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March 2012 - 291

Mouthpiece of the Mauritian Diaspora. Every Overseas Mauritian is an ambassador for Mauritius

Monthly - 80p 29th year

UK Mauritians have got talent

Yohann Saide performing on BBC's Let's Dance For Sports Relief



The sovereign State of Mauritius is 45 years' old on March 12, 2012

Mauritius, a British possession in the Indian Ocean, obtained its independence from Britain on March 12. The Chagos Archipelago, a group of 64 neighbouring islands that comprises Diego Garcia, was and still is another British possession in the Indian Ocean was renamed the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) by Britain on, four years before Mauritius got its independence from the mother country. Can Mauritius be made responsible for the creation of the BIOT by Britain? A servant can never be as great as his master Can any servant tell his master what he (the master) can do or cannot do with his possessions?

Ramgoolam, Father of the Nation

cruel the way Brian forced the natives of the Chagos out of their homeland. Today the Diego Garcians are finding many champions fighting their cause. It would be interesting to know who were those who in the 1970s were trying to induce them to sign away their right to further compensation from Britain.

MN Archives

Who is that man holding a copy of Mauritius News?

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plus Miss Mauritius GB - 23 September 2012 @ Fairfield Hall, East Croydon

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Titbits from Mauritius

By Ahmad Macky



CHANGE IN UK VISA APPLICATIONS

The British High Commission in Mauritius, in partnership with the UK Border Agency, amended the procedures for submitting and processing visa applications from 27th February 2012. All applications for a UK visa made from Mauritius or Seychelles must now be completed online at www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk.

After completing the online application form, the applicant will be asked to book an appointment online to visit the Visa Section of the High Commission in PortLouis, at a time that suits them. During that visit they should submit a printed copy of the application form, any supporting documentation and their biometric data.

Payments for a visa application must be made online via the secure payment system in South African Rand (ZAR) with either a Mastercard or Visa, credit or debit card. Payment in other currencies, including Sterling and US dollars, is expected in due course. The British High Commission in Port Louis will forward the application form and supporting documents to the British High Commission in Pretoria, South Africa by courier where all visa decisions are now processed.

There will be no change to visa requirements or the way in which the visa application is considered. The only difference is the location where the applications are processed. As far as possible, all non-settlement applications will be processed within 3 weeks of the biometrics being submitted and the no changes of levels to the service are foreseen.

RODRIGUANS' REJECTION OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

The recent election in Rodrigues and the result there show that Rodriguans have rejected the Central government of Mauritius. The victorious OPR party of Rodrigues was back in power after over 6 years in oblivion. OPR of Serge Clair obtained 8 candidates elected by First Past the Post System (FPTP) and the MR of Von Mally elected only 4 candidates by FPTP.

With Proportional Representation (PR) in Rodrigues OPR gets 3 more candidates and MR gets 4 more candidates. Another Party namely FR of Johnson Roussety gets 2 candidates by PR system.

Nicholas Von Mally resigned from his portfolio as Minister of Rodrigues following the defeat of his party. Serge Clair is the new Chief Commissioner of Rodrigues as from now.

EARTHQUAKE NEAR RODRIGUES

A seism of magnitude 5.1 on the Richter scale occurred near Rodrigues and Mauritius at 6hr20 am on 16th February 2012. The Meteorological Station confirmed that an earthquake was registered at 308Km from the North-East coast of Rodrigues and 890Km from the North-North-East coast of Mauritius. However, no tsunami alert was issued on both islands.

According to the Met services, there are no official reports to confirm whether the seism was felt on the island or not. Earthquakes in that part of the Indian Ocean are not rare. Several seisms have been registered near Rodrigues during these last years.

OPPOSITION LEADER BERENGER AT POLICE HQ

Opposition leader Paul Bérenger was at Line Barracks Police Headquarter on Wednesday 15th February 2012 to make his statement following the complaint made against him by the Prime Minister in the MedPoint scandal.

Bérenger is accused of diffusing false news at a press conference he held last year, in which he told journalists that Dr Krishnan Malhotra, MedPoint owner, had met the PM, Navin Ramgoolam, who in turn allegedly contacted the Chief Government Valuer, Yodhun Bissessur to request a new valuation of the MedPoint clinic. According to Bérenger, this information was conveyed to him by Showkutally Soodhun through Dr Zuber Joomye.

In his statement to the police, Bérenger confirmed that he indeed made the above allegation to the press. Bérenger, who is defended by Ivan Colendavelloo, also confirmed that his informer was none other than Dr Joomye. He further told police that he made the statement in good faith.

HORRIBLE FAMILY TRAGEDY AT FOREST SIDE

A family tragedy occurred in the Tegnah family on Tuesday the 14th February, 2012. Nizam, 51, the head of the family mortally slit the throat of his wife Asmah, 52, before attempting the same on his only daughter Ameera, 13 and then on himself.

