lot of health benefits and can also result in better connection and attraction among people. Those who exercise report higher satisfaction in their relationships. And this is even stronger for people who exercise with their partners.

Compared to non-exercisers, married people who exercise reported more positive marital events and fewer negative ones.

It's all about the hormones

When you exercise, your body releases hormones such as endocannabinoids and endorphins. Endocannabinoids work on the reward areas of the brain - the same system affected by marijuana - and improve mood. Endorphins are your body's natural opioids: the feel-good hormones that block out pain.

As a result of these hormones, people feel happier after exercise, even after a single session. The effect of exercise is long-lasting and is associated with more positive social engagement, even into the next day. This may be because happier

people smile more and smiling people are viewed as more attractive.

Adrenaline is also released as a result of exercise. It raises your heart rate, speeds up your breathing and increases your blood pressure. These are all similar responses to being sexually aroused.

A classic study that purposely created situations to increase adrenaline release and anxiety found a relationship between anxiety and sexual arousal. This is termed misattribution of arousal, in which arousal of any sort, such as from anxiety or exercise, can be misinterpreted as sexual arousal by the body.

Indeed, following a 15-minute exercise session, adults reported greater attraction to pictures of the opposite sex compared to those who didn't exercise, with the attraction increasing based on perceived indicators of exercise intensity.

Exercise also improves your confidence and self-image, which can make you more attractive to others. Our confidence, or self-efficacy (belief in our own abilities), tends to be tied to how much exercise we do. When it comes to self-esteem and body image (our satisfaction with your own body), these too are greater

in people who exercise, and the more frequently they exercise, the greater the self-esteem.

Couples who exercise together, stay together

The benefits may also be greater when you exercise with your partner. Some of this may be the result of spending time together and sharing an enjoyable experience. However, couples who completed novel and arousing (or exciting) activities together reported increased relationship quality compared to completion of a more mundane task, suggesting it's not just the time together that matters.

This is consistent with findings that exercising with another person is more fun compared to exercising alone.

But you don't need to know the person for exercise to have this effect. Exercising with a stranger can also result in attraction to one another.

This was tested in an experiment of cross-sex partners randomly assigned to perform a physical task either at a low or high intensity. After completion of the task, participants answered questions regarding their attractiveness to their study partner.

Those participants who performed the task at the higher intensity reported greater attraction for their study partners.

The attraction can be further enhanced when exercising in activities that require similar movements such as dancing or walking in synchronicity. In lab experiments, people who mimicked the movements of their partner felt stronger emotional connection and greater bonding to one another.

A later study found that the addition of physical exertion amplified these feelings. Compared to a group of people walking randomly, the group marching synchronously felt more connection and co-operation with one another. In another group that was marching at a faster pace, these feelings increased even more.

Exercise is also a form of play. There is no better example of this than watching kids play. Play for them consists of running around, climbing and jumping, very similar activities to most types of exercise. In many instances, such as sports, play is directly inherent in the activity. This social play provides its own reward by releasing endorphins.

Exercising with a partner adds accountability

The effects of exercising with a partner can also be better for you as well. In addition to being more fun, workouts with others tend to last longer than workouts alone, which can give you an added health boost. Exercising with a partner, friends or a team adds accountability to your routine, as indicated in a study of married couples. Those couples who joined a gym together reported more workouts at the gym and fewer dropouts over one year compared to married individuals joining on their own.

In a way, the effects of exercising together are almost self-fulfilling. It provides accountability, strengthens your relationship and provides more fun, making it more likely that you'll keep exercising and continue the cycle.

Scott Lear

Professor of Health Sciences,
Simon Fraser University

Good Deed Pays

-- D. Juggoo

Right from our childhood our parents have been telling us to do good deeds, to be good to others, to make good use of our intelligence, knowledge and strength, to help those in need and to behave properly. They said that "good deed pays".

As we grow older, some of us begin to doubt the wisdom and advice preached by our parents. Why? It's because we expect our "good deeds" done since our childhood to pay off. We adopt the mindset of a business person who looks upon any good deeds he has done to others as an investment, a bank deposit that should yield an attractive interest. I do not recall my parents telling us to expect a pay-off in return for any good deed.

In fact, our parents have continuously been telling us "neki kar dariya mein daal" which means: do good for others, but never expect anything in return. But somehow we started counting pay-offs.

Human beings are born to do some kind of good deed. We are, after all, children of the almighty God. However cruel one may be, one has a heart and in that tiny heart there is room for several waves like compassion, love, devotion, appreciation, a feeling to be liked, to be loved, to be admired. These waves create the need to do some good deeds.

Good deeds can take several forms ranging from a simple innocent action to a well-planned one. Examples are: helping one's wife in her daily chores like washing the dishes and cleaning the window panes; children helping their parents with the gardening; giving the beggar a nice hot meal. There may be so many other examples, like when a youngster gives up his seat to an

old person in a bus, or a student acknowledges his/her teacher's conscientious efforts to impart knowledge and more.

It is said "Karma kar pal kiashanakar" which means: do your Karma (action/deed) and expect nothing in return. In fact, this has been preached by our parents to us and this is what one should do. Do not expect anything from your good deed, it just pays out.

They also help shape our personality and attitude, better our self-esteem and self-confidence. If one's deed is appreciated by at least one person, one will want to repeat and do better.

In other ways, good deeds can be seen as that magical humanity part of us that makes us feel needed, appreciated and liked. Millions can be spent to get appreciation but only a single good deed can be enough. Moreover, as it has been said, good deeds should be done with intention, not for attention.



The Polar Bear

A baby polar bear while sitting with his mother asks: "Mummy, am I really a polar bear?"

His mother replies: "Why of course, dear".

Sometime later the young repeats his question again.

His mum says: "I'm a polar bear,

your dad is also one, now stop asking this stupid question."

A minute later the baby again questions his mother.

Annoyed the mother says: "But why do you keep asking the same question?"

To which the baby bear shrieks: "Because I'm feeling terribly cold."

I'm a builder

The police had arrested Fred West. They interrogate him in his cell. They ask him how many guys he has murdered. Fred says: "18."

So, the cops spend weeks digging up his house and find 25 bodies. They go back to him and

question him "You bastard, you told us you had killed 18."

Fred replies: "Yes, but I'm a builder, it was only an estimate."

