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# Mauritius News



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23rd Year

## Finance Minister Rama Sithanen explains to MN his Budget philosophy

We had the opportunity to meet Mr Sithanen in London during his recent European trip and we were keen to ask him about the complaints from overseas Mauritians about the National Property Tax which they believe will unfairly affect their investment in Mauritius. We also asked him about his proposal to invite Mauritian Diaspora to bring their contribution to the economic advancement of the island.



Finance Minister & Deputy PM Rama Sithanen (right) talking to Mr Peter Bishop, Chief Executive Officer of the London Chamber of Commerce & Industry, at the MHC in London

With regard to the National Property Tax, the Minister's answer was very straightforward. "Mauritius needs money to service its debts, for development and to provide for the less fortunate members of society. So, we have to get money from those with the ability to pay," he told us.

As regards the diaspora he said "Firstly, we are giving incentives to expatriates to come back home. For example,

the car incentive. It used to be extremely difficult for people to bring back their cars. We have made it easy and simple for them to do so. Secondly, we are creating a database of Mauritians abroad to tell them of the opportunities in Mauritius and to invite them to come and help us reconstruct the economy.

(See on Page 3 more of the Minister's statement to Mauritius News.)

## Junior Football Tournament 2006



PELO, Under-18 winners



Winning Boys Under-15 team Blackburn Rovers FC (Red jersey) pictured with runners-up Sunrise FC (Yellow jersey)

More on Page 13

A write-up on Sunset Travel Limited's move to Croydon will appear in our next issue. (See Advert on Page 9)

## Reception to welcome Air Mauritius new London and Eire manager, Mr Dale Keller



Mr Dale Keller (left in the front row) pictured with Air Mauritius Director General for Europe, Mr Donald Payen (Right) at a Waldorf Hilton reception in Aldwich, central London.

Also gathered around the new manager are some of the London office staff, agents and officials from HQ.

The reception offered an opportunity to Mr Payen to bid goodbye to outgoing manager Chris Gilbert; to Sales Manager Lindsey Walker and Accountant Matharoo who have also left the company.

Continued on Page 15



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# Finance Minister Rama Sithanen explains to MN his Budget philosophy

From Page One

“We don’t have enough money in Mauritius, to restructure the economy. We need around four billion euros, over the next 10 years. To restructure the ailing sectors of the economy and we know what are the ailing sectors of the economy. Textile clothing and sugar cane. And at the same time we also need to draw on the economic base of the economy by diversifying into new areas of growth.

This required courage and this required political will and determination. We could not continue with the same policy as the previous government just to tinker with the system at the edges and we know what is the result. The result of the past policies have been high unemployment, high deficit, high debt, decline in wealth, decline in investment, decline in savings, and a huge inherited balance of payment deficit.

We have reached the end of an economic cycle, which was based on trade preferences. As you know we built our economy on preferences in sugar and preferences on textile and clothing. Unfortunately with the sugar reform, and also with the end of the multi-fibre agreement, we are losing these preferences.

So we could not continue as if nothing had happened. And we have a responsibility to prepare the economy to become globally competitive and not to rely on preferences only because, preferences will disappear with liberalisation and with globalisation.

## Consideration for the less fortunate

We have to reinvest and at the same time we have to protect the poor, we have to protect the vulnerable. We’ve reduced duties on over 1,000 products and for the middle-income group. We have removed them from the tax band. We have taken a decision not to increase VAT, because increasing VAT would inflict more harm on the poor people. . We’ve reduced personal tax, which will come down to 15 %. 40,000 out of 72,000 will be removed from the tax net. 26, 000 people will pay less tax, and when the tax rate will be at the flat rate of 15% in three years’ time, people will pay less tax.

In spite of all these cuts, and at the same time we have to reduce the Budget deficit. If we don’t reduce the budget deficit it means that next year we shall have to find more money to service the debt in terms of interest, in terms of capital and repayment. It’s like running a home, if a couple owe lots of money, and if they continue to live beyond their means, they will have to find more money to service these debts. This is a vicious circle.

So we have to bring down the deficit, which means containing expenditure while raising some revenue without affecting the poor. Without affecting the poor means that we have to get some money from the people who have the ability to pay especially those who abuse the system.

## Abuse of Government land

It is not fair that people are paying only Rs1,000 to the Government and for the long-term lease of State land by the sea. The leaseholders sell the lease for millions of rupees while the Government receives nothing from the sale. So, according to new legislation, the leaseholders will have two options: to carry on with the current lease at market value or to surrender the land to Government on expiry of the lease. Government will auction the land off to the highest bidder. The money raised will be used to help the poor, to be invested in education and healthcare. There is nothing unfair about that.

There have been lots of abuse in the use of these ‘Pas Géométrique’. Leaseholders are allowed to build only one seaside bungalow on the land, but many have constructed several bungalows which for sale. Yet again, the leaseholders are making money at the expense of the Government. So, through the new legislation affecting pas Géométrique, ii is in order for Government to mobilise resources from those who have the ability to pay. This money will be used for good causes.

## The National Property Tax

Tax on property is a fair tax. We do not have a land database to apply a tax based on the value of the property. Most countries have a property register, a cadastre as we call it, indicating the value of a property on which the tax is based. This is what will basically happen in Mauritius in the long term, but it will take at least five years in order to create that database. Even in the towns where there is a register, the authorities are behind by seven years, which means that the value of the

property has not been updated for that long. In many cases, new houses built in these areas are not paying any tax as we are so far behind in the record keeping.

In the absence of an appropriate national register we have introduced an assessment based on income with a threshold of Rs215,000 per year. Those with an income below that threshold will not have to pay the property tax. So it is a tax based on the ability to pay. Only 10% of the 330,000 property owners in Mauritius will pay the property tax, i.e. 33,000 owners will pay. Those who pay the local municipal tax will be able to deduct the municipal tax from the new national Property Tax.

## Budget of reforms

We have taken a decision to introduce several reforms, reform on taxation, reform on labour market, the reform on opening up the economy, while keeping in focus our responsibility to protect the poor, We had to find a tax that would us to do so.

The abolition of the subsidy on Rice and flour has a simple explanation. We have been granting a general subsidy on the commodities. According to our calculation, 50% of the subsidy was being enjoyed by people who do not deserve it. Even tourists benefit from it especially as regards subsidy on flour to make bead. With the abolition of subsidy on the two commodities 120,000 Mauritian families will receive full Income Support plus a 15% premium.

The savings on subsidies abolition will be injected in an empowerment programme to help the poor integrate the new economy. Many Mauritians have lost their jobs and are still unemployed the empowerment programme will enable 20,000 people over a period of five years to receive training with a stipend of Rs3,000 per month for 12 months. By the time they are trained these people will hopefully integrate he economy.

Still to empower the underprivileged, we are constructing five tourist villages, which will provide employment to the poor of the locality. We are setting up nine SME (Small, Medium Enterprise Villages) with the poor in mind to become entrepreneurs. We have a special programme for women. It can be seen that much of the revenue from the Budget will go to the poor people.

## Government’s commitment

This 2006-07 Budget is a *Budget de rupture* as we call it. A break from the past. We are trying to lay the foundation for an economy that is going to be globally competitive, where people will get jobs and where the wages will be high. We are opening up the economy, we have opened up the economy to foreign investment, to foreign talents and skills, we have opened up access to markets. So basically, we are telling the population that it’s easy to do business now. We want to be among the ten best countries of the world as far as the ease of doing business is concerned. I think we rank 28th now.

It used to take 45 days, if you were lucky, to start a business in Mauritius. You can now do it in three days. It used to be extremely difficult for foreigners, even though they bring their money to us, to get a work permit, a resident permit or an occupational permit. We have made it very easy to do business now. Furthermore, we’ve reduced corporate tax for people who are going to invest,

We have to be honest in life, everyone accepts the necessity to change. However when change affects them, they start asking questions and they start moaning. In fact, what we have seen is a lot of emotional outburst on a few issues and on the difficulties that we face. We realise that some prices have increased. So, people are feeling the pain now but the benefits will come in two years’ time. If we had done nothing, it would have been the sure way to economic hell. This is one sure conviction, doing nothing was not an option. To continue on the same path as before would have been the quickest way to disaster.

It is a very bold and very imaginative Budget. The reforms will get the expected results in two years’ time. The most important policy is to create jobs, and let me say it very clearly, the best antidote to poverty is to create sustainable and gainful employment opportunities for people, to make sure that people get jobs where the wages are decent. This is what this Budget purports to do. We need to create wealth before we can distribute it. Some people want us to distribute wealth when there is no wealth. So, we need to create that wealth and this is what this Budget will do.”

# Race Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)

## Racial integration needed in Police and Security services

In a speech delivered to the Social Policy Forum at the Government Office in London, CRE Chair Trevor Phillips said that current race legislation should change to make the police and security forces fit for purpose by increasing the levels of Muslims in their teams. And that it would be a dreadful irony if our race relations laws became an obstacle to dealing with terrorism more effectively.

Speaking following the recent police operations in Forest Gate, London CRE Chair Trevor Phillips said: “It is clear that something went wrong on this occasion. But it’s not the first time. We’ve seen thousands of British Muslims arrested under anti-terror legislation. Virtually all of them released without charge.”

“It is remarkable that in spite of the number of arrests of British Asians under these new laws these communities remain so calm and so determined to work with the police. It is a clear demonstration that British Muslim communities are as alive to the threat of terrorism in our midst as anyone else, and as committed to tackling it. Lack of understanding and unrepresentative security forces will lead to a continued catalogue of errors.”

Trevor Phillips stressed “We cannot take it for granted that British Muslims will put up with being searched, investigated and dragged out of their homes for ever. So we need to ask if we have the capacity within our current security and police forces to respond to the threat of terrorism without further inflaming community relations by unnecessary tactical blunders?

“We know that the police and the security services have to do their job with the information they have, and on the basis of the best assessment they can make. But they themselves say that they feel handicapped by the lack of diversity in their ranks. They can consult community leaders but that isn’t the same as having your own, highly trained professional officers from a range of backgrounds involved from the outset. To take a simple example, I would guess that any Muslim officer discovering £38,000 would be unlikely to read this as the proceeds of some nefarious activity. Their first thought would be the innocent - and far more likely - explanation that this is a family that hasn’t yet found a bank account that would comply with Muslim practice.”

“From the security services’ point of view, to put it crudely, if you don’t have Muslim officers to put into surveillance cars, you can give up any hope of doing covert operations in some areas. And that means that you are flying blind in operations - endangering officers and the public. That’s where things go wrong. And every time an operation like this goes wrong it further alienates communities who want to help in the fight against terrorism”.

Trevor Phillips stressed that race relations legislation is hindering the process of diversifying police and security forces. “In the end, this is not just a matter of fairness - it is now an issue of national security. To get it right you have to have the right people in the room before you plan an operation - and if everyone in the room is white, you’ve got it wrong.”

Security and police managers know this already. There has been a great deal of effort to solve this problem. Both police and security services have put money and thought into speeding up the recruitment of staff from all backgrounds. And they’ve focused within that on recruiting more ethnic minority staff. They tell us that good capable people are coming forward and things are changing. They are making security services and police more integrated every year.

“But here’s the problem. The change isn’t keeping up with the growing need. Given that they can only recruit a limited number of staff each year, in order to accelerate that process of integration, they would have to recruit ethnic minority operatives in greater proportions than whites - and they then run the risk of falling foul of the Race Relations Acts. It is more important now than ever if the security services and police are to be fit for purpose. Terrorist bombs in a tube or a restaurant makes no distinctions of faith or religion. It would be a dreadful irony if our race relations laws became an obstacle to dealing with terrorism more effectively.”

“I don’t think it can be right that we have drifted into a situation where the CRE has to stand in the way of moderate measures to increase diversity in the police force - something which Scarman recommended twenty-five years ago, Macpherson more recently, and the Chief Police Officers are desperate to do so they can do their job better.”

“We’ve seen this problem before. In Northern Ireland, in order to integrate the new Police Service there the law had to be changed to allow the PSNI to recruit half of all its new recruits from the Catholic community. As a result, the Catholic contribution to the PSNI has increased significantly and this has changed both how that service treats Catholics and how it is treated by Catholics. I can’t say for certain whether I think we should go down this road; and if we do how exactly we’d do it. But I do know that we have to debate such measures if we are going to avoid the spectre of a mainly white security and justice apparatus policing increasingly aggrieved and hostile black and Asian communities”.

## Curry industry transforming British culture

At the Bangladesh Caterers Night (Radisson SAS Portman Hotel in London). Keith Best, Immigration Advisory Service (IAS) Chief Executive, received the Bangladesh Caterers Association’s BCA Honour Award in recognition of his valuable contributions to the Bangladeshi Curry Industry in the UK.

Keith Best praised the curry industry for having transformed British culture: the British went to Bengal with guns and bullets and the Bengalis returned with something far more enduring and life changing curry. Your contribution to the UK economy, culture and way of life is enormous and irreversible, he said. It is a pity that more people do not understand that.

The Government must be sensitive to the needs of this industry and allow caterers to recruit those whom they require. Government should not interfere in the legitimate needs of British businesses. Caterers have thousands of vacancies for kitchen-porters which they cannot fill from within the UK or EU they need people who understand the workings and language of a Bengali kitchen. This constitutes a real threat to the continuance of curry restaurants throughout the UK.

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## Examination Success

Warm congratulations to newly-qualified Dr Log Murugesan.  
(MB ChB - University of Manchester).

He is the son of Mr & Mrs Kumaresan Murugesan of Quatre-Bornes  
With love from all friends and family.



# Titbits from Mauritius

by Ahmad Macky

## Aapravasi Ghat: World Heritage

The Aapravasi Ghat has, as from now on, the same status as the Taj Mahal, the pyramids of Egypt, the Statue of Liberty, or the Great Wall of China.

Formerly known as Coolie Gate, the Aapravasi Ghat, has been, since Wednesday, July 2, 2006 inscribed on the list of world cultural heritage.

The decision was taken by World Cultural Heritage committee composed of representatives of 21 countries, signatories to the World Cultural Heritage Convention. Mauritius has been a signatory to this convention since October 2005.

