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23rd Year

Investment in Mauritius

Industry and Commerce Minister Ramesh Jeetah explains why Mauritius is the ideal location for business



To a group of businessmen invited by the Board of Investment (BOI) representative, Anand Dulloo, based at the Mauritius High Commission, Industry and Commerce Minister Rajesh Jeetah (seated at the top of the table in the picture) gave an exposé of the facilities granted by the Mauritius Government or which are already available to encourage potential investors to set up in Mauritius.

Much emphasis was laid by the Minister on the Government's policy to the effect that all arrangements and formalities should be completed within three days for a foreign national to start a business in Mauritius. It used to take as much as a year, or more, for a permit to be granted owing to the red tape to which the applicant was subjected, said the Minister.

Minister Jeetah highlighted the other advantages Mauritius provides, such as an educated labour force, the friendly environment and lifestyle, the favourable exchange rate, the positive annual growth rate, the Government fiscal incentive, and the low corporation tax, the prevailing political stability and the peaceful coexistence of the nation, the position of Mauritius in the business world, the potential of a huge market like the whole of the African continent, and the benefits available through COMESA and SADEC. He drew attention to the residue privileges still available from the EU and trade agreement with the US.

(See More in next issue)

New varieties of anthurium put on the market

The Food and Agricultural Research Council and the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit launched five new varieties of anthurium at the end August to give a boost to the cultivation of the flower and for its export.

The new varieties obtained from the cross of local and foreign varieties are: Ceres, Achilles Icarus, Luna and Juno.

According to Hiranee Gowreesunkur, Research Scientist, these varieties correspond to the required criteria in terms of their resistance to pests.

Mauritius has been exporting the anthurium flower since 1972. At the beginning of the 80s, the island was the second exporter of anthuriums in the world after the Netherlands. But severe competition from other countries, the lack of new varieties and the ban on import of foreign varieties because of a pest named 'Xanthomonas axonopodis p.v. diffenbachiae' slowed down the export of the flower considerably.

Last year, Mauritius exported flowers worth 3 million US\$.

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See More on Page 9

Heroin seized on Indian visitor

An Indian national, Seyyad Ashraf, was arrested on August 26 at the Plaisance airport with 300 grams of heroin in his luggage.

He subsequently purged two preservatives containing another 300 grams of heroin at the Dr Jeetoo hospital in Port Louis, bringing the total amount of heroin seized to 600 grams. He is being questioned by police.



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The Media Commission

Is the government trying to shoot the messenger?

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights indicates that: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers”.

The written and broadcast media are considered indispensable conditions of any democratic State and they play a vital, if not pivotal role, acting as ultimate watchdogs. In Mauritius, like in many other countries, press freedom is guaranteed under the Constitution although very strict libel laws exist to inhibit the media.

We can say, with dignified pride, that there is a free press in Mauritius in that several private daily, weekly and other publications regularly criticise the government and politicians and their policies across the board without suffering any sanctions. However, they have not been spared verbal attacks from political leaders, past and present.

Since 2001, a couple of private radio stations have also been authorised to operate. Sadly, the national television still operates under what can be termed as state monopoly.

Confirmation

The very recent confirmation by the government that it was going ahead with plans to set up a Media Commission and a Broadcasting Compliance Committee has aroused a huge outcry in the local media community. The government aims to regulate the media through the Media Commission, which will be composed of members of the press with an independent arbitrator.

Although, it is believed that the Media Commission will not have powers to take sanctions against any media organisation, those wronged will have a right to appeal to the Commission and the Commission will make their conclusions public.

The Criminal Code Act is also likely to be amended to increase the fine for libel, which can reach up to two million rupees and may also increase the maximum prison term from one year to two years. The amendments are also likely to cover the imposition of heavy fines on newspapers that fail to publish rejoinders within a given period of time.

The Broadcasting Compliance Committee that is due to come into effect soon, will inquire into complaints relating to the non-compliance of legal provisions relating to the media, amongst others. Besides having the ability to impose pecuniary and financial penalties, the Committee will be empowered to suspend or even revoke licences.

Fear

So, why is the government prioritising the regulation of the media when there are so many other important areas of activity that can do with a lot more attention? Are we safe to say that it is that politicians are in fear of being undesirably targeted by the media that they are legislating proactively?

There is no doubt that in Mauritius, by and

large, people trust and believe in the media, especially the press, and have not been generally wronged by them. The public, understandably do not need heavy-handed regulation from the government.

What politicians have to realise is that the media mostly reports matters to the population and if there are allegations against politicians or any member the general public alike, these are published as allegations.

History has amply shown that the media does not make or break governments. As an example, near state-monopoly of the national broadcasting station has not assured any government re-election.

Whilst the representatives of the media in their majority do acknowledge the fact that it needs to be regulated, it is widely believed that the media needs to be self-regulated rather than by the government.

Self-regulation

The media which is very often referred to as the fourth branch of the government after the legislature, executive and the judiciary must not have regulation imposed on it by the government if it is to remain free, independent, responsible and reliable. Self-regulation of the media is a very common phenomenon in many developed states.

The government has vehemently defended its position and re-assured the nation and the press that the Media Commission is far from being set up and will only come into existence after consultation with the stakeholders.

However, there is growing anxiety amongst the representatives of the media and supporters of the free press who believe that politicians have taken their crusade against the media to a personal level and the regulation as envisaged will only undermine the very foundation of our democracy.

The commonly shared contention is that the media in its role as a watchdog can do well without having a watchdog itself.

It is apparent that the government is definitely pressing ahead with its plans to regulate the media. Hence, it has to be stressed that it needs to define clearly the role and functions of the Media Commission and ensure that all regulation conforms to international standards to assure the media, the freedom it needs.

Also, the government must be wary of not being perceived as intimidating or gagging the media under the pretext of enforcing the law.

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



By Santaram Santok

London Mayor’s office Selection for a Conservative candidate

Plans have been set out in the search for a new Mayor of London, and to give all Londoners the chance to play a part in the selection process.

In terms of a Conservative candidate, the selection panel have received a large number of enquiries also receiving expressions of interest from a number of very serious potential candidates for whom the timescale we originally set is too restrictive.

Given that the mayoral elections are still nearly two years away, the selection process deadline is being extended to give these and others the chance to come forward.

The selection committee are looking to get as wide a range of people as possible to take part in this exciting and innovative process with a view to electing a new London Mayor.

Diwali celebrations return to Trafalgar Square

Trafalgar Square will host celebrations to mark Diwali, the festival of light, on Sunday 15 October 2006.

The celebrations will see the Square transformed by magical light displays, floating lanterns, and musical and dance performances, and have been

organised by the Mayor of London in association with the Diwali in London Committee.

The Diwali has religious significance for Hindus, Sikhs and Jains, and is celebrated by many communities throughout the capital. It celebrates the victory of good over evil - and the glory of light over darkness.

Immigration

Don’t blame the immigrants, Blame the statistics

Immigration Advisory Service (IAS) Chief Executive, Keith Best points out the flawed basis of so much scaremongering on immigration statistics and welcomes the solution - which must coincide with an amnesty. He called on the Government today not to allow any slippage in the roll-out of E-Borders (due to commence 2007/08) in which those entering and leaving the UK will be counted in and out electronically.

“I predict that this is the time when the Home Office will declare an amnesty for overstayers so that the figures can start with a clean sheet. However, unscrupulous self-appointed groups with their own anti-immigration agenda can manipulate the present official statistics,” said Keith Best. The Office for National Statistics shows that the UK population increased by 281,200 in the year to mid-2004 but what does this mean?

The reality is that these figures count as immigrants all those who take up residence in a country for a period of at least 12 months. Many of those will be students who have no intention to settle in the UK and no right to do so under the immigration rules. For example, the UK admits about 300,000 students every year (294,000 in 2004 excluding dependants) if all of those were coming in for courses of more than twelve months then they alone would be responsible for the increase in population.

We know, however, that some 150,000 persons are admitted for permanent settlement to the UK every year (144,550 in 2004) but, again, many of those already in the UK (such as those who have completed four years in work permit employment and have the right to apply for indefinite leave to remain [right of permanent residence] - 42,265 in 2004 representing 29% of the total settlement figures whereas there was a fall of 47 per cent to 34,905 in the numbers of family settlement in the same year) so they would not be represented in the immigration figures.

What about those who leave the UK every year. We know from figures from the Department for Work and Pensions that more than 1 million Britons living abroad have their pensions paid overseas (of whom 74,000 are in Spain compared with only 26,700 ten years ago). It is only when we have the statistics that will come from E-Borders that there can be a sensible debate about migration in the UK without the irresponsible gloss and scaremongering of some of these groups as unwelcome background noise.

Three policies to improve the issue of migrant workers

Keith Best sets out three policies to improve the issue of migrant workers. Migrant workers are essential to our economy yet the rules are complicated and they need to be removed from criminal association in the mind of the public

Firstly, there is a need for regularisation of migrant workers who are making a contribution to the economy but, for whatever reason, are not entitled to work under the complicated existing rules.

This should be done at the same time as proper identity checks on arrivals and departures are made available. It would be a one-off exercise to bring certainty to the question of how many illegal workers are in the UK. Leave to remain should be granted only to those who are in sustainable work, making a contribution to the economy and who have not been involved in criminal activity. The beneficial effect of up to 500,000 workers becoming legal and paying taxes is enormous and could result in an increase of more than £1 billion to the Treasury.

Secondly, we need to give migrant workers a fiscal advantage in sending remittances home which so much help developing countries and now exceed official development aid. If remittances are paid through an employer deduction scheme and sent to the country of origin then the workers should be able to do this gross without deduction of tax.

Finally, it is unhelpful to have migration mixed up in the same Government Department (Home Office) which deals with offenders and security issues. It sends the wrong message that migrant workers are associated with criminality when they are legitimate and needed for the UK economy. It is too easy for the Home Secretary to lump them all together. The Immigration & Nationality Department should be split off from the Home Office and set up as a separate executive agency.



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Mauritius honours Sir Abdul Razack Mohamed

Late Sir Abdul Razack Mohamed, philanthropist and eminent politician, has received the honour he rightly deserved.

A commemorative stela in his memory now enjoys a place of pride at the Sookdeo Bissoondoyal Square, familiarly known as Place d’Armes, in Port Louis.

This commemorative slab reminds the population of Sir A.R. Mohamed’s contribution to the political development of this country and to the overall welfare of the Muslim community. He served the country at one time as Minister of Housing.

It is a fitting tribute to the memory of a man who worked

side by side, and hand in hand, with Labour leader Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, father of the nation, and IFB Leader Sookdeo Bissoondoyal, for which he politically paid a heavy price. He failed to get elected in the 1967 pre-independence General Election. He did not even make it at the subsequent election in 1976.

of Dharam in the vicinity of Church Lane, Ilford. The post mortem revealed that he died as a result of asphyxiation.

Police inquiries led them on the trail of Dharam’s cousin, Jayant, who lived in Barkingside. Under police examination, Jayant confessed that he did in fact murder his cousin. His motive was that Dharam was romantically linked with his wife.

British court convicts Mauritian of murder

Jayant R., 40, was found guilty of murdering his cousin, Dharam Luckhee 29, to stop him having an affair with his wife, Missy.

According to police, the murder was premeditated and violent in nature. On April 4, 2005, the police found the body

Titbits from Mauritius

by Ahmad Macky

SUGAR PRODUCTION

115,835 tonnes of sugar have been produced by the eleven sugar factories of the island. According to the bulletin of the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute (MSIRI), 742,785 tonnes of cane have been harvested and 738,133 tonnes crushed as at August 5 to give the 115,835 tonnes of sugar. The extraction rate is 9.72.

It is to be noted that the harvest is at a slower rate this year compared to last year at the same period with 131, 741 tonnes already manufactured.

CULTURAL PROMOTION

Dr Keith Nurse, consultant from UNESCO is in Mauritius from July 31 for a feasibility analysis related to the setting up of a body to promote cultural exchanges between countries in the Indian Ocean. He will also be responsible for cultural preservation projects with a view to establishing social growth and stability.

During his stay he will participate in workshops with members in charge of cultural centres, of the University of Mauritius and of the MGI.

OPR STAYS OUT

The "Organisation du Peuple Rodriguais" (OPR) is no longer in the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. Its leader, Serge Clair, has preferred to quit rather than sit facing a few whom he describes as turncoats. The OPR, he says, is not even going to accept the seat left vacant by the resignation of one of its members.