A couple receive a bank statement showing a huge overdraft. They also receive their gas bill, so they decide to save money. That evening while watching TV, the guy gets up and tells his wife that he's off to the pub. Outraged, she tells her husband that they had decided to economize. The husband nods and tells his wife to put on her coat.

Surprised the wife asks: "Why? Are we going together?"

"No, I'm turning off the heating," he says.



J'ai été invité à un mariage.

Arrivé dans le couloir, il y avait deux portes. Sur l'une, il était écrit 'Amis et parents de la femme' et sur l'autre 'Amis et parents de l'homme'.

Je suis rentré dans 'Amis et parents de la femme'. Un peu plus loin, je trouve deux couloirs où c'est écrit 'Parents' et sur l'autre 'Amis'. J'ai pris le couloir des 'Amis'.

Après, je vois deux portes devant. Sur l'une, c'est écrit 'Avec Cadeaux', et l'autre 'Sans Cadeaux'.

Je prends celui 'Sans Cadeaux'. J'entre.

Arrivé au bout, dès que j'ai ouvert la porte pour rentrer dans la salle, je me suis retrouvé dehors dans la rue.

A woman was having a daytime affair with Moniu while her husband was at work. One wet and lusty day she was in bed with him when, to her horror, she heard her husband's car pull into the driveway.

"Oh my God - Hurry! Grab your clothes and jump out the window. My husband's home early!"

"I can't jump out the window. It's

raining out there!"

"If my husband catches us in here, he'll kill us both!" she replied. "He's got a hot temper and a gun, so the rain is the least of your problems!"

So our friend scoots out of bed, grabs his clothes and jumps out the window!

As he ran down the street in the pouring rain, he quickly discovered he had run right into the middle of the town's annual marathon, so he started running along beside the others, about 300 of them.

Being naked, with his clothes tucked under his arm, he tried to blend in as best he could. After a little while a small group of runners who had been watching him with some curiosity, jogged closer.

"Do you always run in the nude?" one asked.

"Oh yes!" he replied, gasping in air. "It feels so wonderfully free!"

Another runner moved alongside. "Do you always run carrying your clothes with you under your arm?"

"Oh, yes," our friend answered breathlessly. "That way I can get

dressed right at the end of the run and get in my car to go home!"

Then a third runner cast his eyes a little lower and queried, "Do you always wear a condom when you run?"

"Nope...just when it's raining."

Un père rentre du bureau plus tôt que d'habitude et découvre trois verres à Calva sur la table de la cuisine.

Il appelle son petit garçon :

- Dis-moi Mathias, il y a eu de la visite cet après-midi ?

- Oui Papa ! Un monsieur est venu et maman lui a offert à boire un petit calva !

- Mais le troisième verre, alors, il est à qui ?

Mathias devient tout rouge et dans un chuchotement il finit par dire :

- C'est moi qui l'ai bu !

- Mais enfin Mathias, ce n'est pas pour les enfants ! Et tu ne t'es pas senti mal ?

- Non, moi ça ne m'a rien fait, mais maman et le monsieur, ils ont dû se coucher !



Just a thought

Covid 19 -- An educated, very smart and clever virus

Based on government announcements, we know that:

- It won't infect people at a wedding, unless there's more than 50 people. And it also won't infect anyone at a funeral, as long as there's not more than 20 people. So not only can the virus count, it can also differentiate between a wedding and a funeral.
- This virus owns a watch and can tell the time. It does spread in public places and restaurants, but only after 9 pm and not before. So, it's safe to be out before 8 pm and not after 8 pm.
- It also only infects if you're in a group of more than 4, but not at weddings or funerals where you have 50 and 20 people, obviously.
- Masks do work, that's why people will be fined for not wearing them, but not in pubs and restaurants, because as already discovered, the virus doesn't infect in pub or restaurants until after 8 pm.
- You can also safely remove your mask at a crowded eating place because the virus is polite and won't attack when you are eating.
- But don't remove your mask before food is served, as the virus will attack if it sees you without mask and not eating.
- Cinemas, gyms, etc., are also immune from the virus 'coz the virus can't afford cinema tickets or gym memberships.
- The virus also sticks to specific postcodes and barricades, this is why some areas have stricter rules than others. And once you cross the border, the virus will not follow you.
- The virus attacks those who do not queue up for public transportation, so you see everyone practises social distancing and queue up.
- But once inside the buses and commuter trains, then you are fine to be crowded because the virus won't attack as it hates travelling in crowded public vehicles.
- But once you get off the crowded public vehicles, then you are not safe again in private vehicles and cannot travel in the same car because the virus doesn't like those who are not from the same address travelling together in private cars.
- Oh, and political gatherings/rallies are perfectly fine in large groups regardless of any rules. That's because the Ministers set the rules, and the virus obeys the rules.
- It's ok not to quarantine if the Minister says so and the virus will look for other victims. It will not touch government employees or govt. pass holders.
- Prisoners are fine to be crowded and since they are in prison, the virus doesn't like criminals, so social distancing is not important for them.
- The virus is very merciful because it doesn't attack beggars and homeless people living on streets and footpaths as it knows they cannot afford tests and hospitalisation.
- The virus will not touch you for fifteen days if you have done a PCR test and proven negative.
- The Virus takes a vacation from waving at people during festivals and returns to start a second wave.



Diabetes affects men and women differently: Everything you need to know



According to the International Diabetes Federation, currently 425 million people suffer from diabetes worldwide. We all know that diabetes can affect us in ways more than one. But the surprising thing is that the condition affects men and women differently and here is how.

This difference is majorly based on hormones, lifestyle habits, the onset of complications, seriousness towards the treatment, nutrition, stress, environment and more.

How does diabetes affect women?

While caring for others in the family, women often tend to ignore their health, which is why it's difficult for women to keep a check on their blood glucose levels.

As per studies, women suffering from diabetes are four times more likely to suffer from heart disease as compared to men. Women are also at risk of other diabetes-related complications like blindness, kidney disease and depression, say studies.

It has been found that women often experience depression while dealing with diabetes twice as compared as men. This may be because women find it as an added burden in between their responsibilities towards the family and their career.

Diabetes during pregnancy, also called gestational diabetes can make it complicated for the mother and the baby. Also, women suffering from type 1 diabetes are found to have an eating disorder that is not seen in men.

How diabetes affects men?

A majority of men remain undiagnosed as compared to women as they avoid going to doctors. Men do not like to accept the fact that they are sick.