The news was communicated by the executive secretary-general of UNESCO, Armoogum Parsooramen. Mr Parsooramen said: "this inscription of the Aapravasi Ghat on the list of (UNESCO's) World Cultural Heritage is a matter of great prestige for Mauritius."

## Trade Unions Common Platforms (YUCP) maintains strike option

Some 1,500 trade union delegates met at the Auditorium of the University of Mauritius on Thursday July 13 to decide whether to go on a general strike, a civil disobedience or another form of protest against government policy towards workers.

The delegates, united under the banner of the Trade Unions Common Platforms (TUCP), have consecutively heard certain trade-unionists enumerating the many reasons why they should call the government to order: non-respect of their political manifesto, loss of jobs in the civil service and Mauritians losing their purchasing power day by day.

The delegates have, in a letter, enumerated 15 reasons why they are protesting against what they call the dictatorial methods adopted in relation to the annual salary compensation ( Rs 135.00) and the 2006/2007 Budget.

## Terror squad strikes again

The country was shocked to learn of the existence of an organized crime gang operating with impunity and the resurgence of a death squad. People fear that the law and order situation is deteriorating day by day. Crimes are on the increase.

The number of serious crimes reported in June 2006 in Mauritius, excluding Rodrigues, stood at 902 an increase of around 26%. Children ranging from 2 to 15 yrs old are being raped. Homicides and sexual crime against women and children are quite common every where. The police are becoming inefficient and are not enforcing the law at all which is what over 75% of the population is saying.

## War against the national residential property tax

Thousands of people and many opposition members of Parliament have decided to wage war against the National Residential Property Tax (NRPT) as announced in 2006/2007 Budget.

The people find that the NRPT is an unjust, immoral, vile and unconstitutional tax that will destroy the middle class. How can the government impose a tax on properties that have been acquired after so much sacrifice.

Tension is mounting in Mauritius where a social explosion is bound to happen especially after price rises of various goods in the super-markets. Subsidies on flour and ration rice have been removed and this has led to a general revolt, with the public. The Opposition is saying that these home owners will soon revolt everywhere in the streets and other public places.

## Illegal betting scandal

The names of top personalities in the country involved in illegal credit betting appear on a confidential list which is kept by a prominent bookmaker on a CD-ROM. The CD is now in the possession of the police. The bookmaker is on bail while investigation goes on.

The names include, it is alleged, those of four Ministers, eminent members of the judiciary and the legal profession, three Private Parliamentary Secretaries, eminent doctors, Members of Parliament, both from the Government and Opposition sides.

However, officials refuse to give any name. They say the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) is carrying out an in-depth investigation. The names of suspects are in code forms on the CDs and subsequently police is trying to identify them through their phone numbers.

## Prisons new boss

Mr L.Vijayanarainen has been chosen to succeed Bill Duff as the new Commissioner for the Mauritius Prisons. Mr Vijayanarainen was the closest aide to Bill Duff, Government adviser on prison affairs.

The appointment was announced by the Prime Minister in the National Assembly following a question from an opposition MP. The Prime Minister added that Mr Vijayanarainen was chosen by the Public Service Commission after publication of a national and international vacancy advertisement. He also added that three candidates were interviewed before the final choice was made.

## Plastic bags

The Institute for Consumer Protection (ICP) urges consumers not to pay 15 cents VAT on plastic carrier bags and PET bottles.

Hypermarkets and shop keepers around the island have been claiming Rs 1.15 on plastic carrier bags, which were formerly freely distributed. The sum asked represents a levy of One Rupee imposed by government in order to discourage consumers to use plastic bags to protect the environment. Traders have added 15 cents claiming to represent VAT. ICP says that there cannot be VAT on a One Rupee tax.

## Mauritian woman and daughter found dead in France

A woman known as Doornik, aged 32, and her daughter, Chana, aged 5, were found dead by a warden in their Aubervilliers apartment in France last month.

The warden noticed that there were flies on their balcony. The shutters were closed, except for one in the kitchen. Finding this odd, he alerted the fire brigade, who made the terrible discovery.

The post mortem examination on the mother and daughter revealed that they had both died of malnutrition. The medical examiner declared the time of death ranging from anything between one month to four.

# News from Mauritius

## Mauritius seeks help from abroad to combat crime

Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam has recognised there are many problems facing society on the island.

Speaking at the 67th congress of the Labour Party, at the auditorium of Swami Vivekananda Centre, at Pailles, near Port-Louis, he said he would not have pity for criminals, and has asked for help from friendly countries like India, France and the United States to combat crime on the island.

Speaking on his first year in power, Ramgoolam said his government has initiated a policy of transformation of society to be able to face the challenges on the economic front.

He was happy that out of ten pledges; transport for students and the elderly, old age pension for all, abolition of Income Tax for people earning less than Rs 25 000 monthly and free health care has been implemented. Aid to Small And Medium Enterprises, control of public funds and meritocracy with the introduction of an Equal Opportunities Act have also been achieved.

## New legislation against sexual aggression

The government will soon introduce a new legislation with a view to impose a severe prison sentence varying between 20 and 30 years for sexual aggression.

This follows numerous cases of sexual aggression that have occurred in the island since the beginning of the year. Several women and little girls have been sexually assaulted during the past months.

According to the new legislation, anybody who commits an illegal sexual act of any nature and by any means on another person by using violence, menaces and deceit will be guilty of rape and liable to a maximum of 20 years imprisonment.

This sentence will be extended to a maximum of 30 years if the offence has given rise to mutilation or to permanent disability, or if it has been committed on a person less than 16 years of age or committed with the help of another person, or if the assault has been committed by using violence with arms, etc.

The new legislation will not consider the application of the Community Service Order to people found guilty of rape, sexual aggression, rape of a mental patient or of a child less than twelve years of age.

For its part, the Health Ministry has set up a special unit in all the five regional hospitals to treat urgent cases of sexual aggression. The victim is taken care of immediately upon arrival and children are examined in the presence of their mother or female relatives. All the victims are taken care of by a doctor, a psychologist, a gynaecologist and a social health worker.

## Gas, rice, flour bread and cement prices go up

The price of petrol went up by 30% on July 3 while that of gas, rice, bread and flour by 22% and cement by 10.3%.

An official announcement said that the price of bread (pain maison) was raised from Rs 1.75 to Rs 2.15, half-a kilo of flour from Rs 3.75 to Rs 5.30, half a kilo of rice (ration) from Rs 3.50 to Rs 5.40, the 12-kg cylinder of cooking gas from Rs 275 to Rs 300, cement cost Rs 150 as compared to Rs 135 earlier.

## Mauritius strengthens drink-drive legislation

The Parliament has voted a revised legislation calling for the immediate suspension of the driving licence of any driver who causes the death of a person while driving in a drunken state or suspected of having an alcohol rate in the blood which exceeds the limits prescribed by 100%.

Introducing the legislation, Land Transport Minister Rashid Beebeejaun warned of the dangers of drink driving or being under the effect of any drug.

He said that out of a total of 2,863 alcohol tests done between January and December 2004, 1,076 drivers or 37.6% of the total, had an alcohol level above the authorised limit in their blood.

"This tendency rose in 2005 when the rate of driving in a drunken state reached 40%. This year between January and June last, 362 out of 858 drivers tested were driving in a drunken state", he deplored.

Beebeejaun said if the new revised legislation was in force at least 376 drivers would have had their driving licence suspended in 2005 and 77 up to March 2006.

According to him, there is a link between road accidents and alcohol in 2004, 176 drivers were tested positive out of a total of 251 road accidents. The legislation provides for more severe penalties against drivers who do not have car insurance.

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## Mobile phone and Internet television launched in Mauritius

Mobile Phone Television has become a reality in Mauritius, after the signing of an agreement between Emtel, service provider of cell-phones, MC Vision, distributor of foreign TV channels in the island and the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC).

According to Emtel, this new service will enable subscribers who possess the 3G technology to receive 10 channels, including three from the MBC, RTL9, Planète Choc, MCM Pop, Voyage, L'Equipe, Euro news and Trace TV on their mobile phones. The programs can be viewed directly, without any need for downloading.

Mauritius Telecom launched the ADSL television on July 12, giving access to TV channels of numeric quality, films on demand, international calling at reduced tariffs and an Internet connection at 256 Mbps.

At the launching ceremony, Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam said this was a giant step in the modernisation of the audiovisual landscape and telecommunications in the country.

"Mauritius Telecom has put at our disposal the latest technology in the field. It is now for the professionals and entrepreneurs to ensure that this tool is utilised to its full capacity in the transformation of the Mauritian society", he said.

Ramgoolam added that the future of the island resides in the capacity of the population to innovate. He indicated that the government would promote a favourable environment for innovation by encouraging enterprises to try out new technologies so as to remain competitive in the world market.

A new Multiplay-Internet Protocol Television Services of Mauritius Telecom was also launched on July 11, at Ebène. Ramgoolam also said that Mauritius should unlock the potential of the ICT sector which is expected to play an important role in job creation. "One of the critical success factors to transform our country into a wireless nation is to have a high level of ICT literacy and a large panel of ICT professionals", the Prime Minister emphasized.

## Ramgoolam concerned about increasing threat of paedophilia on the Internet

Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam told Parliament last month that the government was concerned with the increasing threat of paedophilia on the Internet.

He underlined the urgent need for a comprehensive policy on child protection on the Internet in Mauritius, and for the setting-up of an appropriate legislative framework for child safety online as a priority.

He said that a new Child Protection Act, which would address in a more vigorous way the problems posed by the Internet to children, was being finalised.

Ramgoolam recalled that the Child Protection Act should make it an offence to make or distribute indecent photographs of children. Besides, the Information and Communications Technologies Act 2001 also makes it an offence to transmit or receive a message which is grossly offensive, or of an indecent or obscene character.

"With the rapid development of technology, it has become very important to protect children from indecency, obscenity, pornography and paedophilia on the net", the Prime Minister said.

He indicated that awareness programmes would be conducted in schools to guide children who surf the Internet. Furthermore, he underscored the importance of parental vigilance to prevent children from having access to unwanted images and sites.

## Aapravasi Ghat inscribed to the World Heritage List



Visitors to the Aapravasi Ghat

The World Heritage Committee has inscribed the Aapravasi Ghat to the UNESCO World Heritage List during its 30th session which took place in Vilnius, capital of Lithuania, on July 12 and 13.

Aapravasi Ghat, situated in Port Louis, is a set of stone steps (from the sea) leading to the gate near Immigration Square in Port Louis, where the first and subsequent indentured labourers shipped from India in the 1830s, landed and entered Mauritius for the first time. In 1834, the British Government selected the island of Mauritius as the first site for what it called 'the great experiment' in the use of 'free' labour to replace the emancipated slaves.

The Aapravasi Ghat (previously referred to as the Coolie Gate) is among the earliest explicit manifestations of what was to become a global economic system and one of the greatest migrations in history.

The Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (Amendment) Bill has been introduced in the National Assembly to make better provision to enable the Fund to raise Aapravasi Ghat to the status of a regional and international heritage site; administer, manage, promote and maintain the site; set up interpretation centres; and create capacity building, and provide training in accordance with its objectives.



Environment:

Mauritius to back International efforts to save world’s top sites from Climate Change

Mauritius with 21 members of the World Heritage Committee has been urged by an International coalition of lawyers and environmentalists to back moves to protect some of the world’s most outstanding natural sites.

As a member of the World Heritage Committee, Mauritius will be discussing what action to take in protecting the five World Heritage sites currently under threat from climate change. These sites include; Mount Everest (glaciers), the Peruvian Andes (glaciers), US and Canadian glaciers, the Great Barrier and Belize Barrier (coral) Reefs.

In relation to the glaciers, global warming has led to the retreat of 67% of Himalayan glaciers and several lakes are at risk of outburst flooding. Continued melting will increase summer river flows over a few decades. Increased flood frequency, poses a major threat to the agriculture in these areas. The recent warming temperature has caused the glaciers to retreat at an accelerating pace. At the current rate of global warming, these glaciers are expected to vanish by 2030, leading to substantial changes in the ecosystem.

The Co-Director of the Climate Justice Programme, Peter Roderick, said: “The dangers are clear, and the main cause is known. The Committee has a clear duty to protect these sites.”

As sea temperatures rise, the Great Barrier Reef (the world’s longest barrier reef) and the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System have resulted in coral bleaching. Thermal stress on the coral is expected to be 3-5 times higher in 2050, therefore killing all the living coral. This increase will occur due to warmer waters, hurricanes and the expanding tourism industry.

Friends of the Earth International’s climate campaigner, Catherine Pearce Said: “Climate change is already having a terrible impact on some of the world’s most spectacular natural heritage sites. But the World Heritage Committee can play a crucial role in trying to protect these sites for future generations. It must pledge immediate action to try and mitigate the threat these sites face, and make it clear to the international community that cuts in carbon dioxide emissions are urgently needed.”

Mauritius to reconstruct the habitat of the Dodo

Research works are being carried out on a site at Mare-aux-Songes, in the south of the island, to find the remains of the Dodo that has been extinct for the last three centuries.

The purpose of this operation is to reconstruct the habitat of the Dodo and to understand the causes of its extinction.

This initiative from the Dodo Research Programme follows the discovery, during excavation works in 2005 at Vieux-Grand-Port, in the south of the island, of bones belonging to the dodo and to tortoises. The bones were sent to the Netherlands and England for DNA tests, so as to determine the dates of the existence of these bones.

Dr Kenneth Rijdsdijk, from the National Institute of Natural History of the Netherlands said: “These works will teach us the life of the dodo, which is unknown until now. We’ll learn about the environment and the ecology that existed before the coming of humans to Mauritius and how the evolution of the dodo and of other animals and plants took place on the island. We’ll also learn about the protection of endemic plants and animals in other parts of the island and in the world.”

