

# MAURITIUS TIMES

• "The key to life is accepting challenges. Once someone stops doing this, he's dead." -- Bette Davis

## Commission of Inquiry on Betamax-STC Contract

### 'This apparently is the first time that we will have a commission of inquiry with its hands tied'



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The G-7 wants to set a minimum global tax rate, which would make it harder for countries to act as tax havens

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### BUDGET 2021/22



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# Commission of Enquiry: What for?

**I**t was American President Abraham Lincoln who famously said: 'You can fool some of the people all the time, you can fool all the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.'

The people may be taken for fools, but they can no longer be fooled. For they are discerning enough to be asking themselves the very pertinent question: Another Commission of Enquiry: What for?

The Cabinet decision is to set up a 'Commission of Inquiry to be presided by a Judge to inquire into, inter alia, the circumstances in which the contract for transport of petroleum products to Mauritius (Contract of Affreightment) was awarded to Betamax Ltd and the circumstances which subsequently led to the termination of the said contract.'

Besides the fact that such a CE should ideally – for ethical reasons and to avoid embarrassing a sitting judge - be chaired by a retired judge, one would have thought that the circumstances are already known. In this connection, there are a few pertinent points of interest:

- After the 2014 elections, several arrests were made in connection with the Betamax case. They included the former Prime Minister Dr Navin Ramgoolam, Minister Anil Bachoo, three public officials including a lady PS, and the CEO of Betamax Ltd. All of them were charged. But the office of the DPP did not find any incriminating evidence against them. In an extensive document that was made public, it stated that "the evidence gathered by the police as contained in the file submitted to the ODPP did not reveal the commission of any offence by the suspects".
- At the time of the award of the contract, Pravind Jugnauth was Minister of Finance and Economic development, and therefore also a member of the Cabinet which gave final approval.
- As Lex points out elsewhere in this paper, 'The Leader of the Opposition, Xavier Duval, who pressed for the setting up of a commission of inquiry, was a member of the Ramgoolam government in 2009 and he is deemed to have consented to the award. He was also a member of the Sir Anerood Jugnauth government when the contract was rescinded. Though he has publicly stated he was against the rescission, he did not resign when the contract was rescinded.'

He also did not publicly make known his disagreement with the award of the contract to Betamax.' Further:

- Showkuttally Soodhun was also a Minister in the then Ramgoolam government. He stood up in Parliament to say, in reply to a question addressed by Paul Berenger, that there was nothing objectionable to the contract.
- Roshi Bhadain, perceived to be the prime promoter behind the rescission, is now an ally of both Paul Bérenger and Xavier Duval.

In other words, practically all the circumstances pertaining to the award are already known, and one is hard put to guess what else might be uncovered that will enlighten the public further – for it is they who need to know since it is out of their pockets that the payment has been made following the judgement of the Privy Council.

And it is important, lest we forget, to underline that that colossal sum: Rs 5.7 bn is not the end of the matter. There are the legal fees for the arbitration in Singapore and for taking the case to the Privy Council, and they will run into hundreds of millions. Add to that the fees for the proposed CE and heads start to spin. So much to go down the drain, without any perceivable benefit to the public, to the country in view?

But there is more: instead of this CE, there ought to have been CE to investigate Britam and the CEB's Saint Louis Power Plant Redevelopment Project scandal with the Rs 700 M that are still to be brought back to the public exchequer, the two cases that come to mind.

Politicians should know that the people can read into the political game that's being played out, but one wonders how long this futile power struggle will last. Has politics been so corrupted as only to serve the pecuniary and self-aggrandizement interests of a power-hungry political establishment across the board - a far cry from the ideals and personal commitment of our earlier generation of political leaders?

Like it or not, this whole episode is being widely perceived not as a battle of the best ideas for the country's advancement but as a fight to death between two dynasts who ought, instead, to see each other as political adversaries rather than enemies to be eliminated at all cost. There can be no winners here.

## The Conversation



The G-7 wants to set a minimum global tax rate, which would make it harder for countries to act as tax havens

**C**lose your eyes and imagine a tax haven. Does a Caribbean island come to mind? Sand, surf and thousands of post office boxes housing shell corporations?

Some tax havens, like the Cayman Islands or Bermuda, fit that description. Many others do not.

The key to a tax haven is the taxes, not the tan. Any place that allows a taxpayer – whether an individual or a company – to get a lower tax bill overseas than at home is a tax haven. Thus, depending on the taxpayer's jurisdiction and business, many places turn out to be tax havens, even the United States.

A recent agreement by the Group of Seven wealthy nations seeks to eliminate corporate tax havens by imposing a global 15% minimum corporate tax rate. However, as a tax expert, I find the effort hard to take seriously.

### 3 things that make a tax haven a tax heaven

Put simply, tax havens are jurisdictions that offer low or even no taxes in a bid to attract foreign investment.

From a taxpayer's perspective, the first sign of a good tax haven is that it's completely legal. While there may be a perception that people who use tax havens to lower their tax bills are breaking the law, that's rarely the case.

A taxpayer who is comfortable doing that does not need a tax haven. Instead, a dishonest accountant and a less honest banker are all that's required.

The second sign of a good tax haven is transparency, political stability and rule of law. If it costs more in lawyers, accountants and bribes to avoid taxes overseas than it costs to pay the tax at home, there is no point to a tax haven.

The third sign is privacy. For many years, Swiss banks provided the gold standard in that regard by refusing to reveal anything about their depositors to anyone. That changed in 2008, when Swiss banks agreed to report on their depositors to 43 European countries.

**Beverly Moran**

Professor Emerita of Law, Vanderbilt University

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## Titbits

# Amortizing the Social Impact of Covid

*Some estimates have it that it may have cost public finances Rs 25 billion or more... barely more than the uncertainly useful Safe City CCTV cameras plus a barely utilized National Sports Complex at Cote d'Or*

Jan Arden

Credit must be given where it is due. In retrospect, we had an unexplainable "attentisme" when it concerned early pre-ordering of vaccines from a variety of known laboratories. The vaccination campaign took off late, when the gift of 200,000 doses from the Government of India landed around February this year and gave impetus to the process, albeit initially in poorly planned conditions and the added onus of a controversial rights waiver form. But, following the cooperation and sacrifices of the population, there ensued several months of respite late 2020 which augured well for the re-opening of our frontiers sometime in early 2021.

"Covid-free" or safe we may have been, but there were also ominous signs that a second, if not a third wave of viral infection, with new strains, were on rampage elsewhere. We failed to guard our shores with enough vigilance and have been paying the price throughout the first half of this year with sporadic viral eruptions and red zones across the island, sending health and other frontliners in overdrive while economic operators were dismayed by costly delays in the re-opening of the economy. In parallel, patients undergoing renal dialysis and their families were thrown into anxiety with the as yet unexplained fatalities at Souillac Hospital.

Had this state of pandemonium over fifteen months, wreaking havoc on health, our small to large business sectors and the economy in general, been allowed to gnaw into the social fabric of the country, a social unrest of unknown proportions could have been much feared. Credit has therefore to be rendered to the wise decision by the authorities to establish the Government Wage Assistance Scheme and the Self-Employed Assistance Scheme and maintained both reassuringly, with their teething and hiccups, for a majority of the population not in public service.

Some estimates have it that it may have cost public finances Rs 25 billion or more. In perspective, that's barely more than the uncertainly useful Safe City CCTV cameras plus a barely utilized National Sports Complex at Cote d'Or. The Minister and the government may come under flak for a variety of reasons, including plunging their hands to the elbows in our national reserves at the BoM, but this double assistance scheme throughout the pandemic was a vital imperative. It prevented possibly massive layoffs in sectors badly hit by Covid-19 and kept a minimum financial inflow to meet basic needs of those thousands not in formal employment sectors.

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## Tax and spend

Neither the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development nor government which, up to early 2020, had been so profligate in public spending for recurrent and capital expenses could have expected that a pandemic would throw the world askew and land Mauritius in tough times requiring many tough decisions. The Finance Minister had no time to bask in the afterglow of his election and appointment but, with Covid and its handling, the opportunity was undoubtedly thrust upon him to reckon in the popular perception among our ablest Finance Ministers. It is therefore somewhat surprising that, despite the welcome Assistance Schemes referred above, the alchemy with the population does not seem to have gelled as yet.



**“The last budget might have been the right time for curbing government profligacy, instill confidence in economic operators, project new hopes and ambitions for our youths, develop new pillars and consolidate existing ones, even if some “lame ducks” would have to be sacrificed. Unfortunately, it was wedlocked in the same Tax and Spend spirit, with Rs 65 billion announced for public infrastructure projects, providing a somewhat illusory feel-good for party henchmen, but as experience has demonstrated, way beyond the capacity of public sector to absorb, control and deliver more than some Rs 25 billion worth of capital projects...”**

This may have little to do with his personal qualities and skills as illustrated in Parliament. We prefer to think he has not been helped by a series of choices and mishaps, for want of a better term, since taking office. For instance, even if the National Pension Fund mechanism needed review to ensure its longer-term sustainability, was there any urgency, in the midst of a harrowing pandemic, to scuttle the system entirely in favour of a tax-based juggernaut (the now infamous Contribution Sociale Généralisée), that looks likely, according to actuaries, to run out of control within a few years? Or the differential treatment meted out to civil servants and the productive sectors of the economy in this as in other measures? Was Mauritius turning into a "Tax and Spend" jurisdiction, asked the economic observers, the Opposition and more worryingly for this government, the private sector, even those dependent on government and BoM funds to ride out their major financial difficulties?

The last budget might have been the right time for curbing government profligacy, instill confidence in economic operators, project new hopes and ambitions for our youths, develop new pillars and consolidate existing ones, even if some "lame ducks" would have to be sacrificed. Unfortunately, it was wedlocked in the same Tax and Spend spirit, with Rs 65 billion announced for public infrastructure projects, providing a somewhat illusory feel-good for party henchmen, but as experience has demonstrated, way beyond the capacity of public sector to absorb, control and deliver more than some Rs 25 billion worth of capital pro-

jects. Many of those, as in previous exercises, may simply gather dust waiting to haunt some future budget. As for taxes, including the combined Rs 6.40 litre rise in fuel prices, the depreciation of the Rupee and the crunch on cost of living most Mauritians are intimately aware of their impact.

The reputational awe the Minister of Finance might have been granted was increasingly under erosion, not helped by budgetary forecasts that looked inexplicably rosy-eyed, namely a forecast economic growth rate of more than 9% when all reputable local and international observers place best estimates between 5 and 6%. Tourism at 650,000 arrivals in the coming 9-10 months after frontier re-opening, without any mention of the national carrier's fate and role, sounds like wishful thinking. These divergences may be ignored but the unprecedented solemn and rather brutal take-down by the IMF a few days before the budget and the later heavy weather made of explaining loans, interest-free advances and outright grants, presented as Revenues rather than Debts, sent alarm bells ringing in many quarters. At such a portentous Ministry, can government afford continued controversies on multiple fronts, a palpable loss of trust by economic operators and a lack of empathy by the ordinary layman? The time has probably not come to ask: does it have any options?

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## Exiting the Grey List

Days after talks with the former PM, Navin Ramgoolam, the post-plenary announcement by the FATF that Mauritius had largely complied with key legal and regulatory requirements of the IMF-

influenced institution has boosted confidence in operators and the parent Ministry that the huge efforts made by all stakeholders may bear fruit at the next plenary scheduled for October this year. It is a long awaited piece of welcome news ever since our jurisdiction landed in hot water in February 2020, falling foul of norms and practices of countries that tackles money-laundering avenues that allow criminals to whitewash their ill-gotten gains through a variety of sources: drug trafficking, embezzlement, large-scale racketeering and rampant corruption. An exit of the infamous grey list with the dovetailed EU blacklist in tow would be indeed a much-needed balm on our national pride as much as a huge relief for our operators and banking sector.

However, the authorities and stakeholders will be fully aware that Grey List exit will only be considered upon a satisfactory report from the experienced auditors that are due here to test how far our laws and regulations are applied. They will also probably determine our capacity for conducting complex investigations into sophisticated financial scams and the demonstrable output in terms of high-profile cases completed, taken to court and convictions secured. Our exit in October now greatly depends on the demonstration of credible and independent investigations by the set of disparate investigative and regulatory agencies, including the likes of the FSC/FIU, the BoM, the GRA, the ICAC and possibly others. We hope they will be fully prepared for that face to face audit exercise.