It has been found that both type 1 and type 2 diabetes is more common in men as compared to women, which means more men suffer from diabetes as compared to women.

Diabetes has also been found to directly affect the sexual health of men and can even lead to erectile dysfunction, if not treated in time. Some other complications include:

- Diabetes can lead to an overactive bladder (frequent urge to urinate).
- Male incontinence (leaking urine)
- Urinary tract infections (UTIs)

But the good thing is that all these complications can be easily managed with proper medication and simple lifestyle changes.

Though diabetes affects both genders differently, all one has to do it to consult the doctor and do simple lifestyle modifications to manage the condition.

Life's Lessons

Karma Theory in Path to Prosperity

When Lord Krishna returned home after the battle of Mahabharata, his wife Rukmani confronted him "How could you be party to the killing of Guru Drona and Bheeshma, who were such righteous people and had a lifetime of righteousness behind them."

Initially Lord Krishna avoided her questions, but when she did not relent, he replied: "No doubt they had a lifetime of righteousness behind them, but they both had committed one single sin that destroyed all their lifetime of righteousness."

Rukmani asked: "And what was that sin?"

Lord Krishna replied: "They were both present in the court when a lady (Draupadi) was being disrobed and being elders they had the authority to stop it but they did not. This single crime is enough to destroy all righteousness of this world."

Rukmani asked: "But what about Karna? He was known for his charity. No one went empty-handed from his doorstep. Why did you have him killed?"

Lord Krishna said: "No doubt Karna was known for his charity. He never said 'No' to anyone who asked him for anything. But when Abhimanyu fell after successfully fighting an army of the greatest warriors and he lay dying, he asked for water from Karna who stood nearby. There was a puddle of clean water where Karna stood but not wanting to annoy his friend Duryodhan, Karna did not give water to a dying man. In doing so his charity of a lifetime was destroyed. Later in battle, it was the same puddle of water in which the wheel of his chariot got stuck and he was killed."

Understand that your one act of injustice can destroy your whole life of honesty.

This story is a great example of Karma Theory in Path to Prosperity.

Be Blessed.

Parenting

Simple ways to parent a preteen to battle stress

The pandemic has drastically altered relationships between people, especially between parents and their children. Parents are facing an increasing issue of communication between them and preteens as they struggle to find a middle ground. Still dependent on parents, controlled gadget behaviour and isolation from school and friends have majorly exposed preteens to stress and struggle with their unexplained emotions. Parents find it difficult to understand what is causing their children to break down. Hence, we bring to you simple steps to abide by, while comforting your child.

Understand calmly

The key to understanding your preteen



is to listen, comfort and reassure them that everything will be alright. During such anxious moments, it is the responsibility of the parents to reassure that difficult times are often greeted with a ray of sunshine next. So the distress they are feeling now, will soon go away as they learn to adapt rapidly.

Massive breaks in routine

Children have been following a sche-

dule ever since they started schooling. Experiencing a sudden, long break in their usual routine can thoroughly confuse the child. As a result, they will end up gaining weight by late midnight snacking or have sleep deprivation by binge-watching cartoons and shows. Build a proper schedule once again and strictly make them follow it.

Praise them once a while

Instead of constantly scolding or cor-

recting their mistakes, try praising them once a while. Constant criticism weighs heavily on children, especially during this gloomy time. Make sure to be flexible while you are with your child. Instead of being in a strict environment always, allow an extra scoop of ice cream or an extra half an hour of TV if the child wants it.

Be with them

This is the ideal time to have some quality family togetherness. Spend time with your child, play board games, watch TV with them or even bake one or two cakes. The child will instantly appreciate your lively presence amidst their distress. This will also help them to ease up a bit more in front of you.

Indulge in creative ideas

Keeping up with your child while they draw, sketch or even sing can be a great idea. This shows that you also share their interests, and thus, the child will start considering you as a friend. Online classes keep their time occupied, so relieving stress through creative activities can be a positive inclination towards self-expression.



Abhishek Bachchan reveals what Big B told him when he wanted to quit Bollywood

Abhishek Bachchan is receiving praises galore for his performance in the recently released film *The Big Bull*. While the actor has always been lauded for his acting, be it for *Guru*, *Raavan* or *Delhi-6*, among others, there have been many occasions when he was trolled and criticised, especially after a string of flops. The actor, in an interview, spoke about how his father, Amitabh Bachchan, has been his biggest support. Abhishek revealed that Big B once guided him when he was ready to give up showbiz, reports India Today.

In a new interview, Abhishek Bachchan revealed that he felt he wasn't made for the industry after a string of flops and continuous negative response for his acting. He revealed that he confided in his dad,

Amitabh Bachchan. It was then that Big B offered him a piece of advice that encouraged Abhishek to stay. He said, "To fail on a public platform is very difficult. There was no social media back then, but I read via media that some were abusing me while some said that I do not know acting. At one point in time, I felt it was my mistake that I came into the industry as whatsoever I was trying, it was not working. I went to my dad and said maybe I am not made for this industry."

Abhishek then went on to say what Amitabh Bachchan advised him. Big B said, "I never brought you up to be quitter. Every morning you have to wake up and fight for your place under the sun. As an actor, you are improving with every film." Abhishek revealed that Amitabh further advised him to take up every role coming his way and just concentrate on working. "Just work and trust me you will be fine," Amitabh had told Abhishek.

Abhishek said that these words gave him courage and thankfully things worked out thereafter.

What did Big B say about Abhishek's 'Big Bull'?

In the film Abhishek Bachchan plays the lead role, which is based on 90s popular stockbroker Harshad Mehta. The veteran actor took to social media to praise his son's performance. In his long note on his blog, Big B, "For a Father, it is ever a moment of great pride to see their 'progress report' prosper and do well.. I am no different from any other Father... the mention of such always brings emotion and tears... particularly when there is an exhibition of immense value.. (sic)."

The Big Bull is streaming on Disney+Hotstar. Directed by Kookie Gulati, the film also stars Ileana D'Cruz, Sohum Shah and Nikita Dutta in pivotal roles.

Kiara Advani opens up about her journey in Bollywood

Kiara Advani recently helmed a movie all on her own called *Indoo Ki Jawani* which was one of the first movies to release in theatres following the uplifting of the national lockdown. The actress had multiple plans for 2020 but they all went for a toss due to the ongoing pandemic and the global lockdowns that followed. However, things have begun opening up and Kiara was recently in Manali to shoot for *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*.