Père Laval Association (UK) Annual Père Laval Mass

Venue: St George’s Cathedral Westminster Bridge Road Southwark London SE1 (By the War Museum)

Date: Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2006 Time: 3.00pm (please be in church by 2.45pm) Social: Social gathering in Amigo Hall (next to the cathedral) after Mass

Drinks and Mauritian snacks will be on sale

The mass will be concelebrated by: The most Rev. Maurice Couve de Murville Archbishop Emeritus of Birmingham

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Da Vinci Code creates a stir

The Catholic Church in Mauritius has launched a national campaign amongst its faithful to explain its stand on the forthcoming premiere of Ron Howards’ film based on the novel written by Dan Brown.

The film is rated 18R by the Board of film censors. In a press communiqué the diocese of Port Louis underlines that Father Sullivan is campaigning through debates and private meetings.

A text written by Danielle Florigny, director of the Catholic Institute of Mauritius, is being circulated for comments as well as other explanations given on the websites of the diocese.

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LEVENES SOLICITORS

Empowerment Programme gets underway

By Santaram Santok



The Empowerment Programme as announced by the Minister of Finance during his recent 2006-2007 budget speech has started to see the light of day.

A Steering Committee, (Implementation Team) has already been set up by the government to concretise all the objectives of the Programme. The Empowerment Programme will undertake seven critical activities including provision of land for social housing and for small entrepreneurs, a workfare programme emphasising training and re-skilling, special programmes for unemployed women, tourist villages, assistance for outsourcing and support for development of new entrepreneurs and Small and Medium Enterprises.

The Programme is meant to facilitate the transition from sugar, textiles and other activities hit by shocks, so that those affected are not left out economically or socially. However, the government has been quick to point out that the Programme is not meant to create jobs for the unemployed or to set up businesses. The aim is to fight poverty, democratise the economy and to develop the necessary competence to meet to new challenges of economic development. The Programme will have a life span of five years and has a project value of Rs 5 billion with Rs 750 million being allocated in its first year to kick it off.

The rich and poor divide

All this seems to indicate that certain crisis can be scripted in advance and it takes politicians to initiate the necessary adjustments. Every government has made pledges about reducing poverty whilst in office; the gap between the rich and the poor has only been widening and getting deeper and deeper. The government does not want a Mauritius where the nation is increasingly dependent on government patronage and expenditure. The Prime Minister

has asked for a complete change of mindset to cope with the threat of globalisation and the economic challenges facing the country.

However, there is one mindset of politicians that has remained the same for decades. Governments are still diagnosing the same problem of poverty and are spelling out the same prognosis - they will reduce poverty and make the lives of people better. But sadly, the problem remains, and is a living testimony that empty promises do not deliver change. With the inflation rate reaching nearly 8 per cent and the unemployment rate soon exceeding 10 per cent, the government needs to make sure its ambitious Empowerment Programme, given its heavy investment succeeds.

The expectations of those targeted, under the Programme are likely to outweigh the ambitions of the government. The fate of the government’s re-election will also hinge on the success of the Programme and failure will be seen as a betrayal of the mandate given to the Labour-led coalition by the electorate last year.

Sizeable progress expected

The government needs to achieve its goal of sustainable empowerment by promoting and supporting economic activity by incorporating the historically disadvantaged Mauritian into the economic mainstream. But will this initiative spell freedom for those caught in the vicious cycle of poverty? Can re-dressing economic inequalities and giving greater ownership and control over the economy to the deprived be effective empowerment? Will the government succeed in eradicating basic poverty and in organising welfare benefits in such a way that quality of life increases for the entire population? Common sense dictates that if all these resources and political will are being deployed into empowering people, then sizeable progress can be

expected.

Pro-Poor Government

There is no doubt that the government is striving for economic growth. But, traditionally economic growth is notorious for having increased inequalities. Ironically, some might argue that lack of economic growth can be a major cause of poverty. Increased economic growth along with balanced public spending on education, health, law and order are recommended as necessary to reduce poverty. Empowerment is said to make the government ‘pro-poor’ but for this to happen there has to be redistribution of resources whether they are in cash, in kind, in services or in terms of power.

The government should also condemn its underperforming and bureaucratic state institutions that are also often perceived as being plagued with corruption. To empower the poor, the key issue is to find ways of creating synergies between civic and state institutions. Emphasis should also be laid on good governance, equality and legal rights as mechanisms of empowerment.

Herculean task ahead

Empowerment raises a whole set of questions, some of an economic nature, some of a political nature and some of an ethical nature. The government faces an Herculean task ahead in terms of reducing poverty and giving people greater ownership and control over the economy. However, for now, it needs to convince its antagonists that the strategies of empowerment outlined are efficient and achievable. To some these might sound like promises so easily made and in the case of politicians, so easily repeated, refined, adapted and diluted but very rarely kept. Five years from now, can we look back on the launch of the Empowerment Programme as a defining moment in the country’s economic and political history? We shall have to wait and see!

Santaram Santok is a Barrister-at-Law and a Certified Fraud Examiner



15<sup>ème</sup> recueil de Khal Torabully, édité en Guadeloupe.

Arbres et anabase

(Finaliste Prix de Poésie du Salon International du Livre Insulaire et du Prix Médiatropical, Paris)

de nos correspondants Gilles Berger et Lena Goel (Paris)



Khal Torabully et Christophe Malherbe, Directeur de la maison d'édition littéraire Ibis Rouge, au Salon du Livre de Paris

Le titre de l'ouvrage, *Arbres et anabase* (1) (*a n a b a s e* : littéralement, marche vers le haut) est un évident clin d'œil à la poésie d'un autre insulaire comme Khal Torabully, Alexis Saint Léger, plus connu sous le nom de Saint John Perse (SJP), Prix Nobel de

l'astronome et la beauté d'un lieu de sépultures... (Saint John Perse, *Anabase* 111-113). Le poète qui trouve ici un accent renouvelé, car il choisit d'éviter que ses poèmes soient répétition formelle ou prosodique *ad nauseam*, après avoir travaillé le rythme césairien dans un autre texte écrit dans l'univers caribéen (3), investit une cadence « créole » du poète guadeloupéen, à savoir « la hachure des rythmes » et « ces précieux listages d'*Anabase* »... par quoi le réel est tramé en étendue, récusant toute fausse profondeur », pour reprendre les termes de Mary Gallagher, parlant de la créolité du poète diplomate. On y décèle aussi, dans cette veine, la trame de la langue créole qui insiste, le recours aux détours linguistiques, étymologiques, cette poétique « d'enrobage et de dérobage » avec l'attention soutenue dans l'intention signifiante, ouvrant la mise en relation entre espaces et mémoires vers l'illimité.

*Arbres et anabase* tient donc toutes ses promesses. Force est de constater que cette poésie toraballienne, emplie d'échos, d'images fortes de la terre, de réminiscences de disparus, de cris de dugongs, est emplie de sensualité, mettant les sens du lecteur en éveil, rendant au poème sa vocation profonde de chanter la vie dans ses raccourcis les plus inattendus.

Rappelons que ce livre a été sélectionné pour le Prix du Salon du Livre Insulaire 2005, et qu'il continue bien cette puissante écriture empreinte de la «souveraine précision poétique» que Raphael Confiant avait souligné dans l'écriture de celui qu'il qualifie de «plus grand poète de la créolité ».

INÉDIT

En primeur, Khal Torabully, ému par le cyclone Katrina, qui frappa Louisiana l'année dernière, a accepté de livrer aux lecteurs de Mauritius News un extrait de,

«Words in the eyes of the cyclone», long poème en anglais::

O mama America  
why is the toll so high  
between Senegal and Louisiana?

Rita, warming up  
Like a bereft planet,  
Rushing to miseries.

It's you who told us  
to go beyond the wind,  
in the eye of Katrina,  
o mama America.

And more cries from the  
Mississippi River,  
O blues for more wind,  
Blues for more tears,  
Blues for all...  
Words in the eye of the  
cyclone».

And the Eye is here,  
like the Ultimate Word.  
America, every cyclone  
bears the name of your daughter:

Notes:

- (1) *Arbres et Anabase*, Ibis rouge éditions, Matoury, Guadeloupe, 2005, 110 p.
- (2) Philosophe et écrivaine, préfacière du précédent recueil de Torabully, *Mes Afriques, mes ivoires*. Madame Boni a reçu le Prix de la Liberté, Berlin 2005, Prix Ahmadou Kourouma, 2005, Genève.
- (3) *Chair corail, fragments coolies* (préface de R. Confiant, Prix du Salon International du Livre Insulaire 2000).

Fête Nationale Malgache, pas pour tout le Monde



Manifestation devant l'Ambassade de Madagascar à Paris

Libérez Julienne Larcher, tel était le slogan scandé par les manifestants devant les grilles de l'Ambassade de Madagascar à Paris, lors de la réception à leur résidence organisée par Son Excellence M. l'Ambassadeur Jean-Pierre Razafy-Andria Mihaingo et son épouse à l'occasion de la célébration de la fête nationale. En effet, il y a un an depuis le 18 Août 2005, que Julienne Laecher, une Française de 67 ans, a été placée en détention à la prison centrale d'Antananarivo à Madagascar. Que

reproche-t-on à Julienne Larcher? Elle a été suspectée par la justice malgache de «détournement d'enfants et recel d'enfants mineurs». Elle est soupçonnée d'appartenir à un réseau de trafic d'enfants sous couvert d'adoption internationale. Le gouvernement malgache veut délivrer, par cet exemple, un message clair à celles et ceux qui, sous couvert d'actions humanitaires, aussi louables soient-elles, se livrent sur son sol au trafic de ses enfants

Birthday Greetings



Congratulations and Best wishes to Tayvanie Nagendran of Woodford, Essex, who celebrated her 21st birthday on July 21..

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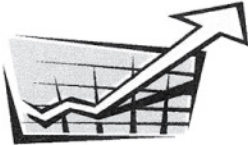
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Thought for the month

The dawn of the 21st century was hailed as  
the Century of Peace.

Yet, the killing still goes on in the animal  
kingdom!

P.C.

National lottery results  
for July 2006

Wed 26: 7 - 17 -27 -30 -3 3- 39-6  
Sat 22: 20 -22 -23 -26 -31 -47 -2  
Wed 19: 4 -21 -25 -37 -45 -46 -6  
Sat 15: 6-12-19-20-38-39-13  
Wed 12: 18-20-26-27-28-39-45  
Sat 08: 6- 10- 19- 29- 32- 42- 13  
Wed 05: 7- 17- 29- 33- 42- 45- 24  
Sat 01: 18- 28- 33- 37- 39- 45- 15

Euro Millions (Every Friday)

Fri 21: 2- 4- 9- 38- 50- (6- 8)  
Fri 14: 1- 7- 17- 31- 36- (2- 8)  
Fri 07: 7- 9- 18- 35- 43- (5-7)

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



News from Australia

Australia opens its doors wider to Asian Migrants



By Eddy Abraham  
Melbourne, Australia

Far from the ‘White’ Australia Policy that has been in place for many years of immigration, the country is now welcoming settlers from Asia in higher numbers.

Out of the top ten migrant source countries for Victoria, Australia, seven are Asian, including China, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Vietnam.

It is also reported that the influx to Victoria is from India, with almost 2,000 arriving between July and December last year. At least 10 per cent of Melbourne population is Asian-born.

The figures are from the Federal Government report, Immigration update July-December 2005.

According to Monash University demographer Dr Bob Birrell, the increase in Indian migration is due to a special skilled visa category, which allows Melbournians to sponsor overseas relatives.

Rama Vaddiraju who works in a Melbourne Café said, “I like the city, the good lifestyle and there are many people from my home city of Hyderabad.”

With so many immigrants from around the globe now calling Australia home, it is not surprising that the country has embraced multiculturalism.

The Taj Exotica Resort & Spa

Australian tourists encouraged to holiday in Mauritius



Jennifer Hawkins, Miss Universe 2004, spent some time in Mauritius, filming for a Channel 7 Travel programme for Australian TV called *The Great Outdoors*. It showcased the Taj Exotica Resort & Spa in Mauritius. The show, which attracted a wide audience in Australia, profiles worldwide destinations in the programme titled ‘Escape Winter with the best deal ever-Bargain holidays in the Sun.’

The Taj Exotica Resort & Spa opened in November 2004, as a luxurious haven of solitude. It is located at Wolmar Beach, Flic en Flac. The resort is spread across 27 acres with its own beachfront. It is now a member of the Great Hotels of the World.

Overlooking the blue waters of Tamarin Bay, Taj Exotica Resort & Spa is an all villa resort with interiors inspired by French Colonial, Indian, African and Arabic influences giving it a unique character and flair. This luxurious and tranquil resort offers 65 villas, providing the utmost privacy. Each villa offers a breathtaking view and comes with its very own swimming pool, al-fresco dining options and personalized service.

Guests can choose from the all day casual dining restaurant serving Continental, Creole and Mediterranean delicacies or the specialty restaurant which provides an intimate dining experience, offering Pan Asian cuisine and the rich flavours of India. For guests who would like to relax over a drink or a pre-dinner aperitif, the Lounge Bar offers a wide selection of wines in an exotic and intimate setting.

Another tempting feature at the resort is its top of the range Spa that offers signature Indian treatments including ‘Ayurveda’ and other western techniques to pamper the senses. The spa also features a Yoga Pavilion, with regular sessions conducted by trained instructors and healers.

Making the holiday experience complete are the special facilities including the fully equipped sports center, tennis courts, water sports and a large swimming pool. The Taj Exotica Resort & Spa is also an ideal destination for families. Apart

from the various facility and services on offer, the resort provides a special Kids Area complete with amenities to enhance a young traveller’s holiday.

Jennifer introduced the segment by saying, “Sit back, relax, The Taj Exotica-Mauritius is just waiting to indulge you.” And indeed indulge she did. She was filmed hopping into a golf buggy to tour the hotel gardens, with manicured lawns, stopping at every outdoor attraction. Inside, the first mention was for the Presidential Suite of the hotel. “Oh yes, this is top of the range. I like it”, she said, whilst describing the luxurious room.

It did not take long for Jennifer to find a boutique and to start talking about shopping. She was seen trying some fashion earrings. She described the hotel as 5-star service and 5-star dining.” You just ask and you shall receive”, she said after requesting a table right on the beach, where she was filmed savouring King prawns and drinking a glass of wine.

