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Mauritian Overseas Gazette

Founded
January
2021

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Vol 2024 No 39

An organ for the Mauritian Diaspora

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A totally independent platform

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HSC 2023 Examinations: Laureates based on Merit and Social Criteria commended for their achievement



A reception was hosted on 19 September at the State House in Réduit, in presence of the President of the Republic of Mauritius, Mr Prithvirajsing Roopun and the Prime Minister, Mr Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, to mark the academic achievement of a cohort of 22 Laureates under the Additional Scholarships based on the Merit and Social Criteria for Cambridge Higher School Certificate (HSC) examinations 2023.

Attendees also included the Vice-President of the Republic of Mauritius, Mr Marie Cyril Eddy Boissézon; Housing and Tourism Minister Steven Obeegadoo; Education Minister Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun; Lady Sarojini Jugnauth as well as families and friends of the laureates.

Addressing the laureates, President Roopun commended them for their enduring investment, effort, and hard work in their educational path while highlighting that this attainment pays a tribute to all parents and educators who have been true pillars of support and motivation. According to him, Mauritius has thrived over the years owing to the emphasis put on the importance of education. "Our greatest resource has always been our people, our human capital", he stated, adding that education is key to empowering the population and sustaining economic growth.

The country, he underlined, remains fully committed to ensuring an inclusive and quality education system so that no child is left behind. As such, he mentioned, many opportunities and facilities ranging from focused programmes to Special Education Needs are being provided for students to avail necessary resources, guidance and encouragement to excel.

President Roopun also urged the laureates to keep up to

their good habits, enthusiasm and discipline as they embark on a new journey of professional development. He encouraged them to put in their knowledge and skills after completion of their university studies for the advancement of the nation.

In his speech, Prime Minister Jugnauth applauded the laureates for featuring among the star performers of HSC examinations 2023, making it a proud moment for their families, friends and educators. This accomplishment, he stated, underscores the paying off of persistent hard work, unwavering dedication and perseverance of the laureates alongside the support and guidance of their surroundings. "It is our duty as a responsible and caring Government to ensure that their pathway to higher education is smooth even if they may have come from humble backgrounds", he stressed.

Highlighting the motto "Higher education is a right and not a privilege", he indicated that the Government, driven by the vision of social justice, is ensuring access to quality education for all. Hence, scholarship schemes have been extended based on Merit and Social Criteria, he said, adding that the funding for this year's laureates have increased to be on par with the Additional Laureate Scheme.

Government, he affirmed, has always made it a point to provide highest quality learning opportunities to all students in a bid to make of Mauritius a truly meritocratic country. As such, he mentioned the provision of free internet, free textbooks, free education from pre-primary to tertiary and subsidies at SC and HSC levels. "Education is an enabler even for people with financial constraints", he indicated, adding that all students presently have access to a modern, relevant and effective education sys-

tem.

Prime Minister Jugnauth also made reference to the importance of technical and vocational education underpinned by the setting up of the Polytechnics Mauritius and other higher education establishments in a view to respond to the long-overlooked aspirations of young people for high education in non-academic fields. The youth, he emphasised, has the ability to strengthen the country's capacity to face adversities and be more resilient.

He thus appealed to the laureates to acquire knowledge and skills in the fields which are reshaping the global economy such as Artificial Intelligence, Marine Economy, Renewable Energies in a bid to make a positive impact on our nation's trajectory.

For her part, Vice-Prime Minister Dookun-Luchoomun expressed her pride and satisfaction with regard to the valiant efforts and commitment demonstrated by the laureates in their academic pathway. She exhorted the young graduates to be more versatile and develop new competencies and aptitudes to keep up to the ever-changing context as most jobs are becoming obsolete.

It is recalled that all beneficiaries of the scholarships on the basis of Merit and Social Criteria under the Additional Scholarship Schemes will have to work for at least two years in a Ministry or Government department in Mauritius immediately after completion of their first degree.

Rann nou Chagos

It would seem that the present Labour Government of Britain is willing to settle the question of the Chagos Archipelago once for all. When Mauritius was granted independence in March 1968 this dependency was retained by Britain.



