

# MAURITIUS TIMES

• "The talent of success is nothing more than doing what you can do, well". -- Henry W. Longfellow

## 'POCA states clearly that the Director of ICAC should not be under the direction or control of any other person...

If he chooses to be subservient, it is not only his personal problem...'

By LEX See Page 4-5

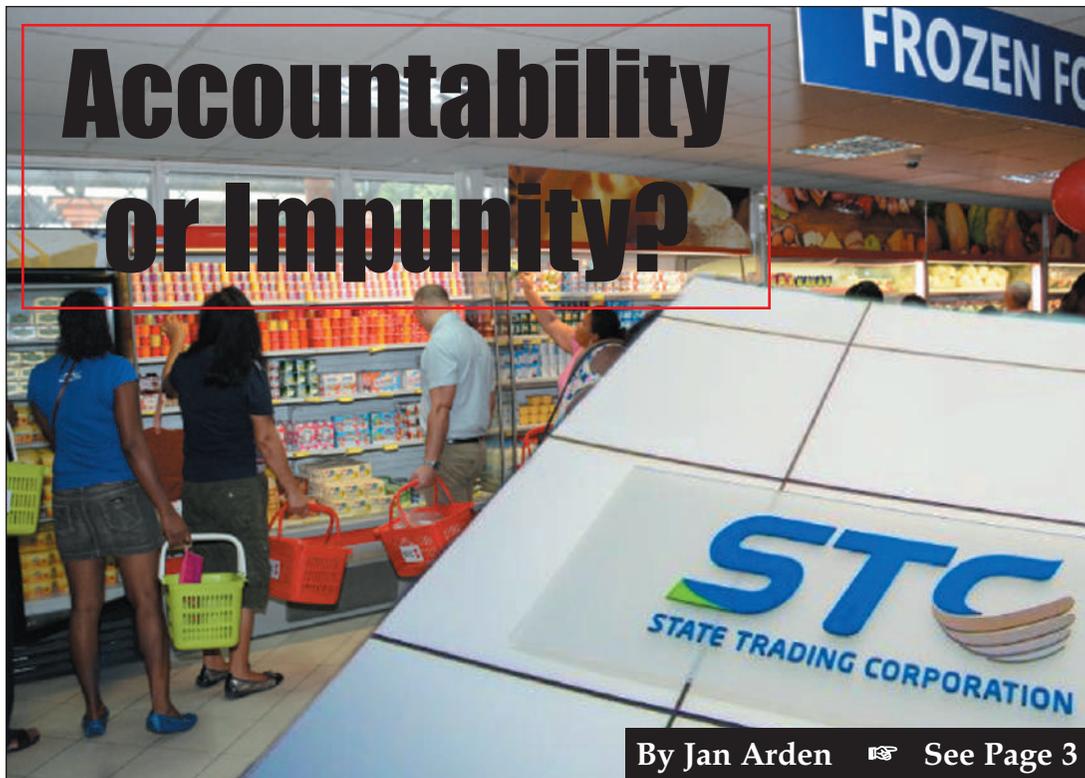


## Global Minimum Corporate Tax Rate



By Anil Madan See Page 5

## Accountability or Impunity?



By Jan Arden See Page 3

## Five lessons on bringing truth back to politics

from Britain's first female philosophy professor

By Peter West, Durham University See Page 2

# Economic Security, Society's Security

In last Friday's issue of this paper we published an interview of Lord Meghnad Desai who requires no formal introduction to the Mauritian public, and who was Chairman of the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd (MIC) - a creation of the Bank of Mauritius set up in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic as its economic and social impacts began to be felt. A sum of Rs 80 billion, taken from the foreign reserves of the BOM was put at its disposal to be allocated as bailouts to various sectors of industry upon application from the respective organizations. The MIC is mandated to play an oversight role, to make sure that the moneys disbursed are channelled towards and utilized in the manner in which they were intended to.

We will not go into the details here, but suffice it to say that there has been a lot of criticisms of the MIC from its very inception, and this has been mostly negative: it should be something completely separate from the BOM, government must give details in Parliament about the sums disbursed, the criteria for disbursement and the conditions attached must be in the public domain – and this latter assumed greater pitch given the veil over procurement transactions; drawing from the BOM was an unorthodox and unacceptable practice; the country's financial situation would be rendered even more precarious than what it already was, and so on and so forth. Further, this step went against the IMF's recommendation.

Almost with a wave of the hand, Lord Desai dismisses the IMF's concern. In his interview, as is to be expected, he defends the setting-up of the MIC and the measures it has taken under his chairmanship to bail out organizations, and goes into some detail to explain that all procedures have been followed and that as Chairman he is satisfied that things have been done appropriately and properly.

From an ideological point of view – the need to bail out – he is right in the sense that practically all big economies have adopted the same route. However, he himself admits that he was conducting committee meetings online, away from Mauritius. It is open to question therefore whether he had all the information at his disposal, especially the nitty-gritty. Have these moneys found their way into dividends, for example, or have employees been laid off whereas all were supposed to remain in their jobs?

Sameer Sharma whom we have interviewed in this paper, and who has also penned articles for

MT, in an article in *l'express* takes a position which counters the rosy picture that Lord Desai depicted of the MIC. The article puts forth several arguments of a very technical nature, but the sum total is that things could have been done differently, so as to preserve financial soundness at the same time as meeting the objectives of supporting companies and saving livelihoods. Time will tell, but the debate is definitely not over.

\* \* \*

A related concern, however, is the security of civil society from a law and order point of view. All manner of crimes and misdemeanours have kept on happening irrespective of the pandemic, and a recent incident that has been brought to our attention flags the issue of security directly. A few nights ago, a young man was driving back home around 11.30 p.m. along the Floreal road towards Curepipe where he lives. He noticed that a car was trailing him, and when he took a turn in the direction of the Police Station the car went into the other direction.

His father was advised to take him along and make a statement at the Police Station, which was duly done the next morning. There, an officer told him in as many words that the security situation in Mauritius is currently very bad, because there are a lot of unemployed people, especially youth. This is the kind of activity they are involved in to get easy money, and do not hesitate to use all means however violent. He added that he himself was similarly trailed a few weeks ago but the Police were able to track, identify and arrest the culprits.

What was more worrying was his averment that the situation is likely to get worse, and this in light of the fact that sooner or later the government will have to terminate the wage assistance scheme which cannot go on indefinitely. So while on the one the generous packages to big organizations have kept them and their employees 'afloat', we are faced with a major concerning issue about those who were on wage assistance and also those usually involved in criminal activities. Not only must all citizens be doubly vigilant as they start to frequent public places such as restaurants, they have to be more careful about their security especially at night. This caution also applies to personnel from the essential and emergency services who have to move about at night. It is hoped that, aware of the risks and dangers that will be on the upswing, the police will gear itself to face the changing situation with the firmness that it deserves.

## The Conversation

# Five lessons on bringing truth back to politics

from Britain's first female philosophy professor



Susan Stebbing's 1939 work is just as relevant today as it was then. National Portrait Gallery, London via Creative Commons, CC. Pic -- NC

It is often said that we live in a "post-truth" era. It is unclear at times what role, if any, truth plays in politics. During the pandemic, world leaders dismissed the advice of experts and acted against empirical data.

Democracies have felt precarious – in the US, during the Trump presidency, and in countries like Brazil, Hungary and Poland currently. Integral to such corrosion of democracy (as George Orwell made clear in his novel '1984') is the distortion of truth and facts in favour of a particular agenda.

In times of crisis, it can be helpful to look backwards at how our forebears have coped with similar situations in history.

Now, I suggest we look to an under-appreciated philosopher writing just before the outbreak of the second world war, as fascism and communism threatened the stability of European democracy.

Susan Stebbing was the first woman in the UK to be appointed to a full professorship in philosophy (at Bedford College in 1933). She came through the ranks of academic philosophy alongside some of Britain's best-known philosophers, including Bertrand Russell.

Like most women in philosophy's history, Stebbing has been overlooked in favour of her male counterparts. She is not a household name, even though she published prolifically and served as president of the UK's two largest philosophical societies, as well as Humanists UK. Only recently has her work gained its deserved attention among philosophers.

Stebbing's 1939 book 'Thinking to Some Purpose' taught a general audience to use the tools of philosophical logic to engage in healthy public discourse. She calls for people to "think clearly," unclouded by "unconscious bias and unrecognised ignorance".

Peter West,

Teaching Fellow in Early Modern Philosophy, Durham University

\* Cont. on page 12

## Mauritius Times

Founder/Editor: Beekrumsing Ramlallah - Aug 1954-Sept 2000

Editor-in-chief: M. Ramlallah / Senior Editor: Dr RN Gopee

This epaper has been produced with the assistance of

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# Accountability or Impunity?

Jan Arden

There are many legitimate policy and management reasons for a Ministry to devolve some specialised aspects within its overall ambit to detached structures, parastatal bodies or semi-independent authorities in the generic sense. Semi-independent, we say, because chairmen and most CEOs are handpicked by polity to ensure they toe the line, while the vast majority of board members, as *ex-officio* representatives of a variety of ministries, are always attuned to the desiderata of their patrons.

of potential fraud, corruption and influence peddling at STC, Health and Commerce, during the pandemic, have thought it fit and proper to submit their resignations and are still holding on to their perks and privileges.

Were this to be a generalized phenomenon across all sectors, some might be entitled to consider that our version of the Westminster model is closer to a banana republic. Fortunately, in the absence of essential information provided locally regarding any high-profile inquiries, if any, our main investigative and regulatory institutions (namely ICAC, FSC, FIU & BoM) will have the opportunity to present factual evidence of their cre-

debt, we have the leeway to do away with the recommendations of such a key partner.

In the context where transparency and accountability are rather threadbare, his reassurances that everything has been done methodically and the documentation would be available at the BoM's convenience or at some future Audit, leaves us reassured but rather perplexed. He notes that the MIC he chairs has been undoubtedly working overtime to satisfy its objectives, and that some 60 applications have so far been approved for disbursement.

Surely our MPs and indeed the population at large would be happier if the Chairman of such vast expertise and international standing would acknowledge the necessity that even a periodic dashboard of key relevant information about the use being made by MIC of our national reserves be made public or at least submitted to our august National Assembly.

\* \* \*

## Runaway inflation & price subsidy

A side-effect of the forced ministerial exit of Yogida Sawmynaden is the absence of any full-time minister at a key function, that of Commerce and Consumer Protection, at a particularly volatile social juncture when a formidable array of Ministry of Finance taxation measures (cigarettes, alcohol, sugar derivatives, fuel oil, CSG, solidarity tax...) and complicit BoM policies with our national reserves have ended up devaluing our currency by 20% or more over the past two years. Couple this with increases in international commodity prices and air or maritime freight and the population, including the pensioners and more vulnerable, has to bear the brunt of a disastrous upward spiral of everyday prices including pharmaceuticals and finds itself with increasingly threadbare pockets.

With the threat of a unified opposition and consumer NGOs galvanised and threatening to take to the streets in a Tunisian style "Degage, Ben Ali!", there was some urgency to the stop-gap measures announced by the PM personally this Friday, leaving the Ministers of Finance and Commerce sidelined.

Some seven commodities deemed essential to the ordinary Mauritian are being subsidized at Rs 500m from the public purse to importers in the hope to revert to January prices. The Contribution Sociale Généralisée (CSG), object of controversies and judicial challenge by the private sector since the mighty pen of the Finance Minister wrapped up our National Pensions Fund system in favour of that taxation scheme, we understand, is terminated and will be the subject of consultations before a proper legislation is introduced before Parliament. Whether those stop-gap measures are sufficient to assuage the population and derail the common front against runaway inflation and rupee devaluation remains to be seen over the coming weeks.

\* \* \*

## Whither Human Resource Development?

At a juncture when the Ministry of Education should have been usefully consulting with all stakeholders regarding the resumption of classroom training and the difficulties encountered by parents, teachers and children, it is bringing up to Parliament these days The Institute of Technical Education and Technology (ITET) Bill.

• Cont. on page 12



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Without any checks and balances, with potential whistle-blowers running heavy risks, with some of the more sensitive such agencies shielded from the minimum of transparency that parliamentary questions or the annual Audit could afford, Mauritius Inc should consider whether this model can be seriously flawed and no longer adapted for widespread demands from society for greater transparency, responsibility and accountability as they are primarily handling public funds.

Several high-profile cases have hit the headlines in recent years, if only the ghastly affairs of St Louis Gate at the CEB, which is still under investigation locally, and the no less obnoxious scandals at the STC. Beyond the firing of the former Minister of Commerce Yogida Sawmynaden and his chosen CEO last year, the population remains in the dark whether any investigations have been concluded and any firm disciplinary actions taken at either the State Trading Corporation or its parent Ministry.

This confers a debilitating sense of impunity for administrative high staffers, political appointees and boards that may have abysmally abdicated their primary duty of responsible management of public funds in favour of toeing the line. We have become accustomed that none of them, in the midst of harrowing revelations

dible investigative or regulatory actions and outcomes at the upcoming money-laundering and financial scams audit to be conducted by a FATF/ESAMLG team. The pointed reminder that the Audit team will also be hearing prominent civil society voices and concerns should warn authorities that the report to the October FATF plenary may not be in the bag yet.

\* \* \*

## MIC: Transparency and accountability

In a forthright interview granted to *Mauritius Times* and widely mentioned in the press, Lord Desai, the venerable and esteemed Economics Professor, has provided key background information to the actions of the Ministry of Finance/BoM, with particular regard to the setting up of the MIC for channeling public reserves onto selected companies in an “unconventional” approach to maintain jobs and livelihoods.