Jennifer was also seen being served breakfast. “Not only do you get breakfast, but you also get served by your own butler. Did you hear that? Jimmy is my own butler”, she emphasised.

Jennifer talked about the Villas, on which the special deal was being done, for the Australian viewers. Showing the swimming pool, dressed in her blue bikini, Jennifer said,”You don’t have far to go to cool off. You’ve got your very own plunge pool. Yes, a plunge pool in every Villa”. “And look at that, would you? An outside shower”, she exclaimed.

Approaching the Rose petal bath, Jennifer reflected, “Too good to jump in, almost!” And what was the deal she was referring to at the beginning of the segment? A 3-night package, \$1,390 (£569.92) per person, includes breakfast & dinner daily, transfers and petal bath.

An impressive performance by Jennifer Hawkins, singing the praises of The Taj Exotica-Mauritius, amid expert and colourful camera shots of the Hotel and surroundings.

For more information on booking details from the UK, please call: 0800 032 4254 or visit [www.ghotw.com/taj-mauritius](http://www.ghotw.com/taj-mauritius).

Tourism records 3.1% growth

Tourist arrivals increased by 3.1% from January to June 2006 compared to the same period last year, that is a total of 360,137 tourists against 349,311. Figures from the Tourism Ministry showed that the Australian, Italian and Spanish markets were in net progression.

Meanwhile, the figures declined by 0.6% as regards the arrivals in June last. This is due to the net

decrease of arrivals from France, 5,908 tourists against 9,600 during the same period last year. This represents a decrease of 38.5%.

On the other hand, arrivals from Australia increased by 35% in June, Italy (+47.5%), Spain (+25.3%), India (+31.5%), Russia (+33.1%) and South Africa (+20%). A total of 42,755 tourists visited the island in June last as against 42,994 during the same period last year.

Mauritian reminiscences

Anniversary of the closure of The Vagrant Depot of Grand River North West



The guardroom/office and gateway of the Vagrant Depot built between September 1866 and February 1867

This year marks the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closure of the infamous Depot created in 1864 at Grand River North West, Port Louis, to serve as prison for Indian immigrants, among others, found guilty of vagrancy. This edifice together with the Aapravasi Ghat, constitutes major reminders of the long era of Indian indentured labour immigration which spanned from 1834 down to the 1920’s.

The Vagrant Depot “ was opened on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1864” along Pointe-Aux-Sables Road, Grand River North West. It occupied “the premises called the Convict Barracks at Grand River North West” as stipulated in Article 1 of Ordinance No 4 of 1864. The following explains quite simply the circumstances under which an Indian immigrant could be summarily convicted of vagrancy and sent to the Vagrant Depot:

“All Indian Immigrants had to possess an ‘Immigrant Ticket’ (identity card) which was used as a ‘pass’ to enable them to move from one place to another. The ticket had the name of the labourer, his number, his photograph and the address of the sugar estate on which he was working. Those found without the ticket were condemned to hard labour and were sent to the depot.”

**Old immigrants and New immigrants at the Vagrant Depot**

Acting Inspector General of Police, P. MacDonald’s return of the number of vagrants admitted to the Vagrant Depot by region between February 1865 to February 1866, reads thus:

Districts	No. of Vagrants
Pamplemousses	176
Rivière du Rempart	70
Flacq	324
Grand Port	477
Savanne	126
Black River	53
Plaines Wilhems	466
Port Louis	3,256
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,948</b>

P. MacDonald’s return indicated that around 1,485 of the Old immigrants (indentured labourers who had fulfilled their first contract) and 1,452 new immigrants (freshly arrived indentured labourers who were on their first contract) had been sent to the Vagrant Depot for the first time. Furthermore, 427 old immigrants and 417 new immigrants were incarcerated for the second time. There were also 338 Creoles and seven

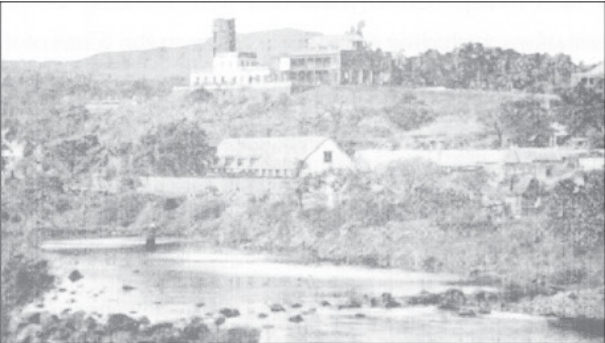
Europeans imprisoned there. Given the success of the new regime under which vagrancy was dealt with, major construction and extension works were carried out at the Vagrant Depot, between January 1865 and December 1867, “at a cost of more than £6,873” including “six large cells... at a cost of some £849”. In between 1864 and 1871, around 40 to 967 vagrants had been incarcerated at the Depot.

**Living and working conditions of the vagrants**

The food list of the prisoners included bread, rice, dholl, salt, pot herbs, greens ‘bredes’, salt fish, oil, fresh meat, coffee, and sugar. They were also supplied with firewood and soap.

Between 1876 and 1879, the vagrants were provided with adequate space for sleeping. By the 1870’s, prisoner accommodation consisted of “one large dormitory capable of accommodating 250 prisoners.” In general, the prisoners were employed on road labour, stone breakers, and various public works. During the first half of the 1880s, the Vagrant Depot had a heterogeneous prison population with individuals from different ethnic groups (Coloureds, Indo-Mauritians, Indians, Africans, all male) and different faiths (Christians, Muslims, Hindus and other faiths).

However, the Vagrant Depot was operational for only a little more than twenty years. It was “closed early in 1886”, as recommended by



On this painting of Froberville showing Grand River North West, the Vagrant Depot is on the extreme right

district magistrate G.C. Mayers Committee appointed in March 1884 to inquire into the condition of district prisons of Mauritius. The report of the Mayers Committee gave the following reasons for the closure of the Vagrant Depot: “...The whole of the Grand River North West is unhealthy but the present Vagrant Depot more so...The Vagrant Depot is one long associated ward...which would not admit of classification and of confirmed vagrants from mere deserters and other minor offenders under the labour law. The Vagrant Depot is besides not a safe place of custody, one side of it being without any wall, so that it is the easiest thing in the world to escape from it.”

The prisoners of the Vagrant Depot were transferred to the Central Prison in Port Louis and replaced some of the prisoners from the Port Louis Prison who were employed on the construction as well as residing in the Beau Bassin prison, itself in the process of being erected. In short, the Vagrant Depot was a cruel parenthesis in the tragic history of Indian indentured immigration to Mauritius.

DODO

National campaign against drugs and alcohol

The Lions Club of Pamplemousses and the Centre d’Accueil de Terre Rouge (CATR), who work in favour of treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts and alcoholics have launched a year-long national campaign to fight drugs and alcohol.

Entitled ‘Drogue et Alcoolisme: Non’, “This campaign comprises information sessions and prevention on the field,” said Alain Béchard, president of CATR.

Brochures are distributed by volunteers who also deliver talks. Victims of drugs and alcohol can also share their experiences with other people.

“At the CATR centre, resident patients work on the restoration of old furniture as per the reinsertion program. We now propose them to repair their lives affected by drugs or alcohol and to take control of their lives”, he added.

Béchard said the caravan would do the rounds of schools to sensitize the students on these problems

which are affecting the youth of Mauritius.

“This proximity campaign will provide a better understanding of the bad effects of drugs and alcohol. Each session will be adapted to the reality of each region visited”, indicated, Jean Francois Rey, animator from CATR.

According to a 2004 report, Rey mentioned, Mauritius has 120, 000 alcoholics on a 1.2 million population and 17,000 drug addicts while the annual consumption of alcohol was about 70 million litres in the island.

Mrs Mita Ballysing-Davidsen, chairperson of the Lions Club of Pamplemousses, called for rapid reaction because of the growing rate of scourges such as the HIV/AIDS, drugs, domestic violence, child abuse and prostitution, which are affecting the country. “Nobody is spared by these problems. When a member of the family is affected, the whole family is attained”, she added.



## **Legal advice column**

## Workplace discrimination and unfair dismissal

*By Aneil Balgobin, Levenes Solicitors*

**In association with Aniel Balgobin from Levenes Solicitors, Mauritius News features this legal advice column to answer any legal queries you may have. Levenes Solicitors specialise in employment law, criminal law, education law, disability law and personal injury claims. If you have a query concerning any aspect of employment law, criminal law, personal injury, education or disability, write to :**

**Aneil Balgobin, Mauritius News Legal Advice Column, Levenes Solicitors, 235-239 High Road, Wood Green, N22 8HF, call: 0800 118 899 or email: [abalgobin@levenes.co.uk](mailto:abalgobin@levenes.co.uk)**

As many of the recent enquiries have been regarding work place discrimination and unfair dismissal I thought I'd write about a recent case involving these areas of employment law.

## Dismissal of BNP Bus Driver Not on 'Racial Grounds'

**The Court of Appeal (Serco Ltd. v Arthur Redfearn) has overturned the decision of the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) that a bus driver who was a member of the British National Party (BNP) was dismissed on racial grounds.**

Mr Redfearn worked for Serco Ltd. as a driver and escort for disabled adults and children in the Bradford area. There had been no complaints about his work or his conduct but in May 2004 an article appeared in a local newspaper identifying him as a candidate for the BNP in forthcoming elections. As a result, the union UNISON wrote to Serco expressing concern, bearing in mind the BNP's political agenda. 70 to 80 per cent of Serco's customers were Asian as was 35 per cent of its workforce. The company also received representations from the GMB union and from employees concerned for their personal safety and that of the company's property in the event of any retaliatory action on account of Mr Redfearn's views.

On 15 June 2004, Mr Redfearn was duly elected as a local councillor for the BNP and was dismissed by Serco on 30 June as the company feared that his continued employment would present a health and safety risk to its employees and passengers. It was also concerned that its reputation might suffer as a result of its association with the BNP with the possible loss of its contract with the council.

Mr Redfearn was not entitled to bring a claim of unfair dismissal because he had not been employed for the requisite 12 months, so he instead brought a claim of discrimination contrary to the Race Relations Act 1976 (RRA).

The Employment Tribunal rejected the claim and so Mr Redfearn appealed to the EAT. He argued that he had been discriminated against on racial grounds as the BNP only has white members and the decision to dismiss him was discriminatory because it had been partly based on the race of the majority of the passengers he carried. Serco argued that Mr Redfearn was not dismissed on grounds of race but on health and safety grounds, arguing that the only relevance to race was that the political views of members of the BNP could provoke strong reactions from those opposed to its policies.

The EAT overturned the decision of the ET and criticised it for not putting a wide enough construction on the phrase 'on racial grounds' as used in the RRA's definition of direct discrimination. It held that the ET had failed to address the question as to 'whether racial grounds had a significant influence on the outcome'.

The Court of Appeal has now overturned the EAT's ruling. It agreed that the decision to dismiss Mr Redfearn included racial considerations, but it did not follow automatically that he had been dismissed on racial grounds. He was treated less favourably not because he was white but because of a particular 'non-racial characteristic' shared by him with a tiny proportion of the white population, that is membership of a party such as the BNP. The dividing line of colour or race was not made by Serco but by the BNP, which defines its own membership in terms of colour or race. Properly analysed, Mr Redfearn's complaint was one of discrimination on political grounds, which falls outside the anti-discrimination laws.

Lord Justice Mummery held that to allow Mr Redfearn's claim would turn the policy of the race relations legislation upside down. It would mean that any less favourable treatment brought about because of concern about the racist views or conduct of a person in a multi-ethnic workplace would constitute race discrimination, which would be at odds with the aim of the RRA.

The ET was criticised by the Court of Appeal for not having carried out a more detailed scrutiny of the evidence for the dismissal on health and safety grounds. In circumstances such as this, employers are advised to seek advice to ensure that their actions can be justified.

If you are an employee who feels you are being treated unfairly, an employer needing advice on current legislation or if you have a query concerning any aspect of employment law, criminal law, personal injury, education or disability law, please write to Anil Balgobin, Mauritius News Legal Advice Column, Levenes Solicitors, 235-239 High Road, Wood Green, N22 8HF, call 0800 118899 or email [abalgobin@levenes.co.uk](mailto:abalgobin@levenes.co.uk)



# One nation one people culture

**The people of Mauritius are urged to 'Think Big' to think and behave in terms of a nation and not as segregated communities.**

This appears to be too much or beyond the capacity of the Mauritian population. Overseas Mauritians do think as one nation, as one people no matter what groups they originate from. Is this because they are far away physically from the island or is it because they have become sophisticated? Or should I say broad-minded?

As the islanders prepared to mark the Independence celebration of Mauritius in March the political leaders were urging them to remember the historical speech of John Kennedy: "Think not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." This was in the spirit of nation building and nationhood. Yet when they stand for elections the candidates are required to fill in the box declaring to which community they belong. This actually is now the subject of litigation, going to the highest level.

According to L'express (5 July 06) " le combat de Rezistans ek alternatif va plus loin encore. D'après Ashok Subron, cette étape judiciaire n'est qu'un pas de plus dans la lutte pour qu'il ne soit plus obligatoire au citoyen mauricien de divulguer sa communauté pour être candidat à des

élections. Nous luttons pour Maurice." Making a slight change in the constitution may satisfy some politicians but will it really galvanise the people to live up to the concept of a united nation made of many ethnic groups? They need to value themselves as one strong nation made up of many languages and cultures as they often describe themselves in the holiday paradise island brochure for tourists.

Even the Prime Minister, in the course of a recent dinner organised by the Telegu-speaking community, said "*si nous continuons de penser en termes de communautés, quand allons-nous penser en termes de nation?*" As an astute statesman he realised a change of mentality is urgently required: "*Il faut changer de direction.*" (L'express 3 June, 06).

There are plenty negative events taking place on the island with regard to drug/alcohol abuse, child abuse, rape, domestic violence, and a serious budget to cause divisions among the population. Feelings of being discriminated and one group being favoured over another are apparent everywhere. In such an atmosphere is it easy for the people to feel and think as one nation?

