

L'Union  
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# Mauritian Overseas Gazette

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Vol 2025 Issue No 68 Page One

A Magazine for the Mauritian Diaspora

A totally independent publication

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Views expressed by contributors are their own

## The Public Debt — La Dette Publique

**There has been, of late, a lot of talk in Mauritius about the public debt of the country, reported to have reached an alarming level under the previous government. This is the situation, according to declarations made by several new-blood parliamentarians, and affirmed by the new Prime Minister, who is cumulating the Finance portfolio as well.**

No, this is not concentration of power; the PM says that he has kept the Finance Ministry for himself in order to spare any other parliamentarian of this burden. He says that the country is experiencing enormous financial difficulties, inherited from the previous government, which have to be put right. It's an ungrateful job with which he did not wish to burden anybody else.

According to a renown economist, the public debt is a phenomenon that is incurred by all independent countries on Planet Earth because it so happens they are unable to meet their annual commitments.

Some internet posts have tried to draw a comparison between our individual personal spending via the Credit Card and the government spending through the provisions of the Annual Budget.. We pay for goods we need with money we do not have. Before we refund that money, we buy more goods paying with the same Credit Card. We sometimes have more than one Credit Card and we go on spending.

The result is that we face the sort of problem as explained by Charles Dickens' Mr Micawber to young David Copperfield: "Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen and six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure

twenty-pound ought and six, result misery."

Unfortunately, no government is ever able to abide by the Micawber principle to spend within its means. The country's eminent economists may take note. No government, local or overseas, is ever able to spend within the limits of its annual revenue.

Let's take for example the present L'Alliance du Changement government. Presenting the 2025-2026 Budget to the National Assembly on 5 June 2025, Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam explained that the Government's estimated income for that financial year will be Rs 224 billion and the estimated expenditure (capital and recurrent) will be 261 billion rupee, leaving a deficit of 37 billion rupees.

How will the estimated deficit be met? The national broadcasting service, MBC, commenting on the Budget in the evening explained that to meet the deficit, the government will borrow. Here is the magic formula: Borrowing. The broadcaster explained that the borrowing will be done from local financial organisations and international financial institutions.

The total repayment of the debts from various sources does not frequently happen. In most instances, more loans are taken for the implementation of the following year's Budget. One can imagine, for the next five years (the duration of the present government), how the Alliance du Changement regime will have considerably built up the country's public debt.

With cumulative effect, Mauritius will compete with other nations for a better place on the podium of the countries with the highest public debts. Therefore, it must be ad-

mitted that public debts are part of all governments' policy and financial strategy.

And so, the present Finance Minister, Dr Navin Ramgoolam, in spite of his criticism of the previous government's public debts policy will start his financial management of Mauritius by borrowing in order to be able to run the country. Therefore, too much fuss is perhaps being made about the existing public debts of Mauritius.

All responsible governments are inclined to borrow to a level that they consider is manageable. This also depends on their policy and strategy. The previous government believed in a policy of public spending to create a healthy circulation of money in the country, which in turn should encourage economic development and prosperity. This policy encourages borrowing to implement projects, and even creating a picture of prosperity.

The present government tends to believe otherwise, and professes a policy of tightening the belt, creating a picture of economic recession. Cuts are effected here and there, and public spending are eliminated wherever the government thinks fit, even if such cuts should cause hardships and distress. Yet, those at the helm do not fail to ensure that their own interests are taken care of, whatever the costs.

We publish, hereunder, the details of the borrowings of a few countries with the highest public debts as featured on the internet.

*Suresh Coonjee Beeharry*

## National Debt

**The national debt or public debt is a phenomenon that is incurred by all independent countries on Planet Earth. Hereunder are the mentions of a few countries with details of their national debts as picked up from the internet.**

**Mauritius:** In December 2024, Mauritius's national debt reached \$11.3 billion, or 77.0% of its nominal GDP. The debt to GDP ratio has fluctuated, reaching a high of 87.2% in June 2021 and a low of 42.8% in December 2008. The government aims to reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio below 80% within the next three years.

**United States:** The national debt of the United States is currently estimated to be over \$36 trillion, a significant increase from the \$33.1 trillion in December 2023. This debt represents the total amount of outstanding borrowing by the U.S. Federal Government accumulated over its history, primarily through borrowing to cover budget deficits. The debt has increased substantially due to factors

like budget deficits, borrowing to cover spending, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The debt is held by both the public (80%) and intragovernmentally (20%), with public debt representing cash borrowed from domestic and foreign investors.