Agreed, says PM Starmer to PM Jugnauth?

All international bodies have ruled that this Indian Ocean territory should belong to Mauritius by right following the decolonisation of the country Mauritius by the British Government.

In 1966, two years before independence of Mauritius, Britain gave a 50-year lease to the US Government to occupy the Chagos Archipelagos. The Americans built a military base on the main island of Diego Garcia

which was to prove of a great asset to them during the ensuing Gulf war. It was reported that many air sorties from Diego Garcia were made by America to subject the nations of the Arab world to the delight of Israel.

The Chagos Archipelago is located in the Indian Ocean some 1,500 miles from Mauritius. It is not conceivable how Mauritius will police the 64 islands which make up the Archipelago. It is a known fact that the Indian Ocean is infested with pirates, especially Somalians, who frequently seize cargo vessels navigating in those waters.

It is therefore not unnatural that the Mauritius Government has made it known that it does not intend to terminate the lease to the Americans provided the lease agreement be made between Mauritius and the US, and that rent money be paid to Mauritius instead of to Britain. This is a term which Britain is likely to accept in relinquishing its colonial claim on the Archipelago. The present Labour Government has of late sent expert diplomat and Government adviser Jonathan Powell as a special envoy to Mauritius to continue discussions which began in 2022 under the previous Government.

Hereunder is press release which was issued by the British Government announcing the mission of Jonathan Powell to Mauritius.



Envoy Jonathan Powell

News story

Jonathan Powell appointed as Special Envoy for BIOT negotiations

Jonathan Powell appointed as the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for negotiations between the UK and Mauritius on the exercise of sovereignty over the BIOT.

Jonathan Powell has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for negotiations between the UK and Mauritius on the exercise of sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) / Chagos Archipelago.

The Government has agreed to continue the talks, which began in 2022 under the previous government. Resolving this long-standing issue with a close Commonwealth partner is in the interest of both parties.

Mr Powell has extensive experience in negotiations affecting the UK's national interests in sensitive domestic and international contexts, including playing a central role in securing the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and previously serving as Prime Minister David Cameron's Special Envoy to Libya between 2014 and 2016.

He will begin his role immediately and his work will involve engaging the most senior Mauritian and US interlocutors and advising Ministers and HMG negotiators on how to conclude a robust agreement.

Foreign Secretary David Lammy said:

Negotiations with Mauritius over the BIOT/Chagos Archipelago are critical to the UK's security. We are determined to protect the long-term, secure and effective operation of the joint UK/US military base on Diego Garcia.

Jonathan Powell's experience working with governments of all colours in the most sensitive international negotiations makes him uniquely qualified to serve as the Prime Minister's Special Envoy.

I look forward to working with him as we endeavour to reach a settlement that protects UK interests and those of our partners.

The Chagos Archipelago includes the island of Diego Garcia, the location of an important UK-US military base which plays a vital role in regional and global security.

Working in close coordination with the United States, the UK Government will continue the previous government's policy of aiming to reach an agreement that protects the UK's security interests, respects Chagossian communities, enhances environmental cooperation and builds a long-term strategic relationship with Mauritius as a close Commonwealth partner.

The UK-Mauritius negotiations began in November 2022. To date, 12 rounds of talks have taken place.

News from Japan



From Mylene

RICE SHORTAGE.

WHERE HAS ALL THE RICE GONE?

Walking into the supermarket, the first thing that caught my eye was the sight of empty shelves - right where the rice used to be stocked.

I had heard there was a shortage but I'd assumed it would've been sorted out by the time I got back to Japan.

So, where has all the rice gone?

There's no single answer—it's the result of several factors coming together.

On August 8th, there was a large tremor off the coast of southwest Japan followed by intermittent shaking. Fearing a megaquake, the Japanese Meteorological Agency issued a bulletin. That was all it took to spark a frantic rush to stock up on rice and other emergency essentials.