Ameera was able to call for help from the balcony and neighbours rushed to the spot. When they went inside, the bodies of both Asmah and Nizam were lying in a pool of blood. The police was called and Ameera was taken to Rose-Belle Hospital where she is still in a crucial state. Nizam was taken to Candos Hospital and his situation is now stable.

It is likely that a debt issue is the cause of this tragedy since the family home was going to be seized and auctioned soon.

FUEL PRICE RISES ON WORLD MARKET

The State Trading Corporation (STC) is closely monitoring the new rise in the price of oil on the international market and significantly, its potential impact on Mauritius. For the time being, the country does not have to worry about the supply of petroleum products.

The Red Eagle ship, arriving from India, docked in Port Louis with about 60,000 tons of oil products. This ship will be back in Mauritius with the same volume of petroleum products on board. However, the sudden rise in oil prices on the international market is alarming. From 111 to 112 dollars a barrel, the price rose to 116 dollars a barrel.

This situation is the consequence of a "panic buying" after Iran threatened to stop the provision of oil to Europe following the announcement of certain sanctions against the country by the European countries and the USA.

MOROCCAN ARRESTED

Police intercepted on Saturday the 11th February, 2012 a car with false number plates. The driver, a Moroccan aged 24, wanted by Grand Bay Police, was apprehended.

During his interrogation, the Moroccan revealed the names of two men who were involved in car thefts. The vehicles were seized by police.

FISHERMAN DIED FOLLOWING SEA TRIP

A 60-year-old fisherman died when he went to sea to lift his nets. At a certain point, when he was in two feet of water, he started feeling a certain discomfort and fell into the waters.

He was rescued by volunteers who were present at that time. Alerted, police and National Coast Guard were summoned to the spot. The victim was urgently transported to the hospital of the locality but it was too late.

ARRESTED FOR FAKE PASSPORTS

A Comorian man aged 24 was arrested on Sunday the 12th February, 2012 by Airport police. He had a forged passport and was pretending to be a French citizen. He was deported to Orly Airport, France.

On the 27th January he was in transit in Mauritius while

being on the flight from the Comoros to France. In addition, three other Comorians were arrested by Immigration Officers. They also were in transit in Mauritius on their way to France.

MAURITIUS-INDIA SIGN AGREEMENTS

Mauritius and India have signed five agreements in the field of Education, Textiles, Sports and Youth affairs, Science and Technology, including a MoU on setting up a Planetarium at the Rajiv Science Centre in Mauritius.

In a statement following the signing of the agreements, the Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh said the next meeting of the India-Mauritius Joint Commission on Economic Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation would be held later this year to identify new measures to promote cooperation in key areas.

The PM said India would provide a new economic package to Mauritius consisting of a Line of Credit of 250 million US dollars and a grant of 20 million US dollars. A part of this grant will be used to establish a hybrid planetarium at the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre in Mauritius.

MAURITIUS EMPLOYERS FEDERATION FEARS SLOW DOWN

In its latest issue of Eco Brief, the Mauritius Employers Federation (MEF) fears that the Eurozone is expected to slide into recession with a negative growth of -0.5 in 2012, due to worsening of the debt crisis and the fiscal tightening.

However, the MEF estimates global growth at 3.3% which is higher than the forecast of 2.5% by the World Bank. It further expects the Mauritian economy to grow by less than 4.1%.

The MEF feels policy should focus on upholding confidence through continuing support to enterprises and structural reforms to boost productivity and competitiveness.

MOU WITH STATISTICS MAURITIUS

The Financial Service Commission (FSC) has on the 9th February, 2012 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Statistics Mauritius on "Cooperation with regard to the collection and compilation of statistics and exchange of information between the FSC and Statistics Mauritius".

The signing ceremony took place at the FSC House, Ebene.

POLICEMAN SHOT HIMSELF WITH HIS REVOLVER

On Thursday the 2nd February 2012, a police constable aged 22, posted at Coromandel police station shot himself in the head with his service pistol.

The young policeman had one year of service in the police force. He committed this desperate act in the toilets. According to sources, he had "family problems". An investigation has been initiated to shed light on this tragedy.

MAURITIUS, FAVOURITE DESTINATION FOR V-DAY

Traveling was never more romantic. According to Makemy/Trip, India, in an interesting trend, more and more young Indian couples headed for international destinations for the Valentine's Day celebrations in February.

The tilt towards short-haul domestic destination notwithstanding, it is the international locales that lure couples these days. Whilst Wayanad, Ooty, Coorg, Andamans and Goa are hot Indian destinations, the overseas picks are mainly Mauritius, Dubai, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Sri-Lanka.

Fibre to the Home (FTTH) project on this month

The Fibre to the Home project will take off this month. The Indian telecommunications operator, Bharat Telecom which will establish the FTTH network across the island will be offering internet services at a speed of 10 mbps for some Rs280 per month.

The project consists of the implementation of 200 km of optical cable underground for a sum of around Rs1 billion. The network is planned to connect various offices, business establishments, government organizations, hospitals and hotels among others.