"When I came back from Chandigarh after the *Jug Jugg Jeeyo* shoot, I didn't see my parents for days as I was in self-quarantine. So, it was like, one day, I was confident, and the next day, I wasn't. It's a constant battle and we have to figure things out gradually, one day at a time. As for *Jug Jugg Jeeyo*, we had a few cases in our team, despite following all the safety rules. It was something that scared all of us and had us feeling a little paranoid about everything. However, the moment the team members recovered, they were raring to go. I've experienced what it means when people say that, 'The show must go on'," the actress told a leading daily.

The actress also opened up about the kind of career decisions she is making now and what kind of films appeal to her. "I feel that there is a long way to go before I reach where I want to be. Yes, the tag of being a star brings a certain kind of pressure, but I will always be an actor in my head. I try not to base my decisions on the position that I am at in my career. I am sure that I want to continue being the person I was when I started my career. My instinct and my passion for my work are the same," she added.



Marriage is a blissful experience. It's the union of two souls! When one decides to get married, he/she takes into consideration a lot of things and then plans their future. Celebrity couples have been shelling out major marriage and relationship goals and whenever one needs any inspiration, they look up to them. There are a few celebs who have been together for years and have survived the test of time. But there are also a few, who tied the knot with their partners only to get separated from them in a short span of time.

If you are wondering who these stars are, then read on as Times Now Digital

5 shortest marriages in Bollywood that shocked everyone

share with you 5 such marriages in Bollywood that lasted for barely few months. Take a look.

Manisha Koirala- Samrat Dahal

Bollywood actress Manisha Koirala tied the knot with Samrat Dahal in Nepal in 2010. Post their wedding, Manisha, as reported, realised that she is not happy with Samrat and suffered from fits of rage. Once, she even took to her Facebook page and wrote, "My husband is my biggest enemy." The two got divorced in 2012.

Pulkit Samrat- Shweta Rohira

After dating each other for a few years, Pulkit Samrat and Salman Khan's rakhi sister Shweta Rohira tied the knot in November 2014. While many thought that

they are an ideal couple in Bollywood, the two parted ways within 11-months of their wedding. The reason behind their separation was reportedly the actor's alleged closeness with co-star Yami Gautam.

Karan Singh Grover- Shraddha Nigam



Karan Singh Grover and Shraddha Nigam were the IT couple before they tied the knot. They got married on December 2, 2008, but within 10-months of their wedding, the two got divorced. Reportedly, Shraddha filed for divorce after Karan was linked with his female friends. Reports of

Karan dating his *Jhalak Dikhla Ja* choreographer had also made waves at that time. Post which, Karan tied the knot with actress Jennifer Winget, but even their wedding lasted for a short span and the two went their separate ways after getting divorced within 2-years of their wedding.

Mandana Karimi- Gaurav Gupta

Actress Mandana Karimi got married to businessman Gaurav Gupta on January 25, 2017, in a lavish wedding in Mumbai. But within 6-months of their wedding, Mandana filed a domestic violence case against Gaurav. It was also reported that Mandana's in-laws were not happy with her profession, and hence the two got divorced.

Kishore Kumar- Yogita Bali

In 1976, singing legend Kishore Kumar tied the knot with Yogita Bali. Yogita was Kishore's third wife, but even their marriage lasted for a short period. Two years after their wedding, the two got divorced as it was reported that Yogita had found love in Mithun Chakraborty, whom she got married to, soon after leaving Kishore Kumar.



New serial

'Bhakharwadi' - JD Majethia and Aatish Kapadia's Slice-of-Life Show

Bhakti Rathod is ruling hearts with her stellar performance in the show

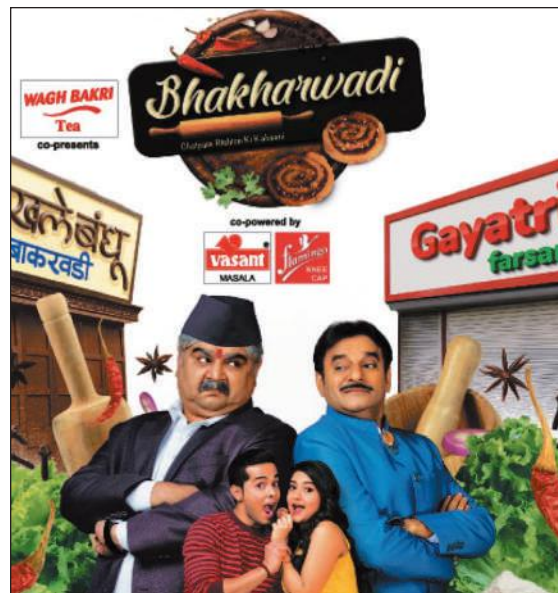
Sony SAB is back with another offering in collaboration with JD Majethia and Aatish Kapadia. Set against the backdrop of Pune, *Bhakharwadi* is a comical take on ideological differences between a Marathi and Gujarati family competing with each other in *bhakharwadi* business. This slice of life series will see versatile actors like Deven Bhojani and Paresh Ganatra coming back on television after a long time, reports indiantvinfo.com.

Talking about this new comedy, Producer JD Majethia said, "Being the makers of *Khichdi*, *Baa Bahu Aur Baby* and *Sarabhai vs Sarabhai*, the family audience always expects something quirky from us and we have attempted to meet their expectations. This is a full family entertainment which will have emotion, humour, drama, love story and many other ingredients of wholesome entertainment and it is not competing with any other show on any other channel."

Commenting on the film and its cast, Hindustan Times reports that talented actress Bhakti Rathod is currently ruling hearts with her acting talent in *Bhakharwadi*. A self-confessed dreamer and explorer, Bhakti has always been supremely confident of her abilities, and has taken risks by portraying different characters. She is currently playing Urmila Thakkar's character in hit comic serial.

The plot revolves around two neighbours residing in Pune; the Gujarati Thakkar family and the Maharashtrian Gokhale family. Both families are competitors in businesses and produce the Indian spicy snack delicacy *Bhakharwadi*, from which the show derives its name. The families have different bitter relations as they have different ideologies, and things get complicated when their children fall in love.