His peremptory dismissal of FMI economists as being too corralled by orthodoxy in general and more particularly during the pandemic, echoing what other economists may well have said over the years, seem to have struck a receptive chord at the Central Bank and Min of Finance. Some may wonder whether, as an insular state with practically no resources and a massive

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or political allegiance. They did their job within the meaning of the rule of law without being subservient to the political regime in place. Today the same can be said of the current Director of Public Prosecutions who did not hesitate and acting in total independence to prosecute the former Prime Minister in two major cases.

Can it be said that the prosecution of Sir Gaetan Duval was decided independently? Can we say that the arrests that

the government would be dragged to court. Thankfully this did not happen.

En passant, it would be worthwhile to recall the scrapping of the defunct Economic Crime Office headed by Ms Indira Manrakhan which put a stop to an investigation of a former minister. That was the weighted majority of the MSM-MMM government. This example shows how dangerous it is to give a weighted majority to political parties or alliances.

**“The POCA states clearly that the Director of ICAC should not be under the direction or control of any other person or authority. If he chooses to be subservient, it is not only his personal problem; it is however a matter of serious concern for our image of integrity internationally...”**

**F**rom the provisions of the 1968 Constitution and the legal and constitutional protections offered to holders of key offices, to today's far from salubrious situation, much water has flown under the bridge. Of significance were the 1982 amendments which made all appointments by the PM or any Minister an ejectable office-holder after general elections and the fortunately foiled attempt in 2017 to bring the DPP under the control of politically appointed commissars. There are still several nominally independent posts with Constitutional protection, and where that independence and credibility are only a reflection of the office-holder's moral fibre.

LEX shares his views below.

## LEX

\* We often come across some local commentators taking issue with the constitutional amendments voted by the MMM-PSM government that would have weakened the protection and the security of tenure that the 1968 Constitution provided to some important public sector posts. Which posts were targeted, and what does the law now provide in terms of security of tenure?

There are a number of holders of constitutional posts who enjoy security of tenure. They are the Judges, the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Director of Audit, Members of the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal, and the Commissioner of Police. The removal of these holders

require an investigation by a special tribunal appointed by the President of the Republic.

\* We understand that besides the Best Loser system and the skewed electoral boundaries that were put in place by the British colonial authorities, some say at the behest of certain political leaders of that time, the protection provided to the constitutional posts (like the Commissioner of Police, DPP, etc) were also an additional guarantee of protection for the minorities to counter against excesses, if any, of majority rule. Has this served the country well?

In the not too far past no Director of Public Prosecutions, no Commissioner of Police would harass any member or any citizen irrespective of community; religion

followed the 2014 general elections were done by a Commissioner of Police acting independently? The answer is obvious.

To answer the question, the system worked well until the indiscriminate arrests of 2014 and thereafter.

\* A reputed constitutionalist would have in the past advised a former Prime Minister that unopposed rule without any obstruction whatsoever could only be ensured through the effective weakening of the Judiciary and the Office of the DPP. Sound advice if we go by the attempts in recent years to establish the Prosecution Commission, right?

Many politicians not only in dictatorships but in so-called vibrant democracies believe that there should be no counter power to their political power. They therefore try to annihilate the lawful Opposition and either directly or by subtle methods they attempt to undermine the independence of holders of posts like the Commissioner of Police, the Director of Public Prosecutions and even the Judiciary.

The attempt to control the Office of Director Prosecutions was to place that office under a politically nominated commission whose members would have been at the beck and call of the government. Those close to the government would have been totally immune to prosecutions and those not in the good books of

\* The context is different today. But could it be said that the removal of the constitutional protection provided to some of the top posts in the civil service could or has weakened the effective application of the separation of powers as envisaged in the 1968 Constitution?

Top posts like judges and some others are still protected. What has changed is the situation of those who are appointed by the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, or any other Minister or on his advice or after consultation with him, or with his approval. Such holder of the office may be required to vacate the office at any time after a general election held after the appointment.

The inclusion of this provision was done by the MMM-PSM government of 1982 in order to get rid of then existing holders and to place their own people. And no compensation shall be payable to those holders for loss of office by reason of the termination of his appointment, other than such compensation as may be prescribed under the laws relating to employment, and they shall not be entitled to any other damages or compensation under any other law whatsoever.

\* Cont. on page 5

# 'When holders of constitutional posts are subject to short-term contracts that are renewed periodically, this creates a perception that a favour is being bestowed on them'

\* Cont. from page 4

\* The Commissioner of Police (CP) enjoyed security of tenure thanks to a "minimum four-year term" that the 1968 Constitution (Article 113) provided. That was amended by the MMM-PSM government in 1982, and the "minimum" term limit changed to a "maximum" four-year term, which henceforth made it possible for the Prime Minister to intervene in the appointment of the CP as regards the number of years he would want him in office or through an extension of his contract. Can the CP effectively run the police force without being subjected to the "direction or control of any other person or authority"?

When holders of constitutional posts are subject to short-term contracts that are renewed periodically, this creates a perception that a favour is being bestowed on them and they have to return that favour to their well-wishers. Then the words "without being subjected to the direction or control of any other person or authority" lose their importance and value. Whereas if the holder gets a one-term contract that is not renewable, the perception of independence is more credible.

\* Just like the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Electoral Commissioner, the Director of Audit, etc., also enjoy some form of constitutional protection, and not subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority. Is that correct?

Yes, and they cannot be removed except for misbehaviour. In such a case the President of the Republic has to appoint a tribunal to investigate. Once he is in presence of the findings, he will take whatever action is appropriate.

\* But what if the DPP, the Director of Audit, etc., are not provided with the information - usually provided by the police and the different government administrative bodies/institutions respectively - to be able to fulfil their constitutional duties?

“When holders of constitutional posts are subject to short-term contracts that are renewed periodically, this creates a perception that a favour is being bestowed on them and they have to return that favour to their well-wishers. Then the words “without being subjected to the direction or control of any other person or authority” lose their importance and value...”

Well there is not much they can do. We have seen how the police bungled the Kistnen case not only at the level of the investigation but also during the judicial inquiry. Even when the DPP asked the police to complete the investigation following the filing of a private prosecution they took their time.

As for the Director of Audit he was denied access to documents relating to public finances on the flimsy pretext that they were with ICAC. Yet section 110 of the Constitution clearly states the following:

'The public accounts of Mauritius and of all courts of law and all authorities and officers of the Government shall be audited and reported on by the Director of Audit and for that purpose the Director of Audit or any person authorised



“When questions are asked in Parliament about the workings of some institutions, answers are not given for a number of reasons or the Opposition is shut down or expelled. What oversight can we have? As for the Parliamentary Committee on ICAC, it is a toothless bulldog. It is as if it exists under the present regime to protect the Director of ICAC...”

by him in that behalf shall have access to all books, records, reports and other documents relating to those accounts.'

\* What about the Director General of the ICAC? Does the law provide some form of protection to ensure that he would be able to resist any pressure from anybody and not be subjected, like the DPP, to the "direction or control of any other person or authority"?

The POCA states clearly that the Director of ICAC should not be under the direction or control of any other person or authority. If he chooses to be subservient, it is not only his personal problem; it is however a matter of serious concern for our image of integrity internationally.

\* Is it absolutely important that the holders of the constitutional posts be not subjected to any form of control? Shouldn't they not be made answerable to at least some form of oversight - parliamentary or otherwise - rather than through onerous and time-consuming judicial reviews?

Agreed and some thought must be given to that idea. However, when questions are asked in Parliament about the workings of some institutions, answers are not given for a number of reasons or the Opposition is shut down or expelled. What oversight can we have? As for the Parliamentary Committee on ICAC, it is a toothless bulldog. It is as if it exists under the present regime to protect the Director of ICAC.

\* On 7 May 2020, the EU included Mauritius on its revised list of high-risk countries that have 'strategic deficiencies in their anti-money laundering and counter terrorist financing frameworks'. Does this mean that those placed in positions of authority/supervision are not doing their job competently or are perceived to be amenable to the direction or control of some other person or authority?

The answer lies in what R. Laxman wrote in this very

paper on 4 February 2019:

'It is one thing to have any number of institutions in a country – but which hardly perform the role for which they have been designed. It is quite another thing when institutions function efficiently to fulfill their mandate fearlessly. It is not that under-performing countries where the rule of law prevails do not have a plethora of similar institutions that exist in well-reputed countries. They have them all. But those institutions fail to live up to their mission either because political powers that be have scorched them or because their top brass fall short of the mental and moral fibre required to do what should be done. Efficiently functioning institutions are what differentiate countries that achieve and those that do not.'

“The attempt to control the Office of Director Prosecutions was to place that office under a politically nominated commission whose members would have been at the beck and call of the government. Those close to the government would have been totally immune to prosecutions and those not in the good books of the government would be dragged to court. Thankfully this did not happen...”

\* At the end of the day, the constitutional amendments of 1982 have not been struck out from our statute book by subsequent governments when they commanded the sufficient parliamentary majority to be able to do so. Does this mean politicians are all the same finally: they must be in control...?

Some are more authoritarian than others. Have we ever seen the erosion of public confidence and the loss of reputation of our institutions internationally under any other government than the present one?

# Global Minimum Corporate Tax Rate

*It is one thing to declare that there will be a global minimum corporate tax rate and quite another actually to collect any tax regardless of the rate*



Anil Madan

**I**n my previous article, I discussed the efforts of the G7 nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to agree on and establish a worldwide minimum corporate tax rate of 15%. This week, let us take a look at some of the forces and numbers at work as nations seek additional revenues to support their

budgets.

In April this year, the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP), a nonpartisan tax policy organization, reported that at least 55 of the largest corporations in the US paid no federal corporate income taxes in their most recent fiscal year that included some portion of the calendar year 2020. ITEP characterized this as a decades-long trend of corporate tax avoidance by the biggest corporations.

jects in Europe on a per capita basis in 2019. Across the European Union, there is a wide range in rates of corporate taxation from a low of 9% in Hungary to Portugal's 31.5%.

France, among other countries, has tried to levy taxes on digital services. The approach is to try to tax the local sales of behemoths such as Facebook, Amazon, and Google. At stake is taxation of the billions in advertising revenue as well as profits from the sale of data.

Even if the OECD's member countries are able to work out the specifics of how to implement the new minimum corporate tax rate, as far as the US is concerned, one additional step will be for the US Congress to pass legislation necessary to enact the OECD's framework into US laws. Here, there is a clash between the approach of the Republicans and Democrats.

President Trump touted his 2017 accomplishment of reducing the corporate tax rate in the US and Republican legislators continue to dismiss any suggestion that taxes on businesses should be increased. On the other hand, President Biden wants to increase the corporate tax rate to fund spending on infrastructure and other needs. The

collectively have paid \$8.5 billion. Instead, they received \$3.5 billion in tax rebates. The taxes not paid, plus the rebates, amount to \$12 billion of potential revenue lost. But again, it bears emphasis that if companies are receiving tax rebates, it is because the law allows such a result.

For decades, the biggest and most profitable US corporations have found ways to shelter their profits from federal income taxation. ITEP reports have documented what it calls tax avoidance since the early years of the Reagan administration's tax cuts. ITEP asserts that from 2008 through 2015 federal tax avoidance remained rampant. Trump's 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) held out the promise of addressing tax "loopholes" that led to such results. But, claims ITEP, it is crystal clear that the TCJA failed to address loopholes that enable tax dodging -- and may have made it worse.

ITEP provides examples of the tax outcomes for some of the companies it accuses of avoiding income taxes in 2020. Food conglomerate Archer Daniels Midland had \$438 million of US pretax income last year but received a federal tax rebate of \$164 million. FEDEX paid no federal tax on \$1.2 billion of pretax income and received a rebate of \$230 million. Nike, the shoe and sporting goods company reported almost \$2.9 billion in pretax income but collected a \$109 million tax rebate. Dish Network paid no income taxes on \$2.5 billion of pretax earnings. Sales force paid no US income taxes on \$2.6 billion pretax earnings.

It is by no means clear that either the OECD accord or the G7 agreement will lead to rules that define "profit" or "income" in such a way that a tax will in fact become due and payable. The complexities involved can be profound. Take the case of Apple, Inc. and its corporate domicile in Ireland.

Back in 2016, the EU Commission ruled that Apple's tax dealings with Ireland violated European law because Apple got undue tax benefits in Ireland in breach of European state aid laws. The Commission ordered Apple to pay \$14.5 billion in back taxes. Both Apple and Ireland denied that any laws had been violated. The EU Commission had made similar rulings against other American companies such as Amazon, Starbucks, and McDonald's.

Both Apple (the company) and Ireland (the country) rejected the Commission's accusations. Ireland asserted that its tax setup was entirely legal, and Apple said it paid tax at Ireland's rate of 12.5% on all the income it generated in that country.

Note that "all of the income it generated in that country" tells us nothing about how revenue was booked and how much income was attributed to Irish operations.

## Investment and job creation in Europe

Apple and Ireland said they would appeal the ruling. "Apple follows the law and pays all of the taxes we owe wherever we operate," the company said. "We will appeal, and we are confident the decision will be overturned." It added: "The European Commission has launched an effort to rewrite Apple's history in Europe, ignore Ireland's tax laws and upend the international tax system in the process. The Commission's case is not about how much Apple pays in taxes; it's about which government collects the money. It will have a profound and harmful effect on investment and job creation in Europe."

\* Cont. on page 7



**“Food conglomerate Archer Daniels Midland had \$438 million of US pretax income last year but received a federal tax rebate of \$164 million. FEDEX paid no federal tax on \$1.2 billion of pretax income and received a rebate of \$230 million. Nike, the shoe and sporting goods company reported almost \$2.9 billion in pretax income but collected a \$109 million tax rebate. Dish Network paid no income taxes on \$2.5 billion of pretax earnings. Sales force paid no US income taxes on \$2.6 billion pretax earnings...”**

But, whereas ITEP calls this "tax avoidance," it is not necessarily illegal. In most cases, business enterprises, particularly the Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) are simply taking advantage of perfectly legal tax and accounting rules that allow them to defer or reduce taxes.

