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ISSN 0953 2706

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February 2013 Issue No 302

Monthly - 80p 30th year

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Mauritian PM meets French President in Paris



PM Navin Ramgoolam is greeted by French President François Hollande (See more on Page 7)

Letter

We usually do not publish letters addressed to us by readers even when they compliment us with their appreciation of Mauritius News. We'll do an exception below, and perhaps on Page 12, to indicate the interest our publication generates here and there. A pat on the back in our 30th year is appreciated.

Dear Mr Chellen,

I read about the 29 years of the existence of Mauritius News in Issue No 299 of November. I found that the length of time that the paper had existed was quite amazing. I sincerely pray that success will continue in the future and that the future generations will continue to appreciate the news you deliver to them.

To start and manage a newspaper business, especially in a foreign country, is really challenging. You have to rely on the countrymen to give it a push, and in this case they have managed to push hard enough to last for so long. Let us hope that they will push with the same vigour.

I have to mention that I have enjoyed reading Mauritius News. It contains news and information that most people would not have obtained otherwise. They might be lucky to look it up on the internet, but that is not always practical. Jacques Lee was delivering similar messages to the community through his 'Mauritian International', but it was sad to see it going out of print. I admired his hard work like I do yours.

I like your work, and as a writer I have used most of the information in my forthcoming book.

I hope that you and your team will continue with the good work.

Best wishes and good luck.

Prem Kutwaroo

(We have had the opportunity in the past to review in MN the work of Prem Kutwaroo)

IMF Chief Christine Lagarde visits Mauritius

A new IMF Africa Training Institute set up in the country



On her visit to Mauritius Ms Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), was received by the Governor of the Bank of Mauritius, Mr Rundheersing Bheenick, at the prestigious building of The Bank of Mauritius that towers over the Capital, the City of Port Louis.

The two bank chiefs discussed matters of bilateral interest and reviewed the excellent state of relations between the Bank of Mauritius and the International Monetary Fund.

Ms Lagarde also visited the AFRITAC South Office housed on the premises of the Bank of Mauritius. She expressed her appreciation to the Bank for "being such a generous host to the AFRITAC South Office."

It may be recalled that the AFRITAC South is the 4th AFRITAC Centre established in Africa. It started operations on 17 October 2011 and caters for the capacity building needs of 13 countries in Southern Africa.

The visit of Ms Lagarde to Mauritius was also the opportunity to exchange the financing documents with Mauritius for the new Africa Training Institute of the IMF, due to start operations in mid-2013.

BANK OF MAURITIUS: NEW INVESTMENT
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CHAGOS MARINE PROTECTED AREA

The UN tribunal could challenge Britain and lead to the return of exiled Chagossians

The British government has suffered a major setback in its legal battle against Mauritius before the permanent court of arbitration at The Hague. The UK's attempt to challenge the jurisdiction of the tribunal has been defeated and will be obliged to adduce explanations on to settle a marine protection area around the nuclear base of Diego Garcia run by the United States until 2016, expiration date of the lease of the island.

The UK government will also have to give explanation on the deportation of the islanders during the 60's and 70's, on the eve of the accession of Mauritius to independence. Britain will be obliged to disclose sensitive political decisions dating back to the 1960s.

The tribunal arbitrates disputes over the United Nations law of

the sea and its decisions are binding upon the UK, which is a signatory state to the convention.

It is the first time that UK will explain the reasons behind the exile of the people of the Chagos Islands. Justifications for the setting-up of a military base at Diego Garcia, which led to the deportation of the inhabitants of the archipelago, will be heard for the first time. This is a major set-back for the British Government which decided to separate the Chagos Islands from Mauritius three years before giving the country its independence.

Mauritius claims that it was a breach of the UN resolution 1514 of 1960, which stipulates that the "break-up of colonies prior to independence was illegal."

e-petition on the net

In an e-petition (<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/34282>), supporters asked for justice for the Chagossians. "We the undersigned call upon the British Government to work with the US Government to allow the banished Chagossian people to return home immediately. Several articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are violated every day. The indigenous Chagossian people have suffered for over 45 years. They must be allowed to return to their homeland, the Chagos Islands, without further delay." As at January 23 the e-petition had received 516 signatures. The petition will remain open till the 25/05/2013 10:36. More information about this movement on the link (<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/34282>)

Double deception for the Chagossians

The USA recognizes the British Indian Ocean Territories, which form part of Chagos Archipelagos. This is what an email mentioned last week from the White House addressed to 25,000 signatories of a petition aiming to help the Chagos Refugees Group (CRG). This is the first deception for the Chagossians in the space of few days. In fact, Obama would not help the Chagossians, says the email.

The second deception occurred when recently, the European Court of Human Rights rejected the "dossier" to do with the returning of the Chagossians to their native lands.

According to a document signed by deputies of three American Secretaries of State in the name of President Obama, the USA has no intention to involve itself in this "drama" which would be "a simple question of Sovereignty. As a matter of fact, they estimate that the Chagossians have already received compensation notably across a financial support done by United Kingdom for the sufferings endured since the end of the 60's. The American president qualifies this act as re-lodging and not a deportation or a forced exile of the Chagossians

Former Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott: 'Give the islanders the chance to go home'

In an article in the Sunday Mirror the former Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott called for the Chagos islanders to be allowed to return home. "The scandal of what happened to the people of the Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean is a terrible injustice... I'm ashamed the UK government allowed this to happen. It was wrong and we must make amends", said John Prescott in the article published by the Mirror.

The point of view of the former Deputy Prime Minister is centred on the humanitarian aspect of the issue of the return of the islanders to their home. John Prescott without any reserve that he was "ashamed" of the position of the UK government regarding this issue. He asked the question: "America's 50-year lease on Diego Garcia runs out in 2016 with an option of renewal next year. Let's ask them what they (the Chagossians) want - whether their island remains a US landing strip or it becomes their home again.

According to John Prescott what happened to the people of the Chagos Islands is "terrible injustice." It was all done to protect the interest of the

United States by allowing them to build a strategic air base on the island of Diego Garcia. But all this was done to the detriment of the people of the Chagos Islands who were expelled from their homes without notice. In the article Prescott discloses that the Island of Diego Garcia was also used for air strikes on Afghanistan and Iraq.

In addition to the deal, "the Labour Government of Harold Wilson was given substantial discount on Polaris missiles" and according to John Prescott this deal was kept secret for many years both by Tory and Labour administrations.

In 2000, the court ruled in favour of the Chagossians and the former Foreign secretary Robin Cook allowed the islanders the right to return to their islands.

But this order was overruled by a Royal Prerogative. "I am ashamed that the UK Government allowed this to happen", said Prescott in the columns of the Mirror. "It was wrong and we must make amend" he added.



John Prescott (Photo: Steve Punter via Flickr)

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TITBITS NEWS FROM MAURITIUS by Ahmad Macky

Privy Council verdict: New trial for Robert Lesage on MCB scandal

There could be a perception that Robert Lesage (right in photo) did not benefit a fair and equitable justice, and could be victim of an unfair and bias trial. This is the conclusion of the Privy Council Appeal Verdict on Robert Lesage, the ex-Chief Manager of the Mauritius Commercial Bank (MCB). Lesage, if we recall, appealed to the Privy Council on judgment by the Supreme Industrial Court on the 30th June 2010.

Robert Lesage was condemned by the Supreme Court on that 30th June, 2010 to pay back Rs 1 billion with interest to the MCB. This was followed by the embezzlement allegation of Rs 881.6

million of funds from National Pension Fund (NPF).

In their judgments rendered on Thursday the 20th December 2012, the Law Lords of the Privy Council emphasized that: "The informed observer could not avoid the conclusion that the way in which the case was conducted was at least indicative of a possible lack of complete impartiality on the part of the Court". The Law Lords have ordered a new trial.

The judges of the Privy Council evoked notably the deposition of Robert Lesage in the witness box where he could not defend himself properly. "Mr Lesage was attempting to distinguish between acting on

his own initiative in identifying the source of the funds and that in taking the funds from the account he was acting on instructions. He was not permitted to develop his answers in order to make that point", the Law Lords of the Privy Council wrote in their judgments appeal.

The reactions of Robert Lesage: "I am happy for Justice sake" and he continued: "I have just learnt that the Privy Council has reversed the decision and judgment of the Supreme Court of Mauritius of my case dated 30th June 2010. This has enormous implications. I won't pronounce on my next move before consultation with my lawyer especially those in London"

CIVIL SERVICE: SOON A DATABASE ON ALL EMPLOYEES !

The objective is to modernize the Civil Service. It is in this way that all information's on human resources will soon be centralized in a data base. Human Resource Management, Information System (HRMIS) will be collected on a data base on a pilot trial scheme basis next year. This announcement was made at the last recent Cabinet Meeting.

This is part of the Civil Service Reformation" explained Sutyadeo Mootia, Minister for Civil Service. The Minister added that this project will start with six Ministries at first and the moment they get good results, they will take over Ministries to join this project.

From now on till 2015, this system will regroup all Ministries. This advantage is that these informations will be made accessible instantaneously, said the Minister. Or, as it is now, "If we need information on an employee of the Civil Service, we need to go and search for that information on that employee in archaic dossiers" added the Minister.

According to Minister Mootia, with this new system, the duration procedures will be made more quickly and efficiently. The aim is to avoid the duplication tasks between each department and ministry. It is also a question to create a synergy between Finance Dept and the Human Resources of each Ministry.

CARGO HANDLING CORPORATION : PENSION PLAN FOR 930 EMPLOYEES

At last the 930 employees who have taken jobs at the Cargo Handling Corporation after the year 2000 would be covered by a pension plan under the aegis of SICOM. The employees would have to contribute 6% and the employers would do a contribution of 12%.