Urmila's character is very witty and humorous at the same time. All comic shows have a plethora of characters with individual quirks to keep the audience engaged. Similarly, Urmila's quirks are



not only famous but also being loved the most. She always mixes up characters' names and when pointed out, quips, why are you making a fuss?

Comedy is the hardest genre for any actor to portray convincingly because unless they believe, they can't make the audience believe and laugh out loud. Talking about *Bhakharwadi*, Bhakti Rathod said "The one thing I love about my character is that she is not dumb and the comedy around her character is intelligent. I have been privileged to play different roles within the show. One of my favourite transformations was Tau's character which impressed the audience impeccably. My entire look was based on dressing details of an elderly Maharashtrian man which brought genuineness to the character. I feel blessed to be part of the ensemble and talented cast. The audience loves the bouquet of actors in *Bhakharwadi*."

Bhakti always looks for challenging roles and makes her characters authentic by painstakingly getting involved in the mind of her characters, which as an actor distinguishes her and sets her apart from many of her contemporaries. Her role in *Bhakharwadi* is a perfect example of how she has improvised and created several nuances. She made her character stand out in the series as one that is loved by the audience for her amazing comic timing and body language.

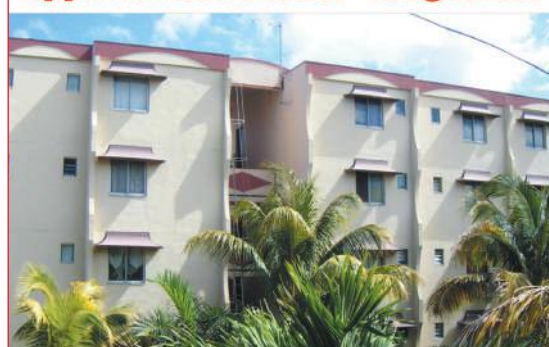
Bhakti is known for having a sharp intuition of timing. An observant and a perfectionist, she often adds her inputs to any television series or film she acts in. She believes that as an actor she needs to study and delve into other technical aspects of camera, direction, editing and writing to be called, 'A Complete Actor' a goal she would like to achieve and be remembered by.

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YOUR STARS

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 21

You'll lead a very active professional and social life, even at the risk of dropping your beloved one. It'll be up to you to advance toward others if you want to make new and faithful friends. You'll be well inspired to limit important financial transactions to the maximum.

Lucky Numbers: 14, 15, 20, 23, 29, 30

Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 19

Be on your guard, jealousy will reappear and could cause damages! The family ambiance is likely to be oppressive; don't close your eyes on the problems, or they won't take a long time to worsen; supervise your children closely, especially if they are teenagers.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 5, 13, 14, 16, 21

Aquarius: Jan 20 - Feb 18

Let yourself be relax with your beloved one. Be on your guard: not anything that glitters is gold and any proposal will have to be examined with the greatest care. Beware of high blood pressure! Try to behave with calm and optimism. Don't neglect your old parents.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 7, 9, 12, 18, 21

Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

It will be possible for you to use your personal relationships to succeed with a substantial advantage in your work or career. The family atmosphere will be electric; it should be said that the reasons for dispute with your spouse will be numerous.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 11, 15, 16, 19, 20

Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 19

Your obligations and responsibilities will be numerous, and it'll be necessary to organize yourself methodically in order to discharge them well. You'll be inclined to spend a large amount of money to satisfy a momentary whim or to make other people envious.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 5, 19, 21, 23, 27

Taurus: Apr 20 - May 20

Everything you complain about at this moment happens to everybody! Be wary of running into too big debts. Certain difficulties in your love life will be solved; you'll live unforgettable moments of harmony.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 9, 10, 24, 26, 29

Gemini: May 21 - June 20

To maintain a dazzling form, do sport in a constant and regular way. If you have an investment to make, turn yourself this time rather to real estate. You'll have problems dissipating certain misunderstandings between you and your close ones.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 12, 16, 20, 30, 31

Cancer: June 21 - July 22

You'll succeed in consolidating your financial position. You'll be tempted by extra-marital relations; don't expect any indulgence from your spouse. If you're single, you'll indulge in many thrilling adventures.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 15, 19, 20, 23, 25

Leo: July 23 - Aug 22

Avoid carrying out real-estate transactions or seeking to solve a litigious matter. Beware of your awkward movements, especially in domestic life! If the daily routine weighs you down, make your imagination work.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 11, 16, 20, 21, 30

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22

You'll have to face important expenses whereas money will be slow coming in. Take the viewpoints of the others into account, this will be the best means to avoid disappointments. Tensions or misunderstandings between lovers could arise.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 9, 12, 16, 17, 20

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22

The understanding within your couple may be jeopardized by too much stubbornness on your side. In your profession, you'll be able to neutralize the difficulties and obstacles that have obstructed you until now. If you ask for a pay raise, it will be granted to you.

Lucky Numbers: 16, 20, 22, 36, 38, 40

Scorpion: 23 Oct - 21 Nov

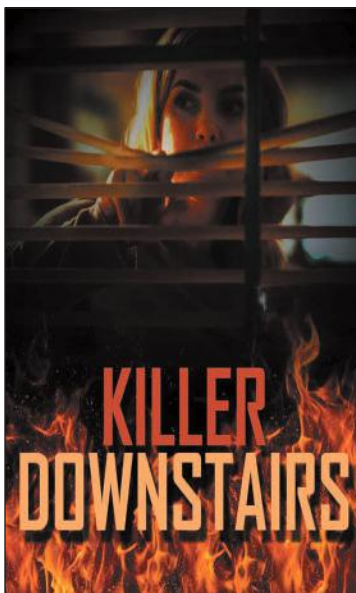
A favourable week to renew contact with people whom you've lost sight of for a long time. At work, changes will prove to be inevitable, but you'll be able to adapt yourself to them with skill. Great satisfactions concerning your family.