Last year, rice production in Niigata, a region famous for its high-quality Koshihikari rice, dropped to just 5%, a sharp decline from the usual 80% or more. This decrease has been linked to extreme heat, one of the impacts of climate change.

The weakened yen is also playing a role in all of this. The surge of foreign tourists has significantly increased the demand for rice in restaurants and the food service industry.

I remember how my grandmother had to eat rice every day. It also reminds me of what my Japanese friends used to say — whenever they ate out at a non-Japanese restaurant, they'd often have a small bowl of rice when they got home because, without it, they felt like they hadn't truly eaten. So, I get why some people might be feeling a bit freaked out. That said, newly harvested rice is expected to enter the market in September, even though I've yet to see it in my local store.

On Your Bikes: Tour de Tohoku 2024

The Tour de Tohoku 2024 is an amazing bike ride along the breathtaking coastline of Miyagi, located north of Tokyo. It serves as a means of supporting the ongoing recovery efforts following the catastrophic Great East Japan earthquake that struck on March 11, 2011, commonly referred to as 3/11.

This fateful day saw a powerful earthquake trigger massive tsunami waves that slammed into coastal areas, hitting the Tohoku region (northeastern Honshu) the hardest. You could say it was one of the worst natural disasters to hit Japan. Thousands had to flee their homes and, sadly, around 15,500 lives were lost.

Bright and early on Sunday, September 15th, a total of 1,303 riders from all over the country hit the road. Before taking off, everyone paused for a moment of silence at the starting line to honour the victims of the disaster.

There were three courses to choose from, with the longest being a staggering 180 km!

The cyclists passed through areas still bearing the scars of the disaster. The route took them



past the old disaster prevention office, now just a haunting shell of what it used to be. Some cyclists even got off their bikes to pray at the site of Okawa Elementary School, where a total of 84 children and teachers perished.

The giant tsunami waves that reached up to 40.5 metres (133ft) also led to a nuclear meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant, releasing toxic radioactive materials into the environment.

As reported by Nikkei Asia, some 30,000

people remain displaced, unable or unwilling to return to their homes.

This annual cycling event started in 2013, to honour and remember the challenges faced by the Tohoku region.

Now in its 11th year, it took a break during the COVID-19 pandemic and made a triumphant comeback the following year, stronger than before, thanks to the incredible support from riders, staff, and volunteers all over Japan. The motto remains: Let's pedal together on the road to recovery!

Commemoration of the 160th anniversary of the death Blessed Jacques Désiré Laval in London

The Père Laval Association (UK) held its annual mass at the St Boniface Roman Catholic Church in Tooting Broadway , South London, on Sunday, 15 September 2024. The celebrant was Rev Bishop Paul.

This year, thanks to the efforts of Mario Fauvrelle, who is not a member of the Père Laval association (UK), the small bust of Père Laval was brought to the altar during the ceremony.



Bust of Blessed Jacques Désiré Laval

The bust was retrieved from the home of the Holy Ghost Fathers of Bickley where it had been kept for several years following the dissolution of the Père Laval Benevolent Society (UK) who had raised funds in the 1990s for it to be made.

According to photographer Michael Marain, (photographer dedicated to the old UK monthly publication, Mauritius News, which went out circulation in 2015 following its sale to another party), the mass was well attended by the faithful members of the Père Laval Association under the chairmanship of Richard Ridonauth. We are pleased to publish on this page a note of appreciation from the Association's secretary Marie Achilles.

The pictures on this page are published thanks to photographer Michael Marain who holds the copyright.



Mario Fauvrelle



Rev Bishop Paul celebrating the Eucharist

A Note of Appreciation and thanks from, Marie Achilles, Secretary of Père Laval Association UK

Amazing - Amazing - Amazing

Pere Laval 2024 great atmosphere and buzz!

On behalf of the Executive Committee Richard, Patrick, Elvina, France and me a huge Thank You for the generosity of support and kindness in making our event special and successful.

Also a big Thank You to Bishop Paul, the choir, altar servers, Voice of Mauritius dancers, DJ Shanley and John for the excellent music they provided, Milo, Sylvain and his team.



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