Logo competition on MID for National Day

The Ministry of Arts and Culture and the Commission on Maurice Ile Durable is holding a logo competition in the context of the National Day Celebrations 2012 on the theme Ile Maurice Durable. The selected logo will be used so as to reflect the vision of this societal project. A prize of Rs 50,000 will be awarded to the artwork which has been retained.

Report on situation of the disabled to UN

By the end of this month Mauritius must submit its first report on the situation of the disabled in the island. It is an obligation under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that Mauritius has ratified in January 2010.

This international treaty guarantees the dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with all kinds of disabilities.

Economic and Social Transformation Plan in the pipeline

The preparation of a 10-year Economic and Social Transformation Plan has received government approval. It would set out the strategies and the policies for Mauritius to move to a High-Income Country with income of over US\$ 14,000 per capita from the current income of about US\$8,000 per capita.

The plan would help meet the challenges for an accelerated sustainable and equitable growth through increased human capital, better policies and processes, as well as more complementary public and private investment and productivity advances.

Units for higher standards in post-harvest practices

Four Post-Harvest Facility units at Rouge Terre (near Fond du Sac), L'Espérance (Quartier Militaire), St. Hubert and Mare d'Albert, where planters have grouped themselves into clusters, will be operational in the future. These units will be set up with a view to assisting them to increase the quality standards of their produce, enhance their competitiveness and shift from traditional post-harvest practices to higher standards to be able to face the new challenges with respect to competitiveness and productivity in the local, regional and international markets.

The Units would be provided with the basic facilities and equipment to wash, sort, grade, minimally process, store and pack fresh produce of the farm.

Business hotel in Bagatelle since March 1

Since the beginning of this month, Voilà Bagatelle, is operating right in the middle of Bagatelle Mall of Mauritius. The hotel has 102 rooms offered at a competitive price of Rs 2,999 and is characterized by a new concept of hospitality known as 'Urbanlifestyle'.

The booking system is 100 per cent online

Business Park project in Rose-Belle revived

After seven years of waiting, the Rose Belle Business Park has been given the greenlight. The land at Rose-Belle covers an area of 25 acres costing Rs 8 million per acre will be sold in lots of 20 by the promoter, Business Park of Mauritius Limited.

The new business park will host most of the projects related to new technologies and 'light' engineering. Space is also reserved for commercial projects such as a small shopping centre. The creation of thousands of jobs is expected.

Twofold increase in scholarships as from 2013

The Government Scholarship Scheme, also known as the Laureates Scheme, has been reviewed with a view to awarding scholarships to a larger number of students, particularly meritorious candidates from modest income families of less than Rs 5,000.

The number of scholarships will subsequently be increased from 30 to 60 and will become operational as from this year and be applicable to laureates proclaimed in 2013.

Mauritius in Kerala Shopping Festival this month

Mauritius may be present at the coming Kerala Shopping Festival in India this month. This will be a good platform to showcase Mauritius as a travel destination and also attract tourists to the Mauritius Shopping Fiesta due to be held in July this year.

Forty Indian journalists who were in Mauritius last month were encouraged to promote the Mauritian fiesta in India.

Mauritian Karuna Rana In Vanity Fair magazine

Young Mauritian woman, Karuna Rana has been featured alongside Sir Bob Geldof, an Irish singer, author, songwriter, actor and political activist, in the issue of this month of Vanity Fair magazine.

Rana is One Young World Ambassador Leader for "The Environment and its Protection" and is currently undertaking the role of the Tunza Youth Advisor (Africa Region) with the United Nations Environment Programme. She is representing the small island states and Africa in global summits and high-level environmental negotiations and passionately speaking on behalf of 3 billion young people.

Bids launched for first wind farm at Curepipe Point

The CEB (Central Electricity Board) has invited bids from nine pre-qualified bidders for the setting-up of the first wind farm of the island. It will be a 25-40 megawatt wind farm at Curepipe Point.

The wind farm is expected to be operational by 2013. The project is in line with the government's renewable energy policy. The objective is to promote the use of renewable resource for electricity generation with a view to reduce the country's dependence on imported fossil fuel and preserve Mauritius' ecosystem.

It is expected that the country will achieve about 35 per cent self-sufficiency in terms of electricity supply by 2025 through the use of renewable sources of energy.

Shanghai flight converted into a non-stop on March 26

Air Mauritius is converting its Shanghai flight into a non-stop, direct one from March 26. This decision was taken after a meeting in China between a Mauritian delegation led by MTPA chairman Robert Desveaux and the Shanghai Tourism Municipal Administration (STMA) chairman, Dao Shu Ming.

Further to this meeting the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority has been invited to participate in the Shanghai Tourism Festival, which is the main opening parade that takes place in the Chinese city every year. It is to be noted that STMA is responsible for promoting Shanghai to the inbound tourists as well as encouraging inhabitants of the city to travel overseas.