Indeed, underscoring that the strategies employed are perfectly legal is the fact that some nations actively seek to lure businesses to set up in their jurisdictions with the promise of low corporate tax rates.

Ireland, with a corporate tax rate of 12.5% -- among the lowest across industrialized nations -- hosts the European headquarters of Google, Facebook and Apple, among other companies. The consulting firm Ernst & Young, reported that Ireland won the most foreign investment pro-

Democrats are unlikely to have enough support to pass a bill increasing corporate taxes. The current US corporate tax rate is 21% so don't expect legislation to reduce it to 15%. However, US legislation committing to a **minimum** rate of 15% is not inconsistent with an extant domestic rate of 21%.

## Tax avoidance and tax rebates

ITEP's report on what it calls corporate tax avoidance is based on an analysis of annual financial reports filed by the nation's largest publicly traded US-based corporations in their most recent fiscal year. The analysis revealed that the companies not paying any corporate taxes represent many different industry sectors and collectively enjoyed almost \$40.5 billion in US pretax income in 2020. If these 55 companies had paid taxes at the US rate of 21%, they would

# Global Minimum Corporate Tax Rate

\* Cont. from page 6

The EU's fine against Apple was its highest-ever fine for alleged corporate tax avoidance, topping the bill of \$335 million (€300 million) for Swedish engineering company Atlas Copco to pay Belgian tax authorities earlier the same year. An EU executive said in a statement that the fine could be reduced if other countries sought to get more tax out of Apple themselves, thus corroborating Apple's comment that the action was really about which country collects the taxes.

The European Commission found that Ireland allowed Apple to dodge international tax rules by letting the company shelter tens of billions of dollars from tax collectors in return for maintaining jobs in the region. About a quarter of Apple's European staffers, around 5,500 people, are based in the Irish city of Cork, where it is the largest private sector employer.

A preliminary report by the EU in late 2014 had already found, based on early investigations, that tax deals that Ireland granted Apple in 1991 and 2007 were illegal. Then in 2016, the European Commission stated that it has "concluded that Ireland granted undue tax benefits of up to €13 billion to Apple," adding: "This is illegal under EU state aid rules, because it allowed Apple to pay substantially less tax than other businesses. Ireland must now recover the illegal aid."

Apple CEO Tim Cook, responding to the claims that Apple engages in a "sophisticated scheme" to avoid paying taxes on \$74 billion of revenue held overseas, in 2015 told *60 Minutes*: "That is total political crap. There is no truth behind it. Apple pays every tax dollar we owe." Again, note that saying: "Apple pays every tax dollar we owe" merely tells us about Apple's compliance with Irish law, not whether it is taking advantage of Irish law to shift profits earned in other countries to Ireland and thus avoiding taxes that would have been payable in such countries.

Cook also sent a message to the larger Apple community in Europe stating: "Thirty-six years ago, long before introducing iPhone, iPod or even the Mac, Steve Jobs established Apple's first operations in Europe. At the time, the company knew that in order to serve customers in Europe, it would need a base there. So, in October 1980, Apple opened a factory in Cork, Ireland with 60 employees."

He continued: "We have operated continuously in Cork ever since, even through periods of uncertainty about our own business, and today we employ nearly 6,000 people across Ireland. The vast majority are still in Cork — including some of the very first employees — now performing a wide variety of functions as part of Apple's global footprint. Countless multinational companies followed Apple by investing in Cork, and today the local economy is stronger than ever. The success which has propelled Apple's growth in Cork comes from innovative products that delight our customers. It has helped create and sustain more than 1.5 million jobs across Europe — jobs at Apple, jobs for hundreds of thousands of creative app developers who thrive on the App Store, and jobs with manufacturers and other suppliers."

Cook then went on the offensive, writing: "The European Commission has launched an effort to rewrite Apple's history in Europe, ignore Ireland's tax laws and upend the international tax system in the process. The opinion issued on Aug. 30 alleges that Ireland gave Apple a special deal on our taxes. This claim has no basis in fact or in law. We never asked for, nor did we receive, any special deals. We now find ourselves in the unusual position of being ordered to retroactively pay additional taxes to a go-



Pic - ICTD

**“In April this year, the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP), a nonpartisan tax policy organization, reported that at least 55 of the largest corporations in the US paid no federal corporate income taxes in their most recent fiscal year that included some portion of the calendar year 2020. ITEP characterized this as a decades-long trend of corporate tax avoidance by the biggest corporations. But, whereas ITEP calls this “tax avoidance,” it is not necessarily illegal. In most cases, business enterprises... are simply taking advantage of perfectly legal tax and accounting rules that allow them to defer or reduce taxes...”**

vernment that says we don't owe them any more than we've already paid. The Commission's move is unprecedented, and it has serious, wide-reaching implications. It is effectively proposing to replace Irish tax laws with a view of what the Commission thinks the law should have been."

Cook also explained: "In Apple's case, nearly all of our research and development takes place in California, so the vast majority of our profits are taxed in the United States. European companies doing business in the US are taxed according to the same principle. But the Commission is now calling to retroactively change those rules."

## A sovereignty issue

One might have thought that the US would applaud efforts to make US corporations accountable for taxes evaded by relocating to tax havens. Not so in this case. The US government was not pleased with the EU's decision. The US has previously accused EU regulators of unfairly targeting US companies in its campaign to generate more corporate tax revenue. So, there is more at play here and that has to do with who controls the playing field.

Getting back to the EU's proposed fine, at least for now, Apple and Ireland won. In July 2020, an EU high court ruled in favour of Apple and Ireland. The court stated: "The Commission did not succeed in showing to the requisite legal standard that there was an advantage."

Nor is the new tax scheme welcomed by all countries that have prospered from their status as tax havens. Bermuda, for example, although a signatory to the OECD accord, has voiced vociferous objections to it.

In an interview with the *Financial Times*, Curtis Dickinson, Bermuda's finance minister, said he was loath to introduce new levies citing the island's struggle to recover from both the Covid-19 pandemic and the financial crisis of 2008.

"Bermuda has a right to determine for itself what it thinks

is an appropriate tax system for its jurisdiction," he said.

"We have a system in place for 200 years. It's not perfect. It does require some adjustment. But we would like to do that on our own and not have someone tell us to change our system to fit some global initiative... I would say it's a sovereignty issue."

Dickinson added that taxing corporate profits would make Bermuda more bureaucratic and add complexity for business. Bermuda seeks to preserve its role as a global hub for reinsurance, using its tax-free system to lure insurance companies. In lieu of corporate taxes, Bermuda raises revenue through taxes on payrolls and property, customs duties and fees charged to international businesses.

What seems inevitable is that the corporate minimum tax will become a de facto maximum tax. What is also inevitable is that it will take years to structure a workable system that has a uniform and sensible methodology for deciding how much profit that corporations earn is actually subject to being taxed. This means updated rules for treating amortization and depreciation, capital investments, and definitions of what items can properly be deducted from revenues as legitimate expenses.

Another looming problem is that a larger and larger share of e-commerce is being handled by smaller companies that are not as easily susceptible to tax capture.

The long and short of it is that it is one thing to declare that there will be a global minimum corporate tax rate and quite another actually to collect any tax regardless of the rate.

The European Commission has appealed the court ruling in favour of Apple and Ireland alleging errors of law. It is anticipated that a ruling should issue by early 2023.

Cheerz...  
Bwana

## European consumer organisation lodged complaint against WhatsApp

The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) on Monday lodged a complaint against Facebook-owned WhatsApp messenger over the company's latest privacy policy updates. In January WhatsApp introduced a new privacy policy, according to which, some data of the users could be shared with its parent company Facebook Inc and other firms owned by the group. However, WhatsApp also said that the changes would not affect private conversations of the users.

Many users globally criticised the new policies of the company and rival messaging applications such as Telegram and Signal messenger also saw their user base expanding due to many switching from WhatsApp.

Criticising this policy change, the BEUC along with eight of its members, lodged a complaint with the European Commission and the European network of consumer authorities aimed at WhatsApp for "multiple breaches of consumer rights." The complaint focussed on how the company has left no choice for its users but to



BEUC said the data sharing between WhatsApp and Facebook has increased incrementally with various amendments to the privacy policy of the messaging platform. Pic - ietp

accept the changes. "The content of these notifications, their nature, timing and recurrence put an undue pressure on users and impair their freedom of choice. As such, they are a breach of the EU Directive on Unfair Commercial Practices," the BEUC's complaint said, reports Srivatsan K C of Hindustan Times.

In an accompanying report with the complaint, titled 'What's Up with WhatsApp - an assessment of WhatsApp's practices in the light of EU consumer protection rule,' the BEUC said the data sharing between WhatsApp and Facebook has increased incrementally with various amendments to the privacy policy of the messaging platform by the parent company.

Meanwhile, Facebook, in its response, said that the BEUC has misunderstood the purpose of the terms of service. "The update does not expand our ability to share data with Facebook, and does not impact the privacy of your messages with friends or family, wherever they are in the world," it further said.

## In first video from space, Richard Branson has a message for children



The Virgin Galactic SpaceShipTwo space plane Unity at Spaceport America, near Truth and Consequences, New Mexico on July 11, 2021 before travel to the cosmos. Pic - AFP

Richard Branson is currently the first person in the world to go to space in his own ship Virgin Galactic's VSS Unity.

Sharing experiences of his first ever trip to space and sending out a message to children, Richard Branson wrote on Twitter that as a child he dreamt of looking up to the stars and now as an adult, he was in a spaceship "looking down to our beautiful Earth."

"To the next generation of dreamers: if we can do this, just imagine what you can do," Branson further wrote. A just over 30-second-long video attached with the Tweet showed how happy and mesmerised Branson and his colleagues were as they experienced zero gravity for the first time, reports Hindustan Times.

Apart from the 71-year-old Branson,

the space journey on Sunday included five of his colleagues from Virgin, two of whom are pilots. The shuttle breached the United States recognised boundary of space, and reached an altitude of 86 kilometres. All aboard the VSS Unity also experienced weightlessness for a few minutes.

Underlining the fact that space is for all of humanity, Branson announced in a blog post that Virgin Atlantic's will team up with Omaze to facilitate space flights for all and those interested could fill in their details on Omaze.com/space.

"Every charitable donation goes to support Space For Humanity and you'll be entered into the Omaze sweepstake for the chance to win two seats aboard one of the first commercial Virgin Galactic space flights," Branson said further.

## New variants, vaccination pace could threaten economic recovery, warns G20



Union minister for finance & corporate affairs Nirmala Sitharaman virtually participates in a G20 meeting. Pic - ANI

The G20 nations on Saturday said that the new variants of coronavirus and different paces of vaccination around the world could threaten economic recovery. In the final communique after meeting in Venice, the finance ministers and central bankers of G20 nations, however, underlined that the global outlook has further improved since their meeting in April, mainly due to the rollout of vaccines and continued policy support.

US treasury secretary Janet Yellen said the G20 meetings were further confirmation that the world is ready to end the global race to the bottom on corporate taxation, adding that there's broad consensus on a global minimum tax of at least 15%. Citing the backing of 131 nations on the global minimum tax, Yellen said that the world should now move quickly to finalise the deal, reports Kunal Gaurav of Hindustan Times.

"In addition to the issue of a global minimum tax, the G20 made good

progress on a range of issues, including climate change and the effort to help lower income nations with their vaccine rollout so the world can finally neutralize the threat of Covid-19," she added.

Indian Union minister for finance & corporate affairs Nirmala Sitharaman participated virtually in the meeting under the Italian Presidency. The two-day meeting on July 9-10 saw discussions on a wide range of issues including global economic risks and health challenges, policies for recovery from the Covid-19, international taxation, sustainable finance and financial sector issues.

According to the Indian Ministry of Finance, Sitharaman shared the Indian experience of integrating technology with inclusive service delivery during the pandemic. She also shared her insights on the Italian Presidency's ongoing work on a roadmap to guide sustainable finance, the Ministry of finance said in a statement.

\* Contd on page 9

# Nepal SC orders to appoint Sher Bahadur Deuba as PM within next 28 hours

As many as 30 petitions, including one by the opposition alliance led by the Nepali Congress, were filed against the dissolution of the House by the President.

A five-member Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court on Monday also ordered appointment of Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba as prime minister within two days.

The bench led by Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher Rana had concluded hearings in the case last week. The bench comprised four other senior most justices -- Dipak Kumar Karki, Mira Khadka, Ishwar Prasad Khatiwada and Dr Ananda Mohan Bhattarai -- at the apex court.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari had dissolved the 275-member lower house for the second time in five months on May 22 at the recommendation of Prime Minister Oli and announced snap elections on November 12 and



A five-member Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court on Monday also ordered appointment of Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba as prime minister within two days.

Pic - www.scriling.com

November 19, reports PTI.

Last week, the Election Commission had announced the schedule for mid-term elections despite the uncertainty over polls.

As many as 30 petitions, including one by the opposition alliance led by the Nepali Congress, were filed against the dissolution of the House by the President.

Nepal plunged into a political crisis on December 20 last year after President Bhandari dissolved the House and announced fresh elections on April 30 and May 10 at the recommendation of Prime Minister Oli, amidst a tussle for power within the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP).

On February 23, the apex court reinstated the dissolved House of Representatives, in a setback to embattled Prime Minister Oli who was preparing for snap polls.

## Leaders of North Korea, China vow to strengthen ties



North Korea has been expected to seek greater support from China, its major ally and aid benefactor. Pic - AP

The North Korean and Chinese leaders expressed their desire Sunday to further strengthen their ties as they exchanged messages marking the 60th anniversary of their countries' defense treaty.