## Commission of Inquiry on Betamax-STC Contract

# 'This apparently is the first time that we will have a commission of inquiry with its hands tied'

- *'It might be embarrassing for a sitting judge to chair such a commission as the judgment of the Supreme Court was reversed by the Privy Council'*

**W**hat will a commission on inquiry into the Betamax-STC contract relating to the transport of petroleum products to Mauritius achieve other than what have come out from the hearings of the Singapore Arbitration Centre, the Supreme Court and finally the Privy Council? Much will depend on the exact terms of reference of the commission of inquiry, but it is widely suspected, rightly or wrongly, that the Government's decision would have been politically motivated. LEX throws light on the processes relating to the setting up of commissions of inquiry and the subsequent reports. Outcomes post the reports depend a lot on political will – or action by the public.

LEX

## \* What purpose does a commission of inquiry serve?

The purpose of a commission of inquiry is to only gather facts and make observations in compliance with the terms of reference in the document appointing it on a number of matters like the conduct of a public officer; the management of a department of the public service; a local or public institution and matters of public interest.

## \* Who holds the power to institute a commission of inquiry, decide on its terms of reference and appoint its commissioner/s?

The power vests in the President of the Republic on the advice of the Cabinet.

## \* What happens when a commission of inquiry submits its findings?

Once the inquiry is over, the chairperson submits his/her report and recommendations to the President of the Republic, who then transmits it to the Prime Minister. The Cabinet will thereafter peruse the report and decide whether to make it public or not.

The government may also decide to shelve the report or take action if the conclusions establish acts of impropriety by public officers or the manager of a public department. If a criminal offence is



revealed, a police investigation may be initiated.

\* We understand that commissions of inquiry are also 'aimed at encouraging transparency through fact finding and providing input for future investigation or criminal proceedings, if necessary'. This means that a mechanism for follow-up has to be instituted. Have we met the expectations of the public in that regard?

Certainly not. The most glaring example is the last commission of inquiry on drugs that revealed the close links of many top shots either in the legal profession or the police force with drug traffickers and barons. What has happened? Nothing.

There were also recommendations on the overhauling of the ADSU and on the need to improve the surveillance of our coasts and our ocean. What happened? The Wakashio disaster has revealed in no uncertain terms the amateurish manner in which our coasts and ocean are monitored.

And recently we have witnessed the arrest of drug traffickers who under cover of their fishing vessels were associated with the importation of massive quantities of drugs to Mauritius.

## \* What if there is no follow-up with regard to the findings and recommendations of a commission on inquiry?

Nothing can be done. It is for the public to judge that type of inaction.

\* Besides follow-up on the Lam Shang Leen Drug Commission's report, we have yet to take cognizance of the findings of the commission on inquiry instituted to inquire into and report on

all the circumstances relating to the purported appointment of a commission of inquiry by Mrs Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, former President of the Republic. What should we make out of these two matters?

The commission's findings are not binding and there must be political will by those who establish them to enforce them. In the absence of political will, there is not much that can be done. According to information available, the findings of the commission on inquiry on former President Ameenah Gurib-Fakim have not yet been submitted to the President, so one cannot comment on them. We also have the commission of inquiry on Britam that is still pending.

## \* Without putting in question the integrity of anybody, does it however matter that a retired judge should be called to chair a commission of inquiry, or would transparency be best served with a sitting judge of the Supreme Court?

Ideally it should be a retired judge. It might be embarrassing for a sitting judge to chair such a commission as the judgment of the Supreme Court in the Betamax case was reversed by the Privy Council. That said, the decision rests with the government. It must be pointed out, and this is said without in any way attacking the honesty or integrity of anyone, that the perception in the public is that those who are called upon to chair commissions of inquiry or fact-finding committees must be or appear to be in the good books of the regime of the day.

\* Cabinet has taken the decision to

“The Leader of the Opposition, Xavier Duval, who pressed for the setting up of a commission of inquiry, was a member of the Ramgoolam government in 2009 and he is deemed to have consented to the award. He was also a member of the Sir Anerood Jugnauth government when the contract was rescinded. Though he has publicly stated he was against the rescission, he did not resign when the contract was rescinded. He also did not publicly make known his disagreement with the award of the contract to Betamax...”

set up of a 'Commission of Inquiry to be presided by a Judge to inquire into, inter alia, the circumstances in which the contract for transport of petroleum products to Mauritius (Contract of Affreightment) was awarded to Betamax Ltd and the circumstances which subsequently led to the termination of the said contract'. What's the point of this commission in inquiry when the matter has already been heard by the Supreme Court, and subsequently by the Privy Council?

Many comments have been made on the pertinence and relevance of establishing a commission of inquiry on the Betamax case. What new facts will emerge remains to be seen. Already many of the salient facts have been revealed either on the circumstances surrounding the award of the contract and its rescission. What next? Maybe there is a political motivation behind all this. Once the findings are made public, if at all they are, they would surely be exploited for political ends.

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## Bangladesh to Australia: List of countries imposing fresh curbs due to Delta variant

The rapid spread of a more virulent version of coronavirus, B.1.617.2, also known as the Delta variant, has forced several countries to rethink their roadmap out of lockdown and many of them have started imposing fresh restrictions fearing another wave of coronavirus disease.

The head of the World Health Organization (WHO) on Friday revealed that the variant, first identified in India, is spreading in at least 85 countries, terming it the "most transmissible of the variants identified so far." Britain has already extended the full reopening of businesses by four weeks after the country started reporting a surge in Covid-19 cases, with the Delta variant becoming the dominant strain, reports Hindustan Times.

London mayor Sadiq Khan warned that the reopening scheduled for July 19 could be at risk unless enough people get vaccinated. "Unless sufficient numbers of Londoners have the jab it makes it more likely that we won't be able to fully reopen on 19 July," said Khan after attending a vaccine summit in London.

**Taiwan:** The self-governed island reported its first domestically transmitted case of Delta variant on Saturday. Six people in Pingtung county had been confirmed to have the Delta variant, of which one has been classified as a domestic infection, according to Taiwan health minister Chen Shih-Chung. The government will tighten border controls to keep out the Delta variant, requiring arrivals



A man walks through the city centre on the first day of a two-week lockdown to curb the Covid-19 outbreak in Sydney, Australia. Pic - Reuters

from five countries to be placed in centralised quarantine facilities.

**Australia:** Australia's New South Wales premier, Gladys Berejiklian, announced a two-week lockdown across all of Greater Sydney, including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast and Wollongong. The stay-at-home order will remain in effect until July 9. According to health authorities, expansion of curbs was needed after more infections were recorded, with exposure sites increasing beyond the initial areas of concern.

**Bangladesh:** India's neighbouring country announced a tougher lockdown starting Monday due to a "dangerous and alarming" surge in Delta variant cases. As per the fresh guidelines, all offices,

government and private, will be shut for a week. The government said in a statement that no one can step out of their homes except in emergency cases.

**Israel:** The country with around 60% of fully vaccinated individuals reimposed an indoor-mask requirement and other measures amid a sustained surge in Covid-19 cases attributed to Delta variant. Nachman Ash, the head of Israel's pandemic response task force, said that the measures were reimposed after Israel reported more than 100 daily Covid cases for four consecutive days.

**Portugal:** The European nation has announced new restrictions in the Lisbon area and two other regions amid a spike in Covid-19 cases. More than 70% of coro-

navirus cases in the Lisbon area are from the Delta variant, which is said to be rapidly spreading to other parts of the country. Portugal is witnessing a surge in infections after the tourism-dependent nation opened to visitors from the European Union and Britain in mid-May. On Friday, the country reported 1,604 new cases, the biggest daily rise since February 19, when the country was still under lockdown.

**Indonesia:** Indonesia on Thursday confirmed a daily high of 20,574 new Covid-19 cases, a jump of more than 5,000 from the previous day. The rise in cases prompted the government to announce the tightening of neighbourhood-level social restrictions in high-risk "red zones" for two weeks, starting last Tuesday. Offices, restaurants, cafes and malls have been allowed to operate at 25% capacity. Earlier this month, Indonesian officials revealed that more than 350 doctors and medical workers have been infected and dozens hospitalised despite being vaccinated with Sinovac, raising concerns about the vaccine against more infectious variants like Delta and Alpha.

**Russia:** Moscow authorities have ordered bars and restaurants from Monday to serve people only if they can present a QR-code showing they have been vaccinated, had an infection indicating immunity or recently tested negative. Russia is facing a surge in coronavirus cases that authorities blame on the Delta variant and slow progress in vaccination.

## British government's top-secret defence documents found at bus stop in Kent



A bunch of classified documents of the United Kingdom government, containing highly confidential details about the British military and foreign policy, were found at a bus stop in Kent, southeast of London, news agencies reported on Sunday.

The 50-page document was discovered with the help of an anonymous tip to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). The UK government said that it was investigating how the documents landed there, adding that an internal inquiry had been launched into the matter,

reports Joydeep Bose of Hindustan Times.

The documents found at the bus stop contained 50 pages of top-secret information about Britain's ministry of defence, including a possible military presence in Afghanistan at the end of NATO operations there. Primarily, however, the papers dealt with the Russian reaction to the passage of a British warship through Ukrainian waters off the coast of Crimea.

The warship in context is a British navy destroyer named the HMS Defender, which is sailing close to the coast of Crimea, as per the BBC. Russia had

annexed Crimea from Ukraine back in 2014, so it saw the British destroyer's presence in the Black Sea as a violation of its territorial waters and fired a series of warning shots in retaliation, the broadcaster added.

Now, the retrieved documents seem to show that Britain already knew the kind of reaction it would provoke from Russia and yet continued to pursue its course, lest an alternate route made Moscow think of the UK as "being scared/running away". The papers also revealed that by letting the

warship take this route, the UK government was, after all, hoping to gain an opportunity to "engage with the Ukrainian government... in what the UK recognises as Ukrainian territorial waters."

The secret documents retrieved at the Kent bus stop were reported lost from the Ministry of Defence last week, the government said, adding that investigation is underway into the matter. "It shouldn't be able to happen," Brandon Lewis, minister for Northern Ireland.

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## World's 1st post-pandemic cruise to set sail with 99% passengers vaccinated

In a style reminiscent of Snowpiercer, the world is set to witness the first cruise ship start its engine after 15 months of pandemic-induced standstill from a US port. What will be the most unique part of this cruise is that nearly all - 99% - passengers aboard the ship will be vaccinated against the infectious coronavirus disease.

Named Celebrity Edge, the cruise will depart from Florida's Fort Lauderdale at 6 pm on Saturday. The number of passengers on the ship has been limited to about 40% of the capacity. The cruise is meeting the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines which require at least 95% of the people to be vaccinated, reports Hindustan Times.

On the Celebrity Edge, 99% of the passengers are vaccinated, according to Celebrity Cruises, a royal Caribbean cruise brand.

In the set of restrictions for passengers on the Celebrity Edge, the authorities are asking for proof of vaccination, as prescribed by the CDC. A new Florida law also bans businesses from requiring customers to show proof of vaccination.



Those who wish to join the cruise will be asked to share their vaccination status and those who do not show proof of being vaccinated against the disease will face additional restrictions.

The cruise lines are returning to business signalling cheer for the sector which will see Carnival vessels slated to depart from other ports next month.

"Words can't describe how excited we are to be a part of this historic sailing today," Elizabeth Rosner told AP. The 28-year-old moved from Michigan to Orlando, Florida, in December 2019 with her

fiance just to be close to the cruise industry's hub.

Carnival, Norwegian and Royal Caribbean, the three largest cruise companies, have had to raise more than \$40 billion in financing just to stay afloat. Collectively they lost \$20 billion last year and another \$4.5 billion in the first quarter of 2021, according to Securities and Exchange Commission filings.

Couples are getting a second shot at designing special memories with vaccines playing the role of artillery.

The pandemic forced Kurt and Carol Budde to cancel their beach celebration wedding aboard the world's largest ship, Symphony of the Seas, in March 2020. Covid-19 halted cruising six days before they were scheduled to tie the knot in St. Maarten. Kurt Budde's part-time gig as a travel agent also dried up.

"It's a honeymoon make-up cruise," said Kurt Budde, sporting matching shirts with the phrase "On Cruise Control."

"We are living our best lives post Covid-19 today," he said.