It is a long struggle by the Port-Louis Harbour & Docks Workers Union that ended last week. In fact the employees who have re-joined the Corporation after the year 2000 were not covered by a pension plan. The Vice-President of this Syndicate, Nigel Valaydon put forward that the negotiation is based on the times of service. The Cargo Handling Corporation refused to include the time of service with effect of a backdated to the year 2000. This is not to the satisfaction of the management of Port-Louis Docks Workers Union because 13 years of service would not be accounted in this pension plan.

Finally an agreement has reached at the end of last week between the two parties and the management has finally accepted to include the time of service.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN MAURITIUS

The employment affecting youngsters remains a cause of concern. From 47,100 unemployed people registered in this country, 20,500 of them are aged less than 25 yrs. Other

statistics recorded: 13,100 Mauritians are looking for jobs since more than a year.

Statistics Mauritius reveals its last assessments on jobs and unemployment in Mauritius. In fact we see that among the working class sector of the country it amounts to 549,300 in the third term of 2012 against 537,800 during the period corresponding in 2011. The rate of unemployment amounts to

7.9% in the third term of 2012 that is in the same level of 2011. However, in the second term of 2012, the unemployment came close to the figure 8.2%. Mauritius registered at least 47,100 unemployed people during the third term of 2012 that is 18,600 men (39%) and 28,500 women (61%). About 20,500 (44%) of them are aged less than 25 yrs, when 55% of these

unemployed people are unmarried. 10,000 (21%) have never got the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE), whereas 12,300 (26%) have not got School Certificate. 13,000 (28%) of these unemployed people are still searching for jobs since more than a year, where as 16,500 (35%) are still in quest for a job for the

Mauritian Government offers scholarship to New Delhi rape victim's brother

The government of Mauritius has offered a seat in a medical college to one of the brothers of the Delhi gang rape victim. The news appeared in an Indian Newspaper and has been confirmed by the SSR Medical School in Belle-Rive, Mauritius.

The brother of the victim will be offered a seat at the medical college with the condition that he secure at least 60 per cent marks in his class 12 exams which will be held in March.

The elder brother has been given a seat in an engineering course in Delhi by the Delhi Government. "The Delhi

government has already promised an engineering seat to the elder son. My only wish left in life is to see them do well academically," the father said in the columns of the Indian Newspaper. Despite the tragic events of December 16, which snatched his daughter from him, the top priority of the father is the education of his children. "Papas keep reminding us not to ignore studies even a wee bit. He has spoken to the Mauritius government. Since Didi wanted to work for better healthcare in our ancestral village in Ballia in Uttar Pradesh, they want to give free medical

education to one of us in a college there," said the brother of the victim to the Indian press.

The victim, whom the Indian media named 'Nirbhaya' (fearless), 'Damini' (lightning) and 'Amaanat' (precious), was gang raped in a bus in New Delhi on December 16. These events have been mediatised in the international press and the presumed offenders have been arrested by the police and are now facing provisional charges of rape and murder. Many barristers of the Great Pensinsula have refused to defend the presumed culprits, it is reported.

Former Miss World Rosanna Davison eyes Mauritius for wedding in 2014

According to the Irish press, the newly-engaged couple might tie the knot abroad. And their preferred destination might be Mauritius where they holiday regularly.

And it was on a Mauritian beach that Wes Quirke proposed to the bride-to-be with a €40,000 diamond sparkler to sealed the deal of their relationship.

This would be the wedding of the year when her famous father Chris de Burgh will walk her down the aisle. But this time the "lady" will not be "in red". It is most likely that she will choose a elegant and somptuous white wedding dress



Penpals wanted

I wish to have friends in the United Kingdom.

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Death Announcement

Mrs Mala Ramasamy passed away last month and was cremated at the West Herts Crematorium on January 9.

The service was conducted by Mrs Lataben Joshi, and the eulogy was read by her son Vijayan

Deepest sympathy from relatives and friends of the family.

Paul Berenger going for treatment in France and will be out of the political arena for three months

The Leader of the Opposition and of the Mauritian Militant Movement (MMM) has announced on January 23, that he suffers from a throat cancer. He will leave the country in early February.

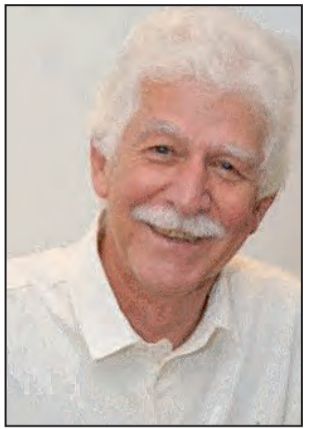
The opposition leader will travel, "probably to Paris" for the first surgery that will be followed by a treatment that should last at least three months.

Paul Bérenger has announced that will be absent from the political scene during this period and that Alan Ganoo will take over the leadership of the MMM and of the Parliamentary opposition until his comeback.

"After my treatment I would resume my role as leader of the opposition party," he said.

He called on supporters of the MMM "not to worry" and added that doctors told him that "the disease is curable."

"There is nothing to be afraid of cancer. Instead, we have to face it ... The type of cancer I am suffering is in the group of the 50% who are completely curable," he said with some optimism.



New trial of Michaela Harte: A new suspect identified in a police report submitted to the DPP



Five months after the re-opening of police enquiries on the murder case of Michaela Harte in her hotel room at Grand Gaube, Mauritius on the 10th January 2011, new evidence is to be produced very soon this year.

In fact at the end of this week police have submitted their first preliminary report to the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP), Satyajit Boolell, Senior Counsel.

This collected information's indicate that this report mentions the name of an eventual suspect who could be subjected to prosecution and stand trial for murder very soon at the Assize Court.

So far the police have heard 38 persons since last August. Not less than 68 other witnesses have been summoned to participate at the reconstitution of different stage surrounding the circumstances of this tragedy of the 10th January, 2011 in the precinct of the hotel belonging to the Naide Group.

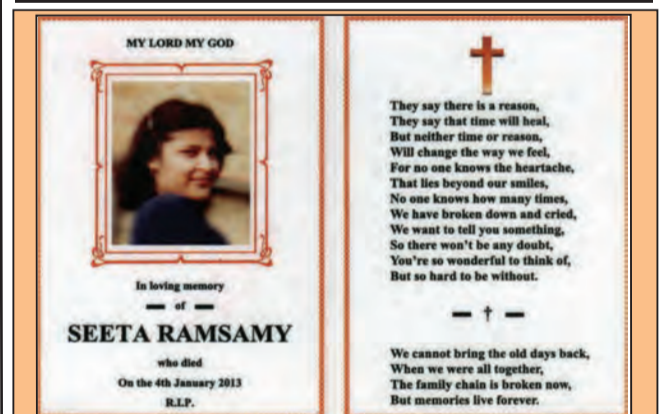
The name of the suspect has not been divulged up to now in case not to damage any trace and prints as there are other witnesses to be interviewed in the near future.

At a certain moment with the re-opening of the police enquiries on the murder case, there have been queries and questions of eye witnesses, a foreigner who at that time too was on holiday residing at that hotel where the new bride Michaela Harte was killed on her honeymoon holiday. It would appear that the said foreigner who was the eyed-witness had seen the movements of suspects nearby the room 1025 nearly at the material time of the murder.

The police authority of this country where that foreign tourist witness lives was contacted to establish a contact with him. The DPP is invited to consider this preliminary report to pronounce on the admissibility of the eyed-witness of this foreign tourist which is vital for the new trial.

So far, the results of 350 DNA tests done in France Laboratory are still pending.

In loving memory of Seeta Ramsamy who died on the 4th January 2013



To the bereaved family, we wish to say:
We mourn with you, we share your grief and we share your sorrow. Seeta was such a sweet person, she will always be remembered with great fondness.

Friends

The Best Mauritian Scientist Award 2013 launched

The Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology, in collaboration with the Mauritius Research Council have decided to launch the Best Mauritian Scientist Award 2013.

The objectives of the award are to promote science, quality research and technology; encourage participation in research and technology; encourage research in research of global importance; upgraded research competencies for a knowledge-based society; and encourage technological and scientific development and innovation.

18 CCEM report post-2015 recommendations

The Minister of Education Dr Vasant Bunwaree remitted to David Hallam at Marlborough House, the seat of the Commonwealth Secretariat, the report prepared by a Ministerial Working Group which he chaired during the 18th Commonwealth Education Ministers held in Mauritius.

The principal goals highlighted in the report are that every child completes a full cycle of a minimum of nine years of continuous, free basic education, and demonstrates learning achievement consistent with national standards

Stele and forum on Chinese migration in October

The President of the Federation of Chinese Societies of Mauritius, Joseph Tsang Mang Kin announced the construction of stele at Meixien, China that will be inaugurated on October 13, 2013.

The monument will commemorate the migration of indentured labourers who came from China to settle on the island. In this context, a forum on Chinese migration will be held on October 13 with the participation

of professors from Madagascar and Réunion. A cultural festival is also in the pipeline.

New MCCI secretary general in office this month

Bhanu Pratapsingh Jaddoo who has been designated secretary general of the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry, will be assuming duty as from this month, succeeding to Mahmood Cheeroo. The new secretary general of the MCCI is a former Managing Director of the Board of Investment. His business competencies are often sought after by world and regional organizations such as the World Bank, SADC and COMESA.

Mauritius Police Force announces policing plan for 2013

The Mauritius Police Force has announced the measures that have been adopted in the National Policing Framework (NPSF) essential for a modern police service, more mindful of public concerns, needs and expectations. The most notable measures planned for this year include a modernization of electric equipment used by the force to combat crime and the introduction of electronic bracelet for closer monitoring of people released on bail. The plan also targets the introduction of the much dreaded Penalty Points Management System for the driver's licence.