Lucky Numbers: 10, 19, 20, 22, 23, 30

CINE 2

Vendredi 16 Avril - 21.15

The Killer Downstairs

Avec: Cindy Busby, Marcus Rosner,
Donna Benedicto
CINE 2

Samedi 17 Avril - 21.15

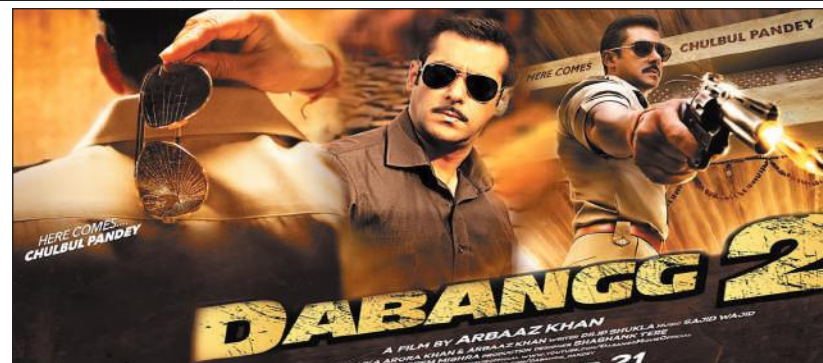
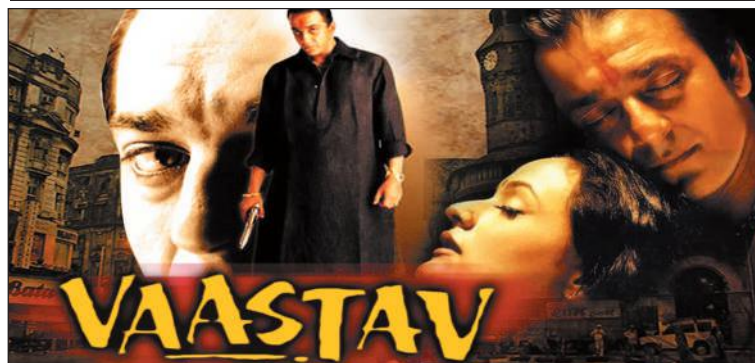
Flip That Romance

