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January 2011 - No 279 Mouthpiece of the Mauritian Diaspora. Every Overseas Mauritian is an ambassador for Mauritius Monthly - 70p 28th year

2011, Annus Mirabilis?



Christmas E e spree on Oxford Street

Crunch? What crunch?

Every one agrees to say that it is so good to see the back of 2010. Annus Horribilis for so many, it was. A year that leaves behind a legacy of economic disasters, and most citizens seem to believe that 2011 will be a healthier year, if not an Annus Mirabilis (a wonderful year) - though last year's flu epidemic still persists.

It hard to believe that 2011 could be wonderful when we begin the year with an immediate hike in the cost of living, VAT going up to 20%, petrol likely to reach soon £14 0 per gallon, 1st Class Postage stamp goes up to 46p. Nurses pay will not only be frozen but will be reduced by an annual amount of £500. Season-tickets go up by 12% for commuters, clothing, furniture and drinks are all meant to bring more money to the coffers of the government. Increase in airport taxes will make air travel more expensive and will affect the tourism industry. The increase in university fees will be greatly felt by students. The banks are still reluctant to lend to businesses, and property market is at lowest ebb. Thousands will continue to be laid off as a result of the economic slump.

Well, still, there could be some wisdom in the thinking that 2011 should **not** be an Annus Miserabilis (Miserable Year), perhaps because of the hope that the situation cannot get any worse.

P.C.

The Miss Mauritius GB 2011

Wandsworth Civic Suite, London SW18
Saturday, 5 February 2011
New deadline for candidates: 20 January

Owing to the bad weather, and the flu outbreak affecting the population in the UK, the exceptionally long holidays over Christmas and the New Year, but worse of all, owing to the defective Royal Mail service, we are compelled to extend the deadline for candidates to enter the competitions to January 20.

The December issue contains the application form for candidature to the Miss Mauritius GB contest. Most copies of this December issue put in the post by the mailers on Dec 9 (RM Docket No 501 428 3575) have been sat upon at the various sorting offices of the country, while the priority of Royal Mail was to service the Christmas mail/New Year's backlog. The departmental instructions, as reported to us, stuff that may be considered obsolete may be made to wait.

It was the practice in the past for the post office to recruit additional staff, especially students during the end-of-year periods to handle the high volume of mail. In its economy drive the post office is reported not to be doing this sort of recruitment anymore. The post delay more than anything else is disrupting our time table for the Miss M event in terms of the selection process. We have therefore been forced to change the deadline for candidates' entries to 20 January 2011, and to issue fresh application forms.

For further information, ring 020 7498 3066 or email editor@mauritiusnews.co.uk

Thaipoussom Cavadee 20 January 2011
See Details on Page 7

Telephone rates to Mauritius

exceptionally 9p? Why should it be so exorbitant? At one time it used to be 1p by TELE DISCOUNT and 1.5p by FONE 2. Both are now charging an average of 10p per minute.

We have complained to the Service Providers and they are adamant that Mauritius has found it a very lucrative source of revenue in charging exorbitant fees for all incoming calls cleared in Mauritius. We should all start requesting the Mauritius Telecom not to be too greedy and not to fleece us too much. Overseas Mauritians are not expected to subsidise the economy of Mauritius.

Please take a look at the rates below offered by FONE 2 to telephone callers to various countries of the world as detailed within the two yellow rectangles. With the exception of South Africa, all the rates are at 1p per minute. The rate for South Africa, which is a stone-throw from Mauritius, is only 2p.

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More Tit-bits .

Mohamad Vayid out of NE C

A new Chairman is to be designated to the National Economic and Social Council (NE C) for 2011.

It is most probable that the mandate of the present occupant of the chair, Mohamad Vayid, will not be renewed. The decision to nominate a new person to the NESOC was taken well before the scathing speech pronounced by Mohamad Vayid denouncing the rampant corruption prevailing in the island.

European Union Rs 2 billion grants to Mauritius

Mauritius has recently benefited from a grant of 17,59 millions euros (Rs 750 millions) from the European Union, bringing to some Rs billions the total grants obtained from EU in 2010.

The ambassador and head of the EU delegation in Mauritius, Alessandro Mariani, has stated that the Mauritian government has fulfilled all the objectives set by EU and has taken appropriate measures in 2011 budget to ensure growth. The EU has earmarked Rs 6 billion in form of grants to Mauritius for the period 2011-2013.

Contested Brinks supervisor pockets Rs 27 millions at L to

A supervisor of Brinks, a company specialized in security, has allegedly pocketed the recent L to proceeds worth Rs 27 millions although twelve other persons, mostly security agents employed at the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise at the airport, were associated with him.

One of the security agents, Arjoon Gopy, has stated that he was the one who ticked the 6 correct numbers in the name of the association, but the thirteen associates elected to leave the ticket in the custody of the supervisor. A police case is in the pipeline.

The Automatic Pricing Mechanism out

A new structure, the Petroleum Pricing Committee (PPC), will replace the Automatic Pricing Mechanism (APM) as from January 2011.

The new body will exert the same task as the APM, that is determining the price of petroleum products, an exercise that will be done very four months instead of every month as with the APM. The advantage of this new formula is that it will give consumers a longer respite instead of the monthly unjustified shocks.

Ramgoolam indicts "policy of deceit" on Chagos

In a statement to The Guardian (22nd December issue), the Mauritian Prime Minister, Dr Navin Ramgoolam, said that he felt "strongly about a policy of deceit" which the British government has entertained in so far as the Marine Protected Area (MPA) decreed by Great Britain in the Chagos is concerned.

The Prime Minister announced that Mauritius has lodged an application under the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea to contest before the International Maritime Tribunal the legality of the MPA. The information regarding this contest was handed on Monday 20 December to the Secretary of State William Hague by the Mauritian High Commissioner in London, Abhimanu Kundasamy.

Demise of Venerable Gerald Walter Ernest (1920-2010)

Venerable Archdeacon Gerald Walter Ernest, father of MGR Ian Ernest, Bishop of Mauritius and Archbishop of the Indian Ocean Province, passed away on Sunday 19 December 2010. He was laid to rest at St. John's Churchyard, Réduit.

He belonged to that class of visionaries like Jean Lebrun who believed in the redemptive power of education and charity. He was behind the creation of St. Barnabas College, now Rodrigues College.