National Assembly resumes on 26 March

The National Assembly which has been adjourned December last, will resume on Tuesday 26 March at 11.30 hours. The last words before adjournment were pronounced by Mahen Seeruttun, second member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle, who criticized government for not having given the necessary support to planters involved in the agricultural sector.

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Congratulations from
 Soondressen Cooppen
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Book review

Two books which were launched in 2012 are worth a mention :

'Gokoola - Family, Temple & Village' co-authored by Vishwanaden Govinden and Dr Marina Carter,

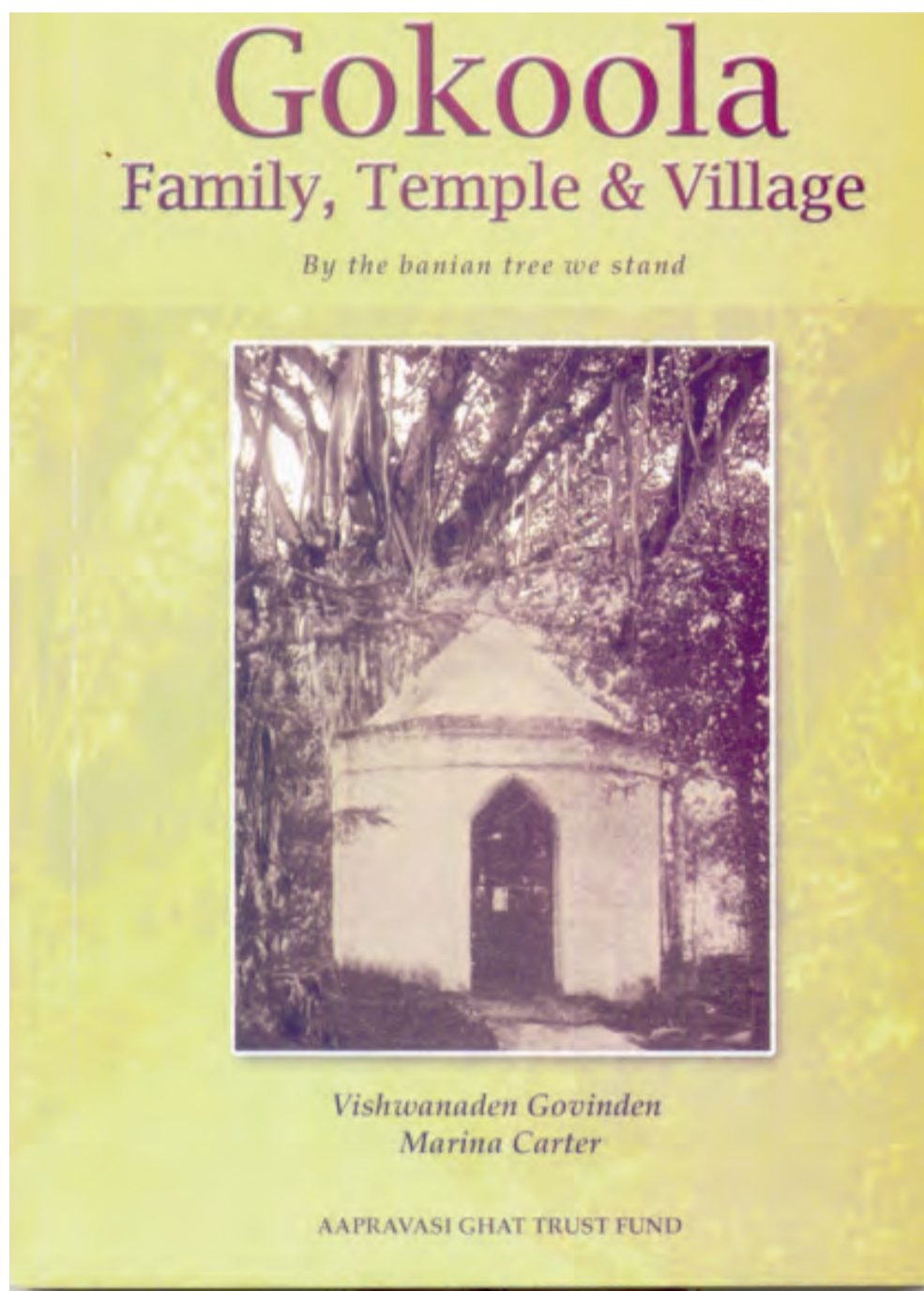
and *'Soldiers of Humanity – Promoting Human Development'* by Geeanduth Gopee.

Gokoola – Family, Temple & Village.

By the banian tree we stand

by Vishwanaden Govinden & Marina Carter

Scarcely a hundred pages, on sale at Rs 275, but what an invaluable documentary work based on all kinds of archival materials and other sources to construct the genealogical history of the immigrant Gokoola (immigrant No. 63067) and investigate the repercussions of the man's deeds on generations of his kiths and kins. Up to now a whole village of the north of the island bears the revered name of Gokoola.



Abundantly illustrated with reproductions of archival documents (certificates of engagement, marriage, etc, deeds and transcriptions), a few artistic renderings and a lot of modern photographs, this new publication of team mates Vishwanaden Govinden and Marina Carter brings an added value to the saga of Indian immigrants who have emerged from anonymity to notoriety through sheer hard work and ingenuity.

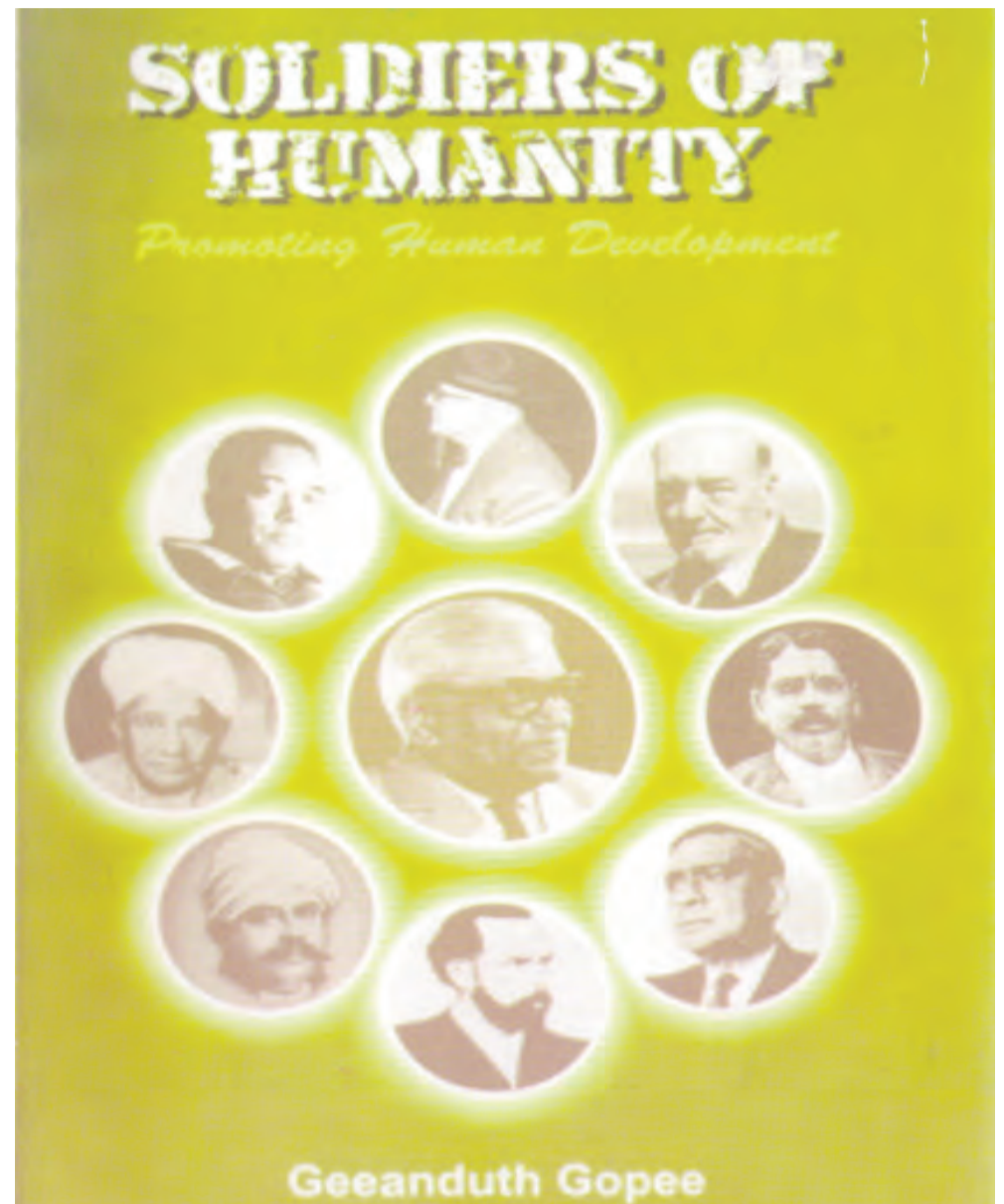
The book is foreworded by Dr Vijayalakshmi Teelock, former Chairperson of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (by the way, this well-researched book is a publication of the fund), prefaced by S.C.K. Sasapu Prayag, the initiator of the project who expresses the hope "that in future many Mauritians will experience the pleasure of retracing their family history, as I have", and introduced by the co-authors.

The subject is dealt with in five parts, each part following the same documented and integrated approach – The Journey Begins (part one), An Immigrant Family (part two), Labourers to Land Owners (part three), An Indo-Mauritian Family (part four) and The Temple and the Village (part five). To crown it all with a fitting conclusion from which we borrow this paragraph to wind up our review:

"The name of Gokoola lives on in the new temple built on his original plot of land, and in the village sited at the location of his endeavours. This small settlement is one of the few, in its nomenclature, to pay tribute to the immigrant pioneers who built wealth out of backbreaking cane labour in the era of the indentured labour system."