In a message to Chinese President Xi Jinping, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said it is "the fixed stand" of his government to "ceaselessly develop the friendly and cooperative relations" between the countries, the official Korean Central News Agency said.

Xi said in his message that "he is willing to provide greater happiness to the two countries ... by strengthening the strategic communication with (Kim) to properly control the direction of the advance of the China-(North Korea) relations and by steadily leading the relations of friendship and cooperation between the two countries to a new stage," KCNA said.

North Korea has been expected to seek greater support from China, its major ally and aid benefactor, as it grapples with economic hardship exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic and crippling US-led sanctions over its nuclear weapons

program. China, for its part, sees preventing a North Korean collapse as crucial to its security interests and would need to boost ties with North Korea and other traditional allies amid fierce rivalry with the United States, reports AP.

Under the 1961 treaty, North Korea and China are committed to offering one another immediate military and other aid in the event of an attack.

North Korea-China ties go back to the 1930s, when Kim Il Sung, the grandfather of Kim Jong Un, led Korean guerrillas as they fought alongside Chinese soldiers against Japanese colonizers in northeastern China. The two countries established diplomatic relations in 1949, one year before North Korea launched a surprise attack on South Korea and started a three-year war that killed hundreds of thousands of people.

China fought alongside North Korea during the 1950-53 Korean War, while US-led UN forces supported South Korea. About 28,500 US soldiers are still stationed in South Korea to deter potential aggression from North Korea. China doesn't deploy troops in North Korea.

## Saudi sets upper limit for subsidy cuts with gasoline price ceiling



The change will alleviate the pain of subsidy reforms introduced by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and is a nod to complaints from Saudis about the rising cost of living under his economic diversification program. Pic - Reuters

Saudi Arabia's government set an upper limit for the domestic cost of gasoline, a rare move to soften the impact of higher living costs on citizens.

The decision, which represents a step back from unpopular subsidy cuts, comes just days after the International Monetary Fund urged officials to reduce subsidies even further.

The ceiling for gasoline prices will be set at June's levels, or 2.18 riyals (58 cents) per liter of 91 octane, as of Saturday, according to a statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency. The decision was made to "decrease the burden of living costs on citizens and residents" and "support local economic activity," a state committee for amending energy prices said.

The change will alleviate the pain of subsidy reforms introduced by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and is a nod to complaints from Saudis about the rising cost of living under his economic diversification program. Inflation in the world's largest oil exporter stood at 5.7% in May -- the latest figure available -- driven by higher food and vehicle prices as well as a move to triple the value-added tax last year. Even as the IMF urged Saudi

Arabia to "press ahead" with subsidy cuts in a statement on Thursday, it simultaneously called for "enhancing the social safety net" to help low-income households, reports Bloomberg.

Saudi officials have closely monitored discontent as Prince Mohammed's plan was rolled out over the past five years, and have occasionally reversed or eased changes that drew vocal grumbling as the kingdom's social contract is reshaped. Because Saudi Arabia's July gasoline prices had already risen above June's levels, the price cap immediately brought the cost of 91 octane gasoline down by about 3 cents per liter.

Local gasoline prices are among the lowest in the world -- around two-thirds that in the U.S. But they've drawn particular ire as they've risen since 2015, when the subsidy reform was introduced to promote more efficient consumption and help plug a budget deficit brought on by plunging oil prices. Today, some Saudis believe that increasing oil prices should actually lead to lower costs at the gas pump because of the boost they provide to government finances.

From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

4th Year No 167

## MAURITIUS TIMES

Friday 18 October 1957

• To be great, one must be positive, and gain strength through foes. -- Donn Piatt



Somduth Bhuckory

# Vote For Roy!

**O**n the 22nd March 1956, Guy Rozemont died. The Labour Party had to choose a fit candidate to replace him in the Legislative Council. Its choice fell on Dr Dupre. In our issue

of the 19th May 1956 recommending Dr Dupre we wrote: "It is but proper that out of deference for the memory of Guy Rozemont this seat should go to a member of the Labour Party. It would be a really sad day if it is otherwise... To send Dr Dupre would only mean that the public approves of the principles and leadership of the Party... We are now in the very throes of Constitutional talks. The strength of the Labour Party will once more be demonstrated at the polls...". We told our friends and readers that by voting the Labour candidate they would reject at the polls the P.R. which the officials and nominees had recently passed in the Legislative Council.

On the 21st of May 1956, the electors of Port Louis went to the polls. Dr Dupre was elected by a fairly big majority. The victory of Labour was not only a victory of progress over reaction but also the people's rejection of P.R.

Shortly after came the municipal elections. On the 2nd September 1956, Labour fought the election on the P.R. issue. It scored a tremendous victory. It snatched eleven seats out of sixteen.

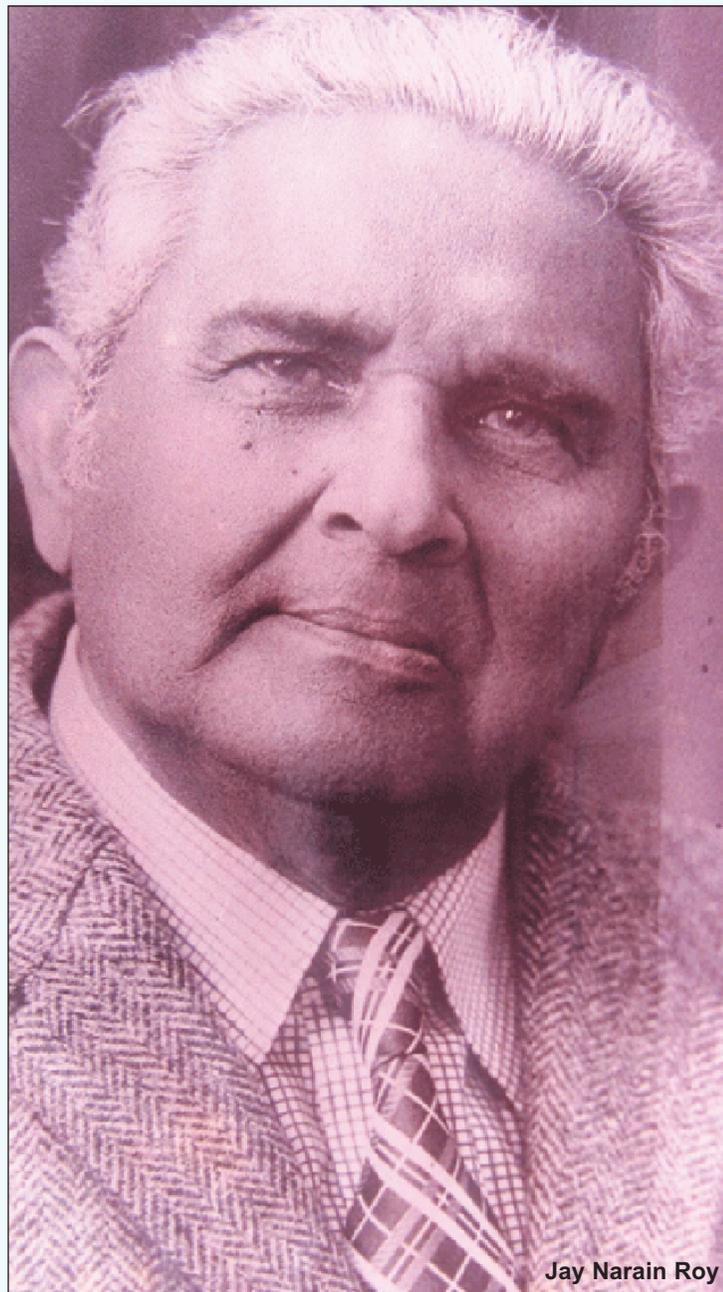
On the 19th November, the electors of Moka-Flacq went to the polls to elect a candidate to replace the late Hon Ackbar Gujadhur. Labour presented Mr R. Balgobin once more. The election was fought on a Constitutional issue.

Recommending Balgobin we wrote: "The *Mauritius Times* recommends unreservedly Mr Balgobin to the electors of Moka-Flacq. Vote for Mr Balgobin and you will vote for Adult Suffrage without P.R., for Responsible Government and social progress. The opponents of Labour have had to bite the dust twice in Port Louis recently. Let Labour carry the day once more. Give the enemies of the proletariat a lasting lesson by voting for Balgobin."

Balgobin scored a big victory. Labourites were delighted to see that he won the seat which he lost in 1953.

\* \* \*

On the 11th Aug 1957, Hon Venkatasamy suddenly died. Speculations ran high as to who would be designated by Labour to fill the seat left vacant by him. To the satisfaction of all Labourites, Jay Narain Roy was selected. There could have been no better choice. We



Jay Narain Roy

have to repeat exactly what we said when Dupre was chosen. Out of deference for the memory of Venkatasamy, this seat should go to a member of the Labour Party. It would be really a sad day if it is otherwise. It will be remembered that at the last general elections Roy fell a victim of communalism. Knowing full well that he was stabbed in the back he exhorted his friends to vote the Labour list. While he helped to elect Philippe Rozemont, he himself fell down. But people had not to wait for long to be disappointed with Rozemont. In spite of the treacherous blow Roy received, he continued as usual to serve his former constituents. He kept on with his social, literary and political activities with the same zeal as when he was an MLC. He indeed took his defeat with magnanimity. Those who did not vote Roy regretted their blunder bitterly.

Does Roy deserve the confidence of the electors of Grand Port-Savanne? Has he done anything worthwhile during his term in Council? Does he possess the neces-

sary qualifications? These are the few questions which must have inevitably cropped up in the mind of the electors.

About Roy's qualifications, we have little doubt. A prolific writer, he has been writing for the last twenty years with mastery on a host of subjects; and as a speaker, there is hardly any Sunday when Roy is not out addressing a gathering somewhere. As a Labour Inspector, he came in close contact with labourers and artisans. He acquainted himself with their weal and woes and with their everyday problems. The experience he acquired at the Labour Department proved much beneficial when he became Secretary of the Amalgamated Labourers' Union and later on M.L.C.

Being himself a planter he knows the difficulties which the planters have to face. He can speak with authority on sugar cane, tobacco and tea plantation.

\* \* \*

The greatest contribution of Roy as an M.L.C. was a motion which he tabled on the 17th June, 1949. In that motion Roy asked that in view of the hardships of tenants of land, the Government should enact a tenancy legislation to regulate the relations between tenants and landlords. The motion was debated during three sittings. Ultimately it was decided that Government should appoint a fully representative committee to prepare an agricultural legislation to regulate the relation between landlords and tenants.

A Committee was set up. It drafted a bill but it was not given force of law. Had Roy been elected in 1953 he would have pressed the Government to bring forward that legislation. The defeat of Roy deprived the people of an important piece of legislation and land tenants in particular have been left unprotected from the exploitation of landlords.

Thousands of planters, tenants and landless people are eager to see Roy in Council renewing his agitation for a land legislation. Socialists all over the country wish to see him back among his colleague in Council helping them in their struggle to alleviate the sufferings of the masses.

The platform of Labour in this election is not Universal Suffrage or against P.R. Labour is fighting to maintain itself in office. It is fighting to implement its quinquennial plan as enunciated in the Speech from the Throne.

The country is undergoing a period of transition – a period of doubt, of uncertainty and of hesitation. A subject race which remained in opposition for two centuries has all of a sudden been saddled with power, though we admit that the power conferred has got checks. Many people find it hard to reconcile this with the present situation. No wonder then that the reactionaries are exploiting it to its full.

Every indication shows that Roy will come out from this ordeal with flying colours. In spite of all the brainwashing, indoctrination, appeal to communal sentiments, we are confident that the electors will not allow themselves to be fooled once more.

We have been assured that the big majority of the coloured population is voting Labour. But what will the Muslims do? Our Muslim friends have been used as footstools by the reactionaries. Let them in this election show their independence. Let them show to the country that they are a community with a character.

# Slain Haitian president faced calls for resignation, mass protests before killing

*The assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse in his home outside Port-au-Prince ended a presidency that had plunged the already troubled nation deeper into crisis*

**H**aitian President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated in the early morning hours of July 7, 2021, in a brazen attack on his private home outside Port-au-Prince, the capital.

Moïse's wife was also shot in the assault that killed her husband. The assailants have not been identified, and Haiti's prime minister reports he is running the country.

Moïse's assassination ended a four-and-a-half-year presidency that plunged the already troubled nation deeper into crisis.

## A political novice

Jovenel Moïse, 53, was born in 1968, meaning that he grew up under the Duvalier dictatorship in Haiti. Like most Haitians today, he lived through turbulent times - not only dictators but also coups and widespread violence, including political assassinations.

Moïse, a businessman turned president, made his way into politics using political connections that stemmed from the business world. Initially he invested in automobile-related businesses, primarily in the north of Haiti, where he was born. Eventually, he ultimately landed in the agricultural sector - a big piece of the economy in Haiti, where many people farm.

In 2014, Moïse's agricultural finance company Agritrans launched an organic banana plantation, in part with state loans. Its creation displaced hundreds of peasant farmers, who received minimal compensation.

But the business brought Moïse prominence. It was as a famed banana exporter that Moïse met then-Haitian President Michel Martelly in 2014. Though he had no political experience, Moïse became Martelly's hand-picked successor in Haiti's next election.

Martelly was deeply unpopular by the end of his term, but party leaders assumed that Moïse would be more welcomed given his relatable background in farming.

## A divisive and unstable presidency

Instead, Moïse barely eked out a win in a November 2016 election that fewer than 12% of Haitians voted in. His meager electoral victory came after two years of delayed votes and confirmed electoral fraud by Martelly's government.

In 2017, Moïse's first year in office, the Haitian Senate issued a report accusing him of embezzling at least US\$700,000 of public money from an infrastructure development fund called PetroCaribe to his banana business.