Education in citizenship must continue. Social leaders and educators have an up-hill task in front of them to prepare the people

building nation culture values, to recognise their worth and place in world society. I am aware of a lot of work being done in this area already. One must not give up at this difficult stage. The Prime Minister has already indicated this in his statement “ *si nous continuons de penser en termes de communautés, quand allons-nous penser en termes de nation?*”

This message should be applied to all and sundry on the island. It should start from the very top in all walks of life. Valuing one another's contribution, respect and courtesy must be practised by all. Our media are already engaged in doing so; they can do a lot more to improve things. Volunteers from various bodies are equally engaged in working towards this goal. Let's capitalise on this. Let's work to make the words of our national anthem as *one nation as one people* a reality as in Scotland, we are trying to make the slogan *One Nation, many Cultures* a reality, not a dream.

**Editor's note:**  
*In England, in many instances, we have to state our ethnic origins for monitoring purposes. For what purpose do we have to do so in Mauritius? We should not forget that according to the 'best loser' system in force in Mauritius, this ensures that each ethnic group have an adequate number of representatives in the National assembly, ethnic monitoring may be necessary in the Island.*



## Economy to grow by 4.6% in 2006

According to the latest Economic Indicators published by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the island's economy is expected to grow at a rate of 4.6% in 2006 with sugar production reaching 530,000 tonnes, a growth of 6.1% in the hotels and restaurants sector, tourist arrivals of 810,000, a 6.7% growth in the financial intermediation sector and a 4.8% growth in the construction sector.

The CSO indicated that investment in 2006 will reach Rs 48.8 billion, an increase of 23.1% over the 2005 figure of Rs 39.6 billion. Private sector investment would increase by 12.9% to reach Rs 31.3 billion in 2006 from Rs 27.7 billion last year and public sector investment is forecast at Rs 17.5 billion, 46.8% higher than the 2005 figure of Rs 12 billion.

# Tobacco and alcohol advertisements removed from billboards

**Since July 7, no billboard advertising alcohol and tobacco are seen on the streets of Mauritius.**

This is a decision made by the government of Mauritius, following concern expressed by Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam, on June 26 on the International Day, speaking against drug trafficking and substance abuse.

Some 250 billboards advertising tobacco and alcohol products have been removed around the island.

# Mauritius condemns Mumbai bomb

**Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam has condemned the bomb blasts in Mumbai which left more than 200 people dead.**

He qualified them as "terrorist acts" and asked for vigilance against terrorists. "We must not put down our hands against them", he said.

## Police Diving school launched

**The Mauritian police launched its own diving school at Le Chaland, in the south of the island, last month, with the objective of training its own police force.**

According to the Police Commissioner, Ramanooj Gopalsingh, this school will fulfil the need of training policemen.

"The objective of this school is also to increase the number of qualified divers so as each region can have qualified personnel to intervene rapidly in cases of distress," he said.

The Mauritius Police Force comprises 8,000 police officers, of which the majority do not know how to swim or dive.

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Mauritius News Youth Page

Mauritians, The Younger Generation

Young UK Mauritians will have their contributions on whatever subject (Cinema, television, music, holiday trips, bullying, school/college/University life, examinations, parents, UK life etc etc etc ) published on this page. Send correspondence to Mauritius News, 583 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 3JD or email editor@mauritiusnews.co.uk

Junior Football Tournament 2006



**Five players of the winning Wanderers FC**  
This year's Mauritius Junior Football Tournament (MJFT) was as great a success as last year's. The competition which took place on Sunday, July 16, on the grounds of the Bishop Lanfranc School in Mitcham, enlisted the participation of young players aged 7 to 17 years old. The games ran from 12.00 (noon) to 9.30pm.  
The games were divided into four categories comprising six-a-side teams of Boys Under-12, Girls Under-12, Under-15s; and the full-squad of Under-18s. The Junior England group, Zenes Sporting

Club, Sunrise FC and Blackburn Rovers were the teams who fought it out for the title in the Boys Under-12 category. It was Blackburn Rovers who took the cup over Sunrise in the Final. Top scorer was Jensen Pillay of Blackburn Rovers with 11 Goals to his credit scored in five games.  
In the Girls Under-12 contest, only two teams took part, namely the Wanderers FC and the Mauritius FC. Wanderers FC won the cup on the score of 1-0.  
Mauritian Malisia, Zenes Sporting Club and Talbot FC were the three teams who took part in the Under-15s games. In the end, Mauritian Malisia and Zenes Sporting Club struggled to get the better of each other. Mauritian Malisia won on the score of 4-1. The best scorer was young Hook with seven goals.  
The Under-18s teams gave a very serious exhibition of mature football. The competing teams were BOC, Wimbledon Park FC, P.E.L.O. Cosmos FC, and Galacticos. The final fight between P.E.L.O. and Cosmos FC was a game worthy of any Sunday League Football competition. Even into extra time they still clung to each other for the final victory but neither could score. In the end, victory was sadly decided by the penalty shoot-outs, and P.E.L.O. took the Champions' title of the under-18 on the score of 4-2.  
Runners-up Cosmos FC had every reason to be proud of their excellent performance vis-à-vis such a strong team as P.E.L.O. In this category, the Top Scorer David (with eight goals) and Best Player Diego were both from the P.E.L.O. team.  
The organiser, Raaj Mauree, Girish Daby and Rouben Pavaday deserve our praise for their efforts to popularise such a dynamic sport as football among the young UK Mauritians while at the same bring together other players of other origins to participate jointly. What makes more... is the organisers solicit no funding from any source for the second year running. All expenses, except for the cups and trophies, are met from among themselves. This is service to the community ...  
The challenge seal to the senior victors was offered by the MJFT organisers. Souvenir cups were offered Mauritius News, Mauritianparty.com, PELO manager, Père Laval Association. DJ Melissa, and others.

[Material for this article supplied by Melissa Armoogum (15)]  
(More pictures in next issue)

BBC Asian Network competition

Mauritian lead singer helps The Pali Gap win BBC Asian Network competition

Sanjeev Pali, lead singer and songwriter for *The Pali Gap*, won a competition hosted by Radio1 DJ's Bobby Friction and Nihal to find an unsigned act to headline at the London City Showcase.  
Pali, who is of Mauritian parentage, along with Jorge Galavis their Spanish Guitarist and their Japanese drummer Shirou, combine their talent to produce edgy rock and pop music, which has attracted interest from the BBC as well as a fan-base extending from Europe to LA.  
Their City Showcase debut led them to supporting *Jay Sean* and the *Rishi Rich Project* where, *The Pali Gap* opened the show and played live to an entranced audience at Carnaby Street in London with tracks such as 'Blow up' and 'Freak'. They were also recently shortlisted for Radio 1's Battle of the Bands on the Lock Up show.  
The City Showcase is an annual event, taking place in venues throughout London showcasing new talent. For the lucky few the opportunity to be the main act can often lead to record deals with big labels. Previous acts that were discovered at the City Showcase have included British acts *Keane*, *Amy Winehouse*, *Razorlight* and *Rooster*.  
Sanjeev Pali sees this as a great opportunity to show the world that there are many talented young Mauritians. He says ' I think it's a great opportunity to show that we can breakthrough into other genres of music and not only stick to what their cultural background dictates'.  
Sanjeev is really keen on encouraging young Mauritians to get involved in mainstream music. *The Pali Gap* have found Myspace to be a very useful marketing tool and Sanjeev is also launching a

website aimed at unsigned musicians called [www.iamunsigned.com](http://www.iamunsigned.com) which gives opportunities for unsigned artistes to gain recognition.  
Sanjeev says ' these days bands have to market themselves and that's the beauty of the Internet. Look at *The Pali Gap* we went from nowhere to supporting *The Rishi Rich Project* overnight!'.  
*The Pali Gap* will next feature on BBC Asian Network on Thursday 27 July 2006. You can also check out *The Pali Gap* at [www.myspace.com/thepaligap](http://www.myspace.com/thepaligap)



Channel 4 Search

Do you have a talent for cracking codes or solving puzzles?

Do you fancy a foreign adventure... all paid for by Channel 4? The Search is a brand new Channel 4 show taking 10 lucky contestants on an amazing treasure hunt to some of the most iconic and spectacular historical locations on the planet.  
Channel 4 are looking for Britain's brightest people to unravel mysteries, decipher codes and keep up with the pace of this spectacular new show.  
It is open to people from all backgrounds with the experts to help you overcome the challenge. You may be an academic from Oxford or a cabbie with a degree from the university of life, it doesn't matter as long as you've got what it takes. If selected you will get the chance to travel to some of the most exotic places on earth and if you can keep your wits about you, discover a fortune in hidden treasure.  
CONTACT: If you've got a thirst for adventure and you have an engaging personality please go to: [www.princesstv.com/search/](http://www.princesstv.com/search/) or call Emilie at 0207 985 1944.  
IMPORTANT: You need to be available for filming from the end of September through to the end of November.

Opportunities for young Mauritians Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowships

Apply now for your chance of a lifetime opportunity for 2007

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The scheme allows you to undertake a project overseas within certain categories. If successful, the Fellowship will cover your expenses, in the form of a grant. Including return air fare, daily living and travel within the country you visit. In 2006 the trust awarded grants in excess of £500,000. The grants cover a stay overseas of between 4-8 weeks.  
**The categories are listed below:**  
Science and Technology  
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Diet and Health  
Special Educational Needs  
Adventure, exploration and leaders of expeditions.  
Climate change  
Sport  
The third age – opportunities and challenges for an ageing population  
Theatre, ballet and Opera  
Workers in tourism and related service industries  
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If you wish to apply for a life changing experience in any of these areas please send a self-addressed envelope to the following address: The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, 15 Queen's Gate Terrace, London SW7 5PR. Tel: 020 7584 9315. An application form will be sent to you. Alternatively, you can download the form at [www.wcmf.org.uk](http://www.wcmf.org.uk).  
The closing date for applications is the 19 October 2006. By 27 November 2006, all applicants will be informed whether or not they have been short-listed for an interview.  
In January 2007, the short-listed applicants will be interviewed in the Trust Office and the Fellowship Awards will be announced in mid February 2007.Travelling will take place throughout 2007.

Search for musical talent

Radio 2's search for Young Folk Award Winner 2007

Are you aged between 15-20? Do you perform folk, roots or acoustic music from any culture? BBC Radio 2 is searching for a talented young group, soloist or duo to claim the title of BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Award Winner 2007.  
In association with BBC Radio 2's Mike Harding Show, the search is on for young people aged between 15-20 who perform folk, roots or acoustic music from traditional English or Celtic to African and Asian and anything in between.  
This is a great opportunity to bring Mauritian Sega to the ears of Radio 2's listeners. You will be given the chance to learn new skills from professional musicians, be taught the tricks of the music trade and music making.  
To enter, each group, duo or soloist must send a recording of their performance along with a completed entry form. Forms can be obtained by emailing: [info@mrscasey.co.uk](mailto:info@mrscasey.co.uk). Send your completed entry form and recording to: BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Award 2007, Mrs Casey Music, PO Box 296, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3XU. The deadline for entries is 11 September 2006.  
Successful entrants will be invited to a semi-final Audition on 13-15 October 2006 in Stratford-Upon-Avon. They will attend workshops and master classes, learning about stagecraft and working in the music industry. They will also perform in front of Judges, who will choose the finalists, to perform in London on 1 December 2006.  
The winning act will record a session to be broadcast on BBC Radio 2's Mike Harding Show, and they will appear at three top UK festivals including the BBC Radio 2 Cambridge Folk Festival.

**Terms and Conditions:** 1. All entrants must live in the UK (England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland) 2. Entrants should be aged between 15-20 years on 1 September 2006 3. Solo performers, duos or groups can enter 4. Groups should consist of at least 3 performers and not more than 5. An individual can make a maximum of 2 entries provided one entry is as part of a group and one entry is as a soloist or duo 6. Entry forms must be accompanied by a recording lasting no longer than 10 minutes. CD, cassette, mini disc (standard recording only) and DAT format are all acceptable 7. The line-up on the recording must be the same as the line-up, which will attend later stages if invited, and the recording must be a representation of a live performance 8. ALL musicians featured on the recording must be aged between 15-20 years inclusive. If you require further information please email [info@mrscasey.co.uk](mailto:info@mrscasey.co.uk) or call: 01629 827012

A poem on MAURITIUS  
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Under the sea you see colourful fish and coral,  
Raging hot weather through the year,  
In the Indian Ocean,  
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Sensational all the time!  
Jake Clements – Age 12



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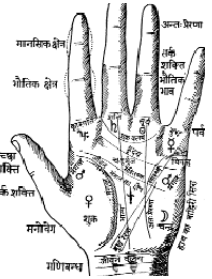
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Air Mauritius

Reception at the Waldorf Hilton Hotel

Donald Payen paid a special tribute to Chris Gilbert. "Mr Gilbert did a great job for Air Mauritius for many years and led the development of the airline to where it is today in terms of capacity, ensuring that Air Mauritius goes to four, five, six flights per week. It is business plan that we are carrying forward to bring Air Mauritius to a daily frequency out of the UK.



Chris Gilbert with Mrs Angela Williams, Customer Relations Manager at Air Mauritius

I had a great privilege and honour to work with a great professional over the three and a half years that I was responsible for Europe, even more so during my time when I was Director of customer services, prior to my appointment to Europe. It was a pleasure to have a great professional by my side," Mr Payen told the guests.

New manager Dale Keller agreed that it would be a great act to follow in stepping in the shoes of his predecessor. He affirmed that he would implement the business plan formulated by Chris Gilbert and endeavour



Lindsay Walker (left) with Iqbal Bhayat, the new Sales Development Manager

to achieve the daily frequency from Heathrow in the course of next year.

His mission will be to encourage growth of the company with the cooperation of all the partners, the tour operators, the travel agents, the hotels, and the local Mauritian community.