Stars: Julie Gonzalo, Tyler Hynes,
Cardi Wong
mbc 1

Dimanche 18 Avril - 21.15



vendredi 16 avril	MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
	07.00 Dessin Anime 10.35 Serial: Radio Free Roscoe 11.05 Tele: Soleil Levant 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.50 Mag: Urban Gardens 14.15 D.Anime: The Hive 14.22 D.Anime: Spirit: Au Galop... 14.45 D.Anime: Sindbad And The 7 15.06 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 15.19 D.Anime: Kung Fu Panda 15.45 Film: Avengers Confidential 17.00 Serial: Mustangs FC 17.30 Live - Covid-19 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.10 Prod: Festival Fashion Mau... 21.05 Serial: When Calls The Heart 23.00 Le Journal 23.35 Mag: Eye On SADC	10.00 Serial: Ki Jaana Mein Kaun 11.05 Serial: Zun Mureed 12.04 Film: Ishq Wala Love 13.57 DDI Magazine 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.25 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.46 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 16.07 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 16.34 Serial: Suno Chanda 16.56 Serial: Achra Ke Moti 17.16 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.37 Serial: Chhanchhan 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 DDI Magazine 19.00 Mag: Sur Mesure 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Serial: Band Khirkiyan 20.49 Local: Anjuman 21.15 Local: Urdu Programme - Noor-E-Iman	06.00 Mag: Eco India 06.26 Mag: Shift 06.38 Mag: Sur Mesure 07.51 Mag: Science Ou Fiction 08.17 Doc: 360 GEO 09.51 Doc: Istanbul Quake 10.34 Doc: Maldives 12.00 Mag: Border Crossing 12.20 Mag: Le Saviez vous? 12.28 Mag: Tomorrow Today 13.20 Doc: 360 GEO 14.54 Doc: Istanbul Quake 15.37 Doc: Maldives 16.06 Mag: Eco India 16.32 Mag: Shift 16.44 Mag: Border Crossing 17.18 Mag: Tomorrow Today 17.47 Doc: Treasures In The Sand 20.05 Mag: Check In 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.40 Doc: Wildlife Heroes	01.28 Film: Boone 02.54 Serial: Hawaii 5-0 03.34 Film: Stan & Ollie 05.08 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.01 Serial: 19-2 06.58 Film: Runaway 09.00 Serial: Chicago Fire 09.45 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.00 Serial: Chicago Med 12.00 Film: Stan & Ollie 13.34 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: Runaway 16.40 Serial: Chicago Fire 17.20 Serial: 19-2 18.05 Tele: Daneilla 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: Killjoys 21.15 Film: The Killer Downstairs Avec: Cindy Busby, Marcus Rosner	08.00 Film: R...Rajkumar 12.05 / 19.54 - Sanjivani 12.30 / 20.11 - Radha Krishna 12.44 / 20.32 - Agniphera 13.07 / 21.09 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.29 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.49 / 21.46 - Naagin S3 14.35 / 21.59 - Ikyawann 14.51 / 22.25 - Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 15.21 Film: Purani Jeans Starring: Tanuj VirwaniAditya Sealzabelle Leite 18.00 Live: Samacher 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.52 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka 19.11 Serial: Bhakharwai 19.33 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak
samedi 17 avril	06.00 D.Anime: Dragons: Par-Delà 06.35 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis... 06.46 D.Anime: Dinofroz 07.12 D.Anime: Dee Dee The Little.. 07.25 D.Anime: Wishfart 07.47 D.Anime: Oum Le Dauphin... 08.19 D.Anime: The Minimighty... 08.27 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies 12.00 Le Journal 12.30 Tele: Daniella 14.46 D.Anime: The Hive 15.00 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 15.30 Film: Albert: Les Aventures... 16.50 Serial: Nowhere Boys 17.15 Local: Info En Langue 17.30 Live - Covid-19 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Entertainment: Dance 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.10 Local: RDV Muzikal 21.10 Film: Terminator 3 23.00 Le Journal	07.00 Film: Bandini 09.13 Serial: Vir: The Robot Boy 10.00 Bade Acchelagte Hai 12.00 Serial: Nanda Saukhyia Bhare 12.29 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 12.52 Serial: High School 13.14 Annakodiyum Ainthus Pengalum 13.37 Serial: Anu Pallavi 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.21 Film: Main Tera Hero Starring: Varun Dhawan, Ileana D'Cruz, Nargis Fakhri 17.22 Mag: DDI Magazine 19.00 Mag: Sur Mesure 19.59 Serial: Vikram Betaal Ki Rahasya Gatha 20.29 Serial: Bitti Business 21.00 Film: Vaastav Starring: Sanjay Dutt, Namrata Shirodkar, Mohnish Bahl 23.21 DDI Live	06.00 Doc: Treasures In The Sand 06.55 Mag: Global 3000 07.21 Mag: Le Saviez Vous? 07.26 Mag: Euromaxx 07.55 Doc: Wildlife Heroes 08.45 Le Monde Des Couleurs 09.37 Doc: Crash 10.20 Doc: Chocolate's Heart Of... 11.02 Doc: Treasures In The Sand 11.48 Mag: Arts And Culture 12.32 Mag: Euromaxx 12.59 Le Monde Des Couleurs 13.51 Doc: Crash - Are We Ready... 14.35 Mag: Global 3000 20.05 Mag: Olivia's Garden 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.40 Doc: 360 GEO 21.32 Doc: Destinations 21.45 Doc: SOS Animaux En... 22.37 Doc: Be Afraid 00.00 Doc: Amazing Gardens 00.26 Doc: Too Good For The...	01.26 Film: The Killer Downstairs 02.56 Serial: Dynasty 2 03.36 Film: Shadow People 04.54 Tele: Esmeraldas 05.36 Serial: Killjoys 06.44 Film: Nessie & Me 08.30 Serial: Mike Hammer 09.20 Serial: The Enemy Within 10.02 Serial: 12 Monkeys 10.40 Film: A Gift Horse 12.15 Serial: Dynasty 2 13.00 Serial: French Series 15.05 Tele: Amanda 15.48 Tele: Muneca Brava 16.30 Mag: Hollywood On Set 17.00 Serial: Killjoys 17.45 Film: Chair De Poule 2 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Series: Killjoys 21.15 Film: Flip That Romance 22.46 Tele: Dulce Amor	04.05 Sanjivani 04.26 Radha Krishna 04.48 Agniphera 05.09 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 05.31 Zindagi Ki Mehek 05.55 Ikyawann 06.13 Bin Kuch Kahe 06.36 Kundali Bhagya 06.58 Ek Rishta Saajhedari Ka 07.18 Serial: Bhakharwadi 08.00 Zindagi Ki Mehek 09.47 Motu Patlu 10.01 Siddhi Vinayak 12.00 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 14.00 Sanjivani 16.00 Pavitra Rishta 18.30 Film: Kambakkht Ishq Star: Akshay Kumar, Kareena Kapoor, Aftab Shivdasani, Amrita Arora 20.42 Serial: Siya Ke Ram 21.30 Serial: Naagin
dimanche 18 avril	06.00 D.Anime: Mega Man: Fully... 06.26 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis A.. 08.11 D.Anime: The Minimighty Kid 09.30 Mag: Future Mag 10.00 Local: Zafan Nou Zil 10.30 Serial: Backstage 12.00 Le Journal 12.40 Tele: Daniella 15.05 D.Anime: Kid Lucky 15.16 D.Anime: The Twisted Whisk.. 15.30 Film: Le Chant De La Mer 17.00 Serial: Nowhere Boys 17.30 Live-Covid 19 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Local: Yeh Shaam Mastani 19.30 Le Journal 20.10 Local: Groove'In - Kafé Kiltir 21.15 Film: Auggie Stars: Larisa Oleynik, Richard Kind, Christine Donlon 23.00 Le Journal	07.00 Film: Ghar Bazaar Starring: Natasha Shalindra, Nilu Phule, Sharmila Tagore 09.08 Serial: Vir: The Moie 10.00 Semi Finals Of Ramayan 11.00 Serial: Oru Kai Osai 11.23 Serial: Santoshi Maa 12.00 Film: Hum Tumhare Hain... Starring - Salman Khan, Shahrukh Khan, Madhuri Dixit 15.00 Serial: Ek Deewana Tha 15.20 Serial: Mooga Manasulu 15.45 Eka Lagnachi Teesri Gosht 16.06 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 17.00 Serial: Mahakali 17.42 Serial: Kisna 18.30 Local: Tipa Tipa Nu Avance 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.00 Serial: Mann Mein Vishwas.. 21.00 Serial: CID 21.44 Serial: Naagin	06.00 Doc: Amazing Gardens 06.26 Doc: Too Good For The... 06.50 Doc: The World From Above 07.47 Doc: 360 GEO 08.37 Doc: Destination 10.26 Doc: Globesity 11.11 Doc: Amazing Gardens 11.38 Doc: Too Good For The... 12.30 Mag: Check In 14.55 Doc: Be Afraid 17.15 Doc: The World From Above 18.00 Mag: Tendance XXI 18.30 Local: Talk On Ramadan 20.05 Mag: Vue D'en Haut 20.30 Local Prod: News (English) 21.32 Doc: Destinations 22.36 Doc: Transylvania 23.18 Doc: Losing Sleep 00.02 Mag: Tendance XXI 00.27 Doc: Ville En Fête 00.52 Doc: Garden Party	01.28 Film: Flip That Romance 02.52 Serial: Hawaai Five-0 03.21 Film: Terminator 3 05.17 Tele: Esmeraldas 05.59 Serial: Killjoys 06.41 Film: A Gift Horse 08.30 Serial: Mike Hammer 09.19 Film: Flip That Romance 10.44 Film: Chair De Poule 2 12.15 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 13.03 Serial: French Series 15.05 Telenovela: Amanda 15.45 Tele: Muneca Brava 16.29 Mag: Close Up 17.00 Serial: Killjoys 17.45 Serial: Hawaii Five-0 18.30 Serial: Macgyver 20.05 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 20.30 Serial: The Good Doctor 21.15 Film: Gattaca 23.01 Tele: Dulce Amor	00.40 Yeh Hai Mohabbatein 02.19 Sanjivani 04.06 Pavitra Rishta 05.33 Film: Kambakkht Ishq Starring: Akshay Kumar, Kareena Kapoor, Aftab Shivdasani, Amrita Arora 08.01 Motu Patlu 08.11 Karn Sangini 09.58 Jaana Na Dil Se Door 12.00 Piya Albela 13.48 Agniphera 15.37 Bin Kuch Kahe 17.27 Punar Vivaah 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Film: Dabangg 2 Stars: Salman Khan, Sonakshi Sinha, Arbaaz Khan 20.27 Entertainment: Dance 20.46 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 22.36 Piya Albela

MBC 2
Samedi 17 Avril
- 21.00Stars: Sanjay Dutt, Namrata
Shirodkar, Mohnish Bahl
BTV
Dimanche 18 Avril
- 18.30Stars: Salman Khan, Sonakshi Sinha,
Arbaaz Khan, Vinod Khanna

Myanmar: Could defecting security forces bring down the military regime?