Protesters flooded into the streets



The late Haitian President Jovenel Moïse in November 2019. Jovenel at a podium with men sitting behind him. Pic - maktoobmedia.com.

crying "Kot Kòb Petwo Karibe a?" - "where is the PetroCaribe money?"

Lacking the trust of the Haitian people, Moïse relied on hard power to remain in office.

He created a kind of police state in Haiti, reviving the national army two decades after it was disbanded and creating a domestic intelligence agency with surveillance powers.

Since early last year, Moïse had been ruling by decree. He effectively shuttered the Haitian legislature by refusing to hold parliamentary elections scheduled for January 2020 and summarily dismissed all of the country's elected mayors in July 2020, when their terms expired.

Sustained protests - over gas shortages and blackouts, fiscal austerity that has caused rapid inflation and deteriorating living conditions, and gang attacks that have killed several hundred, among other issues - were a hallmark of Moïse's tenure.

Existing street protests exploded in early 2021 after Moïse refused to hold a presidential election and step down when his four-year term ended in February. Instead, he claimed his term would end one year later, in February 2022, because Haiti's 2016 election was postponed.

Before his death, Moïse planned to change the Haitian Constitution to strengthen the powers of the presidency and prolong his administration.

## Memories of a dictatorship

For months before his assassination, Haitian protesters had been demanding Moïse's resignation.

For many Haitians, Moïse's undemocratic power grabs recall the 30-year, U.S.-backed dictatorships of François Duvalier, known as "Papa Doc," and his son, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier.

Both Papa Doc and Baby Doc relied on murdering and brutalizing Haitians to remain in power, with the unspoken approval of Western political interests in Haiti. Working with the Duvaliers, U.S. manufacturers in Haiti ensured that their investments were profitable by pushing for wages to remain low and working conditions to remain poor.

When mounting Haitian protests ended the regime in 1986, Baby Doc fled the country. The Duvaliers had enriched themselves, but Haiti was left in economic collapse and social ruin.

The 1987 Haitian Constitution that Moïse sought to change was written soon after to ensure that Haiti would never slide back into dictatorship.

Beyond Moïse's use of state violence to suppress opposition, anti-Moïse protesters before his killing pointed out another similarity with the Duvalier era: the United States' support.

In March, the U.S. State Department announced that it supported Moïse's decision to remain in office until 2022, to give the crisis-stricken country time to "elect their leaders and restore Haiti's democratic institutions."

That stance - which echoes that of Western-dominated international organizations that hold substantial sway in Haiti, such as the Organization of American States - sustained what was left of Moïse's legitimacy to remain president.

Haitians unhappy with continued American support for their embattled president held numerous demonstrations outside the U.S. embassy in Port-au-Prince, while Haitian Americans in the U.S. protested outside the Haitian Embassy in Washington, D.C.

From its invasion and military occupation of Haiti from 1915 to 1934 to its support of the Duvalier regime, the U.S. has played a major role in destabilizing Haiti.

Ever since the devastating Haitian earthquake of 2010, international organizations like the United Nations and non-profits like the American Red Cross have also had an outside presence in the country.

Now, the unpopular president that foreign powers supported in hopes of achieving some measure of political stability in Haiti has been killed.

**Tamanisha John**

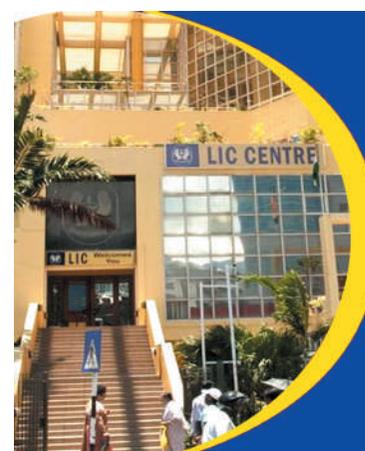
Ph.D. Candidate of International Relations, Florida International University

## Notice for Permission for Land Use

Take notice that I **Mr Hammaade Sooklall** will apply to the District Council of Grand Port for a Building and Land Use permit for a proposed **Greenhouse for Growing of vegetables n.e.c** at Branch Road New Grove.

Any person feeling aggrieved by the proposal may lodge an objection in writing to the above-named Council within 15 days from the date of this publication.

Date: 13 July 2021



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# Accountability or Impunity?

• Cont. from page 3

Although the priorities of the pandemic conundrum in schools and education, with several units being closed for infection, should not debar from useful and necessary legislative work. What does this proposed Institute bring to advance the technical and vocational scene, address the skills shortages or mismatch and the absence of coherent policies in that domain?

We recall that the sector already comprised the Mauritius Polytechnics Ltd and the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) as public providers of technical and vocational education pathways for post-secondary students from about the age of 16 onwards. We also recall that the quality assurance function and the associated national trade certification system was overseen by the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA), with tertiary institutions being controlled by the quality assurance agency, which emerged from the now defunct Tertiary Education Commission.

We also note that in Parliament the Minister gave rousing commendations to both the newly created

Polytechnics and the MITD (“...as for vocational training centres, they are under the MITD. They will get trained. The MITD is doing a wonderful job.”). There were no eyebrows raised either when the Skills Development Authority Bill was enacted (2019) and the Minister

“Several high-profile cases have hit the headlines in recent years, if only the ghastly affairs of St Louis Gate at the CEB, which is still under investigation locally, and the no less obnoxious scandals at the STC. Beyond the firing of the former Minister of Commerce Yogida Sawmynaden and his chosen CEO last year, the population remains in the dark whether any investigations have been concluded and any firm disciplinary actions taken at either the State Trading Corporation or its parent Ministry...”

referred to that Authority in equally glowing terms - “...the Skills Development Authority (SDA) will soon be set up. And the Skills Development Authority will have strategic policy objectives: the coordination and planning of the TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) sector, the identification of skills, sustainable financing mechanisms for TVET, regulation of skills development sector, improvement of partnership and coordination, amongst its stakeholders, that is, HRDC, MQA and the MITD.”

With the somewhat perplexing and unexpected separation of the Human Resource Development functions from Education, the ITET Bill now proposes nothing less than carving up the MITD into two halves, one under the purview of Education with six centers and the residual lot retained by Human Resource Development. The SDA one assumes is a now a lame duck, its functions being taken over effectively by ITET, creating another player in the somewhat congested field of post-secondary education and training. Is this new development conducive to greater coordination, planning and resource optimization in these days when greater fiscal responsibility rather than the mushrooming of Agencies and Institutions would be expected? We trust Ministers will clarify in the National Assembly.

Jan Arden

• Cont. from page 2

Stebbing’s lessons on thinking clearly and taking politispeak with a grain of salt can help us navigate our fraught political climate today. Here are just a few.

## Question your most cherished beliefs

Stebbing claims that all of us have long-held beliefs we are not willing to doubt. She explains that in such cases we confuse the “passionateness” of our feelings for a “guarantee of truth”.

Stebbing argues it is important to question all our beliefs, especially in politics. Once we’ve identified our most cherished beliefs, we might ask ourselves: could I reasonably accept that now? If the answer is no, they ought to be weeded out.

## Avoid the fallacy of ‘special pleading’

Stebbing thinks people are generally pretty poor at putting themselves in one another’s shoes. We make claims about how others should behave, without considering whether we would do the same in a given situation.

She writes: “A safeguard against this mistake is to change *you* into *I*.” For instance, before condemning one state for selling arms to another, I ought to consider whether my own state does the same – and whether I am happy with it. Only then can I be sure I am not acting hypocritically.

## Be wary of emotive language

Stebbing distinguishes between two types of language: “scientific” and “emotive”. Scientific language is used to make objective claims. Emotive language is intended to evoke strong feelings. Often, in politics (and journalism), emotive language is disguised as scientific language — giving words “a significance in addition to

## Five lessons on bringing truth back to politics from Britain’s first female philosophy professor

their objective meaning”. Think of the way “woke” is used by right-wing commentators. It isn’t so much describing someone, as getting you to feel a certain way about them.

Paying attention to whether politicians are trying to appeal to our emotions can help us tell a convincing argument from a cheap, emotional dog whistle. We can then decide whether to allow ourselves to be persuaded by our feelings or to turn to more objective forms of evidence.

## Look out for empty slogans

Stebbing emphasises that politicians make good use of slogans: short statements that stick in the minds of voters.

Slogans are not inherently harmful, she thinks – they are often rooted in truth and can reveal meaningful assertions. However, some slogans seem meaningful but wilt under scrutiny. If a slogan is empty, it has no role to play in rational argument and should be discarded.

Consider, for example, Theresa May’s claim that “Brexit Means Brexit”. While this initially sounded like a firm commitment to follow through with the referendum result, over time it became clear that no one really knew what “Brexit” was going to mean at all.

## Think freely

Stebbing is part of a long line of

philosophers, dating back to the 18th-century Enlightenment, known as “free-thinkers”. Free-thinkers believe that we should only form judgments based on our own independent reason, as opposed to church teachings, newspaper propaganda or party politics.

If your judgment tells you that something doesn’t sound right, pursue that thought. We all have an innate “capacity to follow an argument” that we should put to good use. Rather than voting the way we have always voted or taking the advice of others, we should weigh up the available evidence and form our own conclusions.

Stebbing’s work is finally attracting the attention of other philosophers, but it was never her intention to be read only by her peers. She wanted to bring philosophy out of the ivory towers of Cambridge and Oxford and into the hands of ordinary people. She thought politicians underestimated the public’s ability to follow an argument, and that instead of trying to provide proof of their policies, rely on making themselves appear likeable and painting their opponents as frauds.

Stebbing thought there was something we can do about this state of affairs – we can bring truth back into politics by learning to think clearly and holding politicians to greater scrutiny. Indeed, many of our current leaders would do well to study her lessons.



With claims of ‘fake news’ and ‘alternative facts’, former US President Donald Trump is often seen as the face of the post-truth political era. Rod Millington/EPA-EFE128,000 COVID deaths. Pic - Andy Rain/EPA

**Peter West,**  
Teaching Fellow in Early Modern  
Philosophy, Durham University



## 'You are a disrespectful pig!'

A wife came home early and found her husband in their bedroom making love to a very attractive young woman. She was very upset.

"You are a disrespectful pig!" she cried. "How dare you do this to me - a faithful wife, the mother of your children! I'm leaving you. I want a divorce, now!"

The husband calmly replied, "Hang on just a minute, love. At least let me tell you what happened."

"Fine, go ahead," the wife sobbed, "but they will be the last words you say to me!"

The husband began:

"Well, as I was getting into the car at work to drive home, this young lady here asked me for a lift. She looked so distressed, helpless and defenceless that I took pity on her and let her into the car. She was very thin, not well dressed and very dirty and told me that she hadn't eaten for three days. Out of compassion, I brought her home and warmed up the pizza I made for you last night that you wouldn't eat because you're afraid you'll put on weight. The poor thing ate it, ravenously.

"She was dirty. I suggested she have a shower. While showering, I noticed her clothes were filthy and thread-

bare. I threw them away. I gave her the designer jeans that you've had for a few years, but don't wear because you say they are too tight. I gave her underwear, your anniversary present from me, which you don't wear because you said I don't have good taste.

"I gave her the sexy blouse my sister gave you for Christmas, that you don't wear just to annoy her. I also donated those boots you bought at an expensive boutique but don't wear because someone at work has the same pair."

The husband paused, took a quick breath and continued:

"She was so grateful for my understanding and help that as I walked her to the door, she turned to me with tears in her eyes and said, "Please sir... Do you have anything else that your wife doesn't use?"

\* \* \*

## An Atheist in the Woods

An atheist was walking through the woods.

"What majestic trees! What powerful rivers! What beautiful animals!" he said to himself.

Suddenly, he heard a rustling in the bushes behind him. He turned to look... and saw a 7-foot grizzly bear charge towards him.

He ran as fast as he could along the path. He looked over his shoulder and saw that the bear was closing on him... He looked over his shoulder again, and the bear was even closer... and then... he tripped and fell.

Rolling over to pick himself up, he found the bear was right on top of him... reaching towards him with its left paw and raising the right paw to strike.



At that instant the atheist cried out, "Oh my God!"

Time stopped... The bear froze... The forest was silent...

A bright light shone upon the man, and a voice came out of the sky: "You deny my existence for all these years, you teach others I don't exist and even credit creation to cosmic accident. Do you expect me to help you out of this predicament? Am I to count you as a believer?"

The atheist looked directly into the light. "It would be hypocritical of me to suddenly ask You to treat me as a Christian now, but perhaps you could make the bear a Christian?"

... a pause...

"Very well," said the voice.

The light went out. The sounds of the forest resumed. And the bear dropped his right arm, brought both paws together, bowed his head and spoke: "Lord, bless this food, which I am about to receive."

## Life Stories

# A Bit of Physics Humour

Sir Ernest Rutherford, President of the Royal Academy, and recipient of the Nobel Prize in Physics, related the following story:

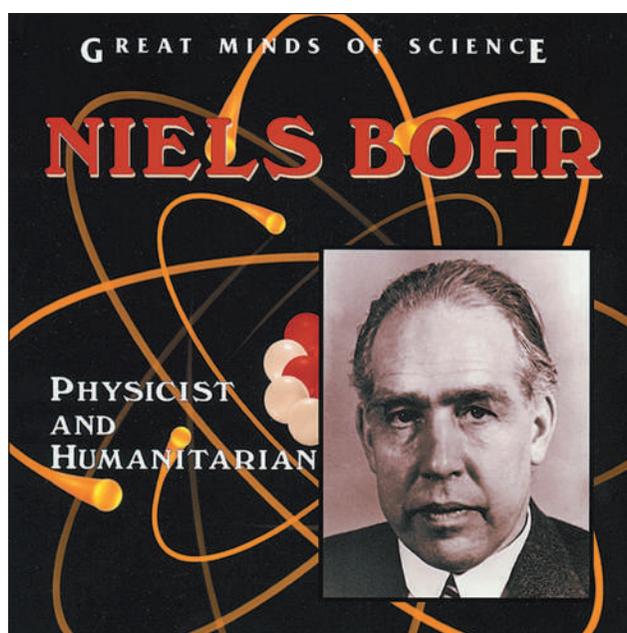
"Some time ago I received a call from a colleague. He was about to give a student a zero for his answer to a physics question, while the student claimed a perfect score. The instructor and the student agreed to an impartial arbiter, and I was selected.