National Day celebrations approved

The government agreed to the official ceremony of the National day celebrations on March 12 being held at the Champ de Mars. The programme will comprise, inter alia, the flag raising ceremony, march-past by disciplined forces and uniformed organizations, helicopter fly-past, special dance choreography depicting national unity and fireworks.

A popular show will be held immediately after the official ceremony.

Fresh Tug of War between PM and President

In this paper we have on occasions drawn attention to the sort of tug of war between the two of the three principal figures of Mauritian politics, namely between Sir Anerood Jugnauth and Navin Ramgoolam or vice versa. In the 1990s Jugnauth, as the then PM, wanted to rid the National Assembly of Ramgoolam, MP, because of the latter's frequent absences from the parliamentary sittings. The other of the three political figures, Paul Bérenger—the perennial Opposition leader—would not concur with the PM to allow him the required constitutional majority to invalidate the parliamentary seat of the MP.

When Ramgoolam in turn became PM in 1995 he could not muster the required constitutional majority to rid himself of Sir Anerood Jugnauth, now the President of the Republic. Once more the eternal Opposition leader, Paul Bérenger, would not concur. So, the two antagonists continue to suffer each other in conducting the affairs of the Republic of Mauritius. But the real power rests with PM Ramgoolam. The President plays the role of rubber-stamping all the

decisions that come up to him via the PM. However, it is said that the President, a bit like the Queen of England, has the prerogative to dissolve the National Assembly, if it takes his fancy.

A situation has now arisen whereby the two protagonists are once more in the ring because of a decision made by Paul Bérenger's MMM (Mouvement Militant Mauricien) on Saturday, March 3. Paul Bérenger had been announcing that on that day (Sat Mar 3) he was to make an important declaration to the country. The nation was expecting a major development. Speculation was that he might declare the total independence of his Party and prescribe his own medicine: No political alliances should take place before the outcome of an election, and that any coalition of parties should be made after the results are known.

In the end, the great expectation was a damp squib. Bérenger's party decided to renew the 'Year 2000 Pledge' when the MMM and the MSM of the Jugnauths joined forces to unseat

Ramgoolam as PM. This has now been officially announced in the country. And so, this is where the shoe pinches, because the PM wants to know whether the President, whose office is constitutionally above all political considerations, has been party to this MMM/MSM deal. The PM wants the President to go on his own accord if he has been involved in any political arrangements with the Opposition MMM. According to the local press the PM has finally got the President against the wall.

But the President is a survivor. He has been in this game for over half a century (60 years plus). The socio-cultural groups may once more be active to bring the two leaders to reconcile their differences, especially as the President's term of office may soon expire.

More development we come from press!

EDDY ABRAHAM. OAM
MELBOURNE.



LE RETOUR EN AFRIQUE DES JEUNES TALENTS

D'un côté, il y a de jeunes Africains qui ont étudié dans les meilleures universités et écoles européennes, qui y ont acquis une formation de haut niveau, et qui, pour certains, ont déjà une première expérience professionnelle. Ils veulent aujourd'hui en faire profiter leur continent et plus particulièrement leur pays d'origine, d'autant plus que la majorité des pays africains connaissent une réelle croissance en opposition à une Europe en crise. Ces jeunes ont tous une forte motivation, celle de poursuivre leur carrière professionnelle en Afrique ; mais aussi la même exigence, celle de repartir avec un contrat pour une grande multinationale qui leur garantira une évolution de carrière à la hauteur de leur talent.

De l'autre côté, les grands groupes internationaux représentés en Afrique, qui voient depuis plusieurs années un continent en pleine expansion. Pour pouvoir se développer de la meilleure façon possible, ils ont besoin de ces jeunes talents qui connaissent mieux que quiconque les us et coutumes de leur pays, qui en ont les habitudes culturelles et qui sauront adapter leur formation et les méthodes de management occidentales aux conditions locales.

Ces multinationales ont toutes compris l'intérêt d'« africaniser » leurs filiales. Ces jeunes africains et ces grandes multinationales se rencontreront lors du forum « Careers in Africa », organisé par le cabinet de recrutement Global Career Company (GCC). Cet événement privé de deux jours permettra à de grandes entreprises comme Philips, Henkel, Phillip Morris, ..., d'interviewer de jeunes talents

préalablement triés sur le volet. Cette événement pour l'Afrique Francophone aura donc lieu du 13 au 15 Avril 2012, à Paris. Le concept est simple : les candidats d'origine africaine posent leur candidature sur le site www.careersinfrica.com/paris [2]. Une pré-sélection rigoureuse est faite par les consultants de GCC, puis par chaque entreprise participante, en fonction de leurs besoins (formation, profil, nationalité, expérience, ...). Les candidats qui répondent aux besoins des entreprises reçoivent ensuite une invitation et pour la majeure partie d'entre-eux, un agenda de leurs entretiens. Cette pré-sélection initiale permet ainsi de mettre en rapport les candidats et entreprises ayant des intérêts communs.