US vs China: Biden bets on alliances to push back against Beijing. Pic - Financial Times

## US says not trying to hold back China but set up a 'free and open' system

United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Saturday insisted that the goal of the current Biden-Harris administration is not to hold back China but to support a "free and open system" based on standards established after World War II. Blinken called for allied nations of the United States to band in solidarity against challenges posed by an increasingly assertive China.

"And I want to be clear on this, our goal is not to hold China back," he said, adding, "It is not to establish a policy against China. It is to support a free and open system based on the rules and standards that France and the United States established after WWII, and which have served us well."

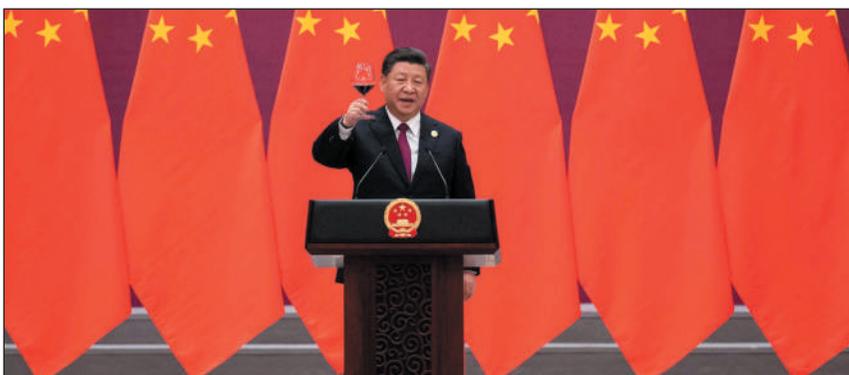
The statements come in the backdrop of recent criticisms at the G7 and NATO summits against Beijing's ambitious political gambits. While the participating countries took out joint statements criticising the Chinese government over its recent controversial exploits in human rights, trade ties, and coronavirus disease pandemic cooperation, there have been marked differences in the trans-Atlantic partnership regarding how exactly to go about it, reports Joydeep Bose of Hindustan Times.

The US prefers a hardline approach, and it seemingly wants to take its allies down this road as well. In his interviews, president Joe Biden has described the US-China rivalry with an almost fantastic edge, framing it as a conflict of interest between democratic forces and autocratic regimes. On the other hand, its allies in Europe, particularly Germany, where chancellor Angela Merkel was instrumental in penning down an EU-China investment agreement deal, might not be too keen on openly antagonising China.

The US administration realises that there is a disparity in approach, and has hence called for greater convergence among its allies. Even so, the gains made in the G7 summit seem to have bolstered US confidence in its allies, at least for now. In an interview with the office of the spokesperson in Paris, Antony Blinken said, "What I've seen, especially these last few weeks, is a convergence with regard to the approach to China and I think we see it the same way."

When asked about the reported difference between the US and its allies over China, Blinken simply said that the relationships that these countries share are too "complicated" to be effectively summed up in a single word or sentence.

## Xi Jinping's continuation in power could be 'very destabilising' for party: Experts



China's President Xi Jinping, unlike his predecessors, did not endorse a successor at the end of his first term in 2017. Pic - AFP

The Communist Party of China (CPC), with President Xi Jinping at the helm of affairs, is gearing up to celebrate its centenary on July 1. While the 90 million-strong member CPC has gone back to one leader party, especially after the removal of the two-term limit on the presidency, experts warn that continuation of Xi after two terms could potentially be "very destabilising" for the party in the future.

In a deviation from normal practice, CPC did not name a successor to the General Secretary during the second tenure of the party leadership, and the Chinese president is

expected to remain as their paramount leader during the reshuffle of the party's governing bodies at the twice-a-decade Party Congress next year, reports Kunal Gaurav of Hindustan Times.

South China Morning Post said in its report Friday that the twice-a-decade Party Congress next year will shed light on how he plans to tackle succession. According to the Hong Kong-based daily, the succession plan could prove to be Xi's biggest challenge and will shape the party for decades to come.

Deng Xiaoping, the moderate "paramount leader" of CPC who

guided the party till 1997, invented a collective leadership structure that accommodated all groups and sections within the party. But Xi, unlike his predecessors, did not endorse a successor at the end of his first term in 2017 and observers suggest that the emergence of a new leadership line-up next year remains highly unlikely.

Amid global adversity in the wake of a pandemic, Xi's supporters project his leadership as the need of the hour for the country but, according to Steve Tsang, director of the SOAS China Institute at the University of London, that could spell trouble for the party. "When succession finally looms, it can potentially be very destabilising if the structure and/or process is not clear and well defined," said Tsang.

Xi has solidified his own leadership position but potentially pushed the country towards a destabilising succession crisis, according to a joint report by the Centre for Strategic International Studies in the US and the Lowy Institute in Australia. The report, published earlier in April, suggests that China's political path is shrouded in great uncertainty.

Dr Francois Saw Lan Ip

# Mandatory Vaccination: 'The people smelled a rat and so became mistrustful'

**D**r FSL Ip is one of the veterans of the medical profession in Mauritius, having been in practice both public and private since 1959. He shares with our readers his considered views on the pandemic and vaccination, the public health services, medical education.

Read on:

\* We are not yet out of the woods, but the easing of the second lockdown restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic indicates we may be getting there. As regards the national vaccination programme, 500,000 persons have already been with a first dose of vaccine. Do you have fears of a resurgence of infection with the easing of the restrictions?

With the possible emergence of more virulent variants, we cannot lower our guard which has served us so well and, in the meantime, get those defective respirators acquired under infamous conditions in good working order. The ongoing vaccination programme can be better organised; for example, at the start of each session, the doctor and the nursing staff should know how many doses would be available and limit the size of the queue accordingly. Hence avoiding frustrating people who would have waited in vain.

\* Some 180.7 million cases have been reported globally, of which 165.4 million persons have been successfully treated. The latest press release issued by the government informs us that in Mauritius '1887 cases (including imported cases) of Covid-19 had been registered as from March 2020 to 25 June 2021... there were 391 active cases in Mauritius, out of which 369 were local cases and 22 imported cases'. Have would you rate the country's handling of the pandemic? Could we have mitigated its impacts?

In the first wave, the measures taken were very satisfactory but some people seem careless. For instance, the queue outside NTA Office in Port-Louis where most of the time no social distancing is maintained, as it can easily be seen from the main road at most times. Reinforcing measures against air pollution (smoke-belching buses & motorcycles) and tobacco are certainly not superfluous.

\* There has been resistance from an important number of the public education and health personnel to the vaccination drive, and besides restrictions of access to health and educational establishments to non-vaccinated people, government might go for legislations to make vaccination mandatory. What's your take on that?

The people have been welcoming vaccination against influenza with many voicing their thanks. However, when people were asked to sign away any possible claim for mishaps allegedly due to a Covid-19 vaccine, some, as the saying goes "smelled a rat" or thought that there were "anguille sous roche" and so became mistrustful.



“The people have been welcoming vaccination against influenza with many voicing their thanks. However, when people were asked to sign away any possible claim for mishaps allegedly due to a Covid-19 vaccine, some, as the saying goes “smelled a rat” or thought that there were “anguille sous roche” and so became mistrustful...”

If I were the Government I would have told the people there is an enemy invading our country and let us join forces; Government is providing ammunition and protection in the form of vaccines and it needs volunteers to help - to help themselves as well as others. In any war, injuries are inevitable; in any case the health services provided by Government are free of charge. So, the consent form is redundant and has scared some people unnecessarily.

When I went for medical studies in 1959 in the UK, there was conscription in force - that is the enlistment of people for compulsory military service - and conscientious objectors were accepted after convincing a tribunal of their sincerity. Compulsions often raise hackles un-

necessarily. Providing the public with accurate and full information is in brief my response to mandatory measures.

\* You have worked in the public health services for about 30 years, and you have been on your own to date since 1988. What's your opinion of our public health services which benefits today thanks to a huge budget from more resources in terms of personnel, technology and logistics?

Year after year during the past three decades or more, the Director of Audit reports have exposed waste in the Ministry of Health (and others).

“I have had the privilege and honour of working for Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam and appreciated him very much both as a doctor who even as a busy Prime Minister managed for quite some time to govern with only a two-vote majority. He kept reading medical journals and kept asking me questions. He also showed great concern for all the patients whom he asked me to help. Dr R. Chaperon and Dr Leckraz Teelock were also much respected. To be good at both politics and medical practice depends on the degree of humaneness of each one concerned...”

As regards personnel, hospital administrators are better qualified to emit an opinion, but I can say that I have found many sinecures. While I was working at Long Mountain Hospital there was a noisy incident between the steward and some labourers over who should work over a public holiday. Later the steward told me that each one wanted to work on a public holiday because of extra pay (for easier work) on such days. Rumours sometimes are rife amongst hospital staff that so and so got a job through political backing when that so and so was not pulling his weight.

On the other hand, technological facilities are often misused. One example: MRI are often requested and carried out on patients with backache or other ailments. Had proper tests been done, these would have obviated the use of the expensive MRI. Often this is done as part of the Defensive Medicine when the doctor tries to avoid being accused of medical negligence.

Finally, regarding logistics, I recall how the late B. Ramlallah would go and check on the quality & quantity of the vegetables brought at Poudre d'Or hospital by the contractor. Now and again one hears of improbable theft of, for example blankets, sputum-mugs with lid in stainless steel, etc., in the hospital.

I have seen many prescriptions for unjustified items, notably NSAID (Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drug or Antibiotics). Early on in the medical curriculum, students are taught the signs of inflammation - an easily remembered Latin rhyme, namely: Calor, Dolor, Rubror and Tumor - that is Heat, Pain, Redness and Swelling respectively. Many such NSAIDs have been prescribed in the absence of those signs.

● Cont. on page 8

# 'To be good at both politics and medical practice depends on the degree of humaneness of each one concerned'

● Cont. from page 7

Abuse or over prescription of antibiotics are well known. Likewise, many vitamins are prescribed when not really needed and many people do not realise that excess Vitamins A & D can have harmful effects.

Then there was the bad quality of medicines supplied to hospitals which was demonstrated by a member of the Legislative Assembly some years ago. I hope that progress has been made on that front.



“The question is basically about whether Medicine is an Art or a Science. In the 19th century it was predominantly Art, but nowadays predominantly Science. High-tech Medicine is ever innovating but the teaching of the art comes from gifted teachers. At the University of Edinburgh where I trained we had some excellent teachers, amongst whom we had Professor Derrick Dunlop whose expressions still ring in my head, for example: “Use your God-given senses”, or he would refer to such and such vague diagnosis as “the refuge of the diagnostically destitute doctor”. Are present-day medical schools better at teaching both the Art & the Science? I can't say...”

There are sometimes medicines in the central stores which were left unused or ordered in excessive amounts from some pressure groups. I hope that with digital control of stocks things have improved.

There is also the poor maintenance of hospital equipment which I think need to be looked into.

**\* Do you think we could have done more in terms of better healthcare delivery with less public funding, as some frugal budget specialists would want us to believe?**

Yes! A good time-and-motion study of staff and patients will also help in that regard.

**\* Alternative medicines have not taken off in our health system. Why is that so? Lack of interest from the public authorities/medical practitioners, or is it due to resistance from insurance agencies?**

60 Mauritian doctors had followed courses on Acupuncture by a lady doctor and a lady interpreter from Beijing over three courses per year for a two-year period (1986/1987) under the sponsorship of the UNDP. 54 were awarded the appropriate certificate. There is a committee in the Ministry of Health regarding Chinese Traditional Medicine and Ayurvedic Medicine. Acupuncture is relatively time consuming, each session averaging 20-30 minutes per patient. Local insurance companies do not refund for acupuncture because I think their reinsurers do not, but they refund on prescription medicines.

**\* Will it take much to improve the quality of our public health services, and which particular area/s should be looked at right away or on a priority basis?**

The quality of our public health services needs faithful and complete auditing and diligent application of their recommendations.

**\* There have been enormous advances in medical training across the world. We speak today of the technological transformation of medical education. Would you say that we are now producing better doctors than what the University of Edinburgh, for instance, could do half a century ago?**

The question is basically about whether Medicine is an Art or a Science.

In the 19th Century it was predominantly Art, but nowadays predominantly Science.

High-tech Medicine is ever innovating but the teaching of the art comes from gifted teachers. At the University of Edinburgh where I trained we had some excellent teachers, amongst whom we had Professor Derrick Dunlop whose expressions still ring in my head, for example: “Use your God-given senses”, or he would refer to such and such vague diagnosis as “the refuge of the diagnostically destitute doctor”.