Accountant Jag Matharoo (left) with Gary Heather of Reservations

Advertising feature:

Currencies Direct: A cost effective way of sending money abroad

Currencies Direct is one of the UK's first independent foreign exchange companies outside of the banking world. They offer a cost saving alternative to high street banks for international payments.

Ten years ago they recognised the need for a cost-effective foreign exchange service that provided both private individuals and businesses with commercial rates of exchange for their international payments.

Currencies Direct is pleased to announce that they will be very shortly opening an office in Mauritius to service the international payment requirements of both the corporate and private markets.

Mark O'Sullivan, Head of Trading in the UK, explains how Currencies direct differ from other high street Money transfer organisations: "We at Currencies Direct can offer superior rates of exchange with no charge for trades above 5k and on a monthly transfer of no charge at all."

The company has also been recognised as one of the fastest growing UK companies by the 2005 Sunday Times Fast Track 100. By dealing directly

with the currency markets, Currencies Direct is able to offer its customers real cost savings and its credentials are second to none. It also offers customers free transfers (over £5,000), no commission and has a minimum transfer amount of just £2,000.

In addition Currencies Direct is able to offer clients an Overseas Regular Transfer Plan. This is ideal if you are regularly transferring money overseas as it offers free transfers on all amounts and has a low monthly minimum of £150.

Mark goes on to explain the procedure of sending money abroad on a regular basis: "If you were to send £200 on a monthly basis to Mauritius there would be no charge from us, but there may be a receiving charge in Mauritius. However we are looking at joint ventures with companies in Mauritius to greater flexibility to how funds can be sent and collected."

Today Currencies Direct is one of the largest independent foreign exchange providers with offices on four continents, and is trusted and recommended by a 1,500 strong network of companies.

Currencies Direct: Forex Report Change in currency markets

The currency markets have for the past month traded in very tight ranges as the fears of inflation in the global system looms large. In the US the Federal Reserve Bank hiked interest rates for the 17<sup>th</sup> consecutive time to 5.25 %, with a further move before year end to 5.5 % not ruled out.

This rate rising cycle is in response to an increase in world growth, and in Europe the European Central Bank (ECB), have also followed suit raising rates to 2.75 % in response to improved economic conditions, and rates as high as 4% are being called for by year end 2007.

The Japanese who have held rates at 0 % for over 6 years are expected this month to finally end this stance and raise rates to .25 % in more of a Psychological signal to the currency markets. The British Pound as well remains supported again due to a high yield of 4.5 % in the base rate with 4.75% being called for by the end of 2006.

The focus in the second half of 2006 will be on the US dollar and if the increasing budget deficit puts pressure on sellers of dollars. Key levels to watch are against the euro 1.30, gbp 1.90, yen 115.00.

Due to ongoing currency shortages the Mauritian rupee continues to remain under pressure against all major currencies.

Exchange Rates

1 GBP = EUR 1.4456

1 GBP = US\$ 1.8427

1 GBP = Rs 56.71

1 EUR = Rs 39.21

1 US\$ = Rs 30.78

Figures correct at time of going to press

All currency information provided by Currencies Direct

The Crisis of Pet Overpopulation



By Devinia Sookia (US)\*

Everyday thousands of puppies and kittens are born throughout the world due to uncontrolled breeding of pets. Many of these poor animals become strays or are euthanized as there are not enough good homes for all of them.

The most obvious result of uncontrolled breeding is the competition for the few existing good homes for these animals. Other tragic problems that result from pet overpopulation is the transformation of some shelters into "warehouses", the acceptance of cruelty to animals as a way of life in our society and the stress that caring shelter workers suffer when they are forced to euthanize one animal after another. Live creatures have become throwaway items. They are cuddled when cute and abandoned when inconvenient. Such disregard for animal life pervades and erodes our culture.

Abandoned, stray dogs and cats, which survive in the streets, and alleys of cities and suburbs pose a health risk to humans. They search through rubbish tips for food. They defecate in public areas or on private lawns thus irritating citizens who have no understanding of their misery or needs and chase them. The public health epidemic of dog bites, which reach millions each year, is due in part to uncontrolled dog breeding. Bites by so-called dangerous dogs have drawn an enormous amount of media attention. The vicious tendency found in some dog breeds can often be attributed to irresponsible breeding without regard for temperament.

Pet overpopulation is not just a problem for the animals but also for taxpayers. Public costs include services such as investigations into animal cruelty, humanely capturing of stray animals and sheltering lost and homeless animals. So the only solution to this problem is implementing widespread sterilization programmes.

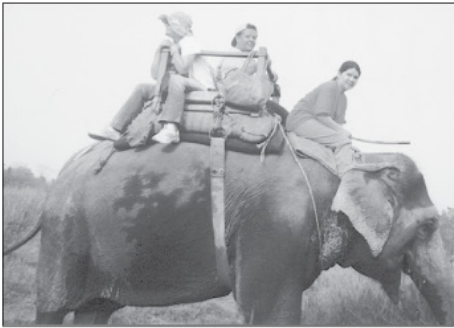
Pet overpopulation can be only controlled by spaying and neutering all companion animals. According to research by the Humane Society of the United States in six years one female dog and her offspring can give birth to 67,000 puppies. In seven years one cat and her off springs can produce 420,000 kittens. Given these high reproductive rates, it seems that only carefully planned and implemented sterilization programmes can reduce the number of unwanted companion animals. In those towns and cities that have implemented such programmes, the number of unwanted companion animals who had to be euthanized has declined by 30 to 60 per cent. However these programmes require the cooperation of many people.

\* Devinia Sookia is a barrister-at-law, journalist, writer and attorney (US)

Visit to Nepal with Aid Camps International

My unforgettable elephant ride

By Teresa Lloyd



I thought my riding days were over, but not quite. As an Aid Camp Volunteer in Nepal we had a brief two-night stay at Alka Resort Camp in Sauraha, Chitwan, to experience an 'elephant walk'.

The short break is intended to allow the walls to dry out before the next stage of decorating at OM Shanti Primary School. The Embarkation Point is located literally within 25 yards of the Resort Camp, so it's within walking distance. I'd longed for weeks for this magic opportunity to ride an 'ele' and now it became a reality.

My journey started by climbing a tall wooded tower known locally as a 'dembarkation point' at Sauraha with my colleagues. The ride had been pre-booked and financially taken care of by Aid Camps International charity. Years had passed since I'd even mounted a horse let alone a full grown 27-year-old female elephant. The first thing to remember is get completely comfortable once inside the riding box. "Slide your legs between the corner" our driver demanded before setting off through the dense Chitwan Jungle.

I soon became accustomed to the undulating slow gait of this giant mammal. A driver is known as a 'mahout' he carries a stick that helps to clear the rider through overgrown trees, whenever she felt like a naughty nibble en route while being of service to us. Elephants have naturally a voracious appetite.

Throughout our route we spotted by chance three rhinos, so I felt already very lucky during the course of the afternoon. Being in the dense jungle is a golden

Successful pet population control programmes range from subsidised sterilisation clinics to cooperative efforts of local veterinarians as well as mass media educational campaigns. It is only through the continued nationwide establishment of such programmes that we will be able to bring an end to the tragedy of pet overpopulation.

Legislation can have the most direct impact. The government of the countries concerned can require every dog and cat owner to sterilise his pet within a time limit otherwise he will be severely fined. Education has also an essential part in solving this problem. Unless people know the facts about pet overpopulation and sterilisation, they are virtually helpless and will not be able to do anything about the problem. Reduced spaying and neutering fees by veterinarians or free spay and neuter programmes established by the government of the countries concerned will be an incentive to pet owners in having their pet sterilised.

Some people might wonder about the difference between spaying and neutering. Female dogs and cats are spayed when their reproductive organs are removed. Male dogs and cats are neutered when their testicles are removed. In both cases the surgery is performed while the pet is under anaesthesia. The pet will stay at the veterinarians office for a few hours or a few days depending on its age, size and health.

Stitches will be removed after a few days. Spaying and neutering help dogs and cats live longer and healthier. Spaying and neutering can eliminate or reduce the number of health problems. Spaying eliminates the possibility of uterine or ovarian cancer and greatly reduces the risk of breast cancer.

Neutering eliminates testicular cancer and reduces the risk of prostate disease. Spaying and neutering makes pets better and more affectionate companions. Spaying a dog or cat eliminates the heat cycle. Spaying and neutering can make pets less likely to bite. Neutering makes pets less likely to roam the neighbourhood, run away or get into fights. Cats and dogs, which have not been sterilised often, display more behaviour and temperament problems than those that have been neutered or spayed.

If every pet owner shoulders his responsibility and makes sure that his dog or cat is spayed or neutered, he can proudly say that he has done a good deed. This means that he has contributed in overcoming the pet overpopulation problem, making it possible for the few remaining ones to find a good home.



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“Africa’s future lies in Africa’s hands — its huge and untapped human resources is waiting to be harnessed through the public services.”  
The Deputy Secretary-General, Forence Mugasha, was speaking on the theme ‘Transforming African Public Services’ at the opening of the Third Forum of African Heads of Public Services in Abuja, Nigeria. It was organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Government of Nigeria.

She stressed that capability and capacity of the public services to support governments was critical because of its impact on efficiency and effectiveness. This is underpinned by both the political will and commitment of the public services, including greater transparency and accountability in decision-making and execution of services.  
Part of the challenge for African public services is the inability to innovate and modernise the institutional frameworks that underpin administrative systems inherited at independence. As a result, many of them are still locked in excessive bureaucratic red tape, confidentiality and rulebooks that have become impractical and self-serving.

**Sharpening skills in international diplomacy and development**

Exposure to international diplomacy and development, and the issues involved in providing technical assistance to Commonwealth countries, have enhanced the understanding and outlook of Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General Winston Cox.  
“It’s an excellent place if you wish to launch a long-term career as an international civil servant. The Secretariat does give you enough international context and outreach that would help you in your career development. It also exposes you to a cross-cultural heterogeneity and ethnic diversity — exposure in the multiple aspects of diversity which you are less likely to get working in your country,” said Mr Cox.  
The Commonwealth has played a leading role in advocating debt relief for low income countries, since the Lever Report in 1984. During Mr Cox’s time, the Commonwealth Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Ministerial Forum served to advance efforts to broaden and deepen debt relief under the HIPC Initiative that was launched by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund while Mr Cox was serving as an Alternate Executive Director at the Bank. As Deputy Secretary-General he personally played an important role in guiding the deliberations of the Commonwealth Finance Ministers.

**New \$4million tertiary scholarship programme for Commonwealth students**

Students from the Commonwealth can apply for a new tertiary scholarship to study at St George’s University in Grenada. Seventy-five full tuition scholarships will be awarded to Commonwealth citizens under the Commonwealth-Grenada St George’s University Scholarship Programme, which has been launched to commemorate the university’s 30th anniversary in January 2007.  
The scholarships, which will be awarded next year, and are an excellent initiative to promote human resource development in the Commonwealth. St George’s University has grown from strength to strength to become an important institution of learning in the Caribbean.  
The scholarships cover both graduate and undergraduate degree programmes and are offered to 25 students pursuing the Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme; 25 students for the Master of Public Health (MPH) programme; 10 students pursuing arts and sciences degrees; 10 students studying veterinary medicine; and five students enrolled in the School of Medicine.  
St George’s University has 3,600 students on its campus, with students and lecturers from more than 80 countries. A quarter of them are from the Commonwealth..

**Shaping a better world through shared beliefs**

The Commonwealth’s role is to use its shared beliefs and vision to shape the world for the better. The Commonwealth’s historic role in shaping the global agenda, was discussed using the aspects of its role in promoting free and fair trade; mutual respect and understanding; democracy and good governance.  
Trade as the key to development; respect and understanding as the key to harmony; the rights of voters and the institutions of government as the key to democracy: none are the exclusive preserves of the Commonwealth, yet all are the active concerns of the Commonwealth within the world at large. The Commonwealth also places special store in the need for adequately and consistently funded ‘Aid for Trade’, to ensure that weaker economies can meet the immediate costs of being open for and to business.

**India**  
**Mumbai attacks condemned by Commonwealth**

Countries of the Commonwealth have condemned the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India, on 11 July 2006, which resulted in death and injury of hundreds of innocent civilians.  
In a letter to Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, The Commonwealth Secretary, said the Commonwealth stands alongside the people of India in the wake of the appalling loss of life in the country’s commercial capital. “These dreadful events once again remind us that the international community needs to stand together and remain resolute in fighting terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, wherever it exists. Let me assure you of the Commonwealth’s shared sense of concern and unwavering solidarity with you and your government at this time.”

**Ghana**  
**Partnerships crucial in promoting Human Rights**

Collaboration between government agencies, national human rights institutions (NHRIs), the media, civil society organisations, and international partners is necessary to ensure effective national plans of action to enhance awareness of and respect for human rights, this was expresses at the opening of a four-day Expert Planning Workshop on National Human Rights Institutions in West Africa in Accra, Ghana.  
Practical experiences of NHRIs in other Commonwealth countries on establishing partnerships, and planning strategies for joint action. Government ministries working with NHRIs and other partners for joint reporting to United Nations human rights treaty bodies is an example of such partnerships, as is conducting joint prison visits to monitor penitentiary conditions, or national awareness programmes for police and other officials.  
The Commonwealth approach to human rights seeks to emphasise the inherent indivisibility and the interdependence of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, with the relationship between human rights and political values on the one hand, and development on the other.  
We support the efforts of Commonwealth countries to improve adherence to and compliance with international and regional human rights instruments, as well as to adopt enabling legislation. We provide technical assistance and advice to member countries in the formulation and implementation of policies.  
Independent, viable NHRIs serve as a major way for national objectives on human rights to be realised. To strengthen networking and co-operation among NHRIs in the Commonwealth, she said the Secretariat’s Human Rights Unit is planning a meeting of Commonwealth NHRIs later this year.