The book can be ordered by email at aapravasi@intnet.mu

Soldiers of Humanity – Promoting Human Development by Geeanduth Gopee



This book of 330 pages, at sale at Rs 500, explores the lives of nine stalwarts, who by their multifarious actions have immensely contributed to the laying of the foundation of the Mauritian nation. These nine great Mauritian figures, which have all been the subject of special issues of the trilingual magazine 'Indradhanush' edited by Mauritian historian and writer Pahlad Ramsurrun, are Malcolm de Chazal, Robert Edward Hart, Pandit Cashinath Kistoe, Aunauth Beejadhur, Léoville L'Homme, Dookhee Gungah, Mohunlall Mohit, Marcel Cabon and Dr Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. They have left their imprints on the sand of time. They were visionary, talented, possessed lofty ideas and sound character, and with these values, they have helped Mauritius in general to develop a democratic way of life in a unified country. However, there is more in Geeanduth Gopee's book than the study of the life-pattern of the nine eminent Mauritians and the imprints they have left on the land and the people. Professor Shalina Mehta of Panjab University (Chandigarh, India) has written the following comments on the book:

"Geeanduth Gopee in this seminal work is essentially addressing the issue of 'Promoting Human Development', reflecting fears of a generation that experienced, imbibed and aspired to transmit the teachings of great gurus of the twentieth century to the offspring of late 20th and 21st centuries....It provides models of life-styles in which the younger generation disregard the struggles of the makers of 21st century. It is this dilemma that this book narrates highlighting disappointments of a generation that hoped to make the world a more equitable space in which the gaps between the haves and have-nots will not be as stark as today, in which the courts of justice will not be required to interfere to ensure the rights of women and elderly are guarded, in which guns and mind-boggling and mindless violence will not be in the form of personal protest and anger, in which unfair trade agreements will not debar the poorest of the poor of the world from their right to a decent meal a day, in which Man will not destroy the ecological balance that cater to the luxury demands of a few."

The book launching was held on 20th December last at the Rabindranath Burrenchobay Lecture Theatre in the presence of a host of personalities among which Ministers Anil Bachoo and Mookhesswur Choonee. The book can be ordered by email at soldiersofhumanity@gmail.com

Prime Minister Navim Ramgoolam in Paris

French President accepts invitation to attend the Indian Ocean Commission summit in Mauritius



credit:elysee.fr



The Mauritian Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, who left Mauritius on 20 January to attend the Davos World Economic Forum in Switzerland, met with the French President, Mr François Hollande, at the Elysée Palace in Paris on Monday 21 January 2013.

At the request of Dr Ramgoolam, the French President has accepted the invitation to attend the Indian Ocean Commission summit to be held for the first time in Mauritius this year.

Both leaders had discussions focusing on Tromelin and Chagos, the fight against piracy, the situation in Madagascar and bilateral relations between Mauritius and France, amongst others. Regarding Tromelin, President Hollande said that it is the wish of France to find an early solution to the question of sovereignty of Tromelin Island, claimed by Mauritius. Dr Ramgoolam, for his part, informed the French President of the latest developments regarding the conflict opposing Mauritius and Great Britain on the issue of the Chagos Archipelago.

Discussions also centred around the possibility of a strategic



partnership between Air Mauritius and Air France. President Hollande informed Dr Ramgoolam of the reasons behind the involvement of France in Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Madagascar. He thanked Mauritius for its contribution to the positive development occurred in Madagascar recently. Mauritius is making a contribution of \$ 500 000 for the forthcoming elections that will take place in Madagascar.

Speaking about Mauritius' commitment towards the fight against piracy, Dr Ramgoolam said that a first group of pirates will be judged shortly. The problem of global warming was also reviewed.

President Hollande further spoke about the historical and traditional economic ties between Mauritius and France, adding that the two leaders share a very good personal relationship. He pledged that France will fully support Mauritius in its economic development.

GIS

Celebrities Boost British Airways Beach Breaks

British Airways has seen a boost in bookings to celebrity-favourite destinations in its January sale, thanks to stars uploading pictures of their holidays to popular social media sites over the Christmas and New Year period.

The Caribbean was overflowing with celebrities, which may account for the recent spike in holiday bookings to Barbados and St Lucia – both up by at least 130% compared to last year.

A favourite with the rich and famous, Barbados welcomed Simon Cowell, Coleen Rooney, Olly Murs and Rihanna to its crystal clear waters, while St Lucia, already a favourite with Kim Kardashian and Kanye West, was the choice for Gwyneth Paltrow who posted pictures of her family enjoying a blissful beach break.

Meanwhile the draw of the 'Spanish Caribbean' attracted Alexa Chung, Pixie Geldof and Nick Grimshaw who partied in Puerto Rico together, while couples Jennifer Aniston and Justin Theroux, Emily Blunt and John Krasinski, and Jessica Alba and Cash Warren enjoyed romantic breaks to Mexico.

Claire Bentley, British Airways Holidays managing director, said, "The start of the year is always the busiest time for bookings – people are back at work and need something to look forward to. The wet weather over Christmas, combined with lots of enticing pictures of celebrities on holiday has clearly influenced the rise we're seeing in beach holidays."

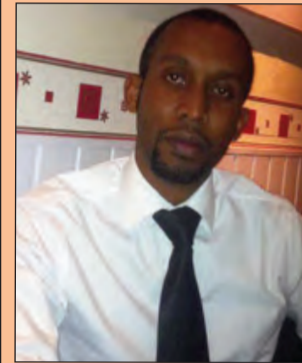
British Airways has also seen a rise in bookings to Hawaii, up by 100% in the past year. Blessed with beautiful beaches and natural beauty, it's no surprise that it's popular with the jet-set, including Katy Perry and John Mayer, Steven Tyler, Jude Law and even the President of the United States, who all vacationed on the islands during the recent holidays.

Other top destinations for stars included Dubai, enjoyed by Rita Ora, Denise van Outen and Nell McAndrew, and Australia – popular with Leonardo DiCario, Mariah Carey and fellow Aussies Kylie Minogue and Nicole Kidman returning for New Year celebrations.

READERS' CORNER

The MMM/MSM must face up to Navin Ramgoolam's popularity

by Pascal Menelas



As the MMM/MSM alliance takes a one point lead in the polls following the local / municipal election, it is still faced with a problem it doesn't want to address: Navin Ramgoolam.

Despite many adversities and challenges, Navin Ramgoolam has been having a good crisis and no party, no leader has been

able to lay a glove on him.

Looking at the political strategy adopted in Mauritius, I found two issues that matter up to the election: Leadership and the economy.

The MMM/MSM alliance has to win credibility on both to win back people's trust. It is clear that Navin Ramgoolam outshines Paul Berenger and Sir Aneerood Jugnauth as the popular choice for Prime minister. Navin Ramgoolam is seen as determined, competent and ruthless. He projects a familiarity and a patrician authority that give him an aura of historical continuity with the past. Perhaps he inherited this from his father, SSR but we can see that he is natural in his surroundings and looks as at ease in government as he does amongst his family and friends. Navin Ramgoolam connects with people.

The MMM/MSM alliance still encumbered by its overly rationalist view of politics, cannot grasp the emotional and symbolic nature of Ramgoolam's appeal. It's just PR. (Public Relation).

It's all lies. But to take on Ramgoolam and win, the MMM/MSM alliance has to understand his popularity and face up to why it is failing to connect with the public.

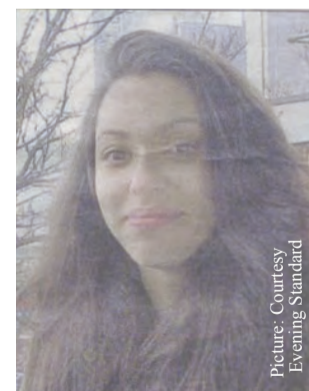
Navin Ramgoolam captured the mood of a country distrustful of certain political parties' impersonal, technocratic and statist politics. Unfortunately the MMM/MSM refused to take Ramgoolam's pro-social politics seriously. Nearly 13 years later and entangled in the compromises and mistakes of its time whilst in power between 2000-2005, the MMM/MSM alliance has neither seized hold of this politics nor exploited Ramgoolam's failure to achieve it.

Ramgoolam's political skill and luck has secured him the centre ground. He has won, for the last 13 years, public acceptance of his 'welfare state' strategy. If Navin Ramgoolam can weather events and keep the coalition with the PMSD of Xavier Luc Duval intact, he has an opportunity to make the MMM/MSM alliance politically irrelevant. We must admit, the stakes are high and with the next general election in 2015, the MMM/MSM alliance needs to speak for the country not just the squeezed middle and yet attempts to frame a story of national renewal. If MMM/MSM can't change the way it talks, it can't change what it wants to do. And it won't beat Ramgoolam.

Helicopter crash commotion on Wandsworth Road

19 years' old Chloe Dooknah (Photo) witnessed the actual crash when an helicopter collided with the crane standing next to the tower of flats under construction at Vauxhall Cross, right at the corner with Wandsworth Road.

The accident happened in the early morning of



Picture: Courtesy Evening Standard

January 16, and Chloe Dooknah who lives nearby in Wandsworth Road told the Evening Standard:

"The helicopter exploded when it hit the ground ... there was metal flying everywhere that narrowly missed a train going over the bridge. People were running out of their cars ... the whole road was on fire, people were screaming and some were also trying to help."



Towerring Inferno?

Chinese Horoscope 2013

The year of the “water-snake”

The Chinese zodiac horoscopes forecast how the year will be for each of the 12 Chinese astrology signs. It is well known that the ancestral Chinese astrology revolves around twelve sacred animals. And the animal names are given for each year and also for month, day and hour. The twelve signs are Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Pig. Note that the Chinese new year for the year 2013 starts on February 10, 2013. Year 2012 was the Dragon year and so year 2013 would be the year of the snake. This time the element of 2013 will be water and it common to hear people naming this year as the one of the “water-snake”



The Snake

This is the year of Snake and if you are born in Snake year, your Chinese horoscope says that you might come to fame this year. You will protect yourself a lot and you will receive a mix of fortunes this year. Your relationships will go smoothly in 2013. Your whole potential will be shown to the world.