Mr Clair wants the Assembly to be dissolved and fresh election held so that the people may decide who should lead the island's future. "According to legislation, by-poll must be held within ninety days," he says.

Political observers in Rodrigues say the resignation will not bring any mileage to Mr Clair. The "Mouvement Rodriguais" (MR) that is at the helm of the island's administration will do everything to weaken him and his OPR party by digging out numerous "skeletons" hidden in the cupboards just before the next poll.

BREAD SAVED

Primary school kids won't be deprived of their daily bread, at least for some more time. In any case, they will be assured of their supply at least until the end of the term.

In fact government has decided to maintain the school bread project until further notice.

It may be recalled that Finance, in his Budget speech, had scrapped bread from the primary school menu in view of the heavy costs it entailed, some Rs16m last year.

This measure had given rise to a general discontent, and protests were registered from several quarters.

Government then proposed to extend the free bread service exclusively to the needy, but it failed to appeal to the majority of parents.

On the other hand, the ZEP Schools (Zones d'Education Prioritaire) for under achievers, have not been affected.

PRISONS UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

Mr Narainen, the new Commissioner of Prison has brought a renewed and fresh vision to the Beau-Bassin prison.

According to prison sources, Mr Narainen has a completely different approach from the former commissioner, Bill Duff. Mr Narainen has a far more hands-on approach. In contrast to Mr Duff, who was very office-based, Mr Narainen is regularly seen to be performing rounds and conducting surveys with his staff. Since his arrival, he has set up weekly committee meetings, taking stock of the progress being made and also identifying new ways to improve the efficiency of the running of the prison.

Some MPs said that it could be a case of "New broom sweeps clean".

FERNEY NATURAL PARK OPENS

The Ferney Valley which was under intense public criticism concerning a high way project cutting through the forest has been turned into a natural park by its proprietors.

During a guided tour, under the direction of Ciel Property Development Manager, Bertrand Adam, Deputy Prime Minister Rashid Beebeejaun and other ministers of the state, had first-hand information on the eco-tourism project which will be opened to the general public from the month of November.

CMT INVESTS 150M

The "Compagnie de Textile Ltee" (CMT) will invest Rs 150 million in the development of its human resources within the next two years.

The CMT general manager, Francois Woo, made the announcement at the official opening of the re-engineering fashion course at the University of Mauritius last month.

This fashion course is a training programme in textile which the

CMT has set up in collaboration with the University. Francois Woo also announced that his company took the commitment to employ all the students following the course (about 150) at the end of their studies.

RODRIGUES:

ROUSSETY, NEW CHIEF COMMISSIONER

Rodrigues is continuing to dominate the political scene as the island prepares itself to write a new chapter in its history with the nomination of Mr Johnson Roussety as the new chief Commissioner.

Johnson Roussety and other commissioners have already been sworn in at a special meeting of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly on August 4 before the President of the Republic of Mauritius, Sir Anerood Jugnauth.

The new Chief Commissioner said that he would work close to the Rodriguans and would cut costly expenditure in various institutions, starting from his own commissioner's office.

34-year-old Mr Roussety, an economist, used to be the Minority leader of the MR (Mouvement Rodriguais) when Serge Clair of the OPR (Organisation du Peuple Rodriguais) was himself Chief Commissioner.

The Rodriguans do not want Clair anymore, it is reported. They prefer the change which they find in Johnson Roussety's policies and strategies to administer the island.

Trade-Unionists demonstrate against rise in prices

Trade unionists from the National Trade Union Confederation (NTUC) demonstrated against the abolition of subsidy on rice and flour and against the small pay compensation that the government proposes to grant workers from end of July.

We also protest against the flexibility of labour laws, the increase of prices of different consumer goods, the abolition of subsidy of examination fees for students, the privatisation policy and the extension of retirement age to 65," declared one of the participants, Atma Shanto of the "Fédération des Travailleurs Unis" (FTU).

He insisted that these measures represent the end of the Welfare State, before accusing the government of following blindly the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Mauritius not satisfied with EU aid

Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Rama Sithanen considers the money that the European Union will grant African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries as compensation for the 36% cut in sugar prices is insufficient and will be made available at a bad moment.

Speaking at a seminar on the cooperation strategy between Mauritius and the EU at Labourdonnais Hotel, in Port-Louis, the Minister indicated that the EU had agreed to a sum of 165 million euros to help the 18 ACP sugar producing countries during the adaptation period while the ACP countries are pressing for 200 million euros.

"The 15% for Mauritius do not reflect the importance of the sugar industry in the economy of the island", Sithanen declared.

According to Claudia Wiedey, Head of the European Delegation, "the negotiations for a 10th European Development Fund (EDF) will cover the period 2008/2013 and will be completed during the first semester of next year. At the end of the 10th EDF, the EU will allocate 39.6 million euros for the period 2008/2013.

Three Indonesian seamen fall at sea

Three Indonesian seamen working on a fishing vessel, Chen Fa Tsai, have disappeared since the night of June 27 in the south-east of Mauritius, the captain of the ship, Tsai Chin Tzu, told the police on his arrival in the harbour.

He said that the ship was at 850 nautical miles to the south-east of the island when four seamen fell into the sea. One of them, Angus Mulgadi, 22 years, could be saved but not the others, namely, Hadi 27-years-old Hadi, Kistam, 33-years-old and 24-year-old, Agung Slamet.

Mauritius to fight child abuse

Women's Rights and Child Development Minister Indira Seeburn has appealed to the population to report all cases of child abuse rapidly to enable the authorities to take preventive measures.

Replying to a question from the Leader of the Opposition, Nando Bodha, she "people who know that children are being abused should be blamed if they do not report the cases to the authorities." Several children have been abused and killed lately in the island.

UN funds religious body

The Council of Religions, working for the promotion of national unity and inter-religious dialogue in the island, has received \$52,000 as donation from the United Nations to step up the struggle against HIV/Aids.

"The main objective of our project is to sensitize people on HIV/Aids. We'll suggest training sessions where religious diversity exists. Emphasis will also be laid on women participation in the struggle against this disease", Jonathan Ravat, member of the Council said.

Unemployment rate stable at 9.6%

The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) has indicated that the unemployment rate for 2006 stood at 9.6% or the same rate as last year.

According to the CBS, there were 50,600 unemployed people (19,000 men and 31,600 women) between January and March this year. Some 20,700 of them were less than 25 years of age while the mean age among men was 27 years and 30 years for women.

Forty-eight per cent of the unemployed were bachelors, 25% had failed the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) and 45% the Cambridge School Certificate. About 5 per cent of the unemployed had attended university.

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Anti-Drug demonstration in Port Louis



Hundreds of people marched in Port Louis against drug trafficking in the island, before submitting a list of 161 names of drug traffickers to Police Commissioner Ramanooj Gopalsingh. They called for urgent action against traffickers. The Commissioner promised an enquiry into the matter.

Holding posters and banners saying 'No to drugs and drug trafficking,' the demonstrators led by social worker, Ally Lazer, marched from Khadafi Square at Plaine Verte to the Line Barracks where they met with Gopalsingh.

According to Lazer, drugs have been sold in Port-Louis for the last 25 years. Many drug addicts have thus been contaminated with HIV/Aids because of needles sharing..

"Mauritius is the first country in Africa and the third in the world where drug abuse is rampant. There are more than 22,000 drug addicts in the island and almost 12 000 of them have already contracted Aids," he said.

Maulana Haroon Hassen and Parish Priest Henri Souchon also marched with the demonstrators. They told police that Mauritians are fed up with drug trafficking and drug dealers.

"We want police protection", Imran Dhannoo said. If police does not arrest the drug dealers, the next body of a dead drug addict would be laid outside Government House.

Tony François, best player of the season

Pamplemousses Sporting Club's striker Tony François was elected best football player of the year 2005/2006 at the MFA Award Nite 2006 held at the Serge Constantin Theatre, Vacoas.

Pamplemousses S.C. won the Super League title this year with François scooping best scorer trophy with 14 goals.

Among the girls, 18-year-old Martine Kelly, playing for AS Quatre Bornes, and captain of the national female team, was elected best female player. The trophy for the best trainer went to Sarjoo Gowreesunkur (Curepipe Starlight S.C.)

Complete list of beneficiaries at the MFA Award Nite 2006 :
Best Player (M): Tony François (Pamplemousses SC)
Best Player (F): Martine Kelly (ASQB)
Best Trainer: Sarjoo Gowreesunkur (Curepipe Starlight SC)
Best Young Player (M): Fabrice Pithiah (Savanne SC)
Best Young Player (F): Cynthia Edouard (La Cure Sylvester)
Best Referee: Rajindraparsad Seechurn
Best Assistant-Referee: Balkrishna Bootun
Best Supporter's club: Curepipe Starlight SC
Special awards: Mamade Elahee, Krishna Latchanah, Alain Lim Kee Chong, ASPL 2000, Rodrigues Regional Committee and Jean Giraud.

Plan to forestall a further chikungunya outbreak

Fearing a new outbreak of chikungunya during the next summer season, the government has announced a plan to fight this disease, holding people responsible in this struggle against mosquitoes.

"If we have been able to fight malaria, we can also fight chikungunya", Deputy Prime Minister Dr Rashid Beebeejaun said while presenting the plan to the press on August 9. But, he added, the island will lose the battle if Mauritians do not engage themselves in it. "They should learn to keep their environment clean", he said.

Dr Beebeejaun said the strategy consisted of mobilizing the population through a massive campaign of awareness that would run for 365 days, coupled with information and communication, monitoring at the port and the airport. Also envisaged is a national cleaning campaign, and the reinforcement of the law to force people to respect their immediate environment.

The Deputy Prime Minister indicated that 130 local committees would be set up in the different regions of the island to act as link between the people and the government.

Couple found guilty of murder

Anjeelee Perle and Deebaren Paupiah were sentenced to 15 years after on conviction by a Port Louis Court of the murder of Vassoodeven Perianen on June 26, 2003 at Belle-Rose.

New Government in Rodrigues

Rodrigues has a new government led by the Mouvement Rodriguais (MR) since August 4, following the resignation of the former government led by Serge Clair, leader of the Organisation du Peuple Rodriguais (OPR), a few days earlier. Johnson Roussety, 31, leader of the MR, replaced Clair as Chief Commissioner. He'll also be in charge of Finance, Tourism, Land, Telecommunications and Central Administration.

The other Commissioners named by the President of the Republic, Sir Anerod Jugnauth are : Gaëtan Jhabeemissar, Deputy Chief Commissioner and in charge of Education, Training, Trade and Consumer Protection and Permits; Robertson Mercure, Commissioner in charge of Arts, Culture and Youth and Sports; Franceau Grandcourt, Commissioner in charge of Public Infrastructure, Environment and Fisheries; Marie-Thérèse Meunier-Clair, Commissioner in charge of Social Security, Women's Welfare and Poverty Alleviation; Christian Agathe, Commissioner in charge of Water Resources and Handicraft and Marie Lindsey Castel, Commissioner in charge of Health and Community Development.

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly is chaired by Chen Lyle Lamvohee. Alan Ladd Emilien is the Deputy Chairperson.

Addressing the Assembly, the new Chief Commissioner qualified as "historic the change that has taken place at the top of Rodriguan politics, as it is the first time in 24 years that a new political party comes to power in the island."Concerning his priorities, Roussety said emphasis would be laid on poverty alleviation in the island by boosting the economy, and jobs would be created together with a favourable climate to attract investment.

He also announced plans to introduce State Land leases to vulnerable groups and the creation of a Tourism Office with the objective of attracting 100,000 tourists to the island during the next two years.

Mauritius tops the CJSOI Games

Mauritius won the fifth edition of the CJSOI Games (Commission de la Jeunesse et des Sports de l'océan Indien) that took place in the island during the fifth week of August with a total of 46 medals against 43 to La Réunion.

Mauritius won 26 gold medals, 18 silver medals and 2 bronze medals. La Réunion won 15 gold, 12 silver and 16 bronze medals.

Madagascar got 7 gold, 16 silver and 6 bronze medals; Seychelles won 5 gold, 9 silver and 20 bronze medals; Mayotte won 3 gold, 1 silver and 6 bronze medals and Djibouti got only one bronze medals.

Trade-Unions demonstrate outside of Government House



Members of the Trade Union Common Platform demonstrated peacefully outside of Government House at the end July to rouse public opinion against the economic difficulties the population is facing .