Are present-day medical schools better at teaching both the Art & the Science?

I can't say, but I hope so. The University of Edinburgh had teaching hospitals of good repute because of the many generous donations but with the advent of the National Health Service, such donations are probably

“When I went for medical studies in 1959 in the UK, there was conscription in force - that is the enlistment of people for compulsory military service - and conscientious objectors were accepted after convincing a tribunal of their sincerity. Compulsions often raise hackles unnecessarily. Providing the public with accurate and full information is in brief my response to mandatory measures...”

getting rare so the level of the different medical schools in the UK are more or less on the same level.

**\* There seems to be some nostalgia (just like there is to this day the same feelings for our earlier generation of politicians) amongst our seniors about some particular doctors in the public service and in private practice who in decades past did very well as medical practitioners. If that was indeed the case, what was different then?**

When I started working in Mauritius in 1959 up to 1980s, patients and their relatives were really appreciative of most doctors in hospitals or private practice. But in the 1970s things started to change in the attitude of patients and their relatives. For example, in the 1960s when an elderly had been treated in hospital and had not fully recovered, some relatives were keen to take their relative home but in the 1980s such a patient even fully cured were left behind in the ward for days because there was dissension amongst his/her children as to who should take the relative home. Likewise, patient's relatives demand more attention for their sick people and tend to sue for negligence more and more.

**\* How would you rate the medical training of our doctors today and their performance?**

I have not seen the curriculum of the medical schools at which our present-day doctors have been trained, but I have some reservations on a simple thing such as taking the blood pressure with a mercury thermometer by certain doctors whom I have had had the chance to see in operation.

**\* We spoke about the earlier generations of medical practitioners and politicians. Do you think doctors make good politicians?**

In the 1960s and 1970s the medical practitioners who were also in politics rendered good service in both activities. I have had the privilege and honour of working for Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam and appreciated him very much both as a doctor who even as a busy Prime Minister managed for quite some time to govern with only a two-vote majority. He kept reading medical journals and kept asking me questions. He also showed great concern for all the patients whom he asked me to help. Dr R. Chaperon and Dr Leckraz Teelock were also much respected. To be good at both politics and medical practice depends on the degree of humaneness of each one concerned.



Arvind Saxena

# Character Building - What Values Need To Be Taught

*"Man becomes virtuous by doing virtuous deeds and becomes brave by doing brave deeds".*

*-- Aristotle*

Founders of democracy like Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, John and Abigail Adams and Benjamin Franklin saw democracy as a moral compact between the people. They were aware that democracy contained within itself the seeds of its own destruction and could degenerate into 'mobocracy', with the many preying on the few. They advocated that education had to be given the highest priority for democracy to work. Literature and history were taught to provide examples of high ethical standards and morally uplifting thoughts.

Moral values were, however, mostly rooted in religion and the spiritual dimension of human existence. With large scale migration to the US from different countries, with different religious persuasions, philosophers like Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud and Friedrich Nietzsche advocated separation of the church from state doctrine. Some educators became proponents of "value free" schooling and moral education took a back seat. It was seen as the province of the family and the church.

The fact, however, is that informal lessons in morality do not compete with numeracy, literacy, career education or health education, and at the same time they are not ancillary to acquisition of knowledge and skills. Informal moral education can permeate all subjects, becoming a part of intellectual development and a wholesome school experience. Remember the 'school honour code' and quotes like 'Honesty is the Best Policy' inscribed on exercise books, irrespective of the subjects they were used for!

Excessive competition, parental expectations, commercialization of education, negative impact of media, misuse of information technology, globalization, consumerism, etc., are putting immense pressure on children, families and schools leading to distortion of values. Growing up in a consumerist milieu has led to a struggle for intangible goals like reputation, status, and pride; all of which are comparative in nature and therefore cause resentment and anger. In turn, such goals incite unhealthy competition and violence. Moral education, unobtrusively, shows the right and just way to lead our lives. Being honest, just, legitimate, accommodative, generous, to share love and care, show consideration and sensitivity are basic principles of moral education. It is important to educate children to be disciplined, not to cheat in examinations and be shown that there are no shortcuts in life. Life is an examination where there is no syllabus, the only thing that can get them through is a good character and speaking the truth at all times.

Discussion on moral issues should be dialogical, rather than didactic. There should be a degree of reciprocity between students and teachers, a sense of shared vulnerability in the pursuit of an ethical life. Students should be encouraged to make their arguments, offer evidence, show they are listening to others and reading the texts with care. Such dialogue should high-



CHARACTER COUNTS - Values are the building blocks of character. Pic - slideplayer.com

**Values are the building blocks of character and shape the nature and quality of our personal and social interactions**

light the inevitability of an ethical life, firing up moral imagination by enabling the student and teacher alike to see the world from one another's point of view. My views on justice, knowledge, and truth are not "shut up words". We have to have the virtue of accepting that our truth could also be shown to be faulty.

**"My views on justice, knowledge, and truth are not "shut up words". We have to have the virtue of accepting that our truth could also be shown to be faulty. So who gets to decide what moral values should be taught in our schools. In multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies, parents from different denominations are naturally concerned that moral values delinked from religion, might lead to their children being weaned away from their faith..."**

So who gets to decide what moral values should be taught in our schools. In multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies, parents from different denominations are naturally concerned that moral values delinked from religion, might lead to their children being weaned away from their faith. Any attempt to enforce the majority population's faith and beliefs would be resented by other sections. As mentioned in the beginning, moral values are qualities which are necessary for harmonious civic living. Enforcing 'majoritarian' views will do exactly the opposite. It will create and deepen fissures which can only weaken the social fabric and weaken the country.

The alternative to taking a call on what moral education should be imparted to our young would, however, be tantamount to 'moral evasion' – nobody wants that either. So is there a religion-neutral space, a space which can be the bedrock for moral education without shutting out the spirit of enquiry, exploration and challenging the status-quo? Keeping the doors of debate open, can we agree on some qualities of the heart and mind we would want in our children so that they can grow into confident youngsters who can build the nation, indeed the world, into a better place? How about traits like honesty, responsibility,

respect for others, compassion, curiosity, self control, critical enquiry, and capacity to be self-critical and diligent, while eliminating habits of laziness and sloppiness. How about imbibing the courage to affirm moral commitments and stand up for them. Can anyone have a problem with these? Yet, howsoever obvious and natural these may seem, prioritising these qualities could carry elements of our own religious beliefs, unique socialisation and upbringing.

Can we try and find some common ground from the critical, even existential, problems facing our nation as a part of the global community? Can we broadly agree that these problems are: growing crime; poor education, health and employment opportunities; mounting disparities in incomes; gender, ethnic, communal and religious chasms; corruption; and degradation of the environment? We could certainly add some more, but these do appear to be our top most concerns. Since these problems have to be minimised, we need to create awareness about them and give our children a set of values which will give them the moral strength to fight these ills and create a more egalitarian and harmonious society – a society in harmony with all other citizens, the global community and nature.

A morally strong population with the strength of character to stand up for the ethical values picked up through a carefully charted school curriculum will be a strong bulwark against Machiavellianism, authoritarianism, human rights abuse and rapacious plunder of natural resources. Once we are agreed on this, the moral values we need to inculcate in our young, and even grownups, emerge - as if by magic!

The time to start building a new and morally strong nation is now.

(This is the second of a three-part series of articles.)

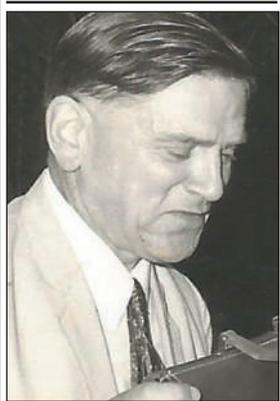
**Arvind Saxena is an Indian civil servant and a former Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) in India.**

From the Pages of History - MT 60 Years Ago

4<sup>th</sup> Year No 166

MAURITIUS TIMES

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• *To have ideas is to gather flowers; to think is to weave them into garlands.* -- Sophie Swetchine

Peter Ibbotson

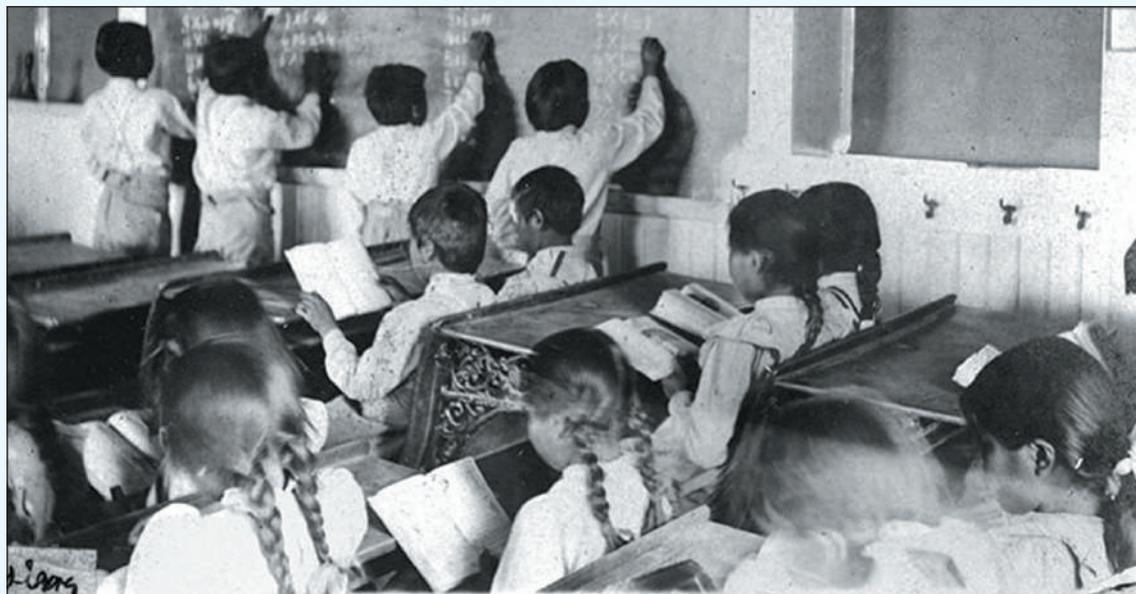
UNESCO seems suddenly to have become aware of the existence of Mauritius. I referred last week to a report on 'Illiteracy at Mid-century' in which the incidence of illiteracy in Mauritius, as revealed at the last census, is detailed. Now, another UNESCO publication has a passage on educational development in Mauritius.

This time it is the issue of the series 'Educational Abstracts' for September 1957 (1 shilling; 50 frs.; Rs 0.67). Entitled 'Long Range Educational Planning', the document deals with the educational development plans of a number of territories, self-governing as well as dependent. 13 of the 26 territories dealt with are British colonies; but the others include countries such as China, the USSR and India.

Of Mauritius, the document says: "The Education Department carried out a survey in 1951 of existing school accommodation in Mauritius and prepared this five-year programme for primary and secondary school buildings. The plan consists of: (a) construction of 56 primary schools providing an additional 12,000 places allowing the space of 10 square feet per pupil; (b) construction of a girls' government secondary school to accommodate 300 pupils with allowance for possible expansion to 500 pupils; (c) rebuild the Royal College and the Royal College School on new sites to accommodate 500 pupils each rather than the present roll of about 300; (d) give financial assistance, up to two-thirds of the cost, to rebuild or expand non-government schools of the Church of England, Roman Catholic, Hindu and Moslem Education Authorities; (e) raise the annual teacher turn-out to 150."

The document invites readers to supply "progress reports on work undertaken in relation to the long-range plans recorded". It will be very interesting indeed to see the progress report furnished by the Education Department to UNESCO on the fulfilment of the five-year plan announced as a Sessional Paper in 1952.

Let us look at a few figures and facts to see what progress has been made. First, remember that the survey was undertaken in 1951, and the plans were to be fulfilled within five years. As it is now near the end of 1957, it is reasonable to take the 'Report of the



'Education Department' for 1956 and compare it with the 'Report of the Education Department' for 1951, to see how the state of education in Mauritius has progressed in five years.

The five-year-plan promised 56 new primary schools. We find that in 1951 there were 143 primary schools, of which 67 were government and 76 aided. In 1956, the numbers had gone up to 163 primary schools in all, of which 86 were Government and 77 aided. Instead of the 56 new schools as the plan envisaged, we find an additional 20 only! Only one of these being an aided school, what becomes of the fine and pious assertion in paragraph (d), that financial assistance would be given to the education authorities to build or enlarge schools? What will UNESCO be told?