The Tiger



Your Chinese astrology 2013 predicts that if you are born in Tiger year, this year 2013 will make you learn to multi-task. You will see some satisfactory growth and will be able to predict future events. You will build good social contacts in the upcoming year and your financial situation will be good in the middle of the year.

The Sheep

Even though the year 2013 predicts minor threats for the Sheep, their overall position will be good and their desires will be fulfilled. They can easily achieve in all their feats this year. They will see a good progress in their income, wealth and career. According to Chinese zodiac 2013, people of the Goat sign are hard workers and are perseverant till they achieve their goal.



The Dog



Chinese Horoscope 2013 predicts that Year 2013 will test your perseverance if you are born in the Dog year. You might face many challenges in the year. Even if you face those challenges with zeal, the outcome will make you feel disappointed. Though disappointments might be around this year for people born in Chinese year of the Dog, they should strive and keep their pace in putting efforts to achieve their goals. Do not worry for you will get a lot of love from your family members this year. Never have second thoughts about your decision making skills or judgment even in the hardest of times.



The Rat

The 2013 Chinese horoscope for the rat animal sign predicts that this year 2013 would bring some struggles for you, if you are born in the Rabbit year. It is suggested that you should avoid over-confidence which might tamper your objectives. Also, use patience to handle the hard scenarios you might face this year.



The Ox

The year 2013 forecasts that it will be a test of patience if you are born in Ox year. It will bring many ups and downs in your life. But if you are calm and polite even in the worst situation, then you can easily achieve your goals. You might be lucky but you should control your emotions well. You will have favorable events but you need to be careful and handle them to your own advantage. You should be patient while in a fight and not burst out.

2013 predictions for people born in the Monkey year is that they should be careful in the year 2013, as they might face hardships, bad luck and inauspicious outcomes. Good luck will come easily to people of this sign this year if they make the right choices. They are advised to avoid gossip or negative thoughts and they might need to work harder than normal to achieve even a little bit of success.

The Monkey





The Rooster

Year 2013 is going to be successful year in career for Rooster people. Their growth chart will be always inclined this year. If people born in the year of Rooster keep their mind sharp and strive a little, they can achieve a lot in 2013. Chinese Horoscope 2013 predicts that they will have internal support from their family as well as from friends. Even though stars are in their favor, they might have some health problems. They are advised to keep their mind open and believe in their inner strength to reap good benefits in 2013.

The Horse

Chinese astrology 2013 for the Horse predicts that people with the Horse sign should take immense care while starting a new project, because they might face a lot of problems if in case something goes wrong. Those problems might include conflicts, violence, financial loss and other such issues. If people of this astrology sign, remain smart and ignore the negative vibes, they can achieve success in this year of 2013. There might be good support from friends and family in the year 2013. They should also be hardworking and smart while dealing with difficult situations



The Pig



Chinese astrology 2013 predicts misfortune and losses for the people born in the year of the Pig. But their health and financial conditions will be stable. They will be having an easy ride this year, as any negative occurrence will have less effect on them. The zodiac prediction 2013 for the Pig sign forecasts that they might need to put in some extra effort to overcome these negative happenings too. If they don't give up and keep at it, they can achieve a lot this year. They have good chances to taste success this year. Year 2013 indicates a progress in wealth and health for them.

"Kung Hei Fat Choi" or Happy (Chinese) New Year!

10 February - Welcomes the Year of the Snake

The magic of China will come to London's West End in a breathtaking blaze of colour on Sunday 10th February with the 2013 Chinese New Year celebrations. The festivities, which are the largest outside Asia, offer revellers a feast of Chinese culture, including a gravity defying lion dance,



fireworks and a variety of performers to herald the Year of the Snake, which is all about action, change, innovation and achievement. The Chinese New Year Schedule:
10am: The parade will begin in Trafalgar Square and the colourful floats can be followed through Chinatown ending in Rupert Street at **11am**
12pm: On the main stage in Trafalgar Square: The celebrations will be officially opened with a traditional Eye Dotting ceremony that will bring the dragons and lions to life. Dignitaries will include the Chinese Ambassador to the UK, Mr. Liu Xiao Ming and Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture Munira Mirza. A dramatic firecracker display will then signal the start of a cultural feast of Chinese music, dance and acrobatics.
1pm-5.30pm: Live entertainment on stage. Performances by Hong Kong-born singer-songwriter Emmy The Great, the world-renowned Chen Brothers Flying Lion Dance and Paul Potts. Performers from Guangdong and Sichuan Provinces will also participate
5.55pm: A stunning fireworks display will mark the end of the day's celebrations
 Chinatown will also be at the centre of the New Year party. The area will be a hive of activity throughout the day with traditional craft stalls and food stands lining the streets. Special events planned for this year include a weekend of oriental artistry and trickery from Opium Cocktail and Dim Sum Parlour and special culinary tours of the area from cooking maestros the School of Wok. The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, who is supporting the celebrations, said: "London's Chinese New Year celebrations will be without doubt an early highlight of 2013. Bringing hundreds of thousands of people into central London it is one of the most exuberant and colourful events of the year, with Londoners and visitors alike enjoying acrobats, musicians and performers from the UK and China itself. As we get set for the Year of the Snake, have a wonderful celebration. Kung Hei Fat Choy."

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Saraswati Jayanti



Saraswati Namastubhyam Varde:Kamroopani Vidya Aarambham
 Karishyami Siddhi Bhavatu May Sada
 Oh! Goddess Saraswati, my humble prostrations unto Thee, who is the fulfiller of all wishes. I start my studies with Thy worship and always pray for success.

Hare Krishna devotees and friends

To celebrate and honour the Jayanti of Saraswati Maa, Guruji Vyas Sharma will be performing a special Puja to celebrate this occasion.

We welcome you to join us in an evening of enriching puja and inspiring pravachans by our highly respected Guru on the following dates:

Saturday 16th February - 17:30pm to 22:00pm
 Sunday 17th February - 11:00 am to 14:30pm

Bhojan and Prasad will be served.

Satyam Shivam Sundaram
 Dharma Mandir

VALENTINES PROM 15 FEBRUARY CLUB CUCCI

Tickets will be sold £10 and £15 at the door and ID strictly required
 9.30pm to 3.30am. Mauritian snack and phoenix beer will be available

TICKET MASTERS:

Sandhya: 07832168335 Smy travel: 0203 056 1616
 Dj vish: 07950488955 Yovana: 07914476024
 Vinella: 02088880400 Sarah: 07833087875
 Pravin: 07530525485 Millie: 07958349000
 Dj masta G: 07917164425 Mauritian cuisine: 02083483388
 Mauritian ticket master: 07961889987



Nearest tube station (wood green) address:

The Broadway High Road London N22 6DS CUCCI NIGHTCLUB



Dress Code: guys (strictly smart or suited booted) girls (evening dress),
 trainers, cap and jeans and sportswear strictly not allowed.

Look out for our Diwali Night and Halloween party to come!

A Winter Wonderland Experience

DOG SLEDDING and the ICEHOTEL IN SWEDISH LAPLAND

by Mylene



What to give a girl for her 18th birthday? That was the question that led four of us out of chilly London, to Kiruna, the northernmost city in Sweden where temperatures can drop down to -19°. I was thinking that clothes and perfume seemed *passé* as a coming-of-age gift when the idea of mushing sprang to mind. Wouldn't it be wonderful to drive a dogsled across wild terrain, through forests and across frozen lakes, far away from cars, computers and the madding crowd? Fortunately, birthday girl, Atlanta, her brother Caspar and my brother, Marco all agreed that would be wonderful and that is why we found ourselves experiencing first hand what Ernest Shackleton and other Polar explorers had to put up with in minus temperatures

The coolest hotel in the world

15 km east of Kiruna lies the village of Jukkasjärvi and the Icehotel. Every year, this incredible building is built from crystal-clear ice harvested from the nearby Torne River. The hotel's snow corridors lead to the bedroom suites where everything is carved out of ice. The bed, table, chairs, even the glass containing your vodka cocktail is made from ice. (Yet, no drinks are served on the rocks!).

Only the deer skin on the bed was not frozen

As you lay in negative temperatures on a glistening block of ice in a warm sleeping bag, surrounded by jaw-dropping sculptured art and design, you will fall asleep in the knowledge that you have been part of an eternal circle. When spring comes, Icehotel melts down and finds its way back to Torne River and when winter arrives a new Icehotel is built. Never colder than -5° inside (outside -15°) you could say it was quite warm and cosy inside this incredible manmade ice building.

Milos Gonda

A Musher from Slovakia and champion of the world's longest stage race, Milos was our guide. Having kitted us out with much needed Arctic outdoor wear, we went to meet the yelping dogs eager to run full speed across the glittering, white, winter landscape. But, first we were shown how to harness the dogs and how to control the sled. Under his expert guidance we became proficient and just as impatient as the dogs to start our Arctic adventure.

Minus 35 degrees, nostrils frozen together and eyelashes caked with snow

The freezing cold takes a back seat as you take in a full panoramic view of dense forests swathed in snow, bare white mountains with deep valleys and smooth frozen lakes. Only the pitter patter of paws on the thick Christmas cake icing-like snow, dilutes the silence as the sled is pulled by four frisky husky dogs.

A wilderness cabin

Lit by candlelight and heated by a wood stove, this rustic wooden cabin far from people, roads, electricity and flushing toilet is our new home. Clean water is collected from below the ice in a nearby brook. Surrounded by all the nature you can imagine, it is in direct contrast to the material world. We never saw any reindeer on our trip, but we did eat the meat with cranberry sauce.