I read the examination question: "Show how it is possible to determine the height of a tall building with the aid of a barometer."

The student had answered: "Take the barometer to the top of the building, attach a long rope to it, lower it to the street, and then bring it up, measuring the length of the rope. The length of the rope is the height of the building."

The student really had a strong case for full credit since he had really answered the question completely and correctly! On the other hand, if full credit were given, it could well contribute to a high grade in his physics course and certify competence in physics, but the answer did not confirm this. I suggested that the student have another try. I gave the student six minutes to answer the question with the warning that the answer should show some knowledge of physics.

At the end of five minutes, he hadn't written anything. I asked if he wished to give up, but he said he had many answers to this problem; he was just thinking of the best one. I excused myself for interrupting him and asked him to please go on. In the next minute, he dashed off his



answer, which read:

"Take the barometer to the top of the building and lean over the edge of the roof. Drop the barometer, timing its fall with a stopwatch. Then, using the formula  $x=0.5at^2$ , calculate the height of the building."

At this point, I asked my colleague if he would give up. He conceded, and gave the student almost full credit. While leaving my colleague's office, I recalled that the student had said that he had other answers to the problem, so I asked him what they were.

"Well," said the student, "there are many ways of getting the height of a tall building with the aid of a barometer. For example, you could take the barometer out on a sunny day and measure the height of the barometer, the length of its shadow, and the length of the shadow of the building, and by the use of simple proportion, deter-

mine the height of the building."

"Fine," I said, "and others?"

"Yes," said the student, "there is a very basic measurement method you will like. In this method, you take the barometer and begin to walk up the stairs. As you climb the stairs, you mark off the length of the barometer along the wall. You then count the number of marks, and his will give you the height of the building in barometer units."

"A very direct method."

"Of course. If you want a more sophisticated method, you can tie the barometer to the end of a string, swing it as a pendulum, and determine the value of  $g$  (gravity) at the street level and at the top of the building. From the difference between the two values of  $g$ , the height of the building, in principle, can be calculated."

"On this same tack, you could take the barometer to the top of the building, attach a long rope to it, lower it to just above the street, and then swing it as a pendulum. You could then calculate the height of the building by the period of the precession."

"Finally," he concluded, "there are many other ways of solving the problem."

"Probably the best," he said, "is to take the barometer to the basement and knock on the superintendent's door. When the superintendent answers, you speak to him as follows: 'Mr Superintendent, here is a fine barometer. If you will tell me the height of the building, I will give you this barometer.'"

At this point, I asked the student if he really did not know the conventional answer to this question. He admitted that he did, but said that he was fed up with high school and college instructors trying to teach him how to think.

The name of the student was:

**Neils Bohr - The Nobel Prize Winner in Physics 1922.**

## Relationships

# Unhappy marriages could mean shorter lives for men

*Men, take note: Staying unhappily hitched could raise your risk of stroke or early death as much as smoking or a "couch potato" lifestyle might. What's the link?*

An unhappy marriage might end in divorce, but staying unhappily hitched could also raise your risk of stroke or early death, a new Israeli study suggests, reports Dennis Thompson.

The increased risk was as much as that seen with smoking or a 'couch potato' lifestyle, said lead researcher Shahar Lev-Ari, chair of health promotion at Tel Aviv University School of Public Health.

Israeli men who expressed dissatisfaction with their marriage were 94% more likely to suffer a stroke during three decades of follow-up, and 21% more likely to die from any cause.

By comparison, a history of smoking increased the men's risk of death by 37%, and an inactive lifestyle by 21%, the researchers said.

"Assessing marital satisfaction and appraising the health benefits of marital education programs for young couples should be implemented as part of health promotion strategies for the general population," Lev-Ari



believes.

What's the link? Men unhappy in their marriage might be more likely to suffer from problems like depression, anxiety and stress, all of which can increase stroke risk, experts said.

They also might be more likely to cope with those feelings through unhealthy behaviors like drinking, smoking, eating bad foods or using drugs.

"When we feel good about our interpersonal relationships, we feel happy and engage in healthy behaviors," said Brittany LeMonda, a senior neuropsychologist at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City. "When we don't feel good about those around us, we are more likely to engage in less-than-ideal behaviours, have more anxiety, and disrupted sleep."

For the study, Lev-Ari and his colleagues recruited

nearly 9,000 male Israeli civil servants and city workers, who underwent an extensive appraisal of their health and behavioral patterns. The research team then tracked the health of these men for 32 years.

The results align with earlier studies that have shown an unhappy marriage can take a toll on the longevity of both husbands and wives, Lev-Ari said.

One 2019 study from the journal Psychological Science found that being happy with your spouse could decrease your death risk by 13% or more during an eight-year follow-up, Lev-Ari said.

### Suggested

"Studies suggest that educating and training young couples on positive psychology techniques, communication skills and parenting strategies may be beneficial for developing family resilience and enhancing marital satisfaction," Lev-Ari said. "These techniques may be usefully implemented as part of health promotion strategies designed for the general population."

LeMonda, who had no role in the study, noted that parenthood is also generally associated with longevity.

"It's possible that those in unhealthy marriages are less likely to have children or may have more stressful situations related to their children," she said.

"This study sheds light on the importance of healthy relationships and our need of strong social support and feeling connected to those we love," LeMonda concluded.

The new study was published recently in the Journal of Clinical Medicine.

## Healthy Beauty

# 13 Oils to Use on Your Skin and Hair

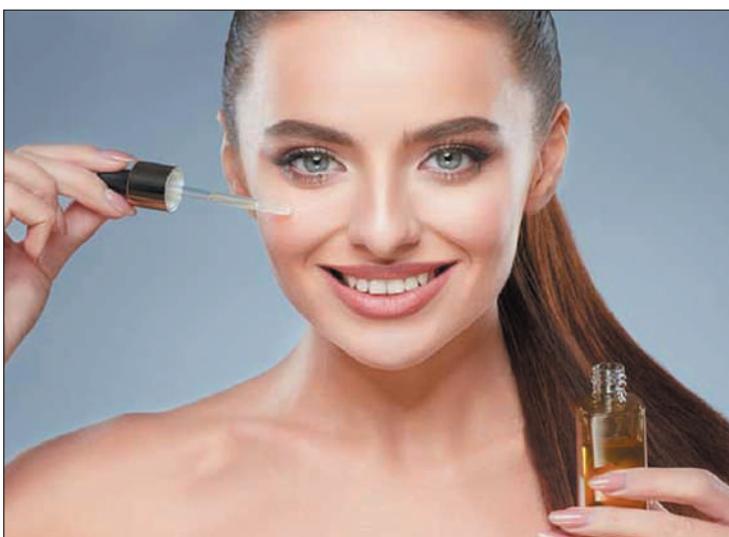
See which oil can boost collagen growth and plump up your skin -- and which one may work against a common form of hair loss

**Why try natural oils? They are touted as alternatives to condition hair, moisturize skin, fight acne, and strengthen nails. Take a stroll down the beauty aisle of your drugstore and you'll find them in many products. Do they work? You might need to experiment. Everyone's skin is different, and it comes down to trial and error.**

**Coconut:** Dry, cracked skin is more likely to get infected, irritated, and have allergic reactions. Coconut oil protects and moisturizes it, and soothes the scaly, rough patches that go along with common conditions like eczema, too.

**Rosehip and Carrot:** You'll find vitamin A in lots of skin care products. It's a "retinoid," a chemical that helps replace old skin cells with new ones and make collagen, which can ease color changes from scarring and stretch marks. Two oils that are particularly rich in vitamin A: rosehip seed and carrot. Some dermatologists say they're also good as acne and anti-aging treatments. You would use only a tiny dab at nighttime.

**Rosemary and Castor:** Want to plump up your ponytail? Does your scalp show more than it used to?



Rosemary oil may help you get a thicker, shinier mane. In one study, 6 months of treatment worked as well as 2% minoxidil against androgenetic alopecia, a common form of hair loss in men and women. And it was less likely to cause an itchy scalp.

Castor oil is another home remedy said to thicken brows and lashes. Before you try it, ask your doctor if it's safe, since it would go near your eyes. The jury's still out as to whether it really works.

**Olive and Avocado:** Got thin or brittle nails? For a simple, all-natural solution, dab a little olive or avocado oil on them before bed. The oils will soak in overnight and nourish with good-for-you fatty acids. You can use other types of oil for this, too.

**Sesame:** Could you replace your mouthwash with oil? It's trendy, but oil pulling, or rinsing out your mouth with oil, is a generations-old remedy for healthy teeth and gums.

Research shows it might help. Recent international studies found that swishing with sesame oil (coconut and sunflower work, too) can cut plaque and gingivitis. It may also wash away the microorganisms that cause bad breath.

**Marula:** Made from the fruit of the marula tree, which is native to South Africa, this oil is rich and hydrating. It's full of fatty acids, which dermatologists say soothe dry skin. It absorbs quickly and won't leave you shiny or greasy.

**Tea Tree:** Red, inflamed breakouts happen when bacteria gets trapped inside your pores. Research shows that tea tree oil helps zap that bacteria. In one trial, it beat a placebo gel (which has no active ingredients) at treating acne and calming inflammation. Another study found that it was as effective as benzoyl peroxide, a common ingredient in over-the-counter zit remedies.

**Argan:** Sometimes called "liquid gold," argan oil is rich in antioxidants called polyphenols, which can fight the effects of aging. Dermatologists also say its omega-3 fatty acids boost collagen growth and plump up your skin. It doesn't matter if you have a dry, oily, or normal skin type.

It also conditions hair, but doesn't weight it down or make it feel greasy. You can still use your other hair care products, too.

**Chamomile and Peppermint:** You probably think of chamomile as a relaxing tea, but the oil from this daisy-like plant can also calm your skin. Skin specialists call it an anti-inflammatory and an antiseptic, which cuts down on redness, irritation, and the chance of infection. Peppermint oil has the same soothing properties.

Reviewed by Stephanie S. Gardner, MD - WebMD

# Bollywood celebs and the pregnancy cravings they had

From pregnancy blues to cravings, expecting a child can bring many changes to your body not just physically but mentally as well. Morning sickness, fatigue, binge eating are just a few examples of what women face in the nine-month-long period.

Bollywood celebs including Kareena Kapoor, Anushka Sharma and others have also craved certain food items during their pregnancies. While we know actresses follow a strict diet to be in a certain shape but during pregnancy, a little or more cheat meal is acceptable.

Listed below are a few Bollywood divas and the food items they craved the most, as reported by Times Now.

## Kareena Kapoor

*What she craved for: Karela, pasta, pizza, chocolate cake*

When the *3 Idiots* actress was pregnant with Taimur in 2016, she revealed her pregnancy craving during a live session with her nutritionist Rujuta Diwekar. Kareena who ate healthy on most days refrained from overeating. Unlike most of the pregnant women who constantly crave sugar and *khatta* when pregnant, Kareena craved for karela (bitter gourd).

"Everyone says add a little sugar to it and the bitterness goes, but I don't like that. I like that it has a bitter, pungent taste to it. It's something that I enjoy," the actress told during a Facebook live session.

During her second pregnancy, Kareena gave in to a few mouth-watering delicacies including biryani and kebabs. As shared in one of her Insta stories, she was



also seen gorging on some delicious chocolate cake. However, food items that were a constant craving in her first and second pregnancies were pizza and pasta.

## Anushka Sharma

*What she craved for: Chana poori, pizza, Pani puri*

Anushka Sharma welcomed her first child, a baby girl in January 2021. The actress who is a big foodie at heart made sure to satisfy her food craving during her pregnancy as well.

From relishing to going local with some homemade pizzas, the *Zero* actress rightly followed the mantra of "go big or go home."

## Kajol

*What she craved for: South Indian cuisine*

It is reported that Kajol experience serious food cravings for South Indian cuisine. As per several media reports, the *Devi* actress requested a famous South Indian caterer from Mumbai to come to her house and cook sumptuous dishes. Kajol apparently also threw a mini party for her friends who enjoyed the feast.

## Aishwarya Rai

*What she craved for: Dhokla, imli ka achar*

Did you know Aishwarya's mother-in-law, actress Jaya Bachchan prepared special food for her during her pregnancy. Reportedly, Jaya prepared savoury dishes like dhokla, and imli ka achar to satisfy her daughter-in-law's food cravings.

## Konkona Sen Sharma

*What she craved for: Nepalese noodles*

The *Wake Up Sid* actress once tweeted about her food craving when she was pregnant with her son Haroon. She craved the Nepalese dish, sukha wai wai which is basically Nepalese noodles.

# Bollywood's latest blue-eyed boy is an outsider from Ballia

*Siddhant Chaturvedi has as many as four big movies lined up*

Contrary to popular belief, the so-called nepotistic Bollywood's newest blue-eyed boy on the block is not a star kid. He is a rank outsider from a distant Ballia village in Uttar Pradesh -- Siddhant Chaturvedi. a report by Giridhar Jha of Outlook...