The number of children attending primary schools between 1951 and 1956 went up, by more than 12,000 (60,143 in 1951 and 74,288 in 1956); but this was not due to the construction of the promised 12,000 extra school places. No, indeed, these extra children were often crammed into school into far less than the 10 square feet promised. Mr Snell himself said in his notorious broadcast last year that "nearly every one of our primary schools is overcrowded. There are sometimes nine children sitting on a bench seven feet long. In these few inches we expect the child to listen to the teacher, to learn to write and not to be naughty." And as Mr Snell admitted, many schools are holding classes on verandahs or under trees; or out in the open at desks improvised out of scrap wood resting on empty dried milk tins.

The increased enrolment of children is not due to any effort by the education department to get the five-year-plan implemented. It is due to the earnest desire of many parents to have their children educated; the extra numbers of parents sending children to private primary schools is proof of this.

Of the extra number of children at school in 1956, the

bigger proportion of the increase is attending government schools – not unnaturally in view of the new government schools that have been built.

The inclusion of plans to build a new Royal College School in the five-year plan suggests, of course, that it was intended to have the new school completed by the end of the plan. Yet work on the new school was not even begun until after Princess Margaret had laid the foundation stone in September 1956. Developments at the Royal College were not complete by the end of 1956, for the 1956 'Report of the Education Department' admits that "the new assembly hall and classroom block at the Royal College is not yet finished".

Of teacher-training, the Education Department could give a rather better

account by comparison with 1951. In the first four years of the training college, only 269 teachers were turned out (96 of them in 1951); but in 1956, 229 students (excluding the handicraft teachers) passed their final examinations. However, only 101 of these had followed a two-year training course; and it is this length of course which we in the UK look upon as the minimum for teacher-training. However, on bare figures alone (and bearing in mind the urgent necessity for teachers to cope with the increased school enrolments) the Education Department can take credit for having fulfilled this part of the five-year plan.

But when will the progress report be sent to UNESCO; and just what will it say? It will obviously have now to be a report from the Minister for Education – and it will thus be the Minister who will have to bear the implied criticism for non-fulfilment of the plan; whereas the criticism properly belongs to the colonial regime. And to Secretaries of State who, like Mr Lyttelton (he was then) in 1953, said Mauritius was spending too much on the social services.

On the subject of the Education Department, I cannot help noticing the remarkable fact that in the same month the Department brought out its report for both 1955 and 1956. How pleasant it is to have up-to-date statistics relating to education; since the report for 1955 appeared in September 1957, may we hope that no future annual report will be delayed longer than nine months after the end of the calendar year to which it refers? None the less, while it is good to have figures and facts soon after the end of the year, I would like to know what has happened to the table showing the number of school pupils at primary and secondary schools according to race? Such figures are essential to us if we are to judge whether the various racial groups are being afforded equal opportunity of getting secondary education; and we are denied the figures.

## Commission of Inquiry on Betamax-STC Contract

# 'This apparently is the first time that we will have a commission of inquiry with its hands tied'

● Cont. from page 4

\* The Cabinet decision refers only to an inquiry into the circumstances in which the Contract of Affreightment was awarded and its termination. Do we therefore conclude that the legality of the award and its termination will not be looked into?

This is unlikely. The highest court, namely the Privy Council, has ruled that the contract was not illegal. The commission should look into the circumstances surrounding the award and its rescission and nothing more.

\* Should we also conclude that the commission of inquiry will also seek to identify those parties who, on the one hand, facilitated or awarded the contract to Betamax (not deemed illegal by the Singapore Arbitrator and not against the public policy of Mauritius by the Privy Council) and, on the other hand, terminated the said contract (successfully contested by Betamax before the Arbitrator and Privy Council)?

“It might be embarrassing for a sitting judge to chair such a commission as the judgment of the Supreme Court in the Betamax case was reversed by the Privy Council. That said, the decision rests with the government. It must be pointed out, and this is said without in any way attacking the honesty or integrity of anyone, that the perception in the public is that those who are called upon to chair commissions of inquiry or fact-finding committees must be or appear to be in the good books of the regime of the day...”

Who are the parties? The contract was awarded in 2009 when Navin Ramgoolam was Prime Minister. There have been allegations that Vikram Bhunjun's ties with his brother-in-law Rajesh Jeetah, then Minister in the Ramgoolam Cabinet, would have played in his favour. That remains to be

proved and no doubt the commission will delve into that aspect.

The Leader of the Opposition, Xavier Duval, who pressed for the setting up of a commission of inquiry, was a member of the Ramgoolam government in 2009 and he is deemed to have consented to the award. He was also a member of the Sir Anerood Jugnauth government when the contract was rescinded. Though he has publicly stated he was against the rescission, he did not resign when the contract was rescinded. He also did not publicly make known his disagreement with the award of the contract to Betamax.

Very interestingly, Pravind Jugnauth was Minister of Finance in the Ramgoolam government in 2010, and it would appear he had nothing to say against the contract. Why?

Showkutally Soodhun was also a Minister in the then Ramgoolam government. He stood up in Parliament to say, in reply to a question addressed by Paul Bérenger, that there was nothing objec-

tionable to the contract.

Roshi Bhadain, perceived to be the prime promoter behind the rescission, is now an ally of both Paul Bérenger and Xavier Duval.

All this crowd should be heard by the commission of inquiry, and it will be interesting to follow their evidence before the commission. It is to be hoped that they will come forward voluntarily; if they don't, they should be summoned... they cannot refuse to attend.

\* Could it be expected that the commission of inquiry might go against the findings of the Singapore Arbitrator and the Privy Council?

Certainly not. It will have to tread carefully, but again all depends on its terms of reference.

\* What latitude will the Commission have?

It would appear that this is the first time that we will have a commission of inquiry with its hands tied.

## What are tax havens?

The G-7 wants to set a minimum global tax rate, which would make it harder for countries to act as tax havens



\* Cont. from page 2

The loss of the complete secrecy that Switzerland once provided has made shell companies – and the countries that make them easy to set up – much more attractive. Shell companies are basically companies without active business operations or significant assets that are stacked one on top of the other to make it harder to trace ownership.

### In the eye of the beholder

Identifying a tax haven isn't as simple for the governments intent on controlling them as it is for the taxpayers who seek them out. This is mainly because governments and international organizations tend to think a tax haven is somewhere other than where they live.

For example, the European Union produces an annual list of tax havens that con-

tains no EU member countries, even though many other lists identify Ireland, Luxembourg and a host of other European countries as tax havens.

And while several groups have described the United States as a tax haven – Forbes even calls it the best in the world – the US government would never do so, even though it fits all the key criteria, such as providing legal ways to avoid virtually all taxation and strong taxpayer privacy.

### The race to the bottom

This is why the G-7 global corporate minimum 15% tax agreement is unlikely to work.

Of course, I applaud the effort. Without a minimum tax, countries are stuck in a never-ending race to the bottom, whereby every time one government cuts its corporate tax rates, another soon follows with even lower rates.

The problem is the G-7 has to get more than 130 other countries to go along with its minimum tax rate. Many countries, including Ireland and China, seem unlikely to give up something that has brought them so much economic advantage.

*Beverly Moran Professor Emerita of Law, Vanderbilt University*



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### Application to Director General of the Mauritius Revenue Authority for the issue of a Licence under Part III of the Excise Act

MPMH International Ltd of Royal Road Pereybere has applied to the Director General of the Mauritius Revenue Authority for the issue of a new licence of **Retailer of Liquor and Alcoholic Products - Restaurant at Royal Road Pereybere.**

Any objection to the issue of the above licence, should be made to the Director General, Mauritius Revenue Authority, Ehram Court, C/r Mon Seigneur Gonin & Sir Virgil Naz Streets, Port Louis within 21 days as from date published in the Gazette.

# 'You're the best!'

## Your belief in your kids' academic ability can actually improve their grades

We have all met the parent who thinks their kid is the next Picasso or Einstein regardless of the evidence. But it's hard to know if these beliefs are helpful or harmful.



**O**verly optimistic parents could reduce their kids' drive to work harder and give them a false idea of the opportunities available to them. Or this same optimism could fill the child with confidence, kindle their self-belief and give them the courage to try harder.

We set out to discover which of these possibilities is most likely. We found a mother's optimism about how good their child is in maths and reading consistently benefited children.

In our study, when a mum's optimism was higher, their child gained better school results and their interest in school subjects increased. But gender stereotypes could get in the way. Mums were consistently more optimistic about their sons in maths and their daughters in reading.

We know kids from wealthy backgrounds often have better academic results and numerous academic advantages over their peers. We may also think wealthier parents are generally more optimistic about their children's success.

But we found only modest and generally inconsistent evidence mothers' optimism was more likely among the wealthy. More importantly, our findings that optimism leads to better school outcomes and more academic interest was the same regardless of a mother's socioeconomic status.

### What we did

Grumbling about how every child needs a participation trophy these days is

a common refrain. Back in the "good old days", some might say, kids got hard truths and parents spurred their children to greater heights by grudgingly giving praise and pessimistically assessing their child's academic performance.

We wanted to find out whether parents could benefit their children most by being a bit more optimistic or by laying down hard truths.

We used data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC). This data comes from 2,602 Australian children and their primary caregiver.



Is it better for a parent to cheer on their kid, or give them hard truths? Pic - Shutterstock

The primary caregiver in the data was almost always a mother, so we focused on them. But we think our results would be true for all parents and guardians.

Included in the longitudinal study was an assessment by mothers about whether their child was below average, average or above average in reading and maths performance.

We then matched the mother's assessment of their child to the child's NAPLAN results in the same year.

This gave us insight into whether children's grades in maths and reading actually were below average, average or above average.

Where mums judged their child's maths and reading performance more positively than school results suggested, we called this optimism. We called more negative judgements pessimism.

We used the resulting optimism or pessimism data from one year and showed how this impacted NAPLAN and academic interest two years later. So we'd look at the data for year 3 and how this changed in year 5, for example.

Thus, we were able to show that mothers optimism and pessimism was associated with change in academic outcomes two years later.

We also found, on average, mums were more optimistic about their child's ability than their child's school results suggested. We found this not only improved their kid's later school results but also increased their interest in school.

For example, let's imagine a child who scores in the 50th percentile in their year 5 NAPLAN numeracy test. Let's also imagine their mother is more optimistic about her child's ability than usual (specifically one standard deviation more optimistic than she usually is). Our results suggest this child will move up to the 55th percentile in the year 7 NAPLAN numeracy test.

In comparison, if this mother was more pessimistic than usual, the same child could expect to fall to the 45th percentile by year 7.

### Could other factors be responsible for these results?

A child's results could appear to be influenced by their mother's confidence in them, when the influence is actually due to other factors such as the child having changed schools between the first NAPLAN test and the next. We used

some relatively new statistical methods to ensure any pre-existing differences between participants (such as socioeconomic status, urban or rural residence, or private or public schools) could not easily provide an alternative explanation for our findings.

These methods are not perfect and other alternative explanations for our findings are still possible. This includes differences between participants that develop during the course of the study. But our study provides more confidence than usual studies that find a correlation between two factors. So, we are relatively confident a mother's optimism was really having the impact we saw.

### Mothers showed some gender stereotyping

We found optimism sometimes varied depending on the child's gender. In particular, mothers' optimism often aligned with gender stereotypes that boys are better at math and girls are better at reading.

Mothers were more optimistic about their sons' ability in maths than their daughters' and more optimistic about their daughters' ability in reading than their sons — even if both performed just as well.

Other research shows parents with strong beliefs that girls are bad at maths tend to give homework help that is both intrusive and controlling. This could lead to poorer school results and reduced motivation.

### How does optimism help?

But how does optimism help kids succeed? We think there are a few ways. Other research suggests parents invest more time and resources (such as tutors) in their child's education if they believe their child can be successful. Likewise, having someone in your corner can be a powerful motivator to try harder in school.

But could unrealistic optimism be damaging? There was some evidence in our study that too much optimism could be neutral or even harmful. But this was only true at very extreme levels, and the evidence was pretty weak.

We think the reason even extreme levels of optimism may not be detrimental because the world will do a pretty good job of keeping kids' egos in check.