History tells us that the stability of a country's security forces is key to the success or failure of a popular uprising

Just over ten years ago there were hopes that Myanmar might become a fully functioning democracy. Today there are concerns that the country may disintegrate into civil war.

The widespread opposition to the military's brutal crackdown on peaceful protesters also includes possibly as many as three-quarters of the soldiers in Myanmar's army, according to an officer who has recently defected. If this is accurate, there could be large-scale defections in the near future.

But what does this mean for the future of democracy in Myanmar? And is Myanmar on the precipice of civil war?

Myanmar's security apparatus is large, consisting of an army of about 350,000-400,000, most of whom are ethnic Bamar Buddhists, another 80,000 police (who have been relied on heavily to confront protesters), as well as state intelligence service members.

Defections from the military have happened from time to time, such as after pro-democracy uprisings in 1988 and during the Saffron revolution in 2007. But over the past 60 years the military has remained a fairly cohesive unit, supported by a system of rewards and punishments and a rigorous indoctrination process.

Yet today's military in Myanmar has had more exposure to the outside world since the country opened up in 2010. While it is still very brutal, it is not an organisation that is as blindly obedient as it was in the past.

Defections from the army or other elements of the security apparatus are important, because the success of any revolution is dependent on this - though this would need to be on a wide scale. The police and the military are the only organs of the state that can use tools of violence to enforce the will of an authoritarian regime.

Why soldiers change sides

There are several factors that are important for understanding what drives military defection. Not surprisingly, military cohesion is important to preventing revolution, as a cohesive military that stays firm in its support of the regime is near impossible to overcome. The worst-case scenario for Myanmar is if some of the military defects, but not enough to overturn the regime peacefully, which could lead to a protracted civil war, as in Syria.

Typically, militaries that consist of one ethnic or sectarian group are more cohesive but considered less legitimate in the eyes of the public, and are usually less professionalised as they are not recruited on the basis of merit. Militaries that are professionalised and not ethnically recruited tend to



be more likely to side with their citizens in the face of sizeable protests.

The role of the ethnic composition of the military is illustrated by the Arab Spring. Both Egypt and Tunisia did not have ethnically recruited militaries, and in both countries the military ended up siding with protesters - although in Egypt's case this was ostensibly to oust the then president, Hosni Mubarak, and rule behind the scenes.

In contrast, both Bahrain and Syria had militaries where recruitment was based on sectarian ties to some extent. In the case of the former, foreigners were also widely recruited to decrease the chances of members of the security apparatus siding with any public protests.

Other drivers of military defection are how the military is being treated (mostly financially) and the political influence and social status that it has acquired. The popularity and legitimacy of the military are also important.

Connected to this point is how popular and widespread the protests are. Notably, the current protests in Myanmar are very different from the past - they are widely popular and involve different ethnicities, religions and occupations. Due to the large volume of people taking to the streets, important institutions - including banks - have been closed due to lack of staff, causing financial chaos.

Military personnel are also increasingly aware that the regime's use of violent tactics to maintain power, such as shooting at everyone, including children, tarnishes any legitimacy it may have had.

This all affects the calculations of military defectors. There has also been a rise in defections among police, which is usually under the military's control.

Chances of revolution or war?

But is there much chance of a successful revolution? Revolutions are often hyped as a common way of ending authoritarian regimes. But in reality, they take place infre-

quently. In the 1960s and 1970s, fewer than 5% of autocrats were ousted through public revolt, with more than half ousted through military coups. That number more than doubled in the 2010s, but revolution is no more likely to oust a dictatorship than a civil war.

Myanmar's chances of war are amplified by the presence of various ethnic armed organisations. Technically Myanmar has faced continuous conflict since the country gained independence in 1948, making it one of the longest ongoing insurgencies. A ceasefire took place in 2008, but calls for greater federalisation and increased autonomy of ethnic states have never dissipated.

Some of these ethnic groups are able to rule in de facto zones (through funds from drug trafficking) without much government interference. Though the military is well trained and experienced in combat, it does not have the capacity to fight simultaneously in the north, east, west and centre of the country.

In addition to being unpopular with its citizens, General Min Aung Hlaing's regime has not gained much international support either. Though Russia and China are major arms suppliers to Myanmar's military - the Tatmadaw - there are serious international concerns that the regime's actions are causing too much instability. At a UN Security Council briefing, an expert warned that Myanmar was "on the brink of state failure".

The crisis is taking place in a context of dire poverty, economic chaos, a raging pandemic, and where few political elites (including Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy) are truly committed to democracy. Thus, even though the increase in military defections might seem promising to protesters, Myanmar appears more likely to collapse than to democratise.

Natasha Lindstaedt

Professor, Department of Government,
University of Essex



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor

The Golden Rule

When we honor others by following the golden rule, we honor ourselves too.

All over the world, there exists a simple precept that, when followed, has the power to end conflict and banish strife. It is the Golden Rule, a key concept in many philosophies and spiritualities that admonishes us to "do unto others as we would have them do unto us." Its meaning is clear: treat others only in ways that you would want to be treated. However, the golden rule is not always easy to follow. It can be a challenge to honor others as we wish to be honored. Yet, when we do so, we bestow a gift of loving kindness on our fellow human beings. And, in honoring others, we honor ourselves.

It is as uncomplicated a tenet as one could wish for. When we live by it, harming another person becomes nearly impossible. The Golden Rule is rooted in pure empathy and does not compel us to perform any specific act. Rather, it gently guides us to never let our actions toward others be out of harmony with our own desires.

The Golden Rule asks us to be aware of the effect our words and actions may have on another person and to imagine ourselves in their place. It calls on us to ask ourselves how we would feel if what we were about to do were directed toward us. And yet this rule invites us to do more than not harm others. It suggests that we look for opportunities to behave toward others in the same ways that we would want others to act toward us.

Showing compassion, being considerate of others, caring for the less fortunate, and giving generously are what can result when you follow the Golden Rule.

Adhering to the Golden Rule whenever possible can have a positive effect on the world around you because kindness begets kindness. In doing so, you generate a flow of positive energy that enfolds everyone you encounter in peace, goodwill, and harmony.