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Mauritius News

TM

Truth & Justice

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Another bank scandal

The deposit account of the National Pension Fund of 600 million rupees (£13m) with the Mauritius Commercial Bank



The Mauritius Commercial Bank HQ at Sir William Newton Street in Port Louis

A outgoing senior manager of the Mauritius Commercial Bank (MCB), Mr Robert Lesage, has been formally accused of embezzlement in the sum of 500,000 million rupees (£11 million), and laundering 400,000 million rupees (£8.5m) between July 1997 and February 2003.

Mr Lesage who only took his retirement from the Bank in early February was quizzed by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) on February 15 and 17. The money belongs to the National Pension Fund (NPF).

The scandal came to light as a result of a telephone call to the Bank from Ms Ameenah Rojoa, a Financial Analyst of the Management Audit Bureau which managed the National Pension Fund. She was enquiring about the maturity of this account deposited with the MCB in 1988 for a period of five years. She was told that the Bank had no record of this Deposit account. Unbelievable!

Where has the money gone and why is there no trace of any transaction affecting the NPF account? Yet, it has pointed out that loans of several millions of rupees from the NPF have been made to one Mauritian businessman in particular who resides in the UK. The businessman, in the style of a conglomeration, has been investing simultaneously in a number of business ventures and has enlisted, in the first instance, the support of the banker himself, and subsequently a former Financial Secretary (a high profile personality now engaged in business consultancy close to the political leaders and the government), an economist from a reputable firm on top of the services of his attorney. All these people's assets with the different banks of the island have now been frozen and their passports withdrawn.

According to press report the UK Mauritian businessman has acknowledged the fact that he has borrowed up to 398 million rupees from the Mauritius Commercial Bank, but argues that he has been paying back, as agreed, some two million rupees every month. His transactions are above board, he is reported to have declared. He has won quite a few court cases previously, and it is not unlikely that he will sue those brandishing his name in the island. This time may prove just a bit too arduous, though.

It is understood that banker Lesage did at first imply that there were other top officials of the MCB involved in the scam, but this has been denied by the Bank. The Bank carried out its own internal inquiry, the outcome of which is not known, and in a press release acknowledged the disappearance of the NPF deposit account. The Bank has promised to make good all the money that has vanished.

The Mauritius Commercial Bank, managed by the Franco-Mauritian community, is the oldest banking institution of the island. Founded in 1838, it is said that it was created three years after the abolition of slavery in the island when the White masters were paid compensation by Britain for the liberation of the slaves.

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Happy 35th Independence Anniversary, Mauritius!

Mauritius commemorates the 35th Independence anniversary, and 11th year of Republic status on March 12.

The Thoughts of People of Mauritian origin will turn to the mother island on that memorable day and will, with Mauritius News, wish the country continued prosperity for the future.

Positive reporting on Mauritius

The US view on the country

"Mauritius has strong relations with the west as well as with India and the countries of southern and eastern Africa..."

A country report on Mauritius praises the island in the context of trade and business relations between the United States (US) and the sub-Saharan countries and the implementation of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The report's findings are nothing spectacular, but in theory, it does show the world the order of things on the island.

Under the Rule of Law/Political Pluralism/Anti-Corruption, 'Mauritius is a robust and vibrant economy. Fair and orderly elections, supervised by an independent commission, take place at regular intervals'.

'The press and political parties operate freely and the judiciary is independent. Procurement is open and transparent, although there have been allegations that some contracts are awarded to the ruling elite and favoured persons'.

Under the section heading on Labour/Child Labour/Human Rights, the island fares quite well in that 'The government of Mauritius generally respects the rights of its citizens, including freedom of speech, press, assembly, and religion'. The report also maintains that 'Mauritius law prohibits forced or compulsory labour as well as trafficking of children. The government has improved the enforcement mechanism to eliminate child labour'.

Another positive remarks of the report are that 'The Constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, caste, place of origin, political opinion, colour, religion or sex'.

However, on trade unions, the report is less optimistic. It notes that unionists have had difficulties with the police during attempts to hold demonstrations and marches, and special provisions in the labour law allow for mandatory overtime and holiday labour for workers in the EPZs. The International Labour Office and trade unions have called for enactment of legal provisions that would provide greater protections to trade unions against acts of anti-union discrimination'.

On human rights, the report states that 'A Human Rights Commission is to investigate complaints against the police was established in 1999, and issues its first report in March 2002, focusing on accusation of police brutality. The government is investigating these allegations and looking at how to improve oversight of the police'.

On economic reform, market economy and liberalisation Mauritius scores highly, as they are the also the major conditions to qualify under AGOA. The island is AGOA eligible and expects to maximise its textile and apparel exports to the US.

The report notes that 'Mauritius was deemed the most competitive economy in Africa by the World Economic Forum 1998 and 2000. 'The government works with the private sector to encourage transparency and encourages market forces'.

'Mauritius has undertaken trade liberalisation, including lowering tariffs; has signed the Information Technology Agreement; and is updating patent trademark, and copyright laws'

The Mauritius Country Report also states that 'Rapid economic growth and social policies have significantly reduced the percentage of the population living below the poverty line'.

On education the report notes: 'Primary and secondary education is free and compulsory for ages five to 12. Nearly 100% of primary school age children are enrolled in school. Nevertheless, Mauritius is working closely with the World Bank to address disparities in the employment and edu-

Continued on Page 3

National Scholarships 2003

Hereunder are the names of the 31 HSC (AL) candidates who have obtained top marks at last year's Cambridge overseas examinations to win a scholarship for university studies. The list comprises two awards for Rodrigues island as well.

SSR NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS - SCIENCE SIDE

BOY

Jeenea, Ramanand - Royal College Port Louis

GIRL

Ajaheb, Bibi Nausheen Fatema - Queen Elizabeth College

STATE OF MAURITIUS SCHOLARSHIPS

SCIENCE - BOYS

Kulloo, Praneta - Royal College Port Louis

Korim, Muhammad Afzal - Royal College Port Louis

Nuckchady, Dooshanveer Chowbay - Royal College Curepipe

Mamoojee, Yaasir Hossen - Dr Regis Chaperon SSS

SCIENCE - GIRLS

Ellapen, Yakshmi Jhordy - Queen Elizabeth College

Ramchurn, Navdha Rajnee - Queen Elizabeth College

Ho Von, Vanessa - Dr Maurice Cure SSS

Choolun, Gyanisha - Queen Elizabeth College

ECONOMICS - BOYS

Parasuraman, Morgana Munisamy - Royal College Port Louis

Kwong Yin, David Andrew Youn Sow Chung - Royal College Port Louis

ECONOMICS - GIRLS

Lam Po Tang, Emma Kimfa - Loreto College Quatre Bornes

Hurnaurn, Yantee - Sharma Jugdambi SSS

ARTS - BOYS

Bhoayrul, Dustin - Royal College Curepipe

ARTS - GIRLS

Gopal, Kushla Devi - Dr Maurice Cure SSS

TECHNICAL - BOYS

Lee Choon Kwet Shin, Fabrice - College du Saint Esprit

TECHNICAL - GIRLS

Li Wan Po, Jessica - Loreto College Quatre Bornes

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Rising costs of production

Owing to the rising costs of production of the paper, as explained in our January issue, we find ourselves compelled to increase the cover price of the paper to 70p, and the annual fee for UK subscribers to £15.

The annual subscription fee will include the mailers' fee (polythene wrap, and insertion etc), transport charge to Royal Mail, postage, administrative cost and other expenses. Young workers (all graduates these days) command high wages. We have been informed that postage will be put up again by Royal Mail from April 1.

Please note that the cover price of Mauritius News and the annual subscription have remained unchanged for over 8 years.

We trust that we shall continue to enlist the support of the community to provide the UK Mauritians with a VOICE in this country.

It depends on us all, the elders and young people for future generations to have this VOICE in this country, and to build a national and international network among all people of Mauritian origin.

Remember that Mauritius News creates employment and provides work experience opportunities for young Mauritians in the UK in publication and administrative practice.

All the other ethnic minorities have their own organs to enforce their presence in the UK. We, too, must indicate that there is a Mauritian presence in the UK, and Mauritius News provides this awareness in our country of adoption. On the other hand, the Mauritius News website bring our presence on to the international scene. MN has had a website since the very inception of this medium in the early nineties well even before Mauritius became aware of the use of the electronic mail and of the existence of the website itself. Thousands and thousands all over the world have been hitting our site since then. Long Live Mauritius, and we take this opportunity to express our thanks to all readers, advertisers, contributors and well-wishers for their support.

Promotion - Subscribers will be

pleased to learn that an additional free draw will be organised in June for a return ticket to Mauritius offered by Air Mauritius. Subscribers will have the opportunity to win a ticket in June and another in December thanks to the national airline.

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No justification for war



Picture: Melanie Cox

London Mayor Ken Livingston with famous American film star Tim Robbins and Reverend Jesse Jackson holding hands at Hyde Park anti-war demonstration

No war can be justified with or without another UN resolution. No institution can mandate the killing of innocent people whether it is for petrol, to oust another country's leader, whether the country possesses weapons of mass destruction or whether to protect the neighbouring countries of a region etc.

If Iraq is such a danger with its weapon of mass destruction why does not the US keep a finger on the panic button with a weapon pointed towards the enemy as they did during the cold war vis-à-vis the Russians?

The Iraqi people should themselves sort out their destiny. Reform must come from within and not from outside. It has always been a principle of democracy that people should themselves choose the form of Government under which they wish to live. Hence the French Revolution, The American Revolution and the Russian Revolution.

The English themselves got rid of a king when they cut off Charles I's head in 1649. In Iraq, Saddam Hussein is himself the product of a revolution. The people should revolt if they are unhappy. For years, the Palestinians have been fighting their own battle.

Why should not the Iraqi themselves strive to turn Saddam Hussein out of office if they consider him to be a tyrant? Why should the Americans take upon themselves the right to decide who should hold office in the Arab world however ruthless they may be to their own people?

The British are still following the ancient policy of interfering to influence the Balance of Power in world politics. It was thus that the nation and the whole British Commonwealth were dragged into a war with the Germans to defend Europe.

It has been pointed out of late, *wrongly perhaps*, that a lot of human sufferings could have been spared had the Britain decided to stay at home and to leave the Germans to do their nuts in Europe.

Britain had to intervene and millions of British nationals and Commonwealth citizens lost their lives when the Germans, however nasty they were, were no threat to Britain as pointed out in a recent television documentary.

Two million people signed a petition against war with Germany in the 1940s, stated the TV programme but this did not stop the warlords in Britain to tackle the Germans.

With hindsight, and everything in its right place now, the question asked is whether the Second World War was at all necessary? The French having experienced the ravages of war are now against war, and rightly so, too!

The British went to war in the 1940s to fight other people's war. They are planning to do the same now when Iraq is no threat to this country.

A war with Iraq will have very serious repercussions. There will be more hatred towards the western world and retaliations will be inevitable. We have been told over

and over that the price of crude oil will shoot up once the war starts. The consequences on the world economy are bound to be disastrous.

Let us all pray for Peace in our Time! But it has been said that the Americans have already been planning for a war decision by March 14. Beware of the Ides of March, says the Soothsayer to Julius Caesar in Shakespeare's play. This is the Year of the Ram which, by deduction we pointed out in our last issue, is associated with the Roman god of war. The Americans attacked Iraq in 1991 which was another year of the Ram according the Chinese zodiacal calendar. And another Bush was President of the US then!



Picture: M.N.

Messages from the people to Prime Minister Tony Blair

The two World Wars were followed by the cold war which is now followed by the terrorist war. If it has been possible to see the end of the other wars, it is doubtful whether it will ever be possible to get rid of the terrorist war. The terror war has been going on for years in various parts of the world without any peaceful solution in sight. The present hatred against the west should not be accentuated unnecessarily.

"America is a great country", says Tariq Aziz of Iraq. America does not belong to the person or government in power. The world grieves with the americans when they grieve, but they can be misled, too!

**Peter Chellen
Managing Editor**

February 2003

War will affect Travel industry - See Page 15

Positive reporting on Mauritius

The US view on the country

(Continued from Page One)

Other report has also talked highly of Mauritius. In November 2001, the US Bureau of African Affairs reported that 'Mauritius has strong relations with the west as well as with India and the countries of southern and eastern Africa... Trade commitment to democracy, and the country's small size are driving forces behind Mauritian foreign policy. The country's political heritage and dependence on Western markets have led to close ties with the European Union and its member states, particularly the UK and France, which exercises sovereignty over neighbouring Reunion.... Relations between the United States and Mauritius are cordial and largely revolve around trade'.

On 29 March 2002, the US Consular Information Sheet, which advises US citizens travelling abroad, remarked that 'Mauritius is an island nation in the south western Indian Ocean with a stable government and growing economy, where facilities for tourism are well developed'.... However, 'US citizens should avoid crowds and street demonstrations and maintain a low profile. In the past year, there have been two reports by African-Americans complaining of racially abusive treatment by Mauritian police.'

Despite some negative reports on Mauritius recently, the island has strongly reasserted its position in the fight against terrorists' activities following the September 11th. Next January the island will be hosting the first sub-Saharan AGOA summit outside the US and a visit by US President Bush is expected.

The Mauritius Commercial Bank scam

(Continued from Page One)

The MCB commands immense respect in the country as there is a belief there that the white man can do no wrong! The reputation of the Bank has been dented in spite of all denial to that effect.

It is reported that a lot of misinformation is purposely being generated by a section of the press to divert attention from the seriousness of the scandal. It is therefore not surprising that this section of the press is making reference to the alleged arrest of former top officials of the Delphis Bank which was closed down by the Bank of Mauritius in March last year.

The Delphis Bank whose assets were estimated at 600 million rupees was closed down because of the Bank's failure to comply with certain requirements of the Bank of Mauritius within specified deadline. The assets of the Delphis were sold for peanuts and the shareholders lost their investments. The Supreme Court has yet to consider the various appeals made by some parties.

The question that is being asked is why the Bank of Mauritius does not take similar drastic action against the MCB as it did exactly a year ago against the Delphis Bank. The whole Delphis Bank's asset amounted to 600 million rupees which equates the amount swindled from the National Pension Fund's deposit account. The former senior manger of the Mauritius Commercial bank is being quizzed about the disappearance of further funds amounting to some 900 million rupees all together.

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AGOA - 2nd US-SSA Trade and Economic

The second summit of the Africa Growth and opportunity Act (AGOA) took place in Mauritius from January 16-21 without the much-drummed presence of President George Bush and Colin Powell who are too preoccupied with the Iraq war, apparently.

Hereunder are some of the facts which provide an understanding of AGOA whose objectives are welcomed by the African countries.

Cooperation Forum

The Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) forms part of the US Trade and Development Act signed by the former US President Bill Clinton on 18 May 2000. The Objectives of AGOA are to facilitate market-led economic growth in Sub-Saharan African Countries and to achieve economic self-reliance by:

- * Strengthening and expanding the private sector in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially women-owned businesses
- * Encouraging increased trade and investment between the US and Sub-Saharan Africa
- * Reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers and other trade obstacles
- * Negotiating free trade areas
- * Establishing a US/Sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Investment Partnership
- * Focusing on countries committed to accountable government, economic reform and the eradication of poverty
- * Establishing a US/Sub-Saharan African Economic Cooperation Forum
- * Continuing to support development assistance for those countries in Sub-Saharan Africa attempting to build civil societies.

The general trade benefits of the Act are:

- * Institutionalises a process for strengthening US relations with African countries and provides incentives for African countries to achieve political and economic reform and growth.
- * Offers beneficiary Sub-Saharan African countries duty-free and quota-free US market access for essentially all products through the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) programme.
- * Provides additional security for investors and traders in African countries by ensuring GSP benefits for eight years
- * Eliminates the GSP competitive need limitation for African countries
- * Establishes a US Sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation forum to facilitate regular trade and investment policy discussions.
- * Promotes the use of technical assistance to strengthen economic reforms and development, including assistance to strengthen relationships between US firms in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Trade and Investment in Mauritius under AGOA

Duty-free exports from Mauritius to the US under AGOA in 2001 totalled \$54million. These exports represented 20% of Mauritius' total exports to the US. There has been significant AGOA-inspired investment in Mauritius. To take advantage of AGOA's textile and apparel provisions, a Chinese firm has started construction of a \$60 million cotton yarn-spinning mill, which will employ 300 local staff.

President George Bush signed amendments to AGOA, also known as AGOA II which substantially expands preferential access for inputs from beneficiary Sub-Saharan African countries. These amendments are incorporated into law as section 3108 of the trade Act of 2002

Laureates 2003

(From Page One)

MCB FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

Ramphul, Lekha - Queen Elizabeth College

ADDITIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

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Madub, Nandeswarnath - Royal College Curepipe
Deena, Ashvin - Royal College Curepipe

SCIENCE - GIRLS

Hooloomann, Vanita - Queen Elizabeth College
Rajabally Mariam Bibi - Queen Elizabeth College

ECONOMICS - BOYS

Bhurtah, Joynay - Royal College Curepipe
Merle, Patrice Nicolas - Royal College Port Louis

ECONOMICS - GIRLS

Kong Win Chang, Jenna - Loreto College Quatre Bornes
Ng Wing Lit, Milly Ah Soye - Queen Elizabeth College

ARTS - GIRL

Rajkomar, Sraddha Shivani - Dr Maurice Cure SSS

TECHNICAL - BOY

Choonce, Kaushal Ravi Vansh - Royal College Port Louis

BOY

Edouard, Joseph Ezekel - Rodrigues College

GIRL

Legentil, Marie Lydia Yannick - Rodrigues College

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Trevor Phillips OBE

New CRE Chairman



Trevor Phillips OBE who was appointed in January Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality in replacement of Gurbux Singh.

Mr Phillips who is of Westindian origin was President of the National Union of Students in 1978 while studying for his Chemistry degree in England.

He took up a career in television and ended up as Head of Current Affairs for London Weekend Television (LWT).

In May 2000, he was made chairman of the newly-created London Assembly to which he was elected. He is also chairman of the Runnymede Trust which donates to charities.

The new CRE chairman will take office at the end of this month.

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African Cups: one win and one defeat for Mauritian teams

La Passe SC from Seychelles beat Association sportive de Port-Louis 2000 from Mauritius by a goal to nil on February 15 at Linité stadium, Mahé, in a match for the preliminary round of the African Champions League.

The goal was scored by Malagasy striker Bruno at the

23rd minute of the match. Meanwhile on February 16, at the Quartier-Militaire stadium, Mauritius, local team Olympique de Moka (OM) beat AS Fortior from Madagascar by three goals to one in a match counting for the African Winners' Cup.

Westley Rouget from OM scored the first goal at the 27th minute but Dedy Tojosoa levelled the score during the dying seconds of the first period.

Mauritian striker Mike Jocelyn scored the second goal for OM at the 53rd minute before James Pierre Louis had the third goal at the 65th minute of the match.

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Cyclonic season

Gerry leaves one dead and 644 homeless

Four cyclones are said to have threatened Mauritius during the month of February but Gerry was the one which came closer to the island

Tropical cyclone «Gerry» passed a hundred kilometers off the north-west of Cap Malheureux in the morning of February 13, leaving one dead and 644 homeless, 125 passengers were stranded at the airport as all flights were cancelled, and 15,000 homes were left without electricity.

Gusts reached 143 km/hour in Port-Louis and less than 120 kmh in other parts of the island. «Gerry» brought lots of rain - 130 mm at Vacoas, 114 mm at Le Val, 174 mm at Arnaud, 120 mm at Grand Bassin, 128 mm at Trou-aux-Cerfs, 102 mm à Balaclava, 89 mm at Beaux Songes, and 139 mm at Mare-aux-Vacoas.

A few hours earlier, during the night of February 12, Dr Pradeepchund Jeetun, was electrocuted on the roof of his house at Floreal. It was reported that he was washing his water tank while holding an electric lamp in his left hand. He received an electric shock and died instantly.

At least 3,000 people went to the hospitals during the class III warning for treatment against diarrhoea, vomiting and fever.

According to police, 644 people rushed to the refugee centres at Baie du Tombeau, Ste-Croix, Cité La Cure and other regions. Some of them went back to their homes after the passage of the cyclone while others stayed for a few more days as their homes were destroyed.

The Central Electricity Board reported that it did not interrupt electricity supply during the cyclone but at least 15,000 homes, mainly in the villages of Baie-du-Tombeau, Montagne Longue, Valetta, Belle-Mare, Riche-Mare, Trou-d'Eau Douce and St-Pierre, had no electricity after «Gerry».

According to Mauritius Telecom, it had no difficulty to offer a full-fledge telephone service, including international calls, during the cyclonic weather, thanks to the South Africa/Far-East submarine cable (SAFE) that is operational in Mauritius since last year.

At the airport, all flights from and to Mauritius were cancelled. Two Air Mauritius planes - one Airbus 319 and one Airbus 340 - flew to the Seychelles without any passenger on the night of February 12 while a third one - a Boeing 767 - coming from Vienna, Austria, with 157 passengers on board was rerouted to Seychelles. It landed in Mauritius after the cyclone.

People from Grand Bay and other regions reported that their houses were flooded because of the heavy rains while members of the Mauritius Vegetable Planters Association and the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit said agriculture was not much affected by the gusts, except for a few fields that were flooded with rain.

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Email from Russia

Mauritian student murdered by Russian thugs

We Mauritians in St Petersburg in Russia are crying on the death of our dear and beloved friend Atish, student of the St Petersburg State Medical Academy (SPSMA).

Over here we are facing problem regarding skinheads, and we would like to inform all Mauritians and the world.

We are studying medicine at SPSMA, and we are facing a very great problem. On Saturday 01/02/2003, while six of us were returning to our flat on the campus of the academy we were attacked by many (20-30) thugs known as skinheads just 40 metres from the "main gate" of the academy.

The thugs are facists whose aim is to kill without mercy all black foreigners. They shouted abuse and swore at us. They chased us, four of us ran away safely, one was caught by the thugs but he succeeded to get away after receiving injuries in his mouth which needed five stitches.

Unfortunately, they caught our friend Atish and beat him up, they grabbed him by his clothes, threw him on the snow and start to kick him with their big winter boots and hit him with metal inside their gloves. The Mauritian was left unconscious on the snow with temperature of 20°C on that dreadful day.

Now nobody can pay for his life which he lost due to his skin colour. For the last 4 months we have lived, joked and cried together, we learnt so much with him. We were not only living like friends but like a family and now a member of this family, my brother-like, is lost for ever just because his skin was pigmented.

I can hardly believe that these things still exist. Did he pay so much money just to come and lose his most precious thing here, his life? He spent so much money

to come here and study to become a doctor so that he could help those in need. Atish would not hurt a fly, so why did they beat him up?

Aged 23, Atish has been in Russia for four months only. They beat him up so much that they broke his collar bone, his skull was fractured and his brain was exposed. No one was there to help him, he went into coma and one ambulance refused to take him to the hospital. When he was finally taken to the hospital there was no doctor on duty. We went for help to the Rector and he said he could do nothing.

The agent in Mauritius, a Mr R. who arranged for us to come to Russia did not make any arrangement for insurance cover and yet we paid him 7,200\$ (US) while the first course is only 3,500 US\$. He had assured us of absolute security in Russia.

This incident has proved to all that the problem of skinheads still persists and that in fact it is becoming more serious since no action is taken against them.

Mr R. created problems for us. Since our arrival in Russia St Petersburg he arranged for our accommodation the worst hostel we have ever seen. On our second day in this country we witnessed someone shot to death at the side of that hostel. We did not tell anything anyone in Mauritius but the last dreadful incident which took place was so frightful and serious that we had no other choice than informing everyone.

Foreign students are frequently beaten up into a coma. Here even the Police Department is not efficient. They just like to take money and ignore foreigners when they ask for help.

R.D.

Email from Mauritius

From: Vijay Poonosamy, Barrister & Aviation Consultant

Date: Mon, 17 Feb 2003

Dear Friends,

When I was dismissed by Air Mauritius on 8 October 2001 not only was injustice done to me but it was manifestly and undoubtedly seen to be done.

Email from Germany

From: Wolfgang Wenzel Save contact
Date: Mon, 10 Feb 2003 14:53:47

My family and I have been spending our fourth vacation in Mauritius this January. As always before we enjoyed the stay with the greatest pleasure, especially this time the celebration of New Year's Eve. So may I herewith express a big THANK YOU to all the staff at the Shandrani Hotel, who did a very good job, receiving us with warm hospitality and a most friendly and excellent service.

Another example of Mauritian friendliness is an unknown old man of Creole origin we met in Port Louis. We were sitting on a bench in the Jardin de la

From India

From: raghavendra ram Date: Sun, 16 Feb 2003 10:59:31

I am very much interested to buy the following book for my reference: INDIAN IMMIGRANTS & THEIR DESCENDANTS IN MAURITIUS - Author: Moonindranath Varma (M.N.Varma) Published in

I sued Air Mauritius and not surprising Air Mauritius has had to effectively recognise that I was unfairly, illegally and arbitrarily dismissed.

Over and above that critical recognition, Air Mauritius has paid me damages at the punitive rate and paid my legal costs.

I thought my friends should know.

All the very best, Vijay

Compagnie, because our Children (8 and 11 years) were both tired and thirsty from walking along the busy roads. The old man in a neat blue workers' suit came along, stopped, looked at each of us, lifted his hat and said with all the warmth that could radiate from a human being "WELCOME TO MAURITIUS!"

We were so utterly surprised, that we just stammered a "thanks" and he had vanished in the crowd. I'll never forget this encounter. The world would be better with more people like him walking about. I wish prosperity and peace for Mauritius, to its people abroad and the little rest of the world!

Best regards
W. Wenzel

Mauritius in 1970's. (I think 2 Volumes is there)

Kindly help me to buy this book, by providing me name & address of some of the old, rare & out of print books shops in MAURITIUS, so that I can contact them. If you have their e-mail ID, please provide it to me. Mr.R.RAGHAVENDRA
e-mail: raghavendra_ram@yahoo.com

Mauritius presence at the Jersey Zoo

An inside view

Being in Jersey on a short Christmas Break gave us only a limited amount of time to cram in the 'sight-seeing'. Armed with a comprehensive map and a leaflet from the tourist rack in the hallway hotel we boldly headed North towards the parish of Trinity. Perhaps it was more about trying to rekindle our memories of visiting Mauritius because of the strong presence of the island at the zoo. The Zoo has for logo not only the effigy of a dodo, it even has a place to eat named the Dodo Restaurant.

An entrance fee of £9.00 is charged for adults; a zoo guide is an optional extra at £1.50, I soon picked up the booklet at the entrance door while the attendant thoughtfully reminded us 'all the money goes towards the cost of feeding the animals and research'. Every penny spent in the Dodo Restaurant contributes to high costs of keeping the animals/birds when there are a far fewer tourists visiting in the Winter.

The symbol of the Dodo, which the charity has adopted, acts as a reminder in the heart and minds of the general public that other rare breeds are currently facing the same predicament unless we take notice. Christmas day is the only day the zoo is closed. Much of the tropical vegetation again reminded me of the flora and fauna of Mauritius, yet less humid. I loved gazing at the gorillas and lemurs with their fine agile bodies, some were waiting for their tasty meals to arrive.

As soon as we made our way to the aviary, I kept thinking of the Casela Bird Park in Black River, Mauritius, in January 2001 whilst staying at the Maritim. Over there, the Mauritians show off their 'carving' skills with the name of the park artistically created all out of wood. On that occasion, (this happened to be the second time) I caught a glimpse of the Pink Pigeon. I felt privileged by the sight of one of the rarest birds in the world. Its zoological title is Nesoenas Mayeri, no wonder a far easier, simplified term is used! Sadly, this rare breed suffers from the same peril as the Mauritius Kestrel. Pink Pigeons are now restricted to South-West of the Island. Loss of natural habitat, hunting and cyclonic damage have taken a dramatic toll on the existing numbers living today. Both the Mauritian government and the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust (JWPT) together with the New York Albuque Zoo and Vogelpark Walsrode in West Germany have collaborated to maintain a captive breeding project.

The Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust is a registered charity. Founded in 1963 by Gerald Durrell, his wife Lee is now Honorary Director. Gerald Durrell died in 1995 at the age of 70. Much has been written about the struggles during the early years of the JWPT in the hardback 'The Ark's Anniversary' authored by Gerald Durrell. 2003 marks the 40th anniversary of his ambition - to protect endangered species. The JWPT has established a presence in Mauritius and Gerald Durrell himself spent a few years in Mauritius and its



Adopted Flamingo Fred

outer island.

Such a visit here to Jersey prompted me to 'do' something too. I've now chosen a majestic looking Chilean Flamingo - Fred, which I found advertised on the zoo's adoption leaflet. In early January, I received an 'adoption certificate' plus a pretty colour photograph of the bird with all his background details. I will now be paying £4.00 every month through direct debit to help for its upkeep.

If readers glancing through this paper are considering a visit to the Channel Islands, I would say 'yes, don't waste a minute, go and see the animals' with the same enthusiasm of those we spoke to when we first arrived there.



The author pictured by the side of the statue of Gerald Durrell who helped to save from extinction the Mauritian kestrel and the pink pigeon



Mauritian kestrel saved from extinction and featured in the Jersey Zoo's leaflet

Teresa Lloyd

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Étude

Pratique du français

17ème leçon

J'espère que vous avez repris l'année nouvelle en pleine forme, surtout au niveau de vos études en langue française.

Nous avons abordé lors de notre précédente leçon la formation du féminin dans les adjectifs. Nous allons continuer à voir ce même sujet quant à l'application du féminin d'autres adjectifs

Exercice: Remplacez les tirets par le féminin des adjectifs soulignés.

Fruit <u>vert</u>	Feuille ---	Salon <u>obscur</u> ---	Maison ---
Charbon <u>noir</u>	Encre ---	Été <u>chaud</u> ---	Saison ---
Oiseau <u>joli</u>	Rose ---	Vent <u>froid</u> ---	Boisson ---
Ciel <u>bleu</u>	Mer ---	Visage <u>triste</u> ---	Mine ---
Clou <u>pointu</u>	Aiguille ---	Poisson <u>salé</u> ---	Viande ---
Enfant <u>jeune</u>	Fille ---	Ciel <u>gris</u> ---	Peinture ---

Maintenant allons regarder les adjectifs terminés par **f** et **x**. Les adjectifs terminés par **f** changent au féminin **f** en **ve**
Ex: vif: vive. neuf: neuve.

Les adjectifs terminés par **x** changent au féminin **x** en **se**.
Ex: honteux; honteuse.

A noter les exceptions: Doux, faux, roux, font au féminin douce, fausse, rousse.

Questionnaire: comment se forme le féminin des adjectifs terminés par **f**? Comment se forme le féminin des adjectifs terminés par **x**? Quel est le féminin des adjectifs doux, faux, roux ?

Exercice: Mettez au féminin les adjectifs suivants:

Masculin	Féminin	Masculin	Féminin
courageux		bref	
heureux		captif	
peureux		curieux	
oisif		naïf	
jaloux		neuf	
doux		roux	
vif		actif	
attentif		oisif	
laborieux		affectueux	
		Bon courage. A bientôt	

D.B.

Disparition de Maurice PIALAT, un cinéaste rebelle

Maurice PIALAT s'est éteint Samedi 11 Janvier 2003, dans sa 77ème année.

Élève des Arts Déco et des Beaux-Arts, il voulait être peintre. Il débute sa carrière cinématographique à 44 ans, en 1969, avec "L'enfance nue", l'histoire d'un gamin de l'Assistance publique. Il compte 11 longs métrages en 26 ans.

Rugueux, irascible, parfois violent, il était intransigent. Insatisfait des autres comme de lui-même, il fustigeait ses propres films. Il grattait ses personnages, ses acteurs, cherchant le vrai, l'authenticité. Il allait au plus direct, au plus physique, ne s'embarrassant pas de présentation.

"Un personnage hors du commun dans sa vie et dans sa manière de filmer" dit Marlène JOBERT partenaire de Jean YANNE (Grand prix d'interprétation à CANNES) dans "Nous ne vieillirons pas ensemble" (1972). PIALAT filme alors sans complaisance la fin d'une relation amoureuse illicite.

En 1970, il avait réalisé un feuilleton télévisé en 7 épisodes: "La maison des Bois", chronique campagnarde durant la guerre 14/18 - Puis c'est "La gueule ouverte" (1973), les derniers moments d'une femme que joue Nathalie BAYE avec Philippe LEOTARD - "Passe ton Bac d'abord" (1978), portrait d'un groupe d'ados paumés de LENS - En 1980, "Loulou" ou la liaison sans issue d'une bourgeoise (Isabelle HUPPERT) et d'un loupard (DEPARDIEU).

Il tourne ensuite, en 1983 "A nos amours" qui révèle Sandrine BONNAIRE dont il incarne le père -En 1985, "Police", avec Gérard DEPARDIEU, Sophie MARCEAU et Richard ANCONI-NA dans un commissariat de quartier.- Et "Sous le soleil de Satan" d'après le roman de Georges BERNANOS, avec DEPARDIEU (encore lui) en curé de village épris d'absolu, pour lequel Maurice PIALAT reçoit en 1987 la Palme d'Or au Festival de CANNES, sous les sifflets d'une partie du public.

En 1991 "VAN GOGH" peint à travers Jacques DUTRONC (César du meilleur acteur). - Enfin "Le Garçon" en 1995, un regard à nouveau porté sur l'enfance. C'est son propre fils Antoine qui joue le petit garçon à l'écran, face à un père insupportable... Ce sera son dernier long métrage.

Maurice PIALAT avait un talent extrêmement particulier, c'était un anticonformiste. Le paradoxe c'est qu'il est devenu un point de repère pour nombre de cinéastes. "Le cinéma français est orphelin" confie Gilles JACOB.

Lena GOEL - Gilles.BERGER (Paris)

Australia warns its citizens against aggressions in Mauritius

The Government of Australia has warned its citizens visiting Mauritius that they should take necessary measures to ensure their security on the island.

In a circular note addressed to Australian tourists, it recommends that they do not walk alone on the streets of Mauritian towns at night and venture out with lots of money.

«Bag snatching is very common on the island. You should take with you very little money, hide your precious belongings and your passports on all occasions and not let them stray on beaches, at hotels, restaurants or at the airport», states the circular.

According to the Australian government, Australians should be aware of terrorist risks in the world.

Australian tourists have also been warned against stray dogs in the streets of the island.

Church is for more pressure on Saddam Hussein

The Bishop of Port-Louis Mgr Maurice Piat stressed earlier February on the need to put more pressure on Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in a bid to reduce his military capacity.

In a press release, Mgr Piat states that Iraq uses violence against its own population and «possesses possibly arms of massive destruction. Saddam Hussein represents a threat to world peace»

Mgr Piat emphasised that he appreciated the UN efforts to stop the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological warfare in a bid to reduce the risks of aggressions from Iraq.

However, he said, one should see to it that political and economics pressure does not turn into a logic of war. «It is still possible to put political and economics pressure on Iraq», he said.

Indian Ocean Games

Gold worth Rs 30,000 for each Mauritian player at next IOG

Each member of the Mauritian football team will receive a cash reward of Rs 30,000 if they win the Gold medal at the next Indian Ocean Islands Games (IOG) due at the end of August and in early September in Mauritius. La Réunion, Madagascar, Seychelles, Comoros and the Maldives are the other participants of these games.

Mauritius Football Association's chairman Vinod Persunoo said last month that a committee was set up to monitor the performance of the Mauritian team in its bid to win the gold medal at the IOG.

According to him, the silver medal would worth Rs 15,000 and the bronze medal, Rs5,000.

As regards the African Cup of Nations, Persunoo indicated that each player would receive a cash reward of Rs 7,000 for every win and Rs3,000 for each draw.

The players would each receive Rs12,500 for each match played in the final stage, Rs 4,000 if the team reaches the quarter-finals, Rs 8, 000 if they reach the semi-finals, Rs12, 000 if they play the final match and Rs180,000* each if they win the African Cup of Nations.

* Editor's note: Each Mauritian player should really be paid £1 million if Mauritius should ever win the African Cup. The African professional giants shining in top European sides, and in the World Cup, go home for the African tournament to give a thrashing to small nations like Mauritius.

In the old days, Mauritius used to be quite a formidable team near home making mince meat of Réunion island and The Seychelles. Mauritius once beat Réunion island 15-0.

Today, those two countries dispose of their neighbour as one would blow a feather off one's palm.

Production sucrière

Estimation pour l'an 2002

Communiqué Chambre d'Agriculture de l'île Maurice

A la fin de la récolte 2002, il ressortit que la production sucrière serait d'environ 521 000 tonnes, soit un chiffre de 3,5% inférieur aux 540 000 tonnes estimées par la Chambre d'Agriculture en août dernier.

Ce résultat ne fait que confirmer l'ampleur des dommages causés par le passage du cyclone Dina en février 2002 ainsi que l'impact négatif des conditions climatiques défavorables qui ont prévalu depuis.

On se souviendra que la Chambre d'Agriculture avait, avant le début de la récolte en mai 2002, estimé la production sucrière à 570 000 tonnes, soit un chiffre d'environ 10% inférieur à la récolte précédente, dû aux effets du cyclone Dina. Les conditions climatiques qui ont prévalu durant la saison ont été largement défavorables, aussi bien à la pousse qu'à la maturation de la canne, venant réduire davantage le potentiel de production sucrière.

Une pluviométrie nettement insuffisante en début de saison n'a pas permis à la canne de se rétablir des effets du cyclone alors que le régime de températures enregistrées durant la période s'étendant de mai à septembre fut particulièrement défavorable à la maturation de la canne, dans toutes les régions de l'île et durant presque toute la période concernée.

Ces conditions ont été surtout défavorables aux variétés tardives coupées en fin de récolte, en particulier la R 570 qui représente près d'un tiers de la canne cultivée à Maurice. Ce sont là les principales causes identifiées par le Crop Estimate Coordinating Committee de la Chambre d'Agriculture concernant la baisse de production enregistrée durant la deuxième partie de la récolte.

Ce comité, qui comprend des représentants du MSIRI, du ministre de l'Agriculture, de la Mauritius Sugar Authority, du Syndicat des Sucres, du Sugar Insurance Fund Board, du Farmers Service Corporation et du Sugar Competitiveness and Productivity Unit, a également noté la mauvaise performance des cannes dans l'ex-tea belt des factory areas de Mon Désert Alma et de Highlands, qui ont subi des baisses conséquentes de rendement, variant entre 25 et 30%.

Pay pauvre - Pauvre santé

La pauvreté multiplie le risque de mort prématurée

Selon une étude menée à Londres, le fait de vivre dans des conditions socio-économiques défavorables augmente le risque de mourir prématurément.

La notion de mort prématurée est définie comme un décès survenant avant l'âge de 65 ans. Les chercheurs ont donc étudié dans quelles conditions vivaient 5.000 personnes décédées entre 26 et 54 ans.

Selon leurs recherches, le fait d'avoir une enfance défavorisée double le risque de mort prématurée mais, quand ces conditions difficiles sont maintenues à l'âge adulte, le risque est alors multiplié par trois ou quatre. L'OMS dans un récent rapport européen avait déjà établi un lien entre pauvreté et mauvaise santé en mettant notamment en cause alcool, tabac et drogues qui sont généralement utilisées plus largement parmi les populations les moins favorisées.

Unpleasant measures against asylum seekers are illegal

The new measures which took effect last month will deny many genuine asylum seekers any support and will reduce them to needy beggars in breach of fundamental human rights, claims the UK's largest charity giving legal advice to immigrants and asylum seekers. This will lead to a large number of people sleeping rough and place a further strain on British charities and local authorities who will have to provide for those with special care needs: it will cause further resentment between central and local government.

These follow a sad saga of failed measures to try to deter anyone from coming to the UK to claim asylum - whether in genuine need of protection or not. Vouchers were the worst experiment. Now at great expense to the taxpayer the Government is sending back nationals from the 10 EU accession states who will be able to come lawfully as EU citizens from 1 May 2004.

The closure of Sangatte is a pyrrhic victory which, again, attacks the symptoms rather than the cause: already, as predicted, there are new asylum seekers arrivals in northern France who are having to sleep rough so that, in time, a new centre will have to be opened to accommodate them.

"Creating an underclass of destitute and desperate individuals is not only inhumane but also bad for Britain and its citizens. The issue of asylum seekers can be dealt with only at a pan-European level on humanitarian principles - Britain cannot solve it unilaterally," said Keith Best, IAS Chief Executive. "The real tragedy is that these experiments are causing enormous misery and resentment among many who will earn the right to remain in the UK - hardly an auspicious start for integrating them into society!"

Editor's note: The government's decision to deny asylum seekers the right to benefits has been declared illegal by the court.

Everyone agrees to say that the government's asylum policy is in shambles. There is a lack of political will on the part of every government to solve the problem once for all. Western Europe (just like the US) is short of manpower. Skilled and unskilled workers are knocking on their doors. In stead of grooming them to become loyal citizens and contribute to the country's economy they are humiliated. Even though they may subsequently be given resident status, they will never forget their ordeal and humiliation. The civics education and oath intended to those applying for citizenship may be extended to this new kind of immigrants to the UK.

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Commonwealth News Arts and Crafts Award

Thirteen young artists who have recently received the 2002 Commonwealth Arts and Crafts Award will now have the opportunity to travel and study in another Commonwealth country.

Under the Arts and Crafts Awards, funded by the Commonwealth Foundation, a group of artists and craftspeople aged 22-35 are selected every two years from over 250 applicants to receive an award for travel and study in another Commonwealth country. The winners are chosen after a long and rigorous judging process, passing through two panels of judges.

"These awards are given to young individuals who are not only passionate about their work, but also good at communicating ideas and skills. They have the ability to plan, organise and manage their award, and make the most of the opportunities it provides," said Colin Ball, Director of the Commonwealth Foundation.

The aim of the award is to encourage the sharing of artistic experience and traditions within the Commonwealth. The award gives craftspeople and artists a chance to share their skills, exchange ideas, develop their talents and create a network of artists around the Commonwealth.

"This award is about cultural dialogue, rather than art for art's sake. The exchange of practice and ideas between artists of different cultural backgrounds creates a stimulus and interest in art making amongst a wide audience in the countries to which the award winners travel and work," said Robert Loder of Triangle Arts Trust, member of the second panel of judges.

Brainstorming to increase private capital flows

International financial institutions (IFIs) and donors met in Marlborough House, London, on 31 January 2003 to brainstorm alternative economically sound ways to enhance private capital flows to developing countries. This meeting was mandated by Commonwealth finance ministers during their London meeting in September 2002, when they discussed the 'Lowering the Threshold' (LTT) study, a report commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat in mid-2001.

The LTT study found that when it comes to co-ordinated action in dealing with the risks of investment in least developed countries (LDCs) and small and vulnerable economies (SVEs), there is a lack of communication and exchange of operational information among IFIs. The report also identified "a dysfunctional lack of communication of ideas and experiences between commercial banks and official financial institutions, at national, regional or international level."

The aims of the one-day meeting were twofold: first, to bring commercial banks and official financial institutions together for improved dialogue; and second, to discuss how IFIs, donors and private financial institutions can assist LDCs and SVEs in getting their fair share of private capital flows.

Chaired by Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General Winston Cox the event enabled participants to discuss current trends in foreign direct investment and review existing measures and facilities currently in place to enhance private flows to LDCs and SVEs. Participants included Commonwealth High Commissioners and representatives of donors, IFIs, regional and bilateral development banks, commercial banks and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Commenting on the findings of the LTT report, Mr Cox said: "Historically, the Commonwealth has been especially sensitive to the very particular situation and plight of a large segment of our membership, namely the SVEs. On this front, the record of support by the international community is less than enviable. In SVEs' efforts to attract investors, these countries have to overcome significant handicaps, such as isolation, remoteness, vulnerability to external shocks, and small-sized and land-locked territories."

Mauritius News needs you !



The community needs the support of each other to stand for ourselves in this country. The message here-under is repeated to bring home the need for solidarity required of the mauritian community to stand for our rights and

the rights of our children both in our country of adoption and in our original homeland.

Mauritius News - 20th Year of publication
 This paper, head held-high, has now entered its 20th year of publication to sail along the 21st century, with us all on

And so, from now on, we shall have to think more and more about the younger readership. It is therefore very pertinent that we ask ourselves the question:

Do the young people of Mauritian origin in the UK need a newspaper of their own like Mauritius News?

Reflections:

*** Together, we are united. * Unity means strength. * Strength means respect!**
We do not have the money to ingratiate politicians for a lobby. Our lobby is Mauritius News!

The younger generation of UK Mauritians and elsewhere will have to fight for their right to retain the Mauritian citizenship which is being denied to many of them who have applied for it. According to one press report in Mauritius, 36,000 applications from young people from overseas who are eligible for Mauritian nationality have been turned down by the Mauritius Government without giving any reason.

Yet, people from other countries are given Mauritian citizenship for one reason or another. Mauritius News has in the past campaigned for dual nationality to be extended to all overseas Mauritians and their children until this was approved by the Mauritius Government in 1999, but which it refuses to implement in practice.

The younger generation of UK Mauritians will have to fight for their right to inherit property in Mauritius or to buy property in Mauritius. As non-Mauritians, they will be denied those rights. Yet, people from other countries, with no connection with Mauritius at all, are allowed to buy properties in the country if they bring in a sum of some £500,000 on top of the property (should be very sizeable - not a few toises) they intend to buy.

Mauritian Passport and ID Card

Do you think that because your children have been issued with a Mauritian passport it means that they have Mauritian nationality? Only a few years ago holders of Mauritian passports (of Mauritian parentage) were deported from Mauritius. A passport is nothing but a travel document, in the same way that an Identity Card (issued in Mauritius) is nothing but a document to identify a person. Neither a passport nor an ID Card is a document meant to establish the nationality of the bearer.

On the UK Scene

In the UK, young Mauritians will, more and more, need to have their identity recognised as a minority among the minorities when it comes to sharing the national cake to which we have contributed by way of income tax, NIC, rates etc etc.

These are only a few of the rights for which they will need a newspaper to fight on their behalf.

As for the first generation of UK Mauritians they will have to fight for it if they wish to be allowed to vote in Mauritius, a right they should have as overseas citizens.

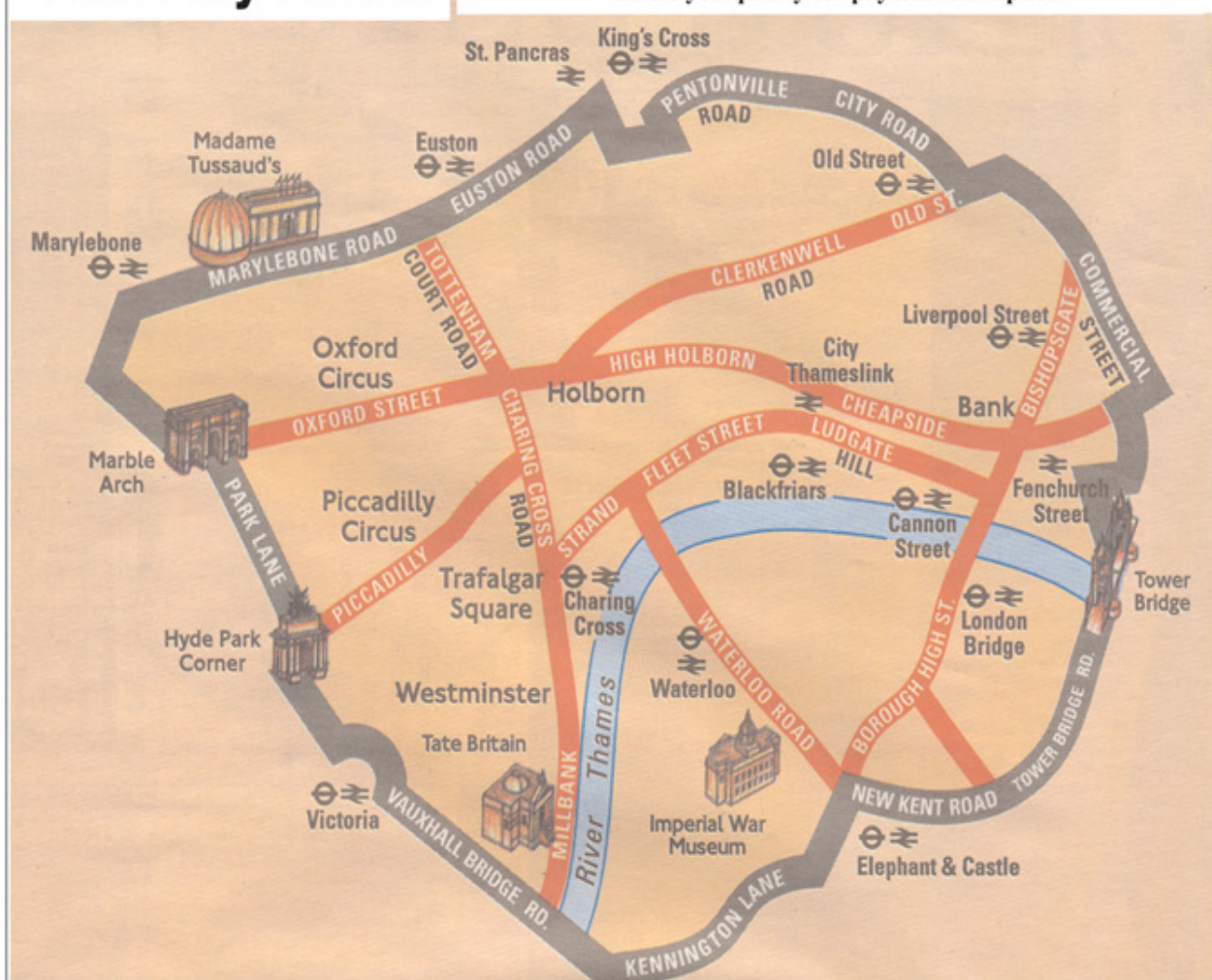
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Reflexion:

*** Divided we fall!**

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Mauritius News cuisine

COCONUT BISCUITS

1/2 lb flour (approx. 2 cups)
 3 tablespoons 'Patna rice' (ground rice) or farina
 1 ripe coconut, peeled and finely grated
 3 tablespoons sugar
 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise and scraped or 1 teaspoon vanilla powder
 1/4 lb butter - 1/2 cup milk - 2 egg whites, stiffly beaten

Reserve 1/2 teaspoon grated coconut and 1/2 teaspoon sugar to mix to the egg whites prior to whipping them until very stiff.

Mix the flour, Patna rice, coconut, sugar, vanilla, butter, and milk, and knead to make a ball of dough.

Roll the dough on a lightly floured surface and cut into circles or squares.

Place on a buttered baking sheet and bake in a medium oven until they are three quarters done.

Remove from oven and cover each biscuit with a layer of stiffly whipped egg whites.

Bake for another 10 minutes.

*From "Exotic Cuisine of Mauritius"
 by Philippe Lenoir and Raymond de Ravel
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Your HOROSCOPE

for January 2003

by Anna

ARIES (March 21 - April 20)

You may be looking for commitment but look more for a one-to-one relationship, even if this is with a family member who you have recently had problems with. You have to start networking and broaden your group of friends if you are to show off your talent and personality.

Being tired of your work will soon change as you take a break from the routine, this may be a holiday or a different job. Make your own decisions and take responsibility, this will lead to more respect at work and make you more confident.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 20)

People are beginning to appreciate you for whom you are both at home and work. Take advantage of this and show them new ideas to help your career. Work colleagues in high places could become more than just a friend or could be a vital support to you.

Enjoy time on your own and take time away from family and friends to appreciate yourself. Listen to what you want and go and find it. Start to think of yourself as work will take care of itself.

GEMINI (May 21 - June 20)

Seeing a best friend will make you realise that these people are more important than a relationship. Once you spend time with them you may begin to find the support and care you are seeking.

Romance will be there but you will have to keep your eyes open and see people in a new light. Look beyond what you would usually do, try something new and you will make a difference to your lifestyle.

CANCER (June 21 - July 20)

Think about what you were like as a teenager and start to see life in this way. Taking yourself too seriously will leave you bored and missing out on the fun. Ring up old friends for a chat or to meet and catch up.

Trusting someone is something you find difficult but at work this is vital if you are to have a happy working environment. Someone very stern will reveal a softer side once you begin to trust their views. It will be beneficial to your social life too.

LEO (July 21 - August 21)

Being happy this month is your priority and you will fulfil this in every way. Spend days doing nothing at all or being with the people you love. This will make you see how work has taken over your social life more than you think.

Take your time with loved ones and show them you can share your time. They may feel neglected and pushed aside. Start a new exercise plan or take up a hobby you can both enjoy.

VIRGO (August 22 - September 22)

Trying to make things perfect is what you are about, but once in a while let things happen spontaneously, you will be surprised. Someone needs to start appreciating the things you do for them. Let them take control of things at home and take time out for yourself.

Worrying about others will make you more stressed. Leave things for a while and come back to them with a fresh eye and you will see the difference it makes. Working too hard will affect your social life so make different priorities.

LIBRA (September 23 - October 22)

Making plans for a trip abroad will keep you occupied this month. Let others have a say too or you might be accused of taking over. Stop being negative about certain issues at home and work and people will begin to see your strengths.

Be cautious with new ideas about your home and lifestyle, they may seem good in theory but may cause disaster if you go ahead with them.

SCORPIO (October 23 - November 22)

Trust and understanding will lead you to a new friend in your life. You have lost all sense of friendship as all your time is taken up with work so meet with friends and enjoy yourself. Understanding a loved one will bring you closer and ideas for a new home will begin.

You are determined to succeed and despite minor setbacks you will. Don't shy away from big jobs at work take them on as a new challenge and take your time. You will be rewarded for your efforts.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23 - December 20)

Be true to a relationship. If you do not love the one you are with, you have to choose the best option. Think about what will be best for you as work pressures begin to pile on at the end of this month.

Remember that people respect you for your caring nature but don't let people walk all over you and stand up for yourself. Plan your time well for work and you will get good results. Start to change your lifestyle and try something new to enjoy, you will make new friends this way.

CAPRICORN (December 21 - January 19)

You need to feel more confident with yourself and start believing that you can make it and a relationship is worth staying in. You may be having problems now but they will soon sort themselves out.

Money matters will come up this month discuss them with someone and they will help you sort them out so you can begin to enjoy more of the things you love. Take time out to start something new.

AQUARIUS (January 20 - February 18)

Concentrate on your homelife this month, your family and friends are the people you can depend on the most and you have been neglecting them. Taking on more at work may seem good at the time but you will soon see how much they are expecting of you and how much you can achieve.

People will advise you on what they think is right listen to their thoughts but do what you feel is best for you. Your influence will show your work how much they should value you.

PISCES (February 19 - March 20)

Feeling comfortable is something we should all feel especially at work. At the moment you feel tense because of a few people. Let them know how you feel and they will respect you more. Make your own choices and you will see how better things can be.

Your confidence will improve especially when meeting new people who will help you see new things that you can do for yourself. Make sure you take time out from work.

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James BOND,
Homme-Sandwich

C'est ce que prétend Guillaume EVIN dans son livre "GOLDBAKER 007" ou "Comment James BOND est devenu le plus gros succès de l'histoire du cinéma" qui vient de paraître aux éditions Fayard, à l'occasion d'un double anniversaire, celui du 20ème film de la série depuis 40 ans.

C'est l'heure des bilans. L'auteur, journaliste à l'Expansion, s'inquiète de la dérive du marketing dans le personnage de 007, qui n'est plus selon lui qu'un support publicitaire au risque de disparaître.

Dans le dernier film "Die another day", "Meurs un autre jour" de Lee TAMAHORI, si l'on voit bien en effet James, une montre Omega (groupe suisse Swatch) au poignet, voyageant avec la compagnie "British Airways", ou un plan de caméra tournant sur une bouteille du Champagne Bollinger ("Grande Année" of course!) et il y aurait près d'une trentaine de marques en cobranding, le rythme toujours très enlevé nous les fait vite oublier et l'on remarque davantage certaines images de synthèse.

C'est surtout le matraquage publicitaire des produits licenciés de la marque "James BOND", autour d'objets de la vie courante à l'effigie de l'agent secret britannique comme les cartes de téléphone, le portable ou des t-shirts, phénomène semblable au marketing du "Seigneur des Anneaux" ou d'"Harry Potter", qui nous paraît excessif. Par sa

croissance, cela porterait à terme un coup fatal au personnage nous dit Guillaume EVIN.

James BOND est la plus fabuleuse franchise du cinéma et surtout la plus rentable. Si bien que les Bond films sont devenus une référence en matière de placement de produit. James BOND est maintenant l'homme-sandwich le plus convoité du marché. Le marketing est ciblé en fonction des publics visés. Tout est bien programmé. Les dates de sortie dans les salles sont stratégiques et habituellement prévues en cadeau de fin d'année, liées à une campagne d'affichage monumentale.

Il faut savoir que 3 Milliards de spectateurs, en audience cumulée, ont vu un James Bond depuis 40 ans. C'est à peu près 1 terrien sur 2. Et ça a rapporté 3,2 Milliards de \$ recettes à ce jour, soit une moyenne de 160 millions par film. "Golfinger" (1964) a totalisé à lui seul 6.675.000 entrées en FRANCE, "Opération Tonnerre" 5,7 millions de tickets, "Bons Baisers de Russie" 5,6 millions, suivent "Dr. NO" 4,7 millions et "on ne vit que deux fois" 4, 48 millions d'entrées auxquelles il faut rajouter les passages à la TV en première et deuxième diffusion et les cassettes vidéo.

La production est anglo-américaine : EON Productions (la famille BROCCOLI depuis 40 ans) à LONDRES et derrière l'énorme machine M.G.M. (Metro Goldwin Mayer) à LOS ANGELES, et la distribution assurée par U.I.P. International.

L'auteur, expert en "James Bonderies", expose aussi la

recette, les invariants, qui font l'immense succès des films depuis quatre décennies. Dans le chapitre 004 intitulé : "l'espion qui plaisait", il énumère 15 règles d'or d'un savoureux cocktail alliant action - humour - séduction: 1/ Un pré-général époustouflant - 2/ Un générique fait de silhouettes féminines ondulant dans des univers colorés - 3/ Des décors gigantesques et spectaculaires - 4/ Des effets surprises de façon à ne pas ménager le spectateur - 5/ Opposer Bond à un méchant retors, parano-mégalo-mytho, suprêmement intelligent, une sorte de double-maléfique - 6/ Lui adjoindre un homme de main d'une force herculéenne - 7/ Disposer d'une ou deux "Bond girls" ainsi qu'une pléiade de ravissantes créatures - 8/ Doter Bond d'une panoplie de gadgets efficaces et amusants - 9/ Emailler le film de rituels : présentation, entretien avec M, visite de Q, badinage avec Money-penny, vodka-Martini, séquence casino... - 10/ Ponctuer l'ensemble de répliques savoureuses et cyniques à souhait, distillées à des moments clés. D'un humour distancé résolument typically british, des dialogues dans l'art du contre-pied - 11/ Lester le tout d'un ou deux morceaux de bravoure - 12/ Insérer régulièrement le thème musical au cours des scènes d'action - 13/ Jalonner le film d'exécutions cruelles - 14/ Réserver une longue séquence pour un duel à mort entre Bond et le méchant - 15/ Terminer sur une séquence charme de détente, l'équivalent du "repos du guerrier".

Mais le temps allant, certaines choses ont évolué. Ainsi les relations de 007 avec les "Bond girls" sont devenues moins macho. Dans "Meurs un autre jour", Halle BERRY, la première noire américaine à avoir obtenu le fameux Oscar du prix d'interprétation féminine à Hollywood en 2002, incarne le rôle parallèle d'un agent secret américain "Jinx". Elle perce l'écran lorsqu'elle sort de l'Océan, sublime, portant le bikini qui fit d'Ursula ANDRESS un mythe, clin d'oeil à "Dr. NO".

Cependant que la fameuse Aston Martin (groupe Ford) est toujours là dans une course infernale, remise à la mode virtuelle, la V12 Vanquish version 2002. Et puis, pour être politiquement correct, James (l'Irlandais Pierce BROSNAN, le 5ème acteur à incarner le héros après Sean C O N - NERY, George LAZENBY, Roger MOORE et Timothy DALTON) ne fume pratiquement plus, sauf cette fois un cigare. Une autre dérive s'insurgeant les fans les plus avertis.

Le livre de Guillaume EVIN, indépendant, bien documenté, n'est pas un pamphlet au vitriol. Il n'y a pas de scoop. L'auteur a démonté la machine James BOND pour essayer de comprendre. C'est une analyse sérieuse bâtie dans le style de la série des romans de Ian FLEMING. Avec un pré-général, des titres comme "Le succès est éternel" à la page 001, on est mis dans l'ambiance de l'univers du plus célèbre agent des services secrets britanniques. Homme-sandwich de la plus fabuleuse saga de l'histoire du cinéma ? peut-être, mais BOND saura rebondir...
A lire.

Gilles Berger (Paris)

Young people of Mauritian origin write to us of their overseas experience

20th World Jamboree

Young Chris Darling was one of the scouts from Bedford who attended the rally held in December last in Bangkok, and he has sent us the note below on the trip.

We welcome, for publication, correspondence from young readers about their experiences, and parents may thus encourage them to write.



Scouts group from Bedford ready to leave for the World Jamboree. Young Chris Darling is second from left in the back row.

We left Marston Moretaine on Saturday 21st December for Heathrow with 24 Scouts from Bedfordshire (2 girls and 22 boys) and 5 Scouts from the Caribbean Island of St. Kitts and 1 from Antigua.

We landed in Bangkok, Thailand the next day after a 12-hour journey and went straight to our hotel in Jomtien, to have dinner and then sleep. It was a 5-star hotel, The Ambassador City Hotel, the tallest and largest in the world.

When we got there we all went up to the 42nd floor to admire the beautiful sights at night. During our stay we went swimming, sightseeing, visiting the Royal Palace, boat touring, and partying, using open army truck like taxiing.

On Christmas evening we all went to a party at another hotel in large taxis with police escorts. The road was closed to all other traffic. It was fantastic!

We left the hotel on the 27th and headed for the Sattahip camp site (a large naval army base) where I met other Scouts from around the world. It was a magical experience to see different nationalities and different languages. Just pure Magic. There were a lot of activities going on, such as biking, walking and assault

training, and cultural activities like Thai boxing, Morris dancing from UK and tasty different cuisine. As it was about 30 degrees, so a lot of time was spent by the beach to cool down.

In the evening we had the opening ceremony of the Jamboree by the crown prince of Thailand and the king of Sweden was also there. The whole world attended the ceremony, about 30,000 Scouts.

On 7th January 03, we flew to Taipei in Taiwan where we stayed in pairs (I was paired with Matthew Lawes) with Taiwanese families. Matt and I stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Chung Ming Lin and their children Joanna and Raymond.

The hospitality was fantastic. The food was not all to my taste but the people were very friendly. We visited a school where we saw some 'rule-breakers' punished, by caning! And so to more partying in the evening.

As soon as the Jamboree started it was over and on Saturday 11th January we had to get up very early (4am) to catch the flight and started our long journey home.

I consider myself extremely lucky to have been able to take part in such an extraordinary event.

Wedding Bells



Congratulations to Dylan Fowdar who married Arista Tupsy on December 8, 2002.

The ceremony and reception took place at the Cape Town Hall, Phoenix, Mauritius.

Dylan is the son of Mr and Mrs Raj Fowdar, and Arista is the daughter of Mr and Mrs Ravi Tupsy of Highlands, Mauritius

Mauritius News: The Challenge
for the next 19 years, and onwards

Mauritius News is the product of 19 years of tenacious effort for Mauritians to have a voice in the UK.

Let us pass this voice to our children to fight for their legitimate right to obtain Mauritian nationality and to own property in Mauritius.

If they have no voice like Mauritius News to stand for them they may later have to spend a lot of money on legal fees to sort out their interests in Mauritius

An Ecuador experience

What do your children want to be?

How much opportunity would you say your children have to become whom they can, and how would you sum up their lives in three words?

Last year I spent two months working in Quito, Ecuador, where thousands of children work on streets selling bubble gums, flowers, shining shoes or doing whatever they can to make a living.

Many of these children are unable to go to school because their parents cannot afford to buy the uniform or books that they need. They are children like yours, with plans and dreams, but I was left wondering whether they would ever have the opportunity to even try to fulfil their dreams.

While my husband and I were waiting for the bus one day, we met a bright, friendly little boy named Christian Bavon, he is 11 years old and his sister Pamela is 9. They work from Monday to Sunday, 7am to 11.45am selling chocolate at the busy bus terminal in Quito.

Christian and his sister have been doing this for 2-3 years. Christian sells about one box of chocolate bars each day, making \$3.80 profit. That's \$3.80 (about £2.90) for nearly 5 hours work. After work, Christian and Pamela attend Clara Ujudid de Paredes primary school in Quito, from 12 pm to 5.30 pm.

The two children use the money they make to pay for their schooling, which is \$10 each per month (excluding books and uniform), and to help support their family.

Another child we met was not as 'fortunate' as Christian and Pamela. He said neither he nor his family earn enough money for him to go to secondary school. At 12 years of age he was shining shoes, already well adjusted to working on the streets.

"But what about their parents?" I hear your protest. Christian and Pamela's mother and grand-



Visiting Vijay Subramaney pictured with the kids (Christian and Pamela), and their mother. The kids show us the chocolates they sell on the streets.

mother work at the bus terminal as well, their father is a builder. With a poor economy and high cost of living, it is hard for many families to survive, they probably feel they have little choice but to send their children out to work.

Although we can armchair moralise, there is no minimum wage, unemployment is high and no welfare system. Yes, there is corruption, but in addition to this, conditions attached to International Monetary Fund, loans include reduction in government spending in areas such as education and health. It is the people in greatest need who are most affected by these policies.

After meeting many children in Quito, I wondered what they would be doing in 5, 10 or 20 years' time, Christian wants to be a fireman or a doctor. What do your kids want to be? Don't they all deserve a chance?

Sharon S.

Deaths

Every entry published below contains the only information supplies to us.

Mauritius

M. Moussa Kurreemun 24.12.02. Saint Julien Village. - Coormayah Appadu (Ram) 46 yrs, 12.01.03. - Wid. Luchmee Murday (Fifi) 76yrs, 11.01.03. Stanley Rose-Hill. - Sookdeo Dyal 70yrs, 14.01.03. - Wid. Ramoon Ramdyal 13.01.03. Petite Retraite. - M. Jaidull Rugooa 01.01.03. Kistnasamy Vayedoo Sooben (Mame Retnon) 82yrs, 31.12.02. Camp Yoloof, Port-Louis. - Mons. Seecundhur Luckun (Gawtan) 09.01.03. - Mrs. Marie Wong Chun (born Leung Kwa Ying 85yrs, Sir Virgil Naz, Port-Louis. - Valiamay Ramalingum (born Naligai Pavaday) 51yrs, 09.01.03. Camp Diabla- Wid. Leon Lamusse (Simonne Fromel de Rosenay) 04.01.03. Beau-Bassin. - Vel Pakiry Poule (Mouty) 03.01.03. Port-Louis. - Bibi Zubeida Oomar (born Saydau) 15.01.03. - Ah-Kee Chen Tse King 69yrs, 14.01.03. - Hurry Jit Mohes (Lalljee) 18.01.03. Ramgoolam Road Plaines de Papayes. - Antony Poullay Chevatian 83yrs, 10.01.03. Port-Louis Cassis. - Denise Valeran 10.01.03. Port-Louis. - Wid. Chang Hong Fong (born Luk Mui) 88yrs, 15.01.03. Sir Virgil Naz, Port-Louis. - Louis Edwin Venchard (Baby) 25.12.02. Curepipe. - Doreen Myrna Patricia Lachman 40yrs, 15.01.03. La Caverne. Vacoas. Alain Dupont 10.01.03. Curepipe. - Joseph Evans Huet 09.01.03. Rose-Hill. - Mrs. Koon tiamah Uriah (toolso) 64yrs, 21.01.03 Avenue Cossigny, Quatre-Borbes. - Aldo Herman Latalente 12yrs, Cite Mangalkan, Floreal. - Ramsamy Bushava Appi (Somio) 10.01.03. Albion Dock, Trou-Fanfaron. - Mrs. Say Yin Kong Shing Cheong (Ah Tsai) 52yrs, 25.01.03. Cpucines, Sodnac, Quatre-Bornes. - Kwang Yeng Tsakok (born Fok Lok) 70yrs, Eugene Laurent, Port-Louis. - Meenatchee Soopamanien (Thevaney) 14.01.03. Port-Louis. - Chandra Teelochun (Swara) 48yrs, 20.01.03. France Manon 04.01.03. - Anna-Marie Chevathean 12.01.03. Louis Freddy Thomas 21.01.03. St-Pierre. - Mrs. Ambravadee Karupudayyan (born Pillay) 77yrs, Kovil de Surenam. - Anbah Soobooroyen 50yrs, 16.01.03. - Wid. Mangalama Maurimootoo (Batty) 19.01.03. Breau-Plan, M.Tse Kee Mew (Ah Miaw) 85yrs, Plaine Magnien. - Mrs. Marie Antoinette Moutian 76yrs, 26.01.03. Joseph Regis Lamaletie 20.01.03. - Mrs. Dhunmati Sembhoo (born Dauhoo) 71yrs, - Louis Annicette Madouga (Cacette) 43yrs, 23.01.03. Roche-Bois - Jean Jacques Yow Ok Cheung 19.01.03. Port-Louis. - Wid. Ng Fo Yan (born Lee Kim Mui) 23.01.03. Port-Louis. - M. Jacques Bellouard 21.01.03. Beau-Bassin. Wid. Koon tiaman Upiah (born Gooriah) 64 yrs, 20.01.03.

Overseas

Mrs Lily Ravat (born Josen) 70 yrs, Melbourne, Austealia. - Cyril Clement Leclair (Fanafan) 66yrs, 14.01.03. London. Mrs Michel Mariette (born May Ricaud) 84yrs, Rose-Hill. - Mrs Michel Tsakok (born Line Kwang Yeng Fok Luk - 70yrs Toronto, Canada. Wid. Leon Lamusse La Reunion. Miss Lise 13.01.03. Toronto Canada. - Nathalie Babets (born Theophile) Australie. Mrs. Ben ja min Pascal (born Lydie Piernney) 84yrs, Melbourne Australia. - Mrs Charlotte Pierre (Ah Yee) 82 yrs, London. Phillipe Bardeau 22.01.03. Pinetown, South Africa.

Deaths announcement

Mrs Charlotte Pierre

Mrs Charlotte Pierre passed away on January 26 at Leyton, London on January 26.

Mourned by her children and grandchildren

Mrs Marthe Duval

The Lauricourt family of London sadly announce the death of Mrs Marthe Duval (born Lauricourt) on February 19 in Woolwich after a short illness.

Marthe was the sister of George Lauricourt, president of the community group 'Voice of Mauritius'.

The service will take place at the St Peter's Church, Woolwich, on March 6 at 10am and the cremation at the Eltham Crematorium at 11.30am.

Marthe is mourned by all members of the family in UK, France and Mauritius.

AUM

It is with deep regret we learnt of the death of Mr Tatvajnani Radhakant (Bhoupen) Purmanan, son, of late Mr and Mrs. B.D. Purmanan. Mr B.D. Purmanan was Principal of Durham College, New Grove, Mauritius.

Bhoupen (aged 54) died in Paris on 7th 2003. A religious ceremony was held at the Institut Medico-Legal, Paris on 14th February 2003 and the cremation took place on the same day at the Crematorium de Joncherolles, Villetaneuse.

May his soul rest in peace.

Our heartfelt thanks go to:- Mme M.H Chaurimootoo, Head of Mission, and staff of the Mauritian Embassy in Paris. Mme Nicole Berganini - Bridadier de Police Beap - Paris. Mr. G Khelooa and family - Paris. From: Mr & Mrs Deven Purmanan, Mr & Mrs Souriaduth Purmanan and Family. All Purmanan Brothers, sisters, and families - Mauritius and Canada. Krish Purmanan, Rani Gopec - Paris. Dr D. Purmanan in India, Mr G. Khelooa & Family, Paris



The Day of Entente

The young people of today should commemorate the Day of Entente on August 1 which was first celebrated in 1965 in the wake of the communal unrest.

In the last two years we have had two additional public holidays in Mauritius. Both were under the initiative of the Deputy Prime Minister Paul Bérenger. The first one is on 1st of February to commemorate the Abolition of Slavery and the second one to commemorate the arrival of the first Indentured labourers on the 2nd of November.

I remember having mentioned and suggested in an article in this paper a few years ago a public holiday on the first of February to celebrate the abolition of Slavery in 1835.

There is one striking difference between the choice of a special day for indentured labourers and a date for slavery abolition. While the latter is to celebrate the end of a sad and cruel historical event, the former is to celebrate not the end but the beginning of another sad historical event, the date when the first indentured labourers landed in Mauritius, as if it was a happy historical event for Mauritius. However, as this Indentured labour day coincides with La Toussaint on the 1st November, an additional public holiday is very welcome.

In this article I shall talk about another day which was celebrated on 1st August 1965 by the Mouvement d'Entente Nationale and which by itself brought an end to one of the most severe Communal conflicts the country had ever known and lasted for three months. This day was called "The Day of Entente" to show that the individuals of every community of our island could live happily together and in peace. I remember a Swiss paper wrote an article referring to the celebration of the "Day of Entente" in Mauritius and compared it to the same kind of celebration in Switzerland to mark the union of its various communities.

After the détente provided by the Sega Nationale, the movement held its committee every Friday and decided that in order to bring the conflict to an end we had to get the involvement of all the individuals of every community at the grassroot level to work actively towards a major project. After much discussion we decided to have a "Day of Entente" which would be celebrated in all the districts of the island on the same day and to get the whole nation to prepare and work towards its organization and celebration.

It was decided that this day would consecrate what had been achieved by the Sega Nationale and cement all the ethnic groups together in a strong bond. As the work towards the celebration and organization of that day was as important as that historic day itself, we decided in June at the time of the raging conflict to give it two full months. We unanimously decided that "The Day of Entente" would be on the first of August 1965.

We got the support of a brilliant Franco Mauritian, Marcel Lagesse who was a very well-known and respected person. He was intelligent and endowed with considerable energy and skill. He designed a flag for the Movement and which would be unfurled all over the island on "The Day of Entente". He chose the colours of the sugar can, green and yellow on a green background with a yellow "fleur-de-lys".

After weeks of deliberations and with the help of people from each region of Mauritius we elaborated a programme of activities which would take place on the same day and at the same time in all the districts of the island which included Port Louis, Rose Hill and Beau Bassin, Quatre Bornes, Curepipe, Vacoas, Moka and St Pierre, Flacq, Riviere du Rempart and Goodlands, Pamplemousses, Mahebourg and Souillac.

Each region would nominate five youths - one from each community. They would meet at eight in the morning at Brown Sequared Hospital and each would carry a torch which would be lighted by me as President of the Mouvement d'Entente Nationale.

Then the groups of five youths would diverge from Brown Sequared and converge to their respective regions covering the distance partly by walking and partly by transport so that they all reached the centres at 9.45 a.m. in the morning. Then they would set light with their torches to the bonfires especially put up by the people of the region.

At exactly ten, the flag of the Entente Nationale would be hoisted by the Regional President and the vast crowds would sing The Sega Nationale. The same ceremony occurring simultaneously in all parts of the island at the same time. The active involvement of the people would have the greatest psychological impact on the minds of the youths toward a feeling of genuine nationhood.

In the afternoon there would be more relaxed activities in all the centres and at night bands would play and there would be public dances. At 9pm sirens would sound all over the island and the bells of the churches would toll announcing the lighting of the fires over the mountains of Mauritius. We had the whole of June and July to prepare for such a vast programme and making the "Day of Entente" a resounding success.

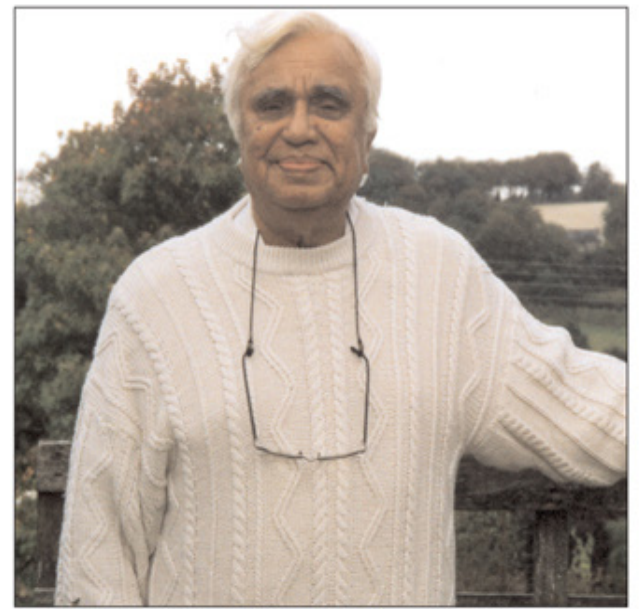
The whole population was enthusiastic about the idea so that there was no need to canvass or to solicit, and spontaneously committees all over the island met and prepared the regional programmes. I do not want to mention the hundreds of leaders who came forwards to volunteer their help but I would like to mention one, Cassam Uteem at that time a youth who volunteered to take charge of the region of Port Louis and worked hard for its success.

The country was under a state of Emergency with British troops in to enforce Law and Order, as there was no way that the Entente celebrations could take place as it was forbidden to have a crowd of more than a few people. I therefore wrote to the Governor of the island, Sir John Rennie, in June to inform him of the "Day of Entente" and to ask him whether he could make an exception to suspend the state of emergency on Sunday, 1st August, for all those manifestations to take place.

There was no objection from the Governor and the Commissioner of Police Mr Mc Caffery to the commemoration of the Day of Entente but they were frightened of the risk of an outburst of communal riots following such a suspension especially with the number of manifestations which were going to take place on that day. I phoned and wrote to the Governor as time was rolling by and I had the same reply that a decision had not yet been taken.

For me it was nerve racking as I knew that if I told the committee of the real situation they would not have the heart to work so enthusiastically as they were doing. So I kept saying to them at every Friday meeting that the Governor would give his permission but he had to wait until the last moment to assess the situation. On Friday the 31st July I phoned the Governor desperately at 9.30 am.

I told the Governor that the Committee of Entente was meeting for the last time before the Day of Entente when all the instructions would finally be given to go ahead on Sunday as planned, and detailed programmes would appear in the press, and announced on radio on



By Cader Raman OBE

Saturday the 31st. Therefore it was vital that we knew of his decision. He told me of his concern and promised to make up his mind one way or another at 6pm and to phone him then.

The committee met at 4pm and there was much to be done. There were so many people from all the centres who came, flags of Entente had to be distributed. The organization had to be synchronized so that there would be no hitch on Sunday. I was asked whether the Governor had given his authorization and I never let my true anxieties to be perceived, I told them the Governor would make his decision at six.

At six I summoned all my courage and phoned Sir John Rennie. I said "Sir, every thing has been prepared for Sunday and I am now with the members of my committee to get your approval and blessing". He replied "After careful consideration and on the advice of the Commissioner of Police I am prepared to remove the state of emergency for twenty four hours starting at midnight on Sunday 1st August." I informed this to the committee, and to the members present. I was instructed to reply "Sir, we thank you deeply for your decision and Mauritius will be grateful to you for your wisdom."

He said "Is there anything else I can do for the Entente". I conveyed this message to the members and they asked me to request him to allow us to start the lighting of the torches at Reduit instead of from Brown Sequared Hospital. Frankly, I did have the nerve but I did express the wish. He replied "Where do you expect me to go if you take over Reduit on Sunday? After a pause, he said - Well, I could go to the bungalow at Cap Malheureux for the weekend and you can have Reduit".

I was greatly moved that in the space of a few minutes a situation of despair had turned into one full of hope, and I would not in my wildest dream have thought at that time in the history of Mauritius I would be given the greatest of honour to open the Day of Entente from the Palace of Reduit at eight in the morning on Sunday 1st August 1965.

The Day of Entente was unique in the History of Mauritius when the whole past was deleted and replaced by a new spirit, a new outlook and a new attitude. People in every corner of the island marched in the streets with banners reading "We do not want Communalism", "We are Brothers and Sisters".

As not a single incident, took place the Governor was satisfied that Peace had returned to Mauritius and the State of Emergency was removed permanently within a few days of the "Day of Entente".

I am writing this article, on the eve of the 35th independence anniversary of Mauritius, to tell the young Mauritians what the older generation did thirty eight years ago for the country and to appeal to them to revive this Day of Entente.

While the Abolition of Slavery day and that commemorating Indentured Labour were decided politically to become public holidays, the Day of Entente must be revived at the grassroot level on the 1st August by the young generation without it being a public holiday. On that day the youths can go beyond the boundaries of their community and engage in activities to cement brotherhood, tolerance and understanding.

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New author

A revelation: Chaya Parmessur

Mauritius is one of those islands where beauty of the sea and the landscape are betrothed under the spell of the sun in a blue sky, where sugar cane production and harmonious co-existence in a multicultural society has an excellent record.

This ancient 'Isle de France', known through literature as the island of *Paul et Virginie*, has added to its list of writers the name of Chaya Parmessur whose debut in the literary world is marked by her 'Snake Spirit', Part 1: The Fire Giver.

Through *The Fire Giver* Chaya takes us onto the original journey of 1885 from India-Gawara, Calcutta - to trace out her ancestors' footsteps on that heart-torn trip to the distant island of Mauritius. The reader is made to witness their tribulations in settling in the foreign land among the first migrants from the Indian



Childhood memories from the old Quatre Bornes house

sub-continent.

The author recalls her childhood memory of the stories told by her grandmother Nandi and the psychic powers she inherited from Dado, an old Indian woman on the island. The stories from her grandmother embellished in the child the beauty of the ancestral land and its culture, and the fascination of Hinduism.

The *Fire Giver* is written in the style of a journey to one's roots. Old Dado and the prime grandmother of the time appear in the book from the beginning to end of the text. Chaya conjures up for the reader Dado's destiny, the curse, superstition, the Exorcist and the Spirits in '*la Maison Maudite*' - The Cursed House.

Many pages are consecrated to religious rites and customs defining the supreme role of humanity in sacred books through Vishnu, Garuda, Shiva, Rama in the *Bhagavat Gita*. The author explains the meaning of the 'Fire Giver' who in fact is the person designated to carry out the rituals associated with a cremation. Then, she contrasts the Asian tradition with the much entrenched Afro influence of the *ravanne* and the *séga* of Vera, the *ségatier*. Her grandma Nandi did the 'pelvic thrust' so well that she could match any Creole dancer. "The *séga* cannot be learnt, it comes from the soul of Africa," writes the author.

Chaya Parmessur is herself, as most compatriots, imbibed with both oriental and occidental cultures fashioned in the Mauritian tradition. Her Cambridge University chemical engineering degree never dampens her fascination for Hinduism and the Indian culture. "I am proud to be Mauritian and will always be Mauritian first, but India and Hinduism fasci-

nate me. Since I was little, I have believed very strongly that all cultures and religions are equally great, and it is a shame that there are so many conflicts in the world, people focus on their differences rather than on their similarities," she says.

Well, Chaya's love for the tradition of her ancestors is legitimate for '*une femme de lettres*'. On the other hand, is it not a fact that the more cultures one can embrace the more open is one to other people's way of life?

Thus, Chaya, our young writer follows in the footsteps of such eminent past Mauritian writers as Robert Edward-Hart, Malcolm de



Modern-day personality absorbing all cultures

Chazal, Marcel Cabon, Raymonde de Kervern and Dr Kissoonsingh Hazareesingh who displayed an understanding of the multi-culturalism of the Mauritian environment in which they were born and bred, as described by Dr Jean-Georges Prosper in his *Histoire de la Littérature Mauricienne*.

They built bridges among the various Mauritian communities whose roots are found in Africa, in the East and in the West. Marcel Cabon, digging his African roots fell on a Malagasy princess in *Kélibé Kéliba* and wrote *Namasté* on an Indian theme. Raymonde de Kervern excelled herself in '*Apsara la Danseuse*', a long mystical poem. *Apsara* dances for the Trinity of God: Civa, Brahma and Vishnu - a concept of the 'triangular of god', according to the poet. We are tempted to quote the following extracts from R. de Kerveve's poem:

Danse mon Apsara *
Sous le pagne framboise
Tu dances pour Civa
Et l'île Turquoise
Danse dans tes yeux verts

.....
La race des Indous
Solennelle, fervente
Scelle sous tes sourcils
Le mystère, l'ombrage
Et les yeux infinis
De la race des sages.

Chaya Parmessur rises up as a talented writer with deep thinking. Her style is fluid and mature. She has a good command of the language and the descriptions she gives us are very vivid. She has the virtue of not only turning something inexistent into a work of art but also of captivating the attention of the reader who finds it impossible to put the book down once he opens it.

Chaya Parmessur is from Quatre Bornes where live her relatives in the very house she grew up. After 14 years in the UK, she took up permanent residence in Australia in 1997. She is now, however, occupying the position of Senior Process Engineer in the Oil & Gas Industry at Houston (USA).

Her book, dedicated to her mother and grandmother, is available from the **Amazon.com** or from the publishers Xlibris Corporation, USA, (**Orders@Xlibris.com**)

Chaya is now working on 'The Snake Spirit Part2.' We extend to her our very best wishes with our congratulations.

Marc Grégoire

* Cited from Dr Jean-George Prosper's *Histoire de la Littérature Mauricienne*

A conference for and about Asian women

7th-9th March 2003

Parliament Hill School,
Highgate Road, London
NW5

What is our history?
Where do we stand today?
What does feminism mean to us?
What kind of a future do we want?

Celebrate International Women's Day with poetry, songs and music from Razia Aziz, Kulwinder, Seni, DJ Ritu and many others on Saturday 8th March.

Get involved and have your say in the drama, film, slide show and other active workshops on:-

How we see ourselves and how others see us
Sexuality
Domestic and Sexual violence and abuse
Mental Health
Racism in Education
Asian women workers
Immigration and asylum laws
25 Years of Feminism

View the exciting exhibition by and about Asian women which includes panels questioning what Asian 'traditional' culture is, exploring the experiences of Asian women workers, documenting struggles against immigration Laws, and analysing the role of the family and community. There are also new works of art by young Asian women on the issues of identity, work, family, culture, war and racism. It gives a glimpse into our history, reflects on recent events while at the same time raises questions on the key themes of the conference.

With Asian women coming from groups active all over the country this conference promises to come up with new positive ideas on how we can tackle the most important issues facing us today.

Express your opinions, Assert your presence and Be yourself, this is your conference! Make this a memorable event which not only brings us together but makes us go forward together.....

REGISTER NOW AND
SECURE YOUR PLACE
AT THE CONFERENCE

Organised by Asian Women Unite! an umbrella group which includes over thirty Asian Women's organisations and a growing number of individuals across the country.

For more details (eg Transport, Crèche, Stalls, Programme, Disabled access).
Telephone: 0207 424 9535
email:londec@hotmail.com

Travel

War will hit industry hard, warns Virgin

At the recent Guild of Business Travel Agents' annual general meeting, you could feel how much the industry feels let down by this government. Virgin Atlantic boss Steve Ridgway talked about the impact of the war on his business. Of course, no government is going to base its decision to go into a conflict on the basis of what will happen to the travel industry. But the human and economic impact at home should be considered before we start flexing our muscles in the Middle East.

Airlines like Virgin used the last conflict to tighten their belts and cut back where they could. You get the impression that there isn't much slack to go if demand slumps again. Closer to home and the government's pledges on improving the transport infrastructure have, like a lot of its policy promises, been a lot of hot air. And, despite catastrophic airline losses throughout the world, there is still no financial protection for scheduled airline passengers. Buy a ticket for an airline that collapses before you travel and you will lose your money. Many point out that if a customer buys on credit card, he or she will be re-imbursed by the card company in the event of failure.

Virgin Atlantic chief executive Steve Ridgway (left) has added his voice to those warning of the dire consequences of war. Ridgway said the airline had contingency plans if a conflict in the Middle East affected the demand for air travel. But, speaking at the Guild of Business Travel Agents' annual general meeting, Ridgway said a long war could be very damaging for the industry. "War is outside our control," he said. "But at Virgin we have already been through a big restructuring and anything else could be very painful and have lasting damage."

"We don't want to have to take draconian action to safeguard the future of the company." Ridgway said he was cautious about consumer confidence in the future but added the airline had continued to invest in its people and products. "We don't see an immediate recovery in the market, particularly the premium sectors, which are extremely tough and are likely to remain so," he said. "We are trying to be brave. We've invested and we will continue to do so. "We've increased pay for our staff, because we must keep them motivated and with a smile on their faces. We've done as much as we can on that. "We also have a long-term drive into product improvements."

Ridgway said in the future it would be even more important to offer customers a high level of service. "Going forward, I think service and product differentiation will be more important than ever before," he said. He added Virgin was scrutinising every area of business to make sure the airline was running as efficiently as possible. Ridgway also had a swipe at the regulations that are blocking Virgin's plans to expand in the UK, notably the law banning foreign ownership of US airlines. "We have aspirations in the US," he said. "At least things have changed a little. The debate after September 11 has moved away from aggressive protectionism by the US, there is a different attitude. "But it amazes me that Mercedes can buy a famous American company like Chrysler and no-one bats an eyelid and here we are, hamstrung by regulation."

This is dangerous thinking. In the current climate, a big call on a card company could put this theory to the test and lead to a big court case. And, my understanding is that when a business travel agency has taken the bookings and acted as the merchant, it may well be responsible for refunding passengers.

It's about time the government sorted out this mess and started giving the travel industry the support it needs. A few years ago, Labour was seen as the great white knight that was going to save this country. After numerous failures, public opinion is starting to turn against the government. It's no surprise that opinion is reflected in the travel industry.

Penfriends

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Hobbies: Music, travel, exchange holidays and reading looking for a female correspondent between 20-30, sincere and friendly.

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