It is during his long inter-regnum that the St Paul's Theological library was opened, the newly rebuilt chapel at Montagne Longue was blessed and opened and the plans for the new buildings for the extension of St Hugh's Home in Rose Hill were approved, and construction started.

At the same time Government was set to modify the grants system to religious bodies and it is much to the credit of Gerald Ernest and his staff that the interests of the Diocese were safeguarded.

Water supply: the dramatic decrease

The Mauritian reservoirs are at barely 45% of their capacity, a dramatic situation attributed to the ongoing drought. As matter of fact, rainfall in December has been deficient to the range of 5% of the average expected.

If the trend persists by the end of January, the water authorities and the Meteorological Station predict a catastrophic situation with, for example, barely 7 millions metre cubes of water in Mare-

aux-Vacoas reservoir and 5 millions metre cubes in that of Midlands to supply the consumers in the districts of Plaines Wilhems, Black River and Moka. A dramatic decrease has been noted in the underground supplies.

Unemployment rate on the rise

The Central Bureau of Statistics predicts an unemployment rate of 75 % for 2010 compared to 73 % in 2009.

This means that the number of unemployed has risen from 415 09 in 2009 (158 00 men and 257 00 women) to 437 00 in 2010 (170 00 men and 267 00 women). The unemployment rate among men has risen from 44 % to 47 % whereas this rate tends to remain stable for women at 123 %.

Shop owners v/s street vendors

At long last shop owners in Rose-Hill and Port-Louis have found the ideal solution to prevent street vendors to occupy the space in front of their shops and to compete illegally with them.

They have themselves moved the articles exhibited in the shop windows to the open space outside, leaving no room for temptation for outsiders.

Lady sees UFO in Mauritian sky

A resident of Belle-Rose said she saw a strange luminous object revolving at an incredible speed faraway in the sky.

The object, of the colour of stainless steel, which the lady saw in the early afternoon of 23rd December, moved away in a flash when she reported to her husband in the driving seat and was, in the coming seconds, but a luminous spot very far on the horizon.

Father Robert Jauffret's two books

A malignant skin cancer has constrained septuagenarian Father Robert Jauffret, known for his vigorous and outspoken stands on burning issues, to retire from active life and take the pen.

His two books, "L'audace de dire" (2009) and "Du vin nouveau dans la vie" (2010), are as thought-provoking as he had been in his no nonsense clerical activities, ever arguing that Christians should take the initiative to go to other as Christ did and not expect the contrary.

ICAC's charges against Rodrigan Chief Commissioner

The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) has formally charged the Chief Commissioner of the regional Assembly of Rodrigues, Johnson Roussety, of "influencing public officials by threats".

The Chief Commissioner is expected to appear before the Intermediate Court on 24 January. The Serge Clair led "Organisation du Peuple Rodriguais" (OPR) is campaigning for the resignation of the Chief Commissioner, the dissolution of the regional Assembly and the holding of fresh elections.

A new ATR 72 for inter-island flights

The national airline company, Air Mauritius, has introduced a new plane, the ATR 72-500, named 'L'Ile-aux-Aigrettes', to service flights to the islands of Rodrigues and Réunion.

This acquisition brings to 3 the number of planes ensuring the company's inter-island flights, a must for the end-of-year peak period. 'L'Ile-aux-Aigrettes' has seat capacity for 72 passengers in economic class.

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Interview

Sabine Hossenbacus, Miss Ile-de-France nous parle de sa participation au concours de MISS FRANCE à Cannes

* Ile-de-France est une des 26 régions de France, comprenant Paris.

MN. Bonjour Sabine, merci de bien vouloir accorder à "Mauritius News" cette interview :

On sait que vous avez été élue 2ème Dauphine de Miss île de France et qu'après un concours de circonstances, le désistement de la tenante du titre Pauline DAR ES puis la disqualification de la première Dauphine Jessica MUZATON suite à la découverte d'une vidéo la voyant défiler en lingerie fine - le dicton disant que le malheur des uns fait le bonheur des autres - vous avez été propulsée sur le devant de la scène. C'est vous finalement qui avez représenté l'île de France à l'élection de Miss France à Cannes le 5 Décembre dernier.

M.N. : Comment avez-vous ressenti cette qualification inattendue ?

SH : C'était bien évidemment une très grande surprise pour moi que d'avoir cette chance de représenter une aussi belle et grande région qu'est l'île de France et par ailleurs je me suis rendue compte que j'avais une chance inouïe, et par ailleurs la question d'être prête à temps a beaucoup été présente.

MN : Et votre candidature a été appréciée de bien belle manière puisque vous avez été élue 4ème Dauphine de Miss France 2011, Laure Thilleman, 19 ans. Vous êtes à 22 ans, la 5ème plus belle reine de Beauté de ce difficile concours, choisie par le jury et les téléspectateurs de tf1 en direct. Bravo! Pensez-vous que les deux Miss île de France écartées en auraient fait autant ?

SH : Je ne pense pas que je puisse prendre position sur cette question, un concours est aussi spécial car il y a toujours des surprises donc tout aurait pu arriver.

M.N.: Comment ça s'est passé psychologiquement ?

SH : Pour ma part, je suis très heureuse d'être arrivée sur le podium, dans les 5 premières sur 33 candidates, car Miss France est une institution qui est respectée en France, un concours où beaucoup de jeunes femmes souhaitent y participer donc ma place de 4ème dauphine, je ne suis que comblée par cela.

MN : Parlons du passé, vous êtes née en France? votre enfance? avez-vous une sœur? Comment en êtes-vous arrivée là? l'image d'une jeune femme libérée, dans le vent, vis à vis de votre famille ?

SH : Je suis née à l'île Maurice, et je vis en France depuis 14 ans, je suis enfant unique, je ne pense pas avoir l'image d'une femme libérée mais plutôt l'image d'une jeune femme qui vit dans son temps, dans un pays qui lui a apporté une culture à part, avec des valeurs morales solides, mes parents me soutiennent bien évidemment dans l'ensemble de mes projets et dans ma vie en général ainsi que le reste de ma famille et les personnes qui m'entourent sont absolument adorables.

MN : Maintenant, vous faites des études de quelle nature ?