**China:** China's national debt, including central and local government debt, reached 14.83 trillion U.S. dollars in 2023. This represents a significant portion of the country's overall economic activity, with the debt-to-GDP ratio exceeding 300% when considering corporate and household debt, according to Fidelity International.

**India:** India's national debt, including central government debt and external debt, is estimated at approximately 185.11 lakh crore (□185.11 trillion) as of March 2025 and 200.16 lakh crore (□200.16

trillion) as of March 2026. This translates to roughly 3.16 trillion US dollars in 2024, according to Statista. The debt to GDP ratio for India is reported to be around 81.23% in 2023, according to [countryeconomy.com](http://countryeconomy.com), with the external debt to GDP ratio standing at 19.4% as of September 2024.

**France:** France's national debt in 2023 was €3.3 trillion, which is 113% of its GDP. This is a record high and exceeds the 60% of GDP limit set by the EU. While the debt has been rising, the debt-to-GDP ratio has also been increasing, reflecting the impact of economic challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and the energy crisis.

**Russia:** In January 2025, Russia's national government debt reached \$291.7 billion USD.

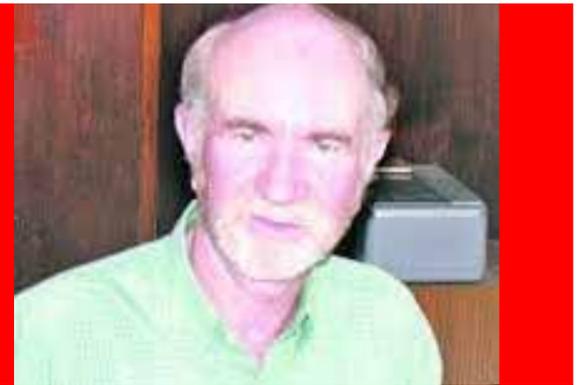
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**NEWSLETTER  
FROM CARE-CO,  
RODRIGUES  
JUNE 2025**

*From Paul Draper*



Hello from Rodrigues.

So, we are now in the Southern Hemisphere winter. It is cool, with blustery and showery weather and the influence of the 'roaring forties'. As I write this Rodrigues is on a heavy swells alert for today, Sunday June 8th.

But the sun is shining and I am getting ready to attend the morning service at St. Barnabas Anglican church in Port Mathurin.

The Bishop of Mauritius Rt. Rev. Stenio Andre (born and bred in Rodrigues) is visiting the Parish for the special service for Pentecost and the 122nd anniversary of the founding of the Anglican church in Rodrigues.

The Anglican church was established in Mauritius in 1854 and there are two parishes in Rodrigues. The Anglican church in Rodrigue dates back to 1903. But all this can be seen on a Google search, so enough of history.

Here at Care-Co and the GPL Centre we have been privileged with a number of important visitors. We had a visit from the Hon. Mahend Gungapersad, the Mauritian Minister for Education and his team of officers, for a series of meetings on local education matters. He was accompanied by the Deputy Chief Commissioner Mr. Johnson Roussety and the Head of Department Mrs. Christelle Grandcourt, Commission for Education. Then we also had a visit from Mrs. Aneeta Ghoora, who is the Ombudsman for Children. She was accompanied by her team of officers.

During last week we were also visited by Mr. Kress Goomany the CEO of the Communications Company EMTEL and his team of officers - Shezaad and Ronnie.

EMTEL have been sponsoring various projects and events at the GPL Centre for a number of years and we have benefitted greatly from their generous help and provision of improvements and on this occasion, we planted some saplings in our new ecological garden.

We will now be working on new projects that we will propose to them for 2025 & 6.

Then, the GPL Centre also benefitted recently from a CSR campaign of Mauritius Telecom Company and Susan was proudly presented with a cheque as winner of the Project presentation session. She had pres-

ented an outline of the work of the GPL Centre and projects for future developments and improvements.

Some of the funding issues that we have benefitted from, which came from the Government run Special Education Needs Authority, have run into some snags since the arrival of a new Government in Mauritius and this CSR funding from MT has come at a crucial moment.

So, it has been an eventful time in the GPL Centre.

Sadly, we have to report that Veena, who we appointed as Head of the GPL Centre found that it was not for her and has now left us.

We hope to be able to find someone else, but in the meantime, Susan Auguste has returned as Head of School.

At the Care-Co workshop Birgit and team are trying to make up for the lost time suffered during Covid. The negative effects of which still being felt in the reduced number of visitors arriving from overseas.

Happily, lots of Mauritians come over in increasing numbers and groups to visit their 'outer island' of Rodrigues 350 miles or so across the seas from Mauritius.