Sauna and picnic Swedish style

Only myself and Atlanta braved the traditional Arctic rolls - popping out of the sauna and rolling in the virgin snow. Awesome! Picnic in the snow was another spellbinding and surreal experience. Breathing in the crisp cool air and savouring the picturesque view, we eat hot dogs and drink steaming cups of coffee made by Pavlo, our other expert guide. I think to myself, this is the only picnic you won't need any insect repellent.

Bonding with the dogs

The dogs are very strong and born to run. At the start of the expedition they are super-excited and noisy, barking and jumping. There is no need to shout out orders as they automatically follow the team in front. Each person is responsible for their four dogs and as we spend hours with them as they teach us how to be a real musher



MN, a pleasure to read in any weather condition!

Herbal island

Medicinal Plants of Mauritius and of the world

by Ameenah Gurib-Fakim PhD

Mauritius, like so many other tropical countries, has a unique flora and a rich medicinal pharmacopeia.

Ameenah talks to Mauritius News about herself and her life-long work

Ameenah Gurib-Fakim PhD, was born in the village of Surinam located in the South of Mauritius, next to the village of Souillac. Like many girls she wanted to become an air hostess (sic) when she grew up. Fortunately for us, her wish to provide a broad picture of the history of medicinal plants and their contribution to modern medicine led her to research in that given field. This has resulted in the publication of her book, *Medicinal Plants of Mauritius and of the world*. From aromatic to ornamental plants, from spices to fruits and vegetables, this book is a compilation of data on the therapeutic potential of different types of plants. Ameenah is a professor at the University of Mauritius with a Chair in Organic Chemistry.

Throughout the ages, human beings have relied on nature for many things; nutritional, cosmetic and last but not least, medicinal. Who hasn't made an infusion of ginger and citronella to guard against the common cold, or use aloe vera juice against burns? Plants have formed the basis of sophisticated traditional medicine systems dating back thousands of years. The first records, written on clay tablets, were found in Mesopotamia circa 2600BC and mention myrrh, liquorice and poppy juice, all of which are still in use today

My book covers 175 Medicinal plants, illustrated with 241 colour photographs. The African continent probably has the oldest and most diverse of all medicine systems, so this is where I start



way of acknowledging the contribution our ancestors have made, that has helped to shape modern medicine. What I have done can best be described as a scientific framework wrapped around traditional knowledge. The end result of all this research could be that more affordable drugs are developed in the future.

Most of the world's flowering plant species live in

Foliage and Bark with Medicinal Properties

84



Psiadia arguta

(Asteraceae)

VERNACULAR NAME: Baume de l'Île Plate

DESCRIPTION & ORIGINS: Endemic to Mauritius, this plant is considered to be highly vulnerable. It can be seen in the wild on the outer islets of Gabriel, not far from the main land. This shrub can reach a height of 1.5m and is very hairy. The leaves are variable in size, the adult leaves being oboval while the juvenile ones are elliptic. The inflorescence is terminal and axillary, sometimes viscous and branched. The capitules are numerous and white in colour.

PARTS USED, PREPARATION: Leaves and Stem Decoction

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE: The juice extracted from the plant is taken orally against respiratory ailments. Often the leaf poultice is applied on the chest against respiratory problems, particularly asthma and to accelerate the healing of wounds (Gurib-Fakim *et al*, 1995).

INDICATIONS: Respiratory ailments, Wound-healing

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS: The essential oil extracted from the leaf is characterized by a high percentage of E-Eugenol 56.5% as the major component. Other *Psiadia* species have been reported to contain flavonoids including psidiarabin and

with an introduction of herbs, past and present, before I move on to other parts of the world. The bulk of my book focusses on aromatic plants and their medicinal properties. Written in alphabetical order, each page gives a full description of the plant in question, together with photographs and its chemical composition

tropical forests. It is a known fact that forests have a vast reservoir of potential drug species, and each has the possibility to provide chemists with invaluable material for the development of new drugs. This is why it is so important to protect our tropical rain forests.

The coveted L'Oreal Unesco Prize for 'Women in Science' for Africa

Naturally, I was over the moon to be nominated to receive this prize for my contribution in the field of traditional medicine. I had created the very first database on medicinal plants of the Indian Ocean region and started validating this traditional knowledge. This prize gives much needed visibility and credibility to women scientist and their work. I feel honoured that in 2007, a 15 member selection panel consisting of two Nobel Prize winners chose me to be the recipient of this sought-after prize.

Bonsai and orchids

I am an organic chemist by training. So, what is my hobby? Even my spare time is spent around plants as I am a keen bonsai and orchid enthusiast!

Without a doubt traditional medicinal knowledge is slowly disappearing. Part of our cultural heritage is in our traditional medicinal knowledge, that is why I have compiled data on the therapeutic potential of different types of plants; from seeds to spices, through to vegetables, weeds, roots and resins. I feel this approach is a

Mylene

Grand River North West, rendez-vous of “persons of opulence”, laundresses and convicts of old



This Thuillier shows the luxuriant park in the property of Benjamin Roussel, one of the “persons of opulence” living in Grand River North West before they were compelled to leave the place which was threatened by the epidemics of the 1860’s. (Source: Léon Huet de Froberville’s ‘La Grande Rivière de Port-Louis’)

Grand River North West has always proved useful to passing visitors, among which the Dutch and the English seamen plying the oceans. They had access to plentiful of fresh water which they could take on board their ships before resuming their journey at sea. Under French occupation Governor François Mahé de La Bourdonnais built an aqueduct to carry the water to Port Louis harbour, to Government House and for use by the town-dwellers. Works on the aqueduct known as ‘Canal La Bourdonnais’ started on 15 November 1738. And right from the beginning of French occupation, the river-banks were regularly occupied by a host of laundresses who came to wash mountains of linen. This popular practice went on under the British rule. “La Grande-Rivière est l’endroit où s’est toujours faite la lessive de Port-Louis.”(1)

Grand River North West has indeed lived up for decades to its notoriety as the washing machine of Port Louis and of the village bordering the river itself. The more so as the village itself was inhabited by rich people who had a team of laundresses to their service and constituted at that time a version of our modern high-class residential Floreal. A visitor to Grand River North West in the 1840’s noted that “many persons of opulence reside in this district (Grand River North West), which, being several hundred feet above the level of the sea, is much cooler than the town.” (2) One of the finest residences close to the river was that of Benjamin Roussel whose name has been given to the bridge crossing rivulet Saint Louis, on the main road.

Stately residences: from Lt. Col. Mulcaster to Benjamin Roussel

Another stately residence extending on some seven acres of land, belonged to lieutenant-colonel Mulcaster who was conceded land there in 1813. It was the first opulent mansion visible to the right at the entrance of the village, to people coming from Port Louis. “La première campagne que l’on apercevait, à la droite de la montée des Hussards, en venant de la ville, était celle du lieutenant-colonel Mulcaster.”(1) Several other estates such as those of Jean Joseph Michel and Auguste Henri de La Blanchetais were situated to the right of the main road leading from Montée des Hussards down to the river. The former even had his private cemetery where both of them were buried. “On remarque celle (la tombe) du chef de la famille, Jean Joseph Michel, décédé en 1822, et celle d’Auguste Henri de Lablanche, allié à la famille Michel, ancien officier de marine, né à Lorient et décédé en 1851.”(Ibid)

To the left of the main road leading from Montée des Hussards down to the river were the lots occupied initially by several owners, and later acquired by Benjamin Roussel “ancien marin, né à Bordeaux, décoré de la croix de la Légion d’Honneur et de celle de Saint-Louis.”(Ibid) Under the French administration, Benjamin Roussel was “assistant-capitaine du port et chef des travaux de curage du port.”(Ibid) In the relation of his visit to Grande Rivière towards the beginning of the 19th century, Jacques Gérard Milbert gave this description of the estate of Benjamin Roussel. “Elle (l’habitation de M. Roussel) se fait remarquer par de grands cocotiers dont les larges palmes s’élançant sur le chemin. Il faut d’abord passer sous la voute verdoyante formée par les branches d’une mimosa qui borde la route. Cette partie du trajet est d’une admirable fraîcheur; on arrive à l’entrée de l’habitation dont la porte est ornée de deux pilastres.” (3)

The traveller described the whole village of Grand River North West as an idyllic place, a paradise of Eden: “Des habitations florissantes et des prairies couvertes de troupeaux animent toute cette campagne; les collines sont boisées et remplies d’arbres fruitiers.”(Ibid) And how can one forget the conspicuous ‘La Tour Koenig’ that dominated the southern skyline of the village and formed part of the estate of Hon. Henri Koenig, “remarquable par ses dimensions, la beauté du site et la somptueuse maison à étage qui, flanquée d’une tour, dominait le village et la baie” ? (1) There were also the residences of some civil servants such as Reverend Langrish Banks, Civil Chaplain, and Dr Lewis Powell, Superintendent of the asylum (created on the same premises after the closure in 1851 of the hospital). The first occupied the Erin Cottage situated “non loin de la Tour Martello, sur une éminence près de la mer.” (Ibid)

However, by the last quarter of the 19th century, all the splendid villas and functional buildings in the vicinity were no more, the inhabitants of Grand River North West as well as the town-dwellers having fled to the safer districts on the plateau after the outbreak of the deadly epidemics of cholera and malaria. “Elles n’existent plus, les jolies villas dont ses rives étaient semées! Comme elles, les magasins, moulins et autres établissements de l’Etat, dont l’ensemble était la vie de la Grande-Rivière, ont presque tous disparu. A travers les ruines de ce village aboli, que les bois et les ronces recouvrent, on ressent toute la mélancolie des habitations