The 28-year-old actor, who floored his audience and the critics alike with a solid performance in his debut film, *'Gully Boy'* (2019), has as many as four big movies on the floors, all produced by three top banners, Aditya Chopra's Yash Raj Films, Karan Johar's Dharma Productions and Farhan Akhtar-Rithesh Sidwani's Excel Entertainment.

On top of it, he has been signed to play the lead, opposite the likes of Deepika Padukone and Katrina Kaif. In Bollywood, an industry often accused of promoting children of film stars, he has well and truly arrived.

Acknowledged by the film industry as a highly promising talent, he had played rapper MC Sher in Zoya Akhtar's widely acclaimed Ranveer Singh-starrer, *'Gully Boy'*, which earned him Filmfare's Best supporting actor award. Since then, he has bagged some of the eagerly-awaited movies produced by the most prestigious banners. Many other film-makers are in the queue waiting for his nod to their scripts.

But he cannot help wonder why people, who have known him since his childhood,



expect him to move out of their middle-class housing society after his brush with stardom. "I love the simple life and if I stop living such a life, I will not be able to emote onscreen," he tells Outlook. "It will simply stunt my growth as an actor."

That's why he does not want to leave the area where he grew up and shift to an upscale locality. But then, even if his neighbours stop pestering him, it is highly unlikely that his newfound stardom will let him lead a normal life again. Going by what is already on his platter, he is already a star.

In *'Bunty Aur Babli 2'*, Yashraj Films' sequel of its 2005-hit, Siddhant shares screen space with Saif Ali Khan and Rani Mukherjee while he teams up with Deepika Padukone and Ananya Pandey in Johar's

next as-yet-untitled venture, being directed by Shakun Batra. There are two other big ones - a slick action thriller *'Yudhra'* with Malavika Mohanan and *'Phone Bhoot'* opposite Katrina Kaif -- from Excel Entertainment.

It is, doubtless, quite an achievement for someone who had until recently shared benches with hundreds of fellow strugglers at the Aramnagar audition hub in Andheri in western Mumbai. Born in a small town of eastern Uttar Pradesh he could speak only Bhojpuri when he landed in Mumbai in the late 1990s.

"I was born in Nagwa in Ballia district, better known as the birthplace of the famous freedom fighter Mangal Pandey," he says. "I spent my early childhood years with my grandfather, a priest, in the village running around sugarcane fields amid bovines and horses, dipping Parle-G biscuits in tea and watching Ramlila in the evenings."

Siddhant had to leave his village when his father brought him and his mother to Mumbai, where he worked as a chartered accountant. While he was growing up, he was expected to follow in his father's foot-

steps but an audition for *'Gully Boy'* changed his world completely.

Within days after its release in February 2019, a new star was born but he was in no hurry to go on a signing spree. Instead, he waited for the "right choices" to come his way.

Siddhant's patience paid off as top-notch film-makers came to rope him in for their ambitious projects. He is now happy that his forthcoming movies are different from one another, which will enable him to showcase his range as an actor. "As an actor, I don't want to find my space only but define my space in the film industry," he says.

Although he had worked in two web series, *'Life Sahi Hai'* and *'Inside Edge'* before the release of *'Gully Boy'* he owes his success to Zoya Akhtar's movie, which also went as India's official entry to the Oscars. "First, it was the audience who loved me; then the biggies in the industry noticed how people loved me. They must also have felt the sincerity in me as an actor," he says.

It was not, however, easy for Siddhant to earn the confidence of big filmmakers. He says he must have been rejected at more than 100 auditions before *Gully Boy*. "I have also lost opportunities to star kids on many occasions but I remained confident of my abilities and never gave up. At the end of the day, people do respect talent which will never go out of fashion in this industry."

From Sriti Jha to Sakshi Tanwar...

## 8 TV actresses who went through major transformation in their shows

TV shows are among the primary source of entertainment in most households even today. So it's not surprising that some shows that click with the viewers go on for years. And that's when the makers need to come up with something innovative, so the protagonist undergoes a transformation. Here's taking a look at some of the most striking transformations of actresses on the small screen as reported by Hasti Doshi of TNN...

### Sriti Jha

Currently, Sriti Jha is seen in *Kumkum Bhagya*. While the actress has undergone small changes in her looks on the show over the years, this time, it's different. Her character Pragya will be seen as a powerful boss lady. As the show takes a leap of two years, Pragya will be seen heading a multinational company and will ace the corporate look. Talking about it, she said, "Having explored the simple, unassuming, caring aspects of Pragya's persona for seven years, I now move into showcasing a more stylish, confident, self-assured dimension and that's truly exciting for me as an artiste."

### Mona Singh

Years after Mona Singh played the geeky character of Jassi in *Jassi Jassi Koi Nahin*, her nerdy look comprising thick spectacles and an oily fringe is still remembered. She was seen as a geeky character in the show, who later goes through an amazing transformation. After her character died, her re-entry in the show as a diva was much spoken about. What kept this show connected to audiences?

Mona said, "It was the simplicity of the show, and that it stayed true to the characters. It hits you somewhere, you could relate to the character so much. Every show out there just wanted to look pretty and sexy. Every Indian girl could relate to Jassi, how she was rejected all the time, and the story was about believing in yourself."



### Mahie Vij

Mahie Vij's character went through a transformation on the show *Lagi Tujhse Lagan*. While she initially had dark skin tone and bushy eyebrows, later, the storyline demanded her to shed her simple look for a more glamorous one. So what appealed Mahie to play Nakusha in the show?

In one of her interviews, she said, "I am like Nakusha. I have the same amount of patience like her, and am a family person like her. So, it was not been difficult for me to do the role. But I must confess my admiration for the character Nakusha, she can wear a smile even when she is ridiculed by the people, thanks to her physical appearance."

### Avika Gorgone

Not only has Avika Gorgone through a transformation in real life, but on her shows, too! In *Sasural Simar Ka*, she played Rolli, who was young and single. As the story pro-

gressed, her character changed from a young girl to a married woman. And so did her look in the show.

On playing matured roles, Avika had said, "The things that you like are not difficult for you. I love acting and I don't mind playing mature roles. I want to follow the footsteps of actors like Amitabh Bachchan and Vidya Balan."

### Drashti Dhani

Drashti Dhani's character in *Madhubala* was much appreciated by viewers. Her character had a geeky look initially, which later went through an impressive change. She had a glamorous makeover and went through a beautiful transformation.

When asked in an interview about what her fondest memory of

*Madhubala* is, she said, "There are so many great memories from that show, but one scene in particular that is a favourite is the first time RK leaves me. I was in shock. I suddenly came to my senses and started crying. That was the best scene by far I did in that series."

### Sakshi Tanwar

Sakshi Tanwar played *Parvati Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki* and at some point in the show, her character was shown to die. Post a leap, Parvati returned in a new avatar, and the *sanskari bahu* gave way to an independent woman.

### Divyanka Tripathi

Divyanka has not gone through one but two transformations. In her recent show *Yeh Hain Mohabbatein*, her character Ishita later appeared as Shannoo in a different look. Years ago when Divyanka was doing *Banoo Main Teri Dulhan*, she went through a transformation there too. She was initially seen in a very traditional look and later switched to a cool modern avatar.

## Rohit Roy: 'I am who I am because of television'

Rohit Roy has been part of many successful shows on television. At a time when actors in general seem to be gravitating from TV to the OTT space, Rohit says he will never forsake television, even if he continues working in other mediums. "That day will never come," Rohit says, when asked if he consciously plans to move away from TV, reports IANS.

"I am a product of television. I am who I am because of television. Had *Swabhimaan* (1994) not happened to me in the beginning of my career, I would have not been here. But when I do television, it has to be role that leaves an impact or an indelible mark on people's minds. I don't see myself doing run-of-the mill characters just to be part of television."

Last seen on the 2019 show *Sanjivani*, the actor is currently gearing up for the release of his upcoming film *Mumbai Saga*.

"I have always straddled all three mediums and hopefully successfully. I did the movie *Kaabil* and at that time I was also doing television. After *Kaabil* I did *Sanjivani* and then I shot for *Mumbai Saga*."

The actor has been a part of television shows such as *Waaris*, *Rishtey*, *Des Mein Nikla Hoga Chand* and also



films such as *LOC Kargil* (2003), *Dus Kahaniyaan* (2007), and *Fashion* (2008) amongst others.

"I have always shot for stuff simultaneously irrespective of the medium as long as my role in the script is good. I am also doing theatre. Over last six years, I have been doing a play called *Unfaithfully Your*'. It's just a two-people play with me and Mona Singh and it is a two-hour play. That is the kind of thing that excites me and I look forward

to. Medium doesn't matter and it keeps changing. Today there are variety of mediums that an actor or any technician can choose from," he says.

Is he planning to pick up a TV project anytime soon? "I hope to get back on television with a show like *Sanjivani* and a character as impactful as Vardhaan (his role in the show). Hopefully 2021 will see me doing something on television. I am already shooting an OTT show for Vikram Bhatt that will see me in a very different character. I have never played such a soft-spoken character," says Rohit.

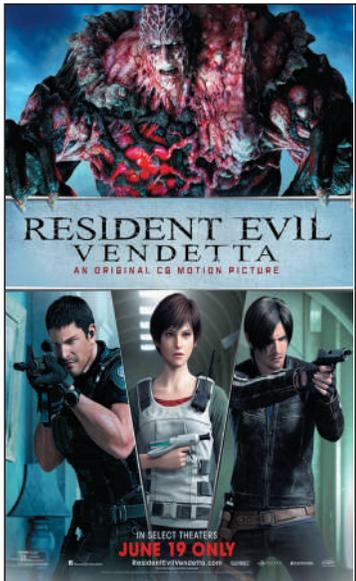
Coming back to *Mumbai Saga*, which stars John Abraham and Emraan Hashmi, the actor says: "I am actually playing a character based on a real-life character. I am playing Baba, and he and John Abraham's characters are very close. They have grown in a *chawl* together. How they work their way up from the by-lanes of Mumbai and start ruling is what my track is about.

"What's interesting for me is that he is a very human character and he doesn't talk much. He conveys his emotion through his eyes and that was a challenge for me. Usually for me, the characters I have played mouth dialogues 24 to dozen but in this film, it is a silent presence," he says.