**Promoting debt management through annual meetings and electronic forums**

Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth countries and territories using the Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System (CS-DRMS) have agreed to form a permanent User Group to assess their debt management status.  
The User Group will operate at regional and international levels and act as a link between the Secretariat and the wider user community. Regional User Group Meetings will be held annually while the International User Group Meetings will be held biennially.  
Delegates agreed to discuss data quality, report production, debt analysis and systems issues. To facilitate dialogue in between meetings, the DMS will set up an electronic discussion forum on the CS-DRMS website.  
The delegates proposed that user countries as well as regional organisations have attachment programmes for debt managers to promote best practices and regional integration. They also encouraged the Secretariat to continue working with the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and other international agencies to ensure that the CS-DRMS remains abreast with advancements in debt data reporting required by these international agencies.

**Nine finalists selected for Commonwealth education good practice awards**

Nine finalists from seven Commonwealth countries have been selected for the Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards. They include entries from Cyprus, The Gambia, Ghana, India, Pakistan, Seychelles and South Africa. The finalists will vie for the top prizes at an awards ceremony during the 16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers to be held in Cape Town, South Africa, in December 2006.  
A pan-Commonwealth panel of judges from Canada, India, Jamaica, Lesotho, Papua New Guinea, South Africa, and Trinidad and Tobago made the selection of the finalists on 5 July 2006.  
About 50 entries were received from across the Commonwealth for the Good Practice Awards. They covered education development projects that promote ways to achieve universal primary education; eliminate gender disparities; improve quality in education; use distance education to overcome barriers; support education in difficult circumstances; and mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on education systems.  
Duncan Hindle, Director-General of South Africa’s Department of Education, who chaired the judging panel, said he was impressed with the quality of submissions for the Awards. He said the nine finalists will be invited to Cape Town to present their projects to a panel for the final selection of winners.

**Uganda**  
**Commonwealth Secretary General meets Ugandan president**

Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon met the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, in the capital Kampala. They held discussions on a wide range of issues, including preparations for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to be held in Kampala in November next year.  
During his two-day visit to the East African country, Mr McKinnon also met the Official Opposition Leader in the Parliament of Uganda, Professor Morris Ogenga Latigo, and the Speaker of Parliament, Edward Ssekandi.

**London**  
**More countries opt for Commonwealth debt management programme**

Bhutan, China, Nepal and Sao Tomé are the latest countries to begin using the Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System (CS-DRMS), bringing the total number of users to 54 countries and territories within and outside of the Commonwealth.  
The new users of this computer software for designing national debt strategies and carrying out debt sustainability analysis, risk management and portfolio reviews were announced by Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General Winston Cox. He was opening a three-day meeting of a CS-DRMS User Group held at Marlborough House, the Secretariat’s headquarters in London. The meeting was attended by 80 representatives from 45 user countries.  
Mr Cox said he was pleased that the debt management programme has expanded beyond the Commonwealth, and expressed confidence that these countries would benefit from the advanced debt management software.  
He stated that the Secretariat has been playing a vital role in helping countries to understand the need for prudent and efficient debt management, and to ensure that debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries remains an issue of global importance.  
Mr Cox stressed that the Secretariat is committed to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through its support of pro-poor policies for economic growth and sustainable development. This includes programmes in finance and debt with the aim of improving the capacity of countries to better manage their debt portfolios.

**New head for Asian Commonwealth youth programme**

Carrying out the mandates of the Sixth Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting which took place in The Bahamas in May 2006 will be the principal task of the new Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) Regional Director for Asia, Raj Mishra. This involves enhancing youth development work in poverty eradication, democracy and good governance, HIV/AIDS and gender equality.  
Mr Mishra, who was formerly with UNAIDS and India’s Ministry of Youth and Sport, joined the CYP in June 2006. He told the Commonwealth News and Information Service during a visit to London, in June that apart from these key areas, he intends to promote sports, computer literacy and entrepreneurship, and look at new ways to encourage youth participation in various fields.  
“I would like to promote greater awareness among the young people of today on global, regional and national issues because of the impact on their lives and future,” said Mr Mishra.  
Mr Mishra, 55, stated that he will continue to expand the Commonwealth Youth Credit Initiative to encourage entrepreneurship and greater use of computers to promote e-commerce besides improving access to communication, knowledge and information.

**Africa**  
**Improving access to education for Nomadic populations in Africa**

Increased access and retention to education and training opportunities for nomadic populations was the aim of a four-day workshop held in Garissa, Kenya. This has been a challenge for governments and educationists due to the mobile lifestyle and migratory nature of nomads.  
The workshop ‘Reaching All: Taking Education to Nomadic Populations in Africa’ was organised by the Social Transformation Programmes Division (STPD) of the Commonwealth Secretariat.  
Commonwealth African countries with significant nomadic populations are Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria and Tanzania. Nomads are categorised into three major groups based on their mobile lifestyle: the pastoralists, the migrant fishermen, and the hunter-food gatherers.  
“The national education systems have, generally, failed nomadic communities. All the education indicators reveal that nomadic groups are at the low end of national statistics in enrolment, participation, class-room performance, gender balance, achievement, progression to the next level of education and training,” Dr Kaluba stated.



Mauritius News Cuisine

Tipik Mauricien Recipe

Octopus curry

Introducing Tipik Mauricien homemade spices

Cooking Mauritian food is not difficult and only needs a little practice to get the mixture of flavourings correct. It can be made easier with the help of Tipik Mauricien spices. Many different dishes can be made with this unique spice: \* Biryani (meat, fish, chicken or vegetable) \* Calliah (meat, fish, chicken or Soya for the vegetarians ) \* Halim (which is a meat soup prepared with dholh or lentils) \* Pilau Rice (Rice flavoured with saffron) \* Daube or Red Sauce (meat, fish or chicken cooked in tomatoes) \* Delicious fried meat or chicken. Tipik Mauricien also makes special Rassum spices. Rassum (Jeera Water) is a special soup-like made to accompany any curry dishes.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1kilo octopus (washed with salt, cut into pieces and boiled) | Coriander leaves (washed and chopped finely) |
| 3 tblsp of curry powder                                      | 8-10 curry leaves                            |
| 3 fresh tomatoes or tin tomatoes                             | Spring onions (washed and chopped finely)    |
| 1 tsp of garam masala  | 1 small green pepper (cut in cubes)          |
| 1 cinnamon stick   | 1 tblsp of ground garlic and ginger          |
| 1 large onion (sliced)                                       |  |

Method:

Fry onions,curry leaves,garlic and ginger. Add octopus and salt according to taste. Stir well. Simmer for about 10 mins, add tomatoes, garam masala and curry powder. Cook for 5 mins,then add green peppers, leave for 2 mins. Lastly add coriander leaves and spring onions. Cover for 1 min and remove from heat.

Serve with a cucumber, carrot and green pepper salad.

Cucumber, carrot and green pepper salad

- Half cucumber (grated)  
2 carrots (peeled and grated)  
1 green pepper (finely sliced)  
1 red onion (sliced)  
2 green chillies (finely chopped)  
1 lemon  
2 tbs olive oil  
Salt to taste.

Put cucumber, carrots and green peppers in a salad bowl, add sliced onion and lemon juice. Add olive oil and chillies and salt to taste, mix well. Serve immediately.

**Mauritius Christian Church**  
Services every second Sunday of each month from 3pm - 5pm at the Streatham Baptist Church, Lewin Road (Back entrance Natal Road), Streatham, London SW16

- \*Sunday 6th & 13th August
- \*Sunday 3rd & 10th September
- \*Sunday 1st & 8th October
- \*Sunday 5th & 12 November
- \*Sunday 3rd & 10th December

Service at the EPI Centre, West Street, Leytonstone London E11

Sunday 27 August  
Sunday 24 September  
Sunday 29 October  
Sunday 26 November

Contact: Steven: 07956 501 120 or Saven: 07845 739 867

The UN Association, Streatham

Mauritius comes to South London

Accompanied by Mauritian music, writings and cuisine the UN Association discussed life in Mauritius and its unique role in the region and the world. The history provided the backdrop and helped to understand the successful present day diversity of culture, background and religion. The Association was set up in 1929, and was then called the League of Nations Union, back then their was a thrive of activity with over 1,000 members. The UN Association (UNA) provides a means for the public in the UK (and in many other countries including Mauritius) to learn about the UN and voice their opinions on international issues as part of the process of upholding international principles. Membership is open to all, and local branches are run by volunteers.

The group discussed the efforts to diversify the economy, and also the opportunities to buy Fair Traded sugar and textiles. They focussed on Mauritius role at the United Nations: the anticipated heritage sites and the promotion of the three UNESCO Conventions on cultural heritage (which Mauritius has been the first to ratify), as well as their part in the Small Island Developing States which is sharing expertise and experience amongst countries in similar situations. Particular thanks were expressed to our Mauritian friends Dev and Tamana Lutchman for inspiring and supporting the whole event. Anyone interested in the UN Association are welcome to contact (Peter & Sarah Webster) at [una.streatham@btinternet.com](mailto:una.streatham@btinternet.com)

G8 commitments to infectious disease can improve global health security

Eight countries in the G8 summit vowed to improve the ways in which the world deals with infectious diseases, including improving communication by all countries in sharing information.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) focused on infectious disease at the G8 Summit, and the detailed health commitments in the outcome document.

“The G8 spoke together on the essential need to tackle infectious diseases, because of their health, social, security and economic impacts,” said Dr Anders Nordström, acting Director-General of the WHO. “The commitments are detailed and specific, and represent another step forward in G8 leadership on public health.”

Dr Nordström led a senior WHO team at the Summit to contribute to discussions on infectious disease and he addressed G8 leaders, in the presence of the Heads of State or Governments of Brazil, China, Congo, Finland, India, Kazakhstan, Mexico and South Africa, and invited UN leaders.

Main objectives including; manage new disease outbreaks and threats - including a potential pandemic influenza outbreak. Improve access to existing and new drugs and vaccines though expanded markets and increased

affordability.

Ensuring there are enough motivated health workers in health centres and hospitals will address the current four-million health worker shortage. The biggest shortages are in the poorest countries where the need is greatest.

There was also progress in investing in innovative financing. The United Kingdom’s support for the Immunisation Financing Facility, and the France/Chile/Brazil/Norway plan to fund HIV/TB and malaria drugs through airline ticket taxes are very promising.

The 12-page health outcome document includes G8 commitments to: strengthen the global network for surveillance and monitoring; increase global preparedness for a human influenza pandemic; combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria; eradicate polio; make progress on measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases; ensure access to prevention, treatment and care including through research, the use of Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) flexibilities and strengthened health systems; and to address the health consequences of natural and man-made disasters.

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EU dependant visa  
Marriage application  
Investor / Business visa  
Indefinite Leave to Remain  
under the 5, 7, 10, 14 years rules  
Civil Partnership Visa

Employment (No Win No Fee)  
Claim for unfair dismissal  
Claim for discrimination  
Bullying, Harassment & Sickness  
Tribunal representation  
Redundancy  
Wrongful dismissal  
Compromise agreement  
Training in Employment Law  
(in house)

Health Matters

Major step forward in Prostate Cancer treatment

The Prostate Cancer Charity has welcomed guidance that recommends all eligible prostate cancer patients have access to the prostate cancer drug docetaxel (Taxotere).

The chemotherapy drug extends the lives of men with late stage prostate cancer (metastatic hormone refractory prostate cancer mHRPC) and improves their quality of life.

Chris Hiley, The Prostate Cancer Charity Head of Policy and Research, said: “This is a major step forward in prostate cancer treatment. Until now there has not been a treatment for men with advanced prostate cancer which could extend their lives and reduce their pain.

“We hope this chemotherapy drug will be made immediately available via the NHS to all men

with prostate cancer across the UK”

Every year nearly 32,000 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer in the United Kingdom and 10,000 men die from it. Prostate cancer is now the most common cancer diagnosed in men in the UK - every hour at least one man dies from this disease. Those from ethnic minority groups, in particular, African Caribbean men are three times more likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer than their white counterparts.

If you have any queries about prostate cancer call The Prostate Cancer Charity’s confidential helpline 0845 300 8383 which is staffed by specialist nurses and open from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday and Wednesdays from 7 - 9pm. If you want to make a donation to The Prostate Cancer Charity call 0208 222 7622 or visit [www.prostate-cancer-org.uk](http://www.prostate-cancer-org.uk)

Your Horoscope for August 2006 by Clairvoyante

Aries (March 21 – April 20)

Once people begin to see what help they can offer you, their co-operation will be appreciated, which will make life easier. This month your confidence will shine though and everyone will notice.

Don’t hold back on career matters. Be positive and be confident on the changes you want to make. Whether they be in your existing job or if you want new challenges with a career change.

Taurus (April 21 – May 21)

Your ideas are finally being recognised and you will begin to get credit you deserve. You will discover that having confidence in yourself and creating a new challenge can get the results that you have been hoping for.

Things you may have overlooked will come to light and may work in your favour. Travel plans are set and you can begin to look forward to them.

Gemini (May 22 – June 22)

Relationships will thrive this month, whether it be with loved ones, or with colleagues, you will be building a better rapport and understanding each other better, this will help with future plans.

Taking things step by step may seem like a long process but you will soon find out that things will work in your favour sooner than you think.

Cancer (June 23 – July 23)

Make sure that all plans you set yourself are complete before embarking on new challenges. Your timing will be spot on for starting something new.

Good fortune will come your way this month, maybe in the form of winning a competition or even just in your home life.

Leo (July 24 – August 23)

You will enjoy experimenting with new ideas in style and home decoration. This will also lead to a more sociable you and friends will notice the change.

Be careful not to neglect other matters as you focus on positive aspects of your life. As long as you cover yourself and organise your time you should be able to have the best of both worlds .

Virgo (August 24 – September 23)

You will be on top of things this month and things will continue to do so for the next few months. Talking about what is bothering you will clear the air and you will feel better.

Someone may test your patience and commitment this month, but your responses will show them that you mean what you say.

Libra (September 24 – October 23)

Don’t turn your back on things that may, make things better. It may not seem like it now but it could be for the best. Things that you feel are not going to plan will turn around to work for you.

Do what makes you feel good, socialise with friends and have a good time, taking a break from things is just what you need.

Scorpio (October 24 – November 22)

You may be trying to hard to get everything perfect; as long as you reach the goal how you get there is of no concern. Don’t get upset if things are not going to plan, you will get there in the end.