L'événement offre également des occasions plus spontanées de rentrer en contact avec les recruteurs : cocktail, présentations, débat sur les tendances du recrutement en Afrique.

L'expérience de GCC montre que les événements « Careers in Africa » constituent pour les recruteurs un rendez-vous essentiel dans leur agenda, car ils y rencontrent « la crème de la crème ». Et c'est une plateforme idéale pour les jeunes africains pour se faire un maximum de contacts sérieux et concrets pour leur retour en Afrique.

Cet événement annuel est organisé par la société Global Career Company. Cette société, basée à Londres, est spécialisée en Recrutement international pour l'Afrique et l'Asie depuis plus de 10 ans.

Crise à la Réunion

Patrick Lozès appelle le président-candidat et le gouvernement à prendre la mesure de la gravité de la crise à la Réunion et à préparer des solutions de fond



Patrick Lozès candidat d'Allez la France pour l'élection présidentielle 2012, s'étonne que le président de la République candidat à sa réélection n'ait pas encore eu un mot sur la crise qui secoue actuellement la Réunion.

Ce territoire connaît des scènes de guérilla urbaine. Des troubles ont éclaté pour la troisième nuit consécutive dans l'île. Au cours des échauffourées, des forces de l'ordre ont été blessées, des voitures ont été brûlées et de nombreux commerces vandalisés.

Né de la contestation des transporteurs routiers contre la hausse du prix du carburant, le mouvement s'est élargi pour

prendre la forme d'une revendication contre la vie chère, la précarité et le chômage.

Face à cette situation, le gouvernement a attendu 2 longues nuits de violences avant de répondre à la volée après une question d'un sénateur.

Le candidat d'Allez la France regrette la réponse inadaptée et tardive du gouvernement qui par la voix de la Ministre de l'Outremer Mme Penchard s'est limité à annoncer une réunion destinée à chercher des solutions uniquement au conflit sur le prix des carburants.

Patrick Lozès appelle le gouvernement à changer sa stratégie « du pourrissement » qui aboutira à une situation désastreuse et à s'attaquer aux problèmes de fond économiques et sociaux que connaît l'île.

Le Candidat invite le gouvernement à aborder rapidement ces questions de fond. En effet, la Réunion fait face à une série de problèmes lourds, aux racines historiques profondes et ramifiées, qui nécessitent un effort énorme de la part de l'Etat qui ne peut plus continuer à tolérer que le taux de chômage moyen soit de près

de 30% et que le taux de chômage des jeunes de 15 à 24 ans soit supérieur à 55 % à la Réunion.

Le candidat d'Allez la France a indiqué « les citoyens de la Réunion et des DOM-TOM en général ont droit à la continuité de développement et de reconnaissance »


Patrick Lozès propose :

1. La mise en place d'une étude d'évaluation des discriminations économiques à la Réunion.

2. La création d'une agence économique pour favoriser la création d'entreprises sur ce territoire et dans l'outremer en général.


3. La délégation d'une partie des pouvoirs régaliens aux conseils régionaux/territoriaux de la Réunion et des DOM/TOM pour leur permettre de nouer des accords directement avec les pays du voisinage dans les domaines économique et culturel.

Fondateur du parti centriste « Allez la France ! », Patrick Lozès, 47 ans est candidat à l'élection présidentielle de 2012



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Commonwealth News

Commonwealth Day this will be celebrated on 12 March 2012 — same date as Mauritius Independence celebrations

Commonwealth Secretary-General addresses UN Human Rights Council

“Human rights challenges confront our members, as they do all people and governments.

“Our Commonwealth approach is to agree to shared goals despite our variety and to provide support in achieving these in partnership – our determination is to see ambition and aspiration translated into practical outcomes.”

These were the words of Commonwealth Secretary-General Kamalesh Sharma as he addressed members of the UN Human Rights Council on the Commonwealth’s commitment to human rights, at its 19th session in Geneva, Switzerland, on Wednesday, 29 February.

With one fifth of the Council’s members sharing membership with the Commonwealth, Mr Sharma said their presence can continue to be a force for a stronger, more unified voice, based on the Commonwealth’s shared values. “The pursuit of shared values by the Commonwealth since its Singapore Declaration of 1971, consolidated and raised in the Affirmation of Commonwealth Values and Principles in 2009, has meant a sedimentation of the culture of democracy in our member states over decades. And that in turn has aided many regions of the Commonwealth in the goal-setting of their own regional and national values. “The Affirmation introduced a shared commitment on human rights, ‘for all without discrimination on any grounds’.”

Mr Sharma said Commonwealth leaders had raised the level of expectations of themselves when in 2011 they authorised the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) – which deals with serious or persistent violations of Commonwealth values, including the systematic violation of human rights – to become more proactively and positively engaged.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has a Small States Office in Geneva, which provides a base for delegations and enables them to establish a diplomatic presence in the region for bilateral accreditation in Europe and to the many multilateral organisations in the city, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, World Trade Organization, the World Health Organization, the UN Human Rights Council, and the International Labour Organization.