Beachcomber hotels creates Country Manager role

Luxury hotel group, Beachcomber Hotels is strengthening its relationship with the UK travel trade following the appointment of Lindsay Walker to the newly-created position of UK Country Manager.

Walker worked with Air Mauritius for 13 years and immediately prior to joining Beachcomber Hotels was responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the UK sales and marketing strategy for commenting closer working relationship with trade partners in order to increase the volume of high-end travellers from the UK.



New Beachcombers UK Country Manager, Lindsay Walker

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 10th 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

Charity fund raising event Together la main dans la main

Sensations Entertainment in collaboration with the Hope and Wellness Charity Association



Rocky Jaison Mokhoon chairman of Sensations entertainment and founder of the local branch of the Hope and Wellness Charity Association promotes not only Mauritian and multicultural events but also raises awareness of those who are disabled.

Rocky explained to us that his hard work and compassion took him to Mauritius for three months this year to put together an open-air concert for the disabled held at the Sir Gaetan Duval Stadium, Rose Hill to raise funds and awareness,

The promoter says he believes in family values and traditions, bringing together the younger with the older generation, to build cultural unity. Through various events he has raised fund for his Hope and Wellness charity in support of disabled people of every age group in Mauritius.

The Mauritius event, he told us, had the support of Mayor Iren Jankie, and Ministers Rama Valayden, Indira Seebun and Xavier Duval. The event was a real success, he enthused.

"Altogether 15 Mauritian and international artistes lent their support to the show, including UK performer Navi, the No 1 Michael Jackson impersonator, blind singer Girish Hurloo, winner of local competition Hum-Tum, Les Enfants d'un Rêve, Sargam Orchestra, the Bojpuri Boys, Nalini Dance Group, Evolozik, legendary Michel Legris, and Stefan who performed in his wheelchair. The show was graced by the presence of Miss Mauritius Isabelle Antou.

It was a memorable occasion for everyone with the electrifying and sensational performance of Navi and his dancers who were especially brought from the UK by Rocky. The Michael Jackson impersonator is in huge demand and has performed in over 100 countries. As a decoy for Jackson he has performed live on MTV and at Michael Jackson's Birthday party. He met his idol on several occasions.

Not only did he give an amazing performance when he performed Heal the World, but it was truly an emotional moment. The crowd was so responsive and moved. They realised the reason why the artistes were there. Navi fell in love with the Mauritian people and said, "There are so many sincere and genuine people in Mauritius and I am very grateful that I have the chance to be here."

This event received considerable press coverage from major papers as *l'Express*, *Le Defi*, *Le Mauricen*, *Scope Magazine*. Interviews with Navi took place on several popular Radio Stations.

"There are many poor people in Mauritius with physical disabilities and who are in critical conditions. Those people truly need our help. I urge our Mauritian community to give generously to help us to help those who are less fortunate and give them a better life. We are aiming to raise sufficient funds to send a container to Mauritius full of equipment such as walking frames, wheelchairs and more) for donation. I appeal to UK Mauritians to donate any equipment or funds towards the charity," Said Rocky.

He can be reached on 07861157459 or email Rocky04@hotmail.co.uk (*Editor's note: on our part, we have drawn the charity's attention, to cover ourselves as publishers, that such an appeal for funds must be officially authorised. We have been assured that the Hope and Wellness Association is a registered charity authorised to raise funds.*)

In his own words, promoter Rocky of Sensations Entertainment said that he has had a number of successful family events including the New Year's Eve party 2005 held at the Walthamstow Town Hall with an attendance of over 2,000 people where Mighty Jah performed. He also mentioned the performance of sega singer Michel Le Gris who came from Mauritius for Independence Day in March providing live entertainment at its best.

"The work doesn't end here, it's just begun. With your help we can help more people to have a better life and to make their dreams come true, Together, la main dans la main, we can do it," says Rocky Jaison Mokhoon with his thanks to everyone.

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Ashley House, 235-239 High Road, Wood Green, London, N22 8HF

Levenes SOLICITORS

Four arrested for selling drugs

The Anti-drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) arrested four people, all Mauritians in early August, while they were trying to sell heroin to police officers disguised as drug consumers.

One of the arrested drug dealers had brought 391 grams heroin from India. Police named the four suspects as 61-year-old Mika Lutchun, 21-year-old Rishi Lutchun, 23-year-old Vishal Jaunky and 34-year-old Rishi Gokhool. The latter had made three trips to India during the year.

Two other people were arrested in connection with drug trafficking from Madagascar. The suspects, Ricardo Medon and Michel Picot were arrested upon arrival on board the Mauritius Trochetia at Port Louis.

Campaign to save energy

With the era of cheap oil coming to an end, there is an urgent need for increasing public awareness on energy saving, the Minister of Public Utilities, Abu Kasenally, said on August 16 at the opening of an exhibition held in the context of the "Save Energy Campaign" at the Royal College, Curepipe.

"There is a definite need for energy saving, that is to decrease our consumption of petroleum", the Minister said. He recalled that his ministry had launched in November 2005 an Energy saving campaign followed by a distribution of energy saving booklets among the population.

According to him, every percentage of electricity saved will generate a reduction of Rs 80 million on the country's bill for petroleum products on an annual basis.

News from Australia

Australian schools fight obesity problem



By Eddy Abraham
Melbourne, Australia

A State Primary School in Victoria, Australia, is taking extraordinary measures to tackle the problem of obesity among school children. Dandenong South primary school has banned parents delivering fast food to their children at lunchtime.

The ban applies to McDonalds, Pizzas, KFC and Red Rooster. "At one point, up to 20 parents were coming to the school a day, dropping off fast food for treats for their kids" Principal Leonie Fitzgerald said.

The ban has received positive feedback from the Australian Medical Association, Parents Victoria and Nutrition Australia also from Victorian Premier Steve Bracks. A Poll conducted on the issue found 61.4% of respondents in favour and 38.6% against.

It is reported that 10,000 children in Victoria become obese or overweight each year. The Victorian Government, which has already announced a ban on soft drinks in schools, is also considering a restriction on lollies and chips.

The fast food ban is already paying off, with parents now taking heed of the school's advice to prepare healthier lunches for their children.

Crossing the floor in Federal Parliament

Three Liberal Government backbenchers crossed the floor in the House of Representatives and voted with the Labour Opposition on the "Migration Amendment (Designated Unauthorised Arrivals) Bill". Other Government MPs abstained following a call from Prime Minister John Howard to disgruntled members, to abstain rather than cross the floor.

However, the legislation was passed in the Lower House where the Government has a substantial majority, of 78 votes to 62. The fate of the Bill is uncertain in the Senate because the Government has a majority of one. Already, two Senators have not fully committed themselves to supporting the legislation.

The new Bill proposes to send boat people seeking asylum in Australia, to offshore detention centres like Nauru, for processing. This would remove the right of asylum seekers to access the safeguards of the Australian legal system.

The border protection legislation follows a diplomatic impasse with Indonesia, after Australia granted protection visas to 43 Papuan boat people.

The crossing of the floor in the Lower House by Liberal MPs is a first since the Government assumed power at the 1996 Federal election.

Prime Minister John Howard has withdrawn the Bill from the Senate to avoid embarrassment as it faced a certain defeat after three Senators declared they would not vote for the legislation.

Academic success

Melissa Husraz, B.A.(Hons)



Congratulations to our daughter, Melissa, on obtaining an Honours Degree in French and Spanish from Manchester Metropolitan University.

Well done, we are proud of you, Melissa.

Love from Mum, Dad, the Husraz, Caunhye, Chandro, and Hurry families. Also from relatives in Mauritius

Krishan Appannah, B.Sc. (Hons)

Congratulations to Krishan Appannah who has obtained a BSc degree with honours in Business Information Technology from Kingston University, Surrey.

From the family and friends

Mauritian Music Chart Top Ten*

1. Elle - Alain Ramanisum

2. Bater Bis - Mario Justin

3. Moris - Evoloziq

4. Dife dans cite - Runel Trapu

5. Aimer jusqu'a impossible - Laura Beg

6. Donne nous ene chance - Gerard Louis

7. Merci mama - Nast T Black

8. Mo contan toi - Sandra Mayotte

9. Pot Pourri - Nancy

10. Chikungunya - Ram Joganah

* Information correct at time of going to press

Information provided by Venen Coolen - Radio Plus -

XIème Sommet de la Francophonie à Bucarest

Le Sommet de la Francophonie se tiendra pour la deuxième fois en Europe après Paris en 1986. Ce privilège revient à la Roumanie, le premier des 13 pays francophones d'Europe centrale et orientale à avoir été admis au sein de la Francophonie.

La Conférence des chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement ayant le français en partage aura lieu les 28 et 29 Septembre 2006 à Bucarest et propose comme thème "Les technologies de l'information dans l'éducation". Elle est précédée par la réunion des deux autres instances de la Francophonie, le Conseil permanent et la Conférence ministérielle (les 25 et 26 Septembre). Le Sommet de Bucarest est également électif, puisque tous les quatre ans, les chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement des pays ayant le français en partage élisent le Secrétaire général de l'O.I.F. (l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie) de l'actuel Président Abdou Diouf.

Le Sommet de Bucarest amènera la Roumanie au centre de l'attention du monde politique, économique, parlementaire et des médias par la présence dans la capitale de plus de 63 chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement, Secrétaires généraux des organisations internationales et régionales, des parlementaires, hommes d'affaires, journalistes de

Logo

Le logo du XIème Sommet de la Francophonie est structuré à partir de deux éléments: le cercle de la Francophonie en cinq couleurs représentant les cinq continents et l'image de la figurine en terre cuite "le penseur deHamangia" de Transylvanie, un élément du pays organisateur.

grandes agences de presse et chaînes de télévision de tous les continents.

Les «38èmes Assises de la Presse francophone» sont prévues la semaine précédente du 18 au 24 Septembre sur le programme de travail «Nouveaux médias, nouvel enjeu européen, nouveaux défis francophones».

Le Vème Sommet de la Francophonie avait eu lieu en 1993 à MAURICE.

Lena Goel et Gilles Berger

Academic achievement

Farrah Zahid Nazir, B.Sc. (Hons)

We offer our warmest congratulations to Farrah Nazir, of Leeds, who has successfully passed her final degree examinations at the University of Newcastle and obtained a B.Sc. (Hons) in Psychology.

Farrah, 21 years old, is the only child of Farida Sooraya (Sue) Koheecaltee, owner-manageress of the well-known shop 'Spice Corner' at the Kirkgate Leeds Central Market. Farrah sadly lost her beloved dad Zahid Nazir while she was pursuing her university studies.

We happily share your joy, Farrah, and that of your devoted mum on this deserving achievement. Well done! We wish you well in your future studies and career!



From uncle and auntie, Monaf & Ameena Fakira, and other relatives and friends in the UK, Mauritius and Australia.

Mauritius carries ethanol tests on cars

Ethanol is being seen as the solution to the present difficulties which Mauritius is now facing.

The product has been on the market since August.

In fact, a mixture of ethanol and petrol is being tried out on 25 selected cars as part of a fleet test.

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Thought for the month

The irony of war

Yesterday's David is today's Goliath.

The lesson: A David can always stand up to

any Goliath.

P.C.

National lottery results

for August 2006

Sat 26:10 -17 -24 -31 -42 -49 -5

Wed 23:6 -16 -20 -21- 23 -37 -40

Sat 19: 6-29-31-34-40-48-4

Wed 16: 4- 8 -16 -20 -25 - 31- 43

Sat 12: 24 -30 -38 -43 -46 -49 -6

Wed 09: 2 -4 -1 2-16 -18 -41 -48

Sat 05 : 3 -11 - 13 -18 - 26 - 31 - 35

Wed 02 : 5 - 8 - 9 -18 - 41- 47 - 49

Euro Millions (Every Friday)

Fri 25: 10 -28 -40 -47 -48 -(6-8)

Fri 18: 12 -37 -39 -40 -50 -(1-2)

Fri 11: 27 -28 -31 -46 -47 -(2 -5)

Fri 04 : 1 -14 -15 -26 -32 -(3 -7)

These results have been obtained from the National Lottery,

Mauritius News accepts no liability for any misprints or

discrepecncies in the results published in this column

The unchanging mentality of visitors from home

By Coosraj Sunassee

It would seem normal for Mauritians, after living abroad for so many years, especially after taking up a different nationality, to show signs of departing from some of their old ways and customs by which they were brought up at home.