The omnipresent washerwomen on the banks of the river

The private residences as well as the public institutions were dependent on an army of laundresses to do the ‘blanchissage’ for their occupants. The British artist Thomas Bradshaw made reference to the omnipresence of these washerwomen (and men as well) on the banks of Grand River North West, an omnipresence that was the more picturesque during the dry season: “The village of Grand Rivière is the rendez-vous of all the professors of the art of ‘blanchissage’, male and female, of Port Louis and its neighbourhood; the banks of the river, at all hours from day-break to dusk, are completely covered with negroes and negresses thus employed; and in the dry season,

when the river is reduced to a very narrow stream, the entire bed of the river is thus peopled, presenting, altogether, a very animated scene.”(4) Bradshaw’s description of this scene is associated with plate No. 9 of his collection of views. James Backhouse’s description while crossing the village of Grand River North West in the 1840’s is worth a mention here: “The road was crowded with people, Hindoos, and Malabars, as well as Blacks and Creoles, just emerging from slavery. Many of them were returning from washing in the Grande Rivière, and were carrying large bundles of clothes.”(2)

Scenes similar to the one recorded by Bradshaw in the early 1830’s could still be witnessed in the early years of the 20th century. “Rien de plus pittoresque que cette longue théorie de blanchisseuses que, partout sur la route de la Grande-Rivière, l’on rencontrait et rencontre aujourd’hui, quoique en moins grand nombre, courbés sous le poids d’énormes paquets de linges. Et c’est aussi un curieux coup d’œil que ces linges qui séchent, semant de taches multicolores tout le vaste creux pierreux de la rivière.”(1) However, years back, this activity was not without danger. “Que d’aventures, que de linges emportés, que de blanchisseurs noyés pendant la lessive autrefois, lors des subites crues d’eau que, de cet endroit, l’on n’entend pas venir ! » (Ibid)

Fortunately, the authorities were quick enough to take the necessary precautionary measures so that tragedies could be avoided. In 1826, the Commissioner of Police ordered the publication of a notice inviting the inhabitants of Port Louis to ensure the security of the laundresses at work on the banks of Grand River North West:

« Messieurs les habitants qui ont l’habitude d’envoyer leurs noirs et négresses laver à la Grande-Rivière sont prévenus qu’une cloche a été établie au dit lieu, au moyen de laquelle les noirs et négresses seront avertis de la crue des eaux et de l’annonce d’un prochain débordement.

Messieurs les habitants sont en conséquence invités à donner à leurs esclaves l’ordre de retirer aussitôt que sonnera la cloche, afin d’éviter les malheurs dont autrement ils seraient menacés. »(Ibid)

The warning bell was used for about fifteen years. The practice was discontinued while the suspension bridge was under construction.

Seven laundresses rescued from drowning in April 1825

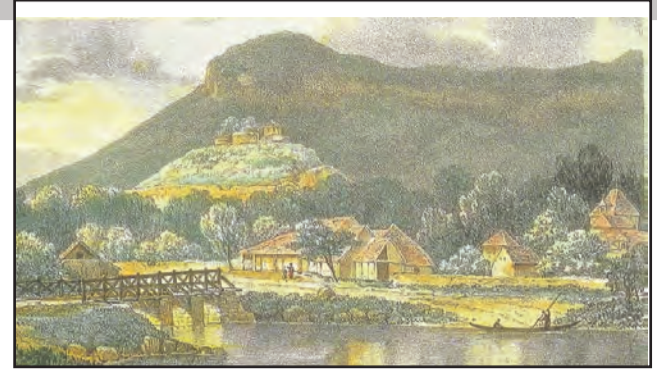
A few months before the publication of the 1826 notice, seven black laundresses who were washing clothes at Grand River North West were miraculously rescued from drowning by a group of soldiers, fishermen and convicts. The British governor, Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole, published officially the brave deed of the rescuers and rewarded them with a sum of money “bien plus comme marque d’approbation de leur conduite que comme une récompense.” (Ibid) The names of some of the heroes of the day have been put on record: “le caporal Collins, les soldats Jenkins, Richard Holt, Evan Jones, du Royal Staff Corps, le brigadier Beugue, de la gendarmerie, et les pêcheurs Pierre Catogan et Prosper Doubré.”(Ibid)

It is unfortunate that the names of the Indian convicts who participated in the rescue, have not been placed on record. At least, their names are not quoted in the work of Léon Huet de Froberville on Grand River North West. Fortunately, the names of some of these courageous convicts are mentioned elsewhere: “On April 7th, 1825 the Grand River North West was flooded as a result of torrential rains. Some washerwomen were nearly carried away by the gushing torrents when they were saved by some convicts quartered nearby. The names of these brave unfortunates have been recorded for posterity. They included many Muslims: Sooka Mohammed, Zaheroodeen and Moosa Mansur Khan.” (5) Indeed a sizeable proportion of convicts brought to Mauritius “happened to be followers of the Prophet” (6), that is, Muslims

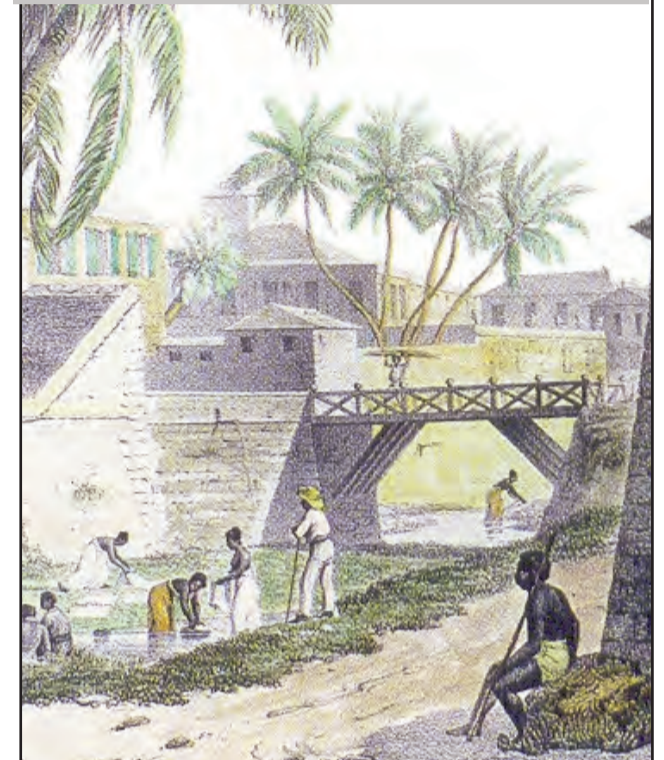
The convicts’ very commendable compassionate act

An anonymous note recalls this incident, giving the credit for the rescue of the laundresses to the Indian convicts: “When the Grand River North West was in spate, it is again Indians that saved the women who were being carried away.” (7) This compassionate act was all the more commendable as “the lot of these convicts was a desperate one”, having been “banished here for life without any hope of remission for good conduct.”(5) As a matter of fact, the convicts, embarked at Bengal and Bombay principally, proved useful in “public works projects all over the island – clearing land, quarrying, stone breaking, and building and repairing roads and bridges” and represented “a valuable force vital for the development of Mauritian infrastructure.”(8)

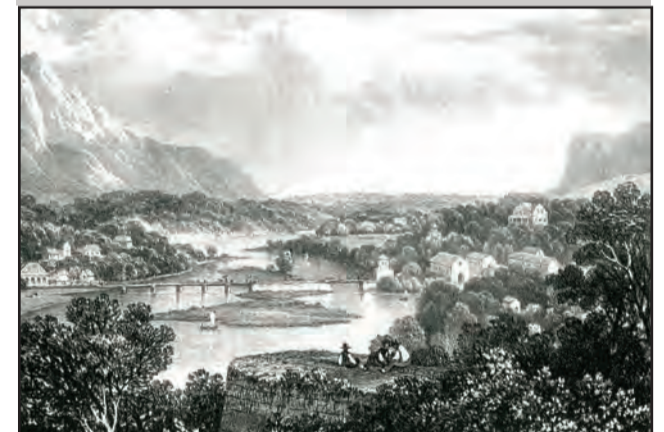
No doubt, there were rascals among them of the likes of Sheik Adam. “He was brought before the Court of Assizes on a charge of



In his description of this plate (No. 9) showing the ‘Village of “La Grande Rivière” Bradshaw writes that “The village of Grande Rivière is the rendez-vous of all the professors of the art of ‘blanchissage’, male and female, of Port Louis and its neighbourhood”, one of which is shown in action in the foreground of the drawing. (Courtesy: Blue Penny Museum, Le Caudan Waterfront, Port Louis, Mauritius)



Grand River North West was not the only place where laundresses were active. In fact, any watercourse could become a place where laundry was done, as shown in this painting by Pierre François Armand Thuillier (1782-1849) showing laundresses at work along the Pouce stream near Pont Etienne, the bridge which connected Champ de Lort and Champ de Mars. (Courtesy: Christian le Comte, publisher)



In his description of this plate (No. 10) showing “Grande Rivière looking south-east” Bradshaw writes that “The buildings below, on the right, comprise the Civil Hospital, a long building with a flat roof, and numerous bungalows, in which the Indian convicts employed upon the roads are lodged.” (Courtesy: Carnegie Library, Curepipe, Mauritius)

poisoning and robbery. He was found guilty and sentenced to fourteen years’ transportation. He left for the Australian penal colony Van Diemen’s Land in 1842... After serving the usual period of probation, remarkably Sheik Adam became a cook to a police magistrate. He later married a female convict named Sarah Swift, using the name John Adam... Sheik Adam’s conduct was exemplary, and he was never reprimanded.” (Ibid) Like his former colleagues who saved the laundresses from drowning, those convicts could do good and show compassion at times.

DODO

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Date: Fri, 1 Feb 2013

To: editor@mauritiusnews.co.uk

Dear Mr Chellen,

Firstly, my congratulations on celebrating 29 years of Mauritius News last year!