Coup d’Etat in the Maldives



Violent clashes took place in February in the Maldives between supporters of former President Mohamed Nasheed - who said that he was forced to resign at gunpoint and baton-wielding police.

Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr Kailesh Sharma, stated earlier this month "Parliament is the heart of a democracy. The Commonwealth finds it unacceptable that the State Opening of the Majlis of Maldives has been disrupted, and the offices of the President and Speaker have been seriously disrespected.

“The leaders of all political parties in Maldives have a solemn responsibility to promote and exercise the utmost restraint.

“The Commonwealth encourages all concerned to pursue the swift and dignified State Opening

of the Majlis so that pressing national needs can be debated and advanced.

“The Majlis is the nationally and internationally recognised place where the representatives of all Maldivians come together to debate responsibly their country’s future and to pass the legislation necessary for that future.

“While freedom of assembly and freedom of expression are core Commonwealth values, so too is constitutional democracy, including respect for the dignity of office-bearers appointed under the constitution and enabling those office-holders to perform their responsibilities fully and freely.

Commonwealth Expert Team issues Final Report on November 2011 Presidential Election in The Gambia

Peaceful and well organised election with an impressive turn-out, but democratic reforms must be urgently pursued

On 14 February 2012 Commonwealth Secretary-General Kamalesh Sharma released the Final Report of the Commonwealth Expert Team, which observed the 24 November 2011 Presidential Election in The Gambia.

Mr Sharma said he was encouraged by the Team’s findings that the election was peaceful and very well organised by the Independent Electoral Commission of The Gambia (IEC). He however underscored that critical democratic reforms were needed to entrench Commonwealth values in The Gambia.

Echoing one of the main recommendations of the Team, the Secretary-General further said: “All stakeholders in the democratic process of The Gambia must be allowed to play a more active role in deepening democracy as part of their fundamental human rights: the opposition parties must be given the space to develop into a credible and visible alternative (and in this regard they too must live up to the people’s expectations.

Angola Foreign Minister visits Commonwealth Secretariat

Dr Georges Chikoti explores areas of possible partnership

The Foreign Minister of Angola, Dr Georges Chikoti, visited Marlborough House - the headquarters of the Commonwealth Secretariat in London - on 21 February 2012 to learn about the organisation and explore areas of possible partnership.

Dr Chikoti was received by Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General Mmasekgoa Masire-Mwamba. Mrs Masire-Mwamba briefed the minister about the fundamental values and principles of democracy, good governance and development that guide the work of the organisation.

Dr Chikoti said he was pleased with the range of work the Commonwealth is involved in and said for a country like Angola, which is emerging from decades of conflict, it is keen to learn from the experiences of other countries - and that he saw good examples in the Commonwealth membership.

African Peoples Advocacy

High Commissioner Kundasamy robustly pitches Mauritius as the ideal regional and global investment destination

From Page One

Mr Kundasamy kicked off the conference with the opening address to a packed hall at the Mahatma Gandhi auditorium of the Indian YMCA in Central London. He was part of panel that also included the Mozambique High Commissioner to the UK, the CEO of Pitching Africa in London project and the Chairman of the British African Business Alliance. The audience comprised of several heavyweight representatives from around the world from social, legal, economic and business sectors as well as members of the African Diaspora in London.

The High Commissioner kept it all business as he spoke of the many challenges that Mauritius had to overcome since its independence. He outlined and shared the very modest economic start of Mauritius at the time of its independence and reminded the audience of its very painful economic take-off. Referring to the studies carried out by Professor Titmus and Professor Meade in the 1960's who prophesied Mauritius as a "doomed to fail" small mono-crop island faced with the might of nature with no viable future, H.E Kundasamy could not fail to mention the determination of the then and first Prime Minister of Mauritius, Dr.Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam - the father of the nation. He eulogised Dr. Seewoosagur Ramgoolam for his great resolve and determination to succeed as a very convinced democrat making free education and social justice the backbone of his policies that led to the very foundation of modern Mauritius and also for promoting a free press and strengthening the rule of law. Dr.Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam was also praised for developing the sense of nationhood amongst its people.

His Excellency then seduced the audience by highlighting reports from the World Bank, Economist Intelligence Unit and the Mo. Ibrahim index amongst others to back his contention of how far reaching the development and progress in Mauritius had been, so many years after its independence. His mention of the fact that since its Independence, Mauritius has seen its Per Capita Income rise from \$260 to \$8,000 was interrupted by huge applause from the audience.

Mr Kundasamy also embraced current Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam's formulation of Mauritius as a one-stop destination for foreign investors. He set out the accomplishment of Mauritius since 2005 where

the Island was facing the triple economic shock following the dismantling of the Multifabric Agreement by the EU, the reduction of sugar exports under the EU Sugar Regime and the soaring oil prices. The High Commissioner spelt out the fundamental reforms successfully undertaken by the Mauritian Prime Minister to transform the island into a centre for excellence in diverse sectors of the economy including the financial services, ICT, BPO, seafood hub, medical tourism amongst many others. He mentioned the fact that Mauritius had a simplified corporate tax regime making it one of the lowest tax countries in the world.