The Republic of Mauritius comprises the main island of Mauritius - Rodrigues to the East, Agalega 700 miles to the North, St. Brandon where there is no resident population some 300 miles to the North and the now much talked about Chagos Archipelago which is 1040 miles to the N. East and houses an American Air Force base. There is another island which we share with France at the moment - called Tromelin.

The nearest 'foreign' landfall is the Island of Le Reunion which is a French 'Dom Tom' and is not so far away, being only 140 miles or so across the Indian Ocean to the west.

Enough history and geography in this NEWS.

Apologies again for the printed NEWS

If you write or email me, I will certainly reply.

Greetings to all,

*Paul.*

## Students urged to embrace science subjects to drive research and innovation in the country



At a ceremony organised, today, in Bell Village, to mark the 20th Anniversary of the inauguration of the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre (RGSC), the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research, Dr Kavi-

raj Sharma Sukon, urged students to embrace science subjects to foster innovation and research in the country.

Kumar Maulloo, were present at the event.

In his speech the Minister recalled that over the years, the RGSC has played a pivotal role in inspiring many youngsters to embrace science and technology. He also spoke of Government's vision to boost the biotechnology sector in Mauritius

and encourage the setting up of more research laboratories. This vision aligns with the broader shared mission to foster scientific curiosity, cultivate critical thinking, and create opportunities for youth across Mauritius and Rodrigues, he said.

The Minister urged educators as well to explore new and innovative teaching methods, underlining that science can no longer be effectively taught through traditional approaches. Regarding the promotion of Artificial Intelligence, he called on educational institutions to leverage immersive technologies to create

more engaging, real-world learning experiences.

Advocating for widespread scientific literacy, Dr Sukon referred to the establishment of a Committee for Science Diplomacy focusing on the intersection of science and international relations. "This will facilitate interactions and knowledge sharing between top researchers and students," he added.

For his part the Indian High Commissioner indicated that the event was an opportunity to reflect on the joint commitment of Mauritius and India to promote scientific research and literacy. "It is time to reckon the foundational partnership that has enabled the growth of this institution which has significantly popularised science and technology among the youth, thus shaping a new generation of innovators and scientists," he said.

Moreover, Mr Srivastava proposed a series of initiatives namely the revival of India-Mauritius Science Week, upgrading of exhibitions at the RGSC, holding of lectures by Indian and Mauritian scientists and provision of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics scholarships, in a bid to strengthen the collaboration between the two countries.

The High Commissioner of the Republic of India to Mauritius, Mr Anurag Srivastava; the Ambassador of the United States of America to Mauritius, Mr Henry Victor Jardine; the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Mauritius, Mr Masahiro Kan; and the Director of the RGSC, Dr Aman

# The Westminster Big Lunch *It's Fun, It's Free and it Brings People Together*

By Mylene



**Cities are bustling, vibrant places, yet they can often feel a bit lonely. While many people have strong connections with their neighbours, research from Aviva shows that one in eight adults don't even know their neighbour's name.**

This is where The Big Lunch steps in. Launched in 2009 by the Eden Project, it has grown into an annual event designed to bring people together and cultivate a sense of community. What a great way to tackle social isolation and get to know your neighbours, right?

I had the pleasure of joining the Westminster's SW1 Community Big Lunch at the Tate Garden within the grounds of Tate Britain, which transported me back to my childhood when I was awestruck on seeing Millais' Ophelia. It made me realize the power art has to

evoke deep emotions. On Saturday, June 7th participants arrived with smiles, dishes to share and an open heart. The driving force behind this Big Lunch was Maria Luitai.

Maria is like a superhero for our community, she has invested so much time and hard work that she truly represents the essence of altruism and dedication.

A reliable friend and mentor, not only to me, but extends to the Mauritian community in the SW1 (Westminster) area and anyone who seeks her assistance. Her commitment to helping others is truly inspiring

The Big Lunch SW1 was attended by Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Westminster, who gave a

speech in which he acknowledged and thanked Maria for her great work in the community.

Alex Farquharson, the director of Tate Britain was also there to talk about the future plans of Tate Britain.

Maria has spearheaded numerous community projects that bring people together. Her unwavering contributions have created a ripple effect, inspiring others to take action to create a positive cycle that uplifts the entire neighbourhood.

Maria is a person that reminds us of the significant influence one individual can exert on the lives of many.

I can't wait for the next Big Lunch.



Left to Right: Chester, Marie-claire, The Lord Mayor of Westminster and Maria Luitai



The Guests



Maria Luitai at The Big Lunch  
Sushi, steam pudding etc



Maria Luitai with Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Westminster



Tate Gallery