Our results reinforce the powerful role parents can play in the academic success of their children. The findings also contradict some people's beliefs you must be cruel to be kind or that a parent's role is to provide their children with a reality check.

**Philip D. Parker,**  
Australian Catholic University; Jake  
Anders, UCL;  
**Rhiannon Parker,**  
University of Sydney; Taren Sanders,  
Australian Catholic University



## Covid-19 vaccine

A Bengali, a Punjabi, a Gujarati and a hardcore leftist Keralite were reluctant to take the Covid-19 vaccine.

The doctor called them in one by one. He told the Bengali, "You must take your vaccine."

The Bengali said, "No."

The doctor said, "Every cultured and civilised man takes the vaccine."

The Bengali took his vaccine.

Then the Punjabi came in.

The doctor said, "Here is your vaccine."

Punjabi said, "No."

The doctor said, "Your neighbours have all taken the vaccine."

So the Punjabi took the vaccine.

Then the Gujarati came in.

The doctor said, "Take your vaccine."

Gujarati said, "No."

And the doctor said: "It's an order from Prime Minister Modi."

The Gujarati took his vaccine.

Finally the Keralite came in.

The doctor said, "Take your vaccine."

Keralite said, "No."

The doctor said, "Every cultured and civilised man takes the vaccine."

The Keralite said, "Go away, I will never take the vaccine."

The doctor then said, "All your neighbours have taken it."

The Keralite replied, "I don't care."

The doctor, now desperate, said, "It's an order from Prime Minister Modi."

The Keralite replied, "I don't care."

Finally the doctor asked, "Which state are you from?"

The Keralite said, "I am from Kerala."

The doctor said, "Oh sorry, you are not entitled to have the vaccine."

The Keralite said, "What!?! Who are you to tell me that I cannot have the vaccine? How dare you deny me my fundamental rights! Give me the vaccine or I will protest outside your clinic!"

The doctor gladly gave him the vaccine and the Mallu proudly took it and said to his comrades, "I fought and got the vaccination!"

## Cleansing of sin

Depressed and guilty a woman goes to seek her priest for forgiveness.

"Forgive me father, for I have sinned," she says.

"What have you done, my child?" asks the priest.

"Last night my boyfriend made love to me three times," the woman says.

"You must go home and suck the juice from three lemons," says the padre.

"Will that cleanse me of my sins?" the woman asks.

"No," the holy man replies, "but it will wipe that smug grin off your face."

\*\*\*

A new vacuum salesman knocked at the door...

a Parsi lady opened it. Before she could speak, the salesman rushed into the living room and emptied a bag of cow dung on the carpet.

Salesman: 'Madam, if I couldn't clean this up in the next 3 mins with my new powerful vacuum cleaner, I will EAT all this!'

Parsi Lady: 'Do you need chili sauce with that?'

Salesman: 'Why, Madam?'

Parsi Lady: 'Because there's no

electricity in the house!'

\*\*\*

Wife: "I have a lot of used clothing I'd like to donate."

Husband: "Why not just throw them in the trash? That's much easier."

Wife: "But there are poor starving people who can really use all these clothes."

Husband: "Honey, anyone who fits into your clothes is not starving."

Husband is recovering from head injury.

\*\*\*

When I was in primary school, I used to ask a lot of questions.

One day, I asked my teacher why do we ignore some letters in pronunciation e.g. the letter in hour, honour, etc.

My teacher said: "We are not ignoring them, they're considered silent."

I was even more confused...

During the lunch break, my teacher gave me her packed lunch and asked me to heat it in the cafeteria. I ate the food and returned her empty container.

My teacher said, "What happened, I told you to heat my food, you are returning an empty container."

I replied: "Madam, I thought h was silent."

## Life Stories

# Indian coin currency history



Coinage in India since Mughal times till soon after Independence.

Phootie Cowrie to Cowrie  
Cowrie to Damri  
Damri to Dhela  
Dhela to Pie  
Pie to Paisa  
Paisa to Rupya

256 Damri = 192 Pie = 128 Dhela = 64 Paisa = 16 Anna = 1 Rupya.

256 Damri = 192 Pie  
192 Pie = 128 Dhela  
128 Dhela = 64 Paisa  
64 Paisa = 16 Anna  
16 Anna = 1 Rupya

Now you know how some of the old Indian sayings originated...

*Ek phootie cowrie nahi dunga!*  
I won't give you a single penny!

*Do cowrie ki aukat nahi hai!*  
You have absolutely no money!

*Dhele ka kaam nahin karti hamari bahu!*  
Our daughter-in-law does not work for money!

*Pie pie ka hisab lunga!*  
I will get my pound of flesh!

*Jaan chali jaye par damri naa jaye!*  
Don't go for less than your full potential!

*Vo kisi ko ek Dhela naa de!*  
He won't give anyone a penny!

## Life's Lessons

# You are the best. Stay as you are

Shweta covered a distance of 10 km in one hour.

Akash covered the same distance in one and a half hours.

Which of the two is faster and healthier?

Of course our answer will be Shweta.

What if we say that Shweta covered this distance on a prepared track while Akash did it by walking on a sandy path? Then our answer will be Akash.

But when we come to know that Shweta is 50 years old while Akash is 25 years old? Then our answer will be Shweta again.

But we also come to know that Akash's

weight is 140 kgs while Shweta's weight is 65 kgs. Again our answer will be Akash.

As we learn more about Akash and Shweta, our opinions and judgments about who is better will change. The reality of life is also similar. We form opinions very superficially and hastily, due to which we are not able to do justice to ourselves and others.

Opportunities vary.  
Life is different.  
Resources differ.  
Problems change.  
Solutions are different.

Therefore the excellence of life is not in comparing with anyone but in testing oneself. You are the best. Stay as you are and keep trying your best according to your circumstances. Stay healthy, stay cool, stay satisfied, keep smiling, keep laughing, keep on serving society and the country.

## Relationships

# 5 behaviours mentally strong people don't tolerate



*You can't control how people act, but you can control what you accept from them*

Every single day we're faced with an internal question that we don't often define to ourselves. Yet, it dictates the quality of almost every area of life.

Our relationships, our careers, our friendships, our family life...

The question is: *What behaviours am I willing to accept from the people around me?*

Two of the most important things we can decide are how we're going to treat other people, and how we're going to let other people treat us.

That being said - I am going to stay away from emotional abuse terminology like gaslighting and similar, because all types of people are susceptible to abuse and I never want to make that blanket statement.

But, there are some more "run of the mill" toxic behaviors that people who hold high standards for themselves simply will not tolerate. Here are a few:

## 1: Being talked down to

It doesn't matter if you're on a date, at work, or in a long term relationship - you are a human being who is worthy of respect. That worthiness is *not* affected by your job title, bank account balance, race, gender, or any other factors.

Being **human** is enough. It has always been enough.

But, it's not always that simple. If someone "senior" to you at work talks to you like you're stupid, how can you express a disapproval with the tone?

### At work:

*"I appreciate your patience while I learn*

*these new skills."*

*"It's helpful to have these open dialogues while I continue to learn the ropes."*

### In your personal life:

*"I understand that you're upset, but personal insults will not solve the problem any faster."*

*"I'm sure we can both agree that it's important to remain respectful during conversations like this."*

## 2: Disrespect of your time

One of the clearest ways to show that you respect someone, is to respect their time.

This is why being punctual is important to both dates and business meetings. You don't know what this person has planned before or after their time with you, and honouring that time in the agreed upon manner is a great way of showing that you respect them.

Hence, needing to have *your* time respected in return.

We're all late sometimes. We all have emergencies come up sometimes - but if someone is *consistently* disrespecting your time, bailing on you, or always being late, they either don't think you have anything else going on in your life or they're too self-absorbed to even care.

Either way, they're not the types of people you need to be around.

Obviously, some of these situations are harder than others. Perhaps you've got a high-paying client who's always changing things around. If so, it's important to set boundaries from the beginning of your business relationship.

### At work:

*"The hours you can expect me to respond to emails are between X-X, except for emergencies."*

*"This project is allocated 3 revisions, and anything over that is the standard hourly rate."*

### In your personal life:

*"I'm really working on protecting my personal time right now as I focus on what's important."*

*"I can tell life is busy for you right now and I'd love to get together when you're able to commit to making the time."*

## 3: Gossiping about others

Let me be clear - this is a point meant to preserve the integrity of those not present to defend themselves.

Someone is talking trash at the water cooler, or on a date, or in the locker room, and it's making you uncomfortable.

These are times we are tested because it may be socially unpopular to take a stand in defense of others, particularly when the rest of the group all seems to be joining in the "fun."

It's also when we must remember that strong people stand up for themselves, but stronger people stand up for others.

### Try:

*"I prefer to air my grievances directly to someone's face."*

*"I'm going to reserve judgment until I hear everyone's side."*

*"I'd venture a guess that there are more productive things we could be talking about."*

## 4: Manipulation

Manipulation can happen in any setting, personal or professional. Odds are, you know exactly when it's happening, too.

Manipulation is not always something that starts out as being drastic or extreme. In some cases, it may not even be *intentional*.

But, if someone intentionally or unintentionally begins to see that they can always "get their way" (you'll fill in for them at work, you'll make excuses for them, you'll justify their bad behaviour...) then certain personality types could take advantage of this (and you).

Someone who recognizes their own self-worth will never allow manipulation on any level.

Consciously choosing to do something for someone is one thing - but feeling *obligated* because you may lose their "friendship," or fall out of their good graces if you don't do their bidding is a whole other scenario.

Allowing yourself to be manipulated in small ways opens the door to the "ask"

subsequently becoming larger each time around. What's more, it puts you in a position of servitude when there should be equality of respect.

### Try:

*"That sounds like something you should be doing on your own."*

*"I have too much stacked on my plate right now to successfully add another task."*

## 5: Losing control of self-talk

Perhaps the most challenging at all. It is difficult to change how we speak to others, but it is an even higher mountain to change how we speak to ourselves.

Which is precisely why the rewards are so much greater.

Mentally strong people don't lose control of their self-talk because it's the very foundation of how we see ourselves and the world.

Being conscious and deliberate about how we speak to ourselves is the very method by which we can alter our own reality and identity.

Instead of saying:

*"I'm so bad at this."*

### Try:

*"I'm working on improving at this."*

*"I'm developing new skills around this."*

*"I'm in the process of getting better at this."*

Other friendly self-reminders:

*"My time is valuable."*

*"I am worthy of respect."*

*"What I do for a living does not define me."*

*"There are people who love and appreciate me."*

*"I work each day to make a positive impact."*

*"I've overcome 100% of my hardest days."*

*"I am capable of learning and growth."*

*"I have the ability to learn new skills."*

When we re-frame our realities to ourselves, our improved decision making begins to reflect the new reality rather than the old.

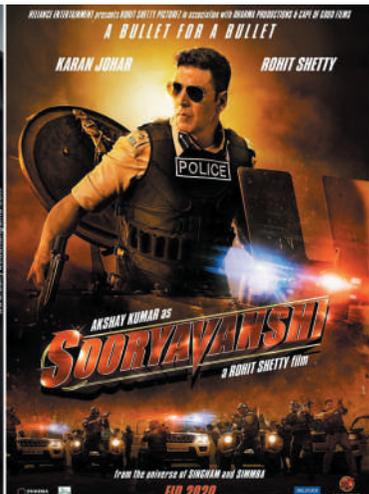
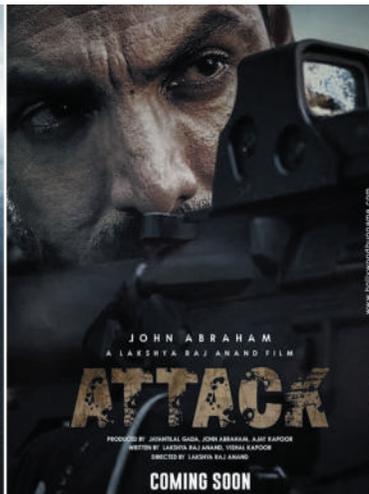
We can essentially re-program ourselves to act in accordance with the identity we accept for ourselves.

James Michael Sama is an internationally recognized speaker, author, and personal development coach.

Source - Medium

Release dates of big Bollywood films hitting theatres in 2021

## Akshay's Bell Bottom, John's Attack and more



Jayate 2' had to be deferred, 'Attack' will meet its August 13 release."