His Excellency stated that all these measures and reforms as introduced under the Prime Ministership of Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam have had the outstanding net effect of increasing Foreign Direct Investment which, today, has reached over a £1bn enabling Mauritius to enjoy a sustained economic growth in the middle of the current global economic recession.

The High Commissioner very robustly stated that Mauritius today provides innumerable investment opportunities and was being recognised as the ideal platform for regional and international trade. He also stated that the island was well positioned to act as a gateway between the Sub-Saharan and the ASEAN markets. The High Commissioner invited potential investors to tap from the various opportunities that Africa and Mauritius had to offer.

The highlight of the day, however, came when a South African lawyer settled in the UK complained that investing and setting up business in most African countries present a bitter challenge for many potential investors and asked the panel as to what progress had been made in these areas. Mr Kundasamy stood out from the other panel members when he very convincingly reassured that setting up a business in Mauritius could be done in as little as 3 days. This was a powerful bookend to the conference. This and further statements won plaudits for the High Commissioner whose speech and responses were enough to make anyone proud to be a Mauritian and energise the sense of patriotism. There is no doubt that the case for Mauritius as an ideal investment destination could not have been better presented to the target audience.

San Santok

**CENTRAL BANKER OF THE YEAR, AFRICA
Rundheersing (Manou) Bheenick
Governor of The Bank of Mauritius**

From Page One

Mauritius is particularly vulnerable to the vagaries of external inflationary pressure, thanks to the openness of its economy and the fact that food and fuel – which mostly have to be imported – make up 40% of its consumer price index.

The past three years have hardly been easy for Rundheersing Bheenick, governor of the Bank of Mauritius. First, he had to deal with a sharp fall in inflation in 2009 as the island's tourism industry and sugar and textile exports slowed, hurting the economy. The, thanks to a quick recovery from late 2010, inflationary pressure increased again.

But the country has been fortunate to have him as its central banker during this volatile period. From the moment he was appointed in February 2007, he has proved himself to be a reformer and farsighted operator.

Within two months of starting the job, he created a monetary policy committee (MPC). Mr Bheenick cites interest rate decisions being made by consensus, rather than opaquely by the governor, as a big reason for Mauritius's stable inflation since then.

The MPC moved quickly to deal with the forces buffeting Mauritius during its downturn, cutting its repo sharply, which helped launch country's recovery.

In 2011, the Bank of Mauritius had to react carefully to the economy's renewed buoyancy and ensure inflation did not rise too far. It succeeded, thanks largely to the MPC's decision to put up the repo rate from 4.75% to 5.5% in the course of the first nine months.

Mr Bheenick says that November's inflation rate of 6.6% - significantly below the levels of 9% to 10% witnessed between 2006 and 2008 – marks the peak of the cycle. He expects it to fall between 5% and 5.5% by June within what he calls the central bank's 'comfort zone' of 4% to 6%.

Mr Bheenick has helped Mauritius's economy, expected to grow 4% in real terms in 2012, in other ways too. In April 2011, to boost credit growth, he capped bank's holding of Treasury Bills - the rate of which had fallen to unacceptably low levels – to 20% of their liquid assets. "When the crisis hit, our bankers seemed to become a bit risk averse," he says. "They preferred to sit on extra liquidity instead of lending it. Credit growth rose to a healthy 12% by the end of 2011.

The central bank's policies have also led to a stable Mauritian rupee, which, unlike most other African currencies, appreciated against the dollar last year. Mr Bheenick had faced plenty of pressure from the island's exporters to weaken it, but he refused to budge, something he firmly believes is in Mauritius's long-term interests. "We do not believe we can gain competitiveness by depreciating the currency," he says. "That was the quick fix our exporters were always asking for. They had got used to it and were very surprised I didn't want to deliver on it."

The Banker (a publication of the Financial Times)

Editorial Note:

In his acceptance speech at the Gala Dinner at the Waldorf Hilton organised by the Mauritius Board of Investment (BOI), Mr Bheenick mentioned the fact that when he came to England for his studies, one of the first Mauritians he met in London was Peter Chellen, then a member of the staff of the Mauritius Students Unit, a London office of the Ministry of Education of Mauritius.

Mr Bheenick, a laureate, stopped at the London office on his way to Oxford University for his studies in Philosophy, Politics & Economics (PPE).

A country boy from the remote island of Mauritius, lost in the Indian Ocean, felt himself lost in the foreign land, he said. (*It was the time when the mass migration of Mauritians to Britain was yet to take place*).

Mr Bheenick invited Peter Chellen to stand up and take a bow. It was a remarkable and well appreciated gesture as Mr Bheenick invited his former distinguished Oxford professors, among others, to take a bow in recognition of his appreciation of their attention and devotion during his student days at the University.