However, this is not the case. It would be a fallacy to believe so. Mauritians, though not in general, tend to be tenacious when it comes to their ingrained mentality. Indeed, not much has changed since the days when V.S.Naipaul, on a short visit to the island of Mauritius in the Sixties, wrote his famous novelette, "Mauritius: An overcrowded Barracoon".

Mauritius News has recently published some excellent articles, with good humour, about the ways and customs of Mauritians now living in the UK, particularly regarding their eating habits and their way of life even after years of residence over here.

The hospitality shown to visitors by the typical Mauritian family is and has always been proverbial. We all know that it is extremely precarious and costly to live in the proximity of airports in Britain, for example, Heathrow and Gatwick, mainly. You are very likely to be asked to pick up relatives or friends coming over for visits or for other purposes.

If they happen to find out that you have a spacious house, you could be running the risk of having to lodge them, for free, for several weeks, if not months. Now, if you are retired and all your children are grown up, married off and living away, there is another danger: that of sponsoring the studies and stay of your relatives' son or daughter for the duration of their education, in addition to providing them with full board and lodging.

If after their studies, they decide to get married here in England, you are very likely to have to meet the full costs of their wedding as well, in addition to standing in as their responsible parents.

Also, a home visit to Mauritius has become a tricky affair. Once there, You must make sure you

spend as little time as possible in your relatives' house. If you happen to have dinner and stay overnight at someone's place, you will expose yourself to the danger of having to welcome a whole family back to your place in the UK the following year.

Some relatives in Mauritius would invariably use this kind of trick in order to invite themselves to your place. On top of that, you would be pestered to supply a letter of invitation to the British High Commission pledging your full support to them, in terms of board and lodging, for the duration of their stay in the UK, including revealing your bank balances to all concerned.

On a slightly different note. now, has anybody noticed the kind of drinks some Mauritians are fond of? When they visit you, they claim to be drinking only the most expensive whisky, not Teacher's anymore (never heard of it!). They now drop hints around that, on their visits to you, you should be serving them Malt whisky and no less.

The same people, whilst in Mauritius prior to coming over to Britain, could hardly afford the occasional 'chopine' of Guinness or a cheap bottle of Pontac wine on a Saturday night.

We must all of us have come across such characters who are clearly free-loaders seizing any and every opportunity to pay you a visit, so they can then indulge in their favourite food and drink and load themselves up for free. Sometimes, they would even stay over for a few days, using your place as Coco Beach Hotel.

However, for the majority of Mauritians I know, things have changed for the better in the UK. Their social and cultural approach to life has been enriched with a nice blend of cultures from other nationalities living and flourishing together in this multi-cultural Britain.

In addition, they have espoused and adopted a honourable way of life which constitutes a succinct demarcation from the unfortunate and shameful mode of behaviour of a minority. It is deplorable that such a minority of Mauritians over here still tend to stick to their old ways which in the longer term would be posing a major hindrance to social and cultural progress - for themselves as well as for their children.

Finance: Currencies Direct Exchange rates and money transfer information

I need to transfer about £500 each month back to Mauritius and I was wondering what will be the best and most cost-effective way to do this?

Transferring money on a regular basis to Mauritius can be an expensive and often time consuming process if you use your UK bank or an over-the-counter money transfer agent. With an average transfer fee of £27 coupled with the poor exchange rates that they offer, you will soon find your money being eaten into.

At Currencies Direct we offer our clients an overseas regular transfer plan which enables regular transfers to be made to an overseas account free of charge and at a commercial rate of exchange. Transfers can be organised on a monthly or

quarterly basis and you can specify a sterling amount to be debited from your UK account or a Rupee amount to be credited to your Mauritian account.

So, if you know that you want to transfer £500 each month, all you need to do is open an account with us and then set up a direct debit with your bank. Once this is done we will take the money from your account on a designated day each month and transfer it to Mauritius at the best possible rate. Not only do you save money on the transfers but you also receive more Rupees in Mauritius each month, plus, as everything is done by direct debit once it's set up you can sit back safe in the knowledge that your money will arrive in Mauritius each month.

Exchange Rates

1 GBP = EUR 1.4802
1 GBP = Rs 59.598
1 EUR = Rs 40.1999
1 US\$ = Rs 31.3376

Figures correct at time of going to press

All currency information provided by Currencies Direct

If you have a question about any aspect of foreign exchange please email mark.s@currencydirect.com

The Surprise rate rise by the Bank of England last month caught the markets off guard and sent Sterling higher against all currencies. It hit the euro with an 8 month high at 1.4865 and the Mauritian Rupee 59.598.

In the US the Federal Reserve paused rate increases at their August meeting bringing to an end a run of 17 consecutive 1/4 point increases. The halt came as a result of weak economic data, especially the housing market, and worries over the general state of the consumer in the States.

However, as the increasing price of oil continues to feed into the economy and prices rise, the chance of

another rate rise cannot be ruled out. Going into the second half of the year should prove to be interesting as the worlds central banks grapple with the conundrum of slowing growth but at the same time increasing prices, a scenario known as stagflation which is every banker's nightmare.

Information provided by Mark O'Sullivan, Head of Trading at Currencies Direct. Please check www.currencydirect.com for live prices

See Currencies Direct advert Page 8

Legends Hotel

Secrets of Sabrage

By Theresa Lloyd

What is the meaning of 'Sabrage'? I pondered over the term when it appeared on the agenda of activities at the Legends hotel in Mauritius. It sounded romantic yet also mystifying.

I remember becoming interested in this ritual as we were new guests at Legends, a deluxe four star hotel located strategically on the north east coast of Mauritius, highly regarded for its unique feng shui design. Our two-week holiday taught us more than we anticipated on this remote exotic island.

On our first experience of this auspicious ceremony, hotel guests are cordially invited to take part, as something special to remember as part of their holiday agenda. Buying a bottle of bubbly and opening it as a special public ritual also needs confidence and grace.

One of the most exciting stages to this 'a la carte' ceremony is the powerful romantic Latin music that eases the entire act into calm. Taking part in a sabrage literally means slitting the top off a selected bottle of champagne with a sword at a specific angle so perfectly that the cork is fully released.

Having spoken with the bar staff that organise and run the event, I soon learned that the tradition originated from France and dates back to the Napoleonic wars. The act of sabrage is both serious and a gallant ritual since its rooted when French noblemen on horseback bearing swords would dismount after serving battle and slate open a bottle of champagne as a mark of victory and celebration.

The ceremonies are always accompanied by music of a dignified arrangement and a certificate of affiliation to the Sabrage Society is granted to the attending guests. This remarkable art actually dates back to the 18th and 19th centuries. Members are growing by the year to the Confrerie du Sabre d' Or that was officially formed in 1986.

It will be hosting its 20th Anniversary Gala in Paris this year. In England, the Pied Piper tune is played as it's considered traditional and it

provides an authentic atmosphere of military achievement.

Champagne is a very natural expression, a celebration of lightness of spirits trapped within glass. Historically, it represents a spontaneous freedom from constraints and precious moments of victory under the Empire.

Since it is not an act that anyone can carry out without appropriate instruction, I would like to explain some of the basic procedures to give a fascinating insight.

The first step is to find a cool bottle of champagne, remove the gold wrapper that surrounds the cork. Ease the wire delicately from the cork, then locate the bottle thread under your finger and separate the wrapper decoration covering the neck.

With an extended arm hold the bottle firmly so that the neck is tilted upwards. Then steadily slide the flat of the sword along the thread while aiming to keep the flight of the cork with dramatic movement. The cork will take flight once the neck is cut neatly, with positive calm and confidence.

Today, having returned for the second time in early February 2006 staying at Legends and having explored the background details that revolved around those evening ceremonies, I took them more in my stride. I also learned how much commitment is required from a 'sabreur'. The message is simple - 'cut it at an angle' et voila!



Sabrage Preparation at Legends Hotel

Miss Mauritius 2006

Melody Selvon is only sixteen and already she has been crowned a Beauty Queen scooping the title of Miss Mauritius 2006.

It is the first time in the country's beauty contest history that a person of such a young age is elected Miss Mauritius, a title which she becomes as she combines elegance with beauty and, above all, she is a very intelligent adolescent.



Melody Selvon

However the question being asked is whether she is mature enough to shoulder the responsibility to act as an ambassador of Mauritius for a year on her overseas trips, a responsibility which goes with the Miss Mauritius title.

Already it has been intimated she may not be chosen to represent Mauritius at the next Miss World competition. It has been decided that this responsibility should devolve on First Princess Sandra Faro, elected at the same contest.

The young age of the new Miss Mauritius has given rise to the question as to whether the minimum age for entry to the annual contest should not be raised to at least 18.

But for Melody Selvon, there is no question of surrendering the title. "It's true that I am only sixteen, but this does not scare me at all. I have confidence in myself and feel mature. I know I can represent Mauritius as it deserves," declares the new Miss Mauritius.

Besides the fact that she wants to serve her country, Melody Selvon would like to devote her time to charity activities, especially towards disabled people and help poor people, she explained.

"This could be another way to help my country. But above all, I've got other things on my mind. I intend to go to Canada to continue my studies. I want to become a lawyer".

15th African Athletics Championship Great show and silver medal for Buckland, only medal for Mauritius

Mauritius hosted in August the 15th edition of the African Athletics Championship at the Germain Commarmond Stadium in Bambous, a new athletics ground situated west of the island.

Thirty Mauritian athletes were selected in different tracks for this event which took place from the 9th to 13th of August.

This was the second time, after a successful championship held in 1992, that Mauritius, through the Mauritian Athletic Amateur Association (MAAA), got the organisation of the games from the African Athletic Confederation (CAA). The MAAA did not hesitate to take up the huge challenge and, again, put up a great show.

Around 500 athletes from 34 countries attended this event. Among them, to name but a few of these great world-famous African athletes, were Kenenisa Bekele (Ethiopia), who is the undisputed master of the middle distance race, Amy M'Backe Thiam (Senegal) who sailed through the 400m, Olusoji Fasuba (Nigeria) winner of the 100m and Vida Anim (Ghana) three times gold medalist in fast track (100m, 200m 4x100m).

Above all these well-known athletes, for us Mauritians, our thoughts were with Stephan Buckland and Eric Milazar. They were the standard-bearers of a whole nation who was expecting a lot of those two guys of international fame performing this time at home.

Eric Milazar, who has been three times African winner of the 400m race (Algeria 2000, Tunisia 2002, Congo Brazzaville 2004), expected to set a new historical record as the only African athlete to win this title four consecutive times.

Unfortunately, he did not live up to the challenge from the other competitors, and was



Eric Milazar beaten by Chickungunya

eliminated in the semi-final. It was an immense disappointment for him as he had prepared himself for months for this championship.

The racer had he bad luck of being struck by the debilitating Chikungunya outbreak which hit the island during the summer. This tropical disease caused by mosquito bites, from which he had just recovered, greatly affected his performance.

Stephan Buckland

It was left to Stephan Buckland to save the day for Mauritius. Buckland had won the silver medal at the 100m of the African Athletic Championship in 2000 in Algeria. It was another big achievement on his part to pick

up silver once more. "But for me, it's like a gold", he said, his eyes brimming with tears, at the end of his 200m final.

This was a highly emotional moment. Not just only for the one who has always held us breathless in every competition abroad, but also for the thousand spectators who were there supporting the Mauritian team.

Following a lap of honour Stephan Buckland went off to great applause. A crowd of fans, friends and members of his family were waiting to congratulate the one who



Buckland (far left) scooped silver for Mauritius

brought the only medal for Mauritius. He did it. "But still, I could have done better. When I review the race, I said to myself: the gold medal was so close," he told the press.

Sportsman



Stephan Buckland saluting the spectators on a lap of honour after taking silver

Mauritian Reminiscences

Aapravasi Ghat, the former Immigration Depot, decreed world heritage site

This year Mauritius has successfully managed to have the Aapravasi Ghat in Port Louis inscribed on the list of world heritage sites of UNESCO. The Aapravasi Ghat, formerly the Immigration Depot created in 1840s Mauritius, has witnessed the arrival of hundreds of thousands of indentured labourers hailing from India, either for employment on the island or in transit pending embarkation for their final destination abroad.

Initially the Immigration Depot (later known as the Coolie Ghat, and now as the Aapravasi Ghat) was “ a large yard with old stone buildings, grey and sombre looking, left over from the French period.” (1) At the depot, the Indian immigrants were submitted to a thorough medical examination, then registered with details about their name, caste,, sex, the district and the province they came from, their physical appearance, and were finally given an identification number.