**Sooryavanshi in October and 83 in November**

Sooryavanshi and 83 are two of the much-awaited films waiting for a theatrical release. Sooryavanshi, directed by Rohit Shetty, stars Akshay Kumar and Katrina Kaif in lead roles whereas 83 starring Ranveer Singh is based on India's 1983 World Cup win. A trade source revealed to Mid Day, "The exhibitors want to give 'Sooryavanshi' and '83' their due for standing by them through 2020. It is possible that the cop caper will arrive in October, followed by Ranveer Singh's cricket drama in November.

With things finally coming under control in India and with the second wave of Covid-19 subsiding by the day, theatres are gradually starting to reopen in phases. Mumbai, the Bollywood hub, has partially reopened after two months of lockdown. So it's only obvious that movies, which were waiting to release in theatres, are quickly blocking dates for film releases. From Akshay Kumar's *Bell Bottom* to John Abraham's *Attack* to SS Rajamouli's magnum opus *RRR*, let's take a look at all

the big Bollywood films releasing in theatres in 2021, as reported by Times Now.

**Bell Bottom - July 27, 2021**

Akshay Kumar recently announced that his spy thriller, '*Bell Bottom*', will have a big-screen release on July 27. He tweeted, "I know you have patiently waited for #Bellbottom! Couldn't be happier to finally announce the release of our film." *Bell Bottom* also stars Vaani Kapoor in lead role and is based on the plane hijacks that

took India by a storm in the early 1980s.

**Attack - August 13, 2021**

John Abraham starrer *Attack* is aiming for August 13 release. Based on a true story of a hostage crisis, the film also features Jacqueline Fernandez and Rakul Preet Singh. John will be seen as the lone ranger who will lead an attack team during a counter operation. An insider, in interaction with Mid Day, was quoted saying, "While John's Eid release '*Satyameva*

**RRR - October 13, 2021**

SS Rajamouli's *RRR* aka *Roudram Ranam Rudhiram* is aiming for October 13, 2021 release. The period drama is going to have a Pan-India release in multiple languages including Telugu, Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil, Kannada. Starring Ram Charan, Jr NTR, Alia Bhatt, Ajay Devgn, *RRR* revolves around two brothers who set out to bring a revolution.

### BollyBites



## When Dharmendra objected to Esha Deol dancing

Esha Deol might be a trained dancer and a former actor now, but her decision wasn't met with much support initially. During *The Kapil Sharma Show* episode earlier, her mother Hema Malini opened up about Esha's childhood and her interest in acting and dancing, reports Indian Express.

"Esha was interested in extracurricular activities such

as sports and dance. Like in our house, we used to do dance practice because of which she started liking it and wanted to be a professional dancer and even make her career in Bollywood."

Hema Malini further added that Dharmendra didn't approve of her passion. "However, Dharmendra didn't like his daughter dancing or making her Bollywood debut and he had an objection to that. Later when he got to know the type of nriya (dance) which I do and how people

appreciated me and my work, that fortunately made him change his mind."

Esha, who has been part of films such as *Dhoom* and *Na Tum Jaano Na Hum*, is Dharmendra and Hema Malini's elder daughter. She has a sister named Ahana. Esha is married to Bharat Takthani. They welcomed their first child Radhya in 2017 while Miraya was born on June 10, 2019.

Huma Qureshi on people disappointed with her role in 'Army of the Dead'

## 'I have to be realistic, it was my first Hollywood film'

A host of Indian actors have been venturing into the West, and joining that list recently was Huma Qureshi. *Army of the Dead*, which featured her in a pivotal role, became one of the most watched films on an OTT platform, and she is naturally happy.

However, there was a section which felt disappointed at the screen space her character had, compared to the buzz that was created before the release, reports Hindustan Times.

The 34-year-old says, "I would want to remind them that my first film ever was *Gangs of Wasseypur* (2012), a really big ensemble film. I was barely there for 15 minutes, and that film changed my life."

Qureshi adds that when she read the script of *Army of the Dead*, she knew it had a big ensemble cast. "I knew the part. I felt what was important is not the length but how the character is moving the story forward. For me, Gita's story was a very important plot point. You take that away,



aur film khatam hi ho jaati," says the actor, who was also seen recently in *Maharani* which got her rave reviews.

There have been more actors from the country in the past who had to face the same response on screen time. Qureshi feels it is okay. "It all comes out of love, and not any negative space," she signs off.



## Ravi Dubey: I have taken retirement from infinite TV projects

**R**avi Dubey, who contracted Covid-19 earlier in May, recently tested negative. Immediately after that, the actor joined the cast and crew of his maiden production, *Udaariyan* in Punjab, reports TNN.

"Thankfully, the symptoms were mild, the road to recovery wasn't very difficult. I was in Punjab when I contracted the virus, so I quarantined in a flat there. Sargun (Mehta; Ravi's wife) was in London back then, but she used to call me every day to ensure that I was doing well. I think it was her love and the blessings of our elders that helped me get through this smoothly," he says, adding, "As soon as I tested negative, I was on the *Udaariyan* set. There was a lot of work that required my attention."

Ravi used his time in quarantine to work on a few of his upcoming projects. "The quarantine period gave me time to work on some amazing stories, and we will soon be coming up with a lot of interesting content across platforms," he shares.

Even though he is occupied with the production of multiple projects, the *Jamai Raja* actor says acting will never take a backseat. "I have taken retirement from infinite commitments, where one doesn't know when the project ends. Unfortunately, in television, the fiction space is designed like that. It doesn't excite me as an actor," he says.

**K**undali Bhagya's Prithvi Malhotra is one of the worst villains in Zee history. He has done all kinds of evil things to the Luthras and the Aroras - from kidnapping, killing, to manipulating them. When compared to Pahile Na Me Tula's Samarpratap, he is a much bigger villain with a lot of incidents in his kitty. Still, Samar is very similar to Prithvi and here are all the things they have in common as reported by zee5.com...

### Their social standing

Samar is rich and affluent. He is always dressed in impeccable shirts and blazers and even his hair is well-set at all times. He looks well-groomed and respectable and he is the branch manager of Lankari finance. He owns a big car and a driver. He also has his assistant Bhope always around and doing chores for him.

Prithvi too comes from a rich family of the Malhotras and in the beginning, was shown to be a very dashing person. He clearly has some history with Rishabh which means that he is rich enough to do business with the Luthras. Both Prithvi and Samar were perceived to be good for this reason.

While Samar still is perceived to be good, Manasi is

## Mona Singh reveals why she was away from TV for 5 years

**M**ona Singh, who was last seen in the show *Kavach...Kaali Shaktiyon Se* in 2016, will be seen hosting *Mauka-E-Vardaat*, a crime thriller. Even though she was away from the small screen, she says that she hadn't taken a break; it's just she wasn't being offered roles which she would have liked to take up.

Talking about her return to TV after 5 years, Mona says,

"I have never been a part of any crime show before. I have done comedy, dance and talent shows, so I thought it would give me a chance to do something different and I would also get to know all that is happening around us. The crime genre has always intrigued me. Also, I now have

the time to shoot because I have completed all my other commitments."

She says that the gap from 2016 to 2021 was also because she was busy exploring other mediums.

"A television serial takes a lot of time and we cannot explore anything

else. Also, I don't find anything interesting on television these days to watch. So if I am not watching, then why will I be a part of it? All shows and actors look the same to me. I have always been looking for doing different kinds of stuff. TV unfortunately wasn't offering anything challenging," she shares.



## What makes Samar of 'Pahile Na Me Tula' and 'Kundali Bhagya's Prithvi seemingly similar to each other



getting wary of his involvement in her family matters. Prithvi on the other hand is no longer pretending to be nice as Preeta and Karan know his truth. He still maintains a facade for his "wife" Kritika though!

### Their "charm" and interest in multiple women

This charm might not work on the heroines they want, but characters seem to exude a mysterious charm that gets them other women! For Samar, Miss Neelam at work seems to be very taken by him and he also occasionally flirts with her.

Prithvi of course has his Sherlyn and he also seemed to have a couple of ex-girlfriends in college who thought he was all that! While viewers hate these two characters, some women really seem to be drawn to them on their shows!

### Their possessiveness and anger issues

Each time Samar sees Aniket and Manasi together he is either seething in anger with his jaw set, or he is

smiling cunningly because he already has an evil plan set in motion. He is extremely possessive of Manasi and once even threw a client into a pool for staring at Manasi and being interested in her. He cannot tolerate seeing Manasi with anyone else and it makes him extremely angry when he does.

Prithvi too loves Preeta and is always fuming when he sees Karan and Preeta together! He tries to poison Kritika's mind against Preeta-Karan and even tries to create obstacles between the couple because he is so jealous and angry!

### Both are in love with married women

While Samar might not know it yet, he will soon find out that he has been pining for a married woman. Manasi secretly married Aniket many episodes back as she was afraid, they would not be able to be together otherwise.

Prithvi is also obviously in love with Preeta, who married Karan instead of him, not once, but twice! Both these villains like women who are married!

### What Samar could learn from Prithvi

Prithvi has entered the Luthra house not only to destroy the family but to also be around Preeta. And he has done this by trapping Kritika.

Samar can take notes from this. When he finds out that Manasi is married, he could do something similar. We know that Megha has had a tumultuous marriage with Satyajit and wants nothing to do but end it. Samar has already won the favour of Manasi's family and he could decide to trap Megha as a way to get close to Manasi as well!