Manou Bheenick has had a very successful *parcours* in the economic life of Mauritius and ended his civil service career as Director of the Economic Planning Unit. He eventually entered politics and was the country's Finance Minister before his appointment as the Governor of the Bank of Mauritius. His philosophical measures at the helm of the banking world of the island has paid immense dividends in stabilising the financial affairs of the country at a time of global recession. His Oxford degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) will have been most appropriate for his career. He applied them all in his exceptional journey.

Peter Chellen



Manou Bheenick holding his trophy in the presence of Brian Caplen, editor of The Banker

Picture: Mauritius News

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Law Society equality plan addresses changing legal landscape

The Law Society has set out its framework for equality and diversity for the next four years

The 2012-15 Equality & Diversity Framework outlines the measures needed to accelerate the rate of progress towards equality of opportunity, greater diversity of the profession and effective, inclusive working practices.

Over the next four years, the Law Society will influence those who shape the business environment in which solicitors operate and work with the regulators to support mechanisms that promote and monitor compliance and ensure equality of opportunity and respect for diversity.

The Law Society will be working closely with the profession to ensure the Framework's core goals and objectives are met. The Society will also step up its direct engagement with minority solicitors through the delivery of its 'Career Barriers Action Plan' and the establishment of dedicated divisions for minority lawyers and women lawyers being launched later this year.

The new framework, which replaces that of 2009-2011, will provide a valuable foundation for the work ahead as the profession moves into an unprecedented period of change with the introduction of Alternative Business Structures and entity based regulation.

To address some of the issues, the Society has in place the flagship Diversity and Inclusion Charter, an instantly recognisable public statement of commitment by its signatories and a framework for positive action across all strands of diversity. Already law firms representing one-third of solicitors in private practice have signed up. Last year, the Society launched the Flexible Working Protocol, presenting a powerful business case and support to firms that wish to implement such practices.

Law Society president John Wotton said while the Framework highlighted gaps and issues that need addressing, it was encouraging to see such positive actions from the signatories of the Diversity Charter.

"That so many firms are prepared to make a public commitment, put their own practices under scrutiny and make necessary improvements is evidence that changes are happening.

"The Law Society will continue to champion change in the profession and knowledge of equality and diversity issues through accredited standards and a robust set of performance measures."

Lambeth Sols

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Beautiful, spacious house with established, terraced garden in Quatre Bornes, Mauritius: Well maintained family home in excellent location, within easy walking distance of the city centre. Consisting of 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, living/dining, kitchen, utility kitchen, office, garage, storeroom and carport - all in an enclosed setting.

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The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games medals on Display at British Museum Room 37 until 9 September 2012 Admission Free

'And, if we thrive, promise them such rewards
As victors wear at the Olympian games'
William Shakespeare, Henry VI, Part 3 – Act II Scene iii

This display tells the story of the production of the medals for the London 2012 Games, from the mining of the metal to the creation of the designs by David Watkins and Lin Cheung and production by the Royal Mint. This display is part of the Cultural Olympiad and is supported by Rio Tinto. Examples of both these victory medals are shown here publicly for the first time and are the high point of the display.

Historical context for these medals is provided by 19th- and 20th-century objects highlighting the longstanding links between Britain and the Olympic and Paralympic movements. Britain played a crucial role in the creation of both the modern Olympics and Paralympics. 'Olympian Games' first took place in the Shropshire town of Much Wenlock in 1850. These games greatly inspired Frenchman Pierre de Coubertin, who attended the 1890 Wenlock games and founded the modern Olympic Games in 1896. The Paralympic Games derive from games held in 1948 at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Buckinghamshire, for people injured in the Second World War. The mascots of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games are named Wenlock and Mandeville in recognition of these earlier games.

This display includes a range of objects from the 19th-century Shropshire games alongside medals from the 1908 and 1948 Olympic Games held in London and the 1960 and 1984 Paralympic Games. These include the silver cup won by Alfred William Oldfield at the National Olympian Games held in Much Wenlock in 1874, which has been lent by a descendant of the winner. Margaret Maughan has lent the gold medal she won for archery at the games now recognised as the first International Paralympic Games, held in Rome in 1960, and John Harris has contributed the gold medal he won for discus at the International Paralympic Games of 1984, the last of these games to be held in England until 2012.

During the summer of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games the British Museum will present a major exhibition on the world of William Shakespeare. The exhibition will provide a unique insight into the emerging role of London as a world city in the 1590s and early 1600s interpreted through objects, digital media and performance. The British Museum has collaborated with the Royal Shakespeare Company in the creative approach to the design of the exhibition, accentuating the connections between the objects, Shakespeare's text and performance. The arrival of the Games to London provides the opportunity to reflect on how the world came to London four centuries ago, and how London perceived the world when global exchange and other aspects of modernity originated. 19 July – 25 November 2012 Admission charge, Reading Room

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