Communicating with loved ones and work colleagues will help you to understand you ideas more and get opinions from others that you may not have thought of.

Sagittarius (November 23 – December 21)

Luck will be coming your way this month. Showing others that you have got your life in order will boost your confidence and show you are heading in the right direction.

It may be time to take the risk and get on with the things that you have wanted to do for so long. It may shock others but will prove to be just what you need.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 20)

Your confidence will reach new levels this month and thinking positive will get the results you want. You may have to re think travel plans, but this will bring a new destination to light.

You will receive praise and success that you have not received for some time that will allow you to move on in your career and also think of new projects.

Aquarius (January 21 – February 19)

There will be a lot to do this month and balancing your time with home and work may prove to be a challenge. You will however, reach all your targets you have set yourself to complete.

Changing something with yourself, health wise or style wise may be just what you need to reflect this new you that will emerge this month.

Pisces (February 20 – March 20)

Updating your lifestyle by visiting new places or starting a new hobby will bring out the best in you. Relax and start to take things at your own pace.

Solving some of your worries, will be helpful, but some will still need to be organised in order to complete your projects. Having a good balance will be beneficial.



Deaths

The details published below are the only information supplied to us

Mauritius


SADASIVEN, Niven Armoogum – 22 July  
ARMOOGUM, Goindamah – 75yrs – 16 July – Rose-Hill  
BRASSE, Henriette – 89yrs - Pamplemousses  
CHAN SUN SEONG, Micheline – 67yrs – Roche-Brunes  
ADDISON Odinette  
MOONSAMY, Gassen (Hitler) – 16 July  
ETWAREEA, Moreealall – 17 July – 89yrs  
QUENETTE, Jack Eddy Mervin – Beau-Bassin  
YAN SHEUNG CHUN, Laval Yan Sheung Chun – 79yrs  
ROFIQUE, Jean Toussaint – 84yrs - 1 July  
APPASAMY, Navamah (Aka Nave) – 93yrs – 12 July  
ROFIQUE, Jean Toussaint – 84yrs - 1 July  
PILLAY, Vassoo Veerapattre – 81yrs - Vacoas  
POOLLAY, Darmalingum (Tangavel) – 78yrs -  
PERIANEN, Navanidum (Maliga) – 65yrs – Coromandel  
GUITON, Louis Hubert (Arnold) – 99yrs – 16 July  
RICHE, Mimose – 15 July  
DU BUISSON PERRINE, Gorgie – 66yrs – 11 July  
BALOOMOODY, Mardaymootoo (Moogam) – 54yrs – 12 July  
DOORGHEN, Moonsamy (Ton Cansamy) – 82yrs – Rose-Hill  
NUMASEVAYEN, Mario Michel  
NG VOON FONG, Bhiang Hing (Paul) 83yrs  
KIT HING, Mme Cheung – 79yrs – Beau-Bassin  
TOOLS, Pearl Venetia - Vacoas  
BéCHARD, Joseph Paul – 86yrs – 11 July  
PRAGASSA, Marie Elina – 54yrs  
PAYEN, Parvedi (Mme Vellou) – 13 July  
COLLIMALAY, Jacques – 67yrs - Coromandel  
GUÉRANDEL, Paulette – 81yrs  
POINEN, France Roger – 5 July  
NAUNKOO, Karumvirsingh (Prem) – 10 July  
LOUIS, George Joseph – 51yrs – Quatre-Bornes  
SAWMYNADEN, Darmoo Pillay (Darmoo) – 54yrs – 3 July - Vacoas  
CHAN KWONG TUNG, Roland – 9 July  
FONG YONG, Guy Roger (Pat) – 59yrs – 9 July  
IP TIAM YOUNG, 76yrs – Terre-Rouge  
KON KAM KING, Ignace Sydney – 71yrs – Port-Louis  
SOOBEN, Gangadharen (Samougon) – 13 July – Quatre-Bornes  
LI SZE CHEN, Jean marie – 8 July  
MADOU, Pierre Noël Harold – 71yrs  
VADIVELLU, Siday – 9 July - Curepipe  
PATTEN, Viswanaden Sooprayen – 73yrs – Quatre-Bornes  
MAUTADIN, Shardhanand – 61yrs – 7 June  
NG TANG FUI, Jean Pierre – 62yrs - Vacoas  
WIEHE, Jeanne – 96yrs -  
TONTA, Marie Thérèse – 84yrs - Curepipe  
BOUIC, Marcel – 27 June  
LAM KAI LEUNG, Affane – 30 June – Rose-Hill  
GAUTRAY, Marie-Edmée – 94yrs – 26 June  
CERVEAUX, Teddy – 28 June - Vacoas  
LEBON, Pierre Iderse – 80yrs – 30 June  
KISTNEN, Soundarajen (Steeven) – 20yrs – 22 June  
CUNJAMALAY, Dorsamy (Darmoo) – 74yrs – 23 June – Rivières des Anguilles  
WIDDOWSON, Pauline – 54yrs – Kettering, England  
GUÉRANDEL, Paulette – 81yrs – 24 June  
VEERAMALAY, Sinda – 69yrs  
SOLAY, Jocelyne Doris (Liline) – 27 June – Rose-Hill  
GARRIOCH, Cyril Anthony – 81yrs – 29 June  
SWAMI VENETHEETHAN, Sadanunda (Mootoo) – 66yrs - 26 June  
JODUIN, Marie Eda Danielle – 62yrs - Curepipe  
ANTHONY, Noëlie – 22 June  
HON TEW, Ah-Moye (Ah-Foon) – 65yrs – Terre Rouge  
LEUNG PING, Paul – 30 June – Beau-Bassin  
KHEEDOO, Santee – 6 June  
VENKATASAMY, Marie Antoinette  
LOUISON, Marie Nicole - Vacoas  
TRIVASSEN, Sébakion (Tantine Séba) – 80yrs  
GAUTRAY, Edmée – 94yrs -  
PHILIPPE, Marie Thérèse Denise – 79yrs

OVERSEAS

SAMY, Loganaiyegee (Sabina) – 27yrs - 20 July, Australia  
KESTREL, Marie Rose Jiliane – 14 July – Sydney, Australia  
NG TANG FUI, Jean Pierre – Melbourne, Australia  
MOUTIA, François Jean-Claude Ribot – 64yrs – 23 June - Canberra, Australia  
MAINGARD, Marie Amélie – 20 June - Durban

In memory of Dr, Tegaraj Ramsamy  
(known as Degoo)

was taken away suddenly on 26 June 2006, aged 79



“Your loving presence will be missed  
Your generosity, inspiration and memory we treasure  
Your youthful outlook on life we cherish  
Loving you always, Forgetting you never”

Mr Retnon Gangadoo, 61 years old passed away on Sunday, July 23 following a short malaise.  
He is deeply mourned by his wife, two daughters and son, and members of the family.  
From Reuben and family (London)

Mrs Navamah Appasamy (born Allagiri) also known as Acca Nav, passed away in Coromandel, Mauritius, on July 7 at the age of 93,  
Mourned by all members of the family in Mauritius and the UK.

Parliament news:

Solvent abuse on the increase

Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam told Parliament that all necessary measures are being taken to protect children and youth from the ill-effects of substance abuse, including glue sniffing.  
He said the practice of glue sniffing by children and youngsters is a worldwide phenomenon but exists in Mauritius to a lesser extent.  
Citing a survey by National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abuse (NATReSA), he indicated 6.2% of the secondary school students in Mauritius had used inhalants and the age of initiation to inhalants among secondary school students was 11 years for Mauritius and 9 years for Rodrigues.  
So far, Ramgoolam added, only a handful of cases have reported for treatment in rehabilitation centres under the NATReSA. To curb this problem, he added, a concerted approach involving the Government, social organisations and the civil society is needed.  
“This approach targets potential substances of abuse including solvent, tobacco, alcohol and all illicit drugs. The strategy targets children at schools; the community, including out-of-school youth; the workplaces, including high risk ones; the family and the youth by providing alternatives to substance use and abuse”, the Prime Minister emphasised.

Inter-Africa Youth Alive Conference to be held in Mauritius

The next Inter-Africa Youth Alive conference which favours the concept of ‘healthy and positive life’ among the African Youth will be held from August 6 to 16 next year in Mauritius.  
Benoit Lebon, vice-president of the Mauritian branch of Youth Alive, said the conference will place emphasis on the fight against HIV/AIDS and also help create a network of participants to favour exchanges between them.  
This Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) was created in1991 in Dakar, Senegal, where young people gather to define a strategy to fight the proliferation of HIV/AIDS.  
“We are conscious that the youth have more and more an early sexual life and they must be conscious of certain responsibilities. The propagation of this disease is not a question of preservative but a problem of behaviour of the person in view of his sexual life”, he said.  
The last conference of Youth Alive was held last year in South Africa.

Only 20.3% of energy from local sources

According to the Central Statistics Office (CSO), in 2005 the total primary energy requirement of the country was derived from imported fuels (79.7%) and only 20.3% from locally available resources.  
Petroleum products represented 805 ktøe (thousand tonnes of oil equivalent), the main component of which being fuel oil (31.5%), diesel (26.6%), aviation fuel (17.8%) and gasoline (12.4%).  
The indigenous production was mainly derived from bagasse, (93.3%), hydro-electricity (3.8%) and fuel wood (2.9%). However, total energy production from local sources decreased by 4.7% from 276 ktøe in 2004 to 263 ktøe in 2005.  
As regards rainfall, the mean amount recorded around the island of Mauritius was 2,372 millimetres, a 4.5% increase compared to 2,270 millimetres in 2004. In Rodrigues, the mean rainfall recorded was 1,275 millimetres at Pointe Canon and 1,126 millimetres at Plaine Corail. The total amount of water produced in the same year stood at 195 million cubic metres as compared to 185 million cubic metres in 2004.

Inflation rate reached 5.1% in 2005/2006

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) has indicated that the inflation rate for the financial year 2005/2006, ended on June 30, stood at 5.1%. Meanwhile, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 1.9 points in June 2006 to reach 126.2 points.  
“This rise in the CPI is attributed to the hike in the prices of tobacco (+0,8 pt) and alcoholic products (+0,6 pt), bread (+0,1pt), fizzy drinks (+0,2pt), petrol (+0,1pt), restaurant services (+0,3 pt) and other products and services (+0,2 pt). Meanwhile, there has been a decrease in the prices of fresh vegetables (-0,1pt), and vehicles (-0,3pt)”, one official of the CSO said.  
The import price index has also gone up to reach 137.9 points from 123.6 points because of a hike in the prices of numerous products among which includes fuel (+24,1%), cooking gas (47,9%), food products (+11,6%), sea products (+24,8%), vegetables and fruits (+13,9%), paper (+13,7%), cloth (+20,1%), precious and semi-precious stones (+29,2%), cement (+9,1%), industrial machines (+5,9%) office equipment (+6,8%), jewellery (+16,9 %), among others.

South African woman arrested for drug smuggling

A 24-year-old South African woman - Amanda Francisca Van Wyk – was arrested last month at the airport with a packet containing 1.6 kg heroine.  
She came to the island on an Air Mauritius flight from Johannesburg. Police also arrested Jean-Marc Labonne who came to collect the packet .

Mauritian Marathi Society is celebrating the Ganesh Chaturthi Festival at Darji Pavillion Darji Mitra Mandal Oakthorpe Road, Palmers Green, London, N13 5HY

Programme for: Sunday 27th August  
11.am: Astapan Puja  
12.00pm: Aarthi  
5.00pm: Puja & Aarti  
7.00 - 9.00pm: Jhakri (Gowri Ganphati songs & Dance  
9.30pm: Aarti & Shantipaata

Programme for: Monday 28th August  
6.00am: Aarthi  
12.00pm: Puja & Aarti  
1.00 - 5.00pm: Jhakri  
5.00pm: Visharjan Puja, Aarti & Immersion of Ganesh

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(Père Laval Mass)  
Association Chrétienne des Mauriciens à Londres (ACML)  
The annual mass in memory of the Apostle of Mauritius  
The Blessed Jacques Désiré Laval will be celebrated on Sunday 3rd September 2006 at 2.30pm  
St.Pauls Roman Catholic Church, Station Road, Wood Green  
Followed by a social gathering in the church hall

New oil price anger consumers

Consumers are being asked to pay higher prices for edible oil since Monday, July 10, 2006. A 4.5% increase has been decided by the main importer/distributor of edible oil.  
According to informed sources, the increase in price is due to the soaring prices of crude oil on the world market. However, it has to be underlined that the new prices for bottled oil will not be subjected to the R1(One rupee) excise duty being levied on PET bottles.  
According to ICP (Institute of Consumers Protection) spokesperson, Mosadeq Sahebodin, the price increase will affect considerably the family budget, edible oil being a basic necessity item for Mauritian households. The increase will also affect other products such as fast food and snacks.

Men denounce violence against women

Members of some Non Government Organisations NGOs and a group of men have denounced violence befalling women in the island, following many cases of sexual aggression recorded during the past months.  
Disgusted with such a situation, in a petition addressed to Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam, the men have asked for actions to protect women  
We ask you to put every effort to find the culprits. Police should do their job efficiently. You can count on us that now solidarity and citizen vigilance will take place also in men, members of the group called “Collectif de Solidarité et de Vigilance Citoyenne au masculin” wrote.  
One of the leaders of the group, Jean-Marie Richard, said “violence against women makes us ashamed. We do not recognise ourselves in such acts,” he added.  
Meanwhile, members of the Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien (MSM), demonstrated peacefully on July 3 outside Parliament to protest against the deterioration of law and order in the island.  
According to the MSM leader, Pravind Jugnauth, the population is afraid of the increasing number of crimes in the country.  
After each case of sexual aggression or murder, the government says it will make the laws against such crimes more severe but we do not see anything», he said. Jugnauth declared the island was sitting on a volcano and if erupted nobody will be spared.  
The MSM leader pointed out that the social situation was worsening in Mauritius because of the increase in crimes and aggression against women. “Violence in every corner of the island,” he said.



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