**CINE 12**

Mardi 13 juillet - 21.10

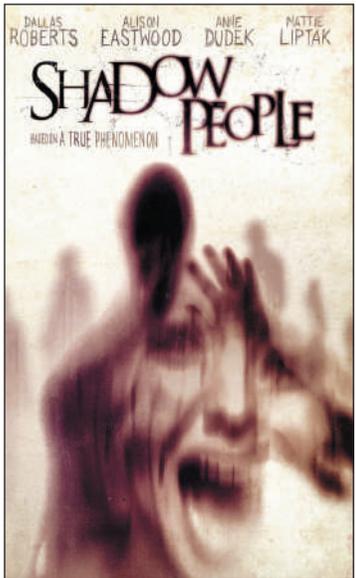
**Resident Evil: Vendetta**



**mbc:1**

Mercredi 14 juillet - 21.00

**Shadow People**



**mbc:2**

**Blood Circus**

Jeudi 15 juillet - 21.15



MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
<p><b>mardi 13 juillet</b></p> <p>06.00 Local: Rodrig Mo Pei 09.00 Doc: Be Afraid - The Science 11.00 Mag: Le Saviez Vous? 11.10 Tele: Soleil Levant 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.50 Mag: Garden Makeover 14.30 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 14.53 D.Anime: Astrology 15.18 D.Anime: Little Spirou 15.27 D.Anime: Rev &amp; Roll, Amis... 15.35 D.Anime: The Hive 15.43 D.Anime: Dinofroz 16.08 D.Anime: The Minimighty Kid 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 18.56 MBC Production 19.30 Journal &amp; La Meteo 20.35 Local: An Eta Dalert 21.05 Film: Resident Evil: Vendetta 23.10 Le Journal</p>	<p>07.00 DDI Live 08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3 10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4 12.00 Film: Chashme Buddoor 15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.25 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.47 Serial: Bava Maradullu 16.08 Serial: Apoorva Raangal 16.29 Serial: Silah 16.54 Serial: Imtihaan 17.16 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.34 Telugu - Premabhishekam 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.00 DDI Magazine 19.30 Journal Kreol 19.30 DDI Magazine 20.04 Local: Programme In Tamil 20.30 Film: Adhimaan Star: Amitabh Bachchan, Jaya Bachchan, Bindu Asrani</p>	<p>06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa 06.39 Mag: Voa Connect 07.08 Mag: In Good Shape 07.34 Doc: Amazing Gardens 08.04 Mag: Future Mag 08.33 Doc: Tresors Oublies De La... 09.00 Educational Prog: Grade 5 11.30 Educational Prog: Grade 8 14.58 Mag: 360 GEO 14.53 Mag: Global 3000 16.19 Mag: Washington 17.27 Mag: Eco@Africa 18.02 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto... 19.00 Student Support Prog... 19.31 Mag: Made In Germany 20.40 Local: News (English) 20.55 Doc: Ville En Fête 21.22 Doc: Snapshots 21.48 Mag: Close Up 22.14 Local: Klip Seleksion 22.57 Doc: Big Pharma</p>	<p>01.24 Film: 30 Days Of Night: Dark 02.52 Serial: Shades Of Blue 03.33 Film: House Of Cards 06.06 Serial: Imposters 06.47 Film: Orky 09.00 Serial: Mission: Impossible 09.48 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: Shades Of Blue 11.41 Film: House Of Cards 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.12 Mag: Hollywood On Set 14.40 Film: Orky 16.41 Serial: Mission: Impossible 17.23 Serial: Imposters 18.05 Tele: Daniella 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: Imposters 21.15 Film: Drone 22.45 Tele: Muneca Brava</p>	<p>08.00 Film: Tell Me O Kkhudda 12.04 / 19.54 - Radha Krishna 12.26 / 20.11 - Chupke Chupke 12.48 / 20.32 Mere Sai 13.09 / 21.09 - Agniphera 13.31 / 21.24 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.53 / 21.59 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.04 / 22.25 - Sethji 15.33 Film: Love Ke Liye Kuch Bhi Karega Star: Saif Ali Khan, Fardeen Khan, Aftab Shivdasani, Sonali Bendre 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.55 Serial: Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 19.17 Bhakharwadi 19.40 Siddhi Vinayak</p>
<p><b>mercredi 14 juillet</b></p> <p>07.00 Local: Aktiv 08.00 Local: Palette 10.30 Mag: Check In 11.10 Tele: Soleil Levant 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 13.00 Local Prod: Groov'in 14.30 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 14.54 D.Anime: Astrology 15.18 D.Anime: Little Spirou 15.25 D.Anime: Rev &amp; Roll 15.36 D.Anime: The Hive 17.35 Doc: Zafan Nou Pei 17.50 Mag: Happy Tales 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 18.55 MBC Production 19.30 Journal &amp; La Meteo 20.20 Prod Indepn: Lottotech 21.20 Film: Shadow People Stars: Dallas Roberts, Alison Eastwood, Mattie Liptak</p>	<p>07.00 DDI Live 08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3 10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4 12.30 Film: Jhutha Sach 15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.25 Aamhi Doghi 15.47 Bava Maradallu 16.01 Apoorva Raangal 16.32 Serial: Silah 16.55 Serial: Imtihaan 17.12 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.28 Serial: Kulvadh 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 Mag: DDI Magazine 19.00 Zournal Kreol 19.30 Mag: DDI Magazine 20.06 Programme In Marathi 20.56 Film: American Force Star: Patrick FrBezar, Danny Ng Wai-Yip, Hans Haraldser 22.24 Live: DDI Live</p>	<p>06.00 Rev: The Global Auto... 06.26 Doc: More Sense, Less... 06.52 Mag: Check In 07.18 Mag: Made In Germany 08.13 Mag: Ville En Fête 09.00 Educational Prog: Grade 5 11.30 Educational Prog: Grade 8 14.00 Mag: Close Up 14.29 Local: Klip Seleksion 15.12 Doc: Big Pharma 16.24 Doc: More Sense, Less... 16.50 Mag: Check In 17.47 Mag: Sur Mesure 17.59 Mag: Motorweek 18.30 Mag: Vous Et Nous 19.00 Student Prog Grade 7 19.28 Doc: Garden Party 20.04 Doc: Amazing Gardens 20.30 Local: News (English) 21.06 Mag: Vue D'en Haut 22.21 Mag: Initiative Africa 22.47 Mag: Focus On Europe</p>	<p>01.27 Film: Boone 02.54 Serial: Shades Of Blue 03.35 Film: Drone 05.43 Serial: Gone 06.51 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive... 09.00 Serial: Mission: Impossible 09.48 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: Shades Of Blue 12.00 Film: Drone 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: Signed, Sealed, Delive... 16.40 Serial: Mission: Impossible 17.20 Serial: Gone 18.08 Tele: Daniella 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: Madam Secretary 21.15 Film: The Killer Downstairs 22.45 Tele: Muneca Brava 23.29 Serial: Mission: Impossible</p>	<p>08.00 Film: Love Ke Liye Kuch Bhi Karega Star: Saif Ali Khan, Fardeen Khan, Aftab Shivdasani, Sonali Bendre 12.04 / 20.06 - Radha Krishna 12.24 / 20.26 - Chupke Chupke 12.44 / 20.02 - Mere Sai - Shrad.. 13.10 / 20.46 - Agniphera 13.31 / 21.09 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.57 / 21.50 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 14.54 / 21.46 - Sethji 15.23 Film: 3 Bachelors Starring: Sharman Joshi, Negar Khan, Manish Nagpal, Manoj Pahwa, Raima Sen, Riya Sen, Himani Shivpuri 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.51 Ishaaron Ishaaron... 19.13 Bhakharwadi</p>
<p><b>jeudi 15 juillet</b></p> <p>06.00 Local: Klip Seleksion 06.45 Local: Sur Prise 07.10 Local: Aktiv 10.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today 11.00 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous? 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.52 Mag: Green Touch 13.03 Local: Le Rendez Vous 14.30 D.Anime: The Garfield Show 15.18 D.Anime: Little Spirou 15.44 D.Anime: Dinofroz 17.05 Serial: Superstore 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 18.55 Local: Tirth Yatra 19.30 Le Journal 20.15 Film: Ajab Prem Ki Gajab Kahani- Stars: R. Kapoor, K. Kaif, Darshan Jariwala</p>	<p>07.00 DDI Live 08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3 10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4 12.30 Film: Gunehgaar 14.19 DDI Magazine 15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.27 Aamhi Doghi 15.47 Bava Maradallu 16.01 Apoorva Raangal 16.32 Serial: Silah 16.53 Serial: Imtihaan 17.12 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.29 Local: Amrit Vaani 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 Serial: Ghar Pahucha Da... 19.00 Zournal Kreol 19.30 Mag: DDI Magazine 20.15 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 20.36 Local: Mots &amp; Ecrits 21.34 Film: Blood Circus Stars: Jamie Nocher, Tom Sizemore</p>	<p>06.00 Mag: Motorweek 06.26 Mag: Vous Et Nous 07.19 Doc: Garden Party 07.49 Doc: Amazing Gardens 09.00 Educational Prog: Grade 5 11.30 Educational Prog: Grade 8 14.52 Mag: Initiative Africa 15.44 Doc: Bhutan 16.29 Mag: Motorweek 16.55 Mag: Vous Et Nous 17.22 Mag: Arts.21 18.00 Mag: Eco India 18.30 Mag: Shift - Living In The... 19.00 Student Prog Grade 7 19.30 Mag: Tomorrow Today 20.01 Mag: Science Ou Fiction 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.54 Doc: Myopia Boom 21.45 Doc: Jewish In Europe 22.27 Doc: The Berlin Wall??s 23.08 Doc: Deadly Greed</p>	<p>01.27 Film: Black Wake 02.57 Serial: Shades Of Blue 03.38 Film: The Killer Downstairs 05.04 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.52 Film: Red Dog: True Blue 09.00 Serial: French Series 09.45 Tele: Daniella 10.36 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.00 Serial: Shades Of Blue 12.00 Film: The Killer Downstairs 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.16 Mag: Hollywood On Set 14.48 Film: Red Dog: True Blue 16.40 Serial: French Series 17.24 Serial: Madam Secretary 18.15 Tele: Daniella 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: Madam Secretary 21.14 Serial: Airwolf 22.01 Film: Wolf</p>	<p>08.00 Film: 3 Bachelors Starring: Sharman Joshi, Negar Khan, Manish Nagpal, Manoj Pahwa, Raima Sen, Riya Sen, Himani Shivpuri 12.05 / 19.54 - Radha Krishna 12.22 / 20.11 - Chupke Chupke 12.48 / 20.32 - Mere Sai 13.07 / 21.09 - Agniphera 13.33 / 21.24 Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.48 / 21.50 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 14.09 / 21.46 - Naagin 14.52 / 21.59 - Sethji 15.20 Film: Jajantaram Mamantaram 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.51 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 19.14 Serial: Bhakharwadi 19.38 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak</p>



Jeudi 15 juillet - 15.20

Star: Jaaved Jaffrey, Gulshan Grover



Jeudi 15 juillet - 20.15

Stars: Ranbir Kapoor, Katrina Kaif, Darshan Jariwala



# Afghanistan: two decades of Nato help leaves a failed and fractured state on the brink of civil war

*Afghanistan is descending into anarchy as Nato troops withdraw, leaving the country desperately fighting off a Taliban insurgency*



The Afghan military appears to be losing the battle against Taliban insurgents.  
EPA-EFE/Ghulamullah Habibi

**A**fghanistan is falling apart. With US and Nato troops leaving the country earlier than planned, experts are warning that the Taliban could take control of the country within six months. Currently the insurgents control the strategically important province of Helmand, and control or contest territory nearly every province in the war-torn country.

As many as 188 of Afghanistan's 407 districts are directly under Taliban rule. With up to 85,000 full-time fighters), the insurgents have already forced thousands of troops belonging to the US-trained Afghan army to surrender or flee.

In response to the Taliban's onslaught, local militias are fighting back. Most notable among them is a coalition of militias in northern Afghanistan called the Second Resistance, led by Ahmad Massoud (the son of Northern Alliance commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, who was assassinated in September 2001).

The Second Resistance has several thousand fighters and militia commanders who have fought against the Taliban, mostly of Tajik origin. Massoud insists that the Taliban will not have the same success in fighting his coalition due to far greater resolve of his soldiers compared to the Afghan military. But henceforth he will have to operate without the help of Nato troops.

But it's not just seasoned veterans that are forming militias. Ethnic Shia Hazaras, thousands of whom were massacred between 1996 and 2001 by the Sunni Taliban, have tended to lack militias of their own. But after a wave of attacks in May that killed 85 people (mostly female students), Hazaras are also now rushing to mobilise.

But while these tribal militias might be

able to defend themselves, this was far from the objective of the US-led coalition. The goal was to help build a national Afghan army that could become the sole legitimate fighting force. In spite of these intentions, this clearly never happened.

Much of the problem was that the US never fully grasped how to best support the Afghan military. The Americans relied on a model of trying to arm the Afghan army, training them and providing them with aerial support. But this model was not sustainable or practical for the Afghan military.

Afghanistan does not have the revenues to rely on sophisticated weaponry and technology. This remains a problem even though the US provides Afghanistan with almost US\$5 billion (£3.6 billion) in aid per year - with US president, Joe Biden, asking for an additional US\$300 million to support Afghan forces.

## 2001: a failed mission?

US efforts to engage in state building after it invaded in December 2001 was a more challenging objective than the Bush administration understood. For centuries, history has shown that Afghanistan has been difficult to conquer - and impossible to govern. The country always struggled to create a unified national military to ward off invaders and maintain internal stability. Instead it has relied on local tribal militias led by warlords that could be immediately called to action to defend their territory. Efforts in the past (such as under Amanullah Khan in 1923) to enforce conscription into the Afghan army resulted in revolt.

As I discovered while researching a book on failed states, in addition to having little experience with a national military, other state institutions in Afghanistan were

also almost nonexistent. This was not just because the country had faced decades of invasion and civil war, but also because it is a nation in name only.

The various Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Turkmen, Baluch and Uzbek groups in Afghanistan never accepted a central regime. This complicated any effort after Afghanistan gained independence in August 1919 to create unified security institutions to fend off various violent non-state actors that threatened stability in the country.

The Taliban, which overthrew the Afghan government in 1996, was the only group able to exercise control over the country after the 1992-1996 civil war. But, in October 2001, after the 9/11 attacks and the Taliban's refusal to turn in Osama bin Laden, US and British forces launched airstrikes against targets in Afghanistan. By early December, the Taliban had abandoned their stronghold in Kandahar and ceded their last territory in Zabul and a new president, Hamid Karzai, was sworn in within two weeks as interim leader.

## Taking control

But the Taliban never accepted a western presence and launched an insurgency in 2002. Over two decades, the Taliban has become the most effective fighting group in the country, building a professional and resilient organisation that has learned to rely on a sophisticated communication apparatus. Its structure has been flexible enough to withstand the death of its leadership, after Mullah Omar died in 2013.

During that time - and despite the presence of Nato troops in the country - thousands of civilians have continued to die in terror attacks and raids. In 2019 and 2020 alone, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan has documented more than 17,000 civilians killed or injured - the majority of which are blamed on the Taliban. Although the Taliban is currently in peace talks with the Afghan government in Tehran, it has little or no credibility when it comes to compromise or adhering to agreements.

So, after spending US\$2 trillion and involving over 130,000 Nato troops for over 20 years, the US and its western allies are almost back to square one. Meanwhile almost 50,000 Afghan civilians have died - and most Afghan citizens still live in poverty. The one concrete achievement of the 20 years of occupation - reversing the Taliban's ban on female education - could be in jeopardy as well.

**Natasha Lindstaedt**

Professor, Department of Government,  
University of Essex



Tree of Knowledge

Madisyn Taylor

## Setting A Limit To Sit With Emotions

**W**hen we take the time to sit with our emotions fully, it will become apparent that the emotion was a catalyst for much-needed healing

Our emotions color our lives with varying palettes. Sometimes we feel a strong emotion in reaction to something that has happened, but emotions also visit us seemingly out of the blue, flooding us unexpectedly with joy or grief or melancholy. Like the weather, they come and go, influencing our mental state with their particular vibration. Sometimes a difficult emotion hangs around longer than we would like, and we begin to wonder when it will release its hold on us. This is often true of grief stemming from loss, for example, or lingering anger over a past event.

Usually, if we allow ourselves to feel our emotions fully when they come up, they recede naturally, giving way to another and another. When an emotion haunts us, it is often because we are afraid of really feeling it. Emotions like despair and rage are powerful, and it is natural to want to hold them at bay. Certainly, we don't want to let them take us over so that we say or do things we later regret. When we are facing this kind of situation, it can be helpful to ask the spirit, "How long do I need to sit with these emotions, how long do I need to feel these emotions before they can pass?" If you ask sincerely and wait, an answer will come. Setting a time limit on your engagement with that difficult emotion may be just the technique you need to face it fully.

When you have a sense of how much time you need to spend, set a timer. Sit down and make yourself available to the emotion that has been nagging you. All you have to do is feel it. Avoid getting attached to it or rejecting it. Simply let it ebb and flow within you. Emotions are by their nature cyclical, so you can trust that just as one reaches its apex it will pass. Each time you sit with its presence without either repressing or acting out, you will find that that difficult emotion was the catalyst for much needed emotional healing.