S.H.: Master 1 de Droit des Affaires.

MN : Parlons du futur, qu'est ce qui vous intéresse? le cat-walk, devenir mannequin ?

SH : Je souhaite poursuivre mes études et puis si des propositions sérieuses, et intéressantes me sont soumises je tacherai d'y accorder un certain intérêt.

MN : Parlez-nous de Maurice. Vous venez de quelle ville? Est-ce que Maurice vous manque? combien de fois y allez-vous ?

SH : Je viens de Bramsthan qui se trouve dans le district de Flacq. Bien évidemment l'île Maurice me manque car c'est le pays où je suis née, avec qui je conserve des relations très étroites. Je



retourne assez souvent à Maurice.

MN. : Comment trouvez-vous Maurice, changé? dans le bon sens ?

SH : Il est indéniable que l'île Maurice change et le changement est une bonne chose car dans le cas de notre île, elle constitue une amélioration de la qualité de la vie: tant socialement qu'économiquement et surtout l'île Maurice s'ouvre au monde, à l'international ce qui constitue une grande richesse pour elle.

MN : Nous organisons à Londres, le 5 Février prochain l'élection de "Miss Mauritius UK". Qu'en pensez-vous? peut-on espérer votre présence qui sera très bien venue? et quel talent artistique pourriez-vous présenter à cette occasion aux Mauriciens londoniens? nous offrir une danse par exemple ?

SH : Je pense que c'est une très belle initiative que d'organiser ce concours, d'autant plus que la diaspora mauricienne est très présente à Londres, après j'espère être bien accueillie.

A savoir si je vais présenter un spectacle aux Mauriciens, je ne pense pas car tout spectacle doit être préparé mais les rencontrer personnellement constituera pour moi un vrai plaisir et un honneur.

MN : C'est dans cette perspective d'une bonne année en votre compagnie que nous vous remercions. Est-ce que vous pouvez adresser quelques mots de la fin en créole pour nos lecteurs de l'île ?

SH : Mo pass bonjour à tous mauriciens qui ti soutien moi lor de mo concours Miss France et mo espéré qui zot fiers de mo parcours.

MN : Et en anglais ?

SH : It was an absolutely pleasure for me to represent our country, because Mauritius deserves it and we know it.

Propos recueillis par Gilles Berger & Lena Goel (Paris)

News from Australia

Award for Mauritius News Correspondent in Australia



Our News correspondent Eddy Abraham OAM has been awarded a Certificate of Appreciation, in recognition for his contribution to the community, on behalf of Hume University of the Third Age Inc. The Certificate was presented by Volunteering Australia on International Volunteer Day 5th December 2010.

Since his retirement from full time teaching English as a

Second Language at Kangan/Batman Institute of TAFE, Eddy volunteers his services teaching French to members of two Universities of the Third Age, namely Hume U3A and Yarra Valley U3A. He also volunteers at Lalor Living & Learning Centre, teaching ESL to adult migrants.

A reminder that Eddy was awarded the Order of Australia Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in June 2007. The citation was "For service to the community through migrant

assistance, multicultural media programs and activities supporting senior citizens." Two local papers, the Whittlesea Leader and the Northern Weekly have reported Eddy's award in glowing terms.

Eddy and his students at Lalor Living & Learning Centre featured in the City of Whittlesea 2010 Calendar, in the month of October. The Centre "endorses, supports and encourages the wisdom and opportunity of lifelong learning for all"

India News

Dalits' suffering laid bare by photographer

Dalit activist Meena Kandasamy: This is something that has to be changed.

Dalits make up more than 16% of India's population of one billion. Yet, despite years



A little girl leans against a stained turquoise concrete wall

of campaigning and state intervention, many of them still face discrimination in society. Their hardship has been highlighted at an exhibition in London.

You first notice her face, which appears deep in thought - then your eyes are drawn to the horrific scars on her arms and body.

This is just one of the photographs on display at Being Untouchable, an exhibition at London's HOST Gallery exploring the lives of Dalits in India.

The little girl is Kamlesh. She was just seven when she was pushed on to a pile of burning rubbish as she was walking with her mother.

Kamlesh is a Dalit, and her scars are a constant reminder of the "punishment" she received for using a road reserved for "high-caste" people.

According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), the charity that organised the exhibition, the bulk of caste-based discrimination and violence in India goes unrecorded.

Kamlesh was pushed for walking on the "wrong" road Kamlesh was pushed on to a

pile of burning rubbish for walking on the "wrong" road

But in 2008 alone, there were 330 000 reports of crimes against Dalits in official statistics, it says.

Formerly known as Untouchables, members of the Dalit community were considered to be the lowest in the traditional Hindu caste system.

The images are presented in such a way that the viewers will feel encouraged to touch them, says Marcus Perkins, the photographer behind the exhibition.

"Despite the huge numbers affected, I'm convinced many outside India either don't know about casteism, or think it is just dying out as a result of India's economic boom, which clearly is not the case," he says.

There are about 166 million Dalits in India, which means one in every 40 people in the world is a Dalit.

Discrimination on the basis of caste is illegal in India, but campaigners say it still continues and is particularly widespread in rural areas.

Meena Kandasamy, an Indian Dalit activist and writer attended the launch of the exhibition. "You realise this is something you should work on, something that has to be changed," she tells the BBC World Service, adding that continuing discrimination against Dalits challenged the idea of an equal world.

"It challenges your idea of hope and justice. It challenges your idea of any good future for the country," she says.

Low-end jobs The aim of the exhibition is to use the photographs to show different forms of "untouchability", discrimination that affects Dalits in modern India, says David Griffiths of CSW.

"In our preoccupation with



Uma cleans human excrement by hand Uma, a Dalit woman, cleans human excrement by hand from a latrine

the extraordinary rise of a middle-class in India, we must not allow these voices to be drowned out," he says.

One photograph on display shows a woman called Uma cleaning the communal latrine of her village by hand.

Members of the Dalit community are frequently forced to take on some of the most demeaning and low-end jobs, whilst lack of opportunities for better work means they often live in severe poverty.

Another image shows Dalit families sleeping together in a community centre after their homes were looted and burnt during a surge in caste-related violence.

Mr Griffiths believes India has much to gain by dealing with the issue of untouchability and tackling the discrimination that Dalits still face.

"Fairer distribution of wealth and universal access to education in the country would mean a larger workforce capable of contributing to India's booming private sector. "There's a real self-interest here for India to address caste discrimination," he says.

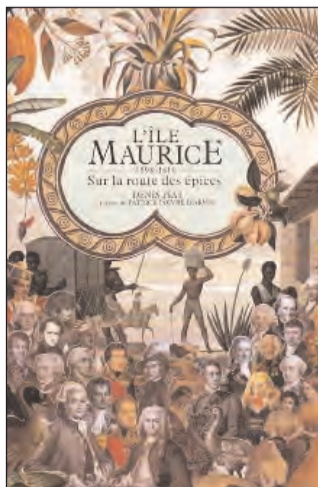
MAURIT US, On the Spice Route, 1598-1810

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Thaipousom Cavadee 2011

The Executive Committee of the MTMS (UK) invites all members and devotees to the religious function of THAIPOUSSOM CAVADEE to be held on Thursday the 20th January 2011 at 8.00 am.

The venue will be ARCHWAY MURUGAN TEMPLE 200A, ARCHWAY ROAD, HIGHGATE DONDON N6 5B.

The first day of fasting is on Tuesday the 11th January 2011. DIETHON will be performed at 7.00 p.m. Followed by UBAYAM every evening at the same time every day up to Cavadee day. ODIETRAM will be performed at 10.30 am on the Friday the 21st of January 2011.

Any devotees who wish to carry the cavadee or paal codum, should contact any of the committee members named below and any devotees wishing to do the UBAYAM during the fasting period please contact any of the committee members.

Please note that Cavadee/Paal

codum entrance fee is £200.00

The committee would also like to be informed of devotees who want to share foods on cavadee day so that arrangements may be made for the provision and organisation of tables. The committee thank members and participants for their contributions during the past years and look forward to seeing you all at the temple on Thaipousom Cavadee day and may Lord Muruga shower his blessings on all of us.

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 - (2) Prize: A return ticket to Paris by Eurostar (donated by MMS) won by Yashir Jethoo ticket No. 1362
 - (3) Prize: A gold necklace (donated by Nutan Jewellers of Nottingham) won by Mr. V. Desait ticket No 820
 - (4) Prize: A metal medicine cabinet (donated by Mrs. Tye) won by ticket No 2 016
- The MMS is thankful to the donors and all those who supported the society by buying the raffle tickets.

The approved list of names of cyclones for Cyclone Season 2010-2011

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Naledi	Elvire	Unjaty	Lumbo
Bingiza	Rafaël	Igor	Yasmine
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Staying Healthy in the New Year

By Devinia Sookia (USA)*



Now that Christmas and New Year celebrations are over you should seriously think of taking good care of your health. Most important of all you should try not to catch influenza also called "the flu".

Influenza is a viral infection in the nose, throat and lungs. Most people suffer from the flu every year. In Europe, America and Canada flu season is during the winter months that is from December to March though people also continue getting flu through the rest of the year.

Some people can get very sick from the flu. According to the American Academy of Physicians, every year about 200000 people go to a hospital with the flu and 36000 people die because of the flu and complications in America Flu may cause fever, cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, headache, muscle aches and tiredness. Most people feel better after one week but for some people, the flu leads to complications such as pneumonia.

Risk at higher risk

Those who have a higher risk of flu complications are children aged 6 months up to 19 years, adults aged 50 years and older, women who are or will be pregnant during the flu season, those living in nursing homes and those who have long-term health problems, health care workers who have direct contact with patients.

H1N1 flu

Many people cannot differentiate ordinary flu from swine flu. The H1N1 influenza (also called swine influenza or swine flu) is a respiratory infection caused by a virus found in pigs. H1N1 flu can infect humans.

Avoiding the flu

The best way to avoid getting the flu is to get the influenza vaccine. It is best to get the vaccine as soon as it becomes available. However, you can also get it any time throughout the flu season that is from December, January and beyond.

The vaccine is available by shot or by nasal spray. The vaccines work by exposing your immune system to the flu virus. Your body will build up antibodies to the virus to protect you from getting the flu. The flu shot contains dead viruses. The nasal-spray vaccine contains live but weakened viruses. You cannot get the flu from the flu shot or the nasal-spray vaccine.

You can also reduce the risk of catching flu by washing your hands frequently as this stops the germs from spreading. Having healthy food, exercising and getting enough sleep also play a part in preventing the flu

because they help to boost your immune system.

If you are sick, make sure that you cover your mouth when you cough and wash your hands often to prevent spreading your germs and giving the flu to others.

Some people who get the flu vaccine can still get the flu but they will usually get it milder than people who are not vaccinated. The vaccine is especially recommended for people who are more likely to get really sick from flu-related complications such as old people, those with a low immune system, those who suffer from cancer, heart disease or diabetes and children. Though the vaccine is highly recommended for those in the category just mentioned, however all those who are 6 months old or older should also get the flu vaccine.

Those who should not get the flu shot? People who should talk to their doctor before getting the flu shot are those who have had an allergic reaction to a flu shot in the past, people with an allergy to eggs, those who previously developed "Guillain-Barré Syndrome" which is a reversible reaction that causes partial or complete loss of movement of muscles, weakness or a tingling sensation in the body within 6 weeks of getting a flu shot and children younger than 6 months of age. Those who have a moderate or severe illness as well as a fever should wait until they feel better before receiving the flu shot.

Nasal spray vaccine

People who should see their doctor before having a nasal spray vaccine are children less than two years of age, adults fifty years of age and older, people with long-term health problems, people with weakened immune systems, children or adolescents who are on long-term aspirin therapy those with diabetes, kidney disease, heart disease or lung disease, people with a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome, pregnant women and those who have had an allergic reaction to a flu vaccine in the past or who are allergic to eggs.

Is the vaccine safe?

Many people wonder whether the vaccine is safe. The flu vaccine is safe and there are very few side effects. If you got the flu shot, your arm may be sore for a few days. You may have a fever, feel tired or have sore muscles for a short time. If you got the nasal-spray vaccine, you may have a runny nose, headache, cough or sore throat.

Can women get the flu vaccine if they are pregnant or nursing?

If you are pregnant during flu season, you cannot get the nasal-spray vaccine. However, it is recommended that women who will be pregnant during flu season get the shot.

Pregnancy can increase your risk for complications from the flu. It is also safe to get the flu shot while breast feeding.

Antiviral Drugs

Antiviral flu drugs are prescription medicines that can be used to help prevent or treat the flu.

If you take one of these drugs such as Tamiflu within two days of getting sick, it can lessen your symptoms, decrease the amount of time you are sick and make you less contagious to other people.

However, most healthy people who have the flu get better without using an antiviral flu drug. Your doctor will decide whether one of these medicines is right for you.

Home Remedies

Many people find that some home remedies work miracles for flu. According to these grand mothers' recipes rubbing the bottom of your feet with a little olive oil and one crushed garlic gets rid of the flu quickly.

Another such cure is placing sliced onions over the bottom of your feet and putting cotton socks while you sleep. Next morning the flu has vanished. The best one is placing a peeled onion on a small tray or plate in your bedroom next to your bed. Apparently the onion sucks all the germs you are carrying and which are in the room. If you are one of those people who hate vaccines and medicines, it is worth trying these home remedies.

Finally here are some useful tips to bear in mind.

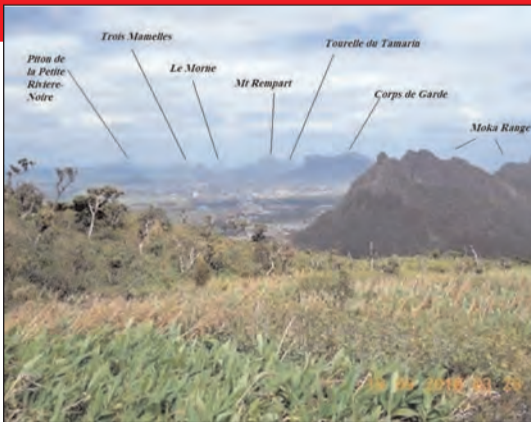
1. Blow air kisses instead of the real thing.
2. Wash your hands often and carry hand sanitizer with you.
3. Do not use your fingers when eating food at parties or when you are eating out. Use serving spoons or forks.
4. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve in order to avoid spreading germs to people around you.
5. If you are at a religious service, try to keep your distance (three to six feet) from other people.
6. In church do not share the wine goblet.
7. Try to avoid crowded places where there is no air and people are breathing on each other.
8. Instead of shaking hands or hugging, greet others with a wave or an elbow greeting.
9. Make sure you get enough sleep in order to keep your immune system strong.
10. If you are sick, stay home.

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

Postcard from Mauritius

A spectacular alignment of Mauritian mountains

By Jooneed Jeeroburkhan



This is a picture from Mauritius taken on September 19, 2010, at 32.6 pm, from the slope of the Pouce Mountain looking west at a spectacular alignment of mountains - Corps de garde, Tourelle Tamarin, Montagne Rempart, Le Morne, Trois Mamelles and Piton de la Rivière Noire. The location of the mountains on the photo has been graciously done by Devy R masam y.

I spent many months of 2010 in Mauritius and saw and appreciated many views. I remember specially how, after experiencing the four seasons for so long in Canada, I thoroughly enjoyed my first real Spring in Mauritius in August.

This couldn't be truer judging from this panoramic landscape of our main island home. I loved this view so much that I felt it deserved to figure on my Xmas and New Year greeting card this December 2010 so

September when the air warmed up gradually and the trees burst with flowers, the litchis and mangoes and longanes and avocados alongside the more spectacular Tecomas and Jacarandas, and so many others, including the perennially blooming Bougainvilleas. Up till then I had known only two Mauritian seasons, Summer and Winter. But the most spectacular and most memorable view was this one, up from behind and above Montagne Berthelot, which I looked up to as a kid vacationing at my grandparents' riverside house in Bois-Chéri, seen from the Western slope of Pouce Mountain, which I escalated one day in September with a bunch of jolly (and very serious) amateurs of endemic Mauritian flora.

Behind the mountain there are other mountains, goes the saying. This couldn't be truer judging from this panoramic landscape of our main island home. I loved this view so much that I felt it deserved to figure on my Xmas and New Year greeting card this December 2010 so

that others may share the thrill of seeing differently familiar landmarks that have been with us for so long that we take them for granted. These landmarks have become such a solid part of our daily environment that we trivialize them through force of sterile habit. Caught up in the daily grind of rushing to and from work and school through the debilitating local traffic, we don't stop to look and rediscover them, let alone climb up the Pouce to view them "autrement", from a fresh outlook. Perspective is everything.

Sixty years after playing at the foot of Montagne Berthelot, I did it. I climbed up the Pouce and suddenly saw this spectacular alignment of all these familiar mountains, the Corps de Garde, the Tourelle Tamarin, the Montagne du Rempart, the Morne Brabant, the Trois-Mamelles, and the Piton de la Rivière-Noire, all in one fell swoop. I felt like John Keats when he first read George Champan's translation of Homer in October 1816, staying up the whole night with excitement, and writing his famous sonnet at dawn, where he compares himself to "some watcher of the skies/when a new planet swims into his ken", and to "stout Cortez when with eagle eyes/ he stared at the Pacific and all his men/looked at each other with a wild surmise/silent upon a peak in Darien"!

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National Lottery Results Dec 2010

Lotto Draws: Twice weekly		
01 Dec	20-21-22-24-27-34	29
04 Dec	04-15-19-44-45-49	11
08 Dec	14-16-23-24-25-43	48
11 Dec	11-15-24-33-43-49	27
15 Dec	06-09-31-33-40-45	41
18 Dec	09-21-35-38-46-49	40
22 Dec	07-13-33-37-48-49	20
25 Dec	13-15-22-25-33-34	17
27 Dec	02-03-16-26-34-39	49

These results have been obtained from the National Lottery, Mauritius News accepts no liability for any misprints or discrepancies in the results published in this column



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Thought for the month

The one thing that Banks and vampires have in common is they both love blood. The difference is that vampires do not exist.

Banks do!

P.C.

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*Figures correct at the time of going to press

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MN was first published in PDF format online in November 2008. For unfortunate reasons, the page turning was removed from our website. It has now been restored. You can now read your paper page by page online at www.mauritiusnews.co.uk.



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Book launch

Presence of two princesses for the ceremony marking the bicentenary of British conquest of Mauritius

At one day interval, in the first week of December, two princesses, Princess Royal of the British royal family and Princess Indira Devi of Hyderabad, India, attended book launches organized respectively by the National Library in Port Louis and the Indradhanush

Kam Lon, OSK. This book, launched in the presence of the Minister of Arts and Culture, Mookheswur Choonee, is based largely on primary sources and is the first serious attempt to provide a global and comprehensive view of the events and the people involved in the various skirmishes after the landing at Mapou Bay (today Bain Boeuf) until the capitulation of the French forces on 2nd December 1810. The book is on sale at the National Library.



From left to right: Princess Indira Devi of Hyderabad and Minister Mookheswur Choonee presenting special issue of Indradhanush magazine, President of the Republic, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, presenting "Pahlad Ramsurrin and his works" and director of Indradhanush Pahlad Ramsurrin presenting "The History of Mauritius - British perspectives"



Front row (from left to right): In company of the Princess Royal (second on the right) are V. Govinden, R Ramasamy, LD C C niah, M. Carter and, at the far right, N. Luckeenarain.

Back row (partially visible, from left to right): Yves E an Kam Lon, OSK director of the National Library, Amiral Laurence, the husband of the Princess Royal, and Mookheswur Choonee, Minister of Arts and Culture

In the course of the ceremony, the director of the National Library offered to the princess a copy of "Account of the Conquest of the Mauritius...by an Officer who served on the 1810 expedition", one of the earliest primary documents on the British Conquest of Mauritius, published in London in 1811. Historian Marina Carter presented a copy of "Kaleidoscopic Conquest Mauritius - 1810" to the royal visitor and artist Nirmala Luckeenarain offered a painting of hers.

A special issue of trilingual Indradhanush

The second publication which highlights the conquest of the island in 1810, with a particular emphasis on the valuable contribution of Indian soldiers along their British counterparts, is a special issue of Indradhanush entitled "The contributions of the Indians in the Conquest and Consolidation of the British Rule in Mauritius" (200 pages) which was launched on Saturday 4 December.

Some 25 contributors among whom seasoned historians as Marina Carter and Prosper Eve have worked with prolific

editor Pahlad Ramsurrin to produce this special issue which, together with the work of CRIOS, has inaugurated a new chapter in the historiography of 1810 - by widening knowledge about the wherefores and the whereabouts of the British takeover of the island, which have so far been dealt with parcimoniously.

The book launch at Long Mountain also included the presentation of "The History of Mauritius - British Perspectives" by William Draper Bolton & others (320 pages) and "Pahlad Ramsurrin and his works" by Sangeeta Ramsurrin-Nunkoo (50 pages). The book launch was attended by the President of the Republic, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, and the Minister of Arts and Culture, Mookheswur Choonee. Princess Indira Devi generously donated Rs 100,000 to the Indradhanush Sanskrit Parishad on the occasion.

DODO

Sanskrit Parishad (ISP) in Long Mountain. Both publications, as their titles indicate, deal with the conquest of the island, the Isle de France, by the British forces which consisted of European soldiers and a sizeable number of Indian soldiers or Sepoys.

The first book, "Kaleidoscopic Conquest Mauritius - 1810", 245 pages, launched on Friday 3 December at the seat of the National Library, is a collective work bearing the imprimatur of the Centre for Research on Indian Ocean Societies (CRIOS). The co-authors are M. Carter, MS. Hall, V. Govinden, R Ramasamy and E. Richon, with a preface by J. Ng Foong Kwong and a foreword by Yves E an

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Bollywood's biggest star, Akshay Kumar, plays real life hero and creates pandemonium at Cineworld Feltham!



Bollywood's biggest stars, Akshay Kumar, Katrina Kaif and Farah Khan, stirred a frenzy among hoards of fans who descended upon Cineworld Feltham last December to catch a glimpse of their number one stars as they visited the venue to launch advance ticket bookings for the blockbuster release, 'Tees Maar Khan', produced by Free's Company, Hari Om Entertainment Company and UTV Motion Pictures.

The stars brought pandemonium to the venue as the throngs clambered to get closer to their screen idols. Despite the cold weather, the venue was packed out both outside and in, and as temperatures dropped, emotions soared!

Getting up close and personal, the stars interacted with fans, with Akshay playing real life hero when he rescued a lost child from the crowds and real life action hero when he climbed on top of the cinema's ticket booth, to the hysteria and delight of the screaming fans. Traditional Punjabi 'dhol' players

provided the soundtrack as Akshay, Katrina and Farah together opened ticket sales to the first 20, starstruck fans.

Prior to bringing Bollywood mania to Cineworld Feltham, the trio engaged in banter with BBC Asian Network presenters Raj and Pablo and a 200-strong studio audience with whom Akshay shared anecdotes laced with his signature, playful wit.

'Tees Maar Khan' has opened in cinemas across UK on Wednesday December 22 2010 with advance

Will Sheila ki Jawani make TEES MAAR KHAN a hit?



There's quite a lot of buzz surrounding the release of TEES MAAR KHAN and one of the major reasons which has helped in creating that buzz is undoubtedly, <Sheila ki Jawani>.

Says Katrina, "There's nothing riskier that I've done with <Sheila ki Jawani>. There isn't any exposure in it. It's really about an attitude. I was very specific on the attitude part. There's nothing in the costumes that is shocking. It's dancing with a certain kind of openness and not being inhibited."

The 26-year-old further adds, "Farah had given me DVDs for reference. They were not given to emulate but just to see how Madhuri (Dixit) used

to have that joy that made you feel that she didn't want to be anywhere else but dancing in that song. Those things were important to get into that mood and environment?"

According to Katrina, Farah has an inimitable style, which is very difficult to comprehend.

She says, "Farah presents her women in a very glamorous way. She has her own 'Farah Khan style' which I can't explain. No other director has that touch. My purpose of signing was working with Farah and how she would present me in a way that no one else would. She didn't let me down and gave me much more than what I had expected."

On the other hand, Farah Khan gives full credit to Katrina for the success of <Sheila ki Jawani>.

"She was the hardest working student to ever have. At one point I had to beg her to stop and go home," states Farah. She further adds, "It was easy for me to make her look the way she does in Sheila. She is the most beautiful woman we have today. She's not trying to be sexy and make those faces."

Well, the efforts that Farah, Katrina and others have put in making <Sheila ki Jawani> a hit is for everyone to see. Let's wait and watch if Sheila is able to tempt the audiences all the way to the theatres.

Do you think <Sheila ki Jawani> will make TEES MAAR KHAN a hit?

Ranbir refuses to play Rishi Kapoor

Ranbir Kapoor seems to be unwilling about getting into his dad's shoes. Perhaps this is the reason why the actor refused to play the role of his dad in the planned remake of the popular classic AMAR AKBAR ANTHONY.

It's learnt that Ranbir was approached to play Rishi Kapoor's role in the remake of this cult classic. It must be mentioned that Arbaaz Khan is planning to remake the film with Salman in the lead.

According to sources, when Ranbir was approached to play the character of Rishi Kapoor, the actor sprung a surprise by refusing to do so. On the contrary, Ranbir was keen on playing the role of Big B and nothing else.

Well, will Arbaaz grant Ranbir his wish or will Ranbir have to fit into his dad's shoes in the end, only time will tell.



*
Book Your Tickets early for Miss Mauritius Great Britain 2011 organised by Mauritius News to be held on Saturday February 5, 2011 at Wandsworth Town Hall. Tickets £15 and £20 on the door. Book a table of 10 persons early for your family, friends and Colleagues

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Astrology Predictions for 2011 At a Glance

Social Interest

* **E** crowdfunding becomes an extremely popular avenue to raise money for artistic and other projects.

* Proliferation of non profit organizations will increase in 2011 and beyond.

* Going green tips the scale and becomes more than a trend; products become viable and sustainable alternative to traditional

* Global recognition and alarm over the planets water pollution and problems.

* **R**eligion and spirituality expanding in countries that denied religious rights- scientist continue to find evidence of spiritual concepts thought to be superstition such as prayer as an effective measure to healing.

* Proliferation of Wine, beer, legal or medical marijuana selling by alternative storefronts such as websites.

Technology

* Electric and hybrid cars will get a huge boost, new technology will make electric and hybrid cars a viable alternative to gas- By the time Uranus leaves Aries (2019) gas powered cars will be in the minority.

* **B**reakthrough in affordability for personal robots

* Major leaks in personal medical data

* New technology and discoveries from the ocean- algae as fuel develops as a viable alternative

* Interactive TV channels explode education channels include college courses

* Inventions of new uses for personal robots and breakthrough in their affordability

Economics

* Job indicators have positive news employment opportunities increase mid April through the rest of the year

* **C**onsumer spending increases significantly by mid year

* Travel industry recovery

* **C**ontinued contraction in large structured corporations who will continue to eliminate benefit packages.

* **R**estructuring of insurance companies and regulations.

* Defaults on student loans increase sharply.

Medicine

* Major breakthroughs that continue in stem cell research and successful trials.

* Major breakthrough for head trauma victims; new rules for sports related head injuries.

* Alarming increase of aging population with brain disease, Alzheimer's, cognitive failure that creates crises for elder care options.

* Major leaks in personal medical data

Real Estate

* Final purging of significant number of bad debts and mortgage defaults late March/April

* The bottom of the real estate market will be over by mid 2011.

* Home shows will continue to be popular and expand on TV and other media.

Government

* Department of defense expands into new and uncharted territory; redefinition of how to win and wage a war.

* News leaks of secret development of a weapons utilizing cutting edge technology.

Buy your tickets now for Miss Mauritius Great Britain Pageant, organised by Mauritius News supported by MCS To be held on 5th February 2011 at Wandsworth Town Hall 7.30 pm - 13.0 am Tickets £15. On the Door £20 Book early to avoid disappointment Call 0207 498 3066

Mauritian reminiscences

British conquest bicentenary



The "Plan et Profil de la Montagne Longue" of 1790 shows the inaccessible Echelle Rock (far left of sketch) under the name "Morne Ecroulé" and the signal post or flag station (far right) on the part of the Long Mountain range ridges "facing the villages of Bois Pignolet and Notre Dame" (ISP report dixit), which are very accessible. Some ninety years later, in the 1880 map by Descubes, the name "Morne Jeannette" appears for the peak with a land concession under the name L'Echelle not far in the valley to the south. So, it must be some time after 1880 that the name "L'Echelle Rock" must have emerged to designate the inaccessible peak

Photo and sketch from "Kaleidoscopic Conquest - Mauritius 1810" showing the position of Long Mountain in relation to neighbouring key positions in 1810 and in 2010

Confusions about the signal post on Long Mountain

People who are familiar with the history of the British Conquest of Isle de France, know that the French had a signal post on Long Mountain "from which every movement of the British army could be seen and signalled to the defending troops." (1)

It is also known that the capture of the flag station, better still the skirmish at Rivière Sèche, the river crossing that was disputed by the British just below the flag station and where most of the casualties on both sides occurred, including the two British officers who fell, Col. Campbell and Major O'Keefe, were an essential part of the whole action of the 1st of December 1810. But they were by no means the decisive outcome of the day. The British troops had yet to force the way towards the capital and the capitulation of the enemy forces.

The capture of the signal post has so far been attributed to sepoys or Indian soldiers: "On 1st December a battalion of sepoys occupied Long Mountain at 7 am." (2) "A body of sepoys now climbed to the top of Montagne Longue, which the French had neglected to occupy, and thence commanded the whole battle field." (3) Further, Derek Hollingworth stated sepoys were "sent to attack the post and dislodge the French troops from Long Mountain." (1) This triumph of the sepoys was strongly emphasized on Saturday 4 December 2010 on the occasion of the official launch at Long Mountain of a special issue of the trilingual magazine **Indradhanush** (184 pages) on the theme "The contributions of the Indians in the conquest and consolidation of the British rule in Mauritius".

The issue and the launch of the magazine were in the context of the bicentenary celebration of the British conquest of Isle de France. Moreover, a report of the Indradhanush Sanskrit Parishad (ISP) was rendered public wherein it was emphasized that "James Prior, William D. Bolton, Albert Pitot, Pandit Amaram, Auguste Toussaint, Derek Hollingworth, R.K. Boodhun, K. Hazareesingh, and B. Bissoondoyal, have said that there was a signal Post in the l'Echelle Rock Mountain, and the French soldiers stationed there were dislodged by the Sepoys." (4)

No official sources warrant sepoys' triumph

However, other accounts such as the one by Bayly (commented for the first time in 'Kaleidoscope Conquest - Mauritius

1810", CRIOS, launched on Friday 3 December 2010 at the National Library in Port Louis) suggest that it is the 12th regiment, composed of Europeans, that stormed the flag station. No mention of sepoys either in British first hand sources, or in the Decaen and Vandermaesen reports. This has been interpreted as a conspiracy of the West to silence the contribution of the sepoys (5)

However, even if primary sources do not seem to warrant an outstanding involvement of the sepoys in storming the flag station, it is undeniable that the latter have magnificently contributed to the success of the 1810



Drawing representing Sepoys in British conquered Mauritius. Only secondary sources mention the participation of Sepoys in the storming of the signal post on Long Mountain on 1st December 1810. Primary sources such as "Colonel Bayly's Diary" or "A count of the Conquest of Mauritius" are mute on the subject

British expedition on the whole, their battalions from Bombay, Madras and Bengal being well embedded and integrated in the overall strategy and tactics set in place by the colonial commanding body. (6)

The exact location of the flag station

Not only are there confusions about the battalion which captured the flag station, but on its exact location as well. Was it on Pieter Both or on L'Echelle Rock? In the account of "an officer who came on the expedition", the place where the signal post was located is designated as "Pirebot" (Pieter Both): "At Pirebot, there was a signal station, from whence every movement of our army could be discerned." (7)

Other sources designate the place as "L'Echelle Rock", which is impossible as this peak is quite inaccessible. The following observation was made by a team of the ISP which successfully reached to the site where the signal post stood on Long Mountain: "The L'Echelle Rock which is the highest

summit of the Long Mountain range is unattainable, because all around it there is stiff-cliff." (4)

As a matter of fact, the signal post was neither on Pieter Both nor on L'Echelle Rock. It was actually on the western ridge of Long Mountain as shown in a plan of 1790. (8) It was definitely not on L'Echelle Rock which is the highest peak (named 'Morne Ecroulé' on the plan) shown on the left.

DODO



This map from the early 20th century, around 1913, shows "L'Echelle Rock". It appears that the confusion related to the location of "a signal post on the l'Echelle Rock" first appeared in Derek Hollingworth's "They Came To Mauritius". He erroneously situates "the Echelle Rock, midway between Pieter Both mountain and the summit of Long Mountain". To say that it is half way between Pieter Both and the summit of Long Mountain does not stand as the highest point of Long Mountain is L'Echelle Rock

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The Nicholas Factor

It is Christmas time once again. It is the season of rejoicing; of giving and receiving; of raising our hands in thanksgiving. My earliest recollections of Christmas festivities are associated with the socks which, we as children (even in Hindu homes), would hang up somewhere (not by the fireside, as there would be none) on Christmas Eve for Father Christmas to fill up. We were always rewarded with sweets or a story book, or something similar, which was sometimes found tucked under our pillows next morning, if it did not fit inside our small socks. But then, we had small desires and these simple gifts made us immensely happy.

It was only much later that I learnt that this custom of hanging up a Christmas stocking originated from the story of Bishop Nicholas on whom the Father Christmas legend is based. The story tells how a local nobleman had lost his fortune and was sadly unable to provide dowries for his three unmarried daughters. St. Nicholas decided to help in secret. He waited until it was night and crept through the chimney. He had three purses of gold coins with him. As he was looking for a place to keep this gift, he noticed the stockings of the three girls that were hung over the mantelpiece for drying, and so put one purse in each stocking. This led to the custom of children hanging stockings or putting out shoes, eagerly awaiting gifts from Santa Claus or Father Christmas.

Another remembrance is of the scene of Nativity, which is still enacted in many missionary

schools/churches. That also had a gift component of the three wise men bringing presents of myrrh and incense for the infant Jesus. But it seems that now the humble manger, with the infant Jesus swathed in rags, is almost forgotten. And so are the humble stockings.

We, the modern day parents, sow the seeds of ambition in our children right from infancy. We teach them to think big and act smart in order to become rich and powerful. So their wish list does not fit in a stocking, and really stretches the purse strings of Santa. The more expensive and exclusive the gift, the higher is their happiness quotient. Need has now been overshadowed with greed. It is not only the children, but even we adults have such skewed up notions about giving and receiving.

The other day I was invited to the 1st birthday party of an acquaintance's grandchild. All of us invitees were trying to outdo the other, carrying loads of gifts for a kid who was literally born with a silver (nay gold) spoon. To my surprise I found that most of the guests, at this supposedly kids' party, were either business friends or high government officials. Even in such a high profile setting, differential treatment to the guests (depending upon their profit value) was more than obvious. One trio of father, mother and daughter was being particularly pampered by the host. The catering waiters were instructed to take special care of this special guest, who turned out to be some bigwig from the income tax department. Liquor was flowing openly for the men folk (and rather discreetly for the women). The soulful

renditions of the hired ghazal singer were drowned in the din of noises. This did not look to me like a children's party from any angle. It was pathetically amusing that neither the ambience, nor the few kids present there, gave it the feel of someone's 1st birthday party. But then, perhaps I was being just too stupid and naive. Someone wisely whispered in my ears that such parties are held to enhance the business prospects of the host family—birthdays are just an acceptable excuse. The giving of gifts and partaking of the hosts' generosity are actually part of the profit generating business strategies, and also an opportunity to show off one's opulence and social status.

It is a sad commentary on our morality that the noble gesture of giving and receiving is now dictated by social and financial obligations to further our monetary interests. The size and cost of our gift is not dependent upon the needs of the receiver. It depends upon what we hope to gain (other than gratitude) from giving it. The worth of our presents is almost invariably inversely proportional to the economic status of the recipient. Why else do we give cheaper gifts to those who are below our own social/economic status?

If only, our giving could be gentle as silence (as goes one of the hymns I learnt in childhood), and if it keeps in mind the needs of the receiver (and not the greed of the giver), then we will be really blessed. Only if we could inculcate the magnanimous modesty of Saint Nicholas while filling up empty stockings!

SS



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