Secondly, I would like to bring my humble contribution to the paper by offering my services to write articles now and again. I was born in Mauritius and left shortly after receiving my A levels. I have studied in Australia and the UK, lived in various cities in the UK, lived and worked in Geneva, worked in several West African countries but I have always been proud of our little island and proud to be Mauritian. I currently work on Aid Development and specifically look at the health financing policies in West Africa and assess their sustainability to ensure policy makers achieve the universal goal of providing free healthcare to the African population.

I currently live in Edinburgh and although there are not as many Mauritians over here, I would like to try and write an article about Mauritians in Edinburgh/ Scotland - the 12th March in Edinburgh! Of course, I only know of a Mauritian doctor, through my local post office but I am sure this exercise will potentially create a little Mauritian community in Edinburgh! London is far and we miss out on the buzz of Mauritian gatherings and even hearing the Mauritian creole (another very interesting topic). This will hopefully increase the number of readers for the paper and therefore increase the financial contribution the paper needs today.

I hope I will be able to contribute to the paper as mentioned above, but should you have any reservations I will be happy to remain a reader of the Mauritian News.

Kind Regards,

Nadia

AGONY UNCLE

Question



by Claude Canabady

I am M and nearly 48 years old. A couple of years ago, my husband died after a long illness. We were really in love and a wonderful sex life. Following his death, I went to stay with my son for a while just to sort my feelings and to know what I was going to do in the future. I have a good job with excellent prospects, in addition my husband left me well cared for financially and as a result I have no worries in that direction. After a few months, I returned home and somehow I could still feel his presence in every room that I went in. I still long for him when I think of the wonderful life we had together. The trouble is now that I get the urge to masturbate myself. I do it regularly. I feel very guilty for doing so. I find it difficult to talk about my personal life to anybody including my son. To talk about sexual matters would be even worse for me. What should I do? Should I stop masturbating? Should I feel guilty? Please guide me in these difficult moments. I feel so lost.

Answer

M

First I will talk a bit about your late husband. I feel that maybe you have not gone through the grieving process yet. Talking helps to come to terms with what has happened and it might be necessary to go over and over the same ground. This repetition is important as it is one of the best ways of helping the truth to be accepted. It is wrong to think that talking about the situation makes it worse and that it is better to try to forget what has happened. Forgetting is impossible and people who are grieving need to talk about it. Sometimes what the grieving person just needs is someone to offer comfort and support to take the pressure off him/her.

There are classic stages associated with the grieving process. They do not necessarily apply in every single case and are as follows:

1. Shock
2. Denial/anger
3. Blame and self blame
4. Resolution
5. Recovery

Now I go on to your guilty feelings about masturbating. I feel that you are very strong and coping admirably following the death of a very much loved husband. It is evident that you were devoted to each other and

now you must face the future without him, hence why the grieving process is so important to you. As you said, you had a wonderful sex life. Lovemaking was an integral and vital part of your time with your husband. I feel that you should not have guilty feelings about masturbating. If from masturbating, you derive comfort and pleasure, so be it. If it gives you a chance to enjoy the marvellous memories of your husband, I'll say good for you. I can assure you that you are not doing anything wrong, nothing to feel guilty about and you must not see it as a sign of weakness. It helps to release any pent up emotions, then it is good and healthy. So please do not feel that what you are doing is reprehensible, in fact what you are doing is perfectly natural. I feel that you need to address your emotional well being, hence why I suggest that you should see professional help as soon as it is practical. In the meantime, I feel that you should talk to someone that you trust and unburden all those mixed up thoughts that are swirling in your mind. Most of all, please do not feel guilty, there is absolutely no reason for you feel like that.

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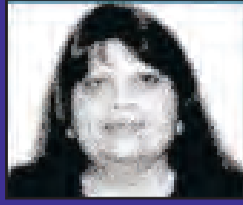
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'A Day In the Life Of Diabetes'

by Devinia Sookia (USA)*



Credit: Net doctor

Diabetes is a serious illness. It can damage many parts of the body and lead to heart attacks, strokes, blindness, amputation, kidney failure and nerve damage. Diabetes complications can be prevented by managing blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol levels, by eating right and being physically active.

The American Diabetes association named November 2012 as the American Diabetes Month and 11 November 2012 as 'ID Day' that is 'I Decide' to fight.

Diabetes Month was the time to communicate the seriousness of diabetes and the importance of prevention and control.

On Sunday 11 November 2012 the American Diabetes Association in association with churches organised a nationwide movement to stop diabetes.

Churches across the country celebrated 'ID Day' by saying prayers for diabetics, by distributing leaflets with necessary information on the disease and by giving health providers an opportunity to speak to the congregation about diabetes.

The reason churches were picked up is due to the fact that the church is a trusted source of information for the African American community. Nearly five million African Americans have diabetes according to studies carried out by the American Diabetes Association.

African Americans are more likely to get diabetes and experience higher rates of serious heart disease and other complications associated with diabetes.

Managing diabetes can be a difficult task making a seemingly ordinary life rather extraordinary.

To show the huge impact diabetes has on families, the American Diabetes Association also launched 'A Day in the life of Diabetes'. Walks, rallies and Diabetes Wellness Fairs were organised where health screenings together with fitness demos, youth activities and music were provided.

Diabetics were encouraged to share a personal story showing what 'A Day in the life of Diabetes' means.

Many people tend to think that only adults can get diabetes. Little do they know how diabetes can change the life of a child. At one of those walks I met Tanisha, a 12 years old girl whose life was changed dramatically by diabetes. Below is the sad story of Tanisha in her own words.

"I had always been a happy little girl but when I turned seven I started acting in an unusual way. I was also drinking a lot of water. I was really weak. I could not even walk up the stairs and I had a bad attitude. I even told my dad that I lost my smile.

My parents did not know what was wrong with me. They thought I was pretending for

an excuse to miss school. My mum told me off a few times.

I could not explain that I was telling the truth when I said I was weak and tired. I felt helpless.

One morning I was having a terrible attitude and my mum told me that she was going to ground me for the rest of the day when I got back from school.

When I got back from school in the afternoon I was feeling so weak that I passed out. It was then that my mum realised that I was not well. She took me to the doctor and begged him to tell her what was wrong. She told him about all the symptoms that I have been having.

When the doctor said I had diabetes and had to be admitted to the hospital immediately, my mum was very worried and called my dad.

My parents took me to the hospital. I was scared as I did not know what was going on. I did not know what diabetes was. When we got to the Children's Hospital in Oakland they put three I.V.'s in me. All I remember is that I fell asleep.

When I woke up I was in I.C.U. and I could not eat anything. I was super hungry. Finally I was given some crackers and a spirite. I was so excited as I could eat but did not feel good at all.

I thought I was going to die as I had a terrible disease. All I did was rest and waited for my blood sugar to stabilize and to get energy. After three days in I.C.U. they moved me to another room and people came to see how I was doing.

The nurses were all very nice. After they showed us how to take care of me they let me go home. I was very excited that I was going home and was going to see my sister and brother.

I am ok now. I know I am not like other little girls. I have to be very careful. I have to take medications everyday and watch what I eat and drink.

I want to thank my family who never left my side at the hospital. I also want to thank the American Diabetes Association for raising awareness for diabetes and raising money to find a cure. Me and my family have raised \$1,000 doing the walk and will continue to do it in the future."

We have learned a few things from Tanisha's story. Parents should always take their children seriously and listen to what they say. Tanisha was lucky that she reached the hospital in time and her life was saved.

Tanisha told her story to raise awareness about Child Diabetes and to educate parents. Parents have to keep an eye on their kids' behaviour. They should see that their children have a healthy lifestyle by giving them healthy food and letting them have good physical activity.

Take your kids to the doctor for a check up if you notice any mood swings and unusual behaviour.

Devinia Sookia is a barrister-at-law, journalist, writer and attorney.



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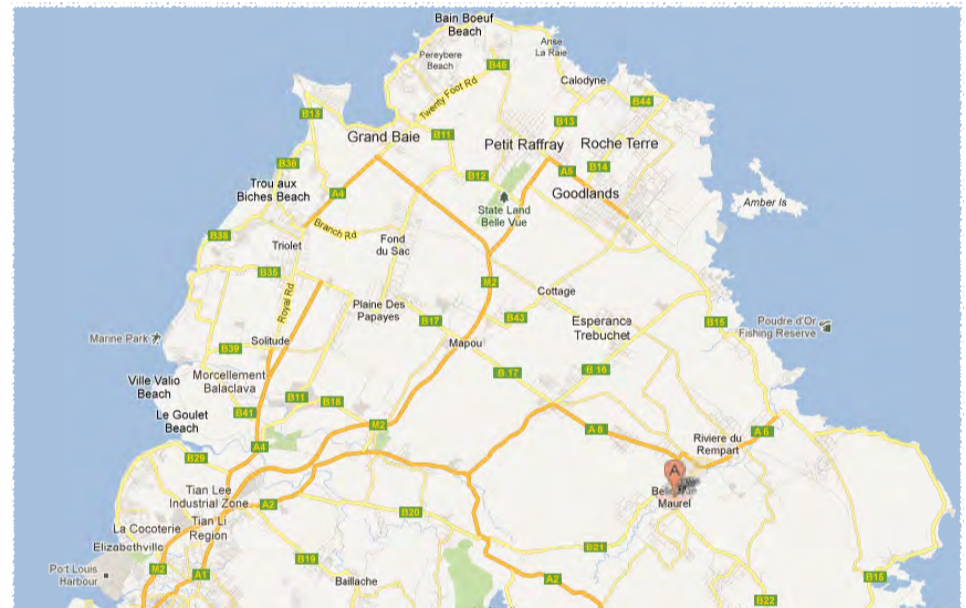
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