Two days’ stay at the depot

The immigrants stayed for two days at the depot. During this period they were informed about their conditions of employment on the sugar estate regarding specially nature of work and wages. Indian overseers known as sirdars

ready, the Bagne is surrounded during these two days with eager planters, anxious to secure for themselves the newly arrived immigrants, and not over-scrupulous about the means they employ to gain this end. As the coolie (Indian Labourer) is ignorant of French and the French planter equally ignorant of the different languages of India, intercourse between them is conducted through the medium of a class of natives known as Sirdars. The services of one of these men are secured by the planter, just in the same way as the services of a barrister are secured by his client. A retaining fee is paid, and the eloquence of the Sirdar is employed on his behalf. The scene presented in the large room of the Bagne during these two days affords a subject worthy of the pencil of Hogarth. It is filled with coolies. Some of them are standing in groups, and listening to the praises bestowed by the Sirdars on their employers. Of course, they are represented as approaching almost to perfection, and their plantation described as a sort of paradise. If they engage with them, they will receive the highest wages for the smallest amount of labour. If they engage with anyone else, they will have short rations, and their wages cut down to half of the amount promised. Others of the coolies are prostrate on the floor, as yet too imperfectly recovered from sea-sickness to listen to the eloquence of the Sirdar or to care much what may be their future fate. In the background may be seen the planters, hardy, bronzed, bearded men watching the effect of the Sirdars’ eloquence upon the hearers, and imperfectly concealing their anxiety about the result”. (2)

From Immigration Depot to Immigration Office

The Immigration Depot, which was created in 1843 and became a more complex body with the passage of time. In a correspondence dated 28 December 1853, British Governor Higginson reported this important structural transformation: “The Depot has, from a mere registration office for the arriving and departing Indians, been transformed into the central Agency, to which all the regulations for the management of the immigration: for the allotment of labourers, for the issue of tickets to old and new immigrants



Indian Immigrants arrive at Immigrant Steps in Port-Louis in 1842 (Source: Social Studies – Form III, MIE)

are referred. It has also to a certain degree become a source of revenue.”(3)

From a mere headquarters where Indian immigrants were kept for a few days before distribution or embarkation for their final destination, the Depot thus became “another element in the unwieldy and comprehensive system which had been set up to control the Indian population in Mauritius.” (Idem) This new vocation of the Immigration Depot/Immigration Office (renamed Coolie Ghat and ultimately the Aapravasi Ghat by the descendants of the Indian immigrants) continued well into the 1920’s when an end was put to the Indentured Labour system.

Bringing the Aapravasi Ghat in the public space

After having served its administrative purpose right down to the 1920s the Aapravasi Ghat went into a long slumber, for nearly half a century until, in the early 1970s, two Indo-Mauritians,



Part of infrastructure at Aapravasi Ghat to-day (Source: Aapravasi Ghat, UNESCO World Heritage Centre (Website)

Beekrumsing Ramlallah, former MLA and founder/editor of Mauritius Times, and Ramnarain Ramsaha, stood up to the challenge of uncovering and bringing the historical landing site in the public space. In an article published in Mauritius Times, Dr R. Neerunjun Gopee pinpoints the pioneering work undertaken by B. Ramlallah:

“ With the help of family and boy-scouts, he undertook a thorough clearing up there before the arrival of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1971. Telexes shot back and forth between India and Mauritius to schedule a visit by the Indian Prime Minister, as Mrs. Gandhi then was, to the site, which she did and thus ‘consecrated’. Certainly it acquired a more official status after that.” (4)

So B. Ramlallah was instrumental in creating the momentum towards the recognition and the preservation of the site as a strong memorial of the “global economic system” known as indentured labour and “one of the greatest migrations in history” in the course of which “between 1834 and 1920, almost half a million indentured labourers arrived from India at Aapravasi Ghat to work in the sugar plantations of Mauritius or to be transferred to Réunion island, Australia, southern and eastern Africa or the Carribean”.(5)

To crown it all, with a team of professionals among whom historians and archaeologists working on the project since the start of the new millennium, Mauritius has been able to have the Aapravasi Ghat recognized formally as a world heritage site at the UNESCO meeting held recently in Lithuania. It is indeed gratifying to the Mauritian ego that Aapravasi Ghat, an international plaque tournante in the history of human migrations, has been given back her international status.

DODO

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New offices and huge expansion plans for Sunset Travel

Sunset Travel affirms its place among the giants of the trade with its move to Sunset House, its new HQ in Croydon. A 12,000-square-foot building on six floors, fully air-conditioned, with totally new-concept Italian furniture, state-of-the-art telephone system, and a brand new IT system.



strategically positioned areas. We expect to recruit an additional 20-30 employees over the next six months and this will provide us with the required staffing level to grow exponentially. As part of our expansion strategy we are also bolstering the management team with some of the best in the industry, and we have taken on as a management consultant the expert services of Mr Roger Wharton, formerly Group Director of Sales & Marketing for the One & Only Resort group, who manage One&Only Le Touessrok and One&Only Le Saint Geran. We have taken on two new trade Sales Managers, a Marketing Manager and two new Product Managers” declared Hamish.



Sunset bought the building and has spent six months planning and upgrading it to very high standards and it is now the flagship for the company. “This will allow the company to expand exponentially as well as provide a harmonious working environment for our dedicated staff” said Harvin Kaumaya, Managing Director and founder of Sunset Travel.

History
Sunset has expanded from its modest beginnings back in 1980 where the first office in Stockwell became a favourite with the Mauritian community buying flight seats on Alitalia and then Air France. With support from the Mauritian Community Sunset grew, selling flight only and holiday packages to the residents of Stockwell. “On a flight back from Mauritius in 1984, Harvin Kaumaya was asked by a fellow colleague from American Express Travel ‘Why is it that the Mauritian agents can only sell flights and not packages to their homeland?’ Harvin vowed that day that he would prove the chap wrong and later that year Sunset produced its first 8-page brochure selling holiday packages to ‘Mauritius with extensions to the Seychelles’, that was the start of Sunset’s evolution. In 1994, Sunset moved to bigger premises in Clapham where the organisation grew to over 40 staff, 6

brochures equating to a production run of over 600,000 copies and a travel agent distribution network spanning the UK. Sunset now sells the World to include the Indian Ocean, the Far East, USA, the Caribbean and Africa. “The secret of Sunset’s success rests in our tenacity and honesty. We have worked very hard to succeed in the travel industry. Everything we have achieved, we have achieved through our own efforts without soliciting any favours,” says Harvin.

Expansion Plans
Director of Sales & Marketing, Hamish Kaumaya, a graduate from King’s College London (BSc) and Surrey University (MSc) is young dynamic and very ambitious with considerable vision for the expansion of the business. “Sunset is going forward,” he told Mauritius News. “We are going to launch a new travel system which we have been developing for over three years and that will enable travellers to book online, allow sales consultants to dynamically package holidays as well as provide a complete CRM solution from clients to suppliers. We want to differentiate ourselves using technology, enhance customer care and maintain our competitive pricing structure! We will also be launching several new consumer brands, whilst maintaining Sunset’s Trade focus. We are also planning to increase the number of retail outlets in

Thank you
Perched from their top floor Penthouse office Harvin and Hamish, although very proud of their achievements, remain very much indebted to the Mauritian Community for their invaluable loyalty from the early days in Stockwell to today in Croydon. “Sunset Travel has been in operation for 25 years and as the strapline says ‘Serving the Mauritian Community since 1980’, and from our new base we plan to serve the Mauritian Community for another 25 years plus’.



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And male star Kamal, of course



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Béranger leads Commonwealth delegation to Zambia
Former Prime Minister and leader of the Mouvement Militant Mauricien (MMM), Paul Béranger, will lead a delegation of observers from the Commonwealth to the presidential elections scheduled in Zambia on 28 September 2006.
The delegation will comprise ten personalities and staff members from the Commonwealth Secretariat.
Béranger previously led the delegation of observers from the Francophone in Haïti, in February of this year.

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Weak earth tremor felt in Mauritius – No cause for panic
According to the meteorological services of Vacoas, there has been a weak earth tremor on Monday night of August 28 around 20:30 (Mauritian time).
It was the residents of the region of Beau Bassin who first said that they had felt the ground shake. “Then those of the regions of Plaine Verte and Sainte Croix (Port Louis) phoned us to know what was happening”, says SubashKowlessur of he Met office of Vacoas.
He explained that this phenomenon was perhaps due to an increase of lava under the volcano La Fournaise at the sister island of Reunion, 120 miles from Mauritius. “It can be also the movement of the earth plate situated at 925 miles from Mauritius. But here, at our station, our seismograph did not detect anything suspect. So no need to panic”.

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More correspondence on the late Sir Harold Walter, QC
In our June issue, our contributor Moti Seechurn paid a belated tribute to Sir Harold Walter, eminent legist and a Cabinet Minister of very high calibre in the Labour Government under PM Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam in the sixties and seventies.
The article gave rise to a series of contradictions from the paper’s reader Zolivet to which we have received the rejoinder, reproduced below, from Mr Seechurn.
We have also received the email reproduced in next column about the same topic from Eli  zer Fran  ois, a one-time Cabinet Minister and Housing Minister.
I was personally acquainted with Sir Harold, and had the

Letter from Eli  zer Fran  ois, former MP and Housing Minister
While on the Air Mauritius flight to the UK I was delighted to read the July issue of Mauritius News.
However, I felt sad and disgusted when I came across the unfair and unwarranted comments of Mr Zolivet about the late Sir Harold Walter. I wished I had read Mr Seechurn’s article that seemed to have triggered Mr Zolivet’s hostile reactions. We know that it is common practice for somebody considered wicked during his lifetime to be lavishly praised after his death. I do not expect Mr Zolivet to have followed that trend; nevertheless, he should have tried to give the devil his due. At least, I believe, he could have held his breath on the matter. For as it is commonly said silence is gold.
I wish to assure your readers that I am not a relative of Sir Harold Walter nor have I ever formed part of his inner circle of friends. But, as an ex-parliamentarian and cabinet minister, I have had the opportunity to see Sir Harold Walter at work and appreciate his many talents. In Cabinet he was always making representations on behalf of his constituents (Mah  bourg/Plaine Magnien). Sir Harold Walter has been one of the most eminent ministers of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam’s government.
He was a powerful orator and very fluent in English, French, Creole and Bhojpuree. As minister of External Affairs, he distinguished himself at international forums and represented Mauritius with pride, honour and dignity. No doubt, as every human being, Sir Harold had his weaknesses and he was often regarded as being too proud of himself. But one should make allowance for that since Sir Harold achieved greatness. He was not born great nor was greatness thrust upon him.
If both Mr Seechurn and I think highly of Sir Harold Walter’s achievements as a politician, parliamentarian and government minister, how can one explain Mr Zolivet’s bitter criticisms against the same man. The answer is clearly illustrated in Mr Zolivet’s letter. To sustain his attacks, he mentioned “two small incidents which many Mah  bourgeois in England will remember.” Paradoxically, anybody with a minimum IQ who reads that letter can easily understand the real motives behind the attacks.
Firstly, they were based on assumptions and mere suspicions. How could someone believe that the Minister Sir Harold Walter would speak to one of his servants somewhere on the phone while pretending to his constituents sitting in front of him that he was talking to his colleague the Minister of Works on their behalf? What a slur!
The second small incident, according to Mr Zolivet, occurred when he and his father went to Sir Harold’s place for “a small favour”. He himself admits that at 6.30 am there was already a queue and could only see Sir Harold at 8.15 am. Why were there so many people, so early in the morning, if Sir Harold was not looking after his constituents?
Now let’s have a look at that “small favour” that Mr Zolivet’s dad asked Sir Harold. “We had come to ask a small favour, my son has applied to join the civil service, is it possible to have your name as a referee.” In Mr Zolivet’s own words, Sir Harold did not refuse to help them. He picked up his phone and spoke to somebody. But as soon as they were outside Sir Harold’s house, Mr Zolivet told his dad “to forget about it, he (Sir Harold) was not talking to anyone, he was only pretending that there was someone at the end of the line.” Once again it appears that Mr Zolivet’s reactions had emanated from suspicions and assumptions.
It’s a shame that Mr Zolivet should have chosen to smear Sir Harold’s name publicly while exposing his own selfishness. How could somebody applying to join the civil service ask a Cabinet minister to be his referee? If at that time Mr Zolivet could not understand the seriousness of that request he could be forgiven but not today after having spent many years in England.

Eli  zer Fran  ois

Mr Seechurn’s rejoinder (shortened)
My association with Sir Harold dates back to the late fifties when he first stood for election in Mah  bourg. My grand mother, the late bonne femme Bapa alias Langris who used to live opposite Mus  e Mah  bourg was the principal agent for Sir Harold. She taught him bhojpuri.
When Sir Harold became an M.P for Mah  bourg, Mauritius was under-developed with a self-government constitution and had her own autonomy. In the late fifties when the army was disbanded unemployment was at its peak in Mah  bourg. For Mr Zolivet’s information it was Sir Harold who helped the people of Mah  bourg to get jobs in C.E.B. and in hospitals. Many people who could not hold a paintbrush were given jobs as painters in the Ministry of works. Others were recruited as Inspectors. I can cite many names to substantiate what I say.
Besides, it was Sir Harold who helped the Mah  bourgeois to have a state secondary school known as the Anquetil JSS at R  my Ollier. Children of Carreau Manioc, All  e Geude and Beau-Vallon were spared from walking long distances. Beau-Vallon Government School was built for their convenience. I cannot understand Mr Zolivet’s assertion. He should have got his facts right before casting aspersions on the character of that great politician.
Mr Zolivet says that Sir Harold sold the Mauritius Railway to a man in USA. I can unhesitatingly say that Mr Zolivet is wrong. Our Railway system was not sold to a man in USA, but the government of South Africa. After all, it was a collective government decision to do away with the Railway system in Mauritius. The whole cabinet debated the issue of closure. It was not Sir Harold’s decision only. Sir Harold, as Minister of Works gave us the first national motorway, known as “Chemin neuf”
At that time the economic situation was

bleak in Mauritius. The country had to fend for itself. The Railway system was not viable. Taxis and private buses were serving the nation better than the railway and it was less expensive to run.
Very often we have heard of “nul est proph  te dans son pays”. This is true. We in Mah  bourg had the opportunity of having a great politician like Sir Harold to represent us. We should have been proud of it.
In recognition of his services to his country and many of his virtues Sir Harold was made Knight Bachelor. France conferred upon him the rare distinction of “Commandeur de la legion d’honneur” for his contribution as Minister of External Affairs to the strengthening of Franco-Mauritian relationships. His personality won him the unique distinction of becoming President of World Health Organisation –not President of the Mah  bourg Village Council. He also held the Chairmanship of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).
Perhaps this is too difficult for Mr Zolivet to understand of what I am talking about because it appears to me that he is not well versed in Mauritian politics. Mah  bourgeois should have been proud of it.
At the time when Sir Harold Walter represented Mah  bourg, there were about 7000-8000 voters. It was indeed very difficult to find jobs for all those voters. It appears to me that Mr Zolivet is one of the disgruntled voters. He bears a grudge against Sir Harold simply because he could not get him to act as a referee. He says that he went to see Sir Harold at 6.15 am. He then saw him at 8 am for permission to put his name down as a referee. Mr Zolivet should have known that as a potential candidate for civil service job, one should refrain from approaching politicians. Did he not entice a minister to corruption? He was lucky that Sir Harold Walter talked to an unknown person in order to satisfy him. The right course of action was to hand him over to the police.
I am sure that Mr Zolivet came to England as a nurse. Perhaps he does not know that Sir Harold’s greatest contribution to the nation at large was when in the early 60’s he struck a deal with the UK Government to send Mauritian students to take up nursing as a profession. He channelled an influx of Mauritian students to become nurses. He also negotiated with the German government to send people to work as telephone operators in the German Telecoms. Is Mr Zolivet aware of it? Perhaps no!! He was more concerned of having a Minister as a referee.
Mr Zolivet also said that the late Sir Harold used a dummy telephone to satisfy his constituents. This is nonsense. That was a ploy used by the opposition to belittle him. Sir Harold was a man of integrity, honest and intelligent with a high degree of self-confidence, which were very often mistaken for arrogance and pompous behaviour.
Sir Harold’s political career ended in 1982. The streets in Mah  bourg currently are no better than when Sir Harold was an MP for Mah  bourg. He is not responsible for the satellite dish erected in the centre of Mah  bourg. Perhaps the present motley politicians representing Mah  bourg are best placed to answer this question.
In the final paragraph of his letter, Mr Zolivet asked me if Sir Harold deserves to be honoured in Mah  bourg. I will say to Mr Zolivet yes and get your facts right. Read my article and you will have an answer- forget Sir Harold as a referee for your application to your job. Give the devil its due!!!
As a constituent of the late Sir Harold, I will say a school, park, sporting ground or street named after him would be a fitting recognition to that great politician.

S (Moti) Seechurn LLB (Hons)



Commonwealth to launch initiative to bridge the digital divide

Commonwealth Connects — a new programme to bridge the digital divide — will be unveiled by Commonwealth Secretary-General in London.

This programme aims to harness information and communication technologies (ICTs) to benefit member countries that need them most.

This programme will provide concrete assistance for the development of ICTs in least developed countries of the Commonwealth. It will enable them to enter the information age fully equipped to compete effectively in the global marketplace.

The ICTs act as catalysts in creating new economic synergies. They offer opportunities to overcome the constraints of remoteness, small size and other factors which have acted as obstacles to development.

The first project under the programme, ‘Rebuilding After the Tsunami: Using ICTs for Change’, will create a web-based platform to provide greater access to vital information and encourage ongoing exchanges between numerous civil society organisations, governments and citizens. It will complement existing reconstruction efforts in India, Sri Lanka and other countries affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

Other Commonwealth Connects projects will involve the provision of radio-based business training for women in Cameroon to help them engage professionally in micro-enterprise; and refurbished computers donated by Caribbean governments and citizens for distribution in schools in other Commonwealth countries.

Islamabad

Pakistani PM calls for accountability of local governments

Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz of Pakistan has called on local governments to be more transparent and accountable. These reforms were needed to strengthen political, administrative and financial decentralisation, he said at the opening of a symposium on ‘Strengthening Decentralisation in Pakistan and the Commonwealth’ in Islamabad. The event was organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat in collaboration with the Commonwealth Local Government Forum and the Government of Pakistan’s National Reconstruction Bureau.

“We face many challenges. These include strengthening of local institutions, enabling them to mobilise local resources and making them financially sustainable, eliminating overlaps, building planning and implementation capacity, institutionalising transparency as well as accountability of local governments and improving training strategy,” said Mr Aziz.

Addressing an audience of senior local government practitioners, academics and ministers from across the Commonwealth, he said that the devolution of political, administrative and financial authority to representative and accountable local governments has been a major landmark in Pakistan’s history.

“The focus of our efforts should be to build local governments that are smart, effective and dynamic to deliver to their customers — the people of local areas,” stated Mr Aziz.

To accelerate all-round development through greater decentralisation and local governance, he identified a nine-point programme that would serve as a “roadmap for local councils” over the next decade.

This included improving clarity in the role of each tier of the local government to avoid duplication of services; strengthening the local management and performance benchmarking system; integrating local development programmes with the Millennium Development Goals; and strict enforcement of accountability mechanisms.

Cameroon

Cameroon launches French version of teacher recruitment protocol

Cameroon’s Minister of Secondary Education, Louis Bapes Bapes, said the French translation of the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol is very useful as this document outlines ways to balance the rights of teachers to migrate internationally on a temporary or permanent basis, while protecting national education systems in their ability to provide quality education.

Speaking at the launch of this French translation of the Protocol in Yaoundé on 1 August 2006, Mr Bapes Bapes said efforts must be made to prevent the exploitation of scarce human resources in poor countries. He stressed the importance of having quality teachers for the development of education.

This French version of the Protocol is the result of a collaborative effort undertaken last year between the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). Both organisations recognise the importance of sharing information on this

Protocol with non-English-speaking countries within and beyond Africa who also face the issue of ‘brain drain’ in the field of education brought about by teacher recruitment and migration.

Renewal Notice *If you have received a renewal form effective from the 1st July 2006, Please send it to us as soon as possible, for your name to remain on our subscription list and also for your subscription number to be entered into the June and December draw*

India

Encouraging volunteers in India for Youth Programme

Around 30 participants attended a workshop on volunteerism in Leh, North India, from 16 July to 20 July 2006. It was organised by the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) Asia Centre in collaboration with the local non-governmental organisation, Rural Development and You.

At this workshop the participants, who were made up of professionals from fields such as the media, health and education, developed an action plan to promote voluntary action among young people in the territories of Ladakh and Jammu. This action plan will now be followed by all state-level forums organised by the CYP Asia Centre.

The workshop is part of the CYP Asia Centre’s ongoing initiative of fostering state-level voluntary forums for young people. So far, four such forums have taken place in the Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Sikkim and Assam.

Commonwealth continues to provide global leadership

The Commonwealth has consistently maintained a leadership role in the international community on issues where it has found it possible to make a special contribution.

It will be an ever greater challenge to get government leaders to focus specifically on the Commonwealth given the many other preoccupations and distractions they face and the array of international organisations to which their countries belong.

The Commonwealth has demonstrated moral, political and intellectual leadership by moulding and influencing global opinion on key issues from time to time, as well as taking initiatives that other international organisations have sought to emulate. The vulnerability of small states, the campaign to free Heavily Indebted Poor Countries of their debt burden and the organic relationship between democracy and development, as areas of distinctive Commonwealth contribution.

Zambia

Supporting regional integration in COMESA

Speedy implementation of development programmes to support regional integration within the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) tops the agenda of Andrew Ngone, Regional Trade Development Adviser at the COMESA Secretariat in Lusaka, Zambia.

Mr Ngone, whose two-year assignment is funded by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, began work in July 2006. He is tasked with helping to promote sustainable growth and development through regional integration.

“COMESA has an ambitious development agenda, and more resources are needed to help it attain the Millennium Development Goals by 2015,” he said.

“However, regional integration is a slow process owing to the multi-dimensional approach to issues. Hence, it is essential to bring national trade promotion organisations on board to assist in the process. This would particularly benefit Small and Medium Enterprises (SME), and help raise intra-COMESA trade beyond the 10 per cent growth rate it recorded in 2005.”

Established in December 1994 when it was formed to replace the former Preferential Trade Area, COMESA — with its 20 member states, population of over 374 million and annual import bill of around US\$32 billion — forms a major market place for both internal and external trading.

The Commonwealth Secretariat’s assistance to COMESA is aimed at assisting regional organisations in their various areas of work — such as the promotion of inter-regional trade that impacts on product diversification and export earnings, as well as focused assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises.

Sri Lanka

Private-public partnerships for Infrastructure development in Sri Lanka

More than 100 key government officials from Sri Lanka and private sector representatives will be attending a workshop on Private-Public Partnerships (PPP) for Infrastructure Development in Colombo.

The three-day programme is organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat’s Governance and Institutional Development Division (GIDD) and the Government of Sri Lanka’s Board of Investment (BOI). The aim of this workshop funded by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation is to examine operational issues in PPP, offering participants from both the public and private sectors a broad understanding of related issues and concepts, while identifying challenges and opportunities.

Strategic issues for senior decision-makers and stakeholders would be discussed on 14 August, while operational issues pertaining to deal structuring and PPP implementation will be examined during the technical sessions.

In the weeks leading up to the workshop, the BOI’s project management committee had conducted research to highlight prevailing constraints in PPP and identified specific areas where the Secretariat could provide support. The findings were presented at the workshop.

Mauritius

Online community creates learning content for small states

Educators from more than 20 Commonwealth small states are met in Mauritius last month under the auspices of the new Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), which was set up by Commonwealth Education Ministers.

The workshop, organised by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), helped to make this collaborative network a reality. Workshop participants developed online skills to allow them to continue to work together after the workshop through the use of information and communication technology.

They include educators from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Cyprus, Dominica, The Gambia, Jamaica, Lesotho, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, as well as non-Commonwealth country Comoros.

“It is becoming essential for people in small states to work, learn and collaborate online,” said Paul West, COL’s Director for Knowledge Management and Information Technology. “With travel becoming increasingly expensive and worries of global warming caused by travel, the group also set an example for others.”

The educators collaborated and developed learning content on a COL-hosted website called a ‘wiki’, which is a simple medium for online collaboration that requires minimal technical knowledge. The popular wikipedia.org is the best-known ‘wiki’ environment.

Mr West sees online collaboration as the wave of the future. He stated: “Educators will be able to collaborate in finding and adapting course materials and resources, creating new content and sharing ideas between classrooms and among countries.”

The VUSSC is helping 25 of the smallest countries in the world to build development capacity and strengthen economies through improved education. Participants in this first such event include island nations located in the Caribbean, Pacific, Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, and small countries in Africa.

Content development will focus on entrepreneurship and tourism skills, both areas of important economic growth for small developing nations. The courses produced will be offered for credit by institutions in the participating states and will be available for adaptation more widely.

COL is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to help developing nations improve access to quality education and training. It encourages the development and sharing of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies.

Improving government administration and public service

To sharpen the skills of permanent secretaries who provide strategic advice and leadership in support of their ministers’ portfolio, central government agencies or cabinet co-ordinating bodies, a seminar funded by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) and the Singapore-Commonwealth Third Country Training Programme was held in Singapore.

The six-day seminar on ‘Managing Complexity in Networked Government’ is jointly organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat and Singapore’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

It was attended by 16 permanent secretaries from around the Commonwealth. The seminar would enhance the competencies of the participants and enable them to better handle key issues, strategies and tools in the management of their portfolios.

“Portfolio management is about ensuring that all actors and organisations within a minister’s portfolio work together in a coherent fashion, while respecting necessary degrees of independence. This involves leadership development, good governance and third-party engagement, which this seminar focuses on,” said Richard Gold, Interim Director of the Secretariat’s Governance and Institutional Development Division (GIDD). “This programme enables permanent secretaries to support their ministers, promote good governance and serve public interests with greater confidence and impact.”

John Wilkins, GIDD Adviser (Public Sector Management) and Head of the Special Programmes Section, said the seminar was an opportunity for public service leaders to be able to share their experiences on ways to shape public sector reform and achieve excellence, responsiveness and integrity in public service delivery.

West Indies

Targeting young people: key to combating AIDS

Spreading awareness among young people is a key to combating HIV/AIDS, said Professor David Plummer, the Commonwealth/UNESCO Chair on HIV/AIDS.

He was speaking on his first visit to the Secretariat since he took up the post of Commonwealth-UNESCO Chair at the University of the West Indies. In his talk, Professor Plummer highlighted the evidence in support of HIV awareness-raising programmes that target education in the Caribbean, the second most severely affected HIV/AIDS region.

“The Bahamas, for example, has allowed HIV prevalence during early teenage years. Other Caribbean nations have broadly similar patterns,” he said. “These low HIV levels raise the important possibility that if children can be kept uninfected into adulthood, then HIV can be largely removed from the population in the space of as little as a generation. This period of low HIV prevalence among children is referred to by the World Bank as the ‘window of hope’.”

However, Professor Plummer preferred to call it a “world of hope”. He also put the spotlight on the ‘feminisation’ of the epidemic. He pointed out that in Trinidad and Tobago, HIV infection levels are six times higher among females between 15 and 19 years of age than males in the same age group. Similarly, teenage girls in Jamaica were two-and-a-half times more likely to be infected with HIV compared to their male counterparts.

Mauritius News Cuisine

‘Tipik Mauricien’ Recipe
Prawn Snacks


Introducing ‘Tipik Mauricien’ homemade spices
Cooking Mauritian food is not difficult, it only needs a little practice to get the mixture of flavourings right. Cooking can be made easier with the help of ‘Tipik Mauricien’ spices. Many different dishes can be made with these unique spices:
* Biryani (meat, fish, chicken or vegetable)
* Calliah (meat, fish, chicken or Soya for the vegetarians)
* Halim (which is a meat soup prepared with dholi 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.

Serve 4 -6 Persons 1kg king prawns (remove heads, peel and wash) 2 large onions (peeled and cut into halves, then each half to be cut into quarters) 8 green chillies (washed and cut into halves length-wise) 10 cherry tomatoes	1 bunch spring onion (chopped finely) 3-4 tbs chopped coriander leaves. 1 tsp soy sauce 5 garlic cloves (chopped finely) or half tsp garlic powder Salt to taste 5-6 tbs cooking oil
Cut open prawns and place in a large bowl, add soya sauce, garlic and salt to taste. Heat oil on low heat, fry prawns until cooked, adding onions, stir and add spring onions, chillies and cherry tomatoes. Continue to fry for 3 to 5 mins Finally add chopped coriander leaves stir well until all	ingredients are mixed and remove from heat. Cooking time: approx 10-15 minutes Place these delicious prawns on a large plate and garnish with lettuce or watercress . Serve with french bread accompanied by any type of drink.

Vegetarian Snacks
with Paneer

1 pk paneer (cut into cubes) 1 bunch spring onion (finely chopped) 3-4 tbs chopped coriander 6-8 green chillies (cut in halves longways)	1 large onion (finely chopped) 1 tsp garlic powder or 4-5 garlic cloves (chopped) 2 fresh tomatoes (sliced) Salt to taste
Heat enough oil to fry Paneer (using lid to cover pan while frying). Remove after frying and place in a plate or bowl, reduce oil, leaving enough to prepare the snacks Fry onions for 3 -5 mins adding garlic, spring onions, tomatoes	and chillies, stir well and add salt to taste. Add the Paneer and stir for 5 mins, finally sprinkle coriander, stir and remove from heat. Serve with bread and salads. Cooking time: 15 minutes

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Summertime

Feeling Hot,
Hot, Hot !



By Devinia Sookia (US)*

Summer is the time that everyone eagerly awaits for in Europe and USA. It is the time for socialising, looking your best and for some, showing off your figure in a swimsuit, time for barbecues, picnics and ice cream. Breaking ones diet is very easy in the face of potato salad, grilled chicken, cold beer, strawberry and fresh cream and ice cream. In fact it is fun and party time. This year however it has been misery instead. People have been feeling sticky and uncomfortable in the heat wave. Instead of going out they have been mostly indoors with fans and air conditioners on.

In France, several elderly people died as a result of heat related problems. In California, 174 people died. Some of them were young adults who had breathing problems as a result of asthma others had high blood pressure leading to strokes, had heat strokes or other causes aggravated by the intense heat. Many had to be admitted to hospital with dizziness and severe headaches.

In many places, in California, the demand for electricity was so high that there was a power shortage for several days. The heat was so intense that the electric cables underground or overhead burnt causing explosions and fires. Many farm animals such as cows, sheep and chicken as well as peoples’ pets also died. For the first time in many years it was feared that California known as the “Dairy State “ would go short of milk. Beaches were packed and many people suffered hypothermia when they threw themselves into the sea to cool themselves, without realising that the water was freezing.

In San Francisco, transport on all buses, trains, bart (underground services). Cable carts, street carts and ferries were free for nine of the hottest days. This was to encourage people to use public transport in order to clean the air and avoid air pollution. Some people preferred to sleep outside in their yards rather than in the bedrooms. One house burnt completely by a fire caused by a candle, which was burning, while the couple slept outside. Many families whose house was not air-conditioned moved in with relatives whose house was. Motels were packed not with tourists but with locals whose house did not have an air conditioning.

They preferred to pay \$ 95 to 100 a night for a cooler room. Police officers were going around knocking on the doors of residential buildings occupied by elderly people to check on them and distributing bottles of drinking water. Ice cream parlours made huge profits. Ice lollies were stuck in every child’s mouth.

Dehydration

Many of us wonder how to keep cool in such harsh conditions. To keep fit and cool, we must take some steps against becoming overheated . We must remember to try to stay indoors as much as we can. Exercising or playing football in such hot weather stresses our cardiovascular system and we become more susceptible to dehydration. It is estimated that our bodies are 60 - 70 per cent water. We require this fluid to regulate our body temperature and carry nutrients throughout our body. Since we lose water through urinating and sweating, we must drink water consistently throughout the day to keep our bodies functioning properly.

Though it is estimated that adults should drink at least 80 ounces of water a day, very few do so. Those who drink alcohol and coffee must drink the same amount of water as alcohol or coffee. According to medical experts dehydration can cause headaches and aches in joints and back. Drinking water also helps to curb the appetite. Many people mistake thirst for hunger and eat when they should be drinking instead. Experts recommend that you drink before you feel thirsty, as thirst is a sign that your body is already dehydrated. Water helps to regulate your body’s temperature. In hot weather you sweat profusely and lose water your body requires. If you exercise in the heat, your body’s temperature rises higher than normal. So drinking more water is important.

Avoid mid-afternoon heat

Exercising outside in the middle of the day is risky. Less blood pumps through your veins. Your heart rate is increased and your work out is more intense. You can suffer a heart attack. If it is humid outside the sweat will not evaporate from your skin. This will make your body temperature higher. So the best thing is to take a siesta if you are at home or stay in an air-conditioned office or workplace. If you are a runner or cyclist, do your workouts in the early morning when it is cooler or else head for the gym where the temperature will be better.

Heat related problems

Too much intense exercise or too much exposure to the heat can result in three main heat related syndromes.

Heat cramps caused by too little water during periods of exercise in the heat can develop in your calves, arms, abdominal muscles and back.

With heat exhaustion symptoms like dizziness, acute muscle fatigue and heavy perspiration can develop suddenly after periods of heavy exercise. As with heat cramps .If this happens get out of the sun, relax and cool down. Replace your fluids with cool water or sports drinks which replace electrolytes. Do not drink fizzy drinks like coke, pepsi or drinks that contain caffeine or alcohol. Apply a cool washcloth to your skin to help you cool down.

The most serious heat related syndrome is heat stroke. In this case a person’s body temperature can be much higher than normal. This can cause irritability, confusion and on some cases lead to a coma. If heat stroke is suspected, get the person in a cool area, loosen or remove his clothing and try to replace his fluids with cool water. Call the emergency services if medical assistance is needed.

Luckily, heat related syndromes can be prevented. By drinking plenty of water, dressing appropriately and not doing excessive intense exercise, you can enjoy summer without feeling threatened. If you want to exercise, swimming is the best form to cool you down.

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

Your Horoscope
for September 2006
by Clairvoyante

Aries (March 21 – April 20)

You will be making good progress this month and all will start to make sense. Some things may not go according to plan, but with perseverance you will succeed.

You will be surprised at your own achievements this month and this will set you up for the rest of the year, where you will see the advantage of forward planning.

Taurus (April 21 – May 21)

Others may be telling you go one way, and you are thinking of another path. Listen to other people’s ideas and also think about your own. You will have to come to an understanding that will be best for everyone.

Be careful that you don’t jeopardise a situation with the choices you make, this could be at work or at home. Be aware of the consequences.

Gemini (May 22 – June 22)

You can see around most challenges, so anything set to you this month should be a breeze. As long as you think carefully and logically the tasks will be effortless. Keeping your options open will allow you to discover more.

Getting success for yourself will improve your confidence and you will begin to set yourself challenges, which you will most definitely overcome.

Cancer (June 23 – July 23)

Holding on to the past is not the best way to see your future life. It may be something difficult to forget, but this will stop you from moving on. Think more about what you want to do, and less on what others expect of you.

If you are happy and show confidence, others will see this and doors will begin to open. Bring out the side of you that you are proud of, and stop hiding it away.

Leo (July 24 – August 23)

You may be in for a shock this month, when family begin to idealise you. Your way of thinking and positiveness shine through to your family and work life. This is good for you and those around you.

This confidence will allow you to focus on what needs to be done at home and in future plans. Start doing the things you have been putting off for so long and you will begin to see the rewards.

Virgo (August 24 – September 23)

Dealing with loved ones in a tactful way will get the results you want. Don’t pressure them into thinking the same way as you, or you may back them into a corner.

By being tactful, you will see a change in the way you are in the company of others. You will have time to pursue things on your own and with friends. Everything will work out for the best.

Libra (September 24 – October 23)

You may not feel that the place you are in now is where you want to be in terms of your career, but for the time being you will put up with it. Your patience will be tested on certain issues but you must think about your actions before taking any.

Putting up with mistakes can help to ease a situation, but don’t let too many slip by without cause for concern. It may not prove to be a popular decision.

Scorpio (October 24 – November 22)

Arguing with someone over a point of view is a waste of time as you will not be able to come to an agreement. Be more open about your ideas and you will be able to show others what you are capable of.

Being too outspoken, however, may backfire on you. Be wary of how you approach people and in your decision making.

Sagittarius (November 23 – December 21)

If things are not going your way you will often turn your attention elsewhere. This is good for a distraction, but will not solve the problems that need addressing.

Give yourself the credit you deserve and your approach to new things will change into a positive one. You have people around you for support, so use them to your advantage.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 20)

Learning a new skill this month will set you up for a new hobby or interest that may be a long-term career move. It may mean having to sacrifice something, but the rewards will make up for it.

At home and work you will be set projects that you will have to deal with in an organised manner. This will be of great benefit to all involved.

Aquarius (January 21 – February 19)

There may be many distractions this month, but you will manage to avoid them to get the things you need done. It may lead you to get too consumed in your work and leave no time for others.

Be aware of this situation as it can be avoided if you balance your time well. Listening to others will help you to get the best for yourself and achieve important things.

Pisces (February 20 – March 20)

You may have been forced in the past to make compromises, but this month you will stand above this and do things for yourself.

Life has a habit of turning things round in your favour, when you least expect it. Trust yourself to make the right decision and you may surprise yourself.

Deaths

The details published below are the only information supplied to us

Mauritius

BAKION KISTNEN, Dano (Saro), 71yrs –12 Aug, Q. Bornes
MURUVAN, Mardaye (Ponnu) – 81yrs - Curepipe
THIERRY, Frances Mary-Ann - Vacoas
ARUMUGUM, Ambravadee – 55yrs – 10 August
UMANEE, Parveddie – (Bonnefemme Tanga) – 95yrs –15 Aug
YONG CHAI SIN YEUNG TACK YAN, Daniel – 23 August
RAMSAMY, Theeroo Ammal (Manoon) – 66yrs – 8 Aug
BEECHAND, Régis – 13 August
MARTIN, Désiré Jean Mée – 78yrs – 15 August
LABOULE, Arlette – 81yrs – Beau-Bassin
LIM CHAI THOONG, Yung Fah - 56yrs – Beau-Bassin
SOBRATY, Marie Idea – 23 August - Vacoas
PRAGASSA, Elina (Lina) – 9 July
PILOT, Alix – 92yrs – 2 August
KOO MUKSANG, Evelyn Christina – 71yrs – Port-Louis
HONISS, Guy Laval – 74yrs – Pointe-aux-Sables
PATHER, Kalyanasoondaram Arnsala (Kye) - 70yrs – 16 August
BOUIC, Marcel – 8 August
HENNEQUIN, Marie Clairette Sylviane (Gérard) – 59yrs -5 Aug
CATHAN, Henry Edmond – 5 August
YONG CHAI SIN, Yeung (Daniel) – 62yrs – Paine-Verte
VYAVOOREE, Mayendee (Ton Mootoo)– 79yrs–28 July- P.Louis
RIBOT, Edmée – 10 August – Rose Hill
MATHUKARUPPEN, Lucie (Cici) – 79yrs - Pamplemousses
JAWAHEER, Somlata – 13 July
NG MAN CHUEN (Paul) – 55yrs
WOO POW CHEONG François – 2 August
CHAN KOOP MAN, Rosy – 25 July – Rose-Hill
RAMLOCHUN, Baboo Yogeswarsingh
HO YUEN YONG HO CHUEN TAI (Rose-Marie) – Belle- Etoile
DOORGHEN, Moonsamy (Ton Candasamy)– 82yrs-19 Jul R.Hill
ROBLET, Alex – 73yrs – 24 July
CHU PING SIM, Nook Shoing – 77yrs – Terre Rouge
YAN TUNG HING, Ah Chun (Thérèse) – Port-Louis
CANGY, Eliud Stello - Pamplemousses
NUCKCHADY, Dewantee – 79yrs – Rose-Hill

OVERSEAS

MARDAYMOOTOO PILLAY, Sarah Amirdamal (Sarah) – 70yrs – 10 August – Ottawa, Canada
LEUNG TANG, Kim Kiaan – 78yrs – Canada – 14 August
CHEONG YOUNE, Diane – 19 August - Canada
FRANÇOISE, Joseline Andréa (Joseline) – 53yrs – 2 August - France

Death announcements

Mrs Kayeroon Jameer (born Purahoo), of London N4, aged 61yrs, passed away on 21st July 2006.

With immense regret we wish to announce the loss, on 15.08.06 of our son, husband, father, brother, grandfather and uncle

Pierre Désiré Saïde (Roro)
aged 64.

He is greatly missed but will remain in our hearts.
*If tears could make a pathway and memories a lane
I'd walk right up to heaven and bring you home again.*

From Saïde family

In memoriam

In loving memory of a beloved sister
Mila Balloo (née Sauboorah)

It'll soon be a year since you left us
There is a void in all our hearts still
A place that no one else can fill
Precious memories we have of you
And we know that you are still with us too
Death leaves a heartache, no one can heal
Love leaves a memory no one can steal
Love you always

Geeta

Airport Security Restrictions latest update 22 August 2006

Following the Government’s reduction in security levels from critical to severe, passengers are reminded that strict security remains in place at all UK airports. This easing of restrictions is not a return to normal.

The revised regulations will continue to have an impact on our airports’ operations. All passengers will be subject to hand baggage restrictions and are asked to be patient while these additional security measures are in place as delays are likely. Passengers are asked to allow extra time for their journey and to arrive at the airport prepared.

Hand baggage restrictions

Passengers are now permitted to carry ONE item of hand baggage, no larger than the specified size, through the airport security search point.

Please note: Other bags, such as handbags, may be carried within the single item of cabin baggage. All items carried by passengers will be x-ray screened. For further guidance on prohibited items, including what to do if travelling with baby milk and prescribed medicines, download this leaflet giving details on what you can and can’t take into the cabin of an aircraft.)

All laptops and large electrical items (eg large hairdryer) must be removed from the bag and placed in a tray so that such items neither obscure nor are obscured by the bag.

Pushchairs and walking aids are permitted but must be x-ray screened. Wheelchairs are permitted but must be thoroughly searched.

Further passenger information

Before security: All shops and catering outlets are open to all passengers, but any liquids and gels purchased must be packed into your luggage for check-in. Any other purchases must fit into your hand luggage.

For further update visit www.baa.com

UK Changes
Royal Mail
New postage rates affecting us

As of August 21st, post is now priced by size as well as weight. It takes into account the thickness of items as well as the weight. There are three sizes: Letter, Large Letter and Packet.

The letter size covers postcards, bills, statements and most greeting cards. The price for posting these remains unchanged.

Large Letter is the biggest change. This covers most magazines, large greeting cards, A4-sized envelopes, CDs and DVDs in cases. **Large Letters** now cost from 37p for the first 60gm.

If you want to send something on A4 paper, you will save yourself some money by folding it and sending it as the **Letter size**.

Finally, a **Packet** is anything longer or wider or thicker than a Large Letter, such as catalogues, videotapes and large documents.

These still need to be weighed at a Post Office branch. You may have already received a size guide in the post. If not , visit your local Post Office branch for more information on the changes or visit www.royalmail.com

NHS information
Moving from paper to electronic prescriptions

At the moment 1.3 million paper prescriptions are issued every working day in England, with this figure set to rise by over 5% each year, of which 70% are repeat prescriptions.

To handle this volume efficiently, the NHS is introducing an electronic prescription service. This will allow your prescription to be sent electronically from your GP to the pharmacy of your choice. Bringing an improved service with convenience and accuracy.

This will happen in two stages. The first stage will be an introduction of a barcode. You will still receive a paper prescription, but it will have a barcode on the right-hand side.

This provides a unique reference for your prescription, but will hold no personal information about you. It is used only by the pharmacy to dispense your items more easily.

This stage has been introduced in preparation for the final stage, when all prescriptions will be electronic.

The second stage will occur between 2006 and the end of 2007, where each GP surgery and pharmacy will move to the electronic versions.

You will be able to ask your GP to send your prescription electronically to a pharmacy of your choice, so you won’t need a paper prescription at all. Please note that you may also obtain a paper prescription if you so wish.

This will save you time by reducing how often you have to visit your GP surgery simply to collect a paper prescription. In future, you will be able to go straight to the pharmacy to pick up your medicines.

This will not only increase the convenience for patients but also substantially improve the efficiency for GP’s and pharmacists.

For more information on this change visit www.cfh.nhs.uk/eps or visit your GP or pharmacy.

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Spirituality and Meditation
The creation and function of the ego

The mind or the ego is a result of the assemblage of innumerable qualities that have been produced and collected during its long journey through 8 million, 400, 000 species of life and innumerable human lives. This has made the mind become a point completely separate from the whole, which it forms part and with which fundamentally is even one with.

There is a possibility of making the mind experience wholeness or oneness with its substratum by breaking the bonds that make it appear particle-like, while in fact it is a wave in the ocean of the infinite. Its bondage or glue consists of greed, anger, lust, hatred, jealousy and innumerable others. All these are bound together to form an illusive personality called ego; this means separation from the one and is the source of all forms of problems and misery. The whole of religious science is how to break the bondage of the mind so that it can experience wholeness or oneness or still become holy. No one can be said to be holy without the experience of oneness with the whole existence.

Individuality is particle-like, while cosmic consciousness is a wave-like experience. A wave is more sea-conscious than a droplet. Similarly, a meditative or an enlightened mind is more cosmic-conscious than an ignorant or body-conscious mind.

A particle is fixed and localized, while a wave is fluid, penetrating and always dancing. The devotee, the sage and the enlightened master are always dancing and living in the all-pervasive blissful state. Since there are ways and means to scatter the particles of the mind and thus release energy, and also since it is possible to make the mind become like a wave dancing on the ocean of existence, spirituality, yoga, meditation, religion and the like are a science.

The mind lives in the illusion that it is a fixed point in the brain or in some part of the body, as believed by some people. Consequently, it identifies itself with the body that is separate from all other bodies. This notion is called ignorance and from such a deep-rooted ignorance, vices of all kinds emerge. Meditation, the most beautiful of all sciences, can act as the photoelectric effect and liberate the mind from the conditionings imposed on it by society, religion and pseudo-education.

Meditation does a similar work to that of the photoelectric effect, save for the fact that the former uses its own light while the photoelectric effect uses a beam of outer light to hit a surface. Mind is fundamentally consciousness, but actually more than 95% of it is filled with present conditionings and impressions from past lives. The result is that we are only 3 or 4% conscious. It is as if we have a torch that has the capacity to produce a hundred-watt light, but we are using only a very small capacity limited to a few watts.

The question is how to become totally conscious and from where to bring light to strike the unconsciousness of the mind. The answer is very simple. Consciousness is the light of our life. If it is turned upon itself and made to flow inwards instead of outwards, the unconscious layers of the mind will be hit. That is, the mind’s stuff likes greed, anger, lust, hatred, jealousy and innumerable others will dissolve.

By using its own light, which is the light of consciousness, or by becoming conscious of it, the mind will explode and cosmic consciousness will result. This is why most spiritual masters have exhorted seekers to ‘look within,’ ‘go inside,’ or ‘know thyself.’

The whole of our life can be flooded with the light of consciousness and we can be eternally happy if we happen to turn our gaze inwards. More than 80% of mental energy flows out through hearing, seeing and other sensual activities. By changing the flow of energy from outer to inner, a great transformation is possible. A few hours of meditation per day will produce the above effect. The tap of mental energy should be closed to the outer world and directed inwards.

This practice demands no belief in any gods. The whole of religion is an inner phenomenon, the outer layer of religion always points towards the inner journey. “Be a lamp unto thyself” - how exactly this saying of the Buddha fits in this context! When an atom explodes, the result is the atomic bomb. What will happen if the mind explodes? Cosmic consciousness! Therefore hurry up, look within!

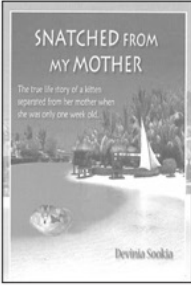
Swami Paramananda

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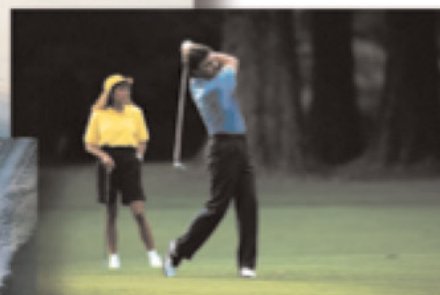
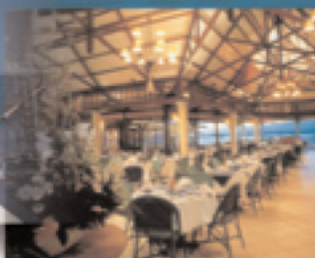
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