**CINE 12**

Mardi 29 juin - 21.10  
**Phantom Thread**



**mbc:1**

Mercredi 30 juin - 21.00  
**Kill Kane**



**mbc:2**

Jeudi 1 juillet - 21.15  
**Dead On Arrival**



MBC 1	MBC 2	MBC 3	Cine 12	Bollywood TV
<b>mardi 29 juin</b> 07.00 Dessin Anime 10.35 Doc: Zenith 11.00 Mag: Le Saviez Vous? 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.52 Doc: L'art Et La Matière 14.30 D.Anime: Teenie Tots 14.55 D.Anime: Spirit: Au Galop... 15.20 D.Anime: La Famille Blaire... 15.29 D.Anime: Little Spirou 15.35 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis... 15.47 D.Anime: The Deep 16.08 D.Anime: Garfield Originals 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 18.56 MBC Production: Charcha 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.35 Local: Les Richesses De... 21.05 Film: Resident Evil: The Final 23.10 Le Journal	<b>mardi 29 juin</b> 08.00 Learning Channel: Grade 3 10.15 Learning Channel: Grade 4 12.30 Film: Teesra Kaun Starring: Feroz Khan, Kamal Mehra, Rajan Haksar, Shyam Kumar 15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.25 Serial: Aamhi Doghi 15.47 Serial: Bava Maradullu 16.08 Serial: Apoorva Raagangal 16.29 Serial: Sila 16.54 Serial: Imtihaan 17.13 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.34 Telugu - Premabhishekam 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 DDI Magazine 19.00 Journal Kreol 19.30 Coming U Graphics 20.04 Local: Programme In Tamil 20.30 Film: Dharti Kahe Pukar Ke Star: Jeetendra, Nanda, Sanjeev	<b>mardi 29 juin</b> 06.00 Mag: Eco@Africa 06.43 Mag: Voa Connect 07.12 Mag: In Good Shape 07.38 Doc: Amazing Gardens 08.04 Mag: Future Mag 09.00 Educational Prog: Grade 5 11.30 Educational Prog: Grade 8 14.03 Mag: 360 GEO 14.55 Mag: Global 3000 15.21 Mag: Washington 15.47 Doc: Losing Sleep 16.33 Mag: Eco@Africa 16.59 Mag: Arts And Culture 17.11 Mag: Japan Video 18.02 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto... 19.00 Student Support Prog Grade 7 19.31 Mag: Made In Germany 20.40 Doc: Ville En Fête 21.10 Doc: Snapshots 21.36 Doc: Comme Un Poisson... 22.50 Local: Klip Seleksion	<b>mardi 29 juin</b> 01.27 Film: Spinning Man 03.04 Serial: Shades Of Blue 03.49 Film: La Charge Des Tunique 05.18 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.40 Film: Marrying Mr. Darcy 09.00 Serial: Mission: Impossible 09.48 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: Shades Of Blue 12.00 Film: La Charge Des Tunique 13.35 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.17 Mag: Hollywood On Set 14.45 Film: Marrying Mr. Darcy 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: Phantom Thread 23.20 Tele: Muneca Brava	<b>mardi 29 juin</b> 08.00 Film: Hai Apna Dil Toh... 12.04 / 19.54 - Sanjivani 12.20 / 20.11 - Radha Krishna 12.48 / 20.32 Agnphera 13.09 / 21.09 - Bade Acche Lagte Hai 13.31 / 21.24 - Zindagi Ki Mehek 13.51 / 21.59 - Naagin Season 3 14.33 / 22.25 - Sethji 15.11 / 22.56 - Mere Sai - Shradha Aur Saburi 15.33 Film: Qahar Star: Sunny Deol, S. Shetty, Armaan Kohli, Sonali Bendre 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.52 Serial: Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 19.22 Bhakharwadi
<b>mercredi 30 juin</b> 07.15 Dessin Anime 10.34 Doc: Zenith 11.10 Tele: Soleil Levant 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.55 Doc: L'art Et La Matière 14.35 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies 14.59 D.Anime: Spirit: Au Galop... 15.21 D.Anime: La Famille Blaireau... 15.33 D.Anime: Little Spirou 15.40 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis... 17.35 Doc: Zanfan Nou Pei 17.50 Doc: A Question Of Science 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Serial: Jijaji Chhat Par Hain 18.55 Local Prod: Vanarasi 19.30 Journal & La Meteo 20.20 Prod Indepen: Lottotech 21.20 Film: Kill Kane Stars: Vinnie Jones, Nicole Faraday, Sebastian Street 23.10 Local: Le Journal	<b>mercredi 30 juin</b> 07.00 Serial: Guddu 07.15 Serial: Babu 07.26 Serial: Chota Bheem 07.49 Serial: Vir: The Robot Boy 08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3 10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4 12.30 Film: Mafia 15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.25 Aamhi Doghi 15.47 Bava Maradallu 16.01 Apoorva Raagangal 16.32 Serial: Sila 16.55 Serial: Imtihaan 17.12 Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala 17.33 Serial: Kulvadh 18.00 Serial: Colourful Bone 18.30 Mag: DDI Magazine 19.00 Journal Kreol 19.30 Mag: DDI Magazine 20.06 Programme In Marathi 20.56 Film: Cunning Kids 22.20 Live: DDI Live	<b>mercredi 30 juin</b> 06.00 Rev: The Global Auto... 06.26 Doc: Cool & Clever 06.52 Mag: Check In 07.18 Mag: Made In Germany 08.13 Mag: Sur Mesure 09.00 Education Prog Grade 5 11.30 Education Prog Grade 8 14.00 Doc: Comme Un Poisson... 14.55 Mag: Close Up 15.21 Local: Klip Seleksion 16.02 Doc: The Atom And Us 16.47 Mag: Rev: The Global Auto 17.13 Doc: Cool & Clever 17.39 Mag: Sur Mesure 18.00 Mag: Motorweek 18.30 Mag: Vous Et Nous 19.00 Student Prog Grade 7 20.04 Mag: Tendance XXI 20.40 Doc: Business Connect 21.21 Doc: Comme Un Poisson... 22.16 Mag: Initiative Africa 22.42 Mag: Focus On Europe	<b>mercredi 30 juin</b> 00.51 Mag: Hollywood Best Film... 01.17 Film: A Date With Miss... 02.54 Serial: Shades Of Blue 03.35 Film: Hope Dance 06.26 Film: Phantom Thread 05.47 Serial: Imposters 09.00 Serial: Mission: Impossible 09.45 Tele: Daniella 10.35 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.01 Serial: Shades Of Blue 12.00 Film: Hope Dances 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.45 Film: Phantom Thread 16.46 Serial: Mission: Impossible 17.35 Serial: Imposters 18.14 Tele: Daniella 19.00 Tele: Tanto Amor 20.05 Tele: Sinu, Rio Des Pasiones 20.30 Serial: Madam Secretary 21.15 Film: Zombie Shark 22.36 Tele: Muneca Brava 23.18 Serial: Mission: Impossible	<b>mercredi 30 juin</b> 08.00 Film: Qahar Star: Sunny Deol, Sunil Shetty, Armaan Kohli, 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 14.18 / 21.31 - Naagin Season 3 14.42 / 21.46 - Sethji 15.04 / 21.59 - Mere Sai - Shradha Aur Saburi 15.23 Film: Satrangee Parachute Starring: Rajpal Yadav, Sanjay Mishra, Zakir Hussain, Lilliput, Rupali Ganguly 18.00 Live: Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 19.00 Ishaaron Ishaaron...
<b>jeudi 1 juillet</b> 06.00 Local: Klip Seleksion 06.45 Local: Sur Prise 07.10 D. Anime: Trolls: En Avant... 10.35 Doc: Zenith 11.00 Mag: Le Saviez-Vous? 12.00 Le Journal 12.25 Tele: Le Prix Du Désir 12.52 Local: L'art Et La Matière 13.03 Local: Le Rendez Vous 14.30 D.Anime: Teenie Weenies 15.29 D.Anime: Little Spirou 15.37 D.Anime: Rev & Roll, Amis... 15.47 D.Anime: The Deep 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: Jab We Met Stars: Shahid Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor	<b>jeudi 1 juillet</b> 07.00 Serial: Guddu 07.15 Serial: Babu 07.26 Serial: Mighty Raju 07.49 Serial: Vir: The Robot Boy 08.00 Educational Prog: Grade 3 10.15 Educational Prog: Grade 4 12.30 Film: Rampur Ka Lakshman 15.00 Serial: Zindagi Ki Mehek 15.25 Aamhi Doghi 15.47 Bava Maradallu 16.01 Apoorva Raagangal 16.32 Serial: Sila 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 Journal Kreol 19.30 Mag: DDI Magazine 20.15 Local: Les Grandes Lignes 21.19 Film: Dead On Arrival	<b>jeudi 1 juillet</b> 06.00 Mag: Motorweek 06.26 Mag: Vous Et Nous 07.19 Doc: Garden Party 09.00 Educational Prog: Grade 5 11.30 Educational Prog: Grade 8 15.00 Mag: Initiative Africa 15.25 Mag: Focus On Europe 15.51 Contest Of The Cathedrals 16.36 Mag: Motorweek 17.02 Mag: Vous Et Nous 17.30 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 Magazine 20.30 Local: News (English) 20.40 Doc: 360 Geo 21.32 Doc: Treasures In The Sand 22.14 Doc: Transylvania 23.29 Mag: Eco India	<b>jeudi 1 juillet</b> 01.27 Film: Boone 02.53 Serial: Shades Of Blue 03.34 Film: Zombie Shark 04.56 Tele: Muneca Brava 06.45 Film: A Doggone Hollywood 09.00 Serial: Mission: Impossible 09.56 Tele: Daniella 10.36 Tele: Tanto Amor 11.00 Serial: Shades Of Blue 12.00 Film: Zombie Shark 13.30 Tele: Muneca Brava 14.16 Mag: Hollywood On Set 14.48 Film: A Doggone Hollywood 16.40 Serial: Mission: Impossible 17.29 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: Le Château De Carte	<b>jeudi 1 juillet</b> 08.00 Film: Satrangee Parachute Star: Rajpal Yadav, Sanjay Mishra, Zakir Hussain, Lilliput, RupaliGanguly 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 14.55 / 22.52 - Mere Sai 15.37 Film: Kuchh Meetha Ho... 18.00 Samachar 18.30 Kundali Bhagya 18.51 Ishaaron Ishaaron Mein 19.14 Serial: Bhakharwadi 19.38 Serial: Siddhi Vinayak



Mercredi 30 juin - 15.20  
Star: Rajpal Yadav, Sanjay Mishra, Zakir Hussain, Lilliput, RupaliGanguly



Jeudi 1 juillet - 20.15  
Stars: Shahid Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor



# How China has been transforming international education to become a leading host of students

*Once seen as mainly as a source of international students, China has for a decade been strategically repositioning itself as a provider of international education.*



When Australians think of international education and China, they typically consider the country as a source of international students - Australia's largest. But China is now one of the leading host countries of international students in the world.

China's level of international education policymaking over the past decade, backed up by strategic priorities, has been unprecedented.

My recently published research shows Chinese universities are learning to reconcile the different forces of local, national and global demands. They aim to:

- calibrate to the Chinese government's grand scheme of national rejuvenation
- expand their global reach and market influence
- enhance their professional impact and managerial efficiency
- respond to the community repercussions of growing numbers of international students.

## A top study destination in the making

China was on the way to becoming a top destination for studying abroad well before the COVID-19 pandemic.

By 2018, 492,185 international students from 196 countries studied in mainland China. They were enrolled in 1,004 higher education institutions.

International student numbers had doubled since 2009, when 238,184 were enrolled. Back in 1978 the total was a mere 1,236.

The Study in China Initiative, *Liuxue zhongguo jihua*, first appeared in 2010 in the National Outline for Mid- and Long-Term Education Planning and Development.

The growth of the initiative over the past decade echoes across China's laws, five-year plans, guidelines and action plans, and government decisions, opinions, regulations, notices and explanations.

## 2010 was a turning point

Between 2007 and 2009, the Chinese Ministry of Education had signalled against reckless pursuit of international student enrolments at the expense of quality education. This was a fleeting period of slight uncertainty for the sector.

In 2010, state policymaking re-endorsed mass international education in China. Study in China was to be built into a global education brand.

The plan specified annual enrolment targets, culminating in 500,000 students in 2020. This included 150,000 degree-seeking students. Yearly targets were set to develop exemplary sites, programs and courses for international education.

The overall goal was to make China the largest study abroad destination in Asia by the end of the decade. This was achieved in 2017-2018.

Subsequent state policies focused on legal, financial and administrative improvements. Increasing funding was made available through national, local, government and corporate scholarships and stipends for international students.

## Education's place in a broader global strategy

The mid-2010s defined the orientation of international education in China. The Study in China Initiative was subsumed under the new global strategy, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It is a "road map" for China's higher education to step onto the world stage.

Study in China is part of the core political discourse of national rejuvenation.

We can see this in the official 2019 Study in China Guide. The guide depicts the BRI as a core strength and essential knowledge about China. It powerfully demonstrates China's market aspirations and appeal to international students.

The Chinese government's Silk Road Scholarship Program sponsors 10,000 new international students a year from countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative. Universities can apply for state funding to run a BRI talent development site for large cohorts of these students.

Research grant schemes fund studies that improve the quality of international education, while supporting BRI work in infrastructure, trade, culture and diplomacy.

The Belt and Road Initiative is central to China's rapid shift from major importer to rising exporter of international education. In 2017, 317,200 international students came from BRI countries, 64.85% of the total.

## Focus shifts to quality assurance

Quality improvement was not new in the policy discourse on Study in China. However, substantive progress has been made since 2017.

Compared to its 2000 version, the 2017 Administrative

Measures for the Enrolment and Development of International Students by Universities and Schools (Order 42) emphasised systematic quality enhancement in four areas:

- development of relevant university regulations
- rigorous assessments for admissions and scholarships
- systematic planning of teaching and staff development
- development of quality control mechanisms.

The 2018 Quality Assurance Standards for Higher Education of International Students is the first of its kind in China. The 2019 Quality Accreditation Rules for International Higher Education established China's first external qualification accreditation and assurance system for international education.

One quality indicator concerns the composition of international students. Degree-seeking students became the majority (52.44%) of international students in China for the first time in 2018. Their numbers had increased by more than 350% from 36,387 in 2006 to 178,271 in 2018. They include bachelor, master and doctoral students who study abroad for at least one year.

## A balancing act for Chinese universities

Chinese universities have benefited from the escalating scale and influence of the Study in China Initiative.

However, my research shows they are under the stress of having to respond to multiple, often competing pressures.

An example of this is academic language and associated ideological tension. English is the dominant language in the academic world and in global trade. Most international students in Chinese universities study in English-taught programs.

But shifting political and community perceptions of the English language have stepped up internal pressures on Chinese universities. The legitimacy of English as the lingua nullius of global knowledge production is under challenge.

Another clear policy shift encourages convergent management of domestic and international students. There is pressure to integrate international students into the regular operations of Chinese universities. The rise in international student numbers has created a need to increase managerial efficiency.

This shift is also a response to community perception. International students benefit from more flexible testing arrangements and greater access to elite universities and scholarships, compared to domestic students. International students are spared the gruelling competition of Gaokao, the national college entrance examination.

In addition, breaches of rules and regulations by international students have often gone unaddressed.

Chinese universities are having to weigh up competing considerations of state aspiration, market appeal, corporate consolidation, professional enhancement and community pressures.